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SLUG MAG

An abstract illustration of a bicycle. The frame is composed of various geometric shapes in orange, blue, and green. The wheels are large circles, with the front wheel being blue and the rear wheel being orange and white. The background features a large orange shape at the top, a blue shape on the right, and a yellow shape at the bottom. The overall style is modern and graphic.

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ABOUT THE COVER: With happy resemblances to Deco illustration, **Alli VanKleeck** of **Hot Slice Design Studio** imbues 2-D shapes with the fresh-breeze wonderment of cycling in the springtime air. You can find more of VanKleeck's work on Instagram @avkleeck and hotslicedesign.com.

Nkenna Onuwuzuruoha

Contributor Limelight
Guest Writer



Nkenna Onuwuzuruoha, also known as Kenna or Kenna O., is a Ph.D. candidate at the *University of Utah* in Writing and Rhetoric Studies—or, as she likes to call it, combining two passions, Riding and Rhetoric Studies. Onuwuzuruoha is excited to share her thoughts on the right bag for bike rides while sprinkling in anecdotes about SLC bike culture (pgs. 8–9). Kenna's been featured in *SLUG* a few times—she holds four *SLUG Cat* 1st place wins in the women's division and was interviewed about **Salty Spokes** (a women-trans-femme-centered bike group) and **WeBikeYou** (a documentary on cycling in SLC). This is her second time contributing an article for *SLUG*'s Bike Month Issue!

Tim Schoof

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Writer



Starting his time as a Contributing Writer in December of 2019, Tim Schoof has defined his role by covering community-based stories ranging from articles about distilleries and *Home Glow Hydroponics* to this month's article on the *Suspension Syndicate* bike-repair shop. "Personally, I wanted to get involved with *SLUG* because I thought the magazine was a great diving-in point for the arts and culture scene, and it's connected me with businesses and experiences I never would've known about otherwise," says Schoof. Currently going to grad school for public policy at the *University of Utah*, Schoof aspires to publish a novel or two in the near future. Check out his most recent article on pg. 7!

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wasatchadaptive sports

RIDES ON

Wasatch Adaptive Sports has both indoor and outdoor cycling classes that become active seasonally, with outdoor beginning in the spring and indoor beginning in the fall.

By Austin Beck-Doss • austinbeckdoss@gmail.com

Photo courtesy of Wasatch Adaptive Sports

Wasatch Adaptive Sports has been providing adaptive recreation programs for people with disabilities for more than 40 years. In the winter season, WAS offers skiing lessons at Snowbird Mountain Resort seven days a week, and the organization focuses on cycling in the warmer months. When the pandemic put a pause on programming in March 2020, the organization worked quickly to create safe and innovative opportunities for their regular participants to keep moving.

"While we were on hold last spring, we quickly realized that a lot of people who regularly ride bikes with us wouldn't be able to keep it up if they didn't have access to equipment," says **Jared Dangerfield**, WAS Program Coordinator. "Adaptive bikes are very expensive, and it became clear that we had to find a way to get our bikes back into people's lives." WAS soon established a contact-free rental system and lent out up to 20 bikes at a time.

Eventually, it became possible to offer in-person instruction, and WAS was able to return to their favorite cycling routes along the Jordan River Trail. However, as the snowy season approached, WAS again had to come up with clever solutions that would allow their cycling programs to forge on. In past years, WAS has hosted indoor winter cycling sessions in a Murray warehouse, but that wasn't possible this time around. Instead, Dangerfield and others decided to offer weekly virtual cycling classes throughout the winter.

As the virtual cycling plan gathered steam, the organization worked fast to distribute equipment and help participants set up exercise stations in their homes. Each rider was fitted with a bike and a stable roller mount to enable stationary cycling. Many

of the people who signed up for the virtual lessons were long-time WAS riders, so Dangerfield and co. knew exactly which bike to bring to their houses. From the safety of their respective homes, cyclists between the ages of 20 and 70+ logged on every Monday night for the entire winter season.

"Leading up to the first virtual lesson we thought, 'This might be pretty weird,'" says Dangerfield. However, as soon as the Zoom cameras turned on, the vibe was pure stoke. "We were blown away with how interactive everybody was," Dangerfield says. The virtual cycling program offered two essential resources that were difficult to come by during winter lockdown: recreation and human connection. WAS participant **Marshall Evans** appreciated the physical benefits of the workouts, but mostly he joined in to spend time with his friends. "I love being part of the WAS fam," says Evans. "It's a much needed break from life's stresses."

With winter 2020/21 in the books, WAS has now returned to the outdoors. "100% of the people who rode with us virtually are going to be riding with us this summer," says Dangerfield. In an effort to expand their mountain biking programming, WAS will be adopting the Little Valley Trailhead in Draper as a home spot for the season. "There are four different routes to choose from," says Dangerfield. "We'll be maintaining those and making sure that adaptive mountain bikers have a positive introduction to the sport."

To match their growing focus on mountain biking, WAS is actively expanding their fleet of adaptive cycles. "We have bikes of all shapes and sizes," Dangerfield says. "There are handcycles, foot-pedaled recumbent cycles, two-wheeled upright

bikes, and more." Many of the bikes that WAS owns are highly customizable, and the cycling instructors on staff are able to help riders with various diagnoses and disabilities find the right bike for them. A number of the bikes in the fleet have a built-in electric assist, which is especially useful for adaptive mountain bikers who pedal heavy bikes through rough terrain with their arms and upper body. "An adaptive mountain bike weighs up to 100 pounds," says Dangerfield, "with the e-assist you can ride for longer, which just means more fun." In addition to a robust biking schedule, WAS also hosts weekly paddle sports sessions at nearby reservoirs throughout the summer.

All abilities and experience levels are welcome at WAS. Many participants find the organization after a new injury or diagnosis. "I never thought I would have the opportunity to get as active as I have for fun after becoming an amputee," says **Danyale Eckersley**. "Being a WAS participant has meant a lot to me."

Check out the Wasatch Adaptive Sports website (wasatchadaptiveports.org) for updates and access to their monthly newsletter. Summer programs are currently open for registration by phone at 801.834.0476, and scholarship opportunities are available. WAS welcomes help from volunteers, and you don't need to be an expert in a recreational activity to get involved. Though primarily a locally focused program, WAS' ultimate aim is to be a force of support for anyone in the adaptive recreation community. "Our doors are always open," says Dangerfield. "Even if you aren't participating in our program, we're happy to be a resource for people with disabilities looking to get outside [and] recreating."

SUSPENSION SYNDICATE

SHOCKS AND SYMBIOSIS IN THE SALT LAKE MOUNTAIN BIKE SCENE

By Tim Schoof
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Photos: @robbookthis

Entering its fourth year in business, *Suspension Syndicate* specializes in mountain bike suspension services backed by expertise. Founder **Cody Priano** spent his entire professional career prior to *Suspension* working in bike shops, growing fascinated with the intricate mechanics of suspension systems. He began *Suspension Syndicate* in 2018 in a tiny, 400-square-foot unit. The business blossomed since then with the additions of partners **Flo Irizarry**, **Blake Sommer**, **Erik Denwalt**, **Stu Greer** and **Dave Crespo**. The team operates according to a collaborative vision of indie business, one where shops can cooperate with one another and act as platforms for community, building common ground around a shared passion for mountain biking.

Suspension Syndicate offers aftermarket repairs, service, diagnostics and custom tuning for mountain bike suspension products. In addition to this service, *Suspension Syndicate* also stocks Vorsprung parts, the Diaz Suspension Design RUNT air spring fork cartridge, CAPO-RC2 dampers and EXT racing products. According to Priano, taking care of walk-in, appointment and mail-order customers makes up half of their business. The other side involves cooperating with local bike shops, offering expedited suspension service and bike pick-ups and drop-offs. If a client schedules an appointment, repairs take only a few days. Walk-ins may have to wait longer. Working with other shops, they complete most repairs in a tight one-week turnaround.

This strategy cuts down the time of maintenance for other shops and reduces the waiting period their customers have to endure. "It's hard for shops to send suspensions off because there's only a few big suspension service centers in the country," says Priano. "In Salt Lake Valley, before we were here, a customer would come

(L-R) For Cody Priano, Founder of *Suspension Syndicate*, and Stu Greer, the shop embodies its namesake definition: "having multiple people [work] for the same common good."

into a bike shop and if their suspension needed to be serviced it would be gone for three, four, five weeks, which is a long time to be without your bike. Also, it weighs on the customer expectation, even though the shop has nothing to do with it."

Suspension Syndicate developed a niche business model by design. Rather than compete outright with bigger, more generalized mountain bike shops, Priano and his associates take a symbiotic approach, meeting the need for knowledgeable suspension specialists. "If a shop is doing their job right, then they have made a friendship or social bond with their customer, and so the customer is going to continue to go there no matter what," says Priano. *Suspension Syndicate* steps in to support the valuable bonds their partner businesses build with customers, and this ethos shines through even in the business's name: "The definition of a syndicate is having multiple people [work] for the same common good," says Priano.

In the past, local shops acted as social hubs, connecting diverse people into networks united by their shared interests well before social media catered to countless micro-cultures. The friendly local record store, cafe or bike shop all provided welcoming spaces for people to share information and build lasting relationships. With the rise of direct-to-consumer shopping driven by uncaring market forces, these social pillars risk fading away, taking the communities they support with them. "There's so few places where you can go and find camaraderie and community. For me, the mountain bike scene has always provided a space where I can find connections with people regardless of their views or perspectives, and we can find a common ground in which we can then break into other types of conversations," says Priano.

"I emphasize working with your local bike shop and going in, meeting the people, being involved with the community, finding the social space in which you can connect to people and find something that you are both passionate about," he says. By supporting other businesses and providing quality expertise, *Suspension Syndicate* itself attests to the community-building potential Priano saw working

in bike shops, where people could meet, grow and create lasting bonds.

Indie shops offer physical forums for their respective communities, but they can also help build the infrastructure that supports their passion. When they can, *Suspension Syndicate's* members attend Salt Lake Valley Trails Society meetings and connect with trail-building advocates. As the sport grows in popularity, demand for new trails soars. The need for all sorts of trails looms large, but Priano also worries that the state fails to offer more technical, advanced courses for the avid bikers who lead the community in new, bold directions. "In Utah, we're kind of behind the times when it comes to trail building," says Priano.

Suspension Syndicate experienced healthy growth along with the scene, but Priano feels unsure if the pandemic that drove many Utahns to the trails directly contributed in 2020. "I don't know if my business is growing because of COVID or if COVID is contributing to our growth, but I think it will. For all of those people who stay with the sport, they're probably going to find us when they need service," he says.

As they wait for Coronavirus-era bikers in need of servicing, *Suspension Syndicate* wants to maintain their niche within the Salt Lake mountain bike ecosystem. Now that the business moved into a larger space, they hope to eventually break into fabricating custom parts themselves. Meanwhile, their focus remains on the mountain biking community they serve, supporting more local races and events while advocating for new trails.

To learn more about *Suspension Syndicate*, follow them on Instagram (@*suspension-syndicate*) or visit their website (suspensionsyndicate.com).

Suspension Syndicate • 124 Beryl Ave., South Salt Lake • 601.884.1158 • service@suspensionsyndicate.com

BACK OR BIKE?

Four bag types commuters should consider for hauling your stuff around SLC

By Nkenna Onwuzuruoha • kenna.o@gmail.com || Photos by [LmSorenson.net](https://www.instagram.com/LmSorenson.net)

As you spend more and more time as a commuter cyclist, you'll focus on having quick, safe and comfortable rides. You'll also inevitably need to choose the right bag for your commutes. The miscellaneous items once nestled into the car passenger seat now need to be on your back or bike. Even if you're already an avid cyclist, the ideal bags for commuting are different from the ones used for bikepacking and mountain biking. While sometimes expensive, good bike bags are sturdy enough to withstand the elements yet convenient enough to carry when you're off your bike. Here are the bags I've had in heavy rotation during my 10 years cycling SLC.

CHROME MESSENGER BAG

Find at: chromeindustries.com



The first bags I had to haul things around were messenger bags. I looked around at what other cyclists were sporting and saw that messenger bags were it. I bought a bulky, no-name one at the now-closed *Our Store*, the LGBTQ+ thrift store. It didn't have a price tag. The cashier looked it over for a few seconds and sold it to me for \$5—a great deal for a starter. It also had the essentials for any good commuting bag: a thick reflective strip on the front that would provide more visibility at night, a waist strap so the bag wouldn't slide down from my back to my chest, and a place on the shoulder strap to clip on my keys for easy access.

Eventually, I decided to donate the no-name bag and find something sleeker and water-proof. I snagged my Chrome messenger bag at a friend's going-away party. Some of the nicest gear I've acquired in SLC have been hand-me-downs from folks looking to upgrade or downsize—a good thing to keep in mind if you're looking for durable, quality gear. Since I got the bag for

free and was using it regularly, I've had the means and interest in buying accessories for it. During a visit to Chicago, I bought a matching Chrome phone case that attached to the strap.

Both bags can haul a sizable amount. The no-name bag was large enough to transport anything I needed for the day. The Chrome bag is great for rides where I'll need items like my laptop and extra layers, but not much more.

As a leftie, it did take a few rides to get used to messengers. I finally got the hang of it and am able to enjoy accessing the contents of my bag without having to take it off. I've even found inventive ways of carrying items that can't fully fit, like my yoga mat. I also appreciate how my messenger bag doesn't cover all of my back but is angled on the mid part of it. It diminished the likelihood that my back would be drenched in sweat during summer rides.

TIMBUK2 TANDEM PANNIERS

Find at: [TIMBUK2.COM](https://timbuk2.com)



What made me switch from carrying things on my back to carrying things on my bike was a new steed and set up. I decided to invest in a Surly Cross-Check bike. I bought it used, but it's a dream commuter. I added a rack that a friend found at the dump on one of his visits there during a home-improvement project. Now I just needed to find a bag to latch onto it. I knew that I'd be walking around a lot before and after rides. I didn't want something that was great attached on a rack but required me to lug it around without a strap. I went the used route for purchasing a bag because I knew that one from a reputable cycling brand would last longer than something coming from a big-box store.

I looked for a week or two on Facebook Marketplace and KSL for an affordable bag that would work for the amount of biking and running around I planned to do on a regular basis. I decided to go with the tandem panniers. The internal and external compartments allowed me to carry items in an organized manner. I could also clip

each side together to form a satchel.

The tandem panniers work well for my commute. I can quickly grab items like a light jacket, beanie or food while stopped at a light or stop sign, or even while pedaling if all is clear—a skill you may want to work your way up to. I bought a small cargo net to strap things that wouldn't fit into the panniers onto the top of my rack: toilet paper, a package containing roller skates I need to mail off and even a hefty bag of top-soil.

Though designed for commuters in mind, these still do the trick for longer rides. I've used this bag for the handful of 60-plus mile rides I've done in the dead of summer. I pack two-three bottles of Gatorade, a bag of grapes and some other miscellaneous items. I can evenly distribute the weight with the panniers, and the energy boost I need to continue on with my ride is always in reach.

TIMBUK2 ROLL TOP

Find at: timbuk2.com



These bags are just like the backpacks you toted around as a kid but with an added bonus: a top you can roll down and strap to enclose the contents inside. Just like the messenger bag, the roll top tends to signal to onlookers "serious cyclist." If one factor in choosing the right bag is fitting in with 20-somethings who have done a stint as a bike messenger, this is a good option.

I recently rode with a friend who has a vinyl Chrome roll top that's much newer with more external compartments that make it easier to attach and grab stuff as he biked. No matter how confident he actually felt on his bike that day, with his bag, he looked like a badass who was skilled enough to tackle anything a ride in the city could throw at him.

Though a roll top is a choice to have your back and shoulders do the grunt of work carrying your stuff around, you'll be surprised at how much these bags can haul without weighing you down. I normally used my tandem panniers, but when I took

my rack off my bike to compete in the *Salty Lizard 100* last year, I had a months-long love affair with my roll top after the race.

I'm able to haul a lot in this bag, which makes it an easy favorite for doing things you'd think you'd need a car for, like transporting a load of laundry or going grocery shopping. Try not to overpack, though—if you do, you won't have a lot of neck and head mobility.

Whatever can't fit quite right in your bag, you may still be able to pedal around with. Try keeping the roll top partially or fully open. Or, keep a tote bag around. Fill your roll top with as much of the stuff you're trying to haul and strap it down as you normally would. Fill your tote bag with everything that couldn't fit into your roll top. Then tie the tote bag handles together in a knot and then tie the handles around the roll top strap. It might look janky, but trust me—it gets the job done. Try it with a frozen pizza or box of cereal sometime.

VELOCITY BAGS CADDY

Similar: etsy.com/shop/alterationannies

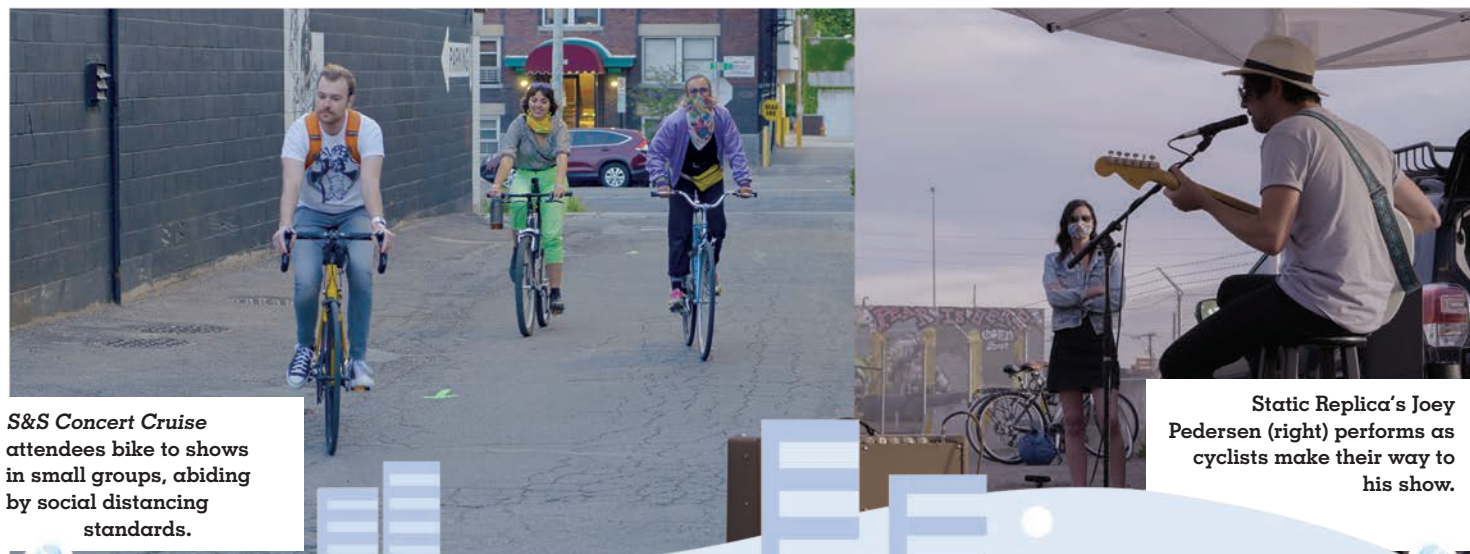


Time for a little SLC bike history. VeloCity Bags, owned by **Nate** and **Debbie Larsen**, made vegan bags and bike accessories for years that had the same quality and attention to detail as any of the bags I've mentioned thus far. VeloCity was more than just bags; it was also about community-building. Nate and Debbie organized the annual *VeloCity Weekend*, which featured goldsprints, bike jousting and alleycats. There were cool swag bags and shirts commemorating the weekend designed by SLC artists. It'd be a shame not to talk about VC when taking urban city cycling bags here in SLC.

Too timid to compete, I volunteered for a *VeloCity Weekend*, then registered for my first and their last one in 2018. I placed third in the Women's Division, and my prize was a nifty gift card. I already had a rolltop I'd won for placing first in *SLUG-Cat*, a wallet I'd purchased at an artisan market for vegan goods and pedal straps on my commuter. I was excited to add to my collection.

I used the gift certificate to buy a hip pouch and a caddy. For the caddy, I asked Nate to do one thing: add velcro straps to the sides so I could attach it to my rack. While this is my go-to bag for casual rides with friends, a caddy is great for the cyclist who doesn't need to carry much. It fits all the essentials you might need: flat-fixing stuff, keys, a granola bar and, depending on the weather, gloves, sunglasses or a beanie. I've even found room for a windbreaker after packing the essentials.

VeloCity decided to close up shop in 2019, which is a loss for all those new to the SLC cycling community. Salt Lakers who experienced the good problems of having one of their quality bike bags will know that they remain functional for years. When you really get used to a certain bag style, it's hard to justify acquiring additional bags. If you want to shop locally, check out *AlterationAnnie's* *Etsy* shop. With some tinkering, you should be able to attach any of her sustainable mountain bags to your bike.



S&S Concert Cruise attendees bike to shows in small groups, abiding by social distancing standards.

Static Replica's Joey Pedersen (right) performs as cyclists make their way to his show.

Cruisin' Around Town With S&S CONCERT CRUISES

By Kimberly Portillo • port.kimberly@gmail.com | Photos by TJ Fitzgerald

The days are getting warmer, the pollen has been flowing about and the return of the S&S Concert Cruises has arrived. The S&S Concert Cruises are minishows where concertgoers bike to different locations to watch local artists perform around the city. S&S Director of Revenue **Nic Smith** books the local bands, organizes the ticketing and biking groups and responds to those emails people send an hour before the show starts with last-minute questions. "We are reliant on all participants to make this possible, and we have been both impressed and overjoyed with how the community has come together to help us realize this unique experience," he says. As a previous participant of these events, I do recall responding to an email about feedback/improvement when the cruises first kicked off last year.

The local businesses who opened up their parking lots for use, local musicians, S&S staff and **GREENbike** helped start up the concert cruises last May when the devastating hit of COVID-19 rocked the local music community. "It also reminded us that having an active local music community is fragile and not a given thing," Smith says. S&S has their mission set on providing a safe, outdoor experience for local artists and music lovers to connect during this pandemic. Now imagine: A parking lot at a local business, 6–10 feet away from musicians and other groups, feeling the summer breeze on your cheeks and jamming out to some good music.

Each cruise splits attendees up into two groups and has concertgoers bike between five different venues, all a little less than a mile apart from

each other, with one different local musician at each one. It's a spontaneous experience, as riders don't know what venue they'll start off or head to next until receiving a confirmation email. Through the concert cruise, participants get to see more of Salt Lake City and what makes Downtown, Downtown. "Finding a way to connect with local artists in your community of any medium is a rejuvenating, inspiring feeling," Smith says. Worry not over those COVID-19 fears, because tickets are sold in a limited capacity, everyone is spaced out, hand sanitizer, water and a staff member can be found at all stations, and they will make sure that everyone has their masks on when watching the show. This has been a method that has worked great for them at their events thus far.

I say "worry not" because S&S has been long preparing for a transition back to normalcy with a target date of July 1, 2021. This is an incredible feeling for the company. They kicked off an S&S / *Kilby Court Fundraiser* when the pandemic first started, and despite how lucky they felt that so many people donated, this only did so much until state grants were made available. There have been various *Kilby Benefit Shows* and socially distanced, masked and seated shows at *Urban Lounge* and *Metro Music Hall* which have kept them busy. "All this combined, we count ourselves as incredibly fortunate to have survived this storm, but even still, our current situation is not sustainable," Smith says. It's safe to say that everyone is looking forward to getting the ball rolling so that S&S is able to fully open the doors to each of their venues again.

If you're looking to attend a concert cruise, Smith

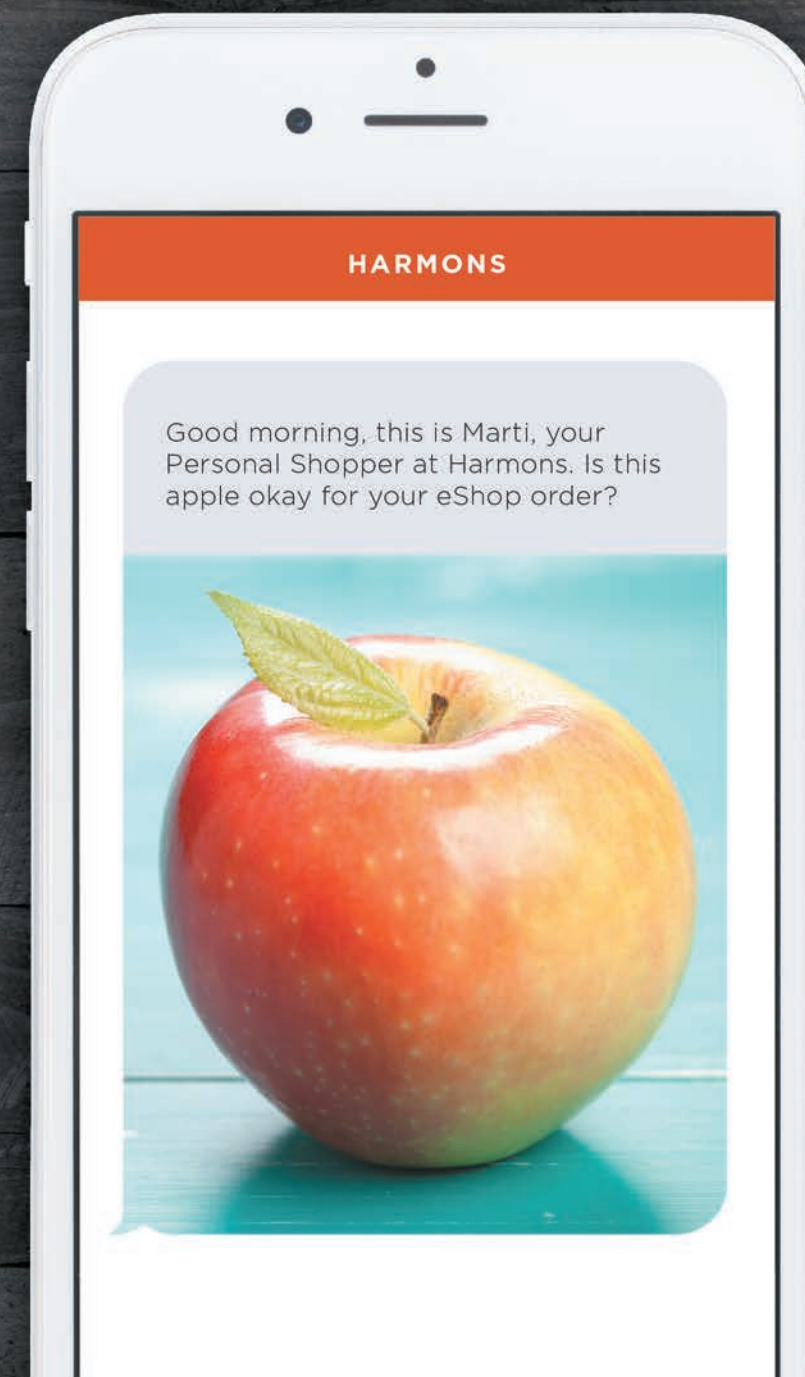
advises, "When choosing your route, look up the bands who are listed on Spotify or Bandcamp before choosing your tickets." This year's schedule is looking like cover nights will be the staple, with *The Beatles Tribute* already passed, *David Bowie Tribute* on May 8, *Rolling Stones Tribute* on June 12 and a *Best of Cruise* on Aug 14. Smith suggests packing a little sunscreen, a water bottle and a helmet too.

If you missed out on the first show, be sure you to catch the upcoming shows because you will regret it if you don't. I say that with all my heart. These cruises have been liberating (scorching hot) and memorable for me, and knowing you're supporting local bands and businesses is satisfying. "The Concert Cruises are truly a labor of love, and we hope that the people attending feel that sense of connection again while also being protected from COVID concerns," Smith says. I had the time of my life when I biked last summer, and I believe anyone interested should attend one.

Utah's local bands are great—their original music is amazing, so be sure to listen to them, and they're great on cover nights too. **Cera Gibson, Drusky, Major Tom, Marny Proudfoot, Mito-kandrea, Nicholas James, Static Replica** and **The Proper Way** have participated in the cruises so far, so go out riding and support them! Grab your tickets and double-check those routes. You can find S&S on Instagram at [@sartainandsaunders](https://www.instagram.com/sartainandsaunders), and check out all the music events going on at [sartainandsaunders.com](https://www.sartainandsaunders.com). Don't forget that sunscreen, mask up, drink plenty of water and get ready to rumble on the S&S Concert Cruises!

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Photo: lmsorenson.net

Artist Jill Whit embraces the exploration of the body through abstract imagery. By Parker Scott Mortensen • @_coldbloom

THE BODY IN ABSTRACT

Jill Whit

Last month, my mother got her first tattoo. She got one before me, something I never saw coming—two small rings conjoined at an end like a Venn diagram etched into her wrist. To her, it’s a reminder of the connection between body and mind, of the subtle ways the two feel interminably entwined. It’s a simple but effective piece that has sent me down the rabbit hole thinking about how we conceive of the body itself. The work of Jill Whit, a tattoo and visual artist (and musician) from downtown SLC, embraces our fleshy vessels as abstract and messy things.

“My art is an exploration of the body, of getting to know yourself through solitude,” she says. “Gaining a connection to your body and your spirit; physical and emotional movement; trying to be ever-accepting, shifting and living. It’s personal, but also I feel like everyone can relate because everyone has a connection to their own body.” Though the human body dominates her art, the theme of solitude and connection persists through the use of lines.

Whit grew up a creative child and knew early on that artmaking would be a fulcrum of her life. “I was always making something,” she says. “I [have] played a little bit of guitar since I was little. I was always writing and making art, making videos, pretty much anything creative.” As an adult it all continued: She studied art and printmaking at school, jumping around Utah colleges before ending up at the *University of Utah*. She’s releasing her first album through **Orindal Records** this spring, and while she dabbles in printmaking still, Whit’s focus is on tattooing. Her space at *Church & State* downtown opened back up last year around September. Though the work has been much less social, 2020 has been a lesson in

embracing solitude with intentionality. She says, “Any sort of creative thing is a meditative thing to me. I feel like this last year, for me, learning to really spend time by myself and be off social media, to be finding things I would have never normally done but felt much more fulfilling to do was definitely beneficial in connecting to myself and my physical body.”

Human bodies are nearly omnipresent in Whit’s visual work, from tattoos to prints. Many of Whit’s pieces feature headless forms that splay out and intersect with each other, puzzles of flesh that balance each other even as they entangle. The linework throughout her portfolio connects and disconnects, spirals inward or casts shadows through itself. The clean, clear lines are somewhat at odds with the way objects lovingly interpolate, which was not always the case. “I used to be like, ‘I want everything to be really flat, perfect and straight.’ I was painting with a lot of acrylics and still doing figures, but they weren’t messy. They were straightforward. Now I’m into abstract, messy art. I like figuring out how my style can play into that.”

That messiness found an unexpected home when Whit studied printmaking. The meticulousness of the craft is what initially attracted her: “I really liked the idea that the process was more tedious,” Whit says. “You could have this idea of what you were trying to accomplish, but then when you actually printed it was always different than I had imagined and usually better than I had imagined. That process was always fun to me.” This dovetails with how the body is depicted in Whit’s work. Bodies are messy things that grow differently than we might expect. The acceptance of the form, as well as the body’s changing capability

over time, became more potent to Whit in 2020.

“[The year] pushed me into this mindset of stripping down. How do I want to spend my time? Am I filling my brain up with things that are stimulating? Creatively it’s gone in waves. I had periods of creativity and periods of block,” she says. Whit’s upcoming album, to be released fully in May with a single in April, is something of a self-help album, as the label describes it. Whit says, “A lot of it is the idea of balancing taking the day off, doing nothing, being bored, and then the opposite—building a routine, finding some sort of structure. During quarantine that’s been the biggest struggle for me. Do I decide to get up and do something productive? Or do I just decide to do absolutely nothing—because I can do absolutely nothing!”

You can do absolutely nothing. I thought of this while looking at one of Whit’s pieces. It shows a body, lying supine on a cloud—its chest, shoulders and neck consumed by the static of a bulky CRT television. I imagine it broadcasting the world right into the brain. The upper ankle of the body is severed, but the foot acts as though it is still connected. In the bottom right, handwritten text reads, “a dark light / creating our / own language.” This simultaneously connected and disconnected, dismembered and scarred body feels tired and full of life, and all my brain can muster to say is “same.”

You can view more of Jill Whit’s visual work at jillwhitart.com. More information on her tattoo work, including availability for custom and flash designs, are also available, and don’t forget to keep an ear out for her album dropping this May through Orindal Records at orindal.limitedrun.com.



Illustration by Sam Sherrill

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ETHICAL DINING WITH THE DARK LORD AT MARK OF THE BEASTRO

By Corinne Bauer
corinnejbauer@icloud.com

(Top) The Garbage Hash offers fried potatoes, curry seasoned tofu scramble, spicy and crumbly sausage and onions on a bed of greens with salty toast.

(Bottom) Mark of the Beastro's Sir Barbalo vegan wing sauce is spicy and sweet, thick and sticky.



In talking to my friends and other people invested in delicious food, I sometimes hear that vegan food lacks something, that the absence of animal products leaves a gap. This is not the case at *Mark of the Beastro*, a trendy spot giving classic diner fare a vegan twist.

The online ordering process at this devil's diner is simple. In response to the challenges of the current pandemic, they've put together a pickup system where, after ordering, you simply call upon arrival and they'll set your food on a table just inside the building. This truly contact-free approach feels secure in complicated times. Once you've picked up your meal, there's nothing left but to take it home and enjoy.

There is something special about fried food. The homey comfort of crispy but somehow not greasy morsels draws you in and makes you reach for more. At *Mark of the Beastro*, the Fried Pickles (\$4.60) had me sneaking bites from the beginning to the very end of the meal. It was lucky that the portion size was large enough that we never ran out. I wish they sold them in half orders so I could pick some up on my way to pretty much anywhere as a treat for the road.

The flaky and crunchy breading coating the thin, tart pickles made me think of late-night snacks when I'm writing or playing video games and need something a little salty for sustenance. They were good all on their own, but the house ranch added a creamy element and an extra layer of dill that kept me dipping them, at least most of the time.

For me, diner food is as much about the experience as it is about how things taste. For wings, the experience is especially visceral, and the wings at *Mark of the Beastro* (coming in at \$1.84 per wing) definitely live up to the expectation. Messy and saucy, the wings even had a skewer down the middle, which added an almost carnal authenticity. The wing itself had a fried exterior that added bite, giving way to the tender soy interior. The wing's flavor was quite neutral and a little light on salt but took well to the sauce. I chose the Sir Barbalo sauce which was spicy and sweet, thick and sticky. I appreciated the accompanying ranch that brought a creamy balance and tempered the spice. Though I'm not really a sports watcher, these wings made me want to start so I can serve them at a game-watching party someday when parties don't feel like such a dangerous prospect.

After the wings, a Grilled Chicken and Roasted Veggies Quesadilla (\$8.29)

seemed like a good next step. Filled with roasted onions, peppers, mushrooms and spinach, the crispy tortilla felt hearty and filling. The cheese was tender and soft and mixed well with the sauce to help make the quesadilla more cohesive, if a bit messy. The seitan chicken was slightly spongy on its own, but well seasoned. All together, the crispness of the veggies, crunch of the tortilla, slight bounce of the seitan and soft creaminess of the cheese and sauce made an excitingly textural bite. A highlight for me was the yummy chipotle aioli served with the quesadilla. This extra sauce brought spice, tartness and smokiness that completed the dish and made it feel like a meal of its own.

Breakfast foods are diner staples, and I appreciate that at *Mark of the Beastro* classics like waffles, pancakes and French toast are available a la cart in whatever amount you desire. I chose French Toast (\$2.76 per slice), with a cinnamon-y smell that immediately gave me breakfast feelings. The French toast was well battered with nice browning. Although it wasn't quite as crisp as I hoped, I blame that entirely on the travel time in a steamy container. To maintain a crisp exterior, I recommend eating this dish in the parking lot or on the way home with your hands, dipping it carefully into the sticky, sweet maple syrup.

If a sweet breakfast isn't your thing, try the Garbage Hash (\$10.13). A crispy, spicy and pleasantly greasy diner dish, the hash felt homey and comforting. In addition to fried potatoes, the curry-seasoned tofu scramble, spicy and crumbly sausage and onions were served on a bed of greens with salty toast. Earthy mushrooms and sweet pepper bits added dimension to the texture and flavor, but I wouldn't have minded a little more salt. This hash was the kind of breakfast I would eat before a long day of working or playing outside to stay comfortably fed until dinner time. To be honest, the hash was the very first thing I tried, but it was so good that I saved some and swung back for a couple extra bites after trying everything else.

If you're looking for diner food that tastes as good as it feels, a trip to *Mark of the Beastro* may be just what you need.

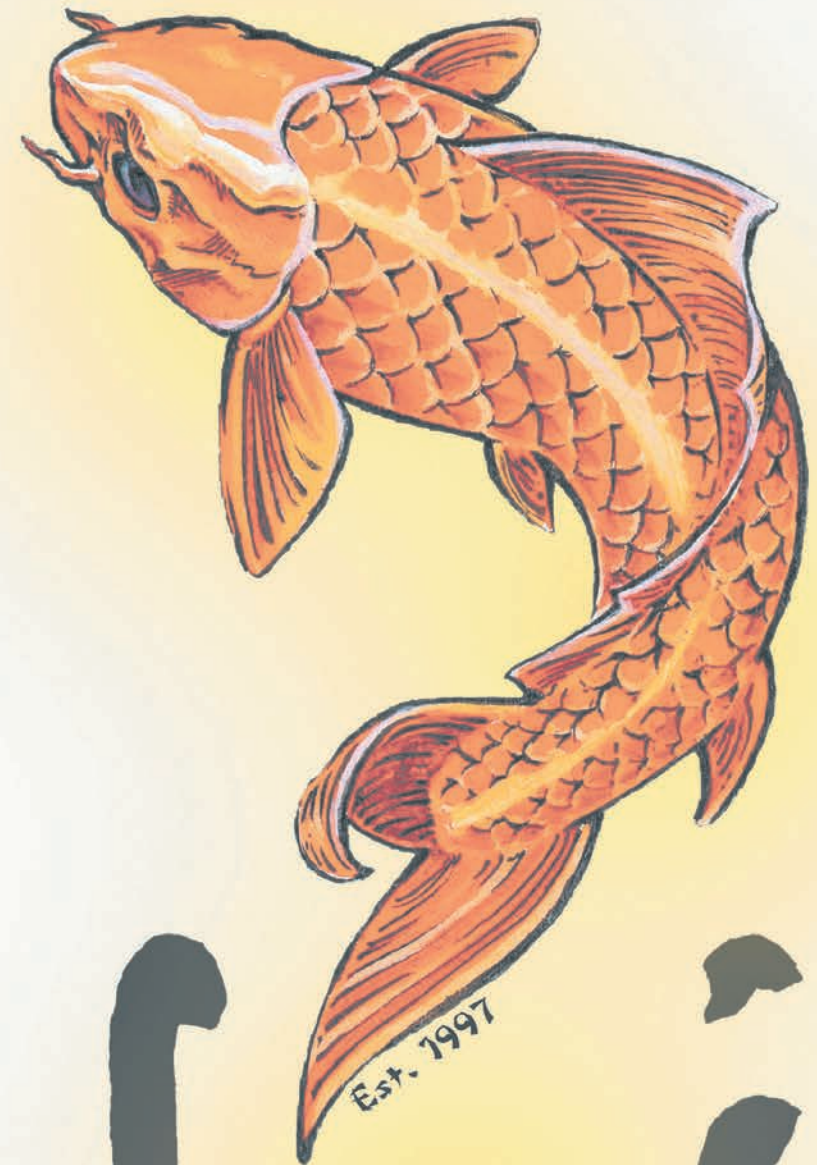
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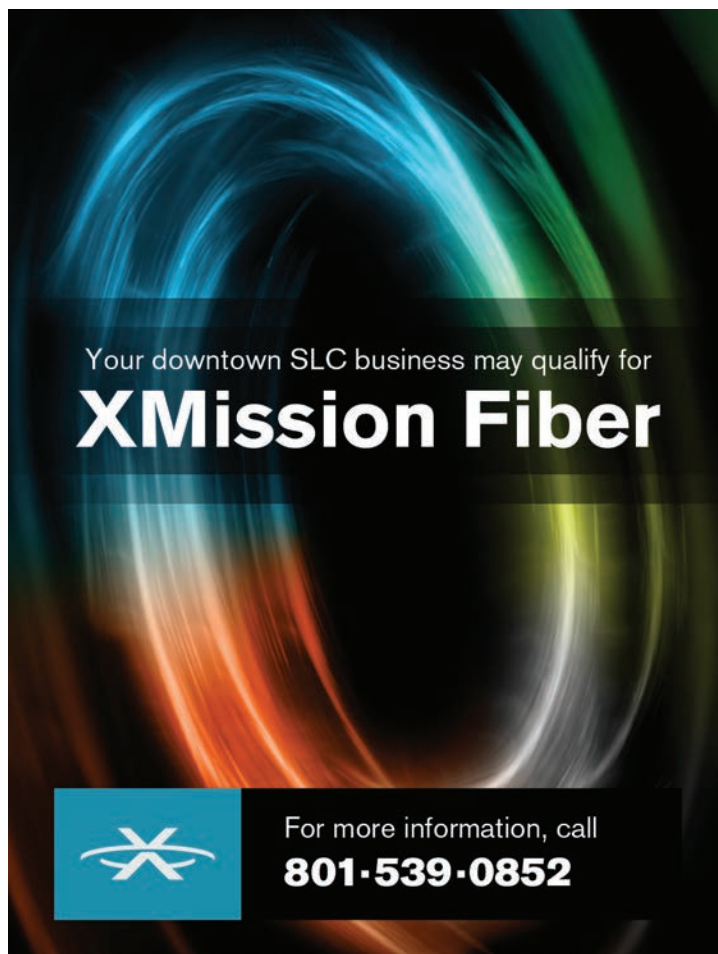
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Virtualized

(L-R) Luke Bamford, Stephen Rodgers, Tate Grimshaw, Jackson Larsen and Chris Shemwell collaborate within the ebb and flow of their tonal and rhythmic choices.

By Kassidy Waddell
kassidywaddell@outlook.com

Photos by John Barkiple

Can you believe we've made it to May 2021!? Wow, time flies! And *SLUG Mag's* May *Virtualized: An Online Concert Featuring Utah Bands* will present Salt Lake City's own **Lit'l Grim**, **jacked johnson** and **Star Crossed Loners**, three anomalous bands who are delighted to entertain you from the World Wide Web! All three create an array of sound that will make us remember why we enjoy music and concerts in the first place. So, sit back and unwind with your preferred vice and tune in to *SLUG Mag's* YouTube Channel on May 21 at 8 p.m. sharp. Trust me—this will be good. *SLUG Virtualized* is sponsored by **KRCL**.

"I think 'Mangosteen' was the first Lit'l Grim song. It's about my experience going to Bali after growing up immersed in Balinese Gamelan music," says **Tate Grimshaw** about his latest song, "Mangosteen." The track is an aggressive mix of guitar and synths, sharing a similar post-punk, experimental tone to the band **Lalic**. Grimshaw, who is the songwriter, singer and rhythm guitarist/banjo player, is accompanied by four other members: **Chris Shemwell**, who plays drums and produces, **Luke Bamford** the "bassgod," **Jackson Larsen**, their lead guitarist and lastly, **Stephen Rodgers**, who is known as the wizard that does all of the synth/cello/various instruments. Yes—it's quite the gang! And it began as a way to keep Grimshaw occupied and content while he wrestled with mental health. "My favorite and most effective coping mechanism [is making music.]" Grimshaw says. "I've been wanting to make this a focus of my life for as long as I can remember. It is a deep desire I've tried and failed to shake off."

The project came about when Grimshaw and Shemwell met at Snow Canyon's percussion studio. They eventually formed **Helichrysum** and released a fucking awesome album: *These Apes Think They Heady* (yes, check it out!). Then, one of Grimshaw and Shemwell's composition professors introduced Rodgers to Helichrysum. Sure enough, Larsen and Bamford came into the mix, and now, here we are with Lit'l Grim. Power pop? Jazz rock? When I asked the band how they describe their style, Grimshaw replied, "My friends usually say, 'It just sounds like Tate.'"

Essentially, their style is a succession of each band members' taste in music. "Our sound greatly is the in-the-moment reactivity we have with each others' rhythmic and tonal choices. There's also something to be said about us constantly showing each other new things for inspiration," says Grimshaw. "My parents immersed me in a lot of odd, beautiful, stimulating music from day one. My mom is a pianist and my dad is a musicology/ethnomusicology professor. I have a weird cocktail of current influences that bleed a bit into my writing too—**R. Stevie Moore**, **Radiohead**, **Erykah Badu**, **Ween**, **Liza Anne**, to name a few."

Speaking of writing, Lit'l Grim's lyrics tend to reference and relate toward Grimshaw's journal entries and sensitive, odd life experiences. "Or my observations on mundane occurrences," Grimshaw says. "Mental health is a common theme. I prefer to phrase things in ways so that only those in my close circle understand the exact details of the circumstances, and to allow for listener interpretation. It feels good to get my experiences out, but if there's no mystery left in a song, it loses

L i t ' l G r i m

its magic." Timelessness is what we strive for, and Grimshaw prefers to express his thoughts with typical, normal and unpretentious vocabulary. "The lyrics usually don't change from the first draft, even if they don't reflect how I feel now, kinda to preserve those moments in time," he says.

Moreover, Lit'l Grim is proud to be part of the local music scene of Salt Lake. Grimshaw loves the fact that there's a solid amount of micro-scenes that are not merely downtown, but throughout this contrasting, dysfunctionally beautiful state. "That's part of the allure for me! I love how many pockets of niche sounds are developed here through groups of friends," Grimshaw says. "As a queer person from a Mormon upbringing, I feel connected to Mormon trauma [that] seems to be a common theme across many bands in the scene. I also enjoy how many quality experimental/heavy/noisy/all of the above acts exist across the state. With the help of my friends, I've made a pretty extensive playlist of Utah music that I frequent a lot each week."

And now, we can add Lit'l Grim to this local playlist. The band is excited to be part of our *Virtualized* series, and believes there's a great deal of potential for collaborations using this type of medium (lo and behold! The internet!). "I hope it's not just temporary until other events are possible. There are SO many bands I would like to see involved. Lit'l Grim as a whole is very grateful to be included in the early stages of the series," says Grimshaw. With that, make sure you tune in for this performance and be drawn to their outlandish, first-rate talent. To look for their releases, like their 10-song album *Mangosteen*, go to Lit'l Grim's Instagram page: @litlgrimble.



(L-R) John Hoang, Andrew Maguire and Val Brown come together to create jazz-infused, “angsty” music.

j a c k e d j o h n s o n

“I definitely grew up listening to **Jack Johnson**—The surfer, ‘Banana Pancakes,’ acoustic guitar guy with the rustic yet tranquil baritone voice. The name began as a joke, a placeholder,” says **Val Brown** regarding to the reasoning behind the band name jacked johnson (JJ for short). “But I do like the way it sounds and looks (no caps or ALL CAPS); the acronym ‘jj’ is very cute. Mostly though, it’s an incentive to do more reps at the gym—to get jacked. If I’m not huge by next year, I should be kicked out.” The band is made up of three people: Brown, who does the vocals, composition and guitar; **Andrew Maguire**, their mysterious drummer; and **John Hoang** the hellra bass player. This collaboration between the three started as a solo project for Brown, but then Brown found Maguire, who went to school as a composition major. Although, Brown says, “Andrew didn’t need the degree. He’s already a galaxy brain songwriter!” Hoang, a jazz performance major, is “far too humble despite his proficiency,” Brown says.

These skilled musicians give jazz-infused, angsty tunes with a touch of culturally driven flavor. I was personally impressed when I first came upon their track “jack3dtothemoon.” It’s as if they’re artistic, digital minimalists. “I really love having two players who, upon hearing an obnoxiously rhythmically complex riff I bring to a session, are able to play along effortlessly and contribute ideas that usually make me and the songs better,” Brown says. Hoang gets his influences from video game music and pop, but for this specific project, he hones his bass expertise from **Morgan Henderson (The Blood Brothers)** and **Joe Lally (Fugazi)**.

Brown, on the other hand, finds inspiration from the hyphy, idiosyncratic duo of **100 gecs**. “**Laura Les** is my absolute favorite musician and songwriter. A few people have clocked me [as] a **Jeff Buckley** superfan. Although, I take a lot of notes from **Xiu Xiu** and **The Cure**, vocally and in spirit,” Brown says. However, I believe jacked johnson is aiming for something much more modest. “I want my songs to be as subtly scary and ridiculously sexy as possible,” Browns says. “Andrew taught kiddos in Oklahoma for a year and brought home some twang. JJ will eventually be a country band for weirdos.” Oh yeah, I can see it now: **Gene Clark** meets **Sean Nicholas Savage** and then they make a Broadway musical set at *Twilite Lounge*.

Brown tends to be very particular when it comes to their initial drive for making music. Sure, one begins with that specific passion and/or pure enjoyment, though Brown thinks there’s a “visceral need to create,” as well as the attention aspect of showing something that one is, more or less, proud to show off. “To be seen and heard and felt. Music inspiration can be a feedback loop; all my besties make such cool music, and I’m constantly enamored and encouraged by their work. I hope I play a similar role to at least one person,” Brown says.

For this group, one of the difficult parts of making music is the sense of self-doubt and criticism, and the fact that there’s never enough time in the day. “I wish I had time to get quality recordings of most of the ideas that strike me daily. But I also see beauty in the ephemeral nature of such inspiration,” Brown says. Throughout jacked johnson’s singles, there are patches of melancholy

mixed with a casual ambience where I can see this so-called transient piece added. But does the trio think they can ever get “perfect” art? Forget about it! “Suggesting there is perfect art informs that there is an artist, which becomes a whole other can of [worms],” says Hoang. Brown attempts to promote their experiences through sound in an “otherworldly ecstasy.” Specifically, in chord choices and progressions. “I like huge chords some people might call ugly, which is clearly a jazz influence. I want to spread that strange, harmonic joy to as many beleaguered ears as possible,” Brown says.

Obviously, we have those days filled with monotonous tasks of work and play and the pressures to be the best we can be. I admire jacked johnson’s consistency in writing songs and gaining as much knowledge of the craft as possible. “I’m always writing new things, sometimes too much to keep up with. As a trio, we want to record and release the several songs we’ve been working on and then take the band in a new direction—a more collaborative effort. Probably some jazz-influenced anxiety-core,” Brown says. I’m sure that’ll be present for their *Virtualized* debut! “[Expect our] reverentest, croon-iest numbers paired with some tasty visuals provided [by] our pal **Zachie Dansie**,” Browns says.

For more information about upcoming releases of the astute jacked johnson, check out jackedjohnson.bandcamp.com, and remember to mark your calendars for the *Virtualized* event via SLUG Mag’s YouTube channel on May 21 at 8 p.m. God bless the internet. God bless authenticity.

black Lives matter

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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.

RIDE OR DIE:

The Diary of a Newly Minted Peloton Rider

By Bianca Velasquez
Bianca@slugmag.com

One thing I learned within the last year is that I really enjoy the advantages of doing things from home. Work? I can do that from my home office. Groceries? I can order those from my bed. Sweating on a stationary bicycle while coming face to face with my physical weaknesses? Definitely would 1000% rather do that in the privacy of my home. While I enjoy the hive-mind unity of an in-person cycling class led by a strong and inspiring instructor, more often than not I'd find myself wishing I could bust out a 30-minute workout without considering drive time, parking, scheduling and just generally going out in public. So, I did it—I succumbed to the targeted ads on my social media accounts and ordered a Peloton.

On my bike's scheduled drop-off day, two young, blonde Peloton representatives arrived at my house in a white van. I led **Maquenzie** and **Tori** to the room where they installed my bike. I chose my art room, next to a mural I made of the people who motivate and scare me the most—my mother and grandmother. After installing the bike and going through the basic usage instructions, they left a card with their names and an online survey for me to give feedback on my experience. I thought, "so far, so good," as installation was essentially effortless and I didn't have to break a single sweat ... yet.

As a person who uses exercise to curb anxiety, my emotional scale tipped more toward fear than it did excitement when I was left alone with the bike. A few questions I had on my first day as a Peloton owner: What if my shoes don't fit? Am I going to miss my cycling comrades? Am I going to lose interest because exercise is too accessible? Luckily, hopping on my bike for the first time eased many of these concerns. My shoes fit (lean toward a smaller size for snugness), classes come with a chat and leaderboard where you can receive and send high-fives to other cyclists taking the same class, and the classes offer a range of ease and difficulty, making the boredom trajectory a bit less steep.

During my first few rides I tried to emulate the same experience I would receive in an in-person class. I signed up for HIIT (high intensity interval training) classes because, in all honesty, I didn't know how to navigate to anything else, and the phrase "go big or go home" really stuck me in a corner—I was already home, so it was "go big" or "fuck off." Many differences sparked a slight regret and a bit of longing for my beloved instructor **Megan Tyrrell** at *Mcycle* within me:

First, the virtual instructors don't call you by the name of the week. Nothing gets me more revved up for my Wednesday than busting out some choreographed high-intensity cardio moves at 7:10 a.m. If you can muscle through that first thing in the morning, being



Photo: Kevin Edwards

SLUG Managing Editor Bianca Velasquez gives us the dish on her first week as a Peloton convert.

called "Wednesday" just reminds you that you're about to kick that day's ass.

Second, no one hands you a cold wet towel spritzed with essential oils at the end of class—you are alone and no one gives you squat.

Third, it's difficult to simulate the same type of workouts you receive from an in-person offering. Those classes consist of ab workouts, arm workouts, cardio and resistance. During virtual rides, it seems that you are only able to focus on one type of training, saturating the workout and making it difficult to get through.

Lastly, the instructors just simply can't connect with you—you are staring at a screen and they are staring at a camera, which is, again, super lonely.

After a few days of HIIT classes, I decided to try something else. I made an investment in and commitment to my Peloton, and I knew I would never forgive myself if I just gave up, neglected the bike and let it become a coat rack. While I was already ready to run back to *Mcycle*, I knew I could find something within the

Peloton-verse that worked for me. Other classes offered scenic rides, yoga classes, strength training, core training and more. Non-HIIT classes were more my speed and hit the mark for me in terms of what I am looking for in a workout. I made the easy choice to take a 10-minute (they go up to 45) scenic bike ride in Switzerland! This was great—I loved this. The experience was more like running on a treadmill. You can control your speed and resistance and set your own goals. Plus, they play some sick techno beats while you ride through Europe. Maybe I'm just travel-thirsty, but this was freaking wonderful.

I still have a lot of time to try everything that Peloton has to offer and can't cast my verdict yet on whether or not it was worth entering into a 23-month payment plan for this. What I can say is that I know I won't completely transition to Peloton only. I have my bike I purchased from *Saturday Cycles* that I intend on riding fervently this Summer. I also don't see myself ever going to an in-person cycling class again—so don't worry, I'll be back, *Mcycle* ;).

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CHILE PEPPER BIKE SHOP

MAMA MIA! THAT'S A SPICY BIKE!

AN INTERVIEW WITH
CHILE PEPPER BIKE SHOP

By Sam D'Antuono | sam.dantuono@gmail.com



Photos courtesy of Chile Pepper Bike Shop

For *Chile Pepper Bike Shop* owner Tracy Bently, the shop provides her with a chance to connect to the vast beauty of the southern Utah desert.

Chile Pepper Bike Shop, one of the premier stores for Moab biking, has everything you need to ride out into the fantastic southern Utah wilderness. *Chile Pepper* was established in 1995 with its current owner, **Tracy Bently**, having purchased the business in 2006. "I'd been in the bike industry since about '99 and the previous owner wanted to make a change, so I took the chance and here I am 15 years later," Bently says about her initial decision to buy the shop. "I guess the previous owner just had a mysterious fascination with peppers," she says nonchalantly about the shop's kitschy, capsicum cognomen.

Moab is home to Utah's more majestic natural sights, and one could comfortably imagine they were traveling through a small section of Mars as parts of the landscape change from an arid and pale tan to a blistering red during their trip. Peering through the Delicate Arch feels like looking through a quaint frame made of clay bones on the landscape. Home of many dinosaur bones and tracks, as well as the *Canyonlands National Park*, Moab is one of the finest outdoor tourist destinations in the United States. Rolling through spring, outdoor activities become a welcome respite from a particularly hibernated winter. Visiting the website for *Chile Pepper*, you can plan out an entire biking trip or tour just from the trailhead information listed on the site. Should you need a repair on your bike, the shop offers a full world-class tune up and general repairs.

Bently grew up in the midwest and moved out to Utah to work in the ski industry. After working for a few different resorts, she moved back to the midwest to get her degree. Dissatisfied with the lack of outdoor activities in that area, she moved back, this time to southern Utah. "I thought to myself, 'What am I doing here?'," Bently says with a laugh, recalling her thoughts on being back in the midwest and out of the western wilderness she had grown to love. "I'd have to say it's the beauty of the desert—I'm still blown away after 22 years."

At *Chile Pepper Bike Shop's* brick and mortar, you can buy and rent from an array of retail and demo bikes which are normally used as rental gear and sold twice a year, each cycle suited for different types of riding around Moab. Many of the area's best trails conveniently sit a short ride away from the shop, such as Captain Ahab, one of the favorite trails of **Paige Stuart**, the Assistant Service Manager at the *Chile Pepper*. Working at a busy and thriving shop like *Chile Pepper*, Stuart is totally immersed in the world of cycling. "What I love about this place is that there's such a strong biking community, everyone bikes ... hitting the dirt jumps a mile away from the shop after work. A lot of people pitch in to build jumps at Anonymous Park—it really becomes like a biking family," Stuart says about her local community.

After over a year of being cooped up during the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity to get

outside is more than highly anticipated. As vaccinations continue and the end of the pandemic seems to be in sight for many, for many vaccinations aren't as readily available and in turn it will be a while until safe, outdoor activities aren't in demand. *Chile Pepper* has always been a hustling and bustling shop this time of year, especially so since the pandemic began. "A lot of my job is delegating tasks ... It's a very high-volume shop and this is our busy season. We do a lot of rentals. It's very fast paced, so I'm doing a lot of multitasking," says Stuart.

For more inexperienced riders, or for someone who needs a refresher, *Chile Pepper* partners with **Moab Mountain Bike Instruction** (MMTBI) to offer 90-minute clinics with in-depth instruction on how to become a better cyclist. The terrain around Moab is grand and wondrous, but it can also be challenging and dangerous. It wouldn't hurt to try out one of these fun classes to better prepare yourself for all that the surrounding area has to offer.

Talking with Bently a bit more about her plans for the future and her shop, she says, "Getting back into travelling and building a home with my boyfriend in an old uranium miner house from 1948." I for one can't wait to travel again, and Moab will certainly be a top priority on the list of places to travel to. For more information or to plan a fun part of your trip to Moab with *Chile Pepper Bike Shop*, check out chilebikes.com.

Chile Pepper Bike Shop provides a one-stop shop for all of your Moab mountain biking needs.



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BMX

By Jon Tinsley • @jontinsley

As spring approaches, nothing feels more welcoming than a blast of warm spring air while riding a bike. Nick Mondella supplies the new season's stoke with one of his graceful boosts down in the woods.

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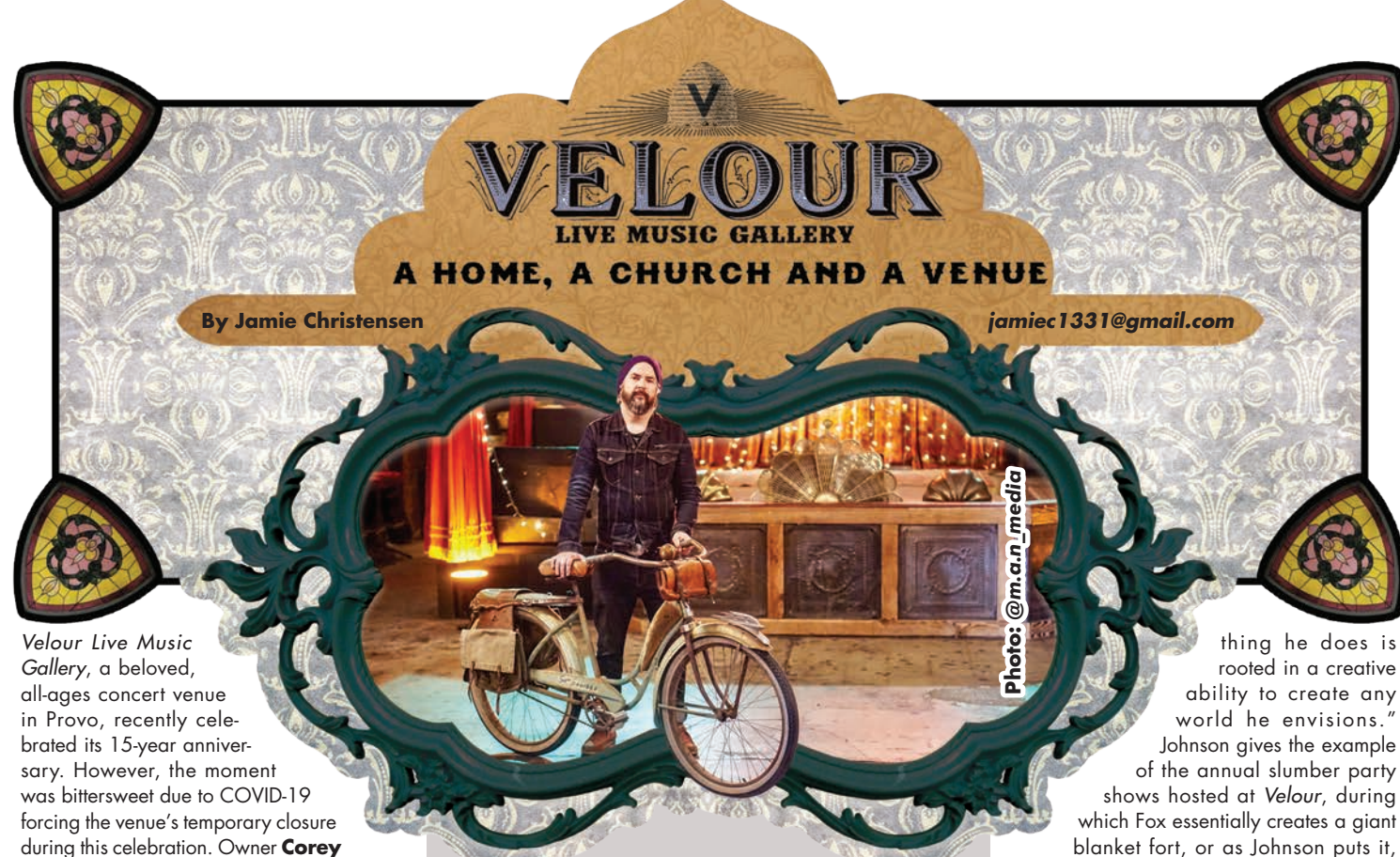


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Velour Live Music Gallery, a beloved, all-ages concert venue in Provo, recently celebrated its 15-year anniversary. However, the moment was bittersweet due to COVID-19 forcing the venue's temporary closure during this celebration. Owner **Corey Fox** opened the venue in 2006 and has continued to bring life and glamour to *Velour* and the Utah Valley music scene since its inception. Those who know the venue understand how remarkable it is—in terms of being an event space, *Velour* is in a category of its own. From stained-glass portraits to velvet artwork, enchanted chambers and mysterious oddities, *Velour* provides a home to many. Despite reaching this 15-year milestone, *Velour's* year-long hiatus has meant the venue is on the brink of closing its velvet curtains for good.

A newsprint article hung in the venue reads, "The Fantastic Mr. Corey Fox," and there is no better way to summarize Fox. He has a 30-year tenure in music management as a band manager, concert promoter and venue manager. "I opened *Velour* with just a goal of bringing the scene back to its '90s glory days but was quickly inspired to set my goals higher," he says. Though Fox is seemingly modest of *Velour's* success, he is truly the lifeblood of the venue's past and present.

The legacy of *Velour* is well-known. Renowned musicians **Imagine Dragons**, **Neon Trees** and **The Moth & The Flame** (among other recognizable names) began on the *Velour* stage. And if not for the pandemic, *Velour* would be putting on a slew of live shows with the hopes of finding even more aspiring artists. "We do a lot of cool, annual events but the most important are probably our annual *Les Femmes De Velour* shows that showcase multiple nights of female talent, our biannual *Battle of the Bands* that has been a proven launching pad for new young

Velour Live Music Gallery Owner Corey Fox reminds us of *Velour's* curatorial charm—from its vintage curiosities to its overall ambience—as the treasured Provo venue's existence now relies on community support more than ever.

bands into the scene (past winners include Imagine Dragons, Neon Trees, **The Aces**, **The Backseat Lovers**, etc.) and our weekly open-mic nights that help cultivate new talent," says Fox. "Many of the biggest artists in the scene started as solo, open-mic regulars."

Fox notes open-mic nights as being essential to *Velour's* ecosystem. Normally, dozens of musicians would pave a line outside of the venue in hopes to play in the weekly show—open-mic nights have created a community of artistic camaraderie. "The pandemic has been horrible, but one bright spot about *Velour's* doors being closed has been the flood of messages from people telling me how much *Velour* means to them. It's a safe space for some, the equivalent of church to others," Fox says. "Many others have told stories of meeting their spouses there, finding their love for music, and for bands, a steady, consistent platform to launch their music from."

Kaneischa Johnson, the previous Marketing Manager for *Velour*, first became involved with the venue after frequenting live shows and deciding she wanted to help out in any way she could. Though no longer located in Utah, Johnson still feels a significant connection to Fox, the music community and the venue. "Corey has managed to generate ongoing experiences for us to lose ourselves in, provide a stage for us to express ourselves, advise us [and] create with us," she says. "The truth is that *Velour* gave me a reason to get out of bed some days, and I know I am not the only one who has used it as a reason for living when a reason was hard to find." With *Velour* enduring repeated hits during the pandemic, Johnson has helped raise awareness to alert community members of its current struggles.

"[*Velour*] is truly an experiential space providing [a] less-common opportunity for a true listening experience," she says. "Although Corey has an incredible instinct for making things happen, every-

thing he does is rooted in a creative ability to create any world he envisions." Johnson gives the example of the annual slumber party shows hosted at *Velour*, during which Fox essentially creates a giant blanket fort, or as Johnson puts it, "the magic of walking through a wardrobe into Narnia," she says. "*Velour* is art, and being at a show there feels like witnessing an art show. Corey may be at the helm, but *Velour* is bigger than all of us, and significant to all of us."

In challenging times, *Velour* has received hundreds of donations from those who recognize its value. The venue's Instagram, @*velourlive*, is up to date with ways to support, including its Venmo, @*velour-live*, and a recent GoFundMe, "Vaccinate *Velour*," set up by **Scott Wiley** and Provo business *June Audio Recording Studios*. Though having already received many donations—including an anonymous donor who will match all donations up to \$20,000—the venue is still on its knees.

If you're interested in supporting *Velour*, there are many options to provide relief from referrals to donating to renting. Fox says, "Until we can open our doors to full-capacity shows, the best way people can help *Velour* is to spread the word about renting the venue for small private events, as a film and photoshoot location, for daytime corporate meetings, pop-up shops, etc." *Velour* also consistently posts about these events on social media, so if you can safely attend, rent out the space and/or raise awareness, please do so! You can also aid *Velour* by renting the venue for small and distanced music school recitals/showcases, smaller and private birthday and holiday parties, and other special events. If interested, email booking@velourlive.com.

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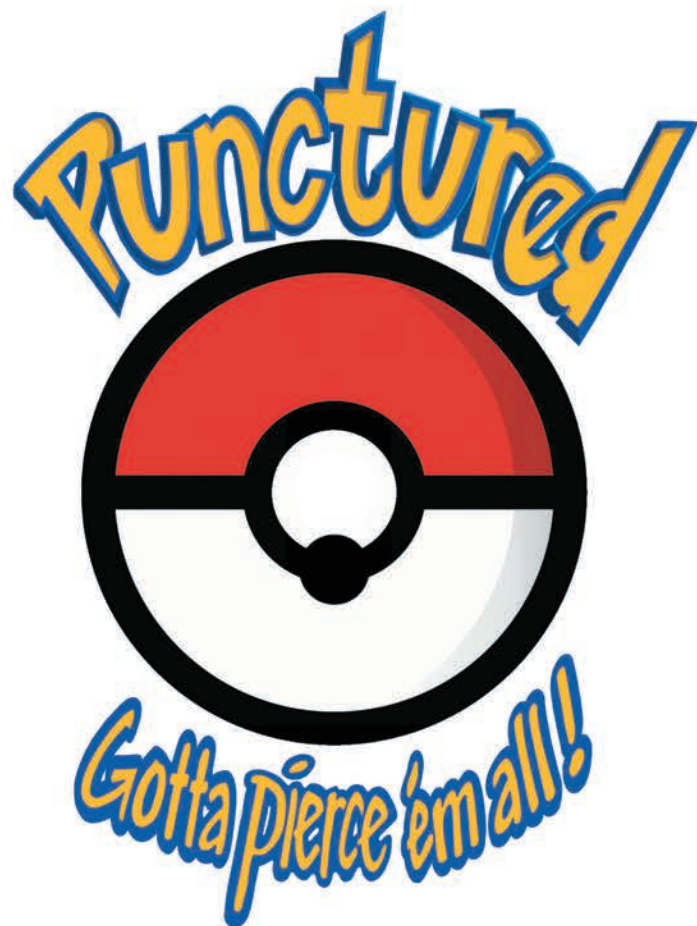
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BEER BIKE RIDE

The Clean, The Hoppy and The Interesting

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

Breweries: Level Crossing Brewing Co., SaltFire Brewing Co., Shades Brewing



This month's column is a little different from past issues. Instead of highlighting one beer, we're pointing out a cool, quick bike-and-beer path that could easily be accomplished in an afternoon. It's a challenge most entry-level riders could complete with relative ease while having a fun experience along the way. The collective trip we recommend is to *Level Crossing Brewing Co.*, *SaltFire Brewing Co.* and *Shades Brewing*. Bike paths are marked and are on both sides of West Temple for safety and ease. If you don't live near, it's simple to start with your bike from the Trax station at 2100 South regardless of whichever brewery you choose to begin with. If you don't have a bike, there is a GREENbike station conveniently located at that stop.

The great thing about this combo of breweries is that you can start at either end of the route because both points have access to great food and beer. To get our thirst on, we started with the most southerly brewery and made our way north. We sampled beers at each location and came up with suggestions categorized as "the Clean," "the Hoppy" and "the Interesting" with the hope to provide something for everyone.

Level Crossing Brewing Co.: If you're hungry, their tasty wood-fired pizza hits the right spot. Beers to try: "The Clean" – Bat Country (5.0%) is a blonde ale, golden in color with hints of fruitiness and is easy to drink. "The Hoppy" – In the Pines

(5.0%) is a hazy pale ale and adds the punch you may be looking for if you are passing on the clean tones of Bat Country. This glowing, orange beverage has notes of pine with stronger flavors of grapefruit. "The Interesting" – You-Tah Coffee Uncommon (5.0%) is a reddish-brown brew with a creamy, sweet and delightful coffee flavor.

SaltFire Brewing Co.: This destination routes past the *SLC Bicycle Collective*—there will be no flat tires here. Beers to try: "The Clean" – NZED Pilsner (5.4%) is light, pristine and thirst-quenching. "The Hoppy" – 12 Monkey's IPA (9.1%) is a big, hoppy brew not made for the timid and imparts a nice balance of malty sweetness to drive up the alcohol with bitterness to round it out. "The Interesting" – Dirty Chai Stout (6.7%) has been a favorite of ours for some time. It drinks dark and roasty with cinnamon and chocolate. This beer is edgy!

Shades Brewing: The smell of delicious BBQ drifts through the air from the neighbor's place, *Pat's BBQ*. "The Clean" – Premium Lager (5.0%), like most in this category, is crystal-clear and smooth with hints of crisp hops. "The Hoppy" – Grapefruit Revolution (5.0%) became a Utah IPA staple with its dry delivery of citrus flavors. "The Interesting" – The Livli Pineapple Mint Seltzer (5.0%) is a pastel-yellow beverage with stages of flavor that starts with mint, flows to pineapple and finishes clean.

All in all, visiting each of these breweries is a fun experience because they have different vibes. If you want to extend this tour a little longer, you can begin (or end) your journey at *Grid City Beer Works* and stop by *Beehive Distilling* between *Level Crossing* and *SaltFire*. Utah touts many closely lumped-together breweries, and a springtime bike ride seems like a great way to visit some of them! Always remember to wear your helmet, keep it safe and be responsible. Cheers!

MUSIC REVIEWS

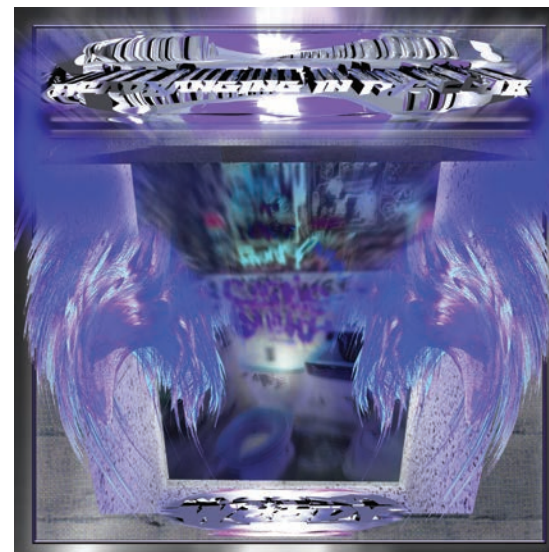


Ishtar Sr. – Divine Ecdysis

(Grimalkin Records, 05.21)

Ishtar Sr. = (J. Fisher + THEESatisfaction) x Headboggle

–Audrey Lockie



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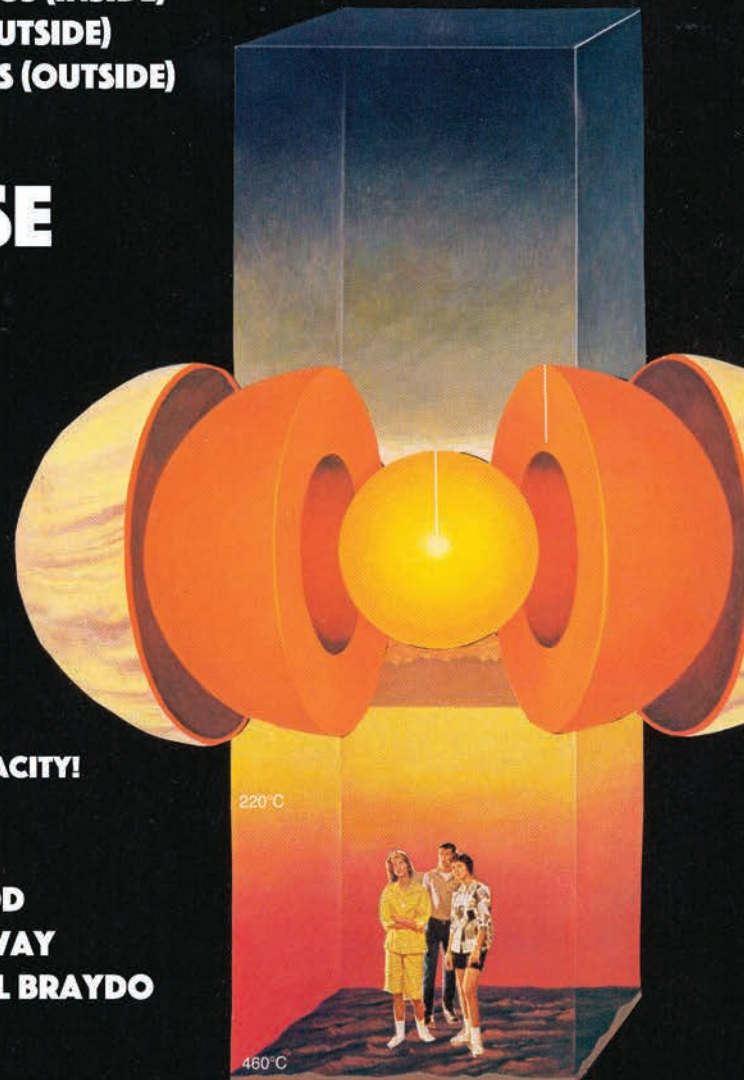
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