

VANITY FAIR

M A G A Z I N E

ANA
SOPHIA
HEGER

Host of the Month

Interviews

Nck Name

Rebecca Pidgeon

Searit Huluf

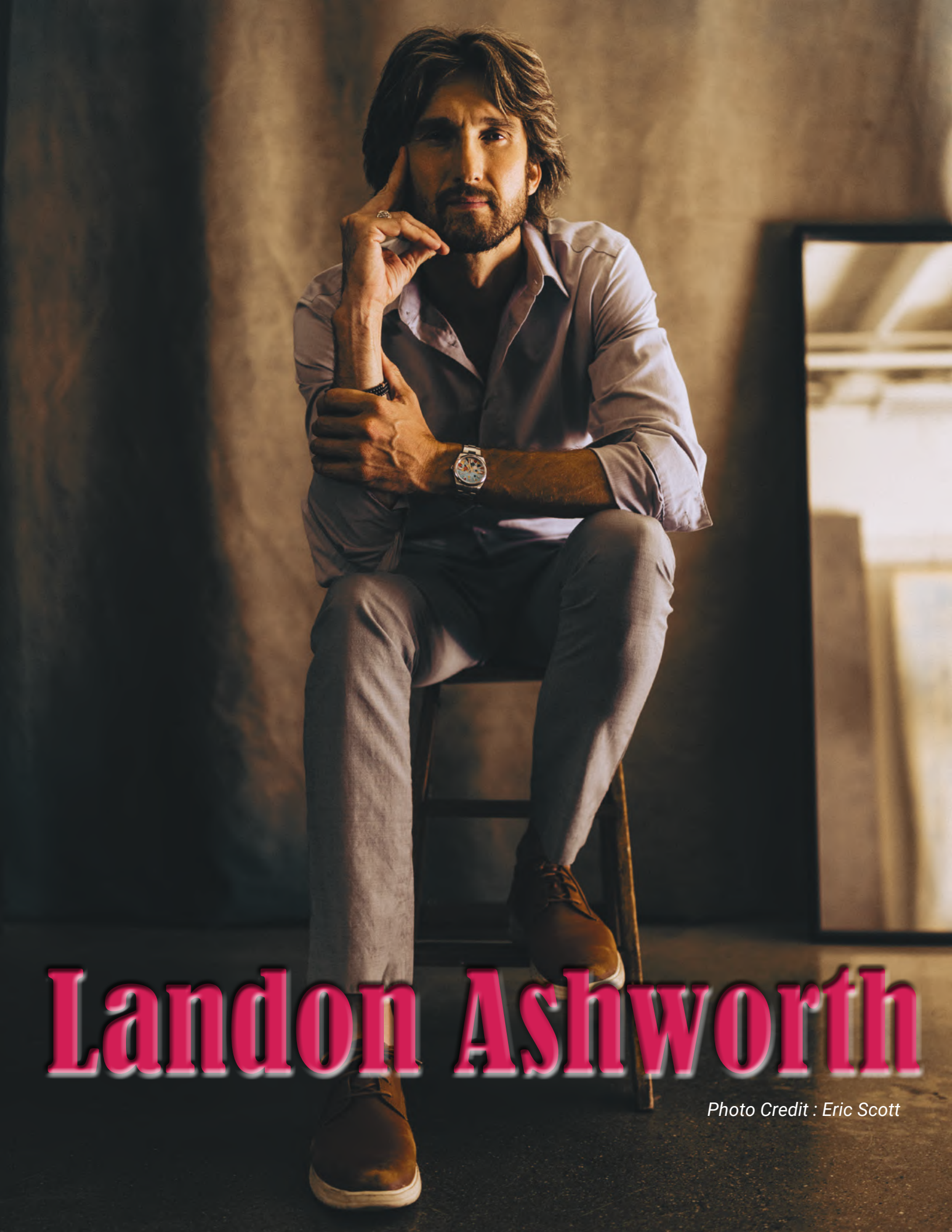
The Silver Snails

YASSiN & Sean Terrio

Bonggun Kim and Kansei Yasuda

Reagan Yorke and Jillian Smith

Jackie Dallas



Landon Ashworth

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We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed and multifaceted American actress and rapper Rosita Young who is perhaps best known by her far-famed nom de plume ROSITA; greetings and salutations Rosita 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 Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 treating you and yours?

2025 has been amazing so far. Everything is coming into fruition and happening very fast. I'm excited to be going along for the ride.

Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted new single Fanned Out 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 you to record one of the very best singles of '25?

Being "Fanned Out" inspired me to record "Fanned Out." I was at work one day, watching a program on my laptop, when I saw this face pop across the screen. I stopped what I was doing, in awe! This was the first time I had a celebrity crush, and at my big age, I was embarrassed. After speaking with some friends of mine, I felt better knowing that they too had celebrity crushes. I ended up going to one of their shows in New Orleans and I was even more relieved to find they had bigger fans than me present. Some people had brought gifts, and even had custom outfits made with their celebrity crush's face printed on them. I was fascinated!

We understand that you've launched an out-of-this-world campaign on Tik Tok and Instagram in conjunction with the release of the Fanned Out single! For anyone late to the party, can you talk about what the campaign is all about?

So, there is the #FannedOutChallenge, where creators reveal what celebrity has them "Fanned Out." To honor the city where this all started, I will be having a campaign this fall where I will be giving out a pair of floor tickets to a major artist's show in New Orleans.

Who did the producing honors on Fanned Out and what did the in-studio collaboration between artist and producer look like while fashioning and shaping this new gem of a ditty?

Multi-platinum producer Heartbeatz and I were in the studio and I started to tell him the story of how I had drove from Hattiesburg, MS to New Orleans to meet one of my favorite celebrities a few weeks prior. I am a big storyteller. We decided that would make a great idea for a song, and I hopped in the booth. After I recorded the demo version, I sent it to a friend of mine, Roosta93. He loved it so much that he added a verse to it!

Prior to Fanned Out, you delivered the pulse-pounding single Jody alongside fellow artists Akeem Ali and P.U.R.P.; congrats! What was it like working with these two accomplished and celebrated music artists on that recent single? And can we look forward to future collabs from the three of you?

It was amazing working with both P.U.R.P. and Akeem Ali. I have known P.U.R.P. for quite some time and was recently introduced

to Akeem Ali. All three of us have Mississippi roots and that is how we vibed. I see myself working with both again, as I learned so much about being an artist from working with both of them. They were very patient with me, and worked hard to make sure that the project came out exactly how I envisioned it.

In your humble opinion, what differentiates Fanned Out from the Distinguished Competition on the current day music scene?

Fanned Out has a nostalgic feel to it. It is meant to tell a story. With my delivery, I wanted to come across to listeners as being deranged, naive, and a little out of touch. On the current day music scene, we have a lot of "baddies" and I have come to realize that I am quite the opposite, which is okay.

In the wake of the June 20 release of Fanned Out, can fans look forward to even more music from you in the near future? Perhaps in the form of an EP or LP release?

I have so many ideas in my head right now. There are so many other artists that I would love to collaborate with and I am in the process of finalizing a few collaborations. I do plan on dropping an EP soon. Experimenting with other genres is big on my list right now as well. Stay tuned for my Halloween project coming in the month of October, too.

What does your touring/performing dance card look like in the coming weeks and months?

I hope to get a few shows in during the next few months. This is about to be a busy next few weeks for me, with the music videos, recording, and photo shoots that I have scheduled. I am really in a creating mood right now where all of these wild ideas are popping up in my head and I love that so much for me.

Major congratulations on your bravura turn in BET's American Gangster: Trap Queens which is set to premiere the first half of its fourth season this July 10! Can you explain to anyone not in the know what American Gangster: Trap Queens is about and how your role of Nelly Idowu figures into the proceedings?

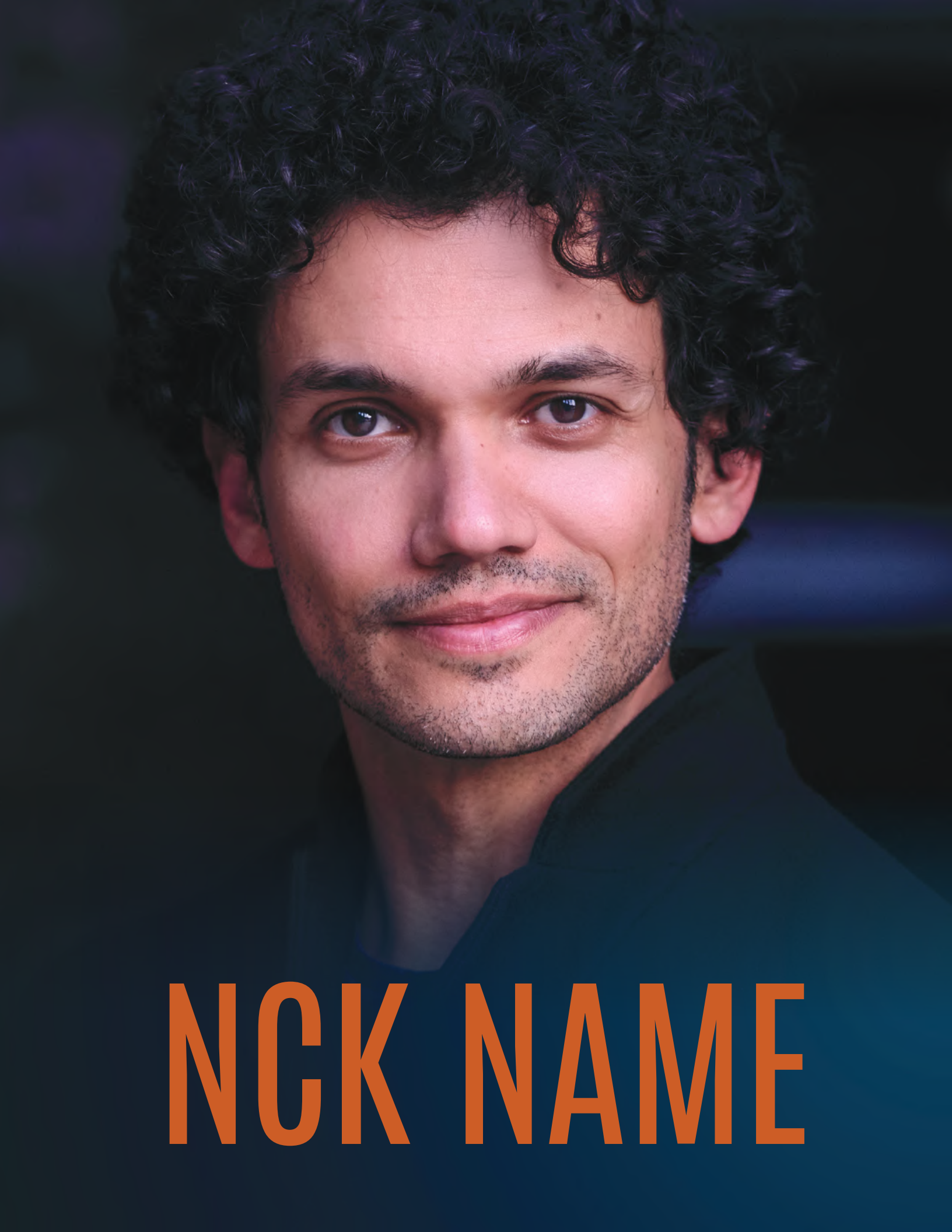
American Gangster: Trap Queens tells true stories of the rise and fall of infamous criminals who are women. Now, these were no ordinary criminals. These were women who ran multimillion dollar schemes. Nelly Idowu came to America from Nigeria for a chance at a better life, and ended up involved in a global romance scam empire. Her story is so intriguing and I cannot wait until that episode airs.

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

Angela Bassett and Melissa McCarthy are two of my favorite, for sure. Angela has such a wide range, and Melissa is just so energetic and quirky. In terms of music, Cyndi Lauper and Tyler, the Creator both offer a unique listening experience in my opinion.

Any final thoughts you might like to leave readers with regarding all your upcoming activities?

Keep your eyes and ears open. I have some special treats in store and there is sure to be something that everyone can enjoy!



NCK NAME

We're so glad to have some time today with acclaimed actor, musician, and producer Nck Name. Thanks for joining us, Nck — how has 2025 been for you so far?

It's been full-on, in the best way. Between filming, scoring, and sound post-production, the year's been a bit of a whirlwind — but a good one. I've been lucky to work on some projects I'm really proud of, and having *Adulthood* come out this year is definitely a highlight.

Congratulations on your standout performance in the new comic neo-noir film *Adulthood*, set to premiere at the 2025 Toronto International Film Festival before its September 19 theatrical release. For those who haven't heard about it yet, can you share what the film is about and how your character, Diego Vargas, fits into the story?

Thank you! *Adulthood* is a dark comedy about a brother and sister who uncover a pretty grim secret about their parents. From there, things spiral into one terrible decision after another. I play Diego, Kaya Scodelario's husband — a grounded, rational guy who's trying to keep his head above water while everything around him unravels. I can't wait for people to see this film.

When the *Adulthood* screenplay from Michael M.B. Galvin first came your way, did you know immediately that you wanted to be involved?

Absolutely. I couldn't put it down. It was funny, dark, and unpredictable. Plus, getting to work with Alex Winter and Josh Gad? That was an instant yes.

You worked with Alex Winter as both your director and co-star in *Adulthood*. What was that collaboration like, and as an actor himself, would you describe him as "an actor's director"?

Without a doubt. Alex has such a sharp eye, but also a performer's intuition - so he knows exactly how to communicate with actors. He's very clear about his vision, but also leaves space for you to bring your own instincts. That's a rare balance, and it makes for a great creative environment. I can't say enough good things about working with Alex.

The cast of *Adulthood* includes Anthony Carrigan, Kaya Scodelario, and Josh Gad — an incredible lineup. What was it like working alongside such a talented ensemble?

Dream team! Kaya's instincts were spot-on — she always seemed to know how to tilt a scene in exactly the right direction, Josh is as funny off-camera as he is on, and Anthony's performance was impossible

to take your eyes off. Being around actors like that is inspiring.

What does it mean to you to have *Adulthood* debut at such a prestigious platform as the Toronto International Film Festival?

It's huge. TIFF is one of the best showcases in the world, and as a Canadian, it feels especially meaningful. To have this film premiere basically in my backyard is surreal and a real honour.

It sounds like you've been keeping very busy this year with a range of upcoming film and television projects. Can you give us a preview of what's next for you?

On the acting side, I'm gearing up to shoot Johnathan Sharp's *Watch Me* in Europe next year. On the music side, I recently finished scoring a beautiful film called *Surfacing*, and I've got some new original music in the works. And in sound post, I'm wrapping work on Anjelica Huston's *The Christmas Witch Trial of La Befana*. So yeah, lots of cool stuff down the pipeline!

In addition to acting, you're an accomplished composer and have worked extensively in the sound department. Can you talk about that side of your career, and whether you prefer acting or composing — or do you see them as equally rewarding in different ways?

They really do complement each other. Music gave me my start, and it's still my foundation. Sound work has taught me so much about the craft of storytelling from the technical side. And acting scratches that performance itch. So I wouldn't want to choose — each art form feeds the others, and together they make me a better artist.

Who are some of the people — in film or beyond — who have inspired or influenced your career? How much time do you have?

In film, directors like Stanley Kubrick and Steven Spielberg have been massive inspirations. I also love everything David Fincher or Quentin Tarantino touch. Musically, Freddie Mercury was the quintessential artist — bold, fearless, and incredibly gifted. And as a music producer, I find Flume hugely inspiring in the way he fuses strong melodies with gorgeous sound design. Honestly, I could go on all day!

And finally, just for fun: what's your favorite movie about making movies — *Living in Oblivion*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, *The Player*, *Barton Fink*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, or *Ed Wood*?

Tough question! Does "Get Shorty" count? Travolta was so good in that!

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed and award-winning filmmaker, writer, and actor Landon Ashworth; greetings and salutations, Landon, and thanks for taking time from a busy schedule to speak with our ever-inquisitive readers here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the Q&A celluloid rabbit hole, how is the latter part of 2025 finding you and yours?

My default answer to that question is "better than I deserve." I believe I'll stick with that.

Major kudos and accolades on your upcoming [http://leagerly-anticipated directorial debut, Go On, which is set to captivate audiences when it hits the film festival circuit this Fall! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired this deeply personal story?

The seed of Go On came from a devastating personal experience. My 15-year-old cousin, who, like me, was on the spectrum, came to stay with me during a very difficult chapter in his life. We spent that week doing anything and everything he wanted — from the simplest joys to long conversations that went late into the night. We talked about purpose, legacy, joy, and the weight of struggle.

By the end of the week, I thought he was in a better place. But shortly after he returned home, he died by suicide. That loss split my world in half. When I got back from his funeral, I sat down and wrote this film in one unbroken stretch of 36 hours. From "EXT. FOREST — DAY" to "THE END," it just poured out of me.

I'm known for comedy, but this script wasn't about career or genre — it was for him. For anyone carrying something invisible. My goal wasn't to offer answers but to create a space where audiences can feel something real, ask themselves deeper questions, and maybe leave the theater carrying a little more light.

Was writing Go On a form of catharsis for you after the passing of your cousin? Similarly, do you see the film as a tribute to your cousin?

I wouldn't call it catharsis, because catharsis implies some kind of resolution — and there really isn't resolution in grief. What the process gave me wasn't closure, but more questions. That's what film can do at its best: open up space for reflection rather than neatly tie a bow on pain.

So yes, in a sense, it's a tribute to my cousin, but not in the traditional way. It's not a eulogy — it's an invitation. An invitation for audiences to sit with the unanswerable, to confront the weight of loss, and to hopefully recognize pieces of themselves in the story.

You wrote, directed and star in Go On. Can you talk about what special challenges you faced wearing these various hats and how you soldiered through any difficult spots during the process?

I've been a working actor for nearly two decades, and at the same time, I've spent years building my own voice by shooting sketch comedy where I had to do everything myself — write, direct, edit, and perform every role. Oddly enough, that training ground prepared me perfectly for Go On.

The difference this time was that I wasn't alone. I had a crew of extraordinary filmmakers around me — people at the absolute top of their craft — and that allowed me to put my energy where it mattered most: shaping the performances and shepherding the

vision. I walked onto set with every frame meticulously storyboarded, every shot mapped out, every emotional beat charted. My job then was to translate that clarity into something alive and real while on the side of a mountain.

The real challenge wasn't juggling the hats — it was maintaining truth. Making sure the performances, including my own, never slipped into artifice. The crew gave me the freedom to chase that honesty relentlessly, and that's what carried us through the tough days.

You work with such a brilliant ensemble of actors in Go On, including the likes of Vincent Kartheiser, Laura Wiggins, Julia Eringer, Heinley Gaspard, Aitor Martin, Emily Katherine Ford, and Mary Fenton! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside these thespians while also directing them?

I've had the privilege of directing some extraordinary people over the years — Oscar winners, cultural icons, world-class athletes. But Vincent Kartheiser was the first actor who genuinely intimidated me. He has this ability to walk on set and carve a performance out of thin air like he's sculpting stone. He's razor-sharp, utterly present, and one of the finest actors of our generation. Since most of my most demanding scenes were with him, he forced me to bring everything I had — not just as a director but as a scene partner. Ninety-nine percent of the time, my best directing choice with Vincent was simply to stay out of his way and let the camera witness. The other one percent, I might suggest another take, but even then, it felt like gilding the lily.

What amazed me most was something he said before we started: "My job is to show up with a character and be real." And that's exactly what he did, every single day, with more discipline and truth than I can fathom.

The rest of the cast, many of whom I hadn't worked with before, faced an entirely different challenge: making a deep impact with less screen time. That's a very delicate craft— you have to arrive fully formed, with no warm-up and no margin for error. And they all did it brilliantly. Laura, Julia, Heinley, Aitor, Emily, Mary — every one of them elevated the film. Together, they created a living world around my character, and as both an actor and director, I found myself constantly humbled by the depth they brought.

Go On is scheduled to wow audiences on September 24 at the ABQ Film Festival, as well as at the Catalina Film Festival on September 26; congratulations! What does it mean to you as a first-time feature film director to get Go On in front of cinephiles at these two prestigious festivals?

It's incredibly meaningful. I've had short films screen at Oscar-qualifying festivals before, but I never showed up because, truthfully, the social side of this business has always been hard for me. I'm on the spectrum, and for years I avoided those rooms.

But with Go On, I feel a responsibility that's bigger than my own discomfort. This film came out of tragedy, and it's meant to create conversation. That means I need to be there, to stand behind it, to make sure it reaches people. So yes, the festivals are intimidating — but that's exactly why I'm showing up this time. To push myself, to honor the film, my

cousin Landon Bellm, and to connect with audiences who are ready to go somewhere real.

For all the folks who might not be able to get out to these festivals to check out Go On, can they ultimately expect and look forward to a wider commercial release?

That's the goal. Festivals are just the first step — they create momentum and spark conversation. But Go On was never meant to live only in those rooms. It's a film about connection and resilience, and it belongs in front of the widest possible audience.

So yes, every day I'm working on that path — building the right partnerships, exploring distribution opportunities, making sure the film can find its way to both theaters and streaming. My dream is that anyone who needs this story, no matter where they are, will have the chance to experience it.

What are your hopes for Go On? What do you hope audiences walk away with after checking out this powerful motion picture?

I don't want to hand audiences a moral or a tidy resolution — life rarely gives us those. My hope is that Go On leaves people with questions that linger. Questions about grief, about connection, about what it really means to move forward when life doesn't give you clean answers.

If people walk out of the theater and feel compelled to talk — to wrestle with what they've just seen, to share their own stories, to look at the people in their lives a little differently — then I've done my job. For me, cinema isn't about telling people what to think. It's about creating space where they can feel something real, and maybe carry that feeling with them long after the credits roll.

As both an actor and a director, what does your upcoming dance card look like? Is there anything you might like to call attention to that is upcoming?

It's a busy season, which is exactly how I like it. On October 9th, I'll be appearing in Boots on Netflix, which I'm really excited for. At the same time, I'm still creating the comedy sketches that built my audience online, and I'm about to launch a podcast where I'll sit down with some incredible guests — Jason Mraz, Brian Dietzen, and a few others I'm keeping under wraps for now.

On the directing side, I continue to helm national commercials, which has always been a great playground for me creatively. And I've written a book that I'm developing into a tour — it's about reframing the way we think about autism. For me, being autistic has been a superpower, and I believe neurotypical people can learn a lot from the way autistic minds approach focus, efficiency, and resilience. It's about shifting the conversation from limitation to possibility.

Final — SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies — Living in Oblivion, The Big Picture, Hollywood Shuffle, The Player, or Barton Fink?

None of those, honestly. The only right answer is For Your Consideration — Christopher Guest at his sharpest, skewering Hollywood with a scalpel instead of a sledgehammer. It's absurd, it's tragic, and it's the most accurate portrayal of how unglamorous and insane this business can really be.

ROSITA YOUNG



JACKIE DALLAS



We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed actress Jackie Dallas; greetings and salutations Jackie 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?

Thank you for this opportunity to chat and I am happy to say that 2025 is turning out to be a good year!

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the eagerly anticipated Netflix series The Hunting Wives which premiered on July 21! Starting at the top, can you explain to our ever-inquisitive readers what The Hunting Wives is about and how your character of 'Jia-Yi' figures into the proceedings?

The Hunting Wives is a sexy murder mystery that is based off of a best-seller book by May Cobb. It is about Sophie, played by Brittany Snow, who moves to East Texas and finds herself in a circle of very rich, beautiful and elite socialites, lead by Margo, played by Malin Ackerman. A whirlwind friendship turns into a scandalous romance. Then when a tragic murder happens with Sophie as the main suspect, trust and loyalties are tested as we try to piece together what actually happened. My character Jia-Yi comes in after Margo's husband Jed decides to run for governor of Texas, as his campaign manager. She's brought in to not only help his campaign, but also to help keep his name out of the dirt that is swirling around, but like all other characters in this show, Jia-Yi has her own motives and secrets that could eventually add to the scandal surrounding the publicly poised family.

Before the pilot script for The Hunting Wives crossed your professional desk, had you been aware of the book off which the series is based on from author May Cobb?

And in what ways does the Netflix series deviate from Cobb's work? And how has it remained true in spirit to the book? The Hunting Wives is the first of May Cobb's books that I've read and it is so good! Of course, with all good murder mysteries though, you got to keep the audience guessing and so when it was decided to adapt the book into a series, they did decide to make a few changes with May's support and blessing! I think the spirit of the story is well preserved and any new elements and characters only add to expand the world so that hopefully, more thrilling seasons can continue to be told.

You work with such an amazing cast in The Hunting Wives, including the likes of the legendary Dermot Mulroney, Malin Akerman, and Brittany Snow! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside that of these stellar thespians?

It was so exciting to get the chance to work alongside such pros! A little intimidating

at first, because I have been an admirer of their work for years, but when I met them, they were all so nice that a lot of my nerves went away. It was very insightful getting to see how they each work both on and off the set, since everyone has such a different process as an actor, but at the end of the day, we all just want to make the best show we can and it really motivated me to be on top of my game in order to be able to hold my own in scenes alongside them.

Speaking of collaborations, who did the directing honors on The Hunting Wives and were these intrepid journeymen what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?

I absolutely love that all of our directors were women, and I think it really helped keep the narrative from a female perspective. Julie Anne Robinson and Melanie Mayron did such an amazing job setting up the story in the first half of the season, and I had the privilege of working with Cheryl Dunye and Jennifer Getzinger in the latter half of the episodes.

In the wake of the July 21 premiere of the new Netflix series The Hunting Wives, you have no less than three other productions waiting in the wings for a release in '25: Her Monster, A Summer's Tale and Designed by Preeti; congrats! Can you give readers a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with these intriguing-sounding productions?

Her Monster is a horror film that is next up on my schedule. It's a creature feature about a young girl who discovers a long lost artifact that unleashes an entity tied to her family. I will be playing her mother and we will be filming that in Phoenix starting in a few weeks. A Summer's Tale is a visually stunning short film that was created using solely shadows. It is a story inspired by Shakespeare about a relationship that has fallen apart and I voice the female lead character. Designed by Preeti is the creation of a good friend of mine who wanted to tell a story not often told in her culture, about an Indian woman who leaves a failing marriage and decides to pursue her dream of becoming a dress maker. It was such a personal project for her and I was thrilled to have been able to serve a small part in it.

Your first credited onscreen performance comes in the form of 2014s Not Another Zombie Movie...About the Living Dead. Any special memories of that freshman production?

This was an independent production in Chicago and I just remember being so grateful that the team behind it were willing to take a chance on me as a new actor. It was so much fun to be able to dress up, get put in special effects make up and play onscreen with other likeminded artists! It was one of the first moments, where I thought to myself, if I could be an actor for the rest of my life, I would be so happy!

Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of acting who have inspired

and informed your own thespian pathway?

I would love to give credit to my first manager Walter Tabayoyong of Altamero Management who signed me when I was a non-union actress living in San Jose. He saw something in me and really helped encourage me into growing into who I am today. He was so instrumental in helping me get my first agents and roles, and teaching me the business of the filming industry. I was signed with him for over ten years until just recently and I can't say enough good things about him as a friend and ally in this crazy entertainment world. I also want to express my gratitude for my loving husband, who's support over the years has been the driving force of my success. When we met, I was doing my medical residency and it was him who gave me the courage to step away from it to instead pursue acting. It takes a lot of trust and faith to be able to believe in a dream and I cannot imagine navigating this journey without him.

When you're not wowing the collective world with your indelible acting talents, you're also recognized as a philanthropic patient advocate for women's health; congrats and thank you! Can you talk about how your passion for this was initially stoked and what it means to you personally?

Women's health has always been an important topic for me. When I was still practicing medicine, I was involved in a lot of clinical research and one of the areas that I found very interesting was how different demographics and communities could have such different outcomes from each other. It revealed a lot of the biases that the current healthcare system has. Fast forward to now, my husband is a prominent urologist and his specialty is focused on women's pelvic health. So naturally, I've been introduced to so many incredible women who specialize in urogynecology and women's health and it moved me to want to get back into medicine, in a way, and give back to the community. I proposed a blending of my two backgrounds where I can help doctors outreach to their patients to better educate them about their pelvic health conditions and teach them how to be their own best advocate. I also use my voice and platform to spread awareness of specific conditions and donate to causes where I can.

Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite Dermot Mulroney film – My Best Friend's Wedding, The Thing Called Love, Zodiac, Silent Tongue, Young Guns, or Living in Oblivion?

My Best Friend's Wedding! Of course! What a cute film! Though I'll admit, Dermot plays a veeerrrrrry different kind of character in The Hunting Wives! Haha!



Sarah Cleveland

Sarah Cleveland, welcome! We're thrilled to have you with us today. Before we get into the details of your latest project, how has 2025 been treating you so far?

Because I like to be as honest as I can, 2025 has been a wild one so far! Lots of ups and downs, but for the most part, pretty wonderful. I have been spending lots of time with my family (we have done quite a bit together, but the best has been all of the ice cream trips). I have enjoyed some great times with friends (one of the more memorable ones was a recent RV road trip to a Distillery and also to camp on a golf course). And work has been consistent and with pretty great people. So I don't have much to complain about here!

Congratulations on your role in the upcoming Lifetime movie *The Girl Who Survived: The Alina Thompson Story*. For those who haven't heard about it yet, can you tell us what the film is about and how your character, Jane McCabe, fits into the story?

Yes, of course! And Thank you! This film is based on true events from the 1980s. It follows Alina Thompson, a 15-year-old aspiring model in LA. Alina secretly attends a casting call where she meets photographer William Bradford. Unbeknownst to Alina, Bradford has been using promises of modeling careers to lure and harm young women. While Bradford is working on luring Alina, his neighbor Tracey Campbell goes missing. Tracey's mother, Jane McCabe (also Bradford's neighbor), confronts Bradford after learning he was the last person to see her daughter alive.

When you first read the script, did you know right away that this was a project you wanted to be part of?

Oh yes! The script was so well-written, I couldn't put it down...and I read it very quickly! That's always a sign for me that it's a production I want to work on. I also felt it was an important story to share for a couple of reasons. One; As a reminder to us all to not just trust someone because you desperately want something. And Two; as a mom who is quite often called "The Strict Mom", it was refreshing to see a positive outcome from parents working with their child to help them to achieve their dreams while still looking out for them. You'll understand what I mean when you watch the film. As I've said before, I can't always keep my kids safe, but when I can, I will. This film reinforces why I worry and have rules that my kids may not always agree with.

The film is inspired by real events. Did you and your castmates feel a responsibility to portray the story with accuracy and respect? Did you do any specific research or preparation before filming?

Absolutely. We were very aware that this story represents real people who experienced genuine pain and loss. It's not just a film; it's about real individuals and the horrors they endured or, fortunately, survived. While I always prepare for roles, portraying an actual person requires a different approach. I wanted to represent Jane McCabe honestly and respectfully. Beyond researching the women who lost their lives, I put myself in Jane's shoes as a mother with a teenage daughter. It is a fear I have every day when my girls walk out the door.

Michelle Ouellet directed *The Girl Who Survived*. How would you describe her approach as a director, and what was the experience like collaborating with her?

I am so grateful I was able to work with Michelle. She has such a calm and kind approach to directing. I had already been told by many that she is wonderful to work with, and it is so true. Michelle was incredibly supportive and respectful. For example, I had a very emotional scene where the police inform me they've found my daughter, Tracey. Before filming, Michelle and I discussed what I needed for support and my performance. She offered to allow me to continue through, instead of yelling "cut" between takes and different camera angles, which could break my concentration. We kept rolling through the scene with the set completely quiet. I really appreciated this approach as it allowed me to stay in character as Jane without interruption and gave me time to fully experience the weight of that moment.

You have an impressive slate of upcoming projects! What can audiences look forward to, and are there any you're especially excited for people to see?

Well, you caught me at an exciting time actually, because I just found out that my web-series I wrote called *Love In All the Small Places* has been greenlit, and we start production late fall! I am so excited about this one. It's about Sasha, a 40-year-old people-pleaser who learns during a therapy-mandated date night that her husband is leaving her for a younger woman. With the push from her sister and her best friend, Sasha navigates the chaotic world of online dating. I also have another Lifetime

movie coming out soon, called *Her Husband's Double Life*. For some reason, I keep marrying the wrong men in these movies and tv shows. It's an interesting script that explores two women with different lives going through similar pain. I also have to say that I thoroughly enjoy working with this wonderful cast and crew.

In addition to acting, you've stepped into producing. What inspired that move, and do you see yourself exploring directing as well in the future?

I wanted to create a place for myself and my friends! How can I get to be on set with the people I love and want to work with...start producing! So, instead of waiting or hoping, I just decided to make it happen myself. I have recently stepped into Directing as well. Some short films, an upcoming Feature, and I will be co-directing *Love In All the Small Places* with Rebeka Herron. I really enjoy understanding and learning all parts of film, so this has been a really exciting journey for me.

Your first on-screen credit was in the 2003 television movie *The Music Man*. What do you remember most about that experience?

Well, the first thing I remember is asking for several weeks off work and thinking I would have to quit my job to make it happen. Luckily enough I didn't have to do that. *The Music Man* was a massive production! There were so many of us on set and I had absolutely no understanding of what to do, where I needed to be, or proper etiquette. I do remember how excited I was about the food and how cold it was doing the Fourth of July parade... it was snowing outside. The sweet crew would bring us all these fuzzy red blankets between takes and it was the best feeling ever. I also remember dancing in the street and how I was so fascinated by seeing an entire downtown transformed into something new. But mostly I remember that feeling in my stomach that THIS is what I HAD to do. Be in film.

Just for fun—what's your favorite movie about making movies? (*Living in Oblivion*, *Hollywood Shuffle*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, *Barton Fink*, *Ed Wood*, *The Player*, or *The Big Picture*?)

Can it be a TV show instead? Because I'm loving *The Studio* right now and the incredible performances! It is even a show I have even convinced my non-tv/film lovers to watch. Can you even believe such people exist???



**Reagan Yorke
and Jillian Smith**

We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed and award-nominated filmmakers Reagan Yorke and Jillian Smith; greetings and salutations gang and thanks for taking time from a very busy schedule to speak with our readers here at Vents Magazine!

Jillian, before we dive down the proverbial S&Q celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 treating both you and Reagan?

We're so excited to be here today and seriously can't believe how crazy this year has been! With the recent wrap of our latest short film, and currently being in post-production, life with S&Q has been so busy in the BEST way. For starters, this recent project was the biggest and most ambitious film we've made together, with the two of us directing, writing, producing, and editing every part of it.

We actually held an open casting call for the film and received over 10,000 auditions from actors and built out our whole crew from S&Q, so basically everyone on set was from the S&Q community! It was a really great moment for us to meet so many of our supporters in person, we really felt a shift within our company after this set, it was so special. With this film brewing, it's definitely been a year of so much growth and we couldn't be more excited to share these fresh projects with our audiences. This is something they have never seen from us and feels so right as the next step in our directing journey. We cannot WAIT!

Major kudos and accolades on the rightly lauded indie production company S&Q Films which you both founded! Reagan, can you give readers the E! True Hollywood Story on how you and Jillian hit upon the idea of starting up S&Q Films?

Thank you so much! Our production company was built off of the two of us adventuring on the streets of Malibu with a Sony camera and filming cinematic clips together! (This is actually how the two of us first met after being connected from a mutual friend) After a few of these outings, we impulsively decided to partake in a 48 hour film festival together which threw us into the traditional side of filmmaking! I had a taste for this side of the business from being a film creator promoting big studios, but knew my heart was in creating projects. This first step really kickstarted our journey and love for the craft of duo-directing and we immediately knew we had to build something bigger than ourselves which is where S&Q Films comes in!

We really do love everything that comes with running our production company and there's nothing we want to do more than share our passion for the indie industry by building a space that feels inclusive and real! (Fun fact: S&Q Films was actually named after the mode of camera we originally filmed cinematic clips on in S&Q mode, standing for slow and quick, and it really just stuck!)

Jillian, in your humble opinion what differentiates S&Q Films from other production companies out there? What ultimately makes S&Q so different and unique?

S&Q Films is built on transparency within the film space. We want to show everyone through our directing path that the industry is evolving and needs to change for the survival of indie filmmaking and new voices. Through our company, we see what the future of indie

filmmaking can look like and how far we can push the boundaries by scaling our films to match the quality of large studios.

Since we started S&Q films in 2023, we've been posting every step of our directing journey online, and pioneered the wave of online filmmaking, bridging the gap between traditional work. With this, we cultivated a community of supporters and even had over 200 of them show up to our last premiere traveling from all over the world! (a surreal moment)

With this, we're also reinventing film marketing. Every S&Q film has millions of impressions before the film is even released. On our recent production, we had BTS creators and videographers on set with us and made sure to prioritize them at the top of the call sheet! We then built and operated our campaigns through sharing on-set content with our audience, allowing them to personally connect to every stage of creation while being invested in the release from literally DAY ONE. We even had a waiting list of thousands of supporters waiting to stream our last film!

We also quite literally have the opposite mindset of every major studio when casting our films. We prioritize first-time actors with no experience, and are really trying to break down these barriers through our online open calls. Nowadays it feels like actors with no experience are overlooked and we love discovering new talent. This also includes our crew and inviting newer members onto set to gain experience too!

Reagan, since its inception, S&Q Films has scored with both audiences and critics, garnering nominations and awards for its out-of-the-box storytelling as well as its unconventional approach to filmmaking! Has it felt validating for you and Jillian to have received so much attention and praise from audiences who turn out for your work?

The feeling is unreal. We feel SO lucky to even have the ability to tell our original stories, so when we hear that an audience has connected or related to our work, it's just like... WHAT! I have such a vivid memory of Jillian and I reading the very first YouTube comments on our early films and sobbing that even one other human felt something from watching our work. I think it also revolves around our audience and how closely connected we feel to them, our whole goal with sharing this work was to validate those our age feeling our feelings! By directing stories about ourselves, for those like us, we really felt authentic to our voices.

On the festival side, when we originally entered this space, it felt a little overwhelming and was a new world for us. We genuinely never expected to even have festivals selecting our work, let alone being awarded prizes! It really has been the best experience and also helped us dream big while encouraging our audience to do the same. You never know if you don't try!

Jillian, you and Reagan have staked a major claim to over 10K Patreon subscribers who avidly follow the both of you to learn about such things as independent filmmaking, industry job openings, and in-person networking events. Has Patreon and other similar audience reachers and subscription-based platforms transformed how this information gets out there for those interested?



Our Patreon community means so much to us and we really do see it as our home base for our aspiring film community! We have global group chats, job offerings, tips, materials, and castings for creatives in the film space and it has absolutely evolved educational material and access in the industry. We almost see it as our own personal "film school."

This was inspired from seeing so many creatives with questions in our comments regarding the industry and having trouble finding those similar to them for collaboration. This is where we connect the dots for other projects (as well as our own) and act as an indie film job network. This can be seen on our personalized Opportunity Board with weekly role openings!

This community pays \$5 a month and helps us fund S&Q events and films that go straight back to its members! We also host monthly Zoom calls and make sure everything is as hands on as possible with our main goal of un-gatekeeping the industry for members all over the world. We're so proud to have a group of over 10k members and truly believe this is the start to changing the way indie films network and fund projects. We've invented our own indie film machine.

Reagan, you and Jillian recently returned from Japan where you served as official judges for a Nikon-based international film competition; congrats! When judging an event such as this, do you tend to keep an eye on any directors who might be a potential good fit for S&Q Films material?

We had the best time judging for Nikon, thank you so much! It was so eye opening seeing submissions of new, original work and there's genuinely nothing better than sitting in a dark room and binge watching these films on repeat. (Haha!) We are always looking to grow our teams and every opportunity and connection we come across leads us in the right path every time.

For S&Q Films specifically, we are the only directors on our projects, but our surrounding team is always open and searching for roles within our crew and acting databases! And of course with every team opening, we always go back to our goals of empowering women and non-binary film folks to balance film set diversity which is the core of S&Q Films. Also... we're always checking our DMs and love seeing our community send us fun content! (Please send your films we're grabbing the popcorn)

Jillian, can you give readers a hint or three as to what S&Q Films has coming up in the near-future which you're especially excited about?

Ahhh! There is just SO much it's hard to narrow it down! Our S&Q to-do list continues to grow every day and, as much as we lose sleep working, it really is the most fulfilling thing for the both of us.

For the near future, we are actually submitting our upcoming film to festivals in the coming months and it's been the best experience for us as we start finalizing the finishing touches on this one. We're working with such creative teams in post and getting so close to sharing more with our audiences.

We're both most excited to see what our audience thinks about this upcoming story as well as seeing our lead actress Lucy Page shine in her first film role! She's such a rare talent and Reagan and I have been in awe watching her completely embody our main character "Sammy." (She's just the coolest girl ever and we know the audiences will agree).

This film really will be a turning point for us in our careers and the anticipation of release is everything — we're sharing clips and trailers soon too which will give a little taste of what's to come! It's genuinely a love letter to our 20s and something we wish we could've seen a year ago to save ourselves a few breakdowns and crises (lol).

Reagan, where do you envision S&Q Films in five year time? Do you and Jillian keep a sort of extended road map for the goals which you would like to hit for the movies that you Make?

In the next five years we'll be releasing feature films and filming in locations across the world. Exploring the short film space has really been a journey of us experimenting with our style and really growing into our directing techniques, but our goals have always been in the feature film space while building the S&Q community.

There are so many places we'd love to film and sequences we've never seen on screen before that we're just patiently waiting to bring to life. Jillian and I's brains together just take off and nothing feels impossible, we start with something simple and it always takes us into a direction we couldn't have predicted. That's part of the magic, we always validate our creative sparks and nothing feels too "out there." Our films are just weird and our audiences are starting to recognize the signature S&Q style and look of our work which makes us so excited.

With all these abstract ideas we have brewing, we both simply yearn to be on set for long periods of time, and with short film timelines, a couple days just does not cut it. (We would live on set if we could)

But in all seriousness, we have so many stories and characters we want to bring to life and having this S&Q community of support behind us has just accelerated the process tremendously. We are just so excited and can't wait to see the community grow right beside it! In 5 years, we have so many

opportunities ready for our members and can't wait to see the indie space filled with women in film from every angle. With our accounts pushing for those who feel the film space is too daunting or unreachable, we are starting to see a shift that we know will continue to soar as we turn the page in the entire industry as we know it.

Jillian, S&Q Films is celebrated for – among other things - their mastery of the short film genre. What is it specifically about this genre which attracts you?

We absolutely love shorts and these mini movies are the reason we were able to start our directing journey in the first place. On top of this, the short film genre is so accessible for creatives, and we are always pushing our audiences to just go for it! Our very first film consisted of 5 total people for a 2 day shoot — just Reagan and I with our DP and actors on set and with this, we were able to make an award winning piece of work. (All based off of a transition scene we wanted to experiment with!)

Also with our goals of directing a feature very soon, shorts have helped us both discover our specific style of filmmaking. Our short films tend to lean towards the experimental categories... and this is exactly why. We focus on not boxing ourselves to one genre and really ride the wave in the direction our script leads us. Especially with this upcoming film which is a mix of drama, experimental, psychological, and... well whatever else the audience sees it to be! (Long story short, our films will always be very mixed and we love it!)

With each one of these short films really comes the ability to learn and experience new aspects of directing — and the trial and error has helped us become more present on set today.

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

For us, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood takes the win here! We also want to give a little shoutout to Babylon because we love Damien Chazelle's work.



Ana Sophia Heger

Host
of the
Month

This film is about a father-daughter relationship. They are trying to connect under extraordinary circumstances, and having been separated for 5 years doesn't make things easier.

You've been receiving early raves for your indelible and inimitable acting work in *She Rides Shotgun*, with some wise souls comparing it to similar revelatory turns from such actors as River Phoenix in *Stand By Me* or Natalie Portman in *The Professional*. Did you imagine when you took the role of Polly that your performance would have such an impact on audiences and critics?

I couldn't count on that, but I knew it was a challenging

role, and I prepared hard for it. I'm very grateful to receive such positive feedback now.

You work with such an amazing cast in *She Rides Shotgun*! What was it like to exercise your own considerable acting chops alongside the likes of Taron Egerton, Odessa A'zion, and John Carroll Lynch while filming the movie?

It was a lot of fun filming with these fantastic actors. Everybody always made me feel comfortable and was very supportive, which made tackling the tough scenes a bit easier. Because this is a heavy subject, we tried to keep it light in between setups. For example, Taron and I would do what he called "Acting lunges," where we would do lunges before filming the next scene, and John Carroll Lynch would play 20 questions with me and tell snail jokes.

Speaking of collaborations, your director on *She Rides Shotgun* is the ever-amazing Nick Rowland. What was it like working with Nick on the film? Is he what some actors might call 'an actor's director'?

Yes, absolutely. Nick cares deeply about actors. He's as concerned about the performances as he is with the overall look of the film.

You got your start at the age of three as a series regular on the CBS comedy *Life in Pieces*. Any special memories of that early production?

To be honest, I don't have a specific memory of filming "Life in Pieces" other than having fun! It was too long ago.

Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of acting who have informed and influenced your own acting?

My Dad. He always helps me prepare for my auditions and roles. We analyze the script, what the scenes are about, what my character wants, and we find out how my character ties into the whole story. We really have a deep connection.

When you're not acting, what do you enjoy doing just for yourself?

I love playing tennis, swimming, and hanging out with my friends and my brother. Of course, I love watching movies as well.

In your humble opinion, what differentiates *She Rides Shotgun* from the Distinguished Competition on the current day movie scene?

I haven't seen everything that's out there, but what I love about *She Rides Shotgun* is that it is a story about the human condition. While there is a lot of action, at the heart, it's truly about the relationship between Nate and Polly.

What do you have coming up after the August 1 release of *She Rides Shotgun*? Is there a special production which fans should keep their eyes and ears on wide alert for?

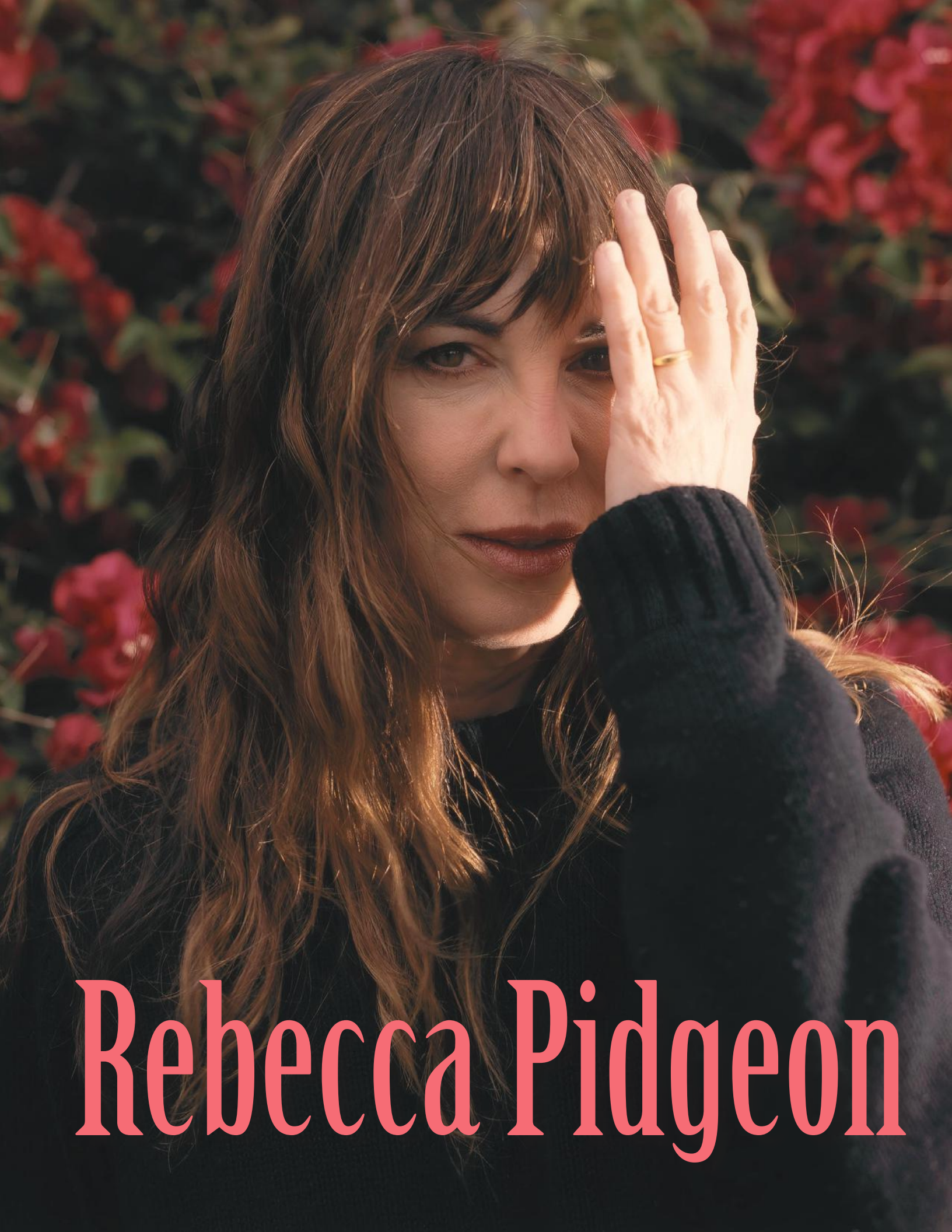
Nothing yet, but I would love to keep playing intense roles that challenge me. A dark comedy could be interesting, too.

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actress Ana Sophia Heger; greetings and salutations, Ana, 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 celluloid pathway, how is 2025 treating you and yours?

Very well, thank you! I'm currently on summer break, which I love, because I get to spend lots of time with my family, and I'm very excited for the release of *She Rides Shotgun*.

Major kudos and accolades for your bravura and stunning turn in the eagerly-anticipated upcoming film *She Rides Shotgun*, which is set to light up box offices around the world when it premieres this August 1! Starting at the top, can you explain for any readers not in the know what *She Rides Shotgun* is about and how your character, Polly, figures into the proceedings?

Photo Credit : Sarah Krick Photography



Rebecca Pidgeon

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed songwriter, guitarist, vocal stylist and accomplished actress bar none, Rebecca Pidgeon; greetings and salutations Rebecca and thanks for taking time from 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?

Well thank you- it's lovely to be talking with you again.

Major kudos and accolades on the eagerly-anticipated release of your twelfth album Unillusion which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving globe when it premieres this August 29 on CD, digital download and streaming platforms! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired one of the best LP releases of '25?

Gosh- thank you for saying that!

Well- I'm a yoga student, and was reading some of the yoga philosophy texts.

I had been very inspired by a teaching about knowledge. They say in yoga philosophy that gaining knowledge is a process of disillusionment.

So you are going along in your life believing one thing, you learn something, and then look back and realize the thing you knew was wrong, partly or wholly.

The texts say that this knowledge is not no knowledge, but that it's a special category all its own called false knowledge.

So I thought - well if we are disillusioned when we learn something more true, then we must have been in an illusion from which we've emerged.

Maybe truth could be described as a place of no illusion or UNILLUSION.

Of course we mere mortals can never know essential truth, but it's important to be a seeker of "a better way" because we are assailed by negative emotions all the time.

The human mind is chaotic and mercurial. We have tendencies and prejudices. We are our own worst enemies. We have to look to wise people, wisdom traditions, wisdom stories, or some kind of wisdom practice for guidance.

I was reading the Ramayana - not as a student, but more casually as one might read a fairy story.

I was struck by how odd the stories were. Just as in biblical texts they seem to describe the weirdness of the human experience. They need to be interpreted- like a code or a dream.

Some of these stories inspired songs. I was taken by the idea of the "hero journey". So it's as if half of the album is telling the hero journey of famous characters, and half is to do with my own personal journey.

Your producer on Unillusion is none other than rightly lauded Fernando Perdomo! What was it like collaborating with Fernando on the new LP?

It's always great fun collaborating with Fernando. He is a maestro and can play anything. He has wonderful ideas, but also can really hear mine and work towards getting things the way I hear them in my mind.

We were once working on a guitar solo- and I kept saying, no Fernando, play it like you can't play the guitar! He couldn't get it- so then I realized I could show him! (As I can't really do lead work). I took the guitar and played the dumb line I wanted and the clumsy way I wanted it played- and he said ah! ok.

We're big admirers of the tune Myself which can be found front-and-center on the upcoming UnillusionLP! What's the VH1-Behind the Music origin story of this gem of a ditty?

It's funny you mention that song. I brought that song in as an afterthought.

Fern asked if I had anything else. I said, well I've got this one song but I'm not sure if it's strong enough. It's a very personal song. I was not sure how I felt about it.

I played it to Fern and he said "wow! I LOVE that song! That's my favorite! we have to do it!"

So we did.

He brought a great power to it in the production. He gave it that good bass gutsy feel.

How is the new Unillusion album similar to some of your past music such as The Raven? How is it different?

I wanted to approach it in a similar way to the Chesky records. Of course we couldn't duplicate it really because they were done live in the Kaufmann Astoria Studios in Queens- a huge room and we had a very big band. And the Cheskys had all that audiophile equipment.

But I wanted this record to kind of "say hello" to the Chesky records. I wanted it to have an acoustic core, and to have a good dynamic range, bringing things down to very intimate, and then broadening out with the band like a kind of MTV unplugged vibe.

Unillusion is being released courtesy of the good folks over at Toy Canteen Records. What makes Toy Canteen the perfect home for you and your music?

Well Toy Canteen Records is just my own imprint actually. The good part about Toy Canteen Records is that they are me. That's also the bad part.

I'm an Indie artist- so don't have a big label backing. But that's true of so many musicians these days. The industry has changed so much as you know.

There are good and bad aspects to that. Personally I'm really enjoying it.

However I'd love to get out on the road more- and for that you need an agent.

In the wake of the August 29 release of your new album Unillusion, can fans look forward to catching you on the touring/performing circuit?

I'm going to be performing an album release show at McCabes on August 31st.

This is a storied venue that I love, and I love playing there.

As far as a more extensive tour I'm not sure.

I would love to get out on the road as I love performing very much- but as an indie artist I don't have a booking agent.

So that might be the next step.

You were born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and spent most of your formative years in Edinburgh, Scotland. How do those seemingly disparate roots inform you as both an artist and as a person?

I feel Scottish really- as that's where I grew up and that's where my family still lives.

But I've always loved the States and love living here now.

I was influenced both by American and Brit music.

Along with being a highly respected music artist, you're also a well-regarded actress, joining a veritable Who's Who of other amazing actors and actresses such as River Phoenix, Juliette Lewis, Keanu Reeves, Johnny Depp, and Kevin Bacon who have also dedicated much of their life's work to the siren call of music. Is it difficult to balance these mutual loves, or is it a case of apples and oranges in that each one nourishes you in different and substantive ways?

It's kind of apples and oranges actually. I once played a gig with Kevin Bacon and his brother- I think I opened for them. That was years ago at The Bottom Line in New York. I don't think it exists anymore.

I think in music maybe you can be more yourself- at least you are in charge of your performance- which a screen actor really is not.

Being a musical artist and touring is a lot more akin to being a theatre actor. The same skills are required.

At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to your stunner of an album Unillusion?

Awww- you're very kind.

I hope they feel transported into the world of the recording- and the stories. I hope they feel like I do when I'm listening to a Kate Bush record!



SEARIT HULUF

We're very excited to have some time to speak today with acclaimed NAACP Image Award nominated director Searit Huluf; greetings and salutations Searit and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the proverbial celluloid Q&A rabbit hole, how is 2025 treating you and yours?

I can't believe we are more than halfway through 2025!! I would describe it as restful and inspiring as I have been traveling to watch BARK at several film festivals around the U.S. I love that I have this time to write, watch films, and connect with other indie filmmakers. Truly living the dream!

Major kudos and accolades on your much buzzed about dark comedy hybrid short film Bark which is making its eagerly-anticipated world premiere at the Oscar-qualifying LA Shorts International Film Festival! Starting at the top – and for anyone late to the party – can you explain what Bark is about?

Yes! BARK follows the story of a heartbroken obsessive woman who steals her ex's dog in a desperate attempt to reconnect. It twists love, revenge, and grief into a visually striking exploration of emotional chaos. It's a hybrid live-action and animated short film with the cutest shiba inu you will EVER see in your life ;)

Bark was co-conceived of by visionary creatives Jennifer Sherer and Tristen Tarp. What was it about their work on Bark which specifically spoke to you and grabbed your attention?

Jennie and I had just wrapped working on my previous short film, buna where she served as a producer. I had such an amazing experience collaborating with her that I reached out, saying I'd love to direct a film with her as the lead actress. It was an automatic YES!!!! We immediately started brainstorming

ideas for the kind of story we wanted to tell. Two things came to mind: we knew we wanted to tell a story about a woman doing something bad, and we wanted it to be an anti-hero story.

We brought Tristen on as our writer to help us further flesh out these ideas. Tristen had actually cold emailed Jennie to apply for a crew position on a feature she was producing. While she didn't hire her, Tristen's cover letter was so memorable, Jennie later reached out for writing samples and we brought her on to this! We looked at Fleabag and Chewing Gum as our tonal springboards, since both shows feature anti-hero women doing bad things, yet you still root for them to succeed. Tristen is a great comedy writer, so we leaned on her to write a black comedy that was cringe, dark, and somewhat unhinged, much like our own character, Liza.

We spent over a year developing the story and script over Zoom, sharing our worst breakup and dating stories as we moved through pre-production. Naturally, a friendship quickly formed between the three of us. I loved working with Tristen and Jennie because we could be as open and direct as we wanted with each other, without holding back. We were all on the same page about the kind of story we wanted to create and the message behind it.

Bark was produced and brought to full-fledged life by a team which is over eighty percent Women & BIPOC. Do you feel that the entertainment industry is finally catching up with the rest of the world as far as allowing representation of different colors of skin, nationalities, and sexuality?

Jennie and I were mindful about our hiring and casting process as it was important to us that we uplifted individuals who may not always have as much traditional representation in the industry. We are creating the Hollywood we want to see and acting out those values in our creative process. Diverse perspectives elevate storytelling, and we made every effort to hire accordingly.

As we noted at the top, *Bark* is making its LA premiere at the Oscar-qualifying LA Shorts International Film Festival; congrats! How does it feel to have your film in contention for a possible Oscar nomination?

We just had our screening last week, and it was a packed theater! Our film is a black comedy, so I'm always curious about which jokes the audience will laugh at. Comedy is so hard!! Thankfully, we had consistent laughter during the screening and held a Q&A afterward where we dove deeper into our filmmaking experience. LA Shorts International Film Festival is definitely one of the top festivals in LA, so it's an honor to be accepted and to screen in a fully equipped theater at Regal LA Live. I have high hopes for our film to play at more Oscar-qualifying film festivals.

You work with a phenomenal trio of actors in *Bark*: Alfonso Caballero, Monica Potter, and Jennifer Sherer. What was it like collaborating with these top-drawer thespians?

A dream come true! Jennie and I went to UCLA together, so we have a long history of working with each other. I was also her roommate during the production of the film, which gave us plenty of time to collaborate on her character, "Liza." It was easy working with Jennie because we share a similar language and shorthand on set. I can't wait to make another film with her! Alfonso Caballero is the most thoughtful and kind actor I have ever worked with. He always brought a positive energy to set and truly has the best smile that could light up any room. Monica immediately understood the type of mom we needed for this film and went above and beyond. She's great at improvising lines and collaborating with our crew.

Variety hailed you as one of the 'Top 10 Animators to Watch' and you broke major ground as the first Black woman to direct a Pixar stopmotion short film, *Self*; congratulations again! What is it about the genre medium animation which appeals to you as a director? Do you feel there are stories which are best told in an animated form?

It's truly an honor to be included on a list with such amazing professionals in the animation industry. I've worked in animation for nearly a decade at Pixar Animation Studios, so it felt good to be recognized in my own industry. Animation is a medium that is often overlooked and undervalued, but it has come a long way from being labeled as just a "family genre."

My favorite aspect of the animation process is world-building. Everything is created from scratch, unlike in live-action films, where you're often shooting on location. In animation, the world is truly your oyster. I also love working with animators to bring characters to life and figuring out how they move, see, talk, and even breathe.

When I was directing my stop-motion short film *Self*, I acted out all the stop-motion animation scenes myself. Together with the animators, we reviewed and critiqued my performances to refine how we wanted *Self* to move through space as a stop-motion



puppet surrounded by CG characters. It's this type of attention to detail that makes me want to make more animated films.

You made your directorial debut with the 2019 short film *Gamers*. Any special memories of that freshman production?

Anxiety. Anxiety. Anxiety. I was in my early 20s and just a PA at Pixar when I wrote and directed that short film. I made all the rookie mistake you can think of when making your first film: so many out of focus shots, not enough coverage, going over 12 hours for a 2 day shoot, filmed in my own apartment to save money, and stuffed all the camera/lighting equipment in my car because I didn't have the budget to rent a truck. It was a whirlwind experience, but it got into over 40 film festival and expanded my film network. I am grateful for *GAMERS* because it gave me the confidence to continue making more films.

Can you give readers a hint or three as to what you have coming up in the near future? Might directing a feature film ultimately wind up on your professional dance card?

I am currently writing a feature screenplay with the hopes of directing it in the near future. Wish me luck!!!!

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

Sunset Boulevard! I remember watching this film when I was a student at UCLA's film school and was mesmerized by Gloria Swanson's performance. I also worked at the Billy Wilder Theater in the Hammer Museum, so Wilder has a special place in my heart as a filmmaker.



CARMEN B. SANCHEZ



We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actress, singer, and dancer Carmen B. Sanchez; greetings and salutations, Carmen, 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 treating you and yours?

It is going so well! Very booked and busy! Most of the time this year, I have been filming and doing press for "Electric Bloom," but we are soon about to end production! Hopefully, this leads to more auditioning and booking for things!

Major kudos and accolades on your fresh and bravura turn in the upcoming eagerly anticipated Disney Channel series Electric Bloom, which is set to make its premiere this July 10! Starting at the tip-top, can you explain to anyone late to the party what Electric Bloom is about and how your character of Jade, figures into the proceedings?

Electric Bloom is a comedy and musical-driven series following 3 best friends! These 3 girls have very different personalities, and although in the beginning of their friendship there were bumps, the story shows their development over time, not just as friends but as a band, eventually becoming the biggest girl group in the world. My character, Jade Castillo, is a fierce, rebellious, and bold Latina. She is very tough on the outside, but has such a soft spot for her best friends, Posey and Tulip. She was obsessed with writing poetry on the lowkey, but eventually, with the help of her friends, that poetry turned into lyrics of the top songs on the charts!

Did you know as soon as the pilot script for Electric Bloom crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?

From the beginning, I got my self-tape audition and read the storyline for this project! I thought to myself, even if I didn't get this, this is such a fun role and I was beyond excited to read for "James", who aka is now "Jade". I remember making a playlist with songs that gave me the vibe of this theme. Just the fact that it was Disney made it 10 times better, and I was beyond excited as soon as I started moving forward in the casting process.

In your humble opinion, what differentiates Electric Bloom from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 television landscape?

I think just the nostalgic feeling this show has. There hasn't been a show about friendship including comedy and musicality in a very long time! I know for a lot of Disney fans this show reminds them a lot of the Cheetah Girls era and also Hannah Montana! So the fact that we are the ones bringing "prime Disney" back is an incredible feeling.

You work with such an incredible ensemble of actors in Electric Bloom, including the likes of Audrey Grace Marshall, Lumi Pollack, and Ruby Marino, among many others! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this impressive lineup of thespians?

We learn so much from each other, and it's such a supportive group. This is the first multi-cam project for most of us, so just the fact that we get to learn and do this together along the way is amazing!

How has your own background as a singer and dancer prepared you for Electric Bloom?

I was raised around musicians, dancers, hair and makeup, and more showbiz environments.. I have learned from watching those around me and have really taken their advice to heart! Something that has stuck with me the most is to be open-minded.

Don't be scared to try new things and just go for it!

When it came to our concert shoots and performances, it came very easily for me because I have been performing on stages since I was 8. Since this was my first multi-cam job, I had to learn certain things along the way, like how to cheat out for the camera or hold for laughs. One of the people that have truly made this easier and helped me along the way was Jody Margolin Hahn! This incredible human directed most of the episodes on "Electric Bloom," but not only that, she was one of the people who believed in me from the very beginning and continues to do so.

Can you give readers and fans alike a hint or three as to what you have coming up in the future as far as acting, singing, and dancing goes? Are all three of these incredible gifts keeping you pretty busy?

When it comes to my music and dancing, I work on continuing to write and release my music! Having albums and a tour is my goal. Being able to inspire and captivate audiences through the art of performing is beautiful. Now, I plan to keep auditioning and booking roles when it comes to acting! Being able to bring a character to life and make it your own is an awesome feeling, and I can't wait to see what else God sets in my future. I would love to explore the world of films, participate in musicals, horrors, thrillers, comedies, rom-coms, but my fav of all time, animations brought to live-actions. My dream role has always been Coraline or Lucille from A Monster In Paris. My dream is to also act and direct a movie at the same time, or create/direct a musical, just like one of my biggest role models, Lin-Manuel Miranda. Being on the other side of production is such an interesting field to me, and I would love to explore it one day!

You were born in the beautiful country of Mexico and raised within a culturally rich Cuban household. How do these seemingly disparate roots inform you as both a person and as an actress/singer/dancer?

As a Cuban-Mexican, there really weren't lots of opportunities for us Latinas in the industry...but now, from music to acting and more. Latinas are breaking barriers and popping off! As a Cuban-Mexican myself, I remember seeing stars like Selena, Shakira, Gloria Estefan and more on the big screen

and thinking to myself, "if they can do it, I can do it too".. so now with me being on the big screen and proving those points... knowing that I am a motivation and inspiration for Hispanics out there is a huge honor.

Who are some of the folks, both in and out of the world of acting, who have informed and influenced your own unique pathway?

Stars like Beyoncé, Selena, Karol G, Rihanna, and Tyla have truly shaped the kind of artist I am today. Not only am I inspired by the way they set the vibe and their star quality, but mostly by their stories. Just like me, most of these artists started from zero. Had to start from scratch, came from a family with nothing, had long days of hard work, learn and work together along the way, be patient, until eventually one day, they made it. These are people who are not just artists, but they are also testimonies of hard work and dedication.

At the end of the day, what do you hope viewers walk away with after checking out the July 10 premiere of the new Disney series Electric Bloom?

To take it all in! Every single person behind this show, from cast to crew, has added a bit of their own love and creativity to make it what it is today! From the fashion to the music, to the stories, this show is truly for the whole family and is a show that will be the highlight of many young kids' childhoods.



Hairstylist: Melanie Ervin

Photographer: Allen Zaki

Makeup: Lucky Napoleon

YASSiN & Sean Terrio



We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed genre-defying music duo extraordinaire, YASSiN & Sean Terrio; greetings and salutations to you two and thanks for taking time from a busy schedule to speak with readers here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the proverbial Q&A mosh-pit,

YASSiN can you give readers the VH1-Behind the Music origin story on how you and Sean came together to create some of the best music on the ever-fickle music landscape?

Hello! Very happy to be chatting with you! The origin story of YST is the stuff of legend, haha. One fateful day in 2019, my friend's dad,

Billy Ross, invited me to have a beer with him at this local open mic. I had been teaching Billy how to play piano, but this was a first! Also, I don't even drink beer, but for some reason I decided to say yes and hang with my friend's dad without my friend actually being there. That same day, in a world not too far away, Sean decided it was time for him to try singing at an open mic for the first time ever. It just so happened that as I walked in, Sean was called up on stage to sing his tune. He sang "Simple Man," and it rocked my world. Right at that moment I knew I had to work with him, and I had the perfect song for him to sing. He sat down, I talked to him, and the next day we met for drinks to talk about working together. The following week, I had him in the studio recording vocals. From there we became best friends and just kept making music!

Major kudos and accolades on the stunning new single Time Alone which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving globe when it makes its eagerly anticipated debut this August 1! Sean, what's the scoop behind this full-throttle summer pop masterpiece?

We're very excited for this song to be out in the wild. This is our first release since our debut album Just Trying in the fall of '24, so we found ourselves revisiting how we write and make music, like a clean slate. It's a bit different from anything we've done but still exists within the YST sound. It also presented a good challenge for us to switch back into creative mode and try to follow up on what we had already done. But we persevered, kept Just Trying. (See what I did there?)

YASSiN, you handled the producing honors yourself on Time Alone; congrats! Can you talk about the pros to serving as the producer for the music which you and Sean create, versus outsourcing these duties to someone else?

I was producing and writing for artists for 10 years before I met Sean, and I have produced everything we've worked on to this day! It's funny – I don't really know any other way of doing it. The pro is, I don't really know what I'm doing on a technical side, I just know what feels right; and I think that has molded the sound that is now YST. Anything we want to hear on a record, we tend to try. When it's contained to a very specific team working on our music, it feels like there is more freedom to go where we want to go. On the other hand, we started outsourcing for the first time this year with producing duties and have been collaborating on all our new music with different producers, solely to expand our horizons and challenge ourselves!

Sean, Time Alone was beautifully mixed by multi-platinum and JUNO Award-winning mix engineer Jay Dufour. What was it like collaborating with this Euripides of music?

It was crazy to consider where we had been and where we were; in the position to work with such a Canadian powerhouse as Jay. A while back we had gone to visit Jay in person to get to know him, and right away you could tell what a professional he is and how passionately he works. And for him to be jazzed about a song we had made was such an excellent source of validation and excitement. Overall, we have had the privilege of working with JUNO Award-winning mixers, recording engineers and artists, so bringing Jay into the fold on this one was another HUGE blessing in the YST journey.

YASSiN, in your humble opinion what differentiates the Time Alone single from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?

There has been a crazy amount of good music coming out this year. The only thing I can say that differentiates us is that it IS us. Time Alone captures our personalities and vibe in so many ways. We weren't listening or trying to be like anything else out. So if you like quirky, cute, and high-energy music. Come to us!

Sean, in the wake of the August 1 release of the rollicking new single Time Alone, can fans look forward to catching YASSiN & Sean Terrio on the touring/performing circuit?

They sure can! Folks can come see us play in Toronto at the CNE on August 22nd and the Casa Loma Summer Concert Series on August 27th, both are looking to be excellent events. Come fall, we will be heading Ottawa-way for another banging night at the Rainbow Bistro. We have an eye fixed on 2026 as we look to make it the biggest and best year yet! So if it's not in 2025, fear not; we will be announcing a bunch of shows in the new year to play for all the lovely folks who want to hear us.

YASSiN, for those unfortunate folks who have never had the opportunity to check out a live set from you and Sean, what can they expect and look forward to when attending one of your shows?

They can expect to fall in love with Sean as soon as he opens his mouth. Hahaha. But we try to make our shows as entertaining and dynamic as possible. Expect laughter, BIG vocals, epic sax solos, and genuine good times. We love what we do up there, and that energy is shared by everyone in the room when we play!

Sean, with '25 still chugging along, should music aficionados keep eyes and ears on the lookout for even more drop-the-mic music from you and YASSiN before the year is up?

The second we drop the mic, we pick it up because, YES, folks can expect at least one new single after Time Alone. And WHO KNOWS? There may be more soon! (But you didn't hear that from me.) All to say that the train is rolling and she ain't slowing down. YST 4 lyfe.

9A question for the both of you: Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have inspired your own indelible musical stylings?

YASSiN: Jim Carrey, Billy Joel, Childish Gambino, Kanye before the nonsense, The Beatles, Quincy Jones, my parents, City & Colour. BOOM.

Sean: I could go on and on, but some folks I really admire include Donny Hathaway, Chris Stapleton, Maya Rudolph, Anastacia, Martin Short, Anthony Kiedis, Philip Bailey, Robert Plant, Chris Farley, David Spade, Shane Gillis; the list just goes on. But at some point, upon seeing these people do their thing, some special thing about them captured my heart and made me want to have fun with the things I do and love.

YASSiN, any final thoughts you might like to share with our ever-inquisitive readers about all the exciting things which you and Sean have in store for them in '25?

Listen up homies. The rest of this year is going to be crazy. Tune in for the good times, the funny bits, and most importantly, some great jams. We have so much music we are so excited about that is in the works, and we hope you love it. Thanks for taking the time to read this, and love ya!

Bonggun Kim (aka Kimchi Daddy) and Kansei Yasuda



Thanks for making time to chat with us! Bonggun (aka Kimchi Daddy) and Kansei, it's great to have you both. Before we get into the tour, how has 2025 been treating you so far?

Bonggun Kim: So far, so good! It's been non-stop with stand-up and content creation—both have been growing a lot since the beginning of the year, so I really can't complain. It's been a busy but exciting ride.

Kansei Yasuda: 2025 has been a great year so far, getting the Golden Ticket on Kill Tony in March, opening for Adam Ray, and now launching a tour with Bonggun. I can't wait to see what's next!

Congratulations on the launch of Two Asians One Cup! The tour kicked off July 11 and is running through September 28. Bonggun, what sparked the idea for you and Kansei to team up for this show?

Bk : We've been friends for about three years and working together for the past year and a half. Stand-up, and comedy in general, has been our life. After years of grinding, things started to pick up: Kansei got recognized as a Golden Ticket winner on Kill Tony, one of the biggest stand-up podcasts out there, and I started gaining traction through several of my social media videos. So we figured it was the right time to launch our first tour.

Stand-up comedians can be pretty particular about who they work with, but we already had a solid friendship and mutual respect, so teaming up for this just made sense, no hesitation at all.

Kansei, what drew you to collaborate with Bonggun on this tour? Did it feel like a natural fit from the start?

Yeah, like Bonggun said, we've been friends for a while and also producing shows together, so teaming up for the tour just made sense. Around the same time he started going viral and I got the Golden Ticket, so it was a no-brainer to build something together.

Bonggun, Asian comedians are still underrepresented in stand-up. Why do you think that is and what does it mean to you to be part of changing that?

It means a lot just knowing I'm part of the change happening in the community. But to be honest, I don't focus too much on the representation aspect. My focus is just on being a human being who's funny on stage and using that platform to speak clearly about the things that matter to me.

I believe that if I keep putting in the effort and stay true to what I care about, then my background, as an Asian comedian, will naturally become part of something bigger that helps shift the industry. I'm always asking myself: What value can I bring? Am I doing enough to make a real, positive impact on people's lives?

Kansei, for new audiences coming to Two Asians One Cup, what kind of energy and material can they expect from the show? How would you each describe your comedic styles, where do they differ, and where do they complement each other? Do you find Korean and Japanese humour overlaps in interesting ways?

KY: If I had to describe our comedy styles as food, I'd say I'm more like sticky rice, witty, a little weird, and over the top. Bonggun is like a fresh cut of fish, playful and sharp, with high energy. So when we go back-to-back in a lineup, it really works, we're like sushi.

Our styles are different, but that contrast makes the show more dynamic. And even though we're both East Asian, Japanese and Korean humor are actually very different.

That cultural gap adds an extra layer to the show.

BK: My style is more energetic and fast-paced—I like to tell stories that build toward a big punchline. Kansei, on the other hand, has a slower, more deliberate rhythm. He builds tension with his cadence, then hits hard with the payoff. So in that sense, our styles are total opposites, but that contrast actually complements each other really well on stage.

Even though we're both from East Asia, me from Korea and Kansei from Japan, our cultures are quite different. So far, we haven't found much overlap in terms of humor or topics. Our perspectives and the issues we focus on tend to be pretty different too, which makes the show more dynamic and layered for the audience.

Kansei, there's growing interest in comedy that reflects culturally specific experiences. Why do you think audiences are connecting more deeply with that now?

I think platforms like YouTube and social media have played a huge role. These days, if someone's interested in Japanese culture, they could find tons of videos or content online.

Because of that, people have more context and understanding, so when I talk about Japanese stuff on stage, the audience already kind of gets it, they're curious and engaged. That cultural awareness has made my comedy stronger, and it feels like it's only growing.

For both of you: What always makes you laugh, no matter what?

KY: Honestly, anything that's awkward or unexpectedly real. Weird silences, people saying the wrong thing at the wrong time, or just the absurd stuff you see in daily life. That kind of raw, awkward energy always cracks me up.

BK: For me, it's the natural stuff that always gets me—real-life reactions to pranks, people making totally nonsensical decisions, my friends bombing on stage, or those silly word mix-ups in conversations with my wife and friends. Anything that's unintentionally funny and genuine—that's the kind of comedy that never fails to make me laugh.

Bonggun, comedy today comes with more cultural sensitivity, does that change how you approach your work, or do you still aim to push boundaries where it matters?

I love pushing boundaries. I like talking about sensitive topics, especially the ones people tend to avoid, because they often reflect the biggest truths about our society. For me, it's all about how you say it, why you're saying it, and what the point is. If you don't have a clear intention behind the joke, the audience won't get it either.

I truly believe comedians are meant to be risk-takers. That's part of the job. I'm not here just to play it safe. I want to make people think. My only goal is that the message lands clearly. People don't have to agree with me 100%, because change takes time. But if I can plant a seed in someone's mind through a joke, then I've done my job.

Like I always say: "For a good cause, wrongdoing may be virtuous."

Kansei, any plans to turn Two Asians One Cup into a special or album for those who can't catch it live?

Since this is my first tour and first time doing a full 30-minute set, we haven't made any solid plans for an album or special yet. But who knows—maybe after the tour wraps. For now, hopefully we can catch you in one of the cities we're performing in!

XAVIER ALVARADO



Photo credit: Eric Quenne

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor, producer, and visual artist bar none, Xavier Alvarado; greetings and salutations Xavier and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the celluloid Q&A rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?

2025 has been a year of seeking wisdom and maintaining grace through it all. There've been a lot of wins, but also plenty of lessons; especially around process and patience. I've become to understand the power of good habits, both in myself and within my team. We make it a point to acknowledge and appreciate life – from the big moments to the small ones, and even those quiet, grey areas in between. More and more, we've started to see each day as an episode, or like a page that's a part of a really dope book.

Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the eagerly anticipated feature film *Hierarchy* which is set to thrill moviegoers when it makes its exclusive North American theatrical premiere this August 15, followed on August 18 with a digital/VOD release! Starting at the top, can you explain what *Hierarchy* is about and how your character of Reach figures into the proceedings?

Appreciate the love and thank you. *Hierarchy* is like those 90's slow burn thrillers, the good ones with multiple layers. On the surface, it's got the grit and adrenaline of a high-stakes heist, but at its heart, it's about the tension and the weight of decisions when power, money and family are involved. Imagine adopted brothers who didn't grow up with a map, so they built one from the ground up. From the discipline of the army, through the lessons carved out in the streets, to the loopholes and layers of the legal system, they pieced together a way forward that was uniquely theirs. Quite impressively if I must say. My character, Reach, is one of the anchors in the crew. He's strategic to the core, an accountant by nature, but a risk-taker when the stakes call for it. He's got this duality: being razor-sharp with numbers and plans, but deeply loyal and protective of his people. Definitely a big brother. Playing him stretched both the tactical and emotional sides of me, a character who is part architect, part outlaw, always ten steps ahead, yet grounded in love and loyalty.

Did you know as soon as the screenplay for *Hierarchy* from scribe Chiderah Uzowulu crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?

Absolutely, this was one of those yes-without-hesitation moments. The story has this mix of modern edge but also nostalgic. We're basically playing Robin Hood, but with style, strategy, and a fresh take. There was room to have fun, but also room to tell a good story. And on top of that, it was written by my friend and co-star, Chiderah. That alone made it special. From the jump, I knew the chemistry was going to be crazy, like T-Mac and Vince Carter running the same court. As for the rest of the team he had in mind, we'd all trained together, worked the craft, and now we had a chance to build something new as a unit.

You pull double-duty on *Hierarchy* as one of the film's executive producers; major congratulations! Can you give readers the E! True Hollywood Story on what led to your

decision to produce *Hierarchy*? And would you be keen to produce another film in the future?

Thank you, I appreciate that. Stepping in as an Executive Producer was really about catalog and vision. When something connects creatively, you want to help shape it from all sides, not just as a performer, but as a builder. I saw *Hierarchy* as a part of my art history. I want everything I'm connected to be revered as something great – yet impressive – and I wanted to help steer that energy from the ground up with *Hierarchy*. Also, being behind the scenes gave me a new respect for the ecosystem it takes to bring a story to life. It wasn't always glamorous, but it was always worth it. And yeah, I'd definitely produce again with this team. Each of us holds our own but when we get together, it's like the Avengers coming together.

The director of *Hierarchy* is the insanely talented Russell K. Reed. What was it like collaborating with Russell on the film? Is he what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?

I believe he's 100% an actor's director. The kind that knows how to speak your language on set and still challenge you to go deeper. Me and Russell are both straight-up movie heads. We'll call each other randomly just to break down a scene from a film we've both seen ten times already. That kind of connection creates trust, it makes the set feel like a lab, a gym, and a theater all at once. That bond definitely translated on screen. When your director respects performance as much as they respect story structure, it creates a space where magic can happen!

Speaking of phenomenal talents, *Hierarchy* more than features its share of amazing actors! What was it like to exercise your own considerable acting chops alongside those of Jenny Frame, Nancy L. Gray, Carol Hickey and others while making this film?

It was an honor, honestly. Working alongside Jenny, Nancy, Carol, and the rest of the cast felt like a full-circle moment. We all came up in acting class together, sharpening our tools and pushing each other. So, *Hierarchy* was like finally getting called up to the big game with the same squad you've been practicing with for years. What made it even more fulfilling was that every character had real weight roles you could sink your teeth into, with layers and complexity. There was no coasting; everyone had to show up and bring it. That kind of energy on set? It's rare. And when it happens, it makes the whole production feel alive, honestly.

Can you give our ever-inquisitive reading audience a hint or three as to what you have coming up after *Hierarchy*? Where can we see you next?

I can't say too much just yet, but I will say this, more art is on the way! Some of it will move, some of it might make you sit still and think. A few unique stories are already in motion, and these projects will be ones that speak to where I'm at creatively and where I'm going next. I'm always interested in work that challenges form; that feels like it's adding something to the conversation, not just echoing what's already out there. So, if you're watching closely, expect the unexpected, but know it's all coming from a place of purpose.

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

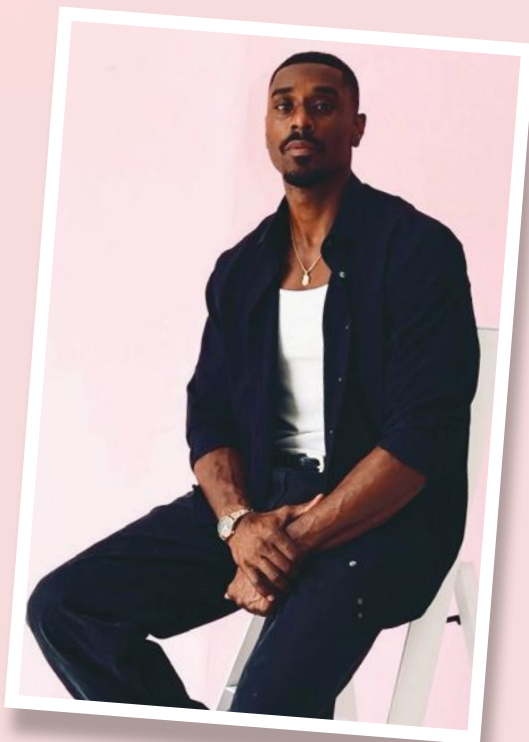
Man, I'm inspired by so many people it's hard to narrow it down. Of course, all the greats in acting have shaped parts of my journey. Denzel Washington, without question. Mickey Rourke's rawness, Nicole Kidman's ability to disappear into roles, Nicole Beharie's emotional precision – they've all taught me something just by doing what they do. But I've also been shaped by artists, scientists, even athletes. I see my job as an observer, a non-judgmental. Admiring the discipline of a fighter, the curiosity of a physicist, the chaos and clarity of a painter – it all feeds the work. That mix keeps me grounded and growing.

When you're not turning the world on its proverbial head with your indelible acting prowess, you're also celebrated as an accomplished visual artist; congrats again! How did this particular passion come into being?

Thank you. I've got a bit of a unique origin story when it comes to art. It was passed to me like a torch from my father. Long story short, art was the beginning. It was the first language I really understood. Before acting, before film, it was just me, a canvas, a journal, and ideas. That early connection to creating something out of nothing is what opened every door for me. Visual art taught me how to translate energy. It's still the quiet engine in everything I do.

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

I gotta be honest and say I haven't seen any of those yet, but now they're all on my list. If I could throw one into the mix, though, I'd say *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* really stands out for me. The pacing, the atmosphere, the way it captures the weird beauty and quiet madness of the industry, it hits different. Plus, it's Quentin Tarantino. Come on.





THE SILVER SNAILS

We're super-excited to have some time today with the husband and wife team who are the two anchors of acclaimed independent pop rock music project The Silver Snails – greetings and salutations you two and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you introduce yourselves and the star-studded members who make up The Silver Snails to our ever-inquisitive reading audience?

Lucas: I'm originally from Portland, Oregon. I sing, write, arrange, produce

and play keyboards and guitars on our recordings. In addition to leading The Silver Snails, I also do financial work. I invited my wife, Elisa to do The Silver Snails with me because I wanted the project to have maximum support and to not compete with family demands. Little did I know that Elisa is an amazing video producer, singer, and community organizer. Thanks to her, we have been able to complement our recordings with a series of official music videos shot in and around our home in Bertinoro, Italy.

Elisa: I am from a normal family in Cesena, Italy. I have lived in San Francisco and traveled around the world with Lucas. I am also the mother of 3 singers: Jasmine (22), Celeste (18), and Elias (11). Lucas: In addition to Jasmine, Celeste, and Elias, The Silver Snails enjoys the support and collaboration of a number of artists and media professionals. Especially important has been Dylan Magierek of Badman Records in Portland, OR. Dylan co-produced Speed of Light and has been critically important for marketing strategy.

Lucas, can you give audiophiles the behind-the-scenes scoop and origin story on how you and Elisa hit upon the notion to found The Silver Snails? What led to the creation of one of the best pop rock bands on the music scene today?

Lucas: I was looking for a second act after retiring from finance in my early 30s. We moved to Italy to create a nest and have kids. I spent years on musical skill building and finally had an epiphany that the singer songwriter path was THE path I wanted to pursue from there on out. Our place in the country happened to be heaven for snails, and they came out in hordes during April rains. While photographing one of these 'snailapaloozas', I realized that the snail was the perfect totem for our project.

Major kudos and accolades on the freshly minted and recently released Silver Snails single Pretty (Ugly Before) which is thrilling music aficionados the world over even as we speak! Elisa, what inspired the Silver Snails to cover this gem of an Elliott Smith tune?

Elisa: Elliott and Lucas were close friends in High School and college, and Lucas was deeply inspired by Elliott's song-writing. It seemed natural to cover one of his and we chose Pretty (Ugly Before) because of its emotional honesty and musical beauty, and because it is not as well-known as many of Elliott's other songs, appearing slightly unfinished on his post-humous release, 'Tapes from a Basement on a Hill'.

Lucas, what's the secret to cracking the code on how to deliver an effective and distinctive cover rendition of a well-known song such as Pretty (Ugly Before)? And was there any trepidation on how to strike a balance between homage to Elliott Smith while also putting your own distinctive stamp on the new single? Did your own personal history with Elliott at all inform this unique spin on the single?

Lucas: Such flattering questions! With covers there's 2 ways to go: faithful reproduction or re-interpretation. With this song, we choose the first route. At the same time, we put in some subtle contributions, including a little piano solo in the 'unfinished' part in the middle of the song. Also, our vocal tones differentiate our version quite a bit, along with approach to the drums. Being a faithful reproduction which nevertheless sounds fresh due to the new vocal palette, our cover hopefully will delight Elliott fans and those who haven't heard the song alike. Regarding the Elliott connection, I guess the song's message (depression, substance abuse) hits harder for me than some, having known the individual who wrote these

devastating lyrics, and also missing him. The song still makes me cry.

Elisa, hot on the heels of the drop-the-mic release of Pretty (Ugly Before), word 'round industry campfire has it that The Silver Snails is set to unleash their eagerly-anticipated sophomore LP Speed of Light on September 5; major congratulations! Can you give our discerning readers a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with the new album release?

Elisa: I believe the album drop date is now Sep 4. We now have 3 focus tracks from the LP already out (Evanescence, Video Killed the Radio Star, and Faro D'Amore). We will drop a fourth focus track (U Say U Know) and full LP on Sep 4. We are also planning an album release concert at McMenamins Kennedy School in Portland on Sep 4, followed by 2 more shows later in the month. Our centerpiece for the LP is the Video Killed the Radio Star official music video which is out on YouTube now.

Lucas, how is Speed of Light similar to The Silver Snails freshman LP, 2012's The 7 Melodies? How is it different? Lucas: Even better production and writing, more focused in the pop rock genre, brighter in tone, more layered arrangements, more accessible/ commercial. The first LP was mixed and mastered in Italy by competent engineers, while Speed of Light features grammy award winning mixing (Peter Katis) and mastering (Greg Calbi). Speed of Light also benefited from co-production and engineering help from Dylan Magierek (Badman Records) and a cabal of amazing studio musicians.

Elisa, Speed of Light was written and produced in Sarsina, Italy and Portland, Oregon. How do those two distinctive locales inform the verve and energy of the new LP? Did location of recording at all dictate the tone of the new LP? Elisa: Our home in Romagna is nestled in idyllic vineyards, with sunflower fields and rolling hills, 20 miles inland from the Adriatic Sea. Our home has special significance for us as the incubator for our 3 children and music project. We have filmed most of videos at our place, including the 'Radio Star' set which still serves as our living room.

Lucas: Given Speed of Light was recording 70% in Portland, OR, the natural and cultural backdrop of the Northwest served as secondary inspirations for the record, and Speed of Light is more 'US centric' than it is 'Italy centric'.

Lucas, in the wake of the September 5 release of the new Silver Snails LP Speed of Light, can fans look forward to catching the group on the touring/performing circuit?

Lucas: We currently have 3 dates in Portland:

**Sep 4 at
McMenamins Kennedy
School, 7pm**

**Sep 10 at
Music Millenium (in-store
performance), 5.30pm**

Oct 1 at The Snug, 8pm

**As we add more, we will
post on our**

**Spotify:
[https://open.spotify.com/
artist/18yS0Z9pBGodlyT
ggcvoqy?si=_CaP5FiLQ--
a0NFK3e9dcw/](https://open.spotify.com/artist/18yS0Z9pBGodlyTggcvoqy?si=_CaP5FiLQ--a0NFK3e9dcw/)**

Elisa, the Speed of Light album was co-produced by the rightly lauded Dylan Magierek of Badman Records. What was it like collaborating with Dylan on the new album?

Elisa: Dylan is a wonderful person and an outstanding engineer and producer. He has become a close friend and consigliere, guiding us at every step as we journey through the independent music maze.

Lucas: Dylan is not only a great engineer, he is truly nice to be around, and we had so much fun recording Speed of Light at his former recording studio, Type Foundry, which was also used by local standouts such as The Decembrists, M. Ward, and Blind Pilot. The studio was very retro and comfy and we used to take long walks around the Broadway Bridge at lunch.

Lucas, any final thoughts you might like to leave fans and readers with regarding the upcoming September 5 release of the new Silver Snails LP Speed of Light?

Lucas: We have put over 10 years of our lives into creating the best piece of music we can for you to enjoy. There is no filler on the LP, and we did almost everything the hard way in our quest for excellence. We hope that some of our songs make it onto your 'Likes' playlist and grow on you over time. If they do, please spread the word and share with your friends!

Leaving Eden



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

Hi, been great! just to reintroduce your readers, I'm Eric Gynan Co-founder of the bands Leaving Eden & Silver Springs Fleetwood Mac Tribute

(2 different bands with the same members). A little introduction.

USA, Boston MA Label:
Verdict Music, Sony/Universal World Wide Distribution

Members:

Eve Lead vocals
Alyssa Bailey White Keys/Vocals
Jake Gynan Drums
Rich Chouinard Bass/Vocals
Eric Gynan Guitar/Vocals.

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

Since we last interviewed we've released School's Out originally by Alice Cooper, Rendition By Leaving Eden Official Music Video: https://youtu.be/VC30baMKTsg?si=dtJLe_IFxo3LMt-v

How was the recording and writing process?

Well as you know we didn't write the song, but recording was awesome. We got our own studio so we can take the time we desire for good production. Then when we are finished I send it off to Johnny K. (Disturbed) for final adjustments and mastering. It's a great process with a great friend.

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

You'd have to ask Alice Cooper.

Will you be hitting the road this year?
Yes always! Can check out

<https://leavingeden.com/tour>

&

<https://silverspringsfleetwoodmactribute.com/tour-dates>

We Continue touring, breaking into new and exciting territories as we forge ahead.

We've been fortunate enough to have shared the stage with so many great artists, touring The USA, UK & Canada sharing the stage with hundreds of the biggest national bands in the world including;

Lacuna Coil, In This Moment, Black Sabbath (Heaven & Hell), Ronnie James Dio, Rob Zombie, 5 Finger DeathPunch, Disturbed, Marilyn Manson, Alice Cooper, Lynyrd Skynyrd, ZZTop, Puddle of Mudd, Korn, Killswitch Engage, Buckcherry (Jefferson Starship, Big Brother and The Holding Company, Country Joe, 10 Years After, 40th Anniversary Woodstock) Shinedown, Dropkick Murphy's, Alice in Chains, Papa Roach, Bret Michaels, Halestorm, Theory of a Deadman, Avenged Sevenfold, Seether, Hell Yeah, Trapt, Dope, Soil, Fuel, Queensryche, Saving Abel, Hinder, Damage Plan, 7Dust, Sebastian Bach, SoulFly, Days of the New, NonPoint, DrowningPool, The Misfits, The Butcher Babies, Collective Soul, Mushroom-Head, Mudvayne, Chevelle, Godsmack, Powerman 5000, 10Years, Taproot, Gin Blossoms, Michael Schenker (UFO, MSG & The Scorpions) Herman Rarebell (The Scorpions), Nicko McBrain (Iron Maiden), Kittie, One eyed doll, Uncle Kracker, Tremonti (Creed/Alterbridge) Lamb of god, Slayer, Stone Sour, Motorhead, Blackstone Cherry, HOOKERS & BLOW Featuring GUNS N' ROSES, QUIET RIOT, W.A.S.P. Members, Steven Tyler, Ted Nugent, Lita Ford, LA Guns, Trixter, Warrant, Apocalyptic Review (featuring members of Godsmack) Adelitas Way, Scott Stapp (The voice of Creed), Pop Evil, Ratt & many more.

What else is happening next in your world?

More touring, recording, writing, producing. Love it!



<https://linktr.ee/leavingeden>



<https://www.facebook.com/bandleavingeden>



<https://youtube.com/@leavingedenband?si=U8cEUL1EbpzVHhEr>



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leavingeden-39320010>



<https://twitter.com/leavingeden?lang=en>



<https://open.spotify.com/artist/2C9xyC93LdvYdwnr7Swaet>



<https://www.tiktok.com/@leavingedenband>



<https://leavingeden.com/>

Silver Springs Fleetwood Mac Tribute Website

<https://silverspringsfleetwoodmactribute.com/>



THE PROBLEM WITH KIDS TODAY

We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed Connecticut-based The Problem With Kids Today; greetings and salutations gang and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you all say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?

T: Hi! I'm Tate Brooks, I play guitar and sing songs in The Problem With Kids Today!

R: I'm Reena Yu, and I'm the drummer.

S: Hello, I'm Silas. I play bass!

Major kudos and accolades on the sizzling hot lead single I Dunno which is straight off your forthcoming album, and which is currently lighting up record charts across the ever-loving globe! Tate, can you talk about what inspired one of the very best singles of 2025?

T: Hey thanks! I'm glad you like it! "I Dunno" was inspired by classic British rock bands like The Who and The Jam, it's a little bit punk, a little bit classic rock, and

a little bit power pop! I also recently got a Rickenbacker guitar so we kind of wanted to show off the iconic Rick sound!

Silas, as we just noted in our last question, The Problem With Kids Today has an eagerly-anticipated album entitled Take It! which is set to obliterate the distinguished Competition when it premieres this August 22; major congratulations! Can you give readers a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with the group's third LP release?

S: 15 of our best songs yet that's what! I think all three of us would say that this album represents a big step up in our songwriting and performances. Lots of great melodies, hooks, and riffs all over this thing. The medley at the end is great too. The last 5 songs all flow together like the dang mod-infested streets of Brighton! That's new for us as well, and I really think it gives the end of the album a super-huge burst of energy. It's my favorite part of the whole thing.

Reena, we're card-carrying aficionados of the gem of a ditty Anymore which stands front-and-center on the upcoming Take It! LP! What's the story behind this stunner of a track?

R: "Anymore" was created when we were all jamming, trying to write new songs, and Tate came up with a guitar riff that we just built upon. With all the songs, everything just comes up naturally the more we jammed.

Tate, how is the music on Take It! similar to such past The Problem With Kids Today tunes like You're In Love With Junk? How is it different?

T: The music is similar because it's still our original sound. We're inspired by a lot of stuff but we still can only write the music that we write, it's raw and stripped back but definitely pop oriented at the end of the day. I'd say the only difference is this record is a little more fun and upbeat and You're In Love With Junk is a bit more mad and a punk kind of vibe, both are good and have their place in life!

Silas, who did the producing honors on the Take It! Album?

S: Our good buddy Joe Lemieux did the producing on this bad boy! We've known Joe for a long time, he's a stalwart in the CT DIY scene. A real make-things-happen kinda guy and super talented musician/producer!! A few years back we did a sort of live session on YouTube with him in the shed we practice in and it sounded great! Joe was super in love with the shed and I guess the natural acoustics of it and for years he always floated the idea of recording properly in there. When it came time to record the album all three of us were really excited about the idea of doing the whole project at home and we knew how talented Joe was and that he would be excited about the project, so it was a natural choice!

Reena, in the wake of the upcoming August 22 release of the new The Problem With Kids Today LP Take It, can fans look forward to catching the band on the touring/performing circuit?

R: We have a show August 13 at Witch Bitch Thrift, which is a thrift store in New Haven, and of course we have a show on the release date at Three Sheets in New Haven, which will be super exciting. And for September so far we have a show at Howard's Bookstore in Torrington on the 26th.

A question for all of you: Who are some of the folks both in and out of the world of music who have informed and inspired you?

T: My dad has always been a big inspiration to me, he's always played in bands and that always made me want

to rock. I'm inspired by my friend's bands like Queen Kong, Western Reserve, and The Ambulance Chasers who are all local New Haven bands. I'm inspired by artists like Iggy Pop, Alex Chilton, The Beatles, Guided By Voices, and The Brian Jonestown Massacre. Outside of music I'm inspired by my dog Lola, my buddy Carson, Homer Simpson, and Jeff Hardy just to name a few...

R: My dad first taught me drums, then I played drums for the church I used to go to, then I minored in music at SCSU for a short time and took up drum lessons and joined a blues ensemble. That's where I really honed in on my drum skills. The bands who are my inspirations are Linkin Park, Cane Hill, Nine Inch Nails, Gojira, Alice In Chains, Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Metz, The Who, Led Zeppelin, and Ty Segall.

S: Big shouts out to Brendan Toller and Sam Carlson, 2 friends and fellow musicians who have helped us countless times over the years! Sam Carlson actually mixed and mastered the album, he did a really fantastic job. And there's the musical influences of course, stuff like the Beatles, the Jam, the Kinks. We were listening to a lot of Lofi stuff this past year - Guided By Voices, The Clean, lots of the Sarah Records catalogue - and that really brought us back to this more hands on, DIY kind of recording.

Tate, what does the creative process generally tend to look like when the group gets together to work on new music? Is there rhyme and reason to the creative madness, or is it all a bit more freeform than all of that?

T: Usually the process is Silas or I come to practice with ideas for songs that we wrote alone at our homes and present them to the band, then if the song seems to work Reena will craft a drum part for the song and Silas will write a bass line to follow. Then if the song works and we like it whoever wrote the music ends up writing the lyrics and singing it. It's a pretty standard procedure but has worked for us well ever since we started the band. Lately though we've been writing a little more all together as a band which is fun and exciting too!

Silas, at the end of the day what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to one of the best LP releases of 2025, Take It?

S: I hope they have fun! That was our main goal while making this album, to just have fun. From the writing to the recording even down to the photoshoots, we just wanted to have fun. Just not take it super seriously. Be a little off the cuff and a little goofy. Kick back or dance around, listen intently to every note or just let it play. However you do it just make sure you're enjoying yourself! That's how we've always tried to approach the band and by extension. life as well. We hope you like the album!

DOCTORS OF SPACE



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

Dr Space- It has been a hot summer but Doctors of Space (DOS) have been having our monthly studio sessions and we finished off the Astral Sessions Vol 7 CD, due in late August. How are you??

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

Our last studio album, Fusing your Synapses, it is about engaging the music at a deep level. It is a long 70min sound collage of electronic synth pieces mixed with some heavy space rock... We are very happy with the results and the amazing artwork by David Graham.

How was the recording and writing process?

Dr Space- We do not write music but just create. All our tracks are improvised and then we take the best pieces and work on mixing and sometimes adding a few other instruments (but most of the time not) to create an album. We have our own studio so this helps a lot.

(<https://estudioparaisionasn.wixsite.com/my-site>)

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

Dr Space- A lot of our inspiration comes from the new instruments we keep introducing into our music like MOOG synths, didgeridoo, Martin's home made synthesizer boxes, etc.. All our music is instrumental so there are no lyrics.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

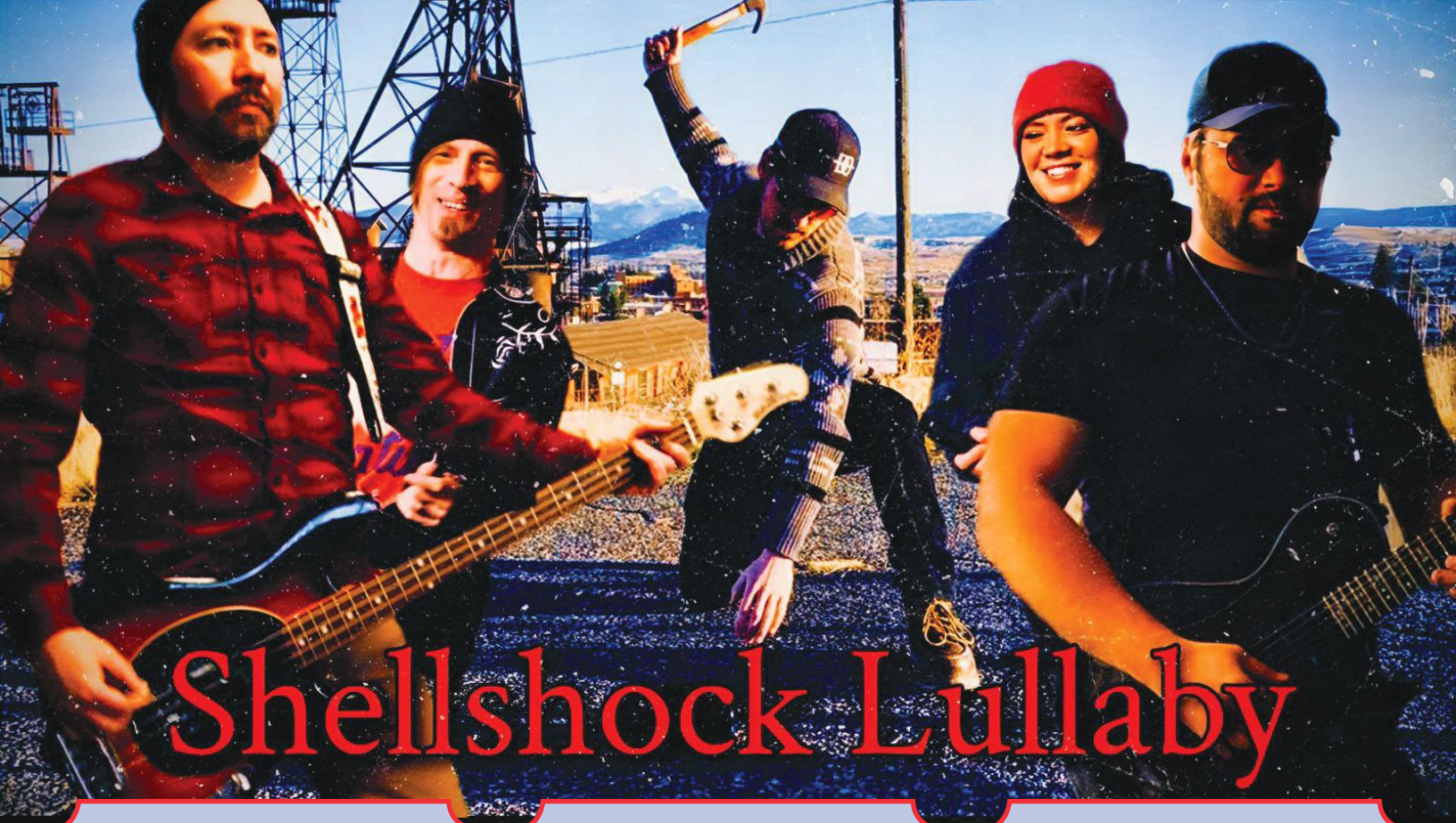
Dr Space- No. We are too old for that stuff anymore. We usually play a few gigs a year locally in Portugal but no tours.. Sorry..... Check out your web site and you tube!! There is a great video from a couple of years ago up there.. The links are below..

What else is happening next in your world?

Dr Space- We have the new Astral Sessions Vol 7 CD coming out in late August and we will have some more digital release exclusive to our bandcamp site of our studio jams. We will probably start sequencing another studio album as well in the fall. Who knows but we will still be making music, that is for sure..

<http://doctorsofspace.bandcamp.com>
<http://facebook.com/doctorsofspace>





Shellshock Lullaby

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

SHELLSHOCK LULLABY:
"Songs In The Movies" is a pop-punk anthem that plays with the contrast between real-life heartbreak and those picture-perfect love stories we see on screen. The lyrics reflect that moment when you realize life doesn't always follow the script — the big romantic gesture doesn't always land, and the soundtrack doesn't always save the scene. It's nostalgic, a little self-deprecating, and packed with energy.

Lyrics Excerpt:

"So don't hold that jukebox over your head, Those songs only work in the movies."
It's a nod to every cheesy 80s movie we loved growing up — and how those same stories mess with our expectations in real life. Bittersweet, punchy, and a lot of fun to play.

How was the recording and writing process?

SHELLSHOCK LULLABY:
We recorded it at Rookwood Audio, Russ's home studio. It's a no-frills space, but we're all about keeping things raw and authentic. We used MIDI drums and bass to lock in the rhythm section, then layered in guitars and vocals to bring the track to life. The process was fast, honest, and really reflective of how we work — DIY, but dialed in.

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

SHELLSHOCK LULLABY:
Honestly? Russ's dating history — it's basically a vault of good material. The song came from those awkward, hopeful moments that crash and burn, and how we all tend to romanticize them in hindsight. There's humor in it too — we're not taking ourselves too seriously, just telling the truth with a little bite.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

SHELLSHOCK LULLABY:
We'd love to, but right now everyone's juggling a lot — jobs, side projects, life. We're definitely open to hitting the road when the timing is right, especially if the right opportunities come up.

What else is happening next in your world?

SHELLSHOCK LULLABY:
We're currently working on new material. The instrumentals are pretty much locked in — now we're just refining lyrics and deciding where we want to take the next release. We're aiming to keep pushing our sound and storytelling further with each track.

Turbo Witch



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

Cheers! Been busy, been good, can't complain, really.

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

The idea for this track came at a time where Merlin was threatened by homelessness in London, stuck in a toxic relationship, and while his head was trying to ignore it, his heart told him in no uncertain terms that his life had to go into a new direction – but where/what/how? Hence the title.

How was the recording and writing process?

The bluesy riff came during the warm-up jam of a band rehearsal at that dark time in London. For Merlin, each song has a certain mood or feel to it, and this emotion wants to be expressed. With this bluesy riff and the background, the mood & topic were quite clear. Merlin wanted a hymn people can sing along, so he chose a classic power-rock Em-C-D progression. As TurboWitch always combine different aspects from various styles, the

bluesy ballad was met with a heavy riff rotating throughout the dramatic part.

The Morrigan has this uncanny talent that when you give her a completed instrumental track, she listens to it, the music begins to speak to her and 30 min later there is a melody and complete set of lyrics.

The recording was a bit chaotic initially as the band structure had changed after the pandemic. Once this had been sorted, recording it felt naturally – all thanks to the new studio and amazing producer we found, and TurboWitch have a coven now with members world-wide, ready for the future.

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

As mentioned above, Merlin was threatened by homelessness, stuck in a toxic relationship, and everything was going wrong because his life was going the wrong way. His mood had hit rock bottom and he knew this could easily get worse. A feeling the Morrigan knew just too well.

This song for everyone whose life has turned upside down, everyone who needs to break free, everyone seeking the right place to be – the hard way. We know how that feels like, every note comes straight from a formerly homeless heart.

Will you be hitting the road this year?

We are planning gigs for this coming Winter.

What else is happening next in your world?

We are busy recording the next EP and dealing with PR companies and labels.

