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Tuesday, January 9, 2007

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community (991)
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 musician (334)
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 jobs (4,753)
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Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes

Tuesday, January 9

Busta Doesn't Rhyme

By Tamara Palmer

Byron Hurt's documentary *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes* screened at Sundance last year and now finds a home on PBS's "Independent Lens" program. As an insider's analysis of the hypermasculine, misogynist, and violent tendencies in hip hop, it fills a critical void, and Hurt asks questions that are often swept under the rug. Most importantly: Why does hip hop seem obsessed with sexism and death?

The film brilliantly uses hip hop's exciting musical pace to credibly draw in both fans (Hurt is an ardent one) and detractors. Throughout, Hurt reveals not only the extent of the epidemic, but also the embarrassment of some of the culture's so-called leaders, who cannot – or will not – justify it. In one memorable scene, successful rapper Busta Rhymes is made visibly uncomfortable by the mere mention of homophobia in hip hop, and bolts from the room rather than staying to discuss anything in that realm. (Perhaps unsurprisingly, Rhymes later made headlines when he allegedly assaulted and verbally taunted a gay man last year in South Beach.) And in another, former BET president Stephen Hill simply walks away from Hurt without answering when asked how he feels about the cable channel's incessant sexual imagery. As they say in hip hop vernacular, that's just not a good look.



Beyond Beats is preceded by entertainment from local organizations Youth Speaks and Youth Movement Records and a screening of the related short film *Trendsetters and Fakers* by Justin Pasene of Conscious Youth Media Crew. A discussion about the issues in *Beyond Beats* follows the screening, with panelists including Dr. Joseph E. Marshall Jr., host of KMEL's Street Soldiers radio program, and PeaceOUT World Homohop Festival director Juba Kalamka (also of Oakland's groundbreaking queer hip-hop group Deepdickollective). **Tue., Jan. 9, 5:30 p.m.**, Main Library, Koret Auditorium, 100 Larkin (at Grove), San Francisco



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"Rice Balla"

Wednesday, January 10

Be Ball

By Hiya Swanhuysen



Satirical installation art isn't the first thing that comes to mind when we think of professional sports, but maybe it should be. What institution is more available for slicing and dicing than the one with the moral low ground: the athletic lottery system that sells high, buys low, and deals in smoke, mirrors, drugs, and racial stereotypes? (Hey, Major League Baseball and NBA: It's not OK to draft right out of high school!) Yet we love sports a lot, and the tension makes for rich material. At "**Kenneth Lo: Rice Balla Chronicles**," the artist (Lo) presents a parodic chronicle of a basketball player nicknamed "Yellow Fever," with video, podcast, 2-D, and interactive elements. At the opening, you can shoot baskets into an ornate, "orientalized" hoop, and then receive a fortune predicting your future as a baller. The effect, says the venue's Web site, may leave you "unsure if you should let out the laughter, shield your eyes in judgment, or start up a discussion with the person next to you about how we still live in a racist culture." **Jan. 10-30, Artists' Television Access, 992 Valencia (at 21st St.) , San Francisco**

Chasing the Lotus

Thursday, January 11

Secret Spot

By Michael Leaverton

In the '60s, Greg Weaver and Spyder Wills began traveling the world to document surf spots for mainstream assignments. Their footage ended up in classic films such as *Pacific Vibrations*, *Big Wednesday*, and *Forgotten Island of Santosha*; their pictures graced the pages of surf magazines. But much of the material remained private, shown only to friends and tight-lipped professional surfers, since the pair shared a belief that, remarkably, is still gospel in the surf industry: Only assholes expose secret spots.

Fortunately, the statute of limitations has long passed on their discoveries, and filmmaker Gregg Schell talked his way into getting 100 lost reels Weaver and Wills shot between the '60s and the '80s, which were buried in Weaver's garage. Schell delicately turned them into *Chasing the Lotus*, a documentary that matches the footage with interviews from surf icons like Gerry Lopez, Buttons, Corky Carroll, and Rory Russell along with nimble rippers of later eras, such as Rob Machado and Joel Tudor. The film is narrated by



Jeff Bridges, which isn't as odd as it seems, if you consider his talent with lines like these: "I am not Mr. Lebowski. You're Mr. Lebowski. I'm the Dude."

Chasing the Lotus screens at 7:15 and 9:15 p.m. Jan. 11-14, Red Vic Movie House, 1727 Haight (at Cole) , San Francisco

Get to Steppin'

Friday, January 12

Hello San Francisco



By Hiya Swanhuysen

If you're into Etta James or old Ike & Tina records, you might also be a fan of Sugar Pie DeSanto, a blues, R&B, and soul artist from the Bay Area. If that's the case, you already know she's famous for a mouth as dirty as R.L. Burnside's and for busting back flips onstage. Recently, "Lady James Brown" had some awful luck: Her husband, Jesse Davis, was killed in a fire; she lost everything else as well. "Get To Steppin'" is a benefit for DeSanto and a chance for local music lovers to give back to the woman who's shared so much for so long: Discovered by Johnny Otis in the 1950s, she's been performing and recording ever since. Her pretty but hard-edged vocal style and horn-drenched arrangements on hits like "I Want To Know," "Soulful Dress," and "Slip-In Mules" (and "Hello San Francisco!") must be heard to be believed -- there's nothing like them.

For those who can't make it, donate to the Sugar Pie DeSanto Fund at Wells Fargo Bank, account number 367-333-5752.

DJ B-Cause, Vinnie Esparza, and DJ Cool Chris perform. Fri., Jan. 12, 10 p.m., Elbo Room, 647 Valencia (at 18th St.) , San Francisco

"23 Years of Hernia Milk and Ergot Dreams: A Retrospective of Caroliner" Saturday, January 13

Raging Bull

By Sean Uyehara

I would love to describe the band/art movement/historians Caroliner in florid detail. But, due to limited space, it's best to stick with the facts, such as they are: Caroliner formed in 1983 in San Francisco. Its music has variously been described as folk, industrial, baroque, bluegrass, noise, and punk. The group is named after a parrotlike singing bull that lived in the 19th century -- it's said the bull could mimic any song it heard; naturally, the band's catalog comes from the bull's songs. Sticking with its 19th-century ethos, Caroliner bases its aesthetic on a psychedelic mania induced by eating ergot fungus, called St. Anthony's fire. It performs only under black light with wildly decorated Day-Glo sets and costumes. Again, the scene is difficult to describe. Let's just say it's unusual to attend a show and remark, "I wasn't sure where the walls ended and the musicians began."



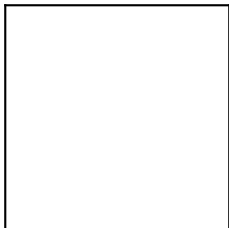
Caroliner has influenced legions of noise and art-music acts, and it hasn't performed in nearly 18 months. Now's your chance to see this seminal band play at the reception for its tantalizing art exhibit, "23 Years of Hernia Milk and Ergot Dreams: A Retrospective of Caroliner and Its Homage to a 19th-Century Singing Bull," which features archived recordings, projects, costumes, writings, and detritus.

The band plays at 8 p.m. Jan. 13-19, California College of the Arts Playspace Gallery, 1111 Eighth St. (at Irwin) , San Francisco

Carolyn Turgeon

Sunday, January 14

Lord of the Ring



By Nirmala Nataraj

We have literary genres for just about everything under the sun (postmodern Westerns, subversive chick lit, sci-fi erotica -- the list goes on), so it makes sense that we devote one to that fading mainstay of Americana, the circus (and its first cousin, the traveling sideshow). It's difficult to appreciate the legacy of the big top, which decades ago graced desolate Dustbowl towns and transformed dead-end stops into stages for the extraordinary. That's why writers like Carolyn Turgeon, who illustrates the obscure terrain of circus folk in her debut novel, *Rain Village*, are refreshing additions to the literary scene. The book offers great big heapings of magical realism à la Gabriel García Márquez, as well as beguiling eccentrics that bring to mind the characters of Jeffrey Eugenides. The novel centers on Tessa, a pint-sized misfit in a Midwestern farming town, who befriends a fable-spinning librarian who, in turn, spurs her to become a trapeze artist. Aside from its offbeat interludes with an assortment of oddballs, *Rain Village* is a quixotic survival allegory that deftly explores the social mores of early-20th-century America.

Whether it's the Great American Circus Novel is for posterity to determine, but at the very least, *Rain Village* is a fun read. Sun., Jan. 14, 4:30 p.m., Cody's Books/Stockton, 2 Stockton (at Ellis) , San Francisco

Bringing the Noise for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Monday, January 15

What Part of "Shh" Don't You Understand?

By Hiya Swanhuysen

A recent Sfgate.com story described an unfortunate situation involving libraries and teenagers in New Jersey. Culled from the *New York Times* though it was, the article's reporting seemed shoddy in a typical way: Although many librarians weighed in, including mucky-mucks from the American Library Association, only one teen was quoted. As one of the many groups whose voices are muted or left out of public conversations, teenagers are rarely heard speaking for themselves. No matter how you feel about kids talking back to librarians, that silence is a problem. But at "Bringing the Noise for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.," the name of the sponsoring organization says it



all: Youth Speaks! Not content to be merely spoken (or written) about, the young versifiers in this group get the support they deserve and find their voices with which to celebrate the civil rights hero.

The spoken-word showcase -- featuring Chinaka Hodge, Ill-Literacy, Spokes, the Attik, J. Period, and the group's slam champions -- starts at 7 p.m. **Mon., Jan. 15**, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, **700 Howard (at Third St.)**, San Francisco

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