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| THURSDAY, JULY 14 RUNAWAY GROOMS | FRIDAY, JULY 29 JEREMIAH & THE RED EYES |
| SATURDAY, JULY 30 TRIBE OF I | |

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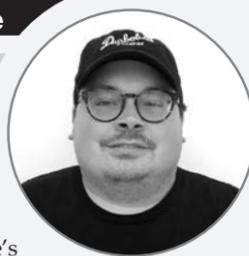
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Issue #403 • July 2022

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ABOUT THE COVER: One half of 5050 Creative Labs, local artist **Spencer Nugent** continued his project of 3D-printing Legos with more inclusive skin tones for our July cover, responding to issue theme of *Amplify Black Voices* with a stage-audience emphasis on projection and listening.

Chris Bickmore

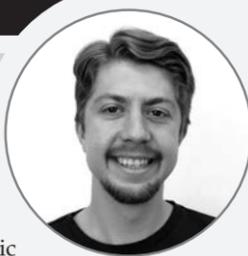
Contributor Limelight
Circulation Coordinator



After joining *SLUG* as a Volunteer Designer in Nov. 2021, Chris Bickmore became our new Circulation Coordinator in May of 2022. Whether he's crafting eye-popping layouts for our print mag (*SLUG Style* on pgs. 20 and 22) or managing the distribution of our print mags, we're honored to have Chris on our team!

Andrew Christiansen

Contributor Limelight
Contributing Writer



Andrew Christiansen has been one of *SLUG's* most prolific music writers since joining us in May 2021. With a boundless passion for the local music scene, Christiansen shines in his empathetic approach to Utah music coverage. Read his Localized features on *Snicks* and *Nostalgic90s* on pgs. 14 and 15, respectively.

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Shawn Newell traces his journey as an inclusion-oriented leader back to his childhood in Southern California. From a young age, Newell attended a fairly affluent and predominantly white school as part of a desegregation program and found himself navigating spaces where he felt unwelcome and excluded. Sports, particularly football, offered him one way to carve a place for himself and hone his leadership skills. His time playing football netted him a scholarship at the *University of Utah* in 1980. After 30+ years in business, Newell is currently the Vice President of the Salt Lake Branch of the *NAACP* and serves on the board of the *Utah System of Higher Education (USHE)*, though these positions are only a fraction of Newell's accomplishments.

The vision of leadership Newell practices centers on the equity, inclusion and mutual learning that he sees as vital to building more resilient and just institutions. As the outside world bombards leaders with evidence of systemic issues that challenge preconceived beliefs, especially in the past few years, too many leaders retreat into their own ideological fortresses rather than change. "To go into these uncomfortable places and discover that things may not have been the way you believe them to be for decades, depending on your age, it's really disconcerting and ... scary," Newell says. "We have to get past that point of being afraid of going to that place, and finding that these spaces and this education—learning about one another—should be energizing, illuminating and should help us to create more curiosity and growth."

In his work with *USHE*, Newell uses a concept called the Equity Lens Framework as one antidote to this fear-based status quo. "We're trying to embed equity into every aspect of the policies, procedures [and] environments of all our institutions," he says. The framework challenges decisionmakers to carefully consider the many intersecting dimensions that underpin equity when evaluating policies and systems where they may not have perceived it before.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION AND EQUALITY

A CONVERSATION WITH
COMMUNITY LEADER
SHAWN NEWELL

By Tim Schoof • schooftimothy@gmail.com



Photo: John Barkiple

Inclusion-oriented leader Shawn Newell breaks down the importance of equity in Utah's conception of the education-to-employment pipeline.

Few aspects of daily life need this realignment more than the education and workforce pipelines—the process by which students receive an education to gain a career. In Utah specifically and the U.S. broadly, the education system that makes the pipeline possible still suffers from a legacy of segregation and exclusion with deep roots. The chilling effect of inequality disproportionately affects members of marginalized groups, including communities of color, immigrants and refugees. "A lot of communities, especially those that have been subjugated for a long time, have an innate fear of these systems. It's not just not knowing how to navigate it, but it's the fear of the system not really welcoming them," Newell says.

In Utah especially, the lingering systemic effects of exclusion threaten future prosperity. Utah's economy increasingly demands a better-educated workforce. From Newell's perspective, overcoming accessibility barriers to empower more people to rise to these careers takes conscious effort from leaders, many involve meeting people where they are. Employers can financially support future employees from marginalized backgrounds as they pursue an education, while board members overseeing higher education can also shape policy to provide for people with various backgrounds and experiences equitably.

Ultimately, Newell sees community leaders as indispensable catalysts who can drive equity, knock down institutional barriers and encourage more inclusive perspectives from the top down. Newell sees Utah leaders in both higher education and business rising to the challenge, but more work still needs to be done. "We have to look at the difficulty of understanding equity ... and expanding this framework to where it becomes the DNA of a system," he says. Supporting these varied perspectives from the classroom to the workspace yields a resiliency that's all too necessary in a rapidly evolving world.

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Photo: Gilbert Cisneros

Alicea Arnold of Defined Skin and Kris Ayoso of Kris Heals Wellness came together to kickstart the Strength in Shades markets, a much-needed space for Utah's diverse community of artists.

Creating Community at

STRENGTH IN SHADES

By Katie Hatzfeld
katiehatzfeld@slugmag.com

Markets

The wind whipped through rows of white tents as people drifted from booth to booth. Above the sound of flapping canvas, people were chatting and laughing. From earrings to salsa, crystals to skin care, the Juneteenth *Strength in Shades* market showcased some of Utah's best BIPOC businesses. With a belly full of *Big South's* fried catfish, potato salad and baked beans, I wandered down to see what handmade goods I would inevitably spend my paycheck on this week.

Full-time moms, full-time small business owners and now full-time *Strength in Shades* co-organizers, Alicea Arnold of Defined Skin and Kris Ayoso of Kris Heals Wellness radiate a go-get-em optimism that can't be stopped. As POC, they've navigated how to take up space—now, they're on a mission to make it possible for every person here in Utah and beyond.

Both Utah transplants, Arnold and Ayoso found "friendship at first sight" when a short conversation revealed startling similarities: new Utah residents, mothers, women of color, small business owners, handmade artisans, holistic living advocates—the list goes on. After selling their products at local markets, the two were equally dissatisfied with the

Utah market scene. "We were the loudest people there ... I think it stems from our culture—she's Afrolatina and I'm Latina," Ayoso says. Moving from New York and Los Angeles, they both longed for a certain energy that they'd left behind. "No matter where we went to sell our products, it just didn't really feel like home," Ayoso adds.

A state severely lacking in racial diversity, Utah presents a formidable challenge to BIPOC individuals eager to find a home. "In New York and California, I didn't have to look too hard to find other people of color ... I didn't have to drive miles to figure out where to buy hair stuff," says Arnold. Ayoso adds, "When I first moved here, I felt like I couldn't be myself. I felt like I had to look and talk a certain way ... There is just this insane pressure culturally in Utah that made me feel like I had to be different things that I wasn't." The more they talked with others like them, the more these women realized that something needed to be done. It was time to start shifting the culture of Utah and make it a more welcoming and accepting home for the BIPOC community. "Alicea and I didn't have a space, so we created one," says Ayoso. Thus, *Strength in Shades* was born.

As a leadership team, they quickly found a natural balance. Ayoso tackles behind the scenes, planning, coordinating and running social media accounts. Arnold shines on the marketing and branding front, brainstorming ideas and creating graphics. When the first *SIS* market launched in February of 2021, it show-

cased 22 local vendors and was a huge success. Unable to keep the emotion from her voice, Ayoso describes this first event: "Everybody who was there needed it ... The spirit of the market that you feel when you come in just feels beautiful, welcoming and accepting," she says.

Now a monthly staple, *SIS* markets provide a much-needed space of diverse community for anyone. Arnold says, "Having all those cultures in one room is eye opening to people where it's their first time being in that kind of setting." And, of course, these markets are just a damn good time! With food, loud music, high energy and plenty of vendors, it's like "a BBQ that everyone's invited to and there's always a seat at the table," says Arnold. Ayoso says, "It feels like you're in LA and NY. It's just a party!"

You can hang out with *SIS* at their upcoming markets on July 23, August 20 and September 17. If you're interested in selling at a market or volunteering, you can find applications on their Linktree. Keep up to date on Instagram @*strengtheninshades* where they announce times and dates of markets. You can also learn more about Arnold's and Ayoso's respective businesses here: @*definedskin* and @*kris.heals*.

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Inevitable Change:

Andrea Hardeman's Abstract Impressionism

By: Parker Scott Mortensen • Parker@slugmag.com

Photos courtesy of Andrea Hardeman



After years spent working in poetry, Utah artist Andrea Hardeman turned toward abstract and expressionist art as a means of "interpreting the essence of a feeling or moment."

Andrea Hardeman is a poet and visual artist who found her knack for abstract impressionism during the 2020 pandemic. Her visual artwork sits at the intersection of creativity and mental wellness, channeling what she cannot express with words into striking paintings that welcome the viewer's experience while holding space for Hardeman's own.

For decades, Hardeman had thought of herself as a poet, but visual art was something she'd left behind in childhood. "I put down the drawing pencil in 2002," she says. "Growing up, I mostly drew dolphins or looked at a picture and then tried to draw exactly what I saw." 20 years later, the pandemic brought pain that needed to be processed. "Words felt too heavy and ended in a flood of tears. Instead, I set up shop [in] my dining room table and painted my emotions on canvas for several weeks," she says. "It was during this time that my abstract and impressionist artistic styles emerged."

It wasn't until friends and coworkers expressed interest in her work that she realized its value beyond an outlet for her own personal expression. "It was something just for me—a way to process intense and complex emotions that I couldn't articulate verbally," she says. In this new medium, Hardeman embraced abstraction. "I love interpreting the es-

sence of a feeling or moment, being a witness to how it translates through the paint to the canvas," she says.

Those feelings come through. Hardeman's visual style may be abstract, but the sensations maintain their distinction across her work. "Shattered Saturn" feels messy and angry, with wild strings of shell-pink, red and orange imposed over what feels like a deeply layered canvas. Meanwhile, "the art of self" is a soothing sea of skobeloff, blues and greens foregrounded by squirl-ish streaks of magenta. "Corduroy" evokes its name through wood-like vertical grains of paint, the background and foreground bleeding into one another like rain on glass.

It's curious to me to hear from Hardeman about the rejections her art has received. "Being an abstract artist, particularly in Utah, you get rejected a lot and told your aesthetic isn't a fit for the demographic here or for a market or event," she says. "Many organizers don't believe abstract art will be appreciated and will sell." That's surprising. Hardeman's work is of such a caliber that you don't want to look away—you want to take it home and put it somewhere it can look back at you. "It's taught me not to base the worth of my artwork or myself

as an artist on other people's opinions, regardless of their title or standing," Hardeman says. Don't take anything personally, she's learned, because "no one's opinion dictates your worth or value truly."

This year, Hardeman published *love the journey: POETRY AND ARTWORK SELECTIONS* through **Pierucci Publishing**. She appeared in *Urban Arts Gallery's* February 2021 exhibition *LOUD!* and is working on new ways to stretch herself through her newfound medium. "I want to work on a large, mixed-media piece that has an industrial vibe and is highly textured," she says. "The plan is to use a wooden canvas and start with a base layer of drywall mud." She's also conceiving a piece that the visually impaired can enjoy, incorporating braille and colors that those with low vision will be able to see. "I have a deep desire to help people feel seen and accepted and am humbled that my art has been an avenue to do just that," Hardeman says.

You can see more of Hardeman's work on her website, papillonskies.com, or on Instagram @papillonskies.

Andrea Hardeman, "the art of self," 2021. Photo: Bonneville Jones



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LVRSSLC

parties with a purpose

LVRSSLC Co-founders DJ Luva Luva and Dajon Thompson met in eighth grade while attending Judge Memorial Catholic High School. The two locals grew up playing basketball together, and both men exchange smiles as Thompson describes their relationship as a ying and yang, each balancing the other out—Thompson plays the more extroverted part of the duo while Luva happily sits behind the spin table with headphones on. Luva and Thompson are both quick to underscore how vital the whole LVRSS crew is to their vision—including Enzo Pighini (Business Development), Tré Bourdeaux (Accounting), Jalen Thompson (“Dawn of a new era”) and DJ Spaz—with each member of LVRSS cultivating the lead pair’s vision while also playing an individually nuanced and vital role for the organization. They are a team, and they coordinate their skills in order to make LVRSS happen. “Everyone plays their position,” says Thompson.

The group formed in 2019 with the goal of mirroring the atmosphere of events in cities like LA, Atlanta and Chicago here in Salt Lake City. Luva and Thompson founded LVRSS as an organization that is inclusive, musically expressive and artfully driven. Having worked as a DJ for over 10 years, Luva felt creatively stifled in what he could play for certain events. With LVRSS, an event likely won’t be mixing the top 40; rather, each song is something culturally meaningful and carefully selected. Deep cuts from popular artists, Black anthems and nostalgic music all flow together into LVRSS’ sound. “Women of color play a huge role in LVRSS,” says Luva. “They ... play an important role in our musical curation and selection, [and] we find that soulful and true R&B sound from female artists.” From the design of the set to the music, everything is intentional.

In addition to their curated artistic approach, cultivating community is one of LVRSS’ main intentions. “People know that feeling when they go out, get drunk and repeat. It can feel like regression,” says Thompson. “LVRSS is about creating a positive experience, to inspire growth [in] a night out.” Luva nods in agreement, adding, “I don’t necessarily look for the crowd to be dancing—I look for the crowd to be singing along ... vibing with their friends.” A LVRSS event won’t be a regular night out—it’s going to be filled with awareness and purpose. “We were the only Black kids in school,” says Thompson, noting that part of the vision for LVRSS was to create a space for people of

By Elizabeth Leach • elianlea@gmail.com



Photo courtesy of LVRSS SLC

LVRSS SLC Co-founders DJ Luva Luva and Dajon Thompson came together to create a nightlife in Salt Lake City based around inclusion and inspiration.



color to have a community filled with love, acceptance and inspiration. This is primarily done through music, design, art and even fashion at their events. LVRSS has beautifully created an environment for everyone while elevating people of color’s presence.

The LVRSS community is filled with young professionals of color; it’s a social experience for people who might not normally meet to create strong bonds. The LVRSS crew is hyper aware of the emotional undercurrent that exists in every event, and their events create a subtle vibration that can expand the experience into something more transformational for attendees. “Come with love and leave with love—that will be the lega-

cy,” says Luva. Thompson hopes that “[LVRSS] influence paves the way for generational change,” he says. “We have to inspire our children and the next generation, making sure they are inspired when we pass that torch.” Being selfless and understanding of our crucial need for community is how anyone can become a member of the LVRSS family. Luva’s and Thompson’s parting words were, “Kill the ego and feed the soul—do what you do with love.”

LVRSS will be at Purgatory Bar (62 E. 700 South in Salt Lake City) for brunch on Saturdays for the month of July. To stay up to date with the group, visit their website, lvrs.slc.com, or follow them on Instagram @lvrs.slc. All are welcome to join the family.

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SNICKS

By Andrew Christiansen

achristiansen01@gmail.com

The Salt Lake hip-hop scene is alive and growing. Come to this month's *SLUG Localized* to see two of the most experienced artists in the scene: Snicks and **Nostalgic90s**, along with opener **PrettyboionDaBlock**. The event will take place on July 21 at 7 p.m. at *Urban Lounge* (tickets are \$5). *SLUG Localized* is sponsored by **Uinta Brewing** and **Riso Geist**.

Snicks, a local rapper who has released several projects ranging from mixtapes to EPs to albums since 2017, has a dream. "I'm a young man coming from Salt Lake in the Rose Park area and I'm here to be the voice of my people—the voice of reason for everybody who doesn't have the opportunity to say so much," he says. Some of his influences include "OG's" like **50 Cent** and **The Notorious B.I.G.**, as well as newer artists such as **Migos** and **Chief Keef**.

Snicks says what makes his sound unique are the word flows, bars and the fact that it appeals to what listeners are used to from major streaming artists with added, underground flare. "It's relatable in the city sense, but also on the major scale, too," he says. The lyrical content of his songs depend on the vibe of the beat, but consistently deal with Snicks' perspective on everyday events and the consequences that come from them. "I mainly get inspiration from my life experiences and the other people around me," he says. Snicks used to write down lyrics before recording, but now he prefers just going into the studio, listen to the beat and freestyle. "I like keeping it fresh and just seeing whatever I feel through the emotion," he says.

Snicks plans on dropping an EP this month to match the summertime vibes, and then a mixtape later this year. "In these next projects, I'm getting more



Photo courtesy of Snicks

Local hip-hop artist Snicks has been shaking up the Utah music scene since 2017.

personal with the music so the fans can get a more unique understanding of me as a person," he says. Snicks aims to make music that is purposeful and motivational but also packed with creativity and versatility, which he hopes listeners can be inspired by. "I hope they get a

therapeutic freedom of expression from my music," he says.

According to Snicks, a big reason rap music is often overlooked in Utah—both by music venues and potential fans—is because of the misinterpretation of hip-hop culture. "People got the wrong concept of rap music. When you hear about rap music, most people think that it's ghetto [and that] it's coming with problems, but it's really not," he says. "Nowadays, I feel like the majority of kids just wanna be at a place where they can listen to and make music that they already do on their own, but still get the vibe where they feel comfortable and accepted in the community."

Snicks says that the culture has started to shift in recent years, though. "Since the state is growing at such a rapid rate, all the diversity coming in is making everyone get more into other cultures [and] it's forcing all the closed-minded people to be more open to change," he says. To Snicks, there are already plenty of talented hip-hop artists in the Salt Lake area, including **PrettyboionDaBlock**, **KHunnid.9000** and **Ceefoe**. In order for the hip-hop scene to continue growing, he believes it's important to hold events to highlight these artists, such as the *Alleyways Amplified* concert that he performed at this year. "[It's about] trying to shift that mindset of what people really think about hip-hop music, because not everybody is alert to the music we make."

Most of all, Snicks is happy to continue making music that he's proud of as he paves the way for the up-and-coming Utah hip-hop community. "The major thing that I feel the Utah [hip-hop scene] is missing is coming together as a community—once that unity is set, there's no way to stop us," he says.

LOCALIZED

NOSTALGIC90S

By Andrew Christiansen

achristiansen01@gmail.com

Nostalgic90s, the hip-hop duo of cousins **APaullo** and **LaneCobain3**, do more than just make music. "I design clothes, I paint, I play instruments. It's more of two artists syncing together creatively than two rappers sitting in a room thinking about what we're gonna do to this beat," Cobain3 says. Some of their many influences include **Lil Wayne**, **OutKast** and **Q-Tip**, and for singers, **Whitney Houston** and **Janet Jackson**.

The duo is originally from North Carolina and first started making music together about 10 years ago. Growing up, APaullo was influenced by different kinds of music from his family. "I remember riding with my grandma [and] listening to oldies and old school music, from R&B to blues and rap. I remember when my pops bought me my first CD with cussing in it, Outkast's *Stankonia*," he says. Cobain3 says his background and upbringing in North Carolina provided windows of artistic expression through the music he listened to and the television he watched. "Being from North Carolina, there's this confidence embedded in you to be the best there is while proving you're just another individual maneuvering through their 24 hours with style," Cobain3 says.

After a series of moves between California, Salt Lake and North Carolina across the 2010s, Nostalgic90s returned to Salt Lake in 2016 after Cobain3's mother passed. Cobain3 believes that's what makes Nostalgic90s unique as an artist in the Salt Lake scene is being from North Carolina, which influences how they make music. "[North Carolina's] culture, the southern vibe, is unique, from the food spots to the basketball courts to the arenas. It's all about taking advantage of a moment in style while understanding life has no rules, just consequences, and that's the approach we bring to any beat," Cobain3 says.



As Nostalgic90s, cousins (L-R) APaullo and LaneCobain3 create music by "taking advantage of a moment in style while understanding life has no rules."

In their songs, the duo rap about everyday life in a style that draws on real experiences, but embraces humor as well. "I can give you some negative shit, but in a way where it makes you go, 'Ah, that's pretty funny,'" Cobain3 says.

The inspiration for this style of lyricism comes from comedians. "Smart comedians have a way of storytelling or relaying information where it makes you go, 'Haha damn, that's true,' but also reflect," Cobain3 says. When talking about their creative process, the duo liken it to basketball, where you take what the defense is giving you. In this case, the defense is whatever the vibe of the beat makes them feel and want to talk about. "You wanna find the right beat that has the same tone as what we're rapping about, [as well as] the mood and the emotion you're feeling at that time," APaullo says.

Having grown up in a hip-hop scene that's more developed and is the home of popular artists such as **J. Cole** and **DaBaby**, the duo believes that in order to grow the hip-hop scene in Salt Lake, there needs to be more support given to the artists. "There's a support system for every genre in the city except the hip-hop scene. The hip-hop scene is handed the little venues or the venues no one really wants to go to regardless of who's playing," Cobain3 says. The two say this gatekeeping happens with venues in Salt Lake because they think the image or culture isn't right. APaullo says, "I feel [for] as much as other genres of music are known and heard here in Salt Lake, hip-hop and rap deserve that same recognition. [There's] a lot of overlooked talent here."

Looking forward, Nostalgic90s are working on two projects right now, one called *Channel 99*, which they describe as more melodic and fun and a reflection of their time as kids surfing TiVo channels. "I feel we can bring a lot of talent and have what it takes to be known in Salt Lake more," APaullo says.

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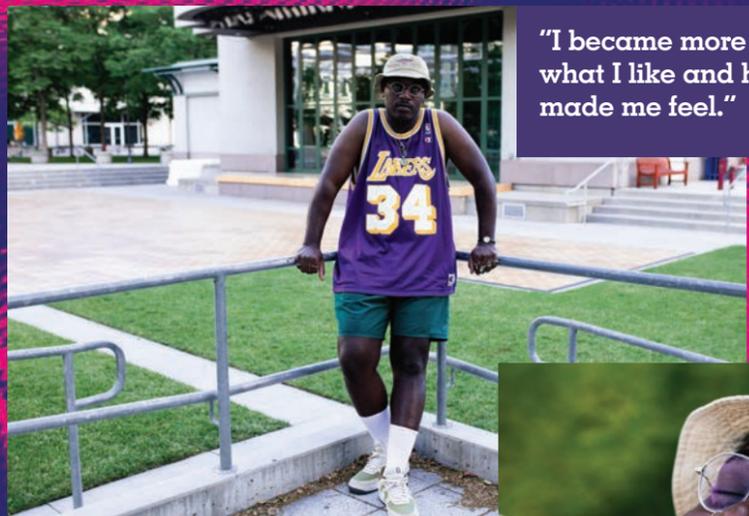
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SLUG STYLISTS

James Ray Davis III is a musician and bartender in Salt Lake City whose fashion exudes confidence. His hip-hop beat tape, *Ultramarine* by **Hurt Davis**, is slated to release at the end of the summer.

Every month, *SLUG Style* features a distinct member of the community and asks them why they do what they do. Exploring more than just clothing, *SLUG Style* is an attempt to feature the people who give Salt Lake City flavor through personality and panache.



"I became more conscious of what I like and how my clothes made me feel."



"I'm trying to make house music Black again. I've been producing for about three to three and-a-half years."



Davis estimates that his day-to-day fashion is "on" 80% of the time and "off" 20%.

Photos By Roberto Valdez

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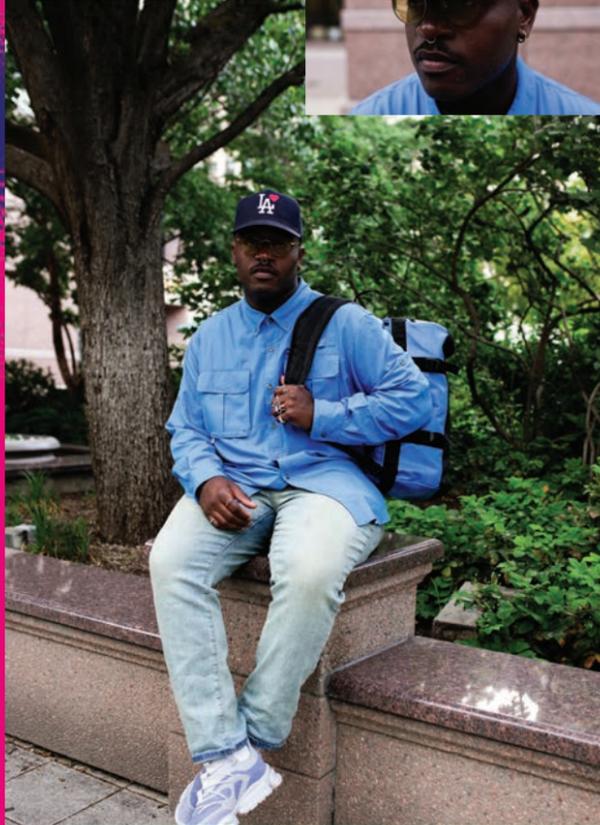
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Davis' interests are varied: "Bartending, making things, skateboarding/skate culture, Ravy'n Lenae, faith, Bee Gees, and energy in all forms," he says.



Originally from LA, Davis wears his hometown love on his cap.



Davis' personal style has evolved over time. "Specifically, I wear clothes that look good for longer," he says.

Davis' influences include Overdoz, Missy Elliott, Pharrell, his older sister and any Black people who were doing acid in the '70s.

The one hobby Davis has that no one would realize to ask him about? Sewing.



Accessories like these enamel Pokémon badges show off Davis' eye for subtle opportunities for cohesion.



Davis tries to keep traditional hip-hop elements in his music, "but but by the time I touch down, I might end up with some reggaeton, dancehall, experimental [or] rock ...," he says,

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BOLD & BEAUTIFUL

By: Kamryn Feigel • feigel1@gmail.com || Photos by Bonneville Jones

Experienced “science nerd” James Banks is also known as a lip-syncing, pop-star queen by the name of Tamara Knight. This wildly intelligent, hardworking and kind individual is the complete package, highlighting his talent, beauty and brains just by opening his mouth. Banks, 21, is a Las Vegas transplant, but Tamara was born in Salt Lake City. Moving here on his 18th birthday, he soon began the pre-med program at the *University of Utah*. Banks’ dedication to paving the way for higher education and Black talent is unparalleled. Follow Banks online @thetamaraknight on Instagram.

TAMARA

TAMARA

TAMARA

TAMARA

TAMARA

TAMARA

“I really try to showcase Black talent, and I think it’s really appreciated here in Salt Lake because there’s not as much of it,” Banks says.

“I come from a very privileged, Gen Z, viewpoint ... I had that mindset of, ‘I’m gonna do it no matter what ... not everyone has the privilege to be viewed that way.’”

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"If I put on a long wig, you can't tell me anything," Banks says.

"There [are] some reservations and conflict between the Black community and LGBTQ [people] and that's something that we've got to iron out," Banks says.

"I'm that type of person that's like, you tell me I can't do something? Now I have to just prove you wrong," Banks says.

KNIGHT KNIGHT KNIGHT KNIGHT

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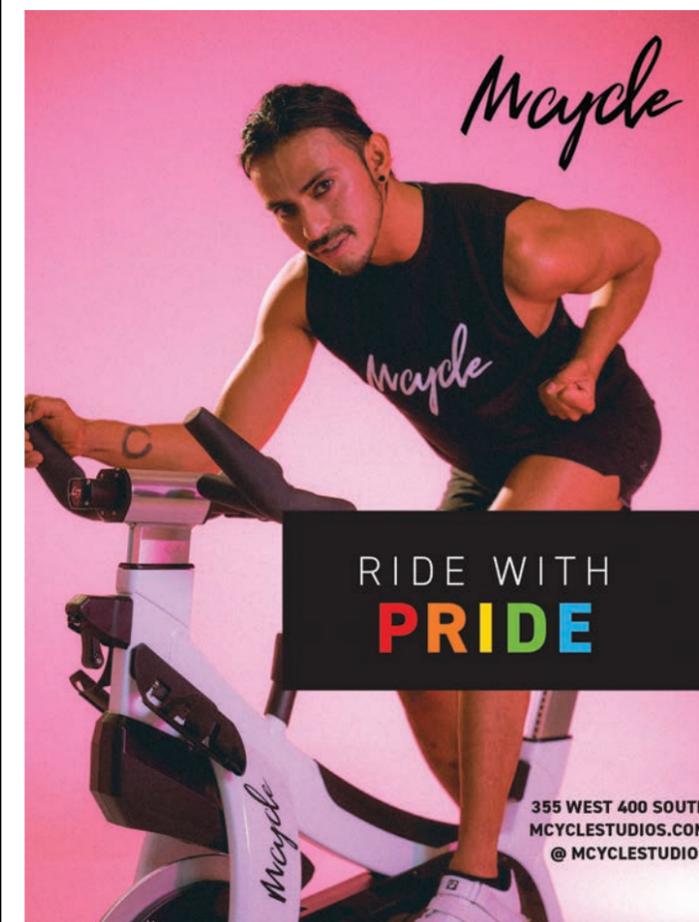


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PIES THE LIMIT

Savory and Sweet and Everything Nice

By Kara Dempsey • karadempsey@karadwrites.com || Photos by @slc_bites



Pies the Limit's Blueberry Sour Cream pie boasts a sturdy crust and a lemon-and-sour-cream custard.

I am convinced that pies are magical—they can be sweet or savory; they can be entire meals or light as air. They possess a corner of the culinary industry that is all their own and nothing—and I mean *nothing*—comes close. It's safe to assume that **Dominique Wilson**, owner and operator of *Pies the Limit*, shares that sentiment.

When asked, "Why pies? What makes them special?" Wilson says, "I love 'em! Growing up, I was never really into cake, cupcakes and cookies. I mean, I love cookies, don't get me wrong, but some can just be too damn sweet. Pies were always big in the South and, if there were desserts in my house growing up, it was usually more pie than [anything else]." He also says that pies are special because of the love that is put into them. "I make sure to treat every pie that I make like I want you to have an experience that you never had before."

Cakes and cookies are a dime a dozen in Utah and, more often than not, indistinguishable from each other. Finding a "damn good pie," as Wilson puts it, can be quite a challenge, which is why he does what he does. Self-taught but a baker at heart, Wilson has been rolling out crusts since his teenage years but more so with purpose since 2016. Thanks to his friends' encouragement after the pandemic inter-

fered with his career, he decided to make his passion for baking an official profession in 2020. After being labeled as a "Black-owned business" on Instagram, his work "took off like a rocket," with his pies being featured on *Good Things Utah* and sold at *Normal Ice Cream*.

I had the privilege of sampling two of the pies from Wilson's June menu—the Blueberry Sour Cream (\$28.00) and the Chicken Pot Pie (\$33.00). As an avid pie addict, I was thrilled to receive my pies and feel the substantial weight of them in their boxes. The Blueberry Sour Cream was just the right amount of sweet with a crunchy pecan crumble on top that offset the smooth, lemon-and-sour-cream custard beneath. Dotted with blueberries, each burst in my mouth at their peak level of ripeness. The crust was sturdy enough to hold its shape and support the weight of the filling, but not to the detriment of the texture and taste. It's no mystery why this is Wilson's personal favorite and one of his best sellers.

Chicken Pot Pie is my go-to comfort food, and Wilson's version is easily in my top-three favorites ever tasted. The filling is fully cooked but does come as raw dough with instructions on how to cook it. 45 minutes after I put it in my oven, my apartment smelled heavenly and I could not wait to try it. The top crust browned perfectly and was dusted lightly with herbs. It's little touches like this that make *Pies the Limit* stand above competitors. My absolute favorite thing about this pie was the consistency and thickness of the filling. When cut, it didn't flood the pie tin but held its shape. There was no cavernous center where it collapsed mid-bake, either. From the bottom crust to the dome-shaped top, Wilson's pie was filled to the brim with carrots, potatoes, peas, chunks of moist chicken and a well-seasoned, creamy sauce.



Dominique Wilson started Pies the Limit to honor his love for the pies from his childhood.

When asked what he would like to share with you, dear readers, it was that he wanted to express his gratitude and appreciation. "These past two years have been challenging yet so much fun, and I couldn't [have done] it without all of you," Wilson says. It's through the support of this community that Wilson is able to provide the sweet and savory pies of our dreams. The menu changes monthly, giving him the opportunity to take advantage of seasonality and holiday themes. He reveals his choices at the beginning of each month on his Instagram @pies_the_limitut. Follow him for updates, announcements and pictures of his beautiful masterpieces.



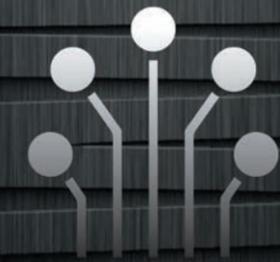
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- 7/3 **Sun.** "The Give-Back" Charity BBQ w/ LVRS SLC - 1 pm
- 7/7 **Thurs.** Vibras Del Lago - Cumbia Night
- 7/8 **Fri.** DJ: Flash & Flare
- 7/9 **Sat.** DJ: Spaz
- 7/10 **Sun.** The Shake-Up w/ Robin Banks & Friends - 1 pm - Patio Party
- 7/15 **Fri.** DJ: James Beard esq.
- 7/16 **Sat.** DJ: Flash & Flare
- 7/17 **Sun.** Caviar Club Record Swap - 1 pm
- 7/21 **Thurs.** DJ's: Chase One2 & Godina 80's / New Wave
- 7/22 **Fri.** DJ: Radical Jones
- 7/23 **Sat.** DJ: James Beard esq.
- 7/24 **Sun.** DJ Spaz: R&B Patio Session - 1 pm
- 7/28 **Thurs.** DJ: Jordi Roc
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KING CYBORG

USING SHADOW WORK IN MUSIC

By Sage Holt sage@slugmag.com

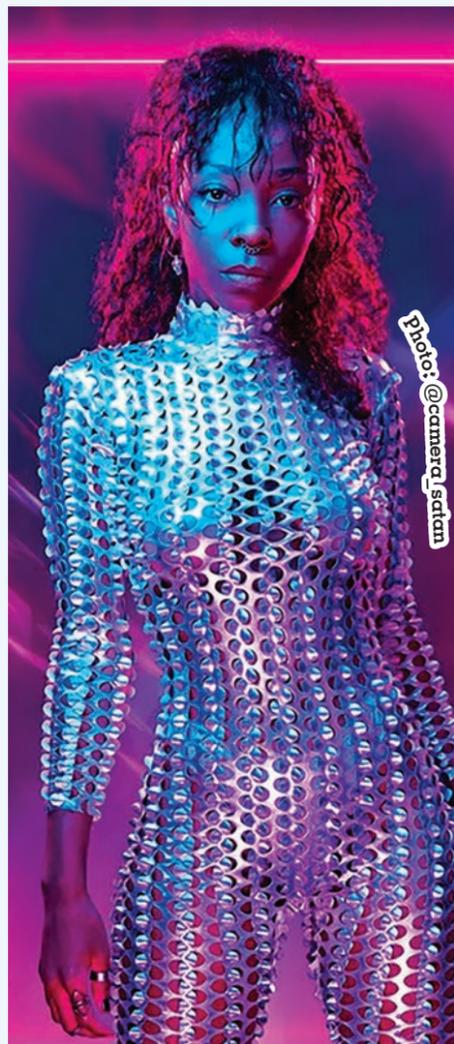
King Cyborg was born to be an artist—from singing to dancing and fashion, Cyborg is dripping with talent. “Music played an enormous role [in my early life] ... It was like I was constantly walking through life, and life has a soundtrack full of moody, romantic, glitch-ridden music embedded with my bold personality,” says Cyborg. Growing up on the Iiha de Luanda Island of Angola, South Africa, Cyborg learned many styles of dancing and singing at a very young age, from traditional African styles to western styles of blues and jazz. This extensive knowledge only confirmed her love for music. Her sound consists of a menagerie of genres, from avant-pop to experimental R&B, neo-soul and dream pop. This confluence of cultures is interpreted through dark melodies and tranquility, sending listeners on a multi-dimensional, cybernetic trip.

Cyborg delivers a healing atmosphere in her music, playing off of the concept of “shadow work” and the comfort it can bring to her listeners. “Shadow work is a practice of self-acceptance, healing and self-growth. It’s the process of coming face to face with your pain instead of suppressing everything that you don’t want to think, feel or address. You go into this process with an attitude of compassion for yourself and your experiences,” says Cyborg. To her, a deeper connection exists between the artist and their listeners—it goes beyond stunning vocals and banging beats. “My songs can be very encrypted, but once you dive deeper into the streaming waves of it, you will hear and feel that every song I create contains a part of my struggles and traumas which, fortunately, has helped a lot of people dealing with similar traumas [that] I do,” she says.

Cyborg has been listening to a multitude of genres since birth, and it’s hard to pinpoint one, specific sonic impact. She describes

her influences as an avalanche of cultures. “I don’t have a specific reference point for inspiration or influences,” she says. “For instance, I ... listen to rock, metal, porch blues and jazz. Those are just a few of the musical and cultural waters I drank from at a very young age. Being Angolan, I also listened to Semba, Kizomba, Kuduro and Fado.” With these diverse guidances, Cyborg gives her

King Cyborg collects the diverse sonic influences of their upbringing into a sound all their own.



songs a more inclusive meaning, especially in “Under the Moon,” where the cheery, rhythmic Semba beats pair perfectly with the polished harmony of Cyborg’s voice and electro-pop guitar, ultimately creating a musical blend of African roots and American pop music.

Cyborg’s creative process begins within the first 10 seconds of listening to a beat or instrument. After those 10 seconds, she begins to assemble both a melody and story. Cyborg is not only creating the sound of her songs, but she is also creating the emotional takeaway for her listeners. From there, she starts building the rest of the song. “It’s in the way the instruments hit my chakras and in the way it makes me feel. Every song I create has a melody and visuals attached to it,” she says. Not only does Cyborg create music and visual accompaniments, but she also tends to leave lessons in her music, hoping that others understand and appreciate the shared trauma between humans. “I want to inspire people [to be their authentic selves] to embrace their sexuality and their quirkiness,” Cyborg says.

The resulting product gives Cyborg reason to continue her path by teaching herself music production. “It’s so magical and truly satisfying; it’s freedom. It’s one of the main reasons why I’m self-teaching music production so that I can put all these sounds into this reality,” she says.

Recently, King Cyborg performed at **The L Project’s** Pride showcase in Los Angeles. She adds, “I’m currently working on a few song projects that are soon to be released, both individually and with other amazing artists. It’s exciting—I’m excited!” The best way to keep up with Cyborg is through her mailing list (available at KingCyborg.com) and by following her on social media under [@kngcybrg](https://twitter.com/kngcybrg).

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