

SGT. PEPPERONI'S OPENS IN IRVINE • SEPTEMBER CONCERT GUIDE • PEDAGO ELECTRIC BIKES BOLSTERS COMMUNITY AND HEALTH

IRVINE WEEKLY

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ALL MEDIA 2021

WORK RANGING FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE CHALLENGING, FROM REALISM TO ABSTRACTION AT THE IRVINE FINE ARTS CENTER. BY LIZ GOLDNER

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Office Manager to schedule vet appointments, maintain patient (animal) charts, billing customers, insurance companies and/or vendors, supervising other employees, order office supplies, etc. Mon-Fri 40hrs/wk. Associate's in Business Administration or 12 mos. exp. as a supervisor or related occupation. Mail Resume to Ramos Lepera Veterinary Corp. 1870 Placentia Ave, Costa Mesa, CA 92627.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 NO. 20

CONTENTS



CULTURE: 3

Pedago Electric Bikes bolsters community and health in Irvine and beyond.

BY RUKSANA HUSSAIN

NEWS: 4

New guidance for the vaccinated, facemasks at school, and asphalt exemptions in Irvine.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

NEWS: 6

UC Irvine professor contributes to 2021 Climate Change Report.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

FOOD: 7

O.C.'s Oldest Pizzeria: Sgt. Pepperoni's opens new Irvine storefront.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

ART: 8

Irvine Fine Arts Center's "All Media 2021"

BY LIZ GOLDNER

MUSIC: 9

Irvine Weekly's September concert guide.

BY PAUL ROGERS

ENTERTAINMENT: 12

Jennifer Coolidge shows new layers in latest film and TV roles.

BY LINA LECARO

ENTERTAINMENT: 14

Reviews of "This is Pop," "Behind the Attraction" and "100 Foot Wave"

BY ERIN MAXWELL

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COVER: ALEXANDER ARSHANSKY, JUSTICE, 2019, ACRYLICS ON CANVAS

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PEDAGO ELECTRIC BIKES BOLSTERS COMMUNITY AND HEALTH IN IRVINE AND BEYOND

BY RUKSANA HUSSAIN

"I love the Mountains to Sea Trail that cuts through to Irvine. I jump on at Bison and MacArthur and ride to the Spectrum or Tustin Marketplace for lunch," says Don DiCostanzo, founder and CEO of Pedego Electric Bikes. "One of the best bike tracks in the country is up there." He would know. As founder of the award-winning national electric bike company, DiCostanzo has accounted for hours of biking all over the country and shares his passion for fitness and fun with many Pedego clients nationwide. The fact that the company recently announced \$121 million in sales, reporting an average of 44.34% increase in sales annually over the decade and more it has been in operation, is proof of its rising popularity despite, or even courtesy, the changing landscape dictated by the global pandemic.

Visit their Official Pedego Owners Group on Facebook which is 9,300+ strong and growing and you'll see the involved and enthusiastic conversations the community engages in daily. Even

celebrities have been seen renting and buying Pedego bikes – DiCostanzo's recent update shares former pro basketball player Shaquille O'Neal stopped at the Pedego Boca Raton in Florida to buy his third Pedego, which needed a few modifications for it to fit his over 7-ft.-tall body. (At 6 ft. 5 in. tall himself, DiCostanzo rides the Interceptor: Platinum Edition.) The brand has been featured on Forbes, AAA and several national publications spotlighting its ease of use, increasing clientele and national growth. And to think it all started here in Irvine.

"Our very first address was in Irvine... we're basically Irvine born and bred," says DiCostanzo. "And we opened a store right on the bike path in Irvine in the shopping center where Target is," he says of the 3800 Barranca Parkway location. "Irvine has a great business environment. We liked the retail space that was available, that proximity to restaurants."

The Irvine Pedego dealership website also shares an Irvine Round Tour itiner-



ary that highlights several spots to enjoy while on your electric bike, including South Lake Gazebo and Island, Shady Canyon Hiking and Biking Trail and Quail Hill Loop Trail. What started out years ago as a solution to a need – DiCostanzo wanted to enjoy being able to ride uphill without worrying about the struggle to get there – is now a booming business.

Fast forward to the present and Pedego has 200 retail stores across the country including six in Orange County. Customers can try the bikes at every one of these locations and rent them before choosing to invest in one of the 18 different models available in different sizes and colors, along with accessories. "I encourage people to try one before they buy one. There's no reason for anybody to make an investment in a product like this without trying out the different models to find what's right for you," he says. Most importantly, there is service offered after sale, whether that's new tires or a tune-up and a five-year warranty on almost all products. The top market is California. Outside of the U.S., there are 14 stores in Canada and Pedego has operations in Mexico and Bermuda.

Where electric bikes were once simply considered a novelty and possibly convenience for those that could afford it, Pedego has made it affordable and accessible as a leisure and health brand. "Our customers themselves are promoters because they testify to us all the time about how they're getting healthy," says DiCostanzo, mentioning the active Facebook group that Pedego owners interact on, sharing details of their riding experiences. "When the business started, it was purely recreation. People just bought these bikes to go out and ride with their friends and have a good time, get some exercise, but now it's evolved. People are using it for transportation, to

the post office or run errands or even go to work. And that happened as a result of the pandemic."

He recounts one customer who purchased a Pedego bike because she was relegated to working at home. Another customer was able to stop medicating thanks to their fitness streak with their Pedego bike, and the feel-good stories go on. The physical and mental benefits of electric bike riding find DiCostanzo hearing words like freedom, recreation, and fun all the time from Pedego owners and renters alike. And the average age of the rider has extended to cyclists in their 90s as you don't have to be worried about hills or headlights, or enough stamina to get home. Its #1 selling bike model though is the Pedego Element, a fat tire electric bike that comes in six colors, caters to a wide variety of heights and appeals to a younger demographic.

Pedego is also a frontrunner in promoting diversity and inclusion in the outdoor recreation space. "We do everything to be inclusive. ... We're always conscious of it," DiCostanzo shares, with efforts simply ingrained in the company culture, considering the diverse audience the brand caters to, rather than a conscious effort to have to be involved in diversity efforts. "We're a member of PeopleForBikes and they've got a whole policy that we follow in how to do inclusion, so we follow the guidelines of the industry." That aside, some of the local organizations he supports include Free Wheelchair Mission and HomeAid. Pedego models catering to the disability community include the Stretch electric cargo bike, which is designed to have a passenger ride at the back, and the Tandem electric bicycle built for two.

Continuing its winning streak and planning for further expansion in the next few months, Pedego will be launching three new electric biked models in December at the annual dealer conference in San Diego that will be rolling out in 2022 and updating all existing 18 models available on the website and at dealers now. Where every industry has one ubiquitous brand, it's DiCostanzo's goal to be that one ubiquitous brand when people think of electric bikes. "And we're winning for two reasons," he says. "The first is we're very good at what we do and it's all we do. We don't do anything but electric bikes and accessories. And the second is everybody else just wants to sell electric bikes. But we're out to build a brand and community with our customers."



Jon and Molly Krick, owners of Pedego McDowell Mountain in Scottsdale, Arizona.

LOCAL NEWS ROUND-UP

NEW GUIDANCE ISSUED FOR THOSE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19, FACEMASKS AT SCHOOL, AND ASPHALT EXEMPTIONS IN IRVINE.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER



On Monday, August 30, the Orange County Health Care Agency reported 1,525 new COVID-19 cases, with 18 new COVID-19 related deaths.

While it should be noted that the county's August 30 COVID-19 totals include the weekend statistics, health officials continue to point to hospitalizations as an indicator of the virus' presence within the community.

As of August 30, the HCA COVID-19 dashboard listed 546 patients, with 139 needing treatment in intensive care. With only slight declines over the past week, O.C.'s current hospital and ICU capacity are higher than August 2020 numbers by more than 200 people.

Last summer, on August 30, there

were 317 people hospitalized and the ICU total was 98.

Still, a glimmer of hope may be on the horizon.

On August 24, HCA issued a statement backing the California Department of Health's updated recommendations for fully vaccinated individuals.

Within the key points of the revised recommendations, issued on August 23, CDPH confirmed that it is investigating the duration of protection the COVID-19 vaccines provide against the virus.

However, CDPH said that fully vaccinated individuals may "resume activities that they did prior to the pandemic."

Additionally, CDPH points to research that suggests vaccinated

individuals are less likely to develop asymptomatic cases, and are less likely to spread the virus.

While the key points include recommendations for face masks in public settings, the new guidance indicates that a fully vaccinated individual can skip quarantine in the event there is suspected or confirmed contact with COVID-19 – if the fully vaccinated individual is asymptomatic.

In an August 24 press release, Dr. Clayton Chau, HCA Director and County Health Officer, offered some optimism, adding that while hospitalizations continue to remain high – with only 21.8% of adult ICU beds available – he sees the summer wave slowing, with the county's daily case rates and hospitalization beginning to stabilize.

Chau also echoed the need for more people to get vaccinated.

"We are finally beginning to see a slight drop in our cases and hospitalizations, but until more people are vaccinated, prevention measures will continue to be necessary for everyone, regardless of your vaccination status," Chau said. "I want to re-emphasize the importance of wearing a mask indoors. Face masks are an extra precautionary measure that helps to reduce the spread of COVID-19. I encourage you to please wear a mask indoors, even in small groups. It not only protects you but also those around you who may be immunocompromised, at risk of severe disease, not fully vaccinated or not yet eligible for the vaccine."

In terms of vaccination totals in Orange County, HCA reports that as of August 23, there are 1,989,131 individuals fully vaccinated on all platforms, and more than 2 million with at least one dose.

O.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION'S FACE MASK CHALLENGE REJECTED

On Wednesday, August 18, the California Supreme Court denied the Orange County Board of Education's petition to challenge California Gov. Gavin Newsom's mandate to require face masks at school.

The ruling came just days after the Costa Mesa-based board brought forth the petition to the state Supreme Court. In OCBE's petition, the board called Newsom's mandate regarding face masks unsound, and lacking "scientific basis."

In a statement provided by Newsom to *Irvine Weekly*, the governor emphasized the need to get children back into the classroom as quickly and safely as possible.

"Our goal has been to get kids back in school for full in-person instruction safely, period. By relying on safety strategies as recommended by the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics, including universal masking, we've seen promising results – the Supreme Court rejecting this effort to stand in the way further reaffirms the state's strategy," Daniel Lopez, Newsom's Press Secretary, wrote in an email to *Irvine Weekly*. "We are committed to working with school districts, other local governments, and other state officials to ensure schools implement this require-



PHOTO BY KELLY SIKKEMA ON UNSPLASH

ment to keep children and staff safe.”

In past conversations, Second District Supervisor Katrina Foley, who oversees Costa Mesa, said that the lawsuit was political theater that should be ignored. During a press conference on August 11, Foley said the board is entitled to file whatever petitions it deems necessary, but cast doubt on the board’s ability to move the lawsuit forward in the courts.

“The great news is that the superintendent of the Orange County Department of Education, Dr. Al Mijares, is not challenging the rule and he understands that masks are the best defense for our young residents, especially against the variant,” Foley said. “I doubt that this lawsuit will go anywhere – the Superior Court is requiring masks.”

In a statement to *Irvine Weekly*, Attorney Robert Tyler, Tyler & Bursch, LLP, argued that Gov. Newsom’s orders are politically motivated.

“It’s always a long shot when asking the California Supreme Court to take original jurisdiction. But we thought this was one they would take based on Governor Newsom’s own statements. How can the governor argue there is no emergency in one case,

and still retain emergency authority over our state?” Tyler’s statement read. “It is hypocritical and appears politically motivated. It goes to show that once a politician gains this kind of authority, it’s going to take a significant effort to pry the emergency authority out of his grip. However, the court’s denial does not deter us from moving forward in the lower courts and we will decide our next step over the next couple days.”

In Irvine, students of the Irvine Unified School District kicked off the 2021-22 academic year on Thursday, August 19. Per state orders, all students are required to wear masks indoors.

ASPHALT ODORS IN IRVINE

For Irvine residents living near the All American Asphalt facility on Jeffrey Road, the facility’s crumb rubber system has long been suspected as the source of the foul odor that wafts through the neighborhoods of Orchard Hills on a consistent basis.

While it is unknown if the crumb rubber system, which is part of multiple sections of equipment that include an oil-burning mechanism and air

pollution control devices, is the official odor-causing culprit, the project itself received a “Notice of Exemption” from the South Coast Air Quality Management District on Friday, August 27, which stated that it posed no threat to the environment.

Within the single-page Notice of Exemption, AQMD summarized the following findings regarding the crumb rubber system’s impact on the environment:

“The South Coast AQMD has reviewed the Proposed Project pursuant to: 1) CEQA Guidelines Section 15002(k) – General Concepts, the three-step process for deciding which document to prepare for a project subject to CEQA; and 2) CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 – Review for Exemption, procedures for determining if a project is exempt from CEQA. Since it can be seen with certainty that the Proposed Project has no potential to have a significant adverse effect on the environment and since the Proposed Project involves negligible or no expansion of use, the South Coast AQMD has determined that the Proposed Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) – Common Sense Exemption and 15301 – Existing Facilities. In

addition, no unusual circumstances would occur that would create significant effects and none of the exceptions to the Class 1 categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 – Exceptions apply to the Proposed Project.”

On Wednesday, August 25, Mayor Khan posted recently released emissions data from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) on her Facebook page. Now, the City Council is set to discuss the findings, along with a presentation from AQMD and UC Irvine, on Tuesday, Sept. 14.

The data indicate no “elevated levels of air toxins detected,” but also state “air toxic monitoring levels below long term health-based thresholds,” according to the fact-sheet.

Jun Wu, a professor at UC Irvine, said that using low-cost sensors to measure potentially hazardous volatile organic compounds did not accurately “correlate to actual concentrations,” adding that low-cost sensors should not be used to make any health risk estimates or source characterization.

“Basically, the correlation between the sensor-based VOC vs. the reference instrument was poor and the sensor over-estimated the VOC concentrations. Thus, I do not think it is a good idea to use the sensor data to make any health risk estimates or source characterization,” Wu wrote in an email to *Irvine Weekly* on Thursday, August 26. “The sensor data did show spatial and temporal variations in the community and over time, but given it is a poor correlation with the reference instrument, it is hard to tell what these variations mean.”

While the most recent AQMD emissions report indicates that no elevated levels of air toxins were detected, Councilmember Larry Agran is choosing to side with what the residents say they are experiencing. Furthermore, Agran says he has looked at the data himself and said there are “alarming” findings that need to be investigated.

“I know the general suggestions seems to be that AQMD, city of Irvine, consultants – they haven’t found anything of concern – well, that’s not true,” he said. “There are many alarming aspects of the data – and even more important than that is what the residents are experiencing in terms of adverse health effects. We’ll see if these distinctions are made at the time of the presentation.”

NEWS

UC IRVINE PROFESSOR CONTRIBUTES TO 2021 CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

Michael Prather, Professor of Earth System Sciences at UC Irvine, was highlighted as a contributor in the most recent climate change report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on August 9.

Prather provided some insight in terms of what the 2021 Climate Change Report concludes, how it impacts Irvine, and what can be expected from the report's dire predictions for global ecosystems.

As part of the United Nations, the IPCC is the world's leading authority on climate change assessment, and has been researching climate change since 1988.

While the IPCC's 2021 Sixth Assessment Report is a report analyzing global climate systems, Prather, who worked as a review editor on the 2021 IPCC report, explained that this year's report did not necessarily provide climate experts

with new information. Rather, Prather explained that the report underscored the message that climate experts have been echoing for decades.

Based on the data, the latest IPCC report has confirmed that due to mankind's inability to reduce the levels of greenhouse gas emissions – mainly Co2 and Methane – in the atmosphere, the Earth's temperature will increase by more than 2° Celsius, further jeopardizing ecosystems around the globe.

"Methane is responsible, to date maybe, for a quarter of the climate change," Prather theorized during a phone call with *Irvine Weekly*. "Co2 is interesting, because Co2, most of it is fossil fuel. There's some from cement and land use. For Methane, there's so many things – we have leakage of Methane from natural gas, we have fossil fuel exploration – which is responsible for a



Silverado Fire

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

quarter of the Methane."

Crossing this single-digit threshold might seem insignificant, but according to Prather, there is no technology available that will help us correct this climate crisis, and there probably never will be. As environmental alarms sound, more populations will be forced to adapt to these environmental impacts at a rate never seen before.

"One item? No," he said. "It's people developing habits and patterns – generally more carbon neutral. One of the simplest ones that's had a great fight in the US is eating less red meat. If you look at the amount of kilogram to Co2 per kilogram of food, rice, chicken and eggs, like 1 kilogram, pork you get to about 3 or 4 (kilograms of Co2 per kilogram of food) – cattle is like 10 – just eating less red meat would make a significant difference in the US."

Prather, who has worked at UC Irvine since 1992, where he served as Director of the UCI Environment Institute between 2008 and 2013, pointed out that he was not an author on this year's report, but provided contribution as a review editor.

During his review, Prather says he was impressed by the level of detail available through this research, which allows experts to fill in the data gaps from the last seven years. However, looking back, Prather said it was a clear indication that the Earth's temperature seems to be increasing by a tenth of a degree – every 10 years.

"Probably the most interesting thing this year is the level of detail on documentation on the systems that have been changing because we've had more time to observe them, because we

have more statistics on them," he said. "As a review editor this time, more and more details about regional small scale things happening, being reviewed, as to where the damage is occurring, how frequently – not just damage but things are changing."

Prather also praised the IPCC's Interactive Atlas, which he said gives users the ability to see projections in trends, based on patterns paired with numerous models.

"It is quite something," Prather said, adding that the five-minute operational tutorial is worth a watch. "What's the projections of rain, likelihood of floods different models give. What's more important is that the models are getting much better and our ability to go from global models down to regional impact – the science has gotten much better. Between higher resolution models, and between better ways of scaling from a model, might have only 100 kilometers, to something that might have a smaller impact."

As environmental indicators, more frequent and prolonged flooding, droughts and wildfire are sounding the alarm globally, in an effort to combat climate change, the city of Irvine recently announced an initiative to transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2030.

"I'm proud of my city for having done that – that's great. In that sense, it takes a village to raise a child. Everybody has to start doing something, and if nobody does, it's not going to happen. If Irvine is the only city that does this it won't make any difference on the climate," Prather said. "But, if Irvine does it, then other people pay attention."



Silverado Fire

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

ORANGE COUNTY'S OLDEST PIZZERIA

SGT. PEPPERONI'S OPENS NEW STOREFRONT IN IRVINE, SHARES ITS RECIPE FOR LONGEVITY.

BY EVAN J. LANCASTER

For pizza fanatics in Orange County, the original Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza, located on Bristol Street in Newport Beach, has been an iconic fixture of O.C.'s food landscape since 1976.

Now, with a new storefront in Irvine, the family-owned pizza joint still operates three locations more than 40 years after the original opened, giving Sgt. Pepperoni's the title of O.C.'s longest-standing pizzeria.

Stan Frazier, current partner and co-owner of Sgt. Pepperoni Pizza and a native to Newport Beach, frequented the original location growing up.

In an interview with *Irvine Weekly*, Frazier shared some insight on how he became a part of Sgt. Pepperoni's newest ownership group, and what the secret ingredient to the chain's successful recipe for longevity in Orange County might be.

"By the time I was 10 or 12 years old, that was the most popular pizzeria in Newport Beach and Orange County – for at least where we lived and our friends and family," Frazier explained. "My parents would go there to watch the games, my brother and I would play pinball, go to the arcade, the food was outstanding – everybody loved Sgt. Pepperoni's."

In the early days, Sgt. Pepperoni's served a Sicilian-style pizza with a thick crust, but that has changed over the years, according to Frazier, who adds that a few local pizzerias have come and gone over the years, but none have existed longer than the Sgt. Pepperoni's name.

"There have been a couple of pizzerias that started maybe earlier. One of them called Me and Ed's on 17th Street – I think that started in the early '70s," Frazier said. "Obviously, we're not the original owners, but when Me and Ed's closed – we opened in 1976. There's

not an older pizzeria in Orange County that's still open."

Prior to his role within Sgt. Pepperoni's ownership, Frazier was the drummer of the band Sugar Ray for nearly two decades, before debuting his culinary talents during a Jamie Oliver reality cooking show on BBC America – through which he won the top prize of \$100,000 in 2012.

Frazier admits his celebrity status as a musician would always become a talking point, but says winning the cooking competition helped catapult him into restaurant ownership. In 2013, Frazier was approached by a few acquaintances who had the idea to acquire Sgt. Pepperoni's from the then-owners.

"It was one of the greatest experiences of my life and it really led me to Sgt. Pepp's," he said. "After winning the competition, I was already thinking about it – I wanted to open a pizzeria. I had never opened a restaurant before, so having three other people approach me and say, 'we want you to be our partner' was much more palatable for me."

Today, pizza and community are at the crux of the mission behind the counter at Sgt. Pepperoni's. Frazier, who can still remember the feel of Sgt. Pepperoni's Sicilian-style pie from the days of his childhood visits, said the menu has seen a transformation as ownership ebbed and flowed over the years. Although the pizza is no longer Sicilian, what Frazier hopes remains the same is the dedication to perfecting the pizza experience through fresh ingredients and consistency.

"The pizza we have now is 100% different than what I had when I was 10 going there. I think, back in the day, it was being made fresh every day, and I think they put a lot of care into the quality of the ingredients. Over time, food costs get expensive and people cut back on quality," he said. "So, when we took over, one of our main things was, let's have the best-tasting pizza we can have. Let's spend the money on the ingredients, so we can have a quality experience."

Since 2013, Frazier and his partners have worked to reinvest in the Sgt. Pepperoni's brand, and built a sense of community through good food and family involvement. From his perspective, Frazier credits the community at large for the continued success of Sgt. Pepperoni's over the years.

To help give back, each September, Sgt. Pepperoni's puts major emphasis on participating with local hos-



PHOTO BY MATHEW MARTINEZ

pitals for Child Cancer Awareness Month, by donating all proceeds for the month to Children Hospital of Orange County.

Since 2019, Sgt. Pepperoni's has donated more than \$20,000, through proceeds from profits generated by the sales of pizza and homemade desserts.

"It's a formula – the families, and the schools, the communities and the charitable organizations we all can get along and provide in giving back to the community through peace, love and pizza – that's our mantra," Frazier said.

As O.C.'s oldest pizzeria opens its newest location in Irvine, Sgt. Pepperoni's is also breaking ground in areas no other pizza place has ventured – streaming on Twitch.

In fact, Sgt. Pepperoni's Irvine location could become the first pizzeria on the streaming network, which Frazier was able to acquire through a connection in the music industry.

"They reached out to have a livestream in a record studio, but it wasn't really working to any of our satisfaction because we're trying to work and make music," he said. "I told Andy Hong, my partner at Sgt. Pepp's, that we've got this partnership with Twitch – and so Andy was transitioning to bring it to the pizzeria, so we could be the first pizzeria on Twitch. I think he's trying to bring it back to Irvine – we actually have a dedicated camera over the pizza-making line, so it's dedicated to people making pizza for 10-hours a day."

While the project has been interrupted by COVID-19, Frazier says it's a work in progress, adding that he was excited about the opportunity.

Sgt. Pepperoni's Pizza is located at 4533 Campus Dr., Irvine.



PHOTO BY MATHEW MARTINEZ

ART

ALL MEDIA 2021

WORK RANGING FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE CHALLENGING, FROM REALISM TO ABSTRACTION AT THE IRVINE FINE ARTS CENTER.

BY LIZ GOLDNER

"ALL MEDIA 2021" at the Irvine Fine Arts Center, comprised of 58 art pieces by Southern California artists, presents artworks in a range of styles and techniques. Yet these pieces, created primarily in 2020 and 2021, reflect the panoply of styles and moods of SoCal contemporary art during our new millennia. They range from the sublime to the challenging, from realism to figurative, to cubist-inspired, to abstract and Light and Space, among other styles and genres. Media includes painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, printmaking, ceramics, quilting, video and installation.

Curator Taylor Bythewood-Porter has created a fresh and vibrant display of disparate works, enticing viewers to gaze for long periods at individual pieces and at the installations. As assistant curator at the California African American Museum, she holds a Master of Arts degree from Claremont Graduate University.

One of the most outstanding paintings in the show is Alexander Arshansky's painting "Justice." Created in a style known as "biomorphic cubism," the Russian-born artist combines abstract with organic or living forms, resulting in portraits containing layers linked through symbolism, intricate patterns and bright primary colors. The curator explains that this and other pieces in the "Just-Us" category echo today's social justice movements. The fractured cubist aspects of Arshansky's painting reflect the divisive characteristics of the world today.

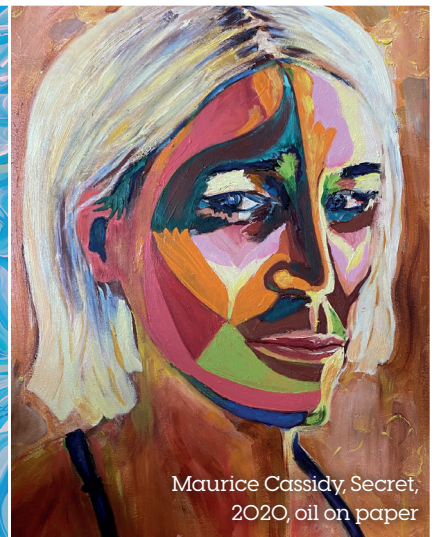
Maurice Cassidy's "Secret," hung next to "Justice," is a cubist-influenced portrait, painted in bright fauve colors. The artist explains: "I met Secret while she was still Keven, and when she killed herself last year I was furious at her for doing so. As I painted her, she reminded me of all the

good times we shared; she whispered to me; 'you can't possibly stay mad at me.' She still makes me laugh." "Secret" is in the "Cravings" category, which Bythewood-Porter says contains "an exploratory focus on obsession-based compulsion, addiction, and the desire of basic human needs." "Number One in LA" by Hedy Torres, also in this category, shows a homeless person sleeping on a bench, covered with a flag. The artist explains, "My work primarily addresses the lack of people representation in this country – my most recent art pieces question who is more susceptible to be homeless in America."

In a rear gallery, six artworks under the category, "Line and Space," are described by the curator as "taking on the feeling of ethereality, the integration of psychology, and exploration of material." These include Eric Moore's "7.2021," a gray and white circular art piece, made of acrylic paint, resin and clear coat on aluminum panel, inspired by the California Light and Space movement of the 1960s and '70s. Nearby, Steffani Bailey's "Rock apart, leaves fall" in oil on wood is an abstract assemblage construction in autumn colors, perhaps referencing



Alexander Arshansky, Justice, 2019, acrylics on canvas



Maurice Cassidy, Secret, 2020, oil on paper

the fall season. Also in this gallery, "Late Bloomer" by Irvine based Mark Leysen, an example of the artist's well-known abstract expressionist style, reveals color and rhythm, along with geometric forms providing balance and harmony.

The "To The Ends of the Earth" category in this show addresses humanity's relationship with the environment, and contains primarily abstract pieces created in a variety of media. Ted Rigoni's "Sojourn," painted in very dark pigment, foretells of a world flung into darkness. Stephanie Leonard's oil, "State of Matter, Flight" suggests a proliferation of smoke filling the sky. And in the category, "Blurred Boundaries," the photo, "Street Life, Tlaxcala, Mexico" by James Kuo depicts an extended homeless family living in an alley.

The "Homelike" category, generating "conversations about our connections to the home, efforts toward feeling protected," as the curator explains, contains eight pieces addressing sentimental yearnings for home. Julia Alexander-Bates' acrylic "Palms, Vines, and Pink

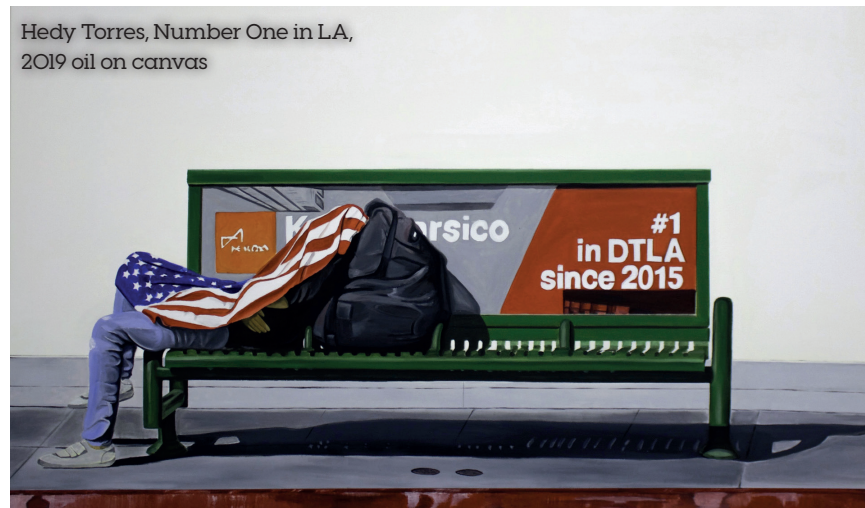
Straws" is a large bucolic landscape of a garden. Lua Kobayashi's "Who's There" is a photo of a dimly lit, yet welcoming room. The nearby "We Always See With Memory" category, expressing "a semblance of memory through hazy or deconstructed imagery," includes Anna Carey's "Green Lantern Chateau," a photo of an abandoned inn set in a large field.

Much of the work in this stunning exhibition by emerging to established artists, incorporating many styles and media, reflect our world since the lockdown. As the pieces are so powerful, these artists' messages will continue to reverberate as we evolve into a new state of health.

Other artists participating in this exhibition are Elizabeth Abaravich, Valentina Aprodá, Nurit Avesar, Renee Azenaro, Gretchen Batcheller, Aurora Bewicke, Arezoo Bharthania, Allegra Bick-Maurischat, Raymond Bonavida, Becky Brinkley, Micki Brown, Carolina Brunet, Michael Chesler, Ashoke Chhabra, Helen Cox, Cindy Craig, Beth Davila Waldman, Mika Denny, Carlos Diaz, Luz Mariel Donahue, Pam Douglas, Margaret Jo Feldman, Paul Gardner, Cyrus Ghalambor, Sofia Gonzalez, Bria Goodall, Carolyn Harper, Randi Hokett, Francesca Hummler, Bahar Jalehmahmoudi, Rachel Leising Soo, Michele Little, John Lorenz, Shahin Massoudi, Deborah McAfee, Brenda Munguia, May Roded, Ziba Safavian, Lori Stanford, Amanda St. Claire, Chris Stoltz, Stephen Thornhill, Christa Toole, Linda Wald, Sydney Walters and Jerry Weems.

"All Media 2021" is on view through September 19 at Irvine Fine Arts Center; Mon.-Thu., 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Fri., 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. www.cityofirvine.org/irvine-fine-arts-center/current-exhibitions.

Hedy Torres, Number One in LA, 2019 oil on canvas



SEPTEMBER CONCERT GUIDE

**FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE
AND IRVINE BARCLAY THEATRE
HOST A WIDE ARRAY OF
PERFORMANCES.**

BY PAUL ROGERS

The continued and very welcome return of live music continues in September, when Irvine is truly spoiled for major shows. But with COVID conditions still changing almost daily, be sure to check the status of any of the events listed below, as well as safety guidelines for concert-goers, before setting out.

KISS AT FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE

Thu. 9/9

When it comes to premature rock 'n roll partings, KISS is rivaled only by Scorpions (whose 2010 farewell tour has essentially never ended) and Ozzy Osbourne (who cheekily titled his ongoing trek "No More Tours II," after the 1992 original proved three decades hasty). While KISS's 2000-01 farewell tour was later craftily rebranded as only a goodbye to drummer Peter Criss (who in fact left midway through) and guitarist Ace Frehley, the foursome's current End of the Road World Tour might just be literally that. Accompanied by the epic career retrospective, *KISSstory*, which premiered on A&E earlier this summer, these performances appear to

be the final, if extended, bows – including a recently-announced Las Vegas residency – of a storied 50-year career. If you've read this far, you already know what to expect: a pyrotechnic orgy visible from space framing a string of bubblegum-pop classics draped in cartoonish heavy metal clothing.

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND AT FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE

Fri. 9/10 & Sat. 9/11

The very mention of the Dave Matthews Band conjures images of khaki shorts, parking-lot hacky sack, and carefree, cannabis-enhanced college days for legions of its now middle-aged fans. Deftly bringing just enough hook and structure to the jam band genre, the South African singer-songwriter and his famously virtuoso bandmates burst from campuses to stadiums seemingly overnight with their first couple of mid-1990s major-label albums (1994's *Under the Table and Dreaming*, and '96's *Crash*). Yet while largely a nostalgia act today, DMB's reputation-making live shows – which also embrace jazz, funk, and world music – remain strictly in the here-and-now thanks to a lingering,



CREDIT JIMMY FONTAINE

proudly jammy ethos that never treats a song the same way twice. Whatever your feelings about DMB's strummy and perhaps overly-sincere anthems, this improvisational ability is especially refreshing in an era of programmed music, backing tracks, and Auto-Tune (which, yes, can even be used in real-time, on stage).

KORN AT FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE

Sun. 9/12

From a distance, Bakersfield's Korn will be forever associated with the knuckle-draggin' nu-metal genre of the late

1990s. But while the quintet was indeed at the forefront of marrying rap, hard rock, and darkly confessional/confrontational lyrics, they've ensured their longevity by repeatedly probing outside their own template. Over the course of 13 studio albums, they've dabbled with melody (2002's Grammy-winning *Untouchables*) and electronica (2011's *The Path of Totality*), while periodically circling back to their rep-making ultra-dynamic, tortured and defiant bombast. While there have certainly been missteps (notably 2007's untitled effort), it's Korn's willingness to take commercial risks that's earned them respect far

Dave Matthews Band



MUSIC

10 | SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 | IRVINEWEEKLY.COM

transcending their core fanbase. Even listeners who lost track of them years ago likely recall first hearing Jonathan Davis' seething "Are you ready?" opening line on Korn's 1994 debut, which ushered in not only a significant new band, but also a sonic revolution still audible in today's hard rock.

THE GATLIN BROTHERS AT IRVINE BARCLAY THEATRE

Sun. 9/19

Between releases as Larry Gatlin and, later, as Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers, these genuine country music siblings racked up an incredible 33 Top 40 singles during the slick "country-politan" era of the 1970s and '80s. Larry's first Nashville gig was singing backup for Kris Kristofferson, and two of his earlier songs were even covered by Elvis Presley. Completed by Steve and Rudy, today's Gatlin Brothers have a vast, if rather distant, gospel-infused back catalogue to draw upon, including Grammy-winning 1975 single "Broken Lady"; their first country number one, "All the Gold in California"; and their last, "Houston (Means I'm One Day Closer to You)". With intuitively close family harmonies honed in Texas oil-country churches, the Gatlin Brothers were well suited to the syrupy, shamelessly mainstream production of their heyday, and are one of the best living examples of country music's most vilified, and hence oft-overlooked, sub-genres.

JAKE SHIMABUKURO AT IRVINE BARCLAY THEATRE

Thu. 9/23

Hawaii's Jake Shimabukuro has been at the forefront of a recent revival in

respect for the ukulele. Long an instrument found gathering dust in children's playrooms and thrift stores, the renewed interest in the ukulele emanated from Hawaii, where it has a long history, in large part propelled by the late Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. Shimabukuro picked up the torch as an international ukulele ambassador somewhat inadvertently, when a video of his stunning rendition of George Harrison's "When My Guitar Gently Weeps," posted without his knowledge, became one of YouTube's first viral sensations in 2006 (and currently boasts more than 17 million views). Now known as "the Jimi Hendrix of the ukulele," he's repeatedly hit the upper reaches of *Billboard's* Top World Music Albums chart, and tours frequently both here and in Japan, as well as collaborating with everyone from Jimmy Buffett and Ziggy Marley, to Yo-Yo Ma and Cyndi Lauper.

PITBULL AT FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE

Fri. 9/24

Having built a head of critical and commercial steam as a reggae-ton, crunk, and Latin hip-hop artist throughout the aughts, Miami's Pitbull took it to the bank with his first overtly pop album, *Planet Pit*, in 2011. That collection earned him a U.S. number one single ("Give Me Everything"), but it was follow-up *Global Warming* that justified his "Mr. Worldwide" nickname, with lead single "Timber" topping charts in some 18 countries. Suave and shaven-headed, the bilingual Pitbull straddles genres and cultures with ease. His melting-pot approach has at various times embraced Southern-fla-



vored party-rap, dancehall, West Coast G-funk, and radio-ready pop-rap, with cross-pollinating collaborations with everyone from Ne-Yo and Natti Natasha to Lil Jon and JLo furthering broadening his fanbase. All this, harnessed to ferocious ambition, has forged a 25-million-album career and a one-man empire of product endorsements, business enterprises, and social activism rooted in the Latino community of his hometown.

JASON ALDEAN AT FIVEPOINT AMPHITHEATRE

Sat. 9/25

Outside of country music, Jason Aldean may be best known for having the misfortune to be on stage when a gunman murdered 58 people during a 2017 Las Vegas music festival. But within the

genre, he's been a high-flyin' fixture for over 15 years, with a string of platinum and multi-platinum albums. Unabashedly bro-country, yet not overly hokey, Aldean can equally crank out feel-good rockers ("Crazy Town," "She's Country") and heart-hurt ballads ("Drowns the Whiskey," "Tonight Looks Good on You"), typically littered with lyrical references to rural locations and lifestyles. Seldom seen without a cowboy hat, he epitomizes the solid-but-sensitive male modern-country role model. With a knack for choosing songs (mostly from outside writers) that broadly resonate, and delivering them with a vulnerability that never quite abandons masculine pride, Aldean doesn't appear to be going anywhere – except maybe down a dirt road in a lifted truck – anytime soon.

ENTERTAINMENT

IRVINEWEEKLY.COM | SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 | 12

JENNIFER COOLIDGE SHOWS NEW LAYERS IN LATEST FILM AND TV ROLES

BY LINA LECARO

A comedic force the past couple of decades, Jennifer Coolidge has arguably reached legend status in the last couple of years, fleshing out and stretching her acting aptitude with last year's *Promising Young Woman* and this year's *Swan Song* (with Udo Kier), not to mention HBO's hot new drama *The White Lotus*. The latter should earn her some awards if there is any justice in this world.

The busy character actress has been popping up on TV and in films forever, and stealing every scene she's in. Her parts in Christopher Guest's slate of mockumentaries including *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind* and *For Your Consideration* remain notable and quotable to this day. And then there's the two beloved babes that fans stop her on the street for: Paulette, the kind-hearted manicurist and bestie to Reese Witherspoon in the *Legally Blonde* franchise and the lady who made MILFs a thing, aka "Stifler's mom" in the *American Pie* films.

Coolidge's gift for playing colorful, often unintentionally funny ladies is a given at this point, but we always won-

dered if she identified with them or if she was anything like them in real life.

"I remember having that audition for *American Pie* and I remember it so clearly because I remember thinking the audition was too easy," Coolidge tells *Irvine Weekly* by phone from her home in New Orleans. "They needed someone who was attracted to young men, and I was like well I'm attracted to young men... A lot of my life I felt like Paulette [from *Legally Blonde*] too. They are different parts of me. I can be very amorous, and like someone who does well in that department, and then I'm the other extreme to where I'm very insecure and I take a lot from people. So I project way too vulnerable sometimes for the modern world. I need to be more like Stifler's mom probably more often than Paulette, but if you told me beforehand I would get both roles I wouldn't have believed you. You know sometimes you go and see a director and just pray to god that you're in sync with the character because it's so much easier if the feelings match."

With a deadpan delivery and bodacious style that's all her own, it's hard



Coolidge in *Swan Song* (Magnolia Pictures)

to imagine anyone else in the above-mentioned roles, so much so that even Ariana Grande has been doing impressions of her on late-night TV. Her cadence is the same in real life (for a lot of comic actors it isn't) and she's as charming on a phone chat as she is on screen; extremely present in conversation, taking pauses to really think about the questions posed. As with the characters she plays, her answers are honest and a little bit droll. Coolidge is complex and her comical take on other complex characters (and simple ones) is something to behold, especially lately.

In a heart-wrenching *White Lotus* scene, her character Tanya – a self-professed "alcoholic lunatic" – talks about the "layers" of personality and how

many of us fear that letting someone see beneath them to the real "us" (or to "the core of onion," as she calls it), can be terrifying. It's a poignant and awkward scene, and in a series about white privilege at a posh Hawaiian resort, *Lotus* is filled with many of them. Coolidge stands out though, especially during a gloriously cringe-y boat scene in which Tanya attempts to scatter her verbally abusive mother's ashes at sea. Reportedly the actress got sea-sick during filming and used the discomfort to inform her performance. It really worked.

But there are always contrasting facets to Coolidge's portrayals and she says her improvisational background with *The Groundlings* laid the foundation. "In a nutshell, it made the biggest difference for my career than anything else, or any sort of schooling," she asserts. "I was sort of uptight and it got rid of a lot of that, performing all the time over there. And like 95% of my best friends are from the Groundlings. Everybody in my group got famous too."

She runs through the alum list from her time working with the New York and Los Angeles chapters and it is impressive: Kathy Griffin, Lisa Kudrow, Will Farrell, Melissa McCarthy, Chris Kattan, Cheri Oteri, Ana Gasteyer, Will Forte and more. "The list just goes on and on," she exalts. "All these incredible people were there."

No surprise many Groundlings alums went on to join the cast of *Saturday Night Live* and eventually hit the big screen. After Coolidge did a couple of low-budget comedies, her first big



Promising Young Woman (Focus Features)

ENTERTAINMENT

Legally Blonde
(MGM)



movie was alongside Farrell and Katttan in *Night at the Roxbury*, and other classics with friends followed including *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me*, *Pootie Tang* and *Zoolander*. Her first TV gig was as a masseuse who dated Jerry on *Seinfeld*, and her last big TV role, on *Two Broke Girls*, was equally memorable.

Even when she's playing "dumb blondes," they are never one-dimensional. Much like Catherine O'Hara whom she worked with on Guest's improvisational classics, the actress can embody a variety of big female personalities, infusing naivete and/or sass when called for, and a satiric energy that's become her signature.

In *Swan Song*, for example, she plays it straight, as Dee Dee Dale, a woman who betrays her hairstylist mentor Mr. Pat (Kier) after she takes his biggest client and opens a salon across the street from his. The Todd Stephens indie has plenty of feel-good moments, but it's not a comedy, and Coolidge is actually kind of the villain.

"The last year and a half was super weird because I started being offered things I wasn't normally being offered, ever," she answers. "And I like the new things that are coming up because you know, it's a nice change. *Promising Young Woman* was filmed a few months before *Swan Song*. Then COVID delayed everything, so those two parts came kind of together."

"Sometimes I'll get calls and guys deliver scripts to my doorstep," she continues on the topic of type-casting. "I always felt like I knew what they were gonna be, especially the ones that sounded like jobs I've already done or similar parts. But you know *Promising Young Woman* started all this and then *Swan Song* and

then *The White Lotus*. It's a very different bunch of films and it's almost like each director got together and said let's do something different for her... like they were all in cahoots, each one offering something new."

Coolidge plays a very different kind of mom in *Promising*, but she meets her match in *Swan Song*, playing opposite Kier, an equally busy character actor. "Yeah I mean when I first heard about the role I called Todd and was like, 'Are you sure you want me in this?' You know I said I might be missing something here, and she's pretty rough around the edges," she recalls, adding that the opportunity to work with Kier added to the appeal. "I've never met anyone like him. He has such a presence in the movie but you know, it's kind of a legend playing a legend. The thing I learn as I get older is that there aren't that many people like that, so it's a true treat to be on a job with someone so unusual and unique and funny. You know, there are so many possibilities for him now and I think incredible things are gonna happen to him and it's because of his presence in this film."

The same could be said for Coolidge at this moment. Her latest roles have been widely praised to the extent that she can surely be picky about what's next. In addition to her film work, she continues to lend her recognizable voice to animated TV shows such as *King of the Hill* and *Rick and Morty* – something that can ingrain an actor like herself into pop culture, and probably already has.

In many ways, Coolidge is like a cartoon character herself, though the way her roles are drawn keeps changing. Whatever she tackles next, count on lots of colors, some laughs and yes, lots of layers.

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SURFING NEW DOCUSERIES

REVIEWS OF 'THIS IS POP,' 'BEHIND THE ATTRACTION' AND '100 FOOT WAVE'

BY ERIN MAXWELL



Turning away from the daring dramas and dark comedies that litter streaming services at every turn these days, docuseries give audiences the chance to take in-depth looks into specific subjects that only experts dare tread. But will these probes appeal to everybody? Here we take a look at the latest episodic docs, filled with whopping waves, music history, and imagineer-y amusements.

100 Foot Wave (HBO Max)

For decades, professional surfer and big wave enthusiast Garrett McNamara has been hunting giant waves that push the boundaries of the sport. His ferocious need for bigger and better rides dictates his life, and eventually takes him to Nazare, a small sleepy town in Portugal with the largest, most foreboding waves any surfer ever dared to conquer.

HBO Max's series *100 Foot Wave* is both an appreciation for the sport of extreme surfing and the story of a man bewitched by these sirens of the sea. In terms of obsession, McNamara is a modern-day Ahab with dedication and drive enough to study his prey before he paddles out.

For people familiar with the sport, the series is a wild ride. But for those watching from the shore (or from

home) without much knowledge of surfing, the sea of information is easy to drown in. The beauty might be worth it, though. The series follows those who are obsessed by these big waves, surfers who follow Icarus' example, each day flying a little closer to the sun. With every success, there is acclaim by the community and records to be shattered, but if a mistake is made, everything can be lost. The stakes are high, and it is both maddening and captivating to watch.

The cinematography which is absolutely key to convey the true peril of McNamara's attempts – is great too. It shows not just the sheer size of the behemoth water monsters these mortals are attempting to ride, but the rocky terrain which can easily result in instant death for the inexperienced.

100 Foot Wave is not just about extreme sportsmanship, infatuated surfers, or the waves they love to ride. It's a message about the dangers and thrills of life itself, which like a wave, can overpower and engulf a person if they are not careful. As McNamara himself said: "If you can live life like you are riding the 100-foot wave all day, every day... you are gonna have really amazing days."

HBO Max just announced it's renewed *100 Foot Wave* and will feature a new slate of surfers along with McNamaras in Nazaré in the second season.

Behind The Attraction (Disney+)

Disney fanatics are a special breed of fandom. Not happy with just watching movies and collecting knick-knacks, these Mouse House aficionados want to immerse themselves in their obsessions. And there's no better way to do it than at Disney theme parks, which boast a rich history and a heaping helping of nostalgia.

Disney+'s *Behind The Attraction* docuseries capitalizes on the "need to know" mentality of those whose thoughts and lives are dominated by Disney. A historical romp through Disney's greatest theme park attractions, it's filled with fun facts that Disneyphiles desire. But sadly, that doesn't make it good.

On the surface, the show is everything that any Disney fan would want: a peek behind the curtain of attractions like *The Haunted Mansion* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and everything that makes the "Happiest Place on Earth" the happiest place on Earth. But after settling down into the series, the warm thoughts begin to fade as the misguided efforts of the production protrude.

The narration of the series flounders from pandering to problematic. The attempt to make the show more personable creates an annoying presence that distracts from the subject and mixed with disjointed editing, creates an irksome tone that's difficult to ignore. It brings down the quality of the production while belittling the significance of the history.

Behind The Attraction was made with the best of the intentions, filled with material any Disney devotee would sell their ears for. But the tedious voice-over talks down to its audience and the sloppy edits create confusion. It's best not to binge, and take in small doses, enduring the tone to savor the info. Or better yet, just read a book about Walt's world, instead.

This Is Pop (Netflix)

History isn't always what happens on a battlefield or an election booth; sometimes it happens on a dance floor, in a studio or at a music festival. As most audiophiles know, music can mark special moments and/or become the soundtrack of a struggle. Netflix's *This Is Pop* shows music's cultural impact by highlighting both.

From "Be-Ins" in San Francisco to the upbeat sounds that swarmed airwaves from Sweden to how the Monterey Pop Festival helped inspire Coachella to the use of autotune to "fix bad singers," *This Is Pop* is a mixtape of music-related subjects made to appeal to the masses.

Examining different facets of the music scene that had a hand in creating and crafting contemporary pop, the series acts as a Music 101 class for people who want to know more about their favorite tunes in a more general sense.

Though well constructed with a decent blend of talking heads and archival footage, *This is Pop* makes for an odd binge as there's no coherency between the episodes. The chapters are unrelated with vast chasms between subjects. This shouldn't deter you from watching, as it still boasts fascinating facts and history, but some episodes – like music itself – will appeal more than others.

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