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**ABOUT THE COVER:** In support of local businesses, *SLUG* illustrator **Sam Sherrill** scales spirited characters to the sizes of their hearts as they shop small, uplifting independent shops this holiday season. Little details celebrate the fine commercial fabric of SLC. Find more of Sherrill's work on Instagram @samsherrill.

## Austin Beck-Doss

### Contributor Limelight

#### Contributing Writer, Editorial Intern

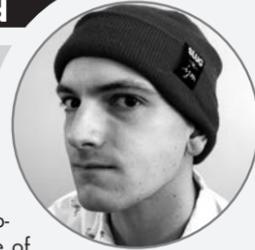


As a Contributing Writer, Copy Editor and Editorial Intern, Austin Beck-Doss shines at *SLUG* through his careful eye and substantive editorial intuition. As witty as it is incisive and profound, Beck-Doss' writing oozes a humanistic edge and finds creative, accessible ways to highlight the people at the heart of his stories. This month, check out his feature on **Pam Pendersen** of *Central Book Exchange* (pg. 36) and his entry on **Cut Worms' Nobody Lives Here Anymore** in our group list of the *Top Albums of 2020* (pg. 28). Whether behind the scenes or our front lines, *SLUG* is thrilled and honored to have Beck-Doss as a consistent and reliable force on our Editorial team.

## Mason McFarland

### Contributor Limelight

#### Contributing Videographer



Joining the *SLUG* team in 2019 as a Contributing Videographer, Mason McFarland has played an important part in documenting *SLUG*'s esteemed local events. "I think the thing I like about contributing to *SLUG* is being able to show off some of the more local artists and vendors," says McFarland. McFarland values shining light on local artists and creators through his videography, and in turn celebrating and promoting their work. Having shot for the semi-annual *Brewstillery* and *Boo!stillery* events, McFarland says, "My favorite is *Boo!stillery* because [of] Halloween and [the] alcohol." McFarland feels *SLUG* has grown into something truly special for local artists, and as we continue to grow, we are grateful to have someone like McFarland recording it all!

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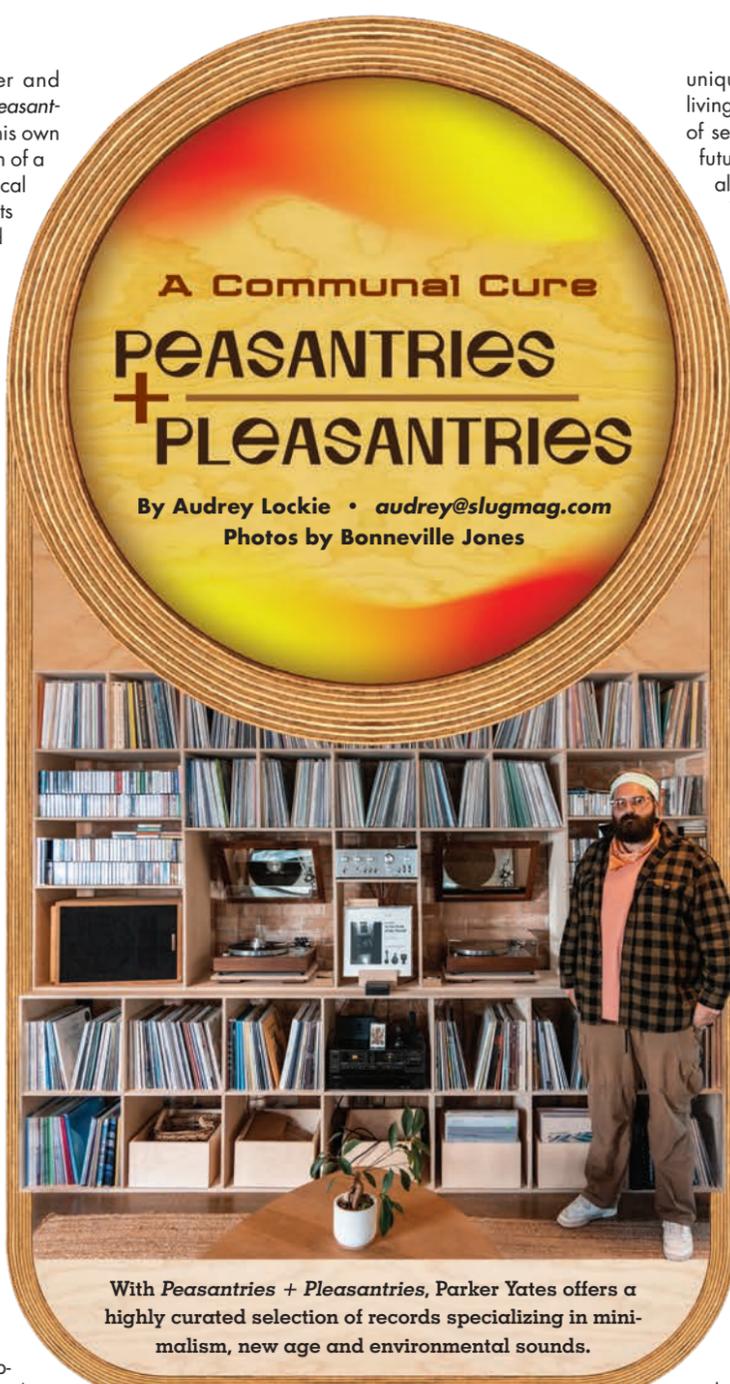


For **Parker Yates**, Founder and Owner of local record store *Peasantries + Pleasantry*, opening up his own shop was the logical culmination of a lifelong love for music and physical media. Growing up, his parents ran Bountiful's *Pegasus Records*, and his near-obsessive record collecting and a penchant for making mixtapes led Yates to expand his hobby into a business. "[I was] having to constantly sell my music collections over and over again," he says. "It got the point where, like, I could make so much more money selling them myself. So I started doing pop-ups and things at markets and friends' businesses. It kind of quickly evolved into finally getting into a brick-and-mortar space."

Now, *Peasantries + Pleasantry* exists in an austere converted duplex a few blocks from the 9th & 9th district, a cozy space with white walls and wood furniture that ooze a refreshing serenity. The stock at the store is relatively small but heavily curated, specialized in ambient and avant-garde music. As *P + P* developed, Yates found that his musical knowledge didn't immediately translate to the realm of business. "It's really not hard to open up your own business if you have the capital," he says. "But without going to business school [and] learning the financial backend of everything ... I've had a couple of friends who did it the same way, and it was just trial and error. You just fuck up on some things, and you pay the price for it. And you write it down so you remember it the next time."

On top of Yates' brisk self-education, he's involved himself in a global community of independent record stores that has proven essential in helping him find his footing. "I've built such a wonderful network of friends and shops all over the country and even in Europe and in Japan," he says. "The community's pretty amazing in that regard. You can find a lot of like-minded people and ... pick their brain for how to better run your business, but [you can] also do a lot of group buys with other shops," the latter a necessary tactic in helping shave down international shipping costs.

When it comes to the community of record stores in Utah, specifically, Yates consistently communes with many of the other shopowners absent of any cutthroat competition. "It feels really welcoming here," he says of responses he's received from the more weathered shops. "The different shops here are doing enough different stuff that it makes it work." And what Yates offers is certainly a



With *Peasantries + Pleasantry*, Parker Yates offers a highly curated selection of records specializing in minimalism, new age and environmental sounds.



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unique niche in the valley's record stores, living up to *Peasantries + Pleasantry's* motto of serving "outer sounds past, present and future." While he does dip his toes into alt rock or other quasi-mainstream styles, Yates notes three styles that he prioritizes more than many (if not all) other shops: '80s and '90s Japanese music (such as city pop, environmental and new age music), '80s and '90s Italian minimalism and cataloged ethnographic folk music from around the world. "Those are three areas of music that I really, really enjoy and I don't really know a lot of other people that really focus on that kind of stuff," Yates says.

If the individuality of Yates' music selection feels distancing, his obvious love for the music and the sharing of sounds gives *Peasantries + Pleasantry* a genial warmth. "I've been in shops where I'm just completely blown away and overly intimidated, and you don't want to feel stupid or whatever and ask questions," he says, noting that he hopes to entirely do away with this pretension and instead offer a welcoming space to explore new and unheard music. When Yates talks about the abstract sounds pouring out of the shop speakers and lining its shelves, there's a palpable excitement, a desire bordering on need to create a communal moment out of reveling in the beauty of the music at hand.

More than just musical enjoyment, though, Yates finds that the sounds stocked at *Peasantries + Pleasantry* serve a special purpose as the world continues to metaphorically and literally crumble around us. "Right now, it seems like with a lot of the inward reflection with all of this pandemic, bringing in a lot more minimal and meditative music has been huge for me, personally. I feel like that could benefit other people, especially," he says. "I hope to grab a few people here and there and show them some cool stuff that they've probably never heard."

If you're in the need of some musical balms, head down to *Peasantries + Pleasantry* and let Yates turn you on to the wonders coming from international labels like **Soave** and **Séance Center** or the meditative beauty of artists such as **Alice Coltrane** or **Alessandro Pizin**. To set up an appointment to visit the store, DM Yates on Instagram @pleasantlyslc, and keep an eye out for future developments, including tea and incense pairings to accompany the soothing and expansive music housed in *Peasantries + Pleasantry*.

# Party Starters



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## THE ART OF BAKLAVA — WITH — RITA MAGALDE

By Jamie Christensen  
jamiec1331@gmail.com

Photos courtesy of Sheer Ambrosia



With *Sheer Ambrosia*, Rita Magalde merges her southern roots with a Greek baklava tradition to create her unique pastries.

Rita Magalde of *Sheer Ambrosia* bakes delectable baklava, a succulent dessert pastry formed of crisp phyllo dough and drizzled with a honeyed sweetness or sugared syrup to hold it together. Chopped nuts mold each layer, and, once baked, the flaky dish crumbles and melts on your tongue with a flavorful duality of earthy walnuts and soaked honey.

Appropriately named, *Sheer Ambrosia* bakes food “fit for the gods,” says Magalde. Not any business can slap such a title onto their storefront and have it feel congruous. As someone who has traveled far past her current home, Draper, Utah, to better understand how food and dessert is derivative of varying cultures and identities, Magalde has earned the name-sake. With baklava that is delivered across the United States, she has certainly mastered the craft and ardently recognizes cooking and baking as an art form, not just something that tastes good and satisfies a craving.

Raised in North Carolina, Magalde began her baklava training in high school while working for a Greek-owned seafood restaurant. As she became close with the family she worked for, they taught her the art of baking baklava—among other Greek dishes and pastries—which ultimately formed a deep appreciation for the dessert. Originally born in New York City, Magalde notes an intrigue in culture and history from an early age, having spent her time reading encyclopedias and developing a warmth for exploration. She says, “Early on, I knew I wanted to travel the world. Food was my entry-way into a lot of different cultures ... You learn so much about a culture through their food.”

As a former History major who has traveled to South America and Europe, Magalde is well aware of how one country’s culture may overlap with and influence another’s, which is evident in cuisine. She says, “It’s not all just black and white; cultures blend and mix, and it not only shows in the language and dress, but in the food as well. My baklava is Greek-inspired, but it’s not just Greek. It’s Middle Eastern; it’s North African; it’s Eastern European—there are a lot of countries that call baklava their own.”

And each country has its own variation. Middle Eastern baklava consists of rosewater and simple syrup, while in Greece they use honey. Since Iran and Turkey commonly use pistachios, their baklava is bright green. Magalde’s recipes and seasonal baklavas are all infusions of what she describes as the Greek way mixed with Southern traditions. “I use walnuts, almonds and pecans,” Magalde says of her own signature recipe. “It’s all inspired from the Greek community where I learned to make baklava. I’m from the South—my mother would make apple pies, peach cobbler and blackberry pies, so I combine my Southern roots with the Greek baklava, [like] how I make a blackberry-walnut baklava.”

It’s due to Magalde’s avidity for history and combining her travels with her roots that *Sheer Ambrosia* is so attractive. “I’m a Black woman making baklava from Greek people in the South .... History is alive and well,” she says. In addition to her signature recipes, other seasonal pastry concoctions Magalde has created are the cranberry, apple and pear



*Sheer Ambrosia* baklava is sweet and succulent, a winning combination of flaky pastry and stunning fillings.

baklavas, each containing walnuts. One of the top-selling baklavas, the cranberry walnut, combines the tartness of the bursting, fresh fruit with the sweetened honey glaze. “It’s so beautiful,” she says. “The bright red of the cranberries is photogenic. Who wouldn’t want that on their holiday table?” Since Magalde consistently uses fresh, natural fruit in her pastries, she offers 12 seasonal flavors to encompass the year, including a traditional baklava, chocolate almond, peach cobbler, walnut and sugar plum.

“Baklava isn’t just a food—it’s art,” Magalde says. “I enjoy making food look beautiful. I enjoy presentation beyond taste. You want there to be a dilemma—people won’t want to eat it because it’s so pretty, but then they can’t handle it anymore, and when they take their first bite, they’re glad they did because it’s so scrumptious. This is an experience from the minute you smell it.” To attain this perfect product, a lot of time goes into preparing and baking baklava. “It’s a time consuming product,” says Magalde. “I put 45 layers of phyllo dough in every batch—you hand lay and hand butter 45 layers. I use real honey and butter—I use real quality ingredients, and that’s why I’ve had the success that I’ve had.” Magalde’s delicious, inventive recipes and dedication to the craftsmanship of baking baklava is how *Sheer Ambrosia* maintains returning customers.

*Sheer Ambrosia* began from Magalde’s home, as it was more feasible than introducing a brick-and-mortar at the time. But after eventually moving *Sheer Ambrosia* into a storefront, Magalde came to the conclusion that her business is meant to serve strictly online. Now, in the evenings and weekends after her day job, Magalde transitions into baking baklava, packing deliveries and sending them coast to coast. She notes COVID-19 had a particularly strong impact on the business, with a severe initial decline in customer orders. As demand eventually began to increase, Magalde hand delivered (continuing to stay six feet away and wearing a mask) baklava orders around Salt Lake with the desire to personally acknowledge and thank those who chose to support her, understanding it was her job as a business owner to turn these one-time buyers into loyal clientele. “I’ve been shown so much love from so many people across the nation,” she says. “I love nurturing people with my food.”

“The whole business is a story, and I love telling the story of how this Black girl from the South learned how to make baklava and turned her hobby into a business,” Magalde says. Check out *Sheer Ambrosia*’s website to order her personalized, gourmet baklava: [sheerambrosiabakery.com](http://sheerambrosiabakery.com).



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# Ideas

## FROM INDIE UTAH BUSINESSES

While our holiday experience this year might look like a chapter out of a dystopian novel, we can all find common ground in our venture to make this year's holiday season as normal as possible. Still, our heart's genuine desire to practice the love language of gift-giving

remains unaffected by these tumultuous times. As we search for the perfect item for that perfect someone, we want to do so safely and invest our precious coin into people—not corporations. Here are seven local creatives and their products that say "I didn't forget you amid the chaos" in a perfectly handmade way.



### GLITTER RANSOM

[etsy.com/shop/GlitterRansom](https://www.etsy.com/shop/GlitterRansom)

Hopefully this isn't news to you, but we should all be wearing face masks. Thankfully, local artist **Dominique LaJeunesse** has designed a colorful and audacious collection of these protective barriers through her Glitter Ransom brand. Adorned with all manner of pop culture icons, sly cult references and parodic send-ups, Glitter Ransom products embody a love of all things cheesy and wonderful. "I love really kitsch things mixed with pop culture," says LaJeunesse. "It goes back to my admiration of **Liberace**, **John Waters**, nostalgic action movies and icons."

In addition to the obvious benefit of providing easy-access masks to the public, LaJeunesse embarked on her mask-making in hopes that her glamorous flair would provide a balm for Utahns. "I'm very into creative expression with clothing and accessories, and I knew others out there would enjoy something a little less basic and boring," she says. "It's been such an amazing experience to make someone's day and just to make them feel better about all the

BS we have to deal with. It's like a security blanket for your face."

With over a decade under her belt, though, Glitter Ransom's masks are a recent addition to her portfolio. Other wares include her popular holiday ornaments, jewelry, magnets, mirrors and pretty much anything and everything else. "You name it—I've slapped glitter and jewels on it," says LaJeunesse. So whether you need a face mask featuring **Lionel Richie** or **Rick Astley**, flashy ornaments with the likes of **Larry David** or **Arnold Schwarzenegger** or a *Twin Peaks*-patterned stocking, Glitter Ransom is your one-stop shop.

LaJeunesse hopes, one day, to turn Glitter Ransom into her full-time gig, but until then, she'll keep plowing away. "For now, I'm just having a fun—albeit sometimes chaotic—time creating things for people to enjoy," she says. Find more of LaJeunesse's work with Glitter Ransom, as well as a link to her current product availability, on Instagram [@glitterransom](https://www.instagram.com/glitterransom). —Audrey Lockie



Photo courtesy of Glitter Ransom

@manda.bull

# black LIVES matter

SLUG Mag stands with you in demanding **equality** and **justice** for all.

An Acronym for Salt Lake UnderGround, *SLUG Magazine's* mission is to amplify Salt Lake City's thriving alternative and underrepresented music, arts, lifestyle and events subcultures with thoughtful media coverage and exclusive event curation.

*SLUG Mag* recognizes the long history of racism and discrimination that continues to live in the independent arts and lifestyle communities we exist within and cover, not just here in Salt Lake but across the country. We're working internally to review our processes and practices to reevaluate whether we're truly accomplishing our core mission of diversity and inclusion across all the fields and disciplines we cover.

If you have any comments, questions or feedback for us, please reach out to our Executive Editor, Angela H. Brown, at: [angela@slugmag.com](mailto:angela@slugmag.com).



Photo courtesy of Davin Abegg

## DAVIN ABEGG DESIGN

davinabegg.tumblr.com

With the Instagram handle *@idrawrandomfollowers*, Davin Abegg's ide hustle pulls observers in at first glance. Starting off as an experimental project to practice and improve on his digital painting, the simple goal of drawing five random followers a week unexpectedly ended up unfolding into a profitable landscape. "I had no idea how it would grow," he says. "I began getting commissions pretty frequently [for] people wanting portraits of themselves, their family or their pets in my style," a service that Abegg continues to offer.

Evidence of Abegg's experience and careful artistic direction are evident in each portrait. While each is based on an already existing image, it would be inaccurate to assume that the illustrations halt at just a trace and color fill. Abegg takes these illustrations into his own world, dictating the colors, gradients and overall mood for each piece to depict the individual as artistically as possible. "I've been a freelance artist for over 12 years and have had the opportunity to draw and design for children's books, movie and concert

posters, catalogs, tons of album covers and whatever comes down the line, really. I love it!" he says.

Soon after starting this portraiture venture, Abegg discovered the significance of what he is doing. "I've really enjoyed the heartfelt feedback from people that might have been having a bad day and to hear how much I cheered them up from a random portrait I posted of them," he says. "It's nice that I get to do something to cheer up some folks a little in these weird times."

When considering gifts for either the holidays or any other occasion, consider giving a gift that says "I like your face" with a commissioned portrait from *@idrawrandomfollowers*. "I sell them the original 12x12 file of the piece. It's usually three days or less turnaround, depending on how many I'm doing at the time," Abegg says. Put in your order by direct messaging Davin on Instagram where you can follow him and possibly be randomly drawn!  
—Bianca Velasquez

## GLOSS + SHIMMER

glossandshimmer.com



Photo courtesy of Gloss + Shimmer

For the starry-eyed loved one who cherishes all things glittery, striking and bold, look to local wearables and home accessory maker Gloss + Shimmer. The business is created, designed and operated by **Morgan Rhyan**, and her skills in graphic design, jewelry making and entrepreneurship shine as bright as her product does. "Gloss + Shimmer was born right when the pandemic hit. It was by no means what I had hoped entrepreneurship would look like, but it was my fortunate means of survival," she says. "My first collection launched on March 1 of 2020, and it's been full speed ever since."

Inspired by old animated films, music videos and nostalgia for all things '80s-'90s, Rhyan captures colors that dance together in hazy dreamworlds and brings them to life through her work. "Right now, I'm big on dream pop, vintage toys, glitter and all things fuzzy," Rhyan says. With the rhythm of her production humming alongside the beat of her inspiration, Rhyan currently offers earring advent calendars, ornaments, stickers and mirrored wall hangings.

As if her work isn't potent enough on its own, it is also empowered by its mission to provide wearable and accessible art to everyone. "I try to be as inclusive as I can, and throughout this process, it's taught me a lot!" she says. "Anywhere from tweaking my website so that everyone can be versed in its technology, providing custom one-offs to people that only have one piercing, different findings for stretched/torn earlobes or even clip-ons for folks that don't have any piercings. While doing that, I try to also find balance in representing me as an artist and creative."

For this holiday season in particular, Rhyan's *Winter Dream* earring collection or her custom ornaments would be perfect things to help bring in that holiday cheer. "They're budget friendly, and super durable since they're lasered acrylic," she says. Keep up with Rhyan and Gloss + Shimmer's creative evolution through her Instagram *@glossandshimmer* and website.  
—Bianca Velasquez

## WAVE COFFEE

brewwave.co



Photo courtesy of Wave Coffee

Whether you're a coffee fanatic or fiend, Wave Coffee seeks to scratch that itch without having you lift a finger. Started as an offshoot of local design firm *modern8*, Wave Coffee offers a to-your-door coffee-bean subscription service, stocking customers with high-quality brew without any hassle. "No need to run to the grocery store without coffee in your pajamas ... to get bad grocery-store coffee anymore," say Wave Coffee CEO **Alysha Smith** and COO **Peter Stevenson**. "You will always have fresh-roasted coffee on the counter."

Given their design-oriented origins, Wave's products are appropriately sleek and eye catching. Of this look, Smith and Stevenson say, "Our focus at Wave is to give people great coffee at home in a package they would be happy to have on the counter all the time." The pastel-tinged packages, the sleek website—everything about Wave Coffee screams ease of access and beauty of presentation.

Especially as in-person shopping teeters on the precipice of precarity, a mail-to-

you coffee service provides a vital lifeline to those staying at home. Having just launched in the fall of 2020, the Wave Coffee team found an element of serendipity in these tumultuous times. "Coffee at home was much more important," say Smith and Stevenson of their origins.

Currently, Wave offers two blends for delivery: The Sweet Daze fruit blend and the Smooth Talk chocolate blend. The latter option especially stands out for Wave Coffee, as they view its rich flavors as a catalyst for connection. "A perfect holiday gift [from Wave] would be a subscription to the Smooth Talk blend for someone you want to share coffee with," say Smith and Stevenson.

Though Wave Coffee is still a nascent business, the team have great hopes for what lies ahead. "Our hope for the future is for people to have great coffee always on hand for when a friend comes over for brunch," say Smith and Stevenson. Find more information on Wave Coffee through their website and on Instagram *@brewwave.co*.  
—Audrey Lockie

## BE:LIGHT CANDLE CO.

belightcandleco.com



Photo: @TBZDPhoto

Under the moniker BE:LIGHT Candle Co., **Taylor** and **Matt Lamb** create candles with a cause. In addition to providing cozy scents and atmospheric, naturalistic lighting, the Lambs seek to use their products to raise awareness about suicide prevention and instill their customers with a message of self-love and togetherness.

"[We] want to 'BE:LIGHT' metaphorically and literally, because our cause and our products tie that together," the pair says. "Our company is a call to action in terms of doing something during these crazy times ... and sharing the hope that is available amid the chaos." In addition to awareness-raising speaking events, BE:LIGHT donates 15% of their earnings to the **AFSP [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention & Awareness]** and are active members of the **Utah Suicide Coalition**.

When it comes to the physical candles, BE:LIGHT products range from 6 oz. (\$20) to a three-wick 24 oz. (\$60) and offer a variety of homemade scents. From classics like Indian Sandalwood to unique

nostalgias like Pipe Tobacco, refreshing blends like Grapefruit & Mint or holiday favorites Pumpkin Spice and Blue Spruce, BE:LIGHT candles utilize natural ingredients to create unforgettable scents, all housed in an eco-friendly soy wax.

While BE:LIGHT products are available for order from their site, the Lambs urge customers to visit some of their local-business peers who carry the candles. They hope to "create anticipation and reason for consumers to travel to other nearby small businesses to find our products," say the Lambs. Among their current local carriers are *Salt & Honey* and *Dancing Crane*, but the list is constantly updating and changing.

BE:LIGHT candles are products that serve as both a physical and symbolic embodiment of a shared communal message. "I think we have a lot of opportunities to build a team of people who are passionate about people, who love candles," they say. Find more information on BE:LIGHT and stay up to date on current stockists on Instagram *@belightcandleco*.  
—Audrey Lockie



Photo courtesy of Yellow Yarrow Apothecary

## YELLOW YARROW APOTHECARY

yyapothecary.com

There's no question that this year has put more strain on our bodies than most others, making self-care practices more important than ever. With seasonal stress looming over us, we seek refuge in taking time for ourselves and in products that aid in relaxation, such as those offered by Yellow Yarrow Apothecary. Founded in 2017, Yellow Yarrow offers its patrons homegrown and handmade products that focus on relief and relaxation. Some include sublingual and edible CBD, soaking salts, massage oils and pain relief roll-ons. "I really love creating an added value to someone's life, whether that being relaxation, pain relief, happiness, soul soothing or just a betterment of self care and enjoyment," says Owner **Erica Bruin**.

Surprisingly, relaxation can prove to be challenging. Between knowing the quality of the product you are investing in and knowing that the ingredients are ethically sourced, the venture to find the right massage oil or soaking salts can end up feeling like an endless pit of research. "During the summer, I love organically growing and collecting my own

herbs to add to my products. I create pretty much everything from scratch," says Bruin. Whether you take home Yellow Yarrow's botanical-infused oils or their herbal first aid kit, you know that each purchase comes guilt-free. "For plant distillation, I donate or exchange with other local efforts, such as *Wasatch Community Gardens*, for fresh lavender and other organically grown herbs," she says. With products that interact with our skin, it's important to know that they are safely tested. "I carefully quality test [and] select earth-safe packaging," says Bruin.

In short, Yellow Yarrow offers options for all types and preferences. "I provide gifts for the sporty outdoorsy type, the frequent bath taker, the person needing some stress relief, your friend that enjoys meditation, your grandma that's in pain and tons of stocking stuffer options!" says Bruin. Visit their website or their Instagram [@yellowyarrowapothecary](#) to learn more. —*Bianca Velasquez*

## LOCAL ARTIST STICKER MACHINE

localartiststickermachine.com



Photo: @blobbosoff

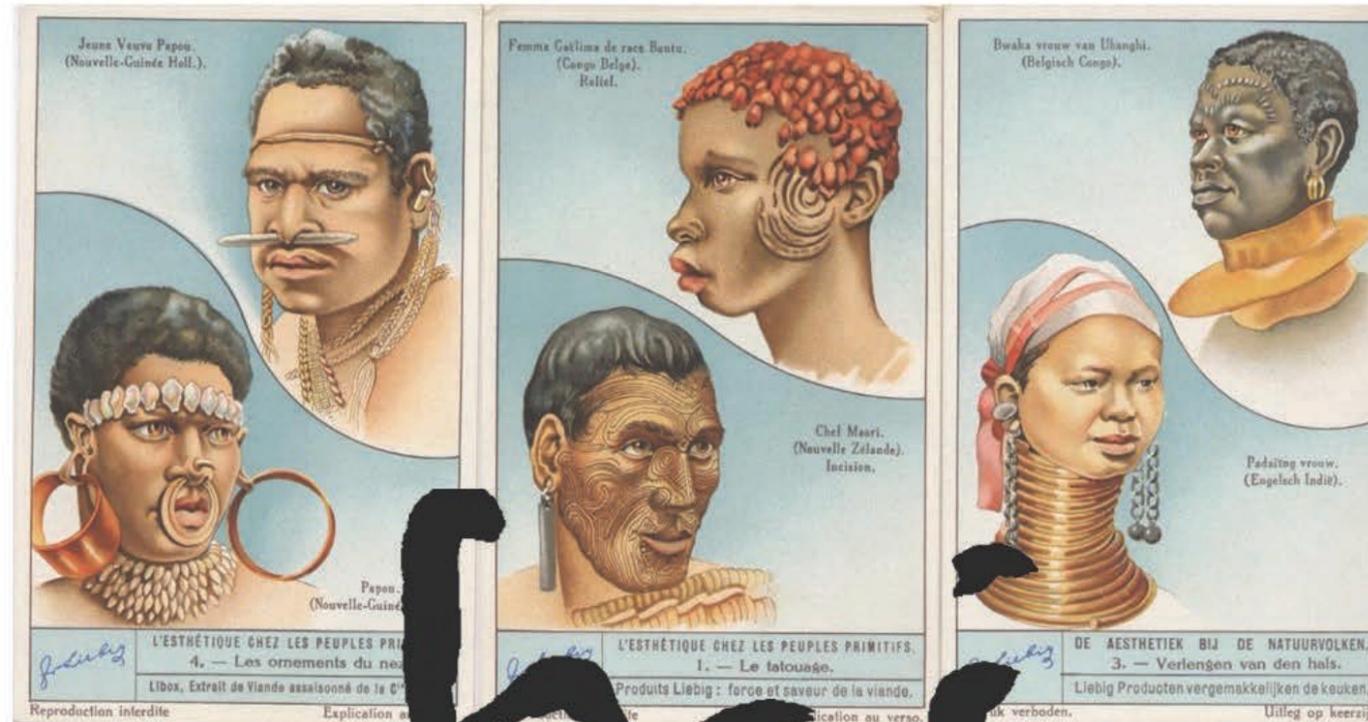
If you're privy to perusing independent Salt Lake businesses, you've probably seen the Local Artist Sticker Machines: classic red boxes with push-in quarter payments housing a wealth of bite-sized stickers, each one featuring work from Utah artists. Throughout a few dozen locations in Salt Lake, a handful in Ogden and a pair in St. Louis and Austin, respectively, these machines offer a fun, bite-sized way to support your local arts community.

For Founder and Owner **Natalie Allsup-Edwards** (who also runs the *Hand Drawn Photobooth*), the genesis of the Local Artist Sticker Machine was a lifetime in the making. "I have been an avid sticker collector since I was a kid, and [I] wanted to see more machines with unique offerings instead of the typical licensed stuff you see (like Disney and NFL stickers)," she says. "I would frequent sticker machines and noticed that their offerings very rarely changed. I wanted to create a way to offer stickers that were always fresh and simultaneously create a platform for artists." And so the Local Artist Sticker Machine

was born, a unique and substantive realization of this dream.

More than just the in-store machines, though, stickers found in the Local Artist Sticker Machines are also available via shipments or subscription packages. These monthly subscription services come right to your door and always contain updated stickers from new and exciting artists. "I think that's a fun gift because it's not very expensive, but they get a new item in the mail every month," says Allsup-Edwards.

So if you're looking for a way to both support your local creative community and give a gift to the art-nerd in your life, the Local Artist Sticker Machines are a great place to start. "I think it's valuable to create sustainable support for artists of all kinds," says Allsup-Edwards. "This is a small but meaningful way for us all to enjoy the work of artists from all over the state." For more information on purchasing or submitting to the Local Artist Sticker Machine, head to their website or Instagram [@localartiststickermachine](#). —*Audrey Lockie*



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# CONSUME WITH CARE

shop sustainably  with animalia



(L-R) Kell Trawick and Abbey Muse proudly operate *Animalia*, serving their customer base and helping to support sustainability.

*Animalia's* bulk bar offers patrons the opportunity to fill their own reusable containers with everyday necessities like laundry detergent.

By Avrey Evans  
avreyevans21@gmail.com  
Photos by Bonneville Jones

**animalia**  
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For many, the holiday season emboldens the giver in us—we spend countless hours finding just the right way to show our loved ones our appreciation. Sometimes it's a thoughtful gesture or affectionate message, but most often, our generosity is manifested through some sort of physical offering. The tradition of gift giving is an enduring feature of America's consumer culture, and is also the cause of an enormous amount of waste. As the environmental crisis grows more and more dire, so does the need for sustainable products and substitutes for one-use items. One shop looking to introduce a solution is *Animalia*.

Run by **Abbey Muse**, *Animalia* is a locally owned business aiming to offer Salt Lake consumers with human-made goods created with passion, kindness and ingenuity. Regarding its inception, Muse says her main inspiration for *Animalia* was the people who make their dreams a reality while simultaneously caring about the planet. "I'm obsessed with people being true to themselves," she says. "I want to be surrounded by the amazingness that being a human is. People inspired me to open *Animalia*."

Muse's passion for people is reflected by *Animalia's* expansive range of products, all of which are stocked from small, independent brands. Currently, the shop collaborates with about 40 brands, including **Yellow Yarrow Apothecary**, **Khala Cloths**, **Happy Hour Ceramics**, **Queen of Cups**, **Coffee Sock**, **Incausa**, **Desert Rose** and **Thrill of a Thrift**, the last of which stocks a rack of their wonderfully curated vintage clothing. Each company provides *Animalia* with its own unique offering, from handmade jewelry to skincare and greeting cards, ceramics to makeup and CBD products. *Animalia* also offers a multitude of single-use alternatives, including

reusable coffee filters, glass straws, wax wraps, bulk bags and menstrual products. Every item in the shop is lovingly curated by Muse, and each works to supply Salt Lake residents with the means to live a less-disposable life.

*Animalia* also features a unique bulk bar where people can bring their own containers to refill household goods without the waste of purchasing single-use plastic items. Items like toothpaste and even insect repellent are weighted and sold by the ounce. Everything in the bulk bar is mindfully made by various eco-certified brands, and many are cheaper to refill than their store-bought counterparts.

While *Animalia* deliver the community with an opportunity to live more sustainably, the shop also works with **Momentum Recycling** and **Wasatch Resource Recovery** to implement a food waste collection service. Food waste—a huge source of toxic methane gas and a byproduct that Americans discard nearly 40 million tons of every year—can be brought directly to the shop where it's converted into biogas and biofertilizer via anaerobic digesters. The natural gas created is used by **Dominion Energy** to help supply over 15,000 local homes with energy.

*Animalia's* food waste program is just one more way that Muse is making clean living more reachable. "People have told me how hyped they are to be sending less food to landfill to sit and release methane. People want to live a lighter footprint life, of sorts, we just need to make that more accessible," she says. To participate in the program, bring your collected food waste to *Animalia's* back parking lot, where you can dump in the appropriate green bins. To cover the cost of the service, *Animalia* charges \$.60 per gallon dropped off.

As sustainability becomes increasingly vital to our world's future, Muse says she recognizes a push for a more environmentally centered community in Salt Lake. "We're adapting to the times (better late than never!)," she says. "Like most things, greater awareness of current issues leads to change, whether that's policy change, lifestyle and behavior change, infrastructure change, etc." In terms of the individual, small actions add up, and Muse offers a few simple changes people can make in their lives to be kinder to our planet: "Take advantage of local farmer's markets, support small brands, shops, markets, buy package-free, spend more time outside! When we spend time in nature, we feel less of a pull to be shitty to her," she says.

As the world endures the pandemic, Muse finds comfort in providing the community with a healthier, kinder lifestyle. The shop offers curbside pick-up orders, online shopping, local delivery and country-wide shipping as well as masked, in-store shopping. As the holiday season rolls around, *Animalia* is excited to offer their annual *Shop Small Saturday*, where the entire shop will be 20% off (although things will look a bit different this year—follow the shop for more updates). *Animalia* also offers shoppers a free gift-wrap station using repurposed, found and reused wrapping supplies! So as you rack your brain for the right way to celebrate others this month, keep Muse's wise words in mind: "Consumption doesn't have to be shitty—it can be very empowering!"

Shop *Animalia's* many offerings at [animaliaslc.com](http://animaliaslc.com), and keep up with the shop by following their instagram: [@animaliaishopslc](https://www.instagram.com/animaliaishopslc). If you'd like to see your small brand featured in *Animalia*, reach out to Muse at [abbey@animaliaslc.com](mailto:abbey@animaliaslc.com).



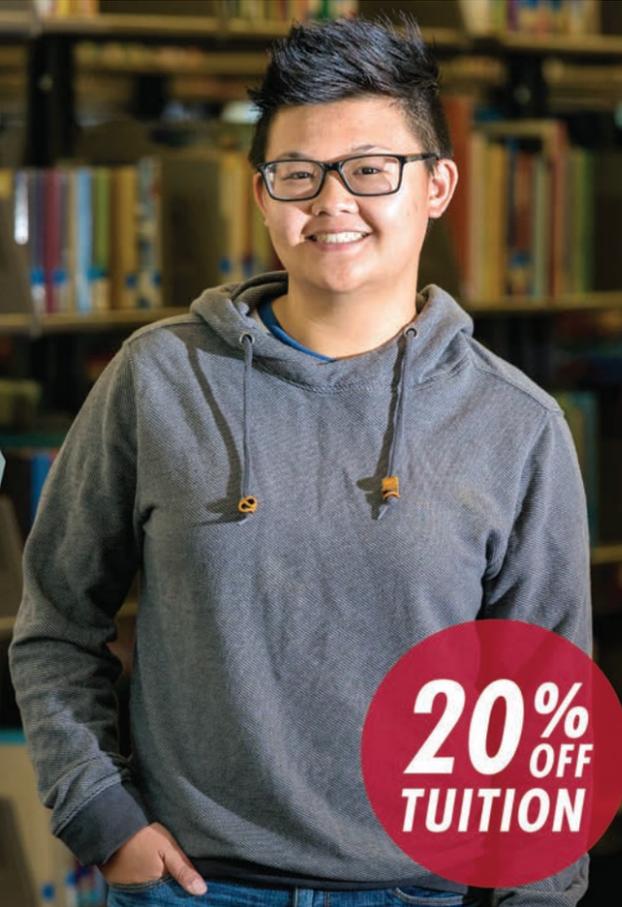
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Throughout the year, we've had to adapt to social distancing and gathering restrictions, but this December, *SLUG* will host *Virtualized* as a safe, virtual way to celebrate local bands from the comfort of your own home. Premiering on *SLUG* Mag's Youtube channel on Dec. 18 at 8 p.m., the virtual live show will feature bands **Thunderfist**, **Fat Candice** and **Los Rojos**. Even though going to a venue and rocking in person isn't an option, fans can still cozy up around their TVs, phones and computers to get a dose of rock and roll.

For many, the global pandemic has made everyday life come to a screeching halt. As the months have flown by, a lot has changed, and we've had to adjust to a "new normal." A life that used to include going to parties, concerts and other shows is now filled with streaming and virtual get togethers. Luckily for rock fans, local group **Fat Candice** was able to get some fresh material ready. Releasing an album during a pandemic is logistically tricky, but the band is coming up with ways to get their music out to the world.

**Fat Candice** is a high-energy band with a loud and fast sound. Formed in 2012, the group has influences that draw from rock and grunge of the '90s. "That era was special," says vocalist and guitarist **Rob Alvord**. "Rock's always been a rebellious and gritty genre, but the glam rock of the '80s felt more like commercialized/artificial

# VIRTUALIZED:

By Emilee Atkinson, [emileeatkinson1@gmail.com](mailto:emileeatkinson1@gmail.com)

rebelliousness and grit. Then suddenly, you have a band like **Nirvana** who brings the real thing to the mainstream by bringing an underground sound to the masses," he says. Alvord also mentions the reason **Fat Candice** is drawn to rock from the '90s is because it blends several different styles together. Elements from punk, blues, metal and folk can be found throughout the music of that decade. Not only that, but the vulnerability of the artists is a draw as well. "Lyrically, there was also a ton of vulnerability that the artists were exposing to their audiences by singing about their depression and childhood abandonment," Alvord says.

One thing that's important to note about **Fat Candice** is that the name isn't a dig on anyone. This is a question that gets asked a lot, and Alvord wanted to clarify. "Sometimes people suspect the band was started as a way to make someone in specific feel bad. The name worked well because it was so easily remembered when you hear it, so it just stuck. We aren't making any statements about body types; it's just a band name that doesn't mean anything. The band could have just as easily been named 'Sleepy Gary' or 'Old Greg,'" he says.

Like countless other bands, **Fat Candice** has gone through many iterations before landing on the current lineup. Alvord says he had been playing bass with other groups, as well as acoustic sets, but wanted to get to his roots of early '90s alternative. In his mind, he wanted a bass player akin to **Nirvana's Krist Novoselic**. "A big, tall, goofy, energetic kind of guy," he says. Soon after, Alvord ran into **Clark Cannon**, and the rest was history. Drummer **Adam Ridd** was found using a local musicians group on Facebook, and he clicked right away. "The band has actually had about five drummers since we started in 2012, but the current lineup is by far the best and here to stay," says Alvord.

As mentioned, **Fat Candice** has new music for fans—six new tracks, according to Alvord. The process of coming up with new material is different for everyone, but Alvord says it's important to stay humble. "Sometimes the band takes an idea I had and completely does something better with what I originally had in mind," he says. He also mentioned it helps to try and absorb others' work to draw inspiration not just by listening, but by covering their material as well. "If you study the greats, such as **Lennon** and **McCartney**, you'll find that even they spent years covering other artists and drew heavy influence from outside material when writing," he says. "I always have to wait until some kind of magic moment, when something great just decides to pop out. It feels more like capturing something that's in the air and less like creating something out of nothing."

Alvord mentioned it's important for him to record ideas on his phone when something comes to mind before it disappears. The songs on this new album sound enough like **Fat Candice** to be recognizable, but incorporate some new elements as well. "I really work hard to give us an eclectic array of styles between songs. This album even has a bit of funk, which is really out of character for us so far," says Alvord.

**Fat Candice** has been able to play a few shows recently, and were also able to work on their album before getting into gigs again. One song they enjoy playing is a new one called "Dancing in a Leotard." Alvord says it's a fun and silly song that the audience enjoys. In addition to their material, **Fat Candice** also covers **Primus'** tunes live. "I don't think any local bands do that," says Alvord. "It's fun to see people's reactions." Catch a taste of **Fat Candice's** energy at *SLUG's Virtualized* on Dec. 18 at 8 p.m. on *SLUG's* Youtube channel.

## Fat Candice



(L-R) Rob Alvord, Clark Cannon and Adam Ridd have worked together to overcome the obstacles introduced by 2020, continuing with their music-writing and recording goals.

# black LIVES matter

@manda.bull

**SLUG Mag stands with you in demanding equality and justice for all.**

An Acronym for Salt Lake UnderGround, *SLUG Magazine's* mission is to amplify Salt Lake City's thriving alternative and underrepresented music, arts, lifestyle and events subcultures with thoughtful media coverage and exclusive event curation.

*SLUG Mag* recognizes the long history of racism and discrimination that continues to live in the independent arts and lifestyle communities we exist within and cover, not just here in Salt Lake but across the country. We're working internally to review our processes and practices to reevaluate whether we're truly accomplishing our core mission of diversity and inclusion across all the fields and disciplines we cover.

If you have any comments, questions or feedback for us, please reach out to our Executive Editor, Angela H. Brown, at: [angela@slugmag.com](mailto:angela@slugmag.com).

# THUNDERFIST



(L-R Back) Kevin Ivers and Jeremy Cardenas.

(L-R Front) Mike Sasich, Mick Mayo and Matt Miller, members of Thunderfist, value including "heft" into their sound.

Photo: Lmsorenson.net

The year 2020 has changed everything. Sickness has taken over, and staying inside has become the new norm. People everywhere have been reevaluating their lives and trying to figure out how to stay sane within the confines of their homes. Despite a shattering earthquake, powerful windstorm and continuing doubt about the state of the world, one thing is certain—2020 is one for the history books. But, we have slowly discovered ways to keep ourselves safe, happy and entertained. Concerts were a time for bands to connect with fans and share an evening of music and good vibes. Even though 2020 has interrupted that connection, bands like Thunderfist are looking to the future, hoping to share more memories with fans virtually.

"We love our people. We miss our people," says Thunderfist vocalist **Jeremy Cardenas**. The last show the band was able to play before COVID-19 hit was last November at *Big Willies* in Salt Lake. "This shutdown has been so hard on us and our friends," says Cardenas. "We look forward to bashing it out again." He mentioned that Thunderfist shows rely on being "in your face," but the last thing the band wants is to put anyone in danger. For some, staying at home and finding things to do has been a good break, but not for Thunderfist—they're ready to get out and get rocking again.

Despite the inability to physically connect with fans, Thunderfist has used the time to write new material. Their last album, *Thunderfist*, was released in 2012, and a new album has been in the works for some time. Because of the global pandemic, the new material contains inspiration from the virus and lock-

down. "So many new songs have come from this," says Cardenas. "All COVID themed—you guys will be impressed." Thunderfist is known for their hard, fast and classic-sounding rock. Their ReverbNation profile mentions that to get the perfect sound, they need vintage Marshall amps, Les Paul guitars and beer. It's easy to hear these elements in their music without being told. Hearing Thunderfist for the first time draws parallels to classic rock groups such as **Mötley Crüe** and **The Offspring**, infused of course with signature Thunderfist nuances—humor being one of them. Thunderfist has a good sense of humor, and they love to have a good time. It's evident while listening and reading the titles of their songs, such as "The Wizard's Lament!!"

Only a band that's been together a long time can pull off the antics and fun that Thunderfist does. The band has been together since 1998, and according to Cardenas, there have been many incarnations of Thunderfist, but the group they have right now is the most solid. "We are like brothers at this point and can pretty much anticipate each other's thoughts when it comes to serving the song," he says. "One consistent thing is every members' love of rock." Cardenas himself started playing music in 1996 and wanted to bring together a group of friends to jam with. "It was a response to a lack of loose-based party rock," he says. "I felt SLC was missing one big element: There weren't many folks like me around."

In the eight years since their previous album was released, Thunderfist hasn't put out new music. On making new music, Cardenas laughed and says that the main thing that gets in the way of additional music is "sheer laziness." There are new songs in the works, though: "It'll be epic when it's done," Cardenas says. Because of their closeness, recording new material is enjoyable for the group. "**Mike Sasich**, our guitar player, is the best at understanding what we need and want sonically. Other than **Jack Endino**, who we've worked with in the past, I wouldn't go to anyone else." Endino is a well-known producer and musician who worked in the burgeoning grunge scene in the '90s with notable acts such as **Mudhoney**, **Soundgarden** and **Nirvana**. Cardenas calls their recording process short and sweet. "We try to record as much at the same time as we can, and then nailing down the mix and putting some heft to the sound are our priorities," he says.

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the entire world, and that doesn't exclude SLC. Earlier this year, local concert spot *In the Venue* closed due to COVID-19. As small as it was, it was a popular hangout for many over the years. Thunderfist feels for the venues and bands that have felt the effects of the virus. "I hate to say it, but so many good venues and bands have been destroyed because of this," Cardenas says. "The loss of venues and close friends has been tough."

As we continue to navigate through the pandemic, the hope is that things will improve, and we can eventually get together again. In the meantime, *SLUG Virtualized* will take place on December 18 on *SLUG Magazine's* Youtube channel at 8 p.m.. Thunderfist is excited to play music for their supporters. And the one thing Thunderfist wanted everyone to know was that they love and miss their fans.

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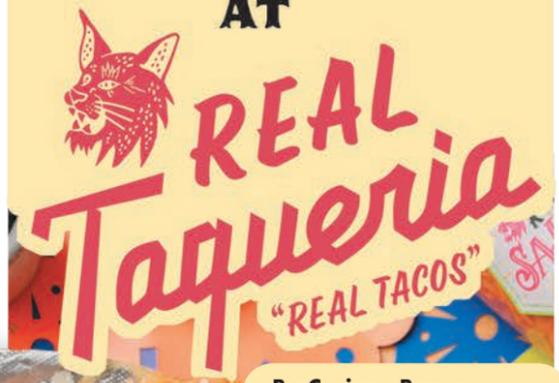
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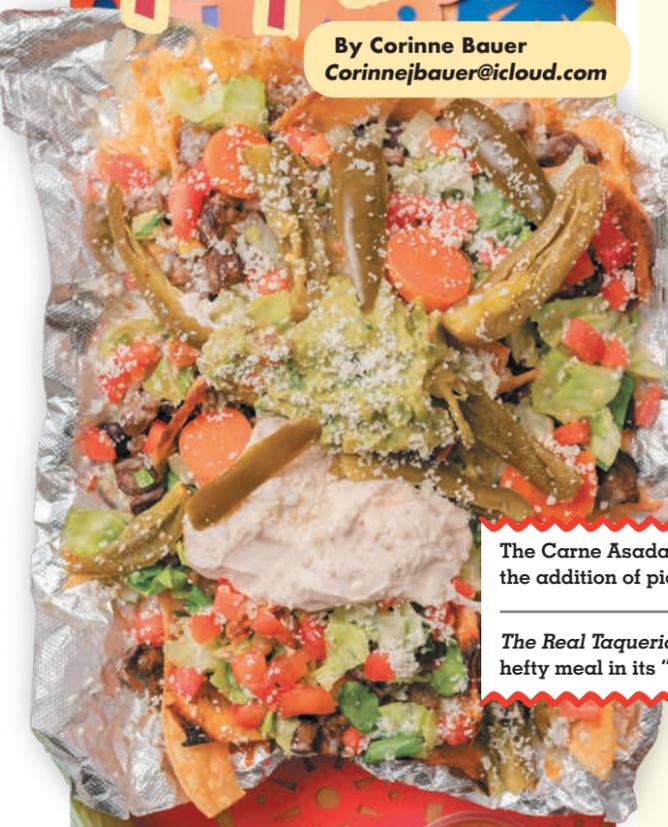
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# EATING FAST,

CASUALLY  
AND DELICIOUSLY  
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By Corinne Bauer  
Corinejbauer@icloud.com



The Carne Asada Nachos gain a unique element with the addition of pickled vegetables as a topping.

The Real Taqueria's Al Pastor Burrito comes in as a hefty meal in its "regular size."

In a bright pink building tucked in a corner on Murray Holladay Road, you can find a local restaurant with great food, helpful service and convenient drive-thru options. *Real Taqueria* boasts a strong menu with a variety of proteins to customize each dish. What started as a Salt Lake City food truck is now a brick and mortar location with all the comfort of local food and the ease of a drive-thru window.

On lazy days, it is hard enough to drive to a restaurant, let alone go inside and pick up my food. That's why I'm always excited to find a local place with a drive-thru. *Real Taqueria* is perfect for a week-night meal, or a Saturday picnic that is both low key and a pleasure to eat. It's worth noting that the line for the drive-thru can get long from time to time, but the service is good, and the line generally moves quickly. I promise—the food is worth the wait.

The *Real Taqueria* menu has entree selections like burritos, quesadillas, tacos and nachos. From carne asada to veggies or fish and shrimp, there is a protein to satisfy most any pallet, and the flexibility of the menu means the combinations are almost endless (well, not endless, but there's a lot!). I love seeing how the experience of a particular protein can change dramatically in a new format. The simplest menu option is the taco, which comes to \$2.99 a piece when paired with classic toppings, or \$3.59 for fish or shrimp. Though simple, the menu provides plenty of room for eaters of many tastes.

Before you visit, it's a good idea to know portion sizes are huge, so you may want to share, but it's delicious enough that you may not after all. The burritos come in two sizes, but even the small is quite large and could feed two people pretty easily. Generally, the tortillas and chips don't survive well as leftovers, but the toppings and fillings do. If you save your leftovers, the meats, beans and sauces could make for a new

set of nachos, or honestly could just be eaten by themselves.

The Al Pastor Burrito comes in at \$8.99 for the regular size, a great choice for your hungriest days. The meat is tender and well-seasoned and is complemented by the fresh pineapple hidden throughout. The only complaint here is that more pineapple would make it even better. I love the way this fruit adds acid and sweetness and cuts through the richness of the pork.

For \$7.49, you can get the Chico version of the Nopalitos Burrito. In addition to the customary beans, rice and cheese, this has cactus and eggs. The eggs make this burrito feel slightly breakfast-y, while the cactus adds great crunch and a combination of savory and sweet that is appropriate for any meal. The beans and rice are really flavorful and have a chance to shine in salty contrast to the nopal. I added their creamy green sauce to this burrito, and it gave a nice kick that worked well with the other flavors.

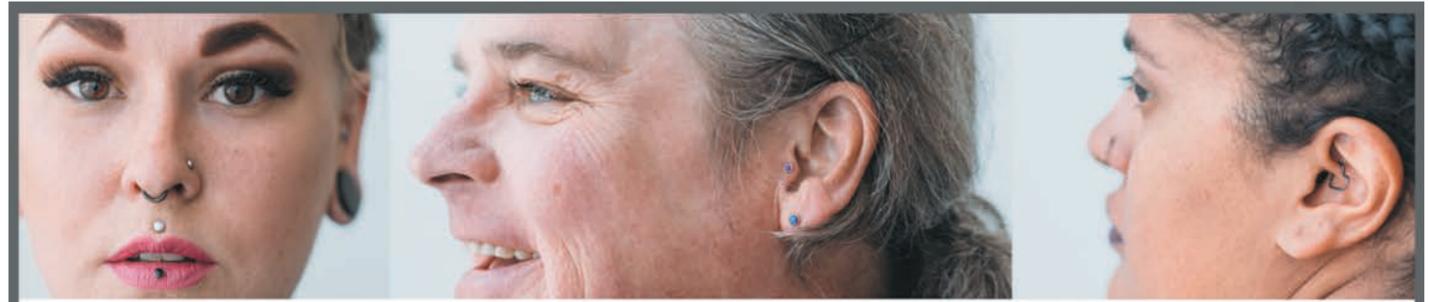
If you are feeling like a real feast, you can't go wrong with the Carne Asada Nachos, priced at \$11.48. Though this is one of the more expensive menu items, it can feed and satisfy a few eaters, or stretch even farther as a side shared among many. The toppings are plentiful, and a thick layer of cheese protects the chips keeping them crisp and heavily loaded (the true goal of any plate of nachos). There is something satisfying about the crunch of these chips, loaded with flavorful meat, beans and veggies that will keep you coming back bite after bite.

No trip to *Real Taqueria* is complete without an Agua Fresca (\$2.19) which comes in cantaloupe, pineapple or horchata. I find the horchata flavor a little sweet, but it's still tasty and has a nice kick of cinnamon that provides some balance. The cantaloupe and pineapple varieties both taste like summer-fresh fruit.

Next time a Mexican food craving hits, stop at *Real Taqueria* for a satiating meal. This eatery makes getting delicious Mexican food on the go easy and satisfying. Make sure to come with an appetite—you'll be happy you did.

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By Austin Doty | [rdotytwo@gmail.com](mailto:rdotytwo@gmail.com)

The Stockist's Helen Wade and Louie, the signature shop dog.

The holiday season is here, and for many of us, with that comes with the pressure of gift shopping for our loved ones—getting something for mom and dad, your brothers and sisters, grandpa and grandma and all your closest friends. Some of us feel so inspired to shop that we even feel the need to get a little trinket for our estranged uncle we hardly ever see and definitely do not talk politics with. And while the instinct is to visit bigger retailers and department stores, there is an abundance of locally owned shops all around Salt Lake City and neighboring areas, among them *The Stockist*, a modest clothing and apparel store located at 9th and 9th.

Stores like *The Stockist* are owned by your neighbors, your friends and your family. The benefit of shopping at these businesses is not only supporting your fellow residents, but partaking in a shopping experience marked by a greater attention to detail and more care for its customers, products and where those products come from. The success of these stores often provide their owners' livelihood, and because of that, they put in more time and effort than any chain or franchise. Not to mention, when you invest in local shops, you're investing in the future of your own community. It's like an investment where the returns come as a smile on your neighbor's face.

Originally named *Fresh*, *The Stockist* itself was established in 2009 by **Helen** and **Ian Wade**. The store was always meant to sell clothing, but back then, its ideas and direction were a bit underdeveloped and a bit "novice," as Helen admits. "We were still so wide eyed and unaware," she says. It took about five years to get under way, and after a re-brand, name change, a move and Ian taking

off to NYC for other pursuits, the shop would become *The Stockist*.

Today, the store focuses on quality over quantity, not getting hung up on how much they can offer, but the value of what they do. "Starting the shop made me realize [what is] behind the scenes of fashion—and honestly—how much garbage is out there," Helen says. There is always plenty to sell, but not always plenty worth selling. "The lines [of brands] we [now] stock are independently owned. They focus on holding up strong values in the creation and execution of their lines," she says. "Our lines are not just run-of-the-mill crap—they are well made, ethically sourced and unique to SLC."



One of the benefits of choosing quality over quantity at *The Stockist* is the durability and longevity of your fashion-forward investment.

It's the what, the how and the where of what they sell that creates the value of *The Stockist*, and shopping local as a whole. Big department stores will sell you whatever products made from whatever material, quality or not,

and they'll often get it from wherever is cheapest, whether that is ethically sourced or coming from a modern sweatshop. They lack a better attention to detail, and their brands often lack values that would make you want to be a part of their message. "People are becoming more aware of where their clothing is coming from and who is making it," Helen says. And it's true—many consumers these days have values that pertain to clothing they wear. They don't want the run-of-the-mill crap. "I want people to know the items we stock aren't from some wholesale website where we can mark it up 4x," she says. "Our clothing is coming from real people [and] independent designers supporting positive change and using their own platforms to educate their clients."

*The Stockist* still primarily focuses on apparel, offering a range of products from more commonly known brands like **Converse** and **RVCA** to the lesser-known brands **Reigning Champ** and **Agolde**. But it's also now selling forms of media like books, jewelry like earrings and necklaces, clothing for kids and even a few items for your apothecary needs. Regardless of what it sells, the message remains the same: quality over quantity.

*The Stockist* is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m.–7 p.m., and Sundays 11 a.m.–5 p.m. You can also book your own private time online before or after store hours to browse the store's apparel and products. It also offers curbside pickup, delivery and online orders. But before you do shop at *The Stockist*, Helen urges you to "wear a mask, wash your hands, stay safe and support local."

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SLUG MAG'S

TOP

5

ALBUMS  
of 2020

It's been a year, to say the least. Amid global pandemics, social justice uprisings, election mayhem and a bottomless well of other turmoil, the always-steady stream of essential new music felt like a consistent hand to hold. But the swathe of new releases wasn't just an escapist salve during 2020—it also served as a unifying factor, an artistic space for magnifying voices and echoing collective grief. So whether the sounds presented here soothe, incite, empathize or excise, we hope that our picks for the best albums of 2020 provide you with some sonic friends that heal your soul in one way or another. Keep an eye on [SLUGMag.com](http://SLUGMag.com) for more new music reviews, interviews and more.

TOP 5

Watch Out Fascists,  
'Cause Pop-Punk's Not Dead

- » Bring Me The Horizon - *POST HUMAN: SURVIVAL HORROR*
- » Danny Denial - *Fuck Danny Denial*
- » **Fever 333 - *WRONG GENERATION***
- » Stand Atlantic - *Pink Elephant*
- » The Wonder Years - *Burst & Decay (Volume II)*



**Fever 333**  
**WRONG GENERATION**  
333 Wreckords Crew/  
Roadrunner Records  
Street: 10.23  
Fever 333 =  
Rage Against the  
Machine + Public Enemy  
+ Black Flag

As the great **Nina Simone** once said, "It is an artist's duty to reflect the times." Fever 333 fulfills that duty and more with their third album, *WRONG GENERATION*. It's an album to get angry to, an album to protest to, an album to start a revolution to. Fever 333 has made an album that is a perfect mirror to everything that has been felt by those who lived in fear and oppression for too long. *WRONG GENERATION* is a high-energy blend of post-hardcore, punk and rapcore. Listening to these tracks is a bolt of electricity to your spine, giving you all the energy you could ever need.

The album starts by throwing you straight into the aggressive, speedy, hardcore punk-forward track "BITE BACK," which sings about the police brutality expe-

rienced by people of color. In the pre-chorus, vocalist **Jason Aalon Butler** screams, "Woke up this morning to people mourning / Another brother they murdered just as a warning / ... They'll do it over and over until we bite back." It is an invigorating call to action and a somber reminder of just how many people have been victims of this all-too-common brutality.

The album ends with "SUPREMACY," which takes a less aggressive and more trap-forward approach. In this track, Butler sings about the threat of white supremacy. The track also plays off of the melody of **Blondie's** "Rapture" and alludes to it in the chorus, "One day you'll see us / But until then we'll sit and wait for the rapture."

Much of the album was produced by Butler, along with **Travis Barker** and **John Feldmann**. It is truly an album of 2020 and a message that we can never forget about or abandon this fight. *WRONG GENERATION* is a stark reminder that this revolution is far, far from over. —*Marina McTee*

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Photo: Brent Courtney

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# TOP 5

## Alternative Folk (ish) Albums of 2020

- » Christian Lee Hutson - *Beginners*
- » **Cut Worms - *Nobody Lives Here Anymore***
- » John Craigie - *Asterisk The Universe*
- » Lomelda - *Hannah*
- » Widowspeak - *Plum*



### Cut Worms *Nobody Lives Here Anymore*

**Jagjaguwar**  
Street: 10.09  
Cut Worms = The Everly Brothers + George Harrison

*Nobody Lives Here Anymore* was released in October, but it sounds like it was dug out of a record store discount bin after decades spent trapped between **Buddy Holly** and The Everly Brothers. Cut Worms is the moniker of **Max Clarke**, whose tone and lyrical subject matter firmly belong to a bygone era. There are no references to current events on this album—no timely quarantine metaphors or clever smart-phone laments. Instead, these tracks dwell in the ambiguous and timestamp-free realm of wistful romance. This ground is well-traveled, but something about this ambitious double album remains spirited and alive, even though it doesn't attempt to distance itself from unmistakable influences.

Despite the uphill battle of making a 77-minute album that belongs in the glove compartment of your

grandma's '75 Buick, *Nobody Lives Here Anymore* is packed with appealing melodies. Several tracks, including highlight "Last Words to A Refugee," are populated by numerous sturdy melodies that could easily exist as independent tracks. Lyrically, repeated lines such as "All roads lead back to you," and "The only thing I care to hold on to / Oh my love that's you," are standard fare reminiscent of early **Beatles**.

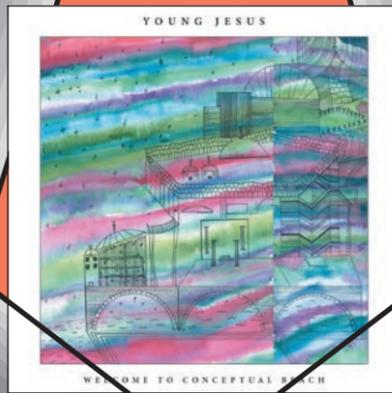
At other times, lyrics transcend their cuteness and become poetic marvels. On "Veteran's Day," Clarke describes the feeling of helplessness as, "Lying underwater looking up at the surface lights / Shining so alive and playing games with my eyes." Clarke's delivery can only be described as doo-wop-shoo-wop crooning, though it feels heartfelt rather than forced.

Instead of drifting into the background like an oldies radio station set, Clarke's attention to detail and lucid tenor keep things enduringly pleasant. The earnestness within *Nobody Lives Here Anymore* is simply comforting, like the warmth of sun-soaked sand after a frigid swim. —Austin Beck-Doss

# TOP 5

## Indie Rock Albums for Locking Yourself In Your Room Because It's All Just Too Much

- » Phoebe Bridgers - *Punisher*
- » Pinegrove - *Marigold*
- » Soccer Mommy - *Color Theory*
- » Touché Amoré - *Lament*
- » **Young Jesus - *Welcome to Conceptual Beach***



### Young Jesus *Welcome to Conceptual Beach*

**Saddle Creek Records**  
Street: 08.14  
Young Jesus = Pile + Horse Jumper of Love ^ Radiohead's OK Computer

A meditation on decay and rebirth, faith and fear, growth and acceptance—*Welcome to Conceptual Beach* is the latest offering from L.A. post-rockers Young Jesus. Described as the long-time mental refuge of vocalist/guitarist **John Rossiter**, *Conceptual Beach* is a fictional in-between place for "knowing and unknowing" (a great contender for 2020's official tagline), and the album it inspired is composed of complex psychological musings evolved from a lifetime of contemplation.

*Conceptual Beach* borrows from a mixed bag of genres, culminating in an improvisational masterpiece. Soaring brass makes an appearance on "Pattern Doubt;" "Meditations" begins with airy flutes that compliment the track's astro-jazz beat; rain-soaked melancholy transforms into playful

keys on "Lark," then transforms again into a twangy, math-y jam, an amalgamation of moving parts that shouldn't sound cohesive together but somehow do. The last two tracks eek past the 10-minute mark, the variety in each enough for a whole album.

Young Jesus has been unabashedly nihilistic on past albums but transcends this mindset on *Conceptual Beach*, considering faith as a coping mechanism that might be worth the effort. "Oh, give me all your perfect things / Your weightlessness and pure belief," Rossiter begs on "(un)knowing," before admitting in startling tones that jump full octaves, "Oh God and Mary, Jesus Christ / Won't bless me for my every vice / I'll be redeemed in shame and grief / In knowing I may not find peace."

A deeply moving opus on life and death, *Welcome to Conceptual Beach* is gritty, heartbreaking and hopeful in equal parts. It's a reckoning with the fact that we're all magicians "making love and doing dishes," as the final track suggests, making peace with the banalities of life, trying to find the holiness in it all. —Mekenna Malan

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# TOP 5

## Electronic Albums that All Sound the Same

- » Loraine James - *Nothing EP*
- » **Nicolas Jaar - *Cenizas***
- » Nicolas Jaar - *Telas*
- » Theo Parrish - *Wuddaji*
- » UMFANG - *RIVEN*



### Nicolas Jaar *Cenizas*

**Other People**  
**Street: 03.27**  
 Nicolas Jaar =  
 (Caterina Barbieri  
 + Pantha Du Prince)  
 x Arthur Russell (*World of Echo*)

Fine, I oblige—not all electronic music sounds the same—and the front-runner, **Nicolas Jaar**, nonstop constructs album after album with exquisite attention to detail. The Chilean-American producer always astounds with his baroque textures, critical and cultured ear, and intuitive taste. I'd go as far to say that he is an enchanter stocked with spells and insight. *Cenizas*, released before *Telas*, is more dreary than his dance-floor-friendly **A.A.L.** albums, but its dreariness turns biblical, with each deconstructed song gasping for air.

The track "Menysid" gives a Sphinx-esque mood, hopelessly trapping listeners in pious drones and laser-like sounds which are comparable to sharpening kitchen knives. Similarly, "Gocce" is morosely hollow with its pitter-pat-

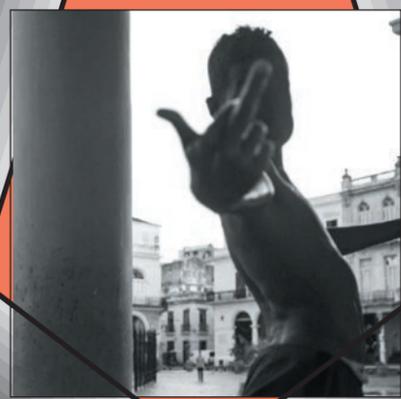
ter sound of objects slipping into some unknown. However, alongside the fixed tone of bleakness throughout, you notice Jaar's renewal as well. Specifically, in the gentle piano performance that is "Garden"—bringing us a great sense of warmth.

*Cenizas* cleanses the palette, and Jaar creates a rebirth from this machine that knits and knits. As **Joseph Conrad** said, "It has knitted space, time, pain, death, corruption, despair and all the illusions—and nothing matters." This so-called machine is amusing until it turns to ashes (Spanish word *cenizas*), and continues on again in a different, compelling form. The cycle feels complete in the final piece, "Faith Made of Silk." "Look around, not ahead," Jaar utters to us. Sure, Nicolas Jaar is no sermonizer, though he's implying that maybe there's nothing left to do but observe and wonder. This LP ultimately gives listeners a chance to explore the various rhythms life has to offer, even if Jaar himself relentlessly heads home to his roots. *Cenizas* is complex, spectacular and 2020's best. Period.  
 —Kassidy Waddell

# TOP 5

## Experimental Albums for Shedding Your Human Skin

- » **9T Antiope - *Placebo***
- » claire rousay - *a heavenly touch*
- » Nicole Mitchell and Moor Mother - *Offering - Live at Le Guess Who*
- » ONO - *Red Summer*
- » White Boy Scream - *BAKUNAWA*



### 9T Antiope *Placebo*

**PTP**  
**Street: 09.04**  
 9T Antiope = **Lingua Ignota + Lucrecia Dalt**

Following *Isthmus* (2017) and *Nocebo* (2019), *Placebo* completes 9T Antiope's (**Nima Aghiani** and **Sara Bigdeli Shamloo**) trilogy of albums with the most stunning release of the set. Constantly in flux without ever feeling frantic, *Placebo* is a masterwork of electronic composition, an album that finds bloody, volatile humanity in 9T Antiope's dust-glistened soundscapes.

On the vocal-heavy "Dose I: Danse Macabre," 9T Antiope deliver a set of theatrical vignettes, the music sharply jutting between sultry grooves and hollow drones, from song to poem to speech and back. Shamloo shapeshifts from narrator to narrator alongside these musical cuts, delivering melismatic singing, gremlin-like spoken word and more. Throughout "Danse Macabre," she outlines an extended metaphor between the human existence and that of horses,

honing in on shared dreams of abolition and liberty: "We neigh like horses refusing to be tamed / Yet our neighs neither break the rhythm nor the code."

Across *Placebo*'s second side ("Dose II: Memento Mori"), this shared being-ness slowly fades away into ether. Near the track's beginning, a bludgeoning techno beat lies under Shamloo's strained screaming. As things morph into a droning song section, it's as if the distorted bass hits were the final blow that finally breaks the being. When Shamloo returns to garbled spoken word, her text turns toward the ephemeral: "A beacon of hope / Desire of immortality."

The album closes with thunderous synthesizer clamor and ghostly Latin chorales, a wash of sound that subsumes the musician's presence into their at-once ancient and futuristic sound worlds—not resignation as much as acceptance, a deal of communion with the jagged peaks and vast oceans heard across *Placebo*. Shamloo's final audible words: "Inject the placebo / Inside your running veins / And dance / Till death equalizes all."  
 —Audrey Lockie



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# TOP 5

## Pop Albums of 2020 That Made Me Forget About the State of the World

- » Niall Horan - *Heartbreak Weather*
- » Lauv - *~how i'm feeling~*
- » **Halsey - *Manic***
- » Taylor Swift - *Folklore*
- » Dua Lipa - *Future Nostalgia*



### Halsey *Manic*

Capitol Records  
Street: 01.17

Halsey = Julia Michaels  
x Zara Larsson x Lorde

Way back in January, when Halsey released her third studio album, *Manic*, my first thought was, "this is a radical album." It's a whirlwind, 16-song chase after a feeling of catharsis, or more simply, trying to figure out who exactly you are and how you fit into this world. In retrospect—after what can be astutely described as a manic year—this album is much more than that. For Halsey, these sounds might remain the same: a collection of songs that embrace who she is, and how she's still figuring that out, one day at a time.

But for listeners, *Manic* is a reminder that nothing is set in stone. As 2020 has so cruelly reminded us, the world is constantly changing. The message behind *Manic* hits differently now. It's not just a diary of Halsey's—it's a cautionary tale that, even within the worst of times, there are good moments.

2020 is a wild combination of the jeering, alarm-raising, in-your-face energy of "3am" and the soft-spoken, slowed-down words of "929."

The fact of the matter is that there's a lesson to apply to 2020 from every song on *Manic*. It's one of my favorite albums of the year not just because I'm a big fan of Halsey, but because she was able to open up about herself in a way that is so true and real. Every once in a while, artists will make albums that are completely themselves—every chord, every lyric, every sonic choice screams them; that they are laying their souls bare in this collection of songs.

And when this happens, it's really something. *Manic* is exactly that: a beautiful collection of who Halsey really is, beyond the headlines. But it's also a reminder that who you are isn't a finite thing—it's constantly evolving, just as it should be. —Palak Jayswal

# TOP 5

## Albums You Can Photosynth(pop)esize To

- » **Buscabulla - *Regresa***
- » Choir Boy - *Gathering Swans*
- » Future Islands - *As Long As You Are*
- » Nation of Language - *Introduction Presence*
- » of Montreal - *UR FUN*



### Buscabulla *Regresa*

Ribbon Music  
Street: 05.20

Buscabulla = Belinda  
+ The Marías  
+ Y La Bamba

Buscabulla translates to "looking for noise," and that's exactly what this duo are doing. Their album and documentary, *Regresa*, meaning "return," is inspired by Puerto Rico, where Raquel Berrios and Luis Del Valle moved from Brooklyn after devastating hurricanes in 2017. It's a ride through what any kind of return feels like, and the first track, "Vámono," draws you in with drums before descending into sweet bliss.

Berrios' voice is backed by various instruments, such as guitars, drums, bass and synths, laying a strong backbone that seems to fall randomly in perfectly placed spots throughout their music. The track "Mío" does this near-ending cry that mimics the way the drums play lightly underneath Berrio's dreamy voice, but it feels organic, almost human-sounding, as it leaves you on a high, wonky-

fun note. In some instances, as in "Volta," keys come in behind Berrios' voice, causing small clashes throughout the song.

"Manda Fuego" starts off with a recording of an older man speaking about suffering before it turns into a smooth beat. It feels angelic and ironic, as Berrios asks for God to send fire and declaring that not everything is what it seems. "NTE," is my favorite track—I relate to Berrios lyrics that declare she should not be underestimated. What I like about Berrios' vocal style is that she follows the beats with the tone of her voice. In this vein, "El Aprieto" features her voice winding as if following the shape of a tornado.

I probably annoyed my roommates by how much I played *Regresa* over and over this year, but I don't care. Buscabulla made it to my "lucky finds of 2020" list! You can hear and see Puerto Rican culture through their music and music videos. It's an overall soothing album. If you want to expand your ears a bit, this is an album to help them grow. —Kimberly Portillo



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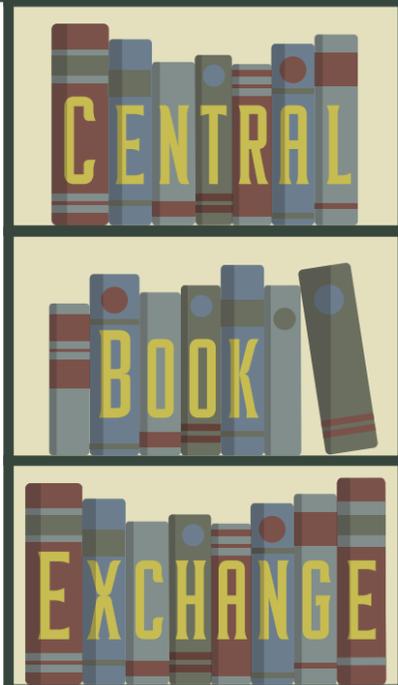
When **Pam Pedersen**—Owner of *Central Book Exchange*—was a kid, she would often draw the floor plans of imaginary houses for her future self to live in. While most of the rooms in these early scale drawings were conspicuously small, the library was always drawn, in Pedersen's words, "as large as a football field." In her adult life, between the shelves of her bookstore and a warehouse space for overflow, Pedersen oversees an ever-changing inventory of over 75,000 books. When asked if her childhood drawings predestined her vocation as a book-seller, Pedersen simply says: "Books have always been in my head and in my heart."

Located in Sugar House, *Central Book Exchange* has been selling and exchanging used books since 1968. When Pedersen bought the business in 2005, she had been looking for a way into the book business that would simultaneously benefit the community, and *Central Book Exchange* was the ideal opportunity. Since then, she has made the store her own, curating the massive collection and creating a faithful following of returning customers.

A unique trade-in-for-points process is the decades-old foundation of *Central Book Exchange*. Though customer's points are now tracked digitally instead of via notecard, the system remains as simple as ever: Bring your books into the store, and they will be quickly assessed and sorted by condition and size. Pedersen notes that *Central Book Exchange* does not want people to feel concerned by the prospect of books being rejected by the store. She knows this feeling often deters people from trading in their used and cherished belongings, she is markedly clear on the subject: "No book shaming!", she says. If the book is readable and ready to be loved by the next person, it is very likely that *Central Book Exchange* will accept the book in exchange for points. Every book on the shelves is labeled with a regular price and a "points price"—a discounted rate that offers customers a deal in exchange for contributing books, and value, to the store. For example, a used paperback novel priced at \$8 will be a few dollars cheaper for those with points.

While there is a big-box bookstore right down the street from *Central Book Exchange*, Pedersen is not intimidated by its presence. "The difference," she says, "is that those big chains have a lot of a little, and we have a little of a lot." While her store is unlikely to shelve a dozen fresh copies of a flashy new bestseller, Pedersen has plenty of space for "one copy each of cool little books that you're unlikely to find anywhere else." Recently, while digging through the offbeat margins of her inventory, Pedersen discovered a guidebook performing tricks with a calculator published in 1981. "We all stared

## A LITTLE OF A LOT AT



By Austin Beck-Doss  
austinbeckdoss@gmail.com



Photos: John Barkiple

*Central Book Exchange* offers a community-focused book-buying experience that privileges the joys of fresh finds and lost classics.

at it like: "Where did this come from?" she says. This is the sort of gem that sets *Central Book Exchange* apart from goliath book retailers. "We fill a totally different niche."

While the store's collection is massive and constantly in flux, Pedersen manages to keep the entire stock catalogued. This database can be accessed both in-store and on the *Central Book Exchange* website, where customers can browse and purchase books to be shipped or picked up in the store. The website has been a handy outlet for Pedersen during the pandemic, though she's glad that the store is open once again and operating under regular hours. "Luckily, there is plenty of room for people to spread out inside. We are open and safe," she says.

For Pedersen, the community building and heart-to-heart interactions that take place within the store are the all-important essence of *Central Book Exchange*. "The feeling in the store is that it is safe," she says. "Often, people begin telling me about a book, and then I realize they're also telling me about a cherished memory or a loved one who has recently passed away." Pedersen knows that this kind of vulnerability is a community service uniquely provided by small bookstores—that's why she is in the business. "The things in people's hearts making them happy or sad come out in meaningful ways," she says. "Humans share stories. That's what we do. In the bookstore, you can share yourself and you'll be honored and respected."

As the time that people are dedicating to reading books seems to wane, bookstores will require consistent and intentional support from their communities. "The people who are regularly coming in, bringing good books, offering recommendations to others and creating a comfortable space are critical to our humanity and society," Pedersen says. Though purchasing books helps the store to thrive, there are other forms of nurturing that are welcome, too. "The person who comes in to have an hour-long conversation is just as important to me as the person who buys a big stack," Pedersen says. "You're always going to feel better leaving the bookstore than when you came in. It's just a good place."

*Central Book Exchange* is open 10 a.m.–7 p.m. on weekdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. on Saturday and 12 p.m.–4 p.m. on Sunday. If you plan to trade in lots of books at once—i.e. several boxes or more—please contact the store ahead of time. Information regarding events and programs such as book clubs, poetry readings and warehouse sales is available online at [central-book-exchange.com](http://central-book-exchange.com) and in the store.

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**DIGITAL ARTHOUSE THEATER**

By Tim Schoof | [t.schoof7@gmail.com](mailto:t.schoof7@gmail.com)



With their new virtual *SLFS@Home* program, The Salt Lake Film Society seeks to bring the arthouse experience to viewers' own houses.

When COVID-19 broke out in March, arthouse movie theaters around the country faced the grim prospect of shutting down indefinitely. Amid lockdown, **Salt Lake Film Society (SLFS)** staff dove headfirst into the challenge to create *SLFS@Home*, a platform that allows members of the community to enjoy the experience of going to the movies at the iconic *Broadway* or *Tower* theaters in their own home. SLFS staff crafted "a tool for arthouses that allows a patron to have a seamless arthouse experience on a particular screen," says SLFS CEO/President **Tori Baker**. Adopted by 12 other indie theaters across the country, this new service connects patrons to the arts in the age of social distancing.

The *SLFS@Home* platform is intuitive to use. Any moviegoer can visit [SLFSathome.org](http://SLFSathome.org), browse the selection of available movies, buy a virtual ticket and watch from the comfort of their own home. However, it is not a streaming service. *SLFS@Home* replicates the authentic arthouse experience, complete with concessions packages that can be picked up curbside from *Broadway*. Some film offerings will be available on demand for long periods of time, but others are limited-availability screenings or live events with panels, requiring audiences to actively stay updated by following SLFS on social media.

In terms of programming, *SLFS@Home* offers a wide range of films, matching the variety audiences expect visiting one of their theaters in person. Patrons can choose from around nine movies at a given time in addition to any series and special events. During November, new films like the 2020 documentary *Donut King* and the virtual-reality experience *Traveling While Black* stood alongside the 4K restoration of the classic 1954 Italian drama *La Strada* (*The Road*). Meanwhile, they offered two film series—a retrospective of documentarian **Frederick Wiseman's** filmography

called *Wednesdays with Wiseman*, and *Filmex-ico 2020*, an annual program that highlights Mexican filmmakers and stories.

Once cases began rising, *SLFS* had to act fast. Fulfilling their mission while bringing in enough income to continue operation would be almost impossible with theaters around the country shut down. Head of Media Accelerator Studio (MAST) **Miles Romney** dedicated his time to build the tech behind *SLFS@Home* at a breakneck pace—and the work paid off. The staff realized they had to share the technology with other venues experiencing hardship. "Once we created it, we ethically didn't feel like we could sit on this," Baker says. "It is the right solution for art house cinemas. It's of interest to us in this time to share as much as we possibly can." Along with other theaters, local arts institution **Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC)** uses their own version of the *@Home* platform, *SLAC Digital*.

The soul of the arthouse theater lies in curation and community, with groups like SLFS handpicking a diverse selection of films for an adventurous audience. Local arthouses share an intimate relationship with the community and don't bend to greater market trends like the massive media conglomerates. "Ultimately, if you're a film lover, a cineaste [and] you're somebody who wants to see things that are curated from the experts in the area, then you're going to go to your local arthouse," says Baker. "The point with this technology creation was to make it so you could still go to your local arthouse."

In an overflowing digital marketplace, the arthouse connects audiences to films that may be overshadowed on other mainstream platforms. Some of the movies SLFS presents offer insights into cinematic history. Others speak from the rich experiences of people of color and marginalized communities. "These kinds of stories are getting buried in the algorithm," says Baker. With a new platform and the continuation of

*SLFS Motor Cinema* drive-in movie exhibitions, the staff delivered that level of curation for their patrons during an unprecedented time.

As 2020 draws to a close, more existential questions for the independent art community loom on the horizon. "The arts are in a lot of trouble right now," says Baker. With no clear end in sight for the pandemic, artists and curators rely on the support of patrons to keep the doors open, even if those doors are digital. The community participation at the heart of the arthouse grows more important than ever. "Whether it's free, digitally or not, become a donor. Choose to put value into those art forms," says Baker.

While the future remains uncertain, Baker and the rest of SLFS are maintaining their momentum into 2021 with a number of offerings, including an Israeli-Jewish film tour planned for February. SLAC will also debut productions via *SLAC Digital* in the near future. "I think this digital screen will potentially exist well into the future," says Baker. "What I'm seeing on a community level is, regardless of a vaccine or anything else, we've now discovered that there's a group of individuals who may decide that they always want to stay home or they don't want to go out and participate until we're well past some safety point."

With this new demand to meet, *SLFS@Home* will deliver an at-home arthouse experience for some time to come. "There's potential that it sticks around, but even if it didn't and it served its purpose during this time, then I think we've done good work," says Baker.

To learn more about *SLFS@Home* and future showings, follow Salt Lake Film Society on Instagram ([@saltlakefilmsoc](https://www.instagram.com/saltlakefilmsoc)) and visit their website ([SLFSathome.org](http://SLFSathome.org)).

# WELCOME TO WAS ANGELES



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# tailored design: HIMALAYAN ARTS

By Parker Scott Mortensen • @coldbloom

Photos by lmsorenson.net

The wooden mahalaka masks available at Himalayan Artswear speak to Owner Yeshi Shekhang's Tibetan heritage.

(L-R) Yeshi Shekhang and her husband Sonam Shekhang have found Utah to be a welcoming place to raise their family and establish their business.

Nestled in historic *Trolley Square*, *Himalayan Arts* is a reflection of **Yeshi Shekhang** and both her Tibetan and Indian heritage. *Himalayan Arts* offers Salt Lake City shoppers unique, handmade products and services.

*Himalayan Arts* products like singing bowls, thangka paintings, wooden mahakala masks, silver jewelry, prayer flags and incense speak to Shekhang's Tibetan side; embroidered cushions, pashmina shawls and yak wool scarves speak to her Indian upbringing. *Himalayan Arts* stands out in *Trolley Square*, and a large part of the store's appeal is how much custom, authentic merchandise is available. The store takes personalized orders for Tibetan thangkhas painted by Shekhang's brother and Shekhang herself creates custom embroidered dresses, blouses and skirts. This winter, they offer sheep and wool sweaters, mittens, booties, socks and handmade owl and dinosaur themed jackets for children. Face masks, free with a \$25 purchase, can also be customized. According to Shekhang, her designs for embroidered dresses are popular with women who are looking for modest yet intricate designs for church and work, and her adjustable-length harem and non-harem pants are favorites across gender lines.

This is all to say that there's a whole lot of custom product at *Himalayan Arts*, and the effort that takes should not go unappreciated. When Shekhang began offering her own designs, ensuring the highest quality meant navigating the world of suppliers on top of running a business. "It was like going to business school while running a small business," she says. "At first, many of my custom design orders were not to my specification and design, and I had to redo a lot of the work. At other times, I repurposed them [in]to children's clothing to reduce waste. I still do this during any downtime at the store."

The fact that Shekhang is here in Utah is no small miracle. In 1949, the peaceful country of Tibet was invaded and occupied by China, who sought Tibet's natural resources and its strategic border with India. Ten years later, Shekhang's parents would escape Tibet and seek refuge in India, where Shekhang was born only a few months later. Still, the effects of living under occupation reverberated for years—Shekhang's father was tortured by the Chinese government before he escaped. He never fully recovered, dying at age 53 and leaving five children. Searching for a vocation, Shekhang was able to attend an Indian school for tailoring opened by the **Dalai Lama** through the Tibetan government-in-exile. There, she learned to sew, design and make her own patterns, embroider and knit—all skills that would eventually bring *Himalayan Arts* to fruition. Eventually, in 1993, the U.S. government offered resettlement for 1,000 Tibetan refugees through a lottery system. Shekhang was lucky enough to be selected.

"Two days after I came to Utah, I started a sewing job at *Flatland Mountain* and started taking ESL lessons," Shekhang says. "I worked a full-time and a part-time job and saved everything I could. My husband and two children joined me six years later. We found Utah to be a great place to raise a family and met many good, kind people."

*Himalayan Arts* had its start as a vendor at small weekend festivals in the Salt Lake area. "I started with Tibetan silver jewelry—turquoise, coral and lapis—meditation items like singing bowls and incense, and some clothing from India," Shekhang says. Customers encouraged her to open a store, and so in 2012, "I quit my two jobs and, with a prayer, opened my small shop in *Trolley Square* mall with help from the amazing management team and the owner's support; eventually landing in my

current location on the first floor," she says. With her training in tailoring and embroidery, Shekhang was also able to take feedback on the clothing she sold to alter and design for more body types.

The care Shekhang puts into her work extends to her sense of community. In the early days of COVID-19, *Himalayan Arts* closed for almost two months. When *Trolley Square* reopened in May with limited hours, foot traffic was predictably slow. Shekhang sanitized and cleaned frequently, waiting for new customers. Summer festivals, usually an opportunity for Shekhang to meet new people and grow her business, were all canceled. Shekhang adapted and began making custom masks (for those with beards, for children, masks with and without nose wires) to attract new customers and relied on regulars to keep *Himalayan Arts* afloat.

"We are so grateful for our regular customers whose support has been relentless," Shekhang says. "We have many patrons who make a conscious effort to shop from small businesses like mine, and I cannot express my feeling of gratitude and community. We ask people to support small businesses through this holiday season by coming to visit *Trolley Square* while wearing a mask and maintaining social distance."

For small businesses like *Himalayan Arts* who depend on the kind of foot traffic that could now endanger others, every purchase counts. While our government may refuse to directly aid us and our neighbors, consider making the time to shop at local businesses who take responsible safety measures. You can plan your visit to *Trolley Square* and *Himalayan Arts* at [trolleysquare.com/himalayan-arts](http://trolleysquare.com/himalayan-arts).

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FOR THE LOVE OF PRINT:  
**Half Pint Studio**

By Theadora Soter  
theadoraisabella@gmail.com

Photos courtesy of Half Pint Studio

In a snowy backyard, behind a house not far from the heart of Salt Lake City sits a dark, turquoise shed with a wooden door and sides lined with windows. The shed belongs to **Allison and Skye Bitzer**, the local couple who founded Half Pint Studio printing press. When I asked Allison and Skye why they named their labor of hard work and love “Half Pint,” they had a few different answers: the small blue shed, the shared love of beer and ice-cream—“we’re also short,” Allison says. The tone of the response warrants a giggle and we all chime in laughing, a continuous theme of the interview proving that Allison and Skye really are the fun, carefree people they seem to be. And, their work reflects that.

Half Pint is about three years in the making, but it goes back to a time way before the company’s conception. Allison and Skye met in Junior High, and have always been involved in each other’s lives in some way or another. They grew up together, married each other, and are now creative partners who spend the days together in a little blue shed behind their house—if that’s not the dream, I don’t know what is. When I asked how they make it all work, Allison says: “Lots and lots of therapy!” We all laugh. “But really, we have such a strong relationship because we have known each other for so long. We are a bit of yin and yang and it really does work,” she says. “We balance each other out. We just really enjoy what we do so we make it work. We both have always wanted this business, and there’s so much reward that comes from building something with your partner and seeing it grow and succeed.”

Skye and Allison have both worked around print and design for a long time. While attending college together, Skye studied graphic design and Allison studied printmaking. They worked individually for a time, but the goal was always to create a place of their own. In fact, they bought their house with the intention of having a garage in the back that could be transformed into a studio. Skye says the goal was always to “take all that knowledge and bring it home.” And they did—literally. Although Allison was the one with expertise in printmaking and Skye focused on the design side, they flipped roles as their business grew. Skye says, “Allison had always been into stationary and I was into the printing side of it.” Their creative process is a collaborative one, and they both contribute equally to



Top: (L-R) As Half Pint Studio, Allison and Skye Bitzer use vintage printing processes to create their unique prints and cards.



Bottom: A sampling of the vibrant products printed through Half Pint Studio.

the success of Half Pint. Skye is quick to describe their process, and takes it as an opportunity to compliment his wife. He says, “Allison takes the initiative and is a master with the stationary. I’m just a boring designer—” She cuts him off: “Oh my gosh, no. You’re the detailed designer!” It’s clear that they do balance each other out.

The actual process that results in Half Pint’s beautiful stationery is one of true craftsmanship, and the way that both Allison and Skye talk about it shows their passion and dedication to their work. The couple started out screenprinting but ultimately landed upon the technique of letterpress printing. “We have a pretty hands-on process and a lot of care and craft goes into everything we print,” Skye says. “Basically, we like the idea of making things that are a little precious, and that you might think twice about throwing away. Things that might even be artifacts in the future.” Skye and Allison also learn a lot from the machinery itself, which is not what you would call modern by any means. “You could say some of our philosophy is inspired by the presses themselves: They’re 60-70 years old, and the quality and engineering that went into them is just astounding. They function almost exactly as they did when they were made,” says Skye.

Skye doesn’t deny the difficulty that accompanies the vintage process. “Sure, these machines are challenging sometimes, and yes, they’re more restrictive in what you can and can’t print with them, but they’re also a reminder that sometimes less is more, old can be new, and quality is better than quantity,” he says. Allison agrees, saying that “we create things that exist beyond a computer, things of quality—you can feel it in the paper. You lose a lot of the character with technology,” Allison says, “It’s a control thing, too. We’re both very controlling.” Once again, we laugh and the authenticity of the couple and their work shines through.

Half Pint is the definition of a modern ma-and-pa local print shop. Skye and Allison offer an array of stationery while also offering a unique and personalized experience, and their goal is to keep the tradition of the local print shop alive by creating quality work for the community around them, and they’re succeeding.

If you want to support the couple’s work, check out their Instagram @halfpint.studio.

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# CONTENT SHIFTER

## 11 Adult Swim Xmas Episodes

By Bill Frost • billfrostsfc@gmail.com

As this tattooed-anarchist-commie-progressive-liberal publication continues to wage War on Christmas (which I will refer to as Xmas from here on out), Content Shifter is all-in on the holidays. Why? Because spending time with TV is far more rewarding than wasting it with family. The ultimate TV source of Xmas Joy™ is Adult Swim. Here are 11 of the best yuletide episodes from Adult Swim to stream between eggnog blackouts.



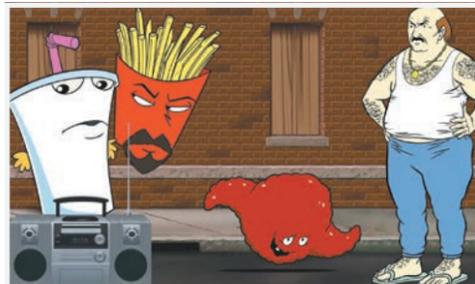
### Morel Orel (HBO Max)

"The Best Christmas Ever" (Season 1, Episode 10): One of the most gloriously anti-Christian TV series of all time, stop-motion-animated *Moral Orel* went dark AF for Xmas. Young boy Orel believes his little brother Shapey is the reborn, vengeance-hungry Jesus, and, equally distressing, his parents are divorcing. With two minutes left of Xmas, Orel finds his dad getting drunk at the local bar ("Forgetty's") and prays for divine intervention. Nothing happens; fade out. *Chef's kiss.*



### Metalocalypse (HBO Max)

"Dethmas" (Season 3, Episode 4): World-famous metal band Dethklok welcome erstwhile clown Dr. Rockzo into their castle at Xmas, who then sells their gifts for cocaine (as clowns do). Meanwhile, bassist Murderface hosts a Christian Xmas special, which ends with rhythm guitarist Toki being crushed under a giant cross and Dr. Rockzo receiving a handjob from lead guitarist Skwisgaar's drunk mom. Lead singer Nathan still doesn't believe the special is "brutal" enough.



### Aqua Teen Hunger Force (HBO Max)

"Cybernetic Ghost of Christmas Past from the Future" (Season 1, Episode 18): The Aqua Teen Hunger Force's next-door neighbor Carl is visited by the Ghost of Xmas Past, who happens to be a psychotic robot. The robot tells Carl and the ATHF that the original Santa Claus was an ape ("Sir Santa of Claws") as he fills Carl's above-ground pool with elf blood. To get rid of the robot, Carl sells his house to Glenn Danzig, who thinks the elf-blood pool is the home's best feature.



### Rick & Morty (HBO Max, Hulu)

"Anatomy Park" (Season 1, Episode 3): Rick brings a homeless man in a Santa suit to the house and creates a Jurassic Park-esque amusement plaza in his body. After Morty is microscopically shrunk and injected into Anatomy Park, the Santa dies and Morty is trapped in the park and hunted down by viruses and bacteria (too soon?). Rick takes the Santa body to space and explodes it, rescuing Morty as Earth is showered with blood and guts. Also, Jerry still sucks.



### NTSF:SD:SUV (Adult Swim)

"Wreck the Malls" (Season 3, Episode 12): The terrorist-busting NTSF:SD:SUV crew attempt to stop an evil Santa and his elf goons from taking a mall hostage to steal valuable Petey the Pitbull dolls. Inside the mall, team wildcard Trent races against time to save his sons (Cherokee and Jericho—nice), *Die Hard*-style. After Santa is literally torn apart by crazed shoppers, we're left with the moral of the story: "Don't trust anyone you love, and don't love anyone you trust."



### The Venture Bros. (Hulu)

"A Very Venture Christmas" (Season 1, Episode 14): This twisted riff on *A Christmas Story* finds Dr. Venture repeatedly waking from dreams within dreams within dreams, one of which involves him escaping being sodomized by Krampus. The Xmas dreamscapes also feature several guest characters from Venture lore, including archenemy The Monarch, who's plotting to blow up the Venture compound with a C4 Baby Jesus. This is all more poignant than it sounds.



### Space Ghost Coast to Coast (HBO Max)

"Waiting for Edward" (Season 5, Episode 12): As talk show host Space Ghost attempts to interview guest star **Denis Leary** (it's 1998; Leary was a thing), Moltar announces that not only is he going to blow up the planet, but he's also throwing a Total Devastation Sale ("30% off all men's outerwear!"). After the planet explodes, cut to Space Ghost telling a group of children, "And so, kids, that's the story of how I saved Christmas—now get back to work, ya fat humps!"



### The Boondocks (HBO Max)

"A Huey Freeman Christmas" (Season 1, Episode 8): Huey takes creative control of his elementary school's annual Xmas play, firing his classmates, hiring musical director **Quincy Jones** and casting a Black Santa. This eventually gets Huey's liberal, white teacher fired, but of course he lands a college professorial job in African-American studies. Meanwhile, Riley and Uncle Ruckus raise hell at the mall. Better—and more racially inclusive—than *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.



### Squidbillies (HBO Max)

"The War on the War on Christmas" (Season 11 episode 9): Local millionaire Dan Halen installs a multicultural evergreen representing all religions at the Dougal County shopping center for Xmas, which angers Christian redneck Early. After nailing himself to a cross at Halen's Winter Solstice Festival, Early sets out to take back "Merry Christmas" from PC culture and Starbucks, only to bring the evergreen crashing down and killing bystanders. Bill O'Reilly smiles up from hell.



### Black Dynamite (HBO Max)

"A Crisis at Christmas or The Dark Side of the Dark Side of the Moon" (Season 1, Episode 5): To get the poor children of the Whorephanage moon rocks for Xmas, Black Dynamite joins O.J. Simpson on a lunar mission. But, when O.J. leaves him stranded on the moon, everyone believes BD to be dead—and they're cool with it. When Black Dynamite finally returns with the moon rocks, he flushes them down the toilet because the kids are "ungrateful." Damn *straight*.



### Tom Goes to the Mayor (Adult Swim)

"Rats Off to Ya" (Season 1, Episode 4): When Tom comes up with an idea to sell novelty "Rats Off to Ya" T-shirts to raise money for his son's Xmas present, The Mayor gets him a kiosk at the mall. Soon, "Rats Off to Ya" is stolen by a chain store and turned into a pop-culture hit, leaving Tom penniless. But he concludes that the joy he inadvertently brought to people is the true reason for the season—as is getting fucked over by local government and corporate America.

With winter and the holiday season comes a lot more time spent indoors. If you're tired of killing time with the same old board games that spark family arguments every year, why not try something new? The world of games has been experiencing a renaissance over the last decade, and the options are more creative and engaging than ever. Here, *Oasis Games* Owner and Director **Alex Sittner** talks what board games offer during the darker months and which games you can pick up at *Oasis Games*.

# OASIS GAMES

## A SMORGASBORD OF BOARD GAMES

By Rio Connelly • [globalricon@gmail.com](mailto:globalricon@gmail.com) || Illustration: Ricky Vigil

**SLUG:** For those unfamiliar, what is *Oasis Games*?

**Alex Sittner:** *Oasis* is a retail store for any games you don't need a computer to play with another human. We operate a beautiful and welcoming community space for tabletop gamers to meet friends new and old. We offer a massive variety of board games both new and used. We also have a program for buying people's older games so that they can get new ones even easier.

**SLUG:** How did you get into tabletop gaming, and what do you enjoy about it?

**Sittner:** I have been gaming for my entire life, since my brothers started getting me into *Dungeons & Dragons* at age 5. I love it as an outlet to solve puzzles, build my problem-solving abilities, compete and meet people who liked those things as much as I do.

**SLUG:** Everyone has played classic board games like *Risk*, *Monopoly* and *Clue*. What do newer board games do to make their experience different?

**Sittner:** The largest difference is that the games have gotten very diverse, and because of the growth, they have been able to create games in a lot of categories that would have never been explored before. If you are someone who loves science fiction and space travel, [or] if you are someone who loves wine and touring vineyards around the world and learning about vintages, there is a game for you.

**SLUG:** How has the pandemic affected board game retail at *Oasis*?

**Sittner:** People love games, and because there is so much more time being spent at home, folks

*Oasis Games* in downtown SLC offers over 2,500 games for a fun yuletide time away from the screen and among loved ones.

are playing them a lot more. We have seen a big rise in family games and games that can be played with a varied number of players.

This couple came in to find a game they could play together. *Unlock!* is basically an escape room in a box. They purchased the first one and brought it home that night and played it together. The very next day, they came back in and said it was so much fun [that] they had to get another one. They came in each week for a while going through every *Unlock!* game we had in stock.

We have another gentleman who comes in regularly and gets games to play with his sons. They do not live with him, and the time they have together can be limited. The shared experience that you gain from learning to play a game and then playing it with other humans is tremendous, and you see this even more in children.

**SLUG:** What games have been selling best recently?

**Sittner:** *Cover Your Assets*, *Secret Hitler*, *Settlers of Catan* and *Pandemic*, the cooperative game of preventing a deadly virus from overthrowing the world.

**SLUG:** Can you share some games you think are destined to be classics?

**Sittner:** First off is *Clask!* Fast-paced and taking 10 seconds to learn, it has become one of our favorite ways to settle inter-office disputes. *Sheriff of Nottingham* is a bluffing game by **Arcane Wonders**. It is a quick-moving game that everyone is constantly involved in. It gives a chance to figure out who the best bluffers in your friend group are. The last is *Age of Dirt*, a brand-new game in which each player is given a tribe of cave-men. I don't want to give too much away, but on your way to earning 10 points, you will fight tigers and bears, and even use a giant hammer.

**SLUG:** Why should people be playing and gifting games right now?

**Sittner:** The shared experience with other people—learning and enjoying the game together can be such an amazing experience and a great way to spend time with family members who may not have tons of things in common.

**SLUG:** Why is *Oasis* a premier local spot to get games?

**Sittner:** Our amazing team of rock-star employees who know more about board games than just about anyone, ... [and] we offer a selection of over 2,500 games to buy and play at home with friends.

Whether for gift ideas or just something to fill time, check out *Oasis Games* and have some fun! Learn more or shop online at [oasisgamesslc.com](http://oasisgamesslc.com), and check out the store itself for some socially distanced browsing.

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# LOCAL MUSIC SINGLES ROUNDUP

As 2020 rolls to a close and the music world at large remains virtually unrecognizable from its former self, Utah's shining musical talents relentlessly continue to provide us with stellar songs and sublime sounds. Find here four reviews

of new singles from local artists, a set of music that showcases the breadth of our state's artistic offerings; four songs harnessing an awe-inspiring emotional, stylistic and creative range between them.



KOBA

**"Late Night"**  
Self-Released  
Street: 10.17  
KOBA = Lil Uzi Vert + Lxst + 6lack

Dropping their second track of 2020, local rapper KOBA is hitting us with the afterparty cut of the year with "Late Night." Following months after the release of "Purple Haze," "Late Night" pairs well with its downtempo sound and long-night, moody atmosphere. Opening with a melodic guitar, the beat builds as KOBA's vocals pierce through, with reverb-soaked bass topping the beat off. "Late Night" creates an atmosphere of smoke-filled rooms illuminated by late-night street lights where the party is just getting started. KOBA is someone that should be on everyone's radar for making impressive, mood-building rap. —Connor Brady



Savage Daughters

**"420 to SLC"**  
Self-Released  
Street: 10.16  
Savage Daughters = ESG's Step Off + Bastro

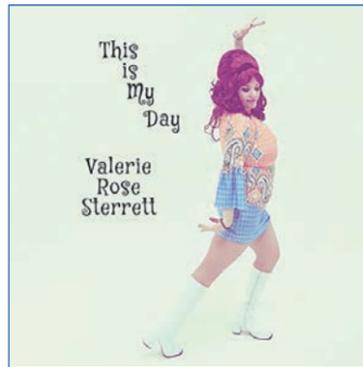
On Savage Daughters' astounding new song, "420 to SLC," the trio of **Summer Sigritz** and **Alex and Tut Lopez** envelops themselves in a fog that shrouds the intersection of fear, pain and ecstasy. Across the song's runtime, the group rev up and down between tight-knit punk aggression and lead-heavy slow burns, uniting these disparate parts with a web of ping-pong guitar effects and sludgy reverb. As "420 to SLC" explodes into its final peak, a delirious combination of the song's electrifying shouted refrain and a stone-faced, spoken word background vocal implodes distant antonyms into a shining, swirling cloud. Loud is soft, fast is slow, anger is happiness—Savage Daughters create music that gargles paradox and spits out self-shaped magic. —Audrey Lockie



SONIALOXO

**"BELLADONNA"**  
discoSPRINKLES  
Street: 10.24  
SONIALOXO = Dua Lipa x Lady Gaga

Belladonna, or as some call it, deadly nightshade, is a drug disguised in the shape of a delicious berry. It's so potent that it can kill children. It's toxic, and in Italy, women used it to enlarge their pupils and make them more beautiful. All this context is needed to understand SONIALOXO's new single, "BELLADONNA," a maddening, near-three-minute, electric-dipped pop song. Upon first listen, it seems the lyrics don't make any sense, as if the narrator is changing perspectives from verse to verse. That's the effect of belladonna personified—accordingly, both the muse and narrator of this single. Simply put, this song is a trip, "and SONIALOXO uses "BELLADONNA" to capture listeners under her terrifying, but exhilarating, spell. —Palak Jayswal



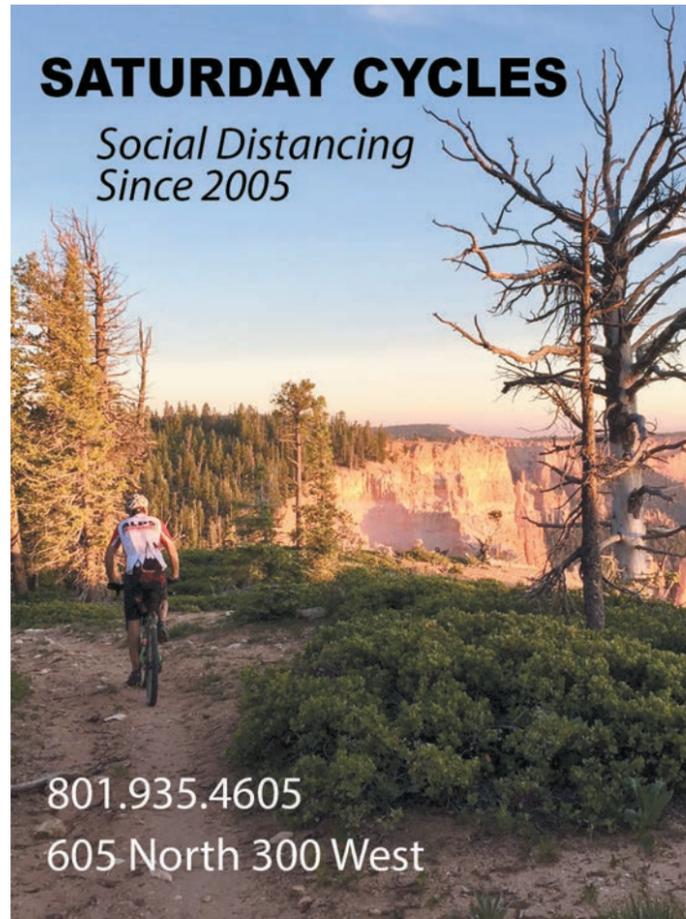
Valerie Rose Sterrett

**"This is My Day"**  
Forget Me Not  
Street: 07.10  
Valerie Rose Sterrett = Jenny Lewis + Oasis

Ogden-based singer-songwriter Valerie Rose Sterrett's new single, "This is My Day," arrives with a retro-flared music video. This tune molds alt-rock and psychedelia together, alongside empowering lyrics about seizing the darkest of days. The video taps into '60s-revivalism, with Sterrett sporting a red-headed beehive hairdo and thigh-high boots while the remaining four-piece dons complementing, colorful attire. The focal point of the video is the band grooving with their instruments in front of a white background, until a kaleidoscope vision takes over. A distorted guitar solo wails as the members trippily swirl around before returning for one more clap-along chorus. "This is My Day" embodies a nostalgic catchiness that's undeniably notable. —Kenz Waldon

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# BEER OF THE MONTH

By Chris and Sylvia Hollands  
chris.hollands@porchdrinking.com  
sylvia.hollands@porchdrinking.com

**Beer Name:**  
**Narwhal 2020**  
**Brewery:** Sierra Nevada  
**Brewing Co.**  
**ABV:** 10.2%  
**Serving Style:**  
**12-ounce bottle**



It's stout season, so it seems appropriate to dive into the darker Narwhal to close out this interesting start of the decade. Honestly, we generally do not adhere to the "stout season" mantra, per se; we'll enjoy these delicious brews during any of the 365 days. Admittedly though, they do seem to be more appealing during the colder months of the year with their robust flavors and stronger-than-most alcohol content. Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. has what seems like a suitable offering. In a world full of adjunct-infused pastry stouts and carefully blended, barrel-aged ales, it's nice to find a more traditional take on the style. Sierra Nevada's annual release of their Narwhal imperial stout is something we like to pick up every year. It's a bit of a throwback brew for us, and this point of nostalgia is uplifting during "these uncertain times." Since imperial stouts age well, we like to save multiple years' worth of releases to enjoy and test the vertical. If you have the chance, be sure to grab a few extras!

**Description:**  
Their Narwhal imperial stout comes in a familiar 12-ounce bottle labeled with a picture of the titular beast. Unlike the friendly narwhal who ushers away Buddy the Elf, this narwhal has more in common with the great leviathan in *Moby Dick*. After removing the bottle top, the faint sound of a short hiss from the blowhole can be heard. After the release, we pour

the murky liquid, which creates a uniform and smooth head, ending with a rocky and uneven visual. This layer remains for several minutes before eventually subsiding into the sea of darkness. The aroma is familiar with sweet, malty sugar mixed with toasted dark-roast coffee, giving a hint of something to hook you. That hook is the presence of the roasted malt blending with black premium coffee, and the beer finishes with a hint of black licorice that is prevalent throughout consumption. As this beer warms up, you can genuinely enjoy the smooth mouthfeel and ever-present alcohol dancing on the tongue. Over the years, this staple beer is consistent.

**Overview:**  
Sierra Nevada, one of the most well-known early craft beer pioneers, paints the Narwhal as a monster. Although all signs point to this being a pretty accurate assumption, there's something especially important about sticking to the basics and holding on to tradition. Truth be told, Narwhal may have been a beast back in the day with its monster-size ABV compared to many in its close peer group. But by today's standards, there are, in fact, many beers that can topple this one over in the imperial stout category. Where Sierra Nevada wins is that we can count on something each year from the brewery and know exactly what we're going to get. It's this level of quality that makes the beer so special.

In addition to the Narwhal, Utah is lucky to have many other beers of this kind that can be found from our own local craft breweries. Squatters' Outer Darkness, Red Rock's Drioma and 2 Row's Dark Alley are some amazing go-to stouts that you can generally find available most times of the year. So yes, it's cold, and sure, this is "stout season," but don't skip on these beers the rest of the year. Narwhal usually makes its appearance known at the DABC come fall, so look for it there, and don't miss out on the many local options out there to enjoy year-round.

Cheers!

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I bought my first Nikon (N65) camera on Black Friday in 2004 as a Christmas gift to myself. Who would have known that 16 years later, Nikon would be giving me one of their newest mirrorless cameras (Z7) and that I would be a Nikon 100 photographer? I love how sharp and colorful my images are with Nikon. I'm a Nikon forever kind of woman.

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