

VEHMENTS

M A G A Z I N E

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Host of the Month



Carson Minniear

We're super-excited to spend some time today with acclaimed young actor Carson Minniet; greetings and salutations, Carson, and thanks for taking time from a very busy schedule to speak with us and our readers here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 treating you and yours?

Hey! Thanks so much for having me! This is super cool! 2025's been awesome so far. A little busy, a little crazy, but in a good way! I've gotten to work on some really fun projects and still make time to hang out with friends, play sports, and just be a regular kid sometimes, too! So yeah, no complaints!

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the upcoming thriller Site, which is set to captivate moviegoing audiences worldwide when it premieres this August 8! Starting at the top, can you explain for anyone late to the party what Site is about and how your character of 'Wiley Bardo' figures into the proceedings?

Thanks so much! That means a lot. So Site is a sci-fi thriller that gets pretty wild. It's about a terrifying encounter at an abandoned government test site. My dad, played by Jake McLaughlin, begins seeing haunting visions of a past that threatens to destroy his present, which my character, Wiley, gets tangled up into.

Did you know as soon as the screenplay for Site crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?

Oh yeah, definitely! As soon as I read the script, I was like "whoa, this is cool"! I hadn't really done anything like it before, so I knew it would be a fun challenge. Plus, the story kept me guessing the whole time, and if it can surprise me while reading it, I knew it would be pretty cool on screen.

You work with some amazing actors in Site, including the likes of Arielle Kebbel, Jake McLaughlin, and Theo Rossi, among others! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this super-talented ensemble?

It was honestly awesome. They were all super chill and made me feel really welcome. I learned a lot just watching them work, like how they prepare for scenes and stay in character even between takes. It pushed me to bring my A-game, for sure. And we also had fun on set too, which made the whole experience even better. Definitely one of the best casts I've gotten to work with!

Speaking of collaborations, what was it like working with Site writer and director Jason Eric Perlman?

Working with Jason was really cool! I've worked with a few directors before, and what stood out about Jason is how calm and focused he is. He made it easy to trust the process, and I felt like he really believed in me, which gave me a lot of confidence.

You play a character in Site who has lost his vision. What challenges did this present for you as an actor, and how did you go about preparing for the role?

Yeah, playing a character who's lost his vision was really interesting. Even during the audition, I pretended like I couldn't see, and I realized right away how different everything feels when you take vision out of it. A funny story while filming...I remember in one scene when we hurried out of a hallway, I accidentally ran into a doorframe! Cameras are rolling, and you just hear a "BOOM," then everyone got quiet and "CUT"! Haha, I was totally fine. Everyone checked in on me, and we had a pretty good laugh.

Word 'round industry campfire has it that you're poised for a breakout role in an eagerly anticipated and mysterious television series, which is set within a globally celebrated franchise; congrats! Can you give readers a hint or three as to what they might expect and look forward to with this forthcoming series?

Haha, I wish I could say more, but I gotta keep my lips sealed on

that one! I've definitely been working on something really exciting, but I'm not allowed to spill any details just yet. All I can say is...stay tuned! It's gonna be worth the wait!

What fascinates you the most about acting, and how did you first become interested in becoming a card-carrying thespian?

I think what fascinates me the most is getting to step into other characters that aren't really like me.

I first got interested in acting when I was really little. I had a small role in a local commercial and totally fell in love with it. After that, I started getting into acting classes at DTV Studios here in Texas, and it turned into something I really wanted to do for real. Now I can't imagine not acting! It's one of my favorite things!

In an industry which is known for its occasional excesses, how do you stay grounded and hold onto the things which matter the most?

Honestly, it's all thanks to my friends and family. They don't treat me any differently just because I'm in this business. They still mess with me. My parents keep me super grounded, too. They always remind me what's important, like being kind, working hard, and staying humble.

And my friends are the best. When I'm not on set, I'm just hanging out, playing video games/sports, going to school, and being a regular kid. That balance helps a lot. Acting is awesome, but it's not the only thing that makes me...me.

You're currently recording season three of Disney's hit animated series Pupstruction; congrats again! Have you been pleasantly surprised by the amazing fan reaction to the series? And how do you like doing voice work for this and a few other productions?

Thank you! Yeah, it's been so cool seeing how much people love Pupstruction! When I first started, I had no idea it would take off like this, or that I'd be getting my own plush toy!! Getting to be a part of something that kids (and even parents!) enjoy so much is really fun.

Voice work is a blast! BONUS points for getting to audition or record in comfy clothes, haha! Being an actor first has definitely helped me a lot when it comes to bringing a character to life, even when it's just through my voice.

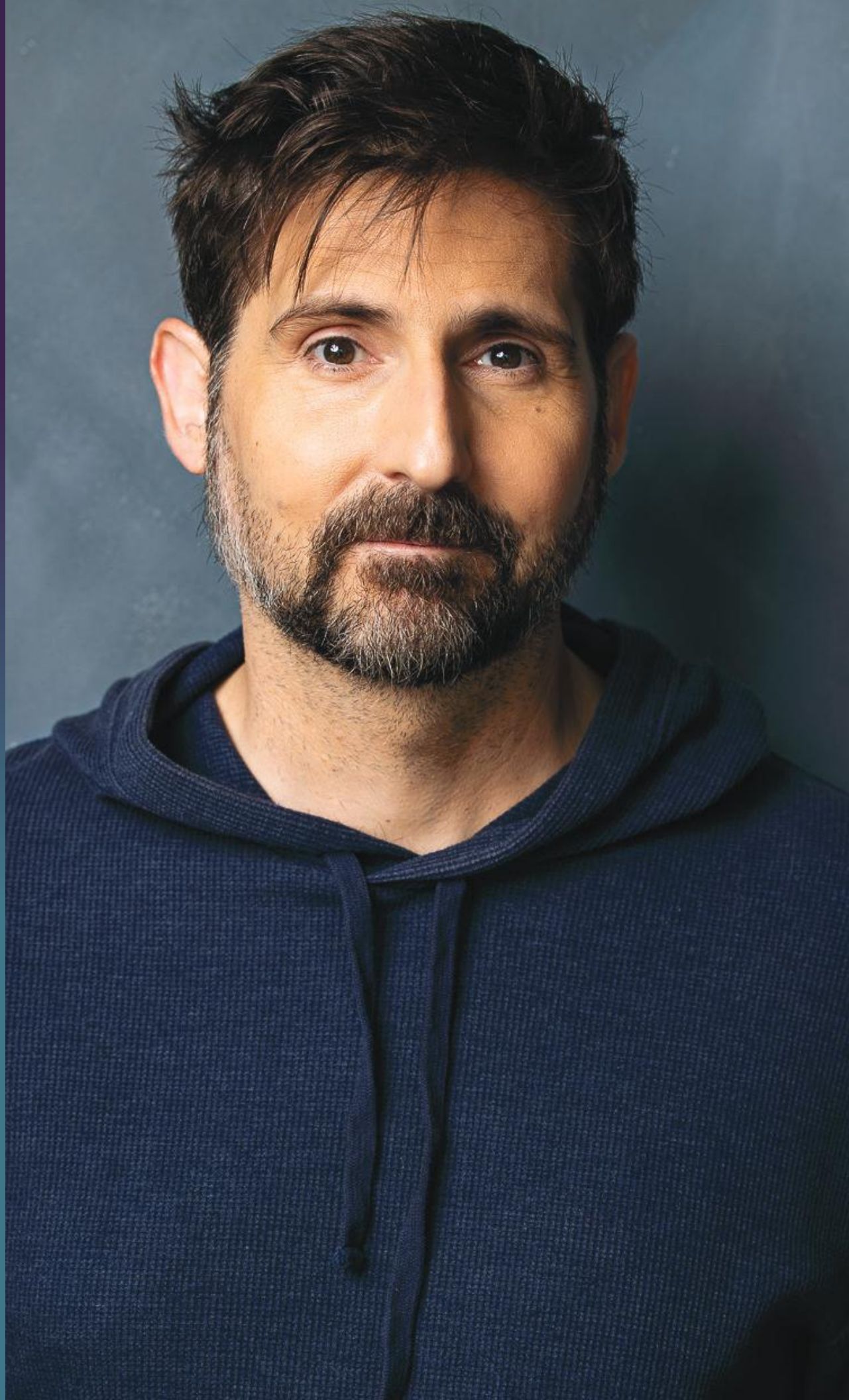
Any final thoughts you might like to leave readers with regarding your upcoming phenomenal work in the feature motion picture Site, which premieres this August 8?

Just that I'm really proud of this movie and can't wait for everyone to see it! Site is full of twists, action, and some really cool moments. It was such an awesome experience to be part of, and I hope audiences have as much fun watching it as we did making it. So yeah...mark your calendars for August 8...it's gonna be wild!



Photo credit: MONICA GOSSELIN PHOTOGRAPHY

william castrogiovanni



We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor William Castro-giovanni; greetings and salutations William and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the Q&A celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

Thanks so much for your questions! This has definitely been a roller coaster year, but also one filled with opportunities, particularly in the indie space. There's never been a better time for new voices to flourish.

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura star turn in the upcoming major motion picture Jurassic Reborn which is set to light up box-offices around the world when it premieres this June 24! Starting at the top, can you explain to our ever-inquisitive readers what Jurassic Reborn is about and how your character of Jerry figures into the proceedings?

The film follows a team of scientists struggling to survive after their cutting-edge research causes a pack of dinosaur hatchlings to grow uncontrollably larger. It's a super fun, thrilling, and very bloody adventure as they race to escape their island base and figure out who or what might have caused the disaster.

I play Dr. Jerry Wilson, a spirited and eccentric geneticist whose passion sometimes outshines his competence. I really connected with my character, who, like me, gets caught up in little details and often misses the forest through the trees. Jerry's extremely bright and analytical, but he doesn't always pick up on social cues and can be very shy and awkward, particularly around strong personalities. I like to think that the only thing more terrifying to him than bloodthirsty velociraptors is being forced to mingle at the office Christmas party.

Did you know as soon as the script for Jurassic Reborn from screenwriter Alex Heerman crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?

Oh, way before that! I was all-in from the moment I first heard about the project. I loved cult sci-fi films growing up and have always wanted to make my home in this genre. When I learned that The Asylum was planning a mockbuster around one of the greatest sci-fi franchises of all time, I absolutely had to be a part of it.

You work with such a great ensemble in Jurassic Reborn, including the likes of Daniel Baldwin, E.R. Ruiz, Esmeree Sterling, Bryan Scamman, and Danielle Titus! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this merry band of thespians?

Not just great actors, but good people! This was a very quick and intense shoot, and I

think that helped forge our comradery on set. Though, I was certain from the first table read that we'd all have great chemistry.

Danielle is a rock star. Actually, cooler than that. She's a classical pianist. Like, in real life. And I think that that fierce discipline shows in her work as Dr. Marie Bessette. She's one of the most prepared actors I've ever met and is fervently committed to finding the truth in every moment.

Bryan is fantastic as Dr. Pete Panfilov and possesses a very deep, quiet strength. I'm blown away by his professionalism and the gravitas he brings to the screen.

But perhaps the greatest thrill was getting to play with veteran actor Daniel Baldwin, who's an incredibly generous scene partner and a force to be reckoned with as Eric Cranston. I learned so much from watching him work.

Speaking of collaborations, your director on Jurassic Reborn is the insanely talented Marcel Walz. What was it like working with Marcel on this film? Is he what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?

Marcel is unflappable. A true leader and a massively talented director. What impressed me most was how inclusive and welcoming he was of everyone's ideas, confidently weaving them into his vision for the picture while making us all feel like valued collaborators. And he did it all under the pressure of an insane shooting schedule without ever missing a beat. It was such a joy to work with him and hope we get to do it again!

Atomic Blonde Productions is the producer of Jurassic Reborn. In your humble opinion, what makes Atomic Blonde the perfect home for Jurassic Reborn?

Brendan Petrizzo and everyone at Atomic Blonde share a punk rock ethos and are hardcore fans of camp and horror. There's no greater evidence of this than the fantastic dinosaur-themed puns they peppered throughout our daily call sheets. Meanwhile, the EPs at The Asylum practically invented the mockbuster. In terms of cult cinema, they rank right up there with the legendary Roger Corman in my book.

Taking a gander at your very full acting dance card, we note that you have no less than five upcoming productions which you are a vital part of: The College Detective Club, Breakfast for Dinner, Dawn, Brennan Reed's: The Theraping, and Residuals; Whew, and congratulations! Can you give readers a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with these intriguing-sounding productions?

I'm drawn to offbeat and thought-provoking projects, so it was a real privilege working on these films, all of which were helmed by incredible indie auteurs.

We literally just wrapped principal photography on The Theraping, which is a very loving parody of John Carpenter's The Thing. Writer-director Brennan Reed's version imagines that there's another remote research outpost in Antarctica, but this one is filled with therapists. And the only way they can suss out the alien among them is by talking through their feelings. We had great fun leaning into the suspense and paranoia of the original film.

You wrote and produced the 2023 short film The World Above; congrats again! What was it like to step back and handle the writing and producing duties on a film, and can we look forward to more writing from you in the future? How about directing?

I hope it's the first of many original productions! While I do have some experience behind the camera as both a writer and director, The World Above was my first major foray into producing.

Since I ultimately aim to mount larger projects, I approached the short as though I were preparing for a feature. I really wanted to get my hands dirty and learn the ropes. I oversaw every facet of production, from budgeting all the way through to post-production.

I didn't direct this project, since I played the lead character, Edison Sparks. But I would like to direct other projects down the road.

Can you share with readers the E! True Hollywood Story on how you landed upon the pathway of deciding you wanted to be an actor?

It was never really a choice; I fear I might have been born this way. When I was a kid, I used to force my cousins and little sisters to help me stage elaborate variety shows in my grandmother's basement. My parents couldn't shut me up, so they enrolled me in acting classes instead. By the time I reached middle school, I was touring with a children's theatre and booking my first TV and commercial credits. Decades later, I'm still at it. And my parents still can't shut me up.

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, The Player, Barton Fink, The Big Picture, Hollywood Shuffle, Ed Wood or Swimming with Sharks?

Barton Fink, hands down! These are all phenomenal movies, but I'll choose the Coen brothers every time. Their films were hugely influential on me when I was a young storyteller, and they opened my eyes to the exciting world of indie cinema.

VIGGO HANVELT



Viggo, thanks so much for joining us. It's great to have you. How has 2025 been treating you so far?

It's been great. I recently graduated from sixth grade and am moving on to a new school. I also just came from a trip to Los Angeles where I attended the US premiere of *The Institute* at the Culver Theatre. It was a really cool experience to walk the red carpet with all the other actors and celebrate a great show. And of course I got to see the first episode on the big screen.

First off, congratulations on your performance in *The Institute*, which premieres this July on MGM+. For those who may not be familiar with the series, can you tell us what it's about and where your character, Avery, fits into the story?

The Institute is about kids with supernatural abilities who get kidnapped and taken to The Institute. At the Institute, the kids are in what's called front half, where they are forced to be tested. And so, because it is awful there, the kids work together to try and find a way out before they are moved to "back half." No one wants to go to the back half. Avery is very young, the youngest there, but the most powerful in terms of supernatural abilities. He makes friends with Luke (the main character), Kalisha, Nicky and George and wants to help them escape.

What drew you to the role of Avery? Were there aspects of the character that you connected with personally?

I jumped at the opportunity to play Avery because I was excited to play such a big role in a thriller. I connected with Avery because I am small like him and he learns to be brave.

You're part of an incredible ensemble alongside Dylan Bailey, Ben Barnes, and Mary-Louise Parker. What was it like working with this cast?

I was really lucky to work with such a great cast. I really connected with "the kids" Joe Freeman, Simone Miller, Fionn Laird and Arlen So, and also some of the actors like Jane Luk and Jason Diaz. I was lucky to be in a bunch of scenes with Mary-Louise Parker who was amazing as Ms. Sigsby. I didn't get to be in a scene with Ben Barnes but he was really cool to talk to. The cast was really supportive and fun to be with.

The series is directed by Jack Bender and Brad Turner, both known for their work in high-stakes drama. What was your experience collaborating with them on set?

It was great working with them. They really knew what they wanted and I could just trust the process and have fun. I'd love to work with them again sometime.

We also hear you have a powerful performance in the upcoming short film *Brotherly*. Can you tell us what the film explores and who you play?



Brotherly is a short film about two brothers. One of the brothers is forced to decide whether or not to respect his mentally ill older brother's wishes to have a medically assisted death. My real older brother and I play the brothers in flashback scenes. I play young Nabil. It is having its Montreal premier at the upcoming Fantasia Festival in Montreal.

What do you love most about acting and what part of the process challenges you the most?

I like acting because it's really, I get to meet new people and they have really great food on set. I find the audition the most challenging bit but also when I need to go to school and film at the same time, that can be really hard.

One of your earliest credits was the 2019 TV movie *Turkey Drop*. Looking back, do you have any standout memories from that first professional experience?

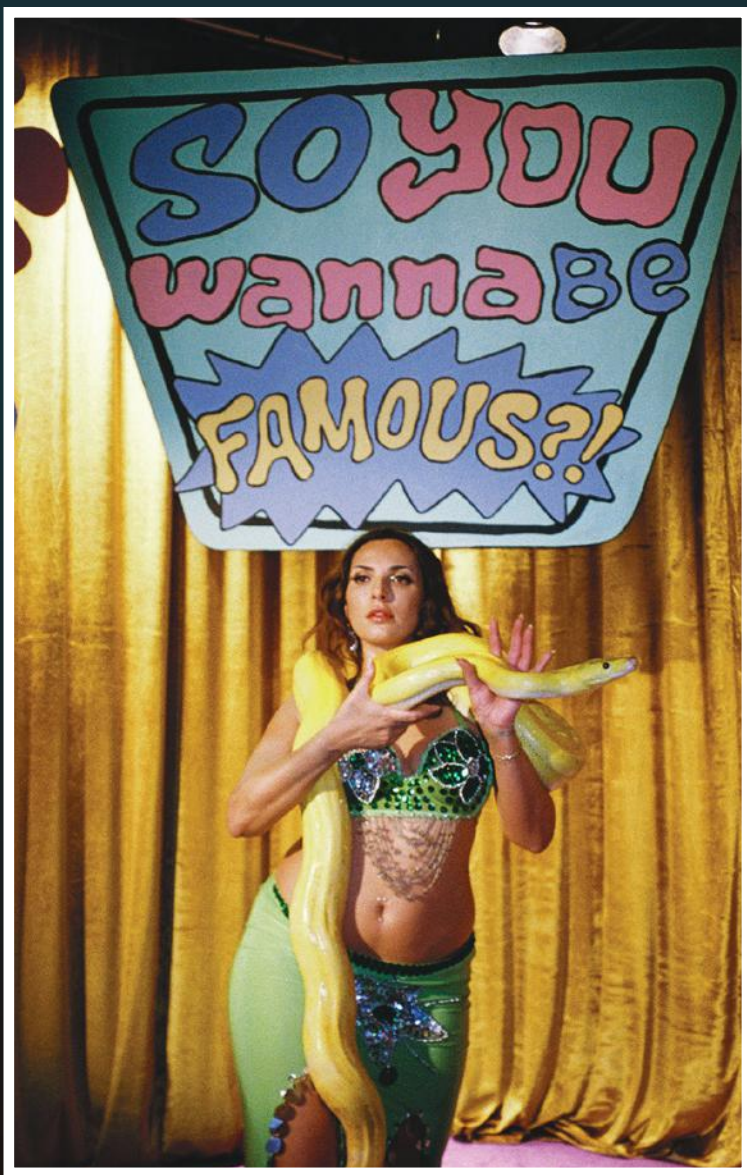
I was really young but I remember it took us three days to film a dinner table scene. I did get to have a really fun scene when I had to get my foot stuck in (fake) turkey!

When you're not working, what do you enjoy doing to unwind or recharge?

I really like to listen to music, especially rock music. I also am a competitive figure skater and I play soccer too. So when I am not acting I keep pretty busy!

Lastly, is there anything you'd like to share with audiences ahead of the premiere of *The Institute*?

I want to tell them to watch the show because they will get to experience an amazing, interesting and thrilling story.



Roxana Baldovin

MANIC became my way to take the power back. A high-energy, genre-blurring ride that fuses silly songs, big feelings, and unfiltered ambition. It's my calling card and my catharsis all in one.

MANIC features no less than fourteen different and very distinct characters, all of which you essay yourself. Can you speak to the challenges as an actress of creating fourteen very different characters? How involved and drawn out were your individual character sketches?

The process of writing MANIC was truly channeled through me—it unfolded over the course of three years. It actually started with the music; the first piece I wrote was the final number, “My Dreams, My Way.” From there, I googled “solo show classes” and stumbled into a whole community I didn’t know existed. Working with Jessica Lynn Johnson and Heather Dowling helped me shape the MANIA into a cohesive story.

What’s funny is, I didn’t originally set out to create fourteen characters—it just happened as I kept writing. I didn’t overthink the structure in the beginning; I let the voices come through and figured I’d sort it out later. Of course, once I stepped into rehearsals, I had to get specific. That meant figuring out the physicality, vocal shifts, and emotional backstories for each one. Some characters blend and overlap by design, which added another layer of complexity. But I embraced that challenge. It forced me to stretch as a performer—and honestly, that’s been the most rewarding part.

Is putting on a one woman show such as MANIC a bit like walking the tightrope without a net? Is there a level of uncertainty and doubt – and even fear - every time you prepare to bring the show to life?

Absolutely—it’s a highwire act every single time. But that being said, the more I do it, the more comfortable I am. When I first started, I hadn’t been on stage since high school, so there was definitely a voice in my head—actually, I turned her into a character in the show named Insecurita—whispering, “Are you really going to do this?” But I kept watching other people take the leap, and I told myself, If

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the genre-busting solo show MANIC which is set to kick off at the vaunted Hollywood Fringe Festival! Starting at the top, can you explain to anyone not in the know what MANIC is about and what inspired this cabaret-meets-comedy special?

I’ve been developing my TV show MANIC since 2021—it’s my Insecure meets Girls moment, where I write, direct, and star in a story that’s entirely my own. But because I didn’t have major acting credits at the time, every network I pitched wanted to cast someone else in the lead role. Then I discovered that Fleabag began as a one-woman stage show, and it entirely changed my brain chemistry.

Seeing that a one-woman show could become a TV show gave me the blueprint—and the fire. I realized I didn’t need to wait for a greenlight—I could prove the concept by performing it live. I had dipped my toes into stand-up back in 2019, but it never quite felt like my lane. Then I saw Cat Cohen’s The Twist...? She’s Gorgeous and it was a lightning bolt. That blend of cabaret, comedy, GLAM and theatricality—I was like, “Oh. That. That’s me.”

they can do it, so can I. Before my first performance, I was terrified—like, fully trembling. But I believe you have to follow the fear. On the other side of it is where the magic happens. My character coach, Ms. Keenya Hill (yes, from America's Next Top Model!), said to me, "Imagine who you're going to be on the other side of this," and I instantly burst into tears. She was right. This process has already changed me. With each show, I shed another layer of self-doubt—and I become more myself.

What has it meant for you to be able to premiere MANIC at no less of a distinguished venue as the Hollywood Fringe Festival?

A major check off my bucket list. I am so proud of myself. This is truly the beginning of the rest of my life!

After the debut of your solo show at the Hollywood Fringe Festival, where will you be performing MANIC next?

Next stop is definitely New York—doing MANIC at Club Cumming would be a dream come true. I'll also be part of the STARS Series at the Zephyr Theatre in LA this December, and I'm hoping to do a night at The Groundlings as well. I've applied for several opportunities that could take the show abroad—to Italy, Australia, and hopefully, Edinburgh Fringe, which is the gold standard for solo theatre.

But MANIC isn't just a stage show—it's a proof of concept for something much bigger. My ultimate goal is to adapt it into a television series, something in the vein of Dave or Crazy Ex-Girlfriend, but with my own chutzpah of course. I've already started building that world, and every performance is another step toward that version of the story. This is just the beginning of a much larger journey—onstage, onscreen, and everywhere in between.

For the folks who can't make a live performance of MANIC, is there a chance that the show will be filmed and televised at a later date? Or can we expect an album release of the Show?

DEFINITELY! I've been filming every performance so I may release it on Amazon Prime - but nothing like



experiencing it first hand in the theatre.

How did your training at the world-renowned Groundlings ultimately inform your work in MANIC?

Groundlings made me! The same way they've made Elvira, Pee-Wee, and Jennifer Coolidge. I didn't know the art of character acting until I stepped foot into those doors.

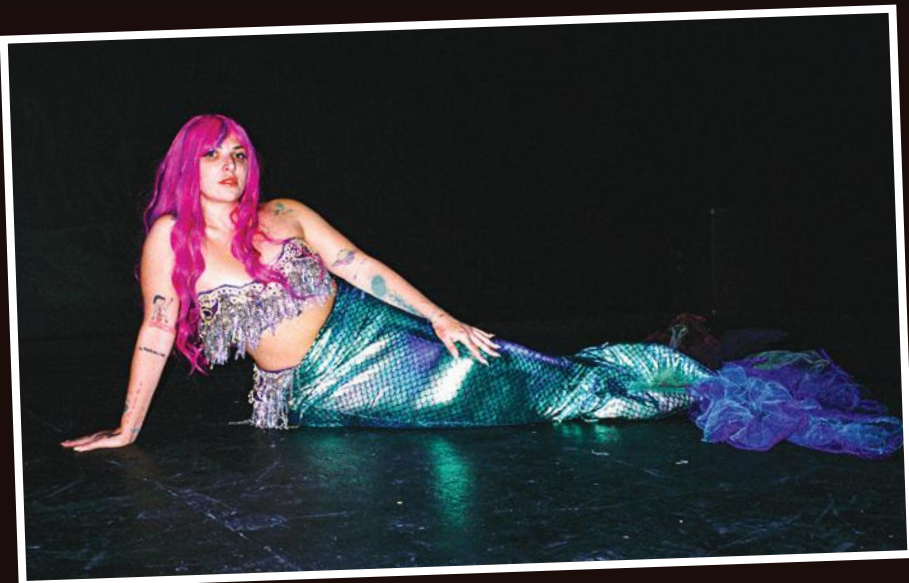
Do you stick entirely to script when performing MANIC, or do you allow for any type of improv while

exercising your thespian muscle in front of audiences?

It's more or less scripted but as with anything live theatre, you'll never get the same performance twice.

At the end of the day, what do you hope audiences walk away with after checking out your solo show extravaganza MANIC?

I hope they walk away inspired and wanting to nurture their inner child !





JANE LUK

We're thrilled to chat with actress and comedian Jane Luk. Thanks so much for taking the time to speak with us today. To start us off, how has 2025 been treating you so far?

So far I've been doing mainly voice overs for animation. Also writing for personal projects. And getting ready for my first red carpet premiere!

Congratulations on your upcoming role in *The Institute*, the highly anticipated Stephen King adaptation premiering on MGM+ this July! For those unfamiliar, can you tell us a bit about the series and your character, Maureen Alvorson?

It's based on Stephen King's novel by the same name. It's about young children between the ages of 10-18 who are gifted with either telepathy or telekinesis. These children are captured and brought to a place called The Institute where they are tested and injected with experimental serums with the hopes of them developing both powers. (These kids only have one or the other). Maureen is an orderly/janitor at the Institute. She is ex-army and this is the only place where she can find work because of her past record. She is the first person the kids see when they wake up in their new environment. She answers to Ms. Sigsby played by Mary-Louise Parker. Her boss is a taskmaster and will do anything for the success of the "program".

Were you familiar with Stephen King's novel *The Institute* before landing the role? What drew you to this particular project?

I hadn't read it, no. When I had my zoom recall, Jack Bender was there to direct the recall. At the time I didn't know who he was but soon knew he was the director and Executive Producer. I really felt how passionate he was about the project and how generous he was after my first go at the character. I wasn't given any other information and I never read the book so after he gave me notes which made a whole different approach to Maureen. I knew immediately what he wanted. I did the audition again and took in all his notes. He was really happy with what I came up with. I knew I really wanted to work with Jack.

You're part of a phenomenal ensemble cast in *The Institute*, including Ben Barnes and Mary-Louise Parker. What was it like working alongside such a talented group?

Like the book, there are two storylines. Ben was with the cast of the town so I didn't see him or those cast mem-

bers very often. They were usually on location in Windsor, NS. I was with Mary-Louise at the Institute which was built in a studio in Dartmouth. I loved working out scenes with Mary-Louise and thought it was so generous of her to ask to run lines. I know that sounds weird but I'm used to lead actors on a production to never run lines with other actors. I also loved the fact that she was always in the moment in scenes. I work the same way as an improviser. No matter how many times you rehearse something, it's never quite the same. The energy always evolves a bit. I also loved working with the younger cast. This was Joe's first big acting gig, and as I had a number of scenes with him, it was so lovely to get to know him outside of playing Luke. He's what you call a natural! Well, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. The other kids were all so nice! I remember I hadn't seen Simone in a few days and when we came out of our trailers at the same time, she greeted me with a smile and a hug. We were becoming family, ironically! Lol! Jason Diaz, who plays the main orderly was the nicest. It's hard to believe some of "Tony's" scenes when in real life he is the best dad to his little girl who turned one while he was on set.

You also worked with directors Jack Bender and Brad Turner on the series. What was your experience like with them on set?

Jack knew exactly what he wanted and would have lots of coverage to make sure he caught everything. He had been sitting on this project while it was on hold from the pandemic so he was raring to go. I loved working with Jack because he respected my ideas and listened. He would let me try things which I rarely get a chance to do with most directors. Brad was always on top of things. He was so calm and cool. Very different energy. I'd never worked with Jeff Renfroe before so it was great getting to know him and figuring out how we would work together. At times Jeff would make a suggestion after a few takes and I have to say they were great.

The series was filmed in Halifax, Nova Scotia. How did shooting in that setting influence the tone or feel of the show?

Oh I fell in love with Nova Scotia! In September I didn't have as many days on set as they started with shooting the scenes in the town. So I got to explore Halifax. So beautiful. It was great to get away from the hustle and construction of Toronto! I think the beauty and calm helped me to focus on my work and dig

into the darkness of my character. I had a couple friends who lived there (Both named Jamie/Jamey but didn't know each other) who took me around to see places like Peggy's Cove, Annapolis Valley, Wolfville, Musquodoboit. Later I got brave and rented a car to see my friend Peter, who has an art gallery in Petite Rivière.

For fans of the book, how closely does the MGM+ adaptation stick to the source material? Are there any notable differences you can share?

There are some differences for sure. The one main difference that will be apparent right away is that the "children" are all skewed a little older than the book. You need to ask Jack his reasons but I personally found that it worked out really well in that we got amazing young actors who were so skilled. Also, all adaptations from one medium to another never follows the original to a T. Creatively there are artistic decisions as well as logistical ones.

After *The Institute*, what's next for you? We've heard rumors about a scripted podcast in development with your writing partner Sam Agro, can you tell us more?

I'm currently working on the writing of a script and polishing an earlier script. Still in the early stages and trying to figure out things. It's mainly a way for us to play a variety of characters.

Who have been some of the biggest influences on your career, whether in acting or beyond?

When I was little I remember my parents watching Flower Drum Song and I saw Nancy Kwan. A Hong Kong actress and I thought "I want to be like her". Of course Carol Burnett, Lucille Ball also stirred the acting bug in me. Meryl Streep is right up there when I became an adult and more recently, though I wish I knew about them earlier, Pamela Adlon, Jennifer Coolidge, Awkwafina. Oh yes, Jean Smart! Tom Hanks is someone whose work I also really admire. And in our own backyard, Catherine O'Hara, Eric Peterson, Seana McKenna (Canadian and veterans of stage and screen)

And finally, what's your favorite Stephen King adaptation: *Stand By Me*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Misery*, *The Mist*, or *The Shining*?

Please don't make me choose! I'll be honest and say I never read or saw *The Mist*. Loved, loved, loved all the other ones you mentioned. I'm really looking forward to *Life of Chuck*.

JASON DIAZ



We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor and former MMA fighter Jason Diaz; greetings and salutations, Jason, and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

Thank you for having me! It's a pleasure to be chatting with Vents Magazine. I appreciate the time and the kind words. So far, 2025 has been great to me and my family. After wrapping up a long shoot for *The Institute* at the end of the year, it's been so nice to have some time at home with my wife and daughter before diving into a new project in the coming weeks.

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the upcoming Amazon series adaptation of Stephen King's thriller *The Institute*, which is set to make its eagerly anticipated debut this July 13! Starting at the top, and for anyone late to the proverbial 'Monster-Mash,' can you explain what *The Institute* is about and how your character, Tony, figures into the proceedings?

Thank you, I really appreciate that! *The Institute* is based on Stephen King's novel of the same name, and it's this dark, suspenseful psychological thriller that follows a group of gifted kids who are kidnapped and taken to a shady facility where their powers are exploited under the guise of doing something for the 'greater good.' My character, Tony, is one of the orderlies at the Institute. He's essentially the muscle—he enforces the rules and ensures the kids stay in line, often through cruel intimidation and brute force. Tony represents the physical threat inside this place, and he's fully committed to the Institute's mission. He's a bully and definitely enjoys the power he's been given, which makes playing him a lot of fun in the most twisted way possible.

Before being offered the role of Tony in *The Institute*, did you count yourself as a fan of Stephen King's writing? Had you read *The Institute* prior to being cast in the Amazon adaptation?

Absolutely, I've always been a fan of Stephen King's writing! My personal favorite is *The Dark Tower*. I hadn't read *The Institute* before landing the role, but as soon as I got the audition, I dove into the book and couldn't put it down. What I love about *The Institute* is that it doesn't rely on monsters or the supernatural; all the horror comes from real people doing monstrous things, and that added element of realism makes it all the more terrifying.

Erstwhile scribes Sam Sheridan, Benjamin Cavell, Ed Redlich, Eric Dickinson, and Sophie Owens-Bender did the *King* adaptation honors on *The Institute*. How close do you feel these uber-talented writers came to capturing the spirit of Stephen King's novel on which the series is based?

Ben Cavell and the rest of this incredibly talented writing team really did a remarkable job capturing the spirit of Stephen King's novel. They've injected their own creativity into the project, and at no point did they sacrifice the tone or the authenticity of the story. That balance makes the adaptation not just faithful and enjoyable for fans of the book, but also fresh and exciting for anyone unfamiliar with the story.

Your name stands proudly next to an amazing list of actors who contributed their own unique talents to *The Institute*, such as Mary Louise Parker, Dylan Bailey, Ben Barnes, Julian Richings, and Joe Freeman, among many others. What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this cadre of amazing actors?

Getting to meet and collaborate with actors from all sorts of different backgrounds and places around the world is for me the most exciting part of what we do in this craft. Getting the opportunity to watch and learn from the incredible Mary Louise Parker firsthand, also working alongside seasoned veterans like Julian Richings and Robert Joy, was such an incredible opportunity for me. I was also a big fan of Ben Barnes' work, long before joining the cast, so getting to work with him was great. And last but not least, working with Joe Freeman and the rest of the young *Institute* cast was an absolute pleasure—they're all phenomenal actors, and together we had a great time and made a really cool show.

Speaking of collaborations, the directors for *The Institute* are the incredible Jack Bender of *Lost* fame, as well as the ever-amazing Brad Turner (*Homeland*). What was it like working with these two respected directors? Are they what some actors might call 'an actor's director'?

Jack Bender and Brad Turner are phenomenal. Absolutely, I would consider them to be 'actors' directors'. They have such a clear vision and a fantastic and clear way of communicating it to their actors, while also giving us the freedom to do our jobs without feeling any constraints. I had a wonderful time working with Jack and Brad. I really thrive in that kind

of collaborative environment, and I find it always brings out the best work.

Can you give readers a hint or three as to what you have coming up after *The Institute*? Do you have a pretty full acting dance card at the moment?

Unfortunately, I can't reveal too many details just yet, but I'm thrilled to share that I'm gearing up to start filming a new project. I'm lucky enough to be joining a show I've been a huge fan of, and I'll have the chance to step into the role of a detective for the first time in my career. I can't disclose the title just yet, but I'm really looking forward to diving into this new adventure!

As we noted at the top, in another life you were a rightly respected MMA fighter. How did you ultimately make the leap from that profession into the world of acting?

I have far too much respect for the men and women who risk their health stepping into the ring professionally to call myself a former MMA fighter, but I definitely trained for a very long time with serious goals of competing professionally. Ultimately, my passion for film and television led me down the path of acting, and I'm grateful I made the shift. I've never looked back since. Although with all the time I put into my martial arts training, I would love the opportunity to showcase it in the action genre at some point.

When you're far away from the lights of Tinseltown, what do you enjoy doing to unwind and get away from it all?

Away from work, I like to live a pretty low-key life. My idea of a great night out is actually a night in! Health and fitness are a big part of my routine, keeping me centered and grounded. And recently, my wife and I welcomed a little girl, so dad life is in full swing. Whenever I have the opportunity to be home, I focus on trying to be as present as possible. Right now, she's absolutely obsessed with *Moana* and *Frozen*, so I'm in the process of learning the entire soundtrack whether I like it or not!

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite Stephen King movie – *Stand By Me*, *Misery*, *Shawshank Redemption*, *The Green Mile*, or *The Mist*?

A classic list, but for me, easily, it's *Shawshank Redemption*. The iconic performances from Morgan Freeman and Tim Robbins, and the idea of being wrongfully convicted and spending your life in prison, has always been such a terrifying prospect to me. That, and I always love a good escape movie!

*Photo Credit : JSquared
Stylist : Estelle Aporongao*

VALENTINA LATYNA



We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed and award-winning actress and voiceover artist Valentina Latyna; greetings and salutations Valentina and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the celluloid Q&A pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

Thank you so much for having me, and it's great to be speaking with Vents Magazine! As an actor, life can be a rollercoaster of emotions, ups and downs. So far, 2025 has been incredibly rewarding. I'm grateful to be able to pursue acting and voiceover full-time, and I'm excited to see what the rest of the year brings – with several projects in the pipeline, I'm looking forward to wrapping up the year on a high note.

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the dynamic, fun, and action-packed live-action Paramount+ film Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado! Starting at the top, and for any wannabe explorers out there who may be a bit late to the party, can you explain what Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado is about and how your character of Sabrina figures into the proceedings?

Dora is an iconic character who inspires community, love for nature, and honoring one's roots and family. In the live-action film *Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado*, Dora embarks on an exciting adventure that encourages exploration while also showcasing her vulnerability. As Sabrina, Dora's aunt and Diego's mom, I bring a special touch to the film. My character embodies the love for nature, particularly flowers, which is a hobby close to my heart. I think Director Alberto Belli did a fantastic job capturing the essence of Dora's spirit and message.

How do the writers of Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado - JT Billings, Chris Gifford, and Valerie Walsh Valdes - expand on a quarter of a century of Nickelodeon history with the Dora character?

They did an incredible job of honoring the character's 25-year legacy. I was deeply moved by the script, particularly the way they wove in the rich details of the jungle and the Quechua dialect, showcasing respect for Colombian indigenous culture. I actually cried reading the script, it was that beautiful. But what really took my breath away was seeing it come to life on the big screen at the Paramount Studios premiere - that was truly shocking and emotional. The balance of fun, humor, and heart was spot on, and it really brought the story to life.

What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops in Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado alongside the likes of Daniella Pineda, Jacqueline Obradors, and Samantha Lorraine among others?

Working with this talented cast was easy, lovely, and super fun! Plus the film was shoot entirely in my homeland Colombia, I feel honored to be part of this amazing franchise.

Speaking of collaborations, what was it like collaborating with director Alberto Belli on Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado? Is he what some actors might call 'an actor's director'?

Working with Alberto Belli was a dream. He's incredibly respectful and charming, and he truly values the input of his actors. From the first callback to the final day on set, he was always open to ideas and collaborative. He's definitely an actor's director - the kind who brings out the best in you.

Word 'round industry campfire has it that, in addition to your turn in Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado, you've got an intriguing-sounding production such as "Atrapada" in the pipeline awaiting release; congrats! Can you give readers a hint or three as to what some of your upcoming film and television work is about?

I'm excited to share that my upcoming film, 'Atrapada,' marks my first lead role. I play Alicia Salinas, a courageous journalist who embarks on a quest for truth after her father's murder is linked to a political scandal. It's a complex and thrilling story that I'm eager to bring to life.

Who are some of the souls both in and out of the world of entertainment who have informed and inspired your own professional pathway?

My mom, a soap opera actress, was my earliest inspiration. I have fond memories of visiting her on set after school, and it sparked my passion for the craft. Outside of the industry, I'd like to mention philosophy professor Benjamin Serpas, who has been an incredible guide on my spiritual journey and a shining example of living philosophy in action.

We noted at the top that you're also a highly respected voiceover artist. Can you give us the E! True Hollywood Story on how you got involved in voiceover and what some of your notable projects as a voiceover artist has been and what you have coming up?

Voiceover has been my first love in the industry. At just 19, I landed my first leading role in dubbing for MTV, and I haven't looked back since. I've been fortunate enough to become the official voice for Food Network and have spent the past 21 years dubbing non-stop, working in both English and Spanish. Along the way, I've had the opportunity to collaborate on a wide range of projects, including audiobooks, video games, and radio commercials.

Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of Unidad Investigativa back in 2000. Any special memories of that freshman production?

This is a memory I treasure. Stepping onto the set felt like coming home. The show tackled tough, dramatic storylines, and I remember being proud of my work. What I'll never forget is buying groceries for my mom with my first paycheck - it was a special moment that made it all feel real.

You're the founder of Latyna Studios; congrats yet again! What is Latyna Studios all about and how did you conceive of it?

Latyna Studios is a broad cast studio based in North Hollywood, dedicated to nurturing new voice talent. We're a welcoming space where aspiring voice actors can record their first demos, get guidance on auditions, and work on projects that bring their passion to life. As the founder, I'm excited to collaborate with talented individuals and help shape the next generation of voice artists.

We understand that you're set to attend one of the biggest industry events of the year, the 2025 San Diego Comic Con in representation of the uber popular video game Brawl Stars. What should readers and fans know about Brawl Stars and your upcoming trip out to this esteemed watering hole?

I'm thrilled to be attending the 2025 San Diego Comic Con as a representative of Brawl Stars! For fans, Brawl Stars is an action-packed mobile game that's all about strategy, teamwork, and fun. As a voiceover artist, it's a dream come true to be part of this iconic event. This will be my first year attending, and I'm excited to share the latest updates and experiences with fans. The game is gearing up for an amazing release that will surely delight fans worldwide!

As if you're not busy enough, we understand that you have no less than two stage plays forthcoming - Wow and major kudos! Can you give us a hint or three as to what the stage plays are about? And do you prefer stage to screen?

One of them is part of the Brisk Festival, a micro theatre play fest in Santa Monica, taking place in late August. I'm really looking forward to sharing the stage with the audience. The other production is "Enfrascada" written by Tanya Saracho, at the Big Bear Theater, running from September to October. I invite everyone to come and experience live theatre - it's a unique thrill!

At the end of the day, what do you hope audiences walk away with after watching the new Paramount+ live action feature film Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado?

My hope is that audiences walk away from *Dora and the Search for Sol Dorado* with a renewed sense of wonder and a reminder to never stop believing in themselves. The film encourages everyone to tune into that inner voice that whispers their true potential. It's not just a movie for kids - it's for anyone searching for answers, looking for inspiration, or simply seeking a fun adventure.



Alain Uy

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor, director, writer and producer Alain Uy; greetings and salutations Alain and thanks for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the celluloid Q&A rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

"Salutations"? Wow... I haven't heard that term in YEARS. I LOVE it! 2025 has found me emerging outside, embracing the sun's warm glow, as I rediscover new joys in my life. I've experienced a great deal of personal loss in my life these past couple of years... so it feels like the clouds are starting to part, ever so slightly.

Major congratulations on your bravura turn in the eagerly anticipated Bosch: Legacy Amazon spinoff series Ballard which is set to thrill audiences when it premieres this July 9! Starting at the top, and for anyone late to the party, can you explain what Ballard is about and how your character of Nelson Hastings figures into the proceedings?

"Ballard" is an extension of the "Bosch" series - a world created by the legendary Michael Connelly. It follows Detective Renee Ballard, played by the one and only Maggie Q. Ballard leads the LAPD's new and underfunded cold case division where she, along with a team of misfits, dusts off some of the most challenging and long-forgotten crimes in LA - crimes that even the great Bosch couldn't solve. The character I play, Nelson Hastings, is the Chief of Staff of Councilman Jake Pearlman (Noah Bean), who oversees Ballard's division and becomes a thorn in her side.

Prior to landing your role as Nelson in the upcoming Ballard series, had you been familiar with writer Michael Connelly's Bosch universe, both in books and in television? And, if so, was this awareness enough to get you excited about helping to explore the story of Detective Renée Ballard?

I gotta be honest. I wasn't too familiar with any of Michael Connelly's writing. I mean, I had only seen a couple of episodes from the previous shows, but it was only to give me context for when I had auditioned for the "Bosch" and "Bosch Legacy" shows. Outside of that, I had no idea how big the universe was so, as soon as I got the offer to play Nelson Hastings, I dove right in and what I discovered was nothing short of amazement and excitement. There's richness in his text, so I was thrilled to get cracking at developing the character - especially since it's one of many that are actually from his book.

Ballard features the directing skills of some of the best directors in the industry, including the likes of Jet Wilkinson, Sarah Boyd, Tori Garrett, Jon Huertas, and Logan Kibens! What was it like collaborating with this phenomenally talented cadre of directors?

Whenever I have the privilege to work with directors like Jet, Sarah, Tori, Jon and Logan, a lot of those little insecurities that typically hover over my head tend to melt away. There's something about working with these types of directors that empower actors to get involved in the creative process - they always bring the best out of us. At least for me, I know that my work will be in good hands with them.

Speaking of talent, you star opposite some of the most insanely gifted actors in the business in Ballard such as Maggie Q, Amy Hill, John Carroll Lynch and Titus Welliver! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this ensemble of thespians?

It was - Daunting. Frightening. Thrilling. I was tremulous, but not with doubt, rather in awe and humility at the thought of sharing the screen with Maggie, Amy, John and of course Titus. I've been a fan of Maggie's for such a long time and to FINALLY have a chance to spar with her on screen was mind-blowing. Don't get me started with Amy...sadly, our characters never crossed paths, but she was so gracious with me off screen. John was extremely generous with his time and constantly lifted our spirits with his dry wit and humor. As for Titus, I'm soooo bummed that I didn't get a chance to meet or work with him, but hopefully I get the chance should the show get picked up for a 2nd season.

Can you give fans a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to in this premiere season of Ballard?

Oooh. I'm so bad at giving hints because I tend to spoil things. But what I will say is that if you're a fan of "Bosch", you're going to LOVE this show. The show is propulsive, exciting, and very LA! Which I love. It's almost like the city is a character all by itself. More importantly, the writing on the show is impeccable thanks to both Michael Alaimo's and Kendall Sherwood's brilliant work.

As we noted at the tip-top, you're not only one of the best actors in the business, but you're also an accomplished and respected writer, director, and producer; congrats! Do you have a preference between acting and writing/directing? Or do you find that each one sort of fuels the other?

Acting is always going to be the driving force in my creative endeavors. However, both writing and directing are no longer in the backseat... they're both riding shotgun now. The great thing about all these disciplines is that they all inform one another. Understanding story through the perspective of a writer's pen, the visual perspective of a director, can only enrich my purview as an actor on stage or on set - and vice versa.

Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of a 2005 episode of E-Ring. Any special memories of that freshman production?

Wow! A deep cut. I have so many memories of that first job but the biggest one that stands out was when I was handling the rifle. I remember the stunt coordinator being extremely intense (rightfully so) of where I placed the point of the gun. "Whatever you do... don't ever... EVER point the tip of this gun directly at anyone. Always aim 2-3 feet away from the target." I had never handled a gun before, so it was a lot to deal with on that set. But man... I remember how much fun that was.

You're the founder and creative guru behind the L.A.-based production company, Them Too; congratulations again! Can you talk about what led you to create and establish Them Too?

In 2009, I was a struggling actor trying to find my way in this unforgiving and unrelenting entertainment industry whilst working at a magazine publication. Now, don't get me wrong, I loved my day job... and could've probably kept doing it but, I felt myself withering, creatively, on the vine so, I quit my job and bet on myself. I didn't know what I was going to do but I decided to follow my heart. I started taking photos (photography was one of my hobbies) for weddings to birthdays to family portraits and property photos. I was able to make a little bit of money to survive off ramen and In-N-Out burgers. Then my work was eventually discovered by Taboo of the Black Eyed Peas. He hired me to take photos of his son's 16th birthday. There, I got this idea of making a cool highlight video of his son's party and when I gifted him that highlight video, he was absolutely floored by it. He blasted it out to all his friends, one of which was one of my best friends, DJ Vice, who was looking for a travel photographer to document him during a series of tour dates. So, off I went, taking photos and creating these promo videos for him. Then, his management blasted my work to all the industry insiders and my email address was flooded with business opportunities. Within a year, January 2010, I was pitching a commercial campaign for MGM Grand Hotel, which then led to working with artists like Pharrell Williams, Nas, Jay-Z, Justin Bieber, and so many more. It's wild to think how far I've come. It's humbling really.

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, Hail Caesar, The Player, Hollywood Shuffle, Ed Wood, or The Big Picture?

"Once Upon A Time In Hollywood" is the best movie about movies ever. Period. I don't care what anyone says. Fight me if you disagree. I know kung-fu...

Arielle Prepetit



Photo Credit : Lola Scott

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actress Arielle Prepetit; greetings and salutations Arielle and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 treating you and yours?

2025 is treating me well! I'm excited to see what the rest of this year brings.

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the buzzy new Paramount+ drama Beyond the Gates! Starting at the top, and for anyone who may be late to the party, can you explain what Beyond the Gates is about and how your character of Naomi figures into the proceedings?

BEYOND THE GATES is set in a Maryland suburb just outside of Washington, D.C., and in one of the most affluent African American counties in the United States. At the center of this community are the Duprees, a powerful and prestigious multi-generational family that is the very definition of Black royalty. But behind these pristine walls are juicy secrets and scandals waiting to be uncovered! I play Naomi Hamilton Hawthorne, one of the oldest grandchildren in the Dupree family. She lives a more humble life with her husband outside the gates in DC where she works as a civil attorney and is a champion for justice.

Did you know as soon as you saw the pilot script for Beyond the Gates from creator Michele Val Jean that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?

I knew right away this was a project I wanted to be a part of because of the groundbreaking history this show would be making! From the minute I read who Naomi was, I knew we had more similarities than differences. I understood her and I knew it was a role I had to play!

What's it been like exercising your own considerable acting chops on Beyond the Gates alongside such amazing thespians as Daphnee Duplaix, Karla Mosley, and Colby Muhammad, among many others?

It's been such a satisfying challenge! This is the hardest I've ever worked and to do it alongside my amazing cast is such a blessing. We lift each other up and support each other through this crazy journey that we are on. I feel so incredibly lucky!

In your humble opinion, what differentiates Beyond the Gates from the Distinguished competition on the current day television landscape?

I think people are excited to watch something new! The audience is having the opportunity to start a soap opera from the very beginning.

Being that this show is historic in so many ways I think folks want to witness that history. People also want to see themselves represented on screen and in our show I think you can relate to at least one of the characters in some way.

Speaking of collaborations, what has it been like working with some of the best directors in the business on Beyond the Gates such as Steven Williford, Anthony Pascarelli, and Phildeaux Xavier? Are they what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?

I love all of our directors! Each one is different and has their own way of working. It's been such a pleasure getting to work and learn how they each run things. Being a director on a soap opera means wearing MANY different hats and I'm amazed at how they are able to keep it all together.

Outside of your phenomenal work in Beyond the Gates, what else are

you working on that you might like readers to know about?

You can catch me in episode 1 and 9 of the new season of BMF out now on STARZ. As well has an independent movie called Sketch starring Tony Hale and D'Arcy Carden out August 6th in theaters!

You grew up in Florida as a first-generation Haitian-American and you're now based out of the beautiful city of Atlanta, Georgia. How do those seemingly disparate roots inform you as both an actress and as a person?

Haitians are extremely resilient and tough human beings and I was raised by extremely strong women. Those are the qualities you need in an industry like this. I wouldn't be who I am without those roots and I'm so proud of my culture.

Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of the 2016 short film Trapped: in the Trade. Any special memories of that freshman production?

If I'm honest I don't remember a lot from this production but I remember this being my first time on set and I had no clue how movies were made. But I also remember the feeling of excitement I had getting to see all the behind the scenes and just getting to be a part of something. I met people that are still in my life and it was a small start to my career.

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, Hollywood Shuffle, The Player, Ed Wood or Once Upon a Time in Hollywood?

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood because I love me some Leonardo DiCaprio!

Brandi Burkhardt

Host
of the
Month

We're very excited to have a little time today with acclaimed music artist and actress Brandi Burkhardt; greetings and salutations Brandi and thanks for taking time out of a very busy schedule to chew the fat with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the Q&A musical pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

2025 has been a whirlwind in the best way. I feel like I've been living five lives at once—in the studio, on set, on stage, and somewhere in between it all, finding my voice in a whole new way. There's this fire under everything I'm doing right now—it's personal, it's purposeful, and honestly, I've never felt more creatively alive. I'm so grateful for the people around me who keep showing up and showing love. And I'm thrilled to be sharing this new chapter with the world. So yes—2025 is a little chaotic, a little magical... and I'm here for all of it.

Major kudos and accolades on what is shaping up to be an exciting year for you, musically-speaking! Starting at the top, congrats on your debut single back/in/time which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving world when it premiered this May 31! Can you talk about what inspired this emotional stunner of a tune?

Thank you so much! back/in/time is about getting pulled into an emotional loop—when someone shows up again, and suddenly you're right back where you started. The first line literally begins with trying to remember... and that's what the song plays with: how memory can shift and soften. We romanticize what we want to remember, or only hold onto the good parts, and sometimes that's all it takes to find yourself back in the same story again.

Sonically, it leans into nostalgic synths and a retro-pop feel, but with something darker underneath—like a memory that's too good to trust. It's mysterious, magnetic, and just the beginning of the emotional spiral this whole EP explores. It's the beginning of the story I tell across the whole EP, so it felt like the right place to start.

The May 31 release of your debut single back/in/time sets the clock running on a consistent release of a whole string of singles from you throughout the summer, all leading to the October 17 premiere of your debut EP just/like/this; congrats again! What was it like collaborating on this debut EP with the highly-respected likes of Nate Lanzino, Yoni Carlsen, Tuomo Korander, and Tommy Vatanen?

I feel incredibly lucky to have worked with such a wildly talented team. Every one of those guys brought something unique to the table—Nate has this ability to score emotions—you can really feel his chord choices. Yoni brought a gift for melody and hooks that made even the most vulnerable lines stay with you. Tuomo and Tommy gave everything that sleek, feel-good lift that makes you want to hit repeat. Everyone brought something essential, and it shows.

What made it really special is that none of us were chasing trends. We were chasing truth—whatever that sounded like in each song. I came in with a story to tell, and they helped me shape that story into something you can dance to and cry to. This EP wouldn't exist without their fingerprints all over it. They helped me turn feelings into sound.

We're big admirers of the tune ^magic^ which can be found front-and-center on the upcoming EP release just/like/this and which also receives the single treatment when it drops on June 28! What's the scoop behind this gem of a ditty?

Thank you! ^magic^ is that moment when curiosity takes over. It's a little impulsive, a little inevitable. The sound picks up where back/in/time left off—still emotional, still confessional—but now we're not holding back. It's flirty, kinetic, with a pulse that feels like possibility. Sonically, it leans into retro house vibes, and that clubby, late-night tension that builds when you're not sure where the night is headed—but you know you're in it now.

For me, this song is where the EP starts to open up. It's a "let the games begin" kind of track—when you dive headfirst into the night with someone, not looking for answers, just a little thrill. It's where the story starts shifting. We're not just reminiscing anymore—we're moving, we're risking, we're feeling alive.

In your humble opinion, what differentiates your music – specifically such upcoming singles as electric <3 hearts (July 25), stay/the/night (August 22), up^all^night (September 12) and what.am.i.saying (October 10) – from the Distinquished Competition on the 2025 music scene?

It's been a strange year in pop—we've seen some new names break out and some familiar ones miss the mark. But I think that's because listeners are craving something that feels real again.

What sets this project apart is how personal it is, while still making you want to move. Every track on just/like/this lives at the intersection of vulnerability and vibe. It's cinematic pop for people who feel everything a little too much—and still want to dance through it.

These songs aren't manufactured—they're moments. Emotional snapshots you can screaming in the car or spin under neon lights. And I think people can feel when something's real, even in a world of filters and formulas. That's what I'm betting on.

In the midst of the release of all this amazing music, can fans look forward to catching you on the touring/performing circuit?

Yes—and I cannot wait. Performing live is where the songs really come to life for me. This EP started in such an intimate place, so bringing it into a room full of people and watching them connect in real time? That's the dream.

We're planning a few special shows and appearances to start—keeping it a little curated while I finish rolling out the EP. But trust me, there's more coming. I want the experience to feel like stepping into the world of just/like/this—lights, emotion, movement, all of it. Stay tuned, because the stage is calling.

Who are some of the folks in the world of music who have inspired your own musical pathway?

I've always been drawn to artists who can break your heart a little and still make you move. Robyn is a forever favorite—she captures longing in a way that feels electric. But my roots go back even further. I grew up on icons like Whitney Houston, Celine Dion, Madonna, Paula Abdul, Fleetwood Mac, Hall & Oates, INXS, and The Cure. There's something about the way those artists built tension and melody—cinematic, emotional, and full of hooks that stay with you.

I'm definitely a product of that late '80s / early '90s pop era. You'll hear it in the synths, in the storytelling, in the way the tracks unfold. It's not retro for the sake of nostalgia—it's because those songs made me feel something. And that's what I'm chasing now, too.

How does your love of music fuel your acting (and vice-versa)?

They feed each other constantly. Acting taught me how to live inside a moment—how to breathe life into a feeling, even if it's not tidy or pretty. Music gave me the freedom to stop playing a part and start telling my own story.

When I'm acting, I'm slipping into someone else's shoes. But when I'm singing—especially my own lyrics—it's just me. No script. No safety net. That kind of honesty can be terrifying, but it's also where the magic lives.

And honestly? Music reminds me not to overthink. Sometimes the most powerful moments—on stage or in the studio—come from instinct, not perfection.



Your music has a wonderful 80s/90s aesthetic which takes all that was good and right about the music from those eras and applies them like gangbusters to such tracks as stay/the/night. Was this by design, or was it something which was more organic?

It was totally organic—but probably unavoidable. I grew up on that sound. My playlists were full of Madonna, INXS, Fleetwood Mac, Celine, Kylie, The Cure... so those textures just live in me. There's something about the drama, the euphoria, the melody that still hits in such a visceral way.

We never sat down and said, "Let's go retro." But certain synth lines would trigger a scene in my head, or I'd hear a chord and think, that feels like this person I used to know. Sometimes I'd literally feel warmth in a sound—like a memory waking up. So we followed that.

The funny part is, I've had people say, "Oh this totally reminds me of something"—without even knowing those are my influences. You never really know how it's going to land with someone else, and I kind of love that. The truth is, the song tells you what it wants. Our job was just to listen.

At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to your debut single back/in/time, as well as all which is set to follow it?

I hope they feel seen—and maybe a little electric. This EP is a time capsule of real feelings: longing, impulsiveness, hope, heartbreak, confidence, chaos... all of it. It's the sound of someone getting unstuck in real time. So if you've ever replayed something a hundred different ways, or stayed out too late chasing a maybe, or had to remind yourself what your heart sounds like when it's just yours again—this is for you.

The whole journey is a shimmer between past and present. It moves. It hurts a little. But it frees you. And if someone hears these songs and thinks, "Wait... I've felt that too"—then I've done what I came to do.

July 25
electric <3 hearts

August 22
stay/the/night

Sept 12
up^all^night

Oct 10
what.am.i.saying

Oct 17
full EP - just / like / this -

Photo credit: Ryan West Photo

Jams Bash



We are very excited to have you both with us. Before we dive into the actual questions, we just want to know — how has 2025 been treating you both so far?

Jams:
2025 has been good. We've been busy — a lot of creative work. It feels like things are getting back on track in the industry, and that's exciting. We're just stoked to keep getting these opportunities.

Bash:
It's funny — I don't even know if this is appropriate for an interview — but it just seems like the crazier the world gets, the more work comes in. I don't know if there's a real correlation, but something wild happens somewhere, and then — boom — a new job rolls in. It's a crazy, amazing, weird career. So I say, keep the hits coming.

Jams:
And to Bash's point, we've been really fortunate — especially since the fires — to be able to shoot in LA a lot and support the LA film community. That's really important to us. Almost every job we've done this year has been in Los Angeles, which has been kind of nice.

Can you explain how you became a duo and what led to this long-term collaboration?

Bash:
Sure — Craigslist. It was a Black dude looking for another Black dude. Not for anything weird — just friendship. And it worked. First try. Never looked back. In all seriousness though...

Jams:
Something close to that! I was a freelancer, and Bash was a creative director at the agency. We worked on a job together and realized we were like-minded creatives who wanted to make cool stuff. That was almost 15 years ago, and we've been doing it ever since — through thick and thin. I always say, we could do this on our own, but getting to do it with someone you care about? That's really special.

Bash:
Yeah. My wife — she's a director too — always complains when she hears us working together. She says, "All I hear is you two laughing," and she hates it because she's working solo in a closet. It's been like that since the beginning. We had a job, we did it, and then we sat over a bottle of Buffalo Trace and realized we shared similar aspirations. Even when the client thought our work was too crazy to air, we liked it.

Jams:
Exactly. That job didn't make it on air, but we loved it.

Bash:
You start to realize it's okay to work with two brains instead of one. We both came from corporate ad backgrounds, full of briefs and demographics. That stuff stays with you. But in the end, you ask — is this crazy enough to get noticed? Will it make someone laugh, cry, or feel something? If not, the data doesn't matter.

You've earned a number of awards — from CLIOs to ADDYs and more. How did it feel to be recognized in that way?

Jams:
It was exciting early in our careers. It showed we were on the right track — that our instincts were resonating. Coming from advertising, we were nerds about campaign performance. The first goal was always: did it work? But beyond that — yeah, the ego likes a bit of hardware. I won't lie — it's welcome. But now, it's more about using that recognition to get the cachet to tell bigger stories and keep pushing forward.

Bash:

Yeah. As a young creative, it's nice to show your parents something real. You can say, "See? I have a real job." Inside corporate structures, you have things like annual reports to measure success. Outside of that, awards become a way to check in with the community — to see if people still care about what you're doing. That's what's meaningful now. It's not so much the award itself, but the validation that we're still making an impact.

Let's talk about your experience with HBO's *Pause with Sam Jay*. What was it like working on that show?

Jams:

That was a great experience. What drew us in was Sam's unique vision for late night. In our first meeting, she said she wanted to make a show that was a cross between *Playboy After Dark* and *Snow on the Bluff*. One was this POV-style public access show where you'd enter Hugh Hefner's place and see Truman Capote chatting with Tina Turner performing in the living room. The other was a raw, found-footage-style movie. That combination was exciting. And HBO was fully behind it. We did a test show, got very few notes, and the team — Langston Kerman, Jack Knight, Zach Fox — all had such strong voices. It was cool to explore ideas no one had seen before.

Bash:

Yeah, Sam wasn't trying to make a show that ran forever. Her unique approach inspired us to just make something strong, weird, and funny. We shot it during the pandemic, so we weren't going out much. It was incredible to just be in a room with some of the funniest minds in comedy for hours. It felt like front-row seats to greatness.

Would you be open to doing another show like that — maybe with Sam or another comedian?

Jams:

For sure. Our goal is to be great in comedy. We're always trying to stretch and bend the genre, whether it's TV, movies, or commercials. We just want to tell great stories and be good stewards of the form. Opportunities like *Pause*, or what Netflix is doing with their comedy formats, are all exciting to us.

You've worked with huge names — Michael B. Jordan, Will Smith, Mindy Kaling. Do you change your directing style depending on the talent?

Jams:

Not really. We have a strong philosophy for how our sets should feel — professional, but fun and relaxed. We try to strip away the film-set artifice. The vibe should be like: let's get in the barn and put on a show. Some talent wants to stay on script, some improvise — that part is flexible. But the overall energy stays the same.

Bash:

Exactly. The industry changes constantly — new formats, new platforms — and we've gotten used to adjusting. But we don't change our core style to fit a project. Every job teaches us something new and adds another layer of experience. As two directors, we prep

heavily to make sure we're aligned and presenting a cohesive vision.

Who or what are your biggest creative influences?

Bash:

That question always makes me hesitate — I love a lot of dreary stuff. Honestly, I'm a fickle person. Whatever I'm immersed in for a project becomes my favorite. Lately, I've been diving into stuff like *The Crucible*, reading about witches, and exploring how that might become something comedic. Then it's on to violent comedies, sketch shows, whatever inspires the current work. Shows like *The Simpsons*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, and *In Living Color* — those things stick with you.

Jams:

Yeah, our brains work differently. I'm more of a collector — I hold onto inspirations that build a foundation. I love duos like Nichols and May. Elaine May and Mike Nichols each had their own genius, but together they were greater than the sum of their parts. Billy Wilder is another favorite — a comedic director who was genre-agnostic. *The Apartment* is one of my favorite films — nearly a perfect screenplay. And I study stand-up too — the timing, the rhythm, the payoff. Comedians like Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy are master storytellers. We try to bring that instinct into our own work.

Are there any upcoming projects you can share?

Jams:

We've got a Taco Bell campaign rolling out for football season — really excited about that. It runs through the Super Bowl. And there's some other stuff in the works that we can't talk about just yet — but it's coming.

What would you say is the biggest difference between directing a commercial vs. a feature film?

Jams:

It's the difference between a sprint and a marathon. Commercials have short runways and limited chances to get it right. It's a client service model — you're selling a product and keeping people happy. Films are more of a long haul. We've been developing some for five or six years. You have to sustain that inspiration over time and carry it into production without burning out.

Bash:

Totally. When you're used to the fast pace of commercials, slowing down for film can be hard. Sometimes I'll get anxious and James has to remind me — we don't need to rush. Film is more comfortable... until it's not. Then things shift quickly. But every project makes you better in its own way.

Last question — what's your favorite movie (or TV show) about filmmaking?



Jams:

Oh man — I love this question. During COVID, I started making movie mixtapes on Instagram. One of my favorites is *Nope*. It's not overtly about filmmaking, but it really is — it's about chasing something uncatchable, like the next big idea. I think Jordan Peele was exploring the pressure to follow *Get Out*. That movie nails what it feels like to capture something ineffable on camera.

Other favorites: *Adaptation* — such a brilliant meta film. Charlie Kaufman turned a simple adaptation into a self-aware action movie. It's wild but it works. And then there's the classic — *Singin' in the Rain*. People forget it's about change in the industry — going from silent films to talkies. We're going through similar shifts now, post-COVID, post-strike. The industry always evolves, but the struggle stays the same.

Bash:

Since James hit the history angle, I'll just say — *The Studio* really captured a moment for me. I saw a billboard calling it "mesmerizing," but it's more than that. It's bold and entertaining. There's a panic in the film industry right now — both existential and immediate — and that show really honors that. It's funny, it's smart, and it hits close to home.

Jams:

Yeah, my friends outside the industry watch it and ask, "Is this what your life is like?" And I'm like, not exactly — but that low-key anxiety? That part is real. It's what makes the show fun... and a little hard to watch.

B: you know, every kind of couple years, the need for changing things as they come happens more frequently and has been happening more frequently. It's just like, you know, oh, now we have to add in a few videos for this platform or new, you know, format for this platform and sort of working styles to adjust to that. I think just knowing that there's always a possibility to adjust gives us a certain freedom we welcome just because it's always been like that. So I think we've gotten used to like preparing for aspects of a of a certain job that we'll need to anticipate, kind of pitfalls and that kind of thing. But for the most part, we're not like changing our personal style to conform to any project, because they're, they're all They're they're all different. And we've done so many different types of of project, and they have all presented a new piece of armor for us going into them. So yeah, for the most part, we just try to, you know, because there's two directors, obviously we have to operate with the same with the same brain, so there's a certain amount of preparation for both of us to make sure we're saying the same things in the in the room, and are sort of making sure that it's all cohesive.

Could you guys speak a little bit about either as individuals, as a duo, some of your biggest influences in your work?

B: don't know I hate, like, every time I get asked that question, I have to, like, like, not think about all the like, dreary things I love, you know? Because, yeah, because it's, it becomes this thing where I'm like, you know, I'm a very, like, fickle person, but, you know, it's like, what am I thinking about at that time? Because each one of these projects you have to get, kind of like, you want to drink the juice a little bit on them. So you get immersed in a certain type of thing, like, you know, just been, you know, reading a lot about, like, witches and watching the crucible and learning about the inspirations that Arthur Miller had going into stuff like that. And is that my personal taste? No, but I'm loving digging into this world and then trying to figure out how that becomes, like a comedic thing. So it's like going back and forth with that and looking at kind of like period comedies and comedies that had an extraordinary amounts of violence but still became, like, you know, hit comedies and that kind of thing. And and then that sort of drives you to like, exploring, you know, the history of cinema and comedy and duos and that kind of thing. So, you know, there's a there's a line, and as a person who is very easily distracted, I kind of have to, like, think that the couple things that I'm consuming in that moment are my favorite things, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think James is probably better at, like, cataloging and in the I mean, this in the best way of becoming a fan of a thing, you know, yeah, a lasting fan.

J: I do think our brains work differently that way. You know, it's like, I to bash this point, like, have much more of, like, a collector mentality, just do, like, a lot of things in my life, but just like inspirations that kind of form a foundation. You know, it's like talking to duos, you know, it's like, I'm a big fan of Nichols and May, which is, like a, you know, historic comedy duo. And like, looking at the way that these two comedic geniuses,

you know, Elaine May has a very specific style, Mike Nichols has a very specific style. And together, they did a thing that was like, I. Greater than the sum of the parts, but they were also both geniuses in their own right, you know, and stuff like that's really interesting to me. And I kind of keep returning to Billy Wilder is another one who's like, I think I would describe as a as a comedic director, but he was very genre agnostic, you know, it's like you, but you can see these elements of, like, a humor and a cynicism through, like, all the work that still holds up to this day. Like, the apartment is one of my favorite movies of all time. I just think it's like, close to perfect screenplay, and the performances, the way it's acted, is fantastic, you know, and then just looking at like stand ups and like joke structure. You know, it's like, that's another thing that in so much of what we do as directors, it's about timing and like delivering, whether it's a payoff to a storyline, a story beat, or, like a a punchline to a joke. You can learn a lot of that by watching how stand ups tell stories, and like, how their relationship with the audience melds. And I, and, you know, I look at some of the greats, like Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy, like those kind of guys that are just like, fucking fantastic storytellers, right? And how do we, how do we take learnings from that, and, like, make it cinematic, or just, like, get into, like, what is the instinctual rhythm they have with this? And why does it work? You know, it's stuff that that just kind of forms the basis of of my inspiration and the kind of work that we do.

B: Yeah, I also think, like, you know, when you're going through this, this phase of, like, immersing yourself in specific areas for a project. You know, I often like, will go back to the things I watched as a kid to kind of just like, come back to the thing that made me love this stuff in the first place. Like, I'm going to get you sucker and like, you know, Hollywood shuffle and in living color, you know, these places that these comedy superstars sort of cut their teeth in, you know, particularly in, like, sketch comedy, yeah, so those, those kind of like pieces which, which come up in, in, in different ways, but A lot of the times when these, you know, rooms talking about more contemporary things, but those were definitely like sources of major inspiration for a lot of people, like The Simpsons. You know that just, you know, you come back to, or you mentioned, mention, a sketch from any one of those pieces. And you know, they just well up other points of comedic inspiration for you. You know.

Is there any projects that you guys have coming up, coming down the pipeline that you guys want to talk about a bit, or that you're able to talk about in this interview today?



J: Taco Bell campaign that's rolling out for the football season that we're really excited about. And, you know, again, like finding ways to kind of continue to push comedy and advertising forward, that it was something that, you know, we had a goal and a campaign that we wanted to work on, and we're stoked that people are going to get to see it. But it's, you know, starts running around the beginning of football season, and we'll go, go through the through the end of the Super Bowl. And, you know, it's exciting, amazing. There's other stuff too that's coming out. We just can't talk about it quite yet. So, yeah, but we can leave that in and just as a little tease

For people that are maybe starting out in their path as directors, what would you highlight is one of the biggest differences? I mean, I'm it's, there's obviously a ton between directing a feature film or one of these more commercial pieces.

J: I mean, it's really the difference between a sprint and a marathon. You know, on a commercial, you have a very short runway, and you have very few opportunities to get it right, you know what I mean? So you have to be kind of efficient in the way that you're targeting what you're like. Kind of wins are, you know, and it's also a very like client service based style of working, where you have to get your vision across while also selling a product and making like core. People happy, you know what I mean, and excited with the work, whereas a film is much more of a I don't want to use the word slog, but I'll use the word slog, you know, it's like they're film projects that we've been developing for five, six years that, you know, you just have to, like, keep staying inspired. And because of that, it's like, how do you sustain the inspiration across that time so that we do get there, you know? Bash likes to use a phrase a lot. It's like, we just gotta

get to having the cameras up, you know. And it's like, how do you sustain that momentum throughout that process, so that you when you are finally there, shooting the thing that you've been thinking about and writing and developing and pitching and like, for years. I mean, capture that spirit that you first had when it when it started. You know what I mean? So that you can, like, actually bring your vision through, and you're not exhausted, you know, right?

B: Yeah, I think for people who have been making commercials for so long and and for as frequently as we're going in and in and out of them, is one, one the time that we have. Because I think when you're producing commercials at the rate that we've produced them, it's hard to let go of that tempo. It's hard to readjust. So, I mean, I think a lot of the times it's like jams, just telling me, like, oh yeah, you're not. We can, we can, we can slow down on this part. Or, you know, it's, or it's, you know, the amount of planning that will go into a piece at any particular time. It just, it just always feels like a more comfortable situation, making, making a film until it's not Yeah, then and that change happens very quickly. You know, they all have their like kind of gifts, but they each, each one of them, makes you, makes you better in its, in its own way. You know.

Okay. So last question, what would you say is your favorite movie, or, if you can't think of a movie, TV show about the film industry or about movies, if you have one?

J: Oh, there's so many about movies, about movies? Yeah, I did a list of this, like, during COVID, because everyone was just kind of sitting around, and right, I started doing these, like, movie mix tape things on Instagram, and I did one about movies, about making movies. And there's just, like, so many ways to go with that genre. I think one of the ones that I love, just because it's not blatantly obvious that it's about making movies and about this director's experiences. Nope. And it's like this idea that Jordan had to tell a story about trying to catch the next big thing. You know what I mean. And it's like in this, in the story, or in the film, it's an alien. But you can also extrapolate that to how he was trying to chase the success of get out. You know what I mean? And like this idea of you, you have to kind of have that drive and that determination and that perseverance to, like, catch a thing that is uncatchable, and like film a thing that is unfilmable, you know, like a feeling and you know it's there, but you just don't necessarily know how to express it to people. And I think that what that movie captures is exactly what it feels like to try to put something on camera, you know what I mean, and tell a story. I think some more literal examples is a movie like adaptation, and I'm a huge spike Jones fan, but the way that that movie kind of turns in on itself and like, what is a very unique film about what was supposed to be a literal adaptation of a Vanity Fair article about, like, a guy who was like, looking for orchids in the Florida Everglades turns into this action movie because he's making a comment on, like how, like the React structure. And action movies don't work. But the film actually then turns into that. And you can see, kind of a director and a writer or, I mean, Charlie Kaufman script for that is just like, like, if I was the exact, like, hired you to do an adaptation something, and that's what you came back with. And be like, What is wrong with you? But

it just fucking works, and it's brilliant. Yeah, you know. Yeah, so I think those are two big ones for me. And there's the classic. Classic. Classic is just like singing in the rain, which I think people forget, like is a movie about change in the industry, like it's a movie that's about going from talkies to sound, and how you kind of have to roll with those punches sometimes. And we go through these moments in our industry where, you know, right now, with the COVID and the strikes, we've had, this kind of existential crisis with, like, Are people still going to make movies or we, you know what I mean? And it's like, yeah, we are, you know, but we go through this period, like every 20 years. And if you look at the history, it's like, it's literally about every 20 years where there's just this weird existential crisis and film and entertainment. It was like Silent films to talks. It was the introduction of television. It was, you know, like black and white TV versus color TV. Then it was VHS, then it was DVD, then it was Netflix, and now it's like, it just keeps happening, and it's the same story over and over again. And when you look at something like singing in Iran, you're like, they were worried about that shit back then too, you know what I mean. So it's one of those things that's that's comforting to go back and know that as much as this industry changes, it's still the same. And they were making movies about problems way back then too. Wow, that's

Did you have your favorites that you wanted to shout out?

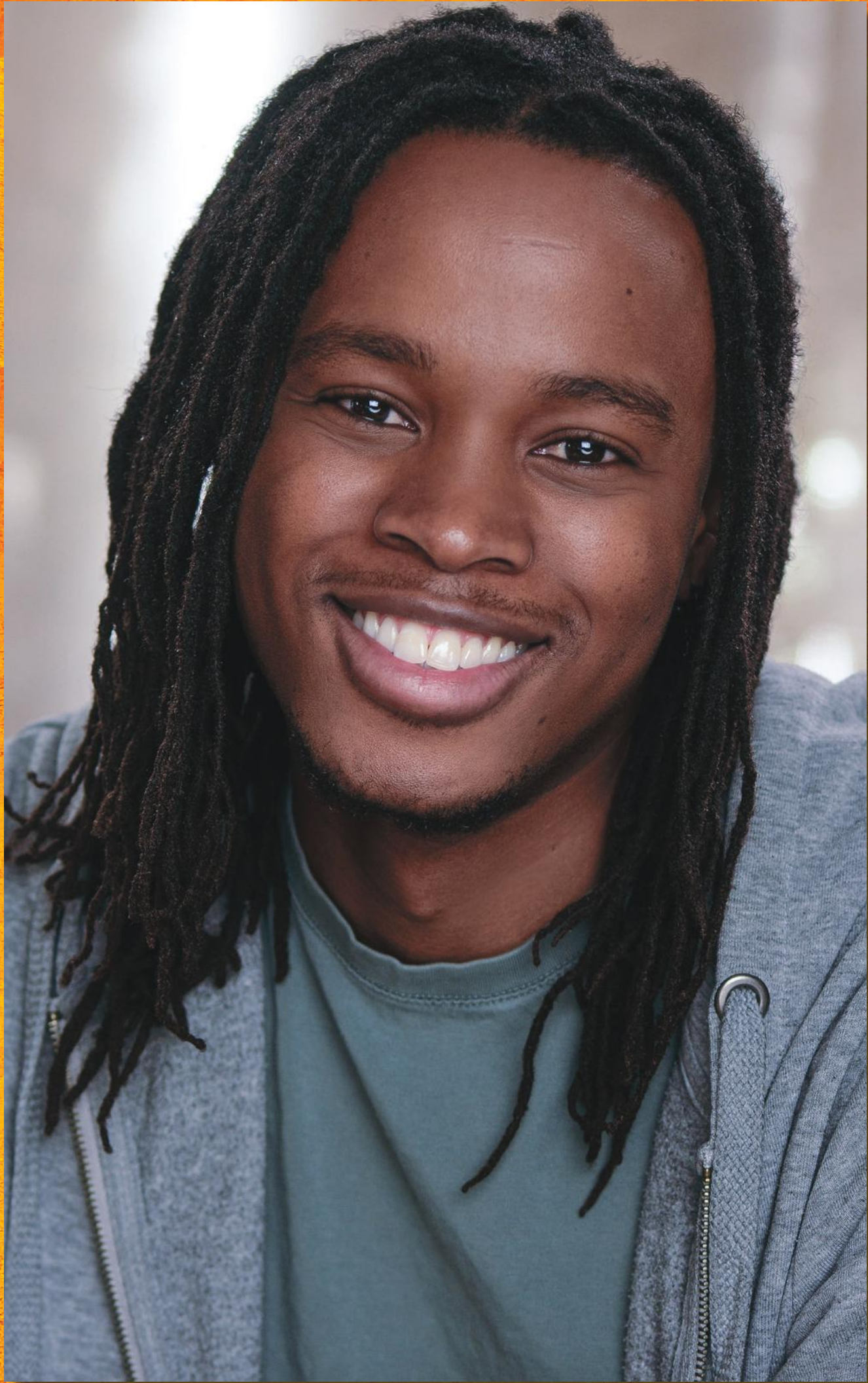
B: I mean, I so since, since James has dug into the history of it, I think that, you know, it'd be hard not to, not to recognize the feet of what the studio was able to pull off. I I'm surprised by the when I drive past the billboard and this says, like a mesmerizing event, it just seems to like be such a kind

of standard pull quote for something so brilliant and and fun. You know, it's like, it is, it is mesmerized, but it's, it's so much. It's so much more than that. One that's like, it's, it's, it's hard to do, but it's not the thing that you walk away from thinking, like, oh, how effortful that was. You know, it's just like, Thank God somebody made something. And was just like, alright, this might be fucking wild, but let's see if we can. Let's see if we can pull it off. And then they and then they did, and it's just really entertaining. And just, you know, kind of of the moment, in a way, you know, when things like you sort of coalesce to to capture, I think, generally, how people are feeling about their state of their career. Obviously, we all feel it like working in the film, film industry there, there is an element of panic. And it can be existential panic, and it can be very immediate today, right now, panic, it's there, and I think it does a really great job of just honoring that, that that element that is that kind of always kind of softly exists in the in the in the mind and heart of a creative trying to make it in in an industry.

J: the brilliant thing about it, is like, I always say my civilian friends, like the ones who aren't in the industry, don't really know anything about it or watching the studio, and they're like, Wait, is this what your life is like? And I'm like, it's not, not like this. There's definitely a level of anxiety that is a common thread, right? Our life probably isn't as hilarious, but it's like, you know what I mean? Like, there is, there is a truth to that show which makes it fun to watch, but also a little hard to watch at the same time. You know,



AGAPE MNGOMEZULU



We're very excited to have some time today with actor Agape Mngomezulu! How's 2025 treating you so far, both personally and professionally?

Thank you for having me. On both accounts, it's been a great year so far! And summer is here in Toronto, so it can only get better.

Congrats on your standout performance in Season 3 of Ginny & Georgia, now streaming on Netflix. For anyone new to the series, can you share a bit about what the show is about and where your character, Bryon Bennett, fits in?

Thank you! My character, Bryon, starts off in Season 2 as part of the football team, but once he seemingly takes an interest in one of Ginny's friends Bracia, he auditions for the musical, gets a roll and gets closer and closer to her.

Now that you're stepping back into Bryon's shoes for another season, how do you feel he's evolved from the earlier seasons? And in what ways has he stayed the same?

This season, we see Bryon take care of his friends in a way we didn't get to see in the second season. He shows a bit of his emotional maturity, which I think helps Bracia see him in a new light. But he's still the cool, calm, collected guy he was last season, just with a bit more depth.

Without giving too much away, what can fans expect from Season 3? Any teasers you can share?

Overall, we see most of the characters get taken to their breaking point. Everything is dialled up to an 11 and we see characters say and do things we never thought they would. It's also the most heartbreaking season yet.

When the role of Bryon first came your way, what drew you in? Did you have a strong feeling that this was a project you wanted to be part of from the beginning?

I was incredibly excited to join the team and be part of G&G family. The show had a great reputation from its first season and when the role came my way, I was ecstatic. I also resonated with Bryon's willingness to get himself out of his comfort zone in the pursuit of love.

The cast of Ginny & Georgia is packed with talent. What's it been like to work alongside this ensemble? Any moments

on set that really stand out?

Every single person on the cast and crew has been exceptionally welcoming and lovely, especially considering I joined the cast in the second season. And the talent on display, especially in this 3rd season really raises the ceiling for everyone and challenges you to bring your A-game.

In your opinion, what sets Ginny & Georgia apart from other shows in the current TV landscape? Why do you think it resonates with so many people?

This is such a unique show because I get people from all walks of life that come up to me and say they love it. I think it's because this show hits home with so many different kinds of people who can resonate with the problems each character deals with. Ginny and Georgia touches on mental health, the struggles of being a single mother, love from a teenage and adult perspective and so many other things that people can find relatable.

Outside of Ginny & Georgia, what's coming up for you in 2025?

We've heard whispers of a couple of exciting projects...

Yeah, I've got a film coming out called "Lucky Weekend" which was directed, written and stars "Yellow Jackets" actor Kevin Alves. He also produces it alongside fellow Alexa Barajas so very excited for that to come out very soon.

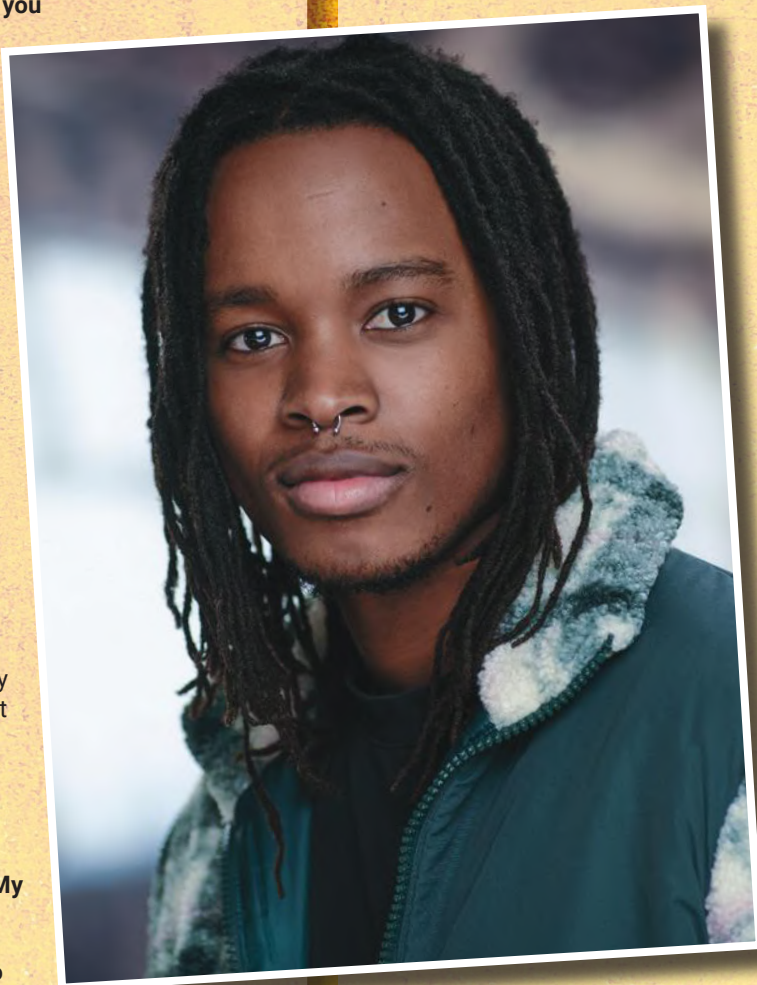
Your first screen credit goes back to My Best Friend's Birthday in 2016. What do

you remember about that experience, and how far do you feel you've come since then?

Sometimes it can be embarrassing watching my earlier stuff because I was so new in the industry and I still had so much to learn. But then I have to remember that you're always learning and I can take away the amount of growth I've made in the last 9 years in the industry. I feel like I've come a long way from student films to working on a hit Netflix show, but there's still so much further to go.

Okay, last one, just for fun: What's your favorite movie about making movies – The Player, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, Bowfinger, Swimming with Sharks, or another you'd add to the list?

I reeeaaally enjoyed "Once Upon A Time In Hollywood". I think the mixture of fiction and nonfiction really made the movie such a fun ride and Tarantino really knows how to keep you on the edge of your seat throughout a film. Plus it was great to see a story being told from a stunt person's POV.



doubleVee



We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed alt-pop husband and wife duo doubleVee; greetings and salutations you two and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you both say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?

Thank YOU, Vents Magazine for your interest! We really appreciated your publishing of a very lovely review by Bethany Page of our 2019 EP Songs for Birds and Bats. We are Barb and Allan Vest, a.k.a. doubleVee, currently based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in the United States. We released our first song together on Halloween of 2013 and are very happy to be on the verge of releasing our new EP Periscope at Midnight. Our most widely heard song thus far is Your Love Is It Real?, from our 2022 album Treat Her Strangely. An excerpt from it can be heard in episode seven of season one of Tim Burton, Alfred Gough, and Miles Millar's Netflix series Wednesday.

Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted new EP Periscope at Midnight which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving globe when it makes its eagerly anticipated debut this July 25! Allan, starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired one of the very best EP releases of 2025?

A: We would love to see it chart globally! Thank you for your vote of confidence and kind words! Our EP was very much inspired by the feeling of resilience and need for self-care...of facing challenges head-on or shelving them as needed. Every song had its own unique journey, but we completed producing and recording each song one at a time as they are sequenced on the E.P.. In the end, it just felt right to order them that way, with each song kind of inspiring the next.

Barbara, can you introduce readers to two of the very special musical guests who lend their own musical alchemy to the Periscope at Midnight EP proceedings?

It would be my pleasure! We were very happy to again get to work with both of these very talented musicians, after previously working with them on Treat Her Strangely. Christi Wans performed the trumpet for our song Natural Selection. She's held positions with the Yakima and Mid-Columbia Symphonies in Washington, traveled as a show band member with Princess Cruise Lines, and served as lead trumpet with the national tour of Kinky Boots. She nailed the bossa nova-inspired style of the song and was such a blast to again record in our home studio.

We were thrilled Dr. Brent Williams was available to record the violin parts for the first single from our EP, Submarine Number Three Vee. We were glad to get to work with him again after he so beautifully played violin and/or viola on six songs on Treat Her Strangely. And he goes even further back with Allan, having recorded violin parts for three songs each on the Starlight Mints' albums Built on Squares and Drowaton. Brent's impressive resumé includes serving as concertmaster of the San Juan Symphony and Albany Symphony Orchestra. He's a member of the Rio Verde String Quartet and enhakē and founder of the Chamber Music Society of Wichita.

*We've rephrased question #4, due to Allan not being the sole producer of our EP.

Allan, you and Barb worked closely together on producing the Periscope at Midnight EP. What are the pros to serving as your own producers versus outsourcing the task to someone else?

Honestly, I have been producing for many years now and there's no way Barb and I would let somebody else take over the production duties we share. We've developed into such an effective team together over the years. We really can't imagine outsourcing any part of the production process...it's one of our biggest strengths I'd say. We're fortunate to have slowly built up our home studio to a level that works for our needs, where one of the big positives is not having to rent studio space every time inspiration strikes.

Barbara, prior to the July 25 release of the Periscope at Midnight EP, doubleVee will be dropping a single from the new EP on June 27; congrats again! Can you wax philosophical on the upcoming single and what made it the perfect tune to see release independent from the EP as a single? Do you feel that it tonally represents the new EP?

Wax on, wax off? Haha! Our third single is Maybe Tonight (What's Inside of Me?) It's our take on Inside of Me, one of Allan's Starlight Mints songs, from the 2006 album Drowaton. It's our final update of a Mints tune and one that we really enjoyed putting our spin on. We thought it'd be best to highlight it as a single, with a self-produced video illustrating a bit of what the song has come to mean to us. As far as tonally representing the new EP goes, I think that's one of things we like best about the EP format...that it can touch on several different flavors and tones. It does seem to give it a fun piano bar vibe, with the rollicking theme for keys and the reverting to the original C-minor key it was conceived in.

Allan, in your humble opinion what differentiates the Periscope at Midnight EP from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?

A: We feel so fortunate to be back at releasing music, it's hard to view anyone creating any kind of art as competition, but I know we are true to our sound and vibe and not a day passes where I think "Maybe we should try to sound more like X or Y band/music." If that were the case, we may never get anything finished. There are so many killer bands putting out music these days in so many microcosms of styles. I've heard a few bands drastically change their style over the years, not always for the better, in my opinion. I can certainly see a change of styles from my younger self from point A to point B, but I definitely feel comfortable with what Barb and I are accomplishing style-wise, especially with Periscope at Midnight.

Barbara, in the wake of the release of all this amazing new music, can fans look forward to catching doubleVee on the touring/performing circuit?

We've long dreamed of performing our music live, practicing with a bassist and drummer several times prior to the release of Treat Her

Strangely. It was amazing getting to experiment with how we'd pull off performing our music in a live setting. But then Allan was diagnosed with cancer a couple of months after our album was released...reality set in and our priorities shifted as we faced his surgery and recovery. Ultimately our live lineup practices wrapped up and we resumed working on new music as his re-checks kept coming in clear and we felt we could breathe a little easier. So...no touring just yet, but it's still something we'd love to pull off in some form someday. For now, we're just really grateful to be releasing new music.

A question for the both of you: Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have informed and influenced your own unique and indelible musical pathways?

A: When we first hung out, literally the first night, I played an Ennio Morricone piece for Barb from The Sicilian Clan because I was so enamored with it. Seeing her really get it, coming from such an intensive film music-related background, was a spark and we now have tons of shared inspired songs between us of course. We both came into the relationship with a lot of similar tastes loving bands like The Cure, Pixies and Stereolab for instance...but we like to kid around that Barb is a lot more punk-leaning than me. I do think our love of movies and musicals is just as powerful in influencing our musical output as anything else.

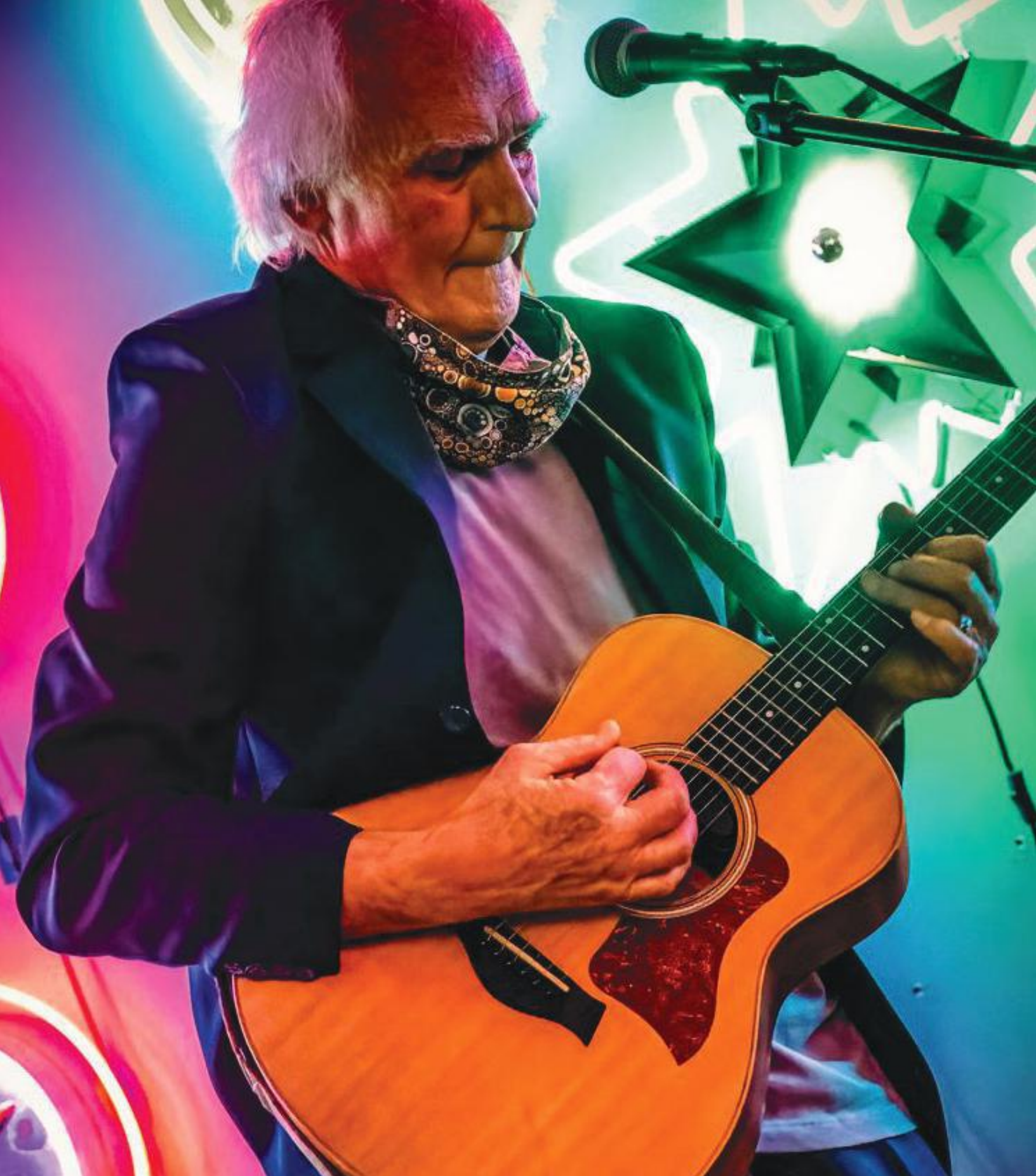
B: I was fortunate to have a well-lit musical pathway, growing up with my parents regularly playing songs on their record player and my mother singing and playing the piano, with my sister and I singing alongside. My grandmother was a playwright, composer, vocalist and pianist, so I was fortunate to be born into a family with a deep love for and understanding of music and the arts in general. I took piano lessons as a child, and later rode my xylophone-on-wheels down the school hallway, as it was too heavy for me to carry! I spent some time in junior high in show choir under the direction of the wonderful Victor Wong, but had definite issues with my two left feet! My particular affection for film music led me to hosting and producing Filmscapes, a nationally syndicated public radio movie music program, and the shorter format Filmscapes Intermission. (With Allan hearing the former on the air, long before meeting me!) I definitely agree with him that our cinematic sensibilities have a strong influence on our musical creations.

Allan, how is the Periscope at Midnight EP similar to such past doubleVee EP's as Songs for Birds and Bats? How is it different?

I think vibe-wise it has similarities, but it feels like we've taken everything up a few notches. Our writing relationship has evolved over the years, with our song production process happening pretty fluidly. I think it's different in how intense things were in the background personally and politically and how what was happening left a clear imprint on some of our songs.

Barbara, at the end of the day what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to the out-of-this-world new doubleVee EP, Periscope at Midnight?

I hope they hear our gratitude and amazement reflected in our voices and that our musical ideas catch their ears, Grant Fuhst's mesmerizing artwork captures their psyche and they're ultimately as happy as we are that we've overcome a lot of what's been thrown at us lately and released new music in spite of it. These are particularly tough times for everybody...we hope to be part of a tide of music that offers comfort, inspiration and stimulation when a listener might need it most.



FRED HOSTETLER

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed Roots and Americana singer and songwriter Fred Hostetler; greetings and salutations Fred and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the Q&A musical pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

I am an independent artist and it has been a year full of challenges, but I am moving forward as best I can. Life challenges can sometimes put music and the things you love temporarily on the back burner.

Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted new album Blues Back Pages which is lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe even as we speak! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired one of the very best LP releases of 2025?

I describe it by saying, "Welcome to my little corner of the blues world". This is the album "Blues Back Pages". It is a collection of 11 handpicked blues-based songs that reflect my vision and journey with blues and blues rock music. The tracks were pulled from my previously released recordings since returning home to the USA seven years ago. 'Taming the Wolf', a seven minute long autobiographical "epic," traces a life of living and loving the blues.

In 2017 after returning from India, I decided to finish something I started in 1977 when I declined signing to Max's Kansas City-NYC records as a solo artist. Now forty years later I started over again with 8 years of continuous releases. A few people became aware of my songs. I felt that some of my earlier work, especially the blues songs, were lost and had gone unheard but deserved to be heard in a more focused blues setting. This materialized as Blues Back Pages. Some songs have been remastered or partly rerecorded.

You handled the producing honors yourself on the Blues Back Pages. What are the pros to serving as your own producer versus outsourcing the job to someone else?

On the positive side is retaining all your rights and the double edge sword of complete creative control. Recording your own material for an album comes with many challenges. It's a daunting task. Competition is fierce and a song can be greatly enhanced by working with other musicians and a qualified producer in a quality recording studio. But as an indie artist, who can afford that? If you go it alone, for me the greatest risk is in the mixing process. For this reason I always try to get help from someone who knows what I do, where I'm coming from, and not only has good ears but can give advice and correct things that I may have missed due to repeated listens to the track while recording it. Losing perspective is a ghost always sitting on your shoulder.

Outsourcing seems like you are out of the loop when it is your song. I am not comfortable with that. There are many lists of pros and cons available on the internet and AI seems to do well in giving the basics. Resources I never dreamed of are available on line and can provide help.

We're tremendous admirers of the tune Taming the Wolf which stands front-and-center on the new Blues Back Pages album; congrats! What's the story behind this epic and intimate gem of a ditty?

It's a true modern blues story of growing up in a small all-white town in northern Indiana, leaving for the big city going west to follow my dreams, eventually leaving for India and returning to the USA.

Taming the Wolf is a real story, and the blues heaven referred to in the song is appearing nearer than ever. In some circles blue is said to be the color of the divine which, like the sky above us, is there all the time.

Reckless Independence is another autobiographical song of mine that blues rock fans might enjoy. (Spotify said it was on illegal playlists and took it down. Do I believe that? What recourse do I have?)

In your humble opinion, what differentiates Blues Back Pages from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?

As I said before, it reflects my little corner of the blues world. The album is a collection of 11 handpicked blues based songs that reflect my vision and journey with blues and blues rock music. One 5 star review said, "Blues Back Pages is an historic trip through Hostetler's vault of deeply personal songs, self-produced, recorded and performed, resulting in a stark intimacy...(and) startling vulnerability that seems rare these days." Perhaps this is the distinguishing trait.

By the way, I personally don't look at other musicians' releases as competition.

In the wake of the May 22 release of your stunning new LP Blues Back Pages, can fans look forward to catching you on the touring/performing circuit?

Though my music is played in 107 countries around the world, I only play live locally on Whidbey Island for private parties, at wineries, the island juke joint in the woods-Baileys, etc. I'm a bit reclusive now and content to enjoy the forest and islands of the Salish Sea. My YouTube channel has clips of live performances. Youtube channel: @dejablooze

Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have inspired your own musical pathway?

Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Muddy Waters, Sun House, Paul Butterfield, Bo Diddley, Joan Baez, B.B. King, the Beatles, the Band, John Mayall and many more. Producer Jack Douglas gave me the opportunity to learn about studio recording and producing at the historic Record Plant locations in NYC and Los Angeles. Philosophy, and religion: Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Jesus Christ, Yogananda, Sathya Sai Baba, Vasantha Sai.

As a singer and songwriter, which generally tends to come first for you during the creative process – The lyrics or the music? Or is it a

bit more freeform than all of that?

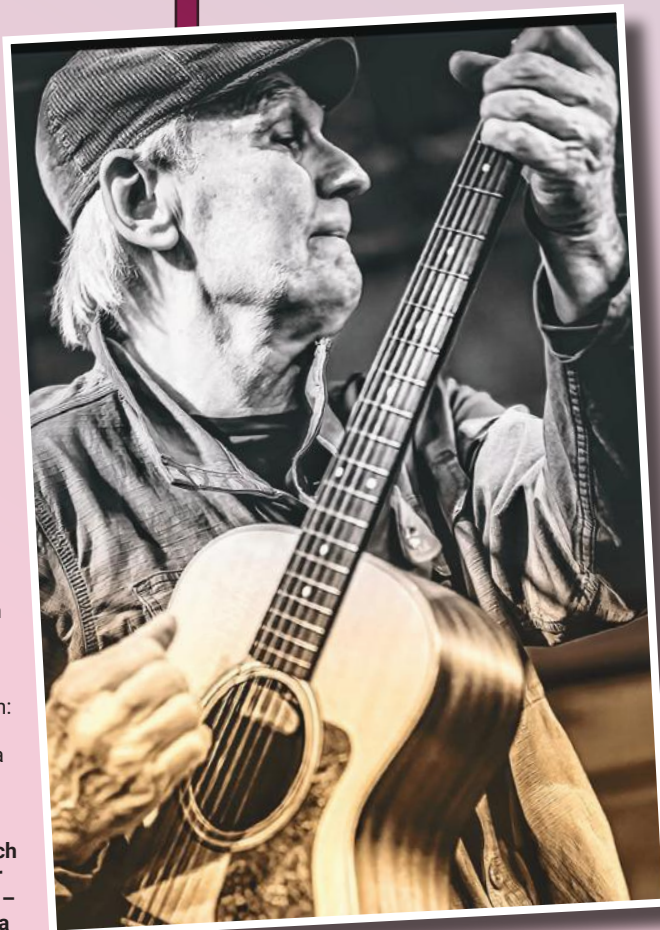
It can be lyrics first or music first or a bit of both at the beginning. After that it is interplay until the recorded track is finished. I don't get ideas from looking at the cell phone but while interacting in the physical world. I am always alert for a phrase that strikes me as a possible source of inspiration. Nowadays, I do use my cellphone to record music and melody ideas that pop into my head. Every few weeks I review what is there and move the creative process along.

How is Blues Back Pages similar to some of your past music? How is it different?

It is my past music with some new tweaks to the selected tracks. I am known to handle different styles- indie, folk rock, Americana- but music critic The Rock Doctor said "the title of his latest album gives you a big, fat clue as to what you can expect here. Blues Back Pages is a collection of 11 blues-based songs" whereas blues in previous albums was included along with other styles of music.

At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to your beautiful new album Blues Back Pages?

These days it's amazing to me if people even have the bandwidth to listen. Attention span is very short. What is the purpose of even doing an album? But, as a boyhood hero Ricky Nelson said, "you can't please everyone, so you gotta please yourself," I hope they walk away wanting to return for more music from myself or from someone else. Let the special power of music make their day go more easily and happily.



We're very happy to have some time today with acclaimed and respected U.S. Air Force pilot, practitioner of law and filmmaker Leonidas G. Demas; greetings and salutations Leonidas and thanks so much for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine today! Before we dive down the proverbial celluloid Q&A rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

I am doing fine along with family and friends. That is, for an old timer I am doing fine! And actually, it's my age that makes this movie a bit special, I think. It all rises out of my experience of visiting Greece many times since I was a boy of twelve.

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura filmmaking debut as a freshman writer and producer on the eagerly-anticipated feature film A Spartan Dream which is set to wow movie-going audiences when it makes its debut this August 15! For anyone late to the party, can you explain what A Spartan Dream is about and what inspired you and fellow creative gremlin (as well as one heck of an actor, to boot!) George Demas to write this fresh and original story?

A Spartan Dream is about a young Greek American who visits Greece for the first time on orders from his father to sell an old ancestral home in a Spartan village. It is occupied by an uncle he has never met along with his aunt and adopted daughter. When he meets them, he faces the dilemma of throwing them out though he likes them very much, especially the intelligent and beautiful daughter named Gorgo. Regarding the screenplay, George, thank God for him, is an actor working out of New York and he was very helpful in developing the script and I owe him a lot for that. He also co-produced with me on set in Greece.

A Spartan Dream is inspired by events from your own life, specifically your encounters as a younger man with the small village which generations of your own ancestors hailed from. What was it like to plumb those memories and all that familial history in service of a narrative feature? Did it all come pretty easily for you?

Well, the first time I went to Greece, I was twelve years old. We stayed in the ancestral home in a village just outside of the modern town of Sparta which was the only community that had electricity and running water. In the village our home had a compacted dirt floor, we used oil lamps at night, and the well from which we drew water was a hundred yards away. But at twelve, I loved it! A Spartan Dream takes place 25 years later, but my knowledge of Spartan history was learned while sitting in front of the fireplace, listening to my father spin tales about Ancient Sparta, some true and some pulled by my father from thin air! I learned the character of the Spartans first hand over many visits to the village A Spartan dream centers around the love I developed for a young village girl starting from my first visit. The entire story spun out of me like a gift from the Muses.

The director of A Spartan Dream is the ever-amazing M. Achilles. What was it like handing over the reins of your story to this extraordinary filmmaker?



Leonidas G. Demas

M is a fantastic director. Why? Because you don't feel like you have handed over anything to him, even though it is a fact that you have. This was true for everyone involved from the producers to the stars to the cast and entire crew down to the Best Boy. He is gentle and firm at the same time and the best thing is he acknowledges when someone else's idea is better than his own. There was absolutely zero conflict in Pre through Post production.

As the story of A Spartan Dream is so personal to you and George, was there ever a point in time where you entertained the possibility of taking the helms to direct it yourself?

Direct the film myself? Maybe in a dream. Directing takes an intimate knowledge of the art as well as the science of the job. Though I feel like I have a strong artistic streak in me, the science of directing, I learned from observation, is developed over a great deal of time and study.

A Spartan Dream boasts an out-of-this-world cast of thespians which includes the likes of Peter Bundic, Georgia Mesariti, and Katerina Didaskalou among others. What was it like witnessing these accomplished actors bring your words to vibrant and exciting life?

It was magnificent. It was like witnessing the birth of my first child at which time a father is overwhelmed and awestruck at the art of God.

In your humble opinion, what differentiates A Spartan Dream from the distinguished competition on the current day movie landscape?

A Spartan Dream, I hope, brings us back to the time when cinema was devoted to telling stories about real people, so as to elevate the audiences understanding of what it is to be human. I want the viewers to feel that they have been elevated in some small way at the end.

A Spartan Dream was the 2025 winner for Best Feature Film at this year's Prague Actors and Filmmakers Film Festival; congratulations! How does that sort of recognition for the film make you feel?

It makes me feel like the film has been confirmed by professionals who are strangers to me yet have tipped their hats in my direction and everyone else who made the film possible.

Did your prior service in the U.S. Air Force (thank you for your service, by the way!), as well as your time in the arena of law prepare you for the trials and travails of filmmaking as it applied to A Spartan Dream?

Some people think that being an Air Force pilot is an Erroll Flynn thing. A bit, but it is more understanding the science of flying and knowing your aircraft and aviation technologies like the back of your hand. This is also true for the practitioners of law. Come to think of it, it's true for bricklayers and waiters in a restaurant. The best ones know their business backwards and forwards. This is why I tried to stay in my lane as much as possible during all phases of the movie's production. The original story was mine. The production belonged to all the other great people who worked to create my vision.

At the end of the day, what do you hope audiences walk away with after checking out one of the very best motion pictures of 2025, A Spartan Dream?

As I have intimated, my greatest hope is that the audiences have fun, but more importantly, that they come out of the experience slightly elevated in heart and spirit from when they initially sat down in their seats.



DON'T WAKE THE NEIGHBOURS

Hey, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Not too bad thank you! Very busy, we've got loads going on, but overall pretty good!

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release, 'My Place in the Sun'?

My Place in the Sun is all about loneliness and trying to find a place to fit in. The lyrics are pretty sad, but the song itself is quite upbeat, I wanted to create something that mirrored the idea of pretending everything is fine and keeping up appearances even when you're not feeling too good.

How was the recording and writing process?

I wrote the song many years ago, before Don't Wake the Neighbours had even been formed and when I started the band, it was one of the first songs we ever played together.

We recorded it one instrument at a time at the studio, drums, then bass, then guitars, and finally vocals. It was important to us to spend lots of time on the arrangement, we even went back and re-recorded some of the guitar parts just to make sure that everything was perfect.

Where did you find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

I wrote the song just after the last lockdown ended. I think a lot of people were going through the same thing of worrying about the future and what was going to happen next and I think that emotion helped me to create this track. The world was rebuilding and everything felt a little off, and I really wanted to lean into that vibe when writing this track, the idea of not really knowing where you fit in, or what was right for you.

Will you be hitting the road at all this year?

We've got lots of shows lined up for this year but all of them are local to us. Unfortunately, having a band with 7 people makes planning trips away very difficult and we've been recording so much lately for our debut album "Welcome to the Neighbourhood" so we've been really busy with that. Hopefully next year, we will be able to venture out further and meet more people!

What else is happening next in your world?

The biggest thing we've got coming up is our album! We've been recording for what seems like forever, but we're finally finished! It's coming out on 8th August 2025, and we've got an album release party happening at The Half Moon Putney on 7th August.

We are incredibly excited, it's the biggest and most ambitious thing we've ever done, but we're so happy with how it's sounding so far!!

MY PET RHINO



Hey, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

I'm doing well – same panic, different disco, I guess!

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release, 'Knots'?

Knots is a song I wrote about my tendency to try and do all the right things to succeed in whatever I am pursuing but always seeming to fall just short of the success I am after at the final hurdle. I wrote the track roughly 9-10 years ago, and around that time it did not seem to matter what part of my life it was – study, work, sport, music, relationships etc. – I would always seem to do really well up to a point, but ultimately not come home with the chocolates. The idea was that the track would remind me to do better next time. It didn't work, but I still quite like the song!

Given the topic is rather broad, I gave the track some context by using a 'boy chases girl in a club but gets rejected at the end of the night' type of story to make it more of a familiar tale for a lot of listeners (I am sure there's plenty of people who have been there). The title is actually a little play on words – at the time I wrote the lyrics, the last club I had been to (to this day it still could be the last club I have been to) was an alternative/emo club called Phlebas in while on holiday in Nottingham, so I used this location as a point of reference in my head. I originally was going to title the song 'Notts' in reference to this but then got self-conscious of how bad my spelling would seem if I did this, so went with the more traditional spelling to suit the use of the word in the lyrics ('tying knots with tips of tongues and toes').

How was the recording and writing process?

The writing process was a bit of a turning point in my songwriting as a whole. Up until this song, I had only attempted to write lyrics about fictional stories as I was not really confident writing about my own personal stories. This was my first attempt at trying to write about something from my life, and it opened the door for me to do more of this as time went on. I was also very conscious of trying to use more positive/affirmative language where possible as I had a bit of a bad habit of always using negative wording and phrasing all the time in my lyrics. Musically, this was also the first time I had genuinely attempted to obtain a certain sound for a song while writing. Before this, I would just play whatever came out and it sounded like whatever it sounded like. This was a bit of a good shift forward in trying to actively write songs to match a certain atmosphere and sonic quality.

From a recording point of view, Knots was an absolute dream to record. Basically, from the first moments of recording all the sounds just came together so quickly and seemed to gel perfectly. I think the bass was the only instrument on the track that required more than two takes – everything else was either one or two. One interesting aspect about the recording of the track (and the album, Arrows) was that the vocals were recorded in a completely different country. The vocalist I chose for the album, LeeLoo, is based abroad, so I would send her the instrumental backing track and another track with some guide vocals, then she would record in her own time before sending me back the final vocal files to input back into the main song.

Where did you find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

I wanted to write a song that sounded a little bit like something my two favourite bands at the time, There Will Be Fireworks and We Were Promised Jetpacks, might write. I love the jangly guitar tones and the pounding, intense drumming in their tunes, as well as their unique melodies and powerful vocal performances. They also love to play around with their song structures too and use dynamics to phrase verses and choruses in unique ways. I use these concepts to try and come up with something that gave a nod to their work but also still sound completely unique to me. The addition of female vocals was something I thought could add to the sound in a beneficial way and be a bit of a point of difference. Lyrically, in the end it is just a 'boy chases girl' story, but having the deeper personal meaning of really being more about snatching defeat from the jaws of victory gave it a nice added layer of complexity that I really enjoy.

Will you be hitting the road at all this year?

Unfortunately not! At this stage it is just me in the band – other than the drums and vocals which were performed by session musicians, all the other instruments on the record are played by me. This makes playing live at the moment a little bit tricky. I will start to search for musicians for all the roles in the future, but at the moment I am just focusing on promoting the album and finding my audience. The bigger the audience gets, the more incentive I will have to pull my socks up and get a band together quicker, so if you like the tracks and want the chance to hear them live, make sure to keep listening and spreading the word!

What else is happening next in your world?

I am strongly considering going back to the studio to record one more single to release at the end of the year. I think it would close out the 'Arrows' chapter of our career nicely. Otherwise, I have a couple of other little side projects (an album with the band, Twinkling Stars, and a little acoustic covers EP with my old cover duo, Mckenzie & Jon) that will almost certainly be releasing records later this year, so I will be spending a bit of time helping out with those too.

/ MY PET RHINO /



/ KNOTS /

The Trousers



Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Hello! We are ok. In the spring we had a tour with Konflikt from Slovakia, and celebrated our 20th birthday in Budapest. In May our bassist, Bandi and his wife had a newborn baby, so we had to stop doing concerts for some months, although in June we participated a festival near Budapest. In the summer we will also play at a festival, then close the summer at A38 Ship in Budapest, one of the best clubs in the world. During the while we keep recording our forthcoming album. So we are busy!

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

"Second hand suicide" is our latest single form the next album. The title might be a bit shocking, but it's metaphorical. It takes us to the depths of intimate relationships where love and hate, eroticism and aggression are going hand in hand. It's deeply philosophical, first formulated by the writers, philosophers and artists of Romanticism in the 19th century. This tradition had a deep impact on the late 1960's aesthetics, like psychedelic arts or the mysticism of hard rock bands like Zeppelin or Sabbath, where music like ours is coming from.

How was the recording and writing process?

I wrote the song last year based on some personal experiences but new musical influences also played part in the process. I always start with the main riff, then comes the accord progression, after that the song "writes itself". We usually do a demo first, and then based on this we record the instrumental parts and vocals one by one. First our drummer, Sam recorded the drum parts, after that I came and did my guitar and vocal parts, so does our bassist Bandi. Guitarist Peter is recording his parts at home. Finally our constant guest musicians, Rita on backing vocals and Zsolt on keyboards finalize the project. Our sound engineer and producer is our former drummer, Csészi, so we have a very good relationship.

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

It's very different. In this band I am the songwriter and lyricist. I always find myself being influenced by bands that I get to know deeply, for example The Hellcopters around 2009-2010, Monster Magnet around 2013, Thin Lizzy and Cheap Trick around 2020, Alice in Chains, Death Angel and Trouble around 2022-24. It doesn't mean that I start to copy them, but they touch my sense of music deeply and make me want to create. Of course personal experiences also play very important part,

equally, like love and loss, or philosophical insights.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

We already have three concerts booked in Budapest the rest of the year. The country outside Budapest is a hard case for underground bands like this. Fortunately we will have a concert at a festival in August near my hometown in the East, but most of the time we go to the country only when we can support bigger bands. For us the countries of Central Europe, like Austria, Slovenia, sometimes Germany, Czechia and Slovakia are more available. Currently we are organizing gigs in this area for the autumn and winter months.

What else is happening next in your world?

In August we are about to release the second single, called "All through the night", while we keep on recording the rest of the next album which will be called "Necessary evil". We plan to release it in November, and do an album release show in Budapest. We close the year in Robot Club, as usually, and we invited our friends Degradace from Ostrava, Czechia, We will going to play with them in Ostrava in the beginning of 2026.

Jay Draper & The Subterraneans

Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Oh, you know, just living this thing we call life. Very nice of you to ask, though. How have you been?

What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?

I just put out a new album at the beginning of May called Dollhouse. The title comes from a song off the album called A Death in the Dollhouse, which is about an AI sex bot who turns against her master and murders him. I also like the imagery of a dollhouse that is all pastel perfection on the outside, but houses a seedy underbelly of different stories from room to room. I took it upon myself to construct an actual cardboard dollhouse that I wear over my head on the cover, further implying that each of these rooms are just facets of a disturbed psyche. For the CD release, I went even further and designed it so that when you open up the packaging, it's like you're opening the dollhouse itself to reveal illustrations I did to represent the different rooms with scenes in each depicting the various songs.

How was the recording and writing process?

Long and varied. I was hoping to have this album done a year or two after the first one, but things always take way longer than I want or expect, it seems. This is partially due to my perfectionist tendencies, but also the way that I worked on different songs with different people for this album. On the first album, Behind the Night, I primarily worked with the co-founder of the project, Justin Minister, and although that one took a little while to finish as well, and we did have a few guest contributors, it at least felt like the process had a much clearer sense of direction and vision between the two of us. Since then, Justin has moved on to other projects and for better or worse, I decided to do things a little more piecemeal this time. I worked with a couple of different co-producers, as well as mixing and producing several of the tracks myself, plus a handful of various guest contributors. It probably makes for a somewhat more fractured feel to this album, but I think that kind of works with the overall theme I was going for. Plus, I always like the opportunity to work with other people who might try things I wouldn't think to do. I find it adds a certain

type of spice to the sound. It does often make for a longer and more complicated process, though on the other hand. I'm famous for doing things the hard way, though.

Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?

I mostly find inspiration from my struggle to adapt to the modern world around me. How it makes me feel living in a world that wasn't really made for a person like myself, which I think is something a lot of people can probably relate to these days. I tend to write a lot about existential and psychological themes, like identity, autonomy, and the struggle to find meaning or deal with a lack of meaning in the world that we've created for ourselves. That, and also whatever books I'm reading or movies I'm watching at the time. Actually, the last song on the album, Judy, was written almost immediately after watching some guy on YouTube give a four-and-a-half-hour lecture on his fan theories about Twin Peaks. So, that's one way to do it.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

Unfortunately, not. At least not that I'm currently aware of. The Subterraneans is primarily a studio recording project. In 2019, Justin and I did attempt to put together a live act for the project, and we even managed to play one small secret show together, but then the pandemic derailed everything, and the members slowly started moving on to other things. If it seems in the future that there are opportunities for good gigs, especially outside of Toronto, then I would be open to putting something together for it again. My other group, The Scarlet Fever, who I've been performing live with for years now, will hopefully be putting out a new album later this year or early next, and will likely be playing plenty of shows to promote it, so look out for that.

What else is happening next in your world?

Well, I'm already hard at work on new material for a possible third Subs album, but like I said, there is also the new Scarlet Fever album, which will hopefully be birthed in the near future. Other than that, and the usual ritual sacrifices to the outer gods, I'm just staying open to opportunities. If anyone out there is interested in booking me or Scarlet, or if anyone just wants to collaborate on a track, please feel free to reach out. I always love opportunities to work with new and exciting people.



JAY DRAPER & THE
Subterraneans