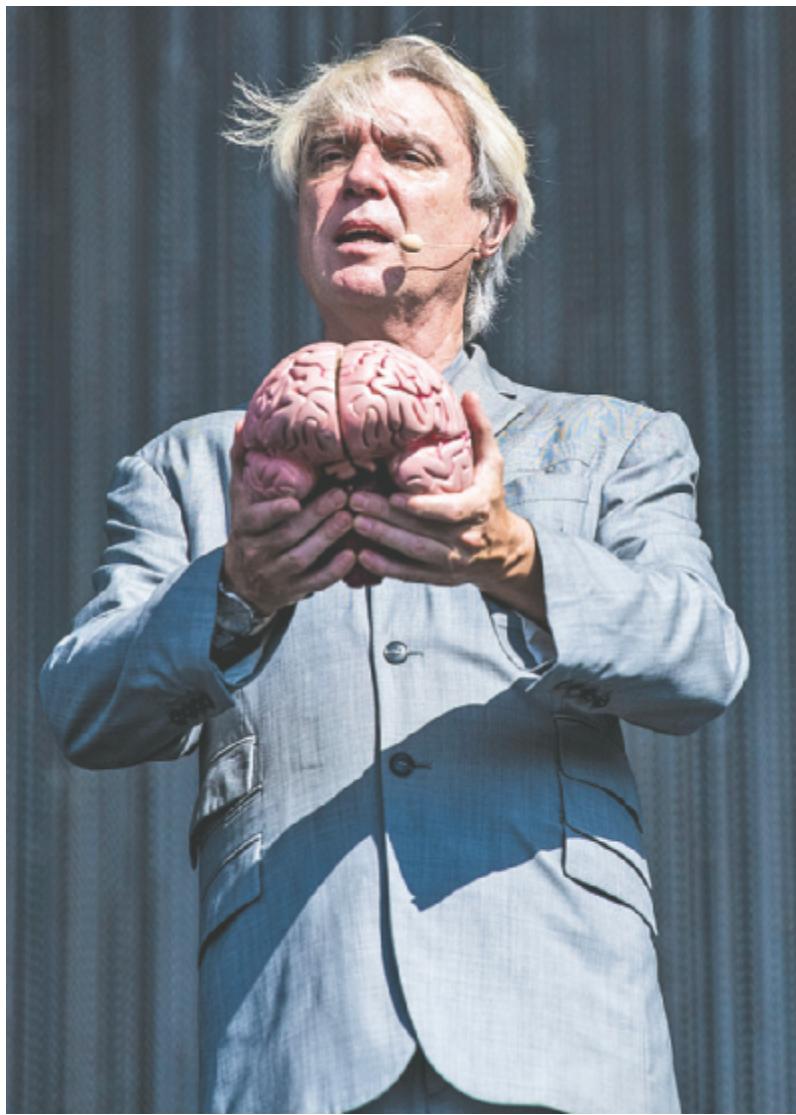


THE AUSTIN
CHRONICLE ACL 2018 REVIEW
SECOND WEEKEND



AC ACL 2018 FRIDAY



DAVID BRENDAN HALL

DAVID BYRNE

3:45pm, American Express stage

David Byrne began with a brain. Emerging quietly and alone on the massive ACL main stage set up with only a small table and wooden chair, the Talking Head sat down and held up a model of man's center of intellect: "Here is a region of abundant details. Here is a region that is seldom used." Then he launched his Friday afternoon set behind "Here," closing track to this year's *American Utopia*.

Byrne, 66, followed with an hour-long dive into the subconscious behind primal, percussive rhythms and his cerebral, almost absurdist lyrics. Even as the band swelled to eight members on "Lazy" and then 12 with "I Zimbra," the show remained minimal and precise, all instruments strapped to the players as they marched around the stage in free-flow formations.

The 13-song set rested heavily on Talking Heads favorites, revving midway with "This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody)" and "Once in a Lifetime" as the band sweat through their matching gray suits and the funky, stripped-down, New Wave rhythms increasingly entranced behind Byrne's charmingly awkward vogues. Likewise, the double shot of "Road to Nowhere" and "Burning Down the House" sent the crowd into a dancing frenzy.

Yet Byrne saved his most powerful statement for last – a cover of Janelle Monáe's "Hell You Talmabout." The full band shouted a litany of names of African-Americans slain by police, demanding recognition and atonement as Byrne shifted focus from the subconscious to collective conscience.

– Doug Freeman

KHALID

5:45pm, Honda stage

"That's my soooong!" rang out as a common squeal from the fresh faces in the crowd. They were not, in fact, the songs of seemingly every teenager in Zilker Park. They were Khalid Robinson's.

The 20-year-old singer acted as a siren call to the Honda stage on Friday for the under-25 set. As cameras beamed sweaty faces in the front row onto huge LED screens, the demographic looked like curfew waiting to happen. Khalid, feeding off that energy and flashing a wide smile, proved better than an afternoon coffee.

Three dancers flanked him as he worked through upbeat bits of last year's Grammy-nominated debut *American Teen*, but he didn't need help inspiring the crowd. As he launched "8Teen," his leathery voice became comfortable and winking as he hit the chorus, live drums snapping behind him: "Because I'm

18/ And I still live with my parents/ Yeah, they're not like yours/ Well, yours are more understanding."

That song won't age well, perhaps, but the singer, whose career was birthed in El Paso – a fact he shouted out several times during the supertime set – served his purpose with its bass-laden pop scorching even the late-afternoon heat. When he slowed things down and ditched the dancers for songs like "Better," a new single from last month that he performed live for the first time, he held the crowd.

Sure, the hooky choruses and R&B beats don't hurt, but Khalid's true charm – the reason he had people packed against the barrier hours before a true headliner would grace a stage – is his relatability. Looking around after he wrapped the understated party jam "Young Dumb & Broke," you saw it. These were their songs.

– Abby Johnston



GARY MILLER

Nicole Atkins

12:45PM, BMI STAGE

Dubbed heir to the legacy of Roy Orbison and Carole King, this Nashville-via-New Jersey song catcher proved her mettle on 2017's *Goodnight Rhonda Lee*. While her previous albums – 2007's *Neptune City*, 2011's *Mondo Amore*, and 2014's *Slow Phaser* – glean indie rock, her fourth LP embraces chest-heaving soul, country crooning, and vamped blues belts.

– Alejandra Ramirez

Sasha Sloan

2:45PM, BMI STAGE

Behind the scenes as writer and collaborator for artists including Charli XCX, Camila Cabello, and Odesza, Sasha Sloan stepped into the spotlight herself with this year's aptly titled debut EP *Sad Girl*. The clipped and understated pop of singles "Normal" and "Ready Yet" hinge on the Boston native's sharp and earnest songwriting, paradoxically introspective against quivering and confident beats.

– Doug Freeman

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ON THE COVER:
Janelle Monáe by David Brendan Hall



CURTIS ROUSH
Cosmic Campfire Music
(*Modern Outsider*)

For Bright Light Social Hour frontman Curtis Roush, sorrow sparked *Cosmic Campfire Music*, a solo project that feels at once intensely intimate and slightly distant. Following a breakup and the death of BLSH manager Alex O'Brien, Roush sought solace in Marfa. The results are beautiful in that West Texas way – sparse, quiet, expansive, unhurried. These are hushed songs for nights under big skies, more stargaze than shoe-gaze. Roush plays every instrument on the soulful, self-recorded affair, with simple drum loops grounding acoustic and electric guitars, percussion, and a warm blanket of synth. Outro "Space Is Empty (Come With Me)" stares straight into the abyss: "Off to settle space, come with me/ Cold and dark without your love, it's empty." (11:15am, Miller Lite stage)

★★★★ – Thomas Fawcett

CONTINUED ON P.4



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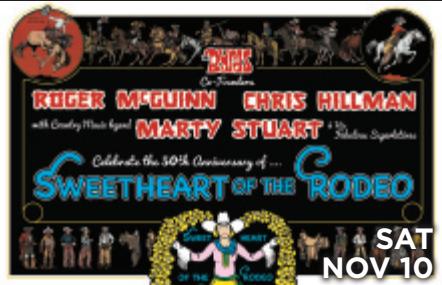
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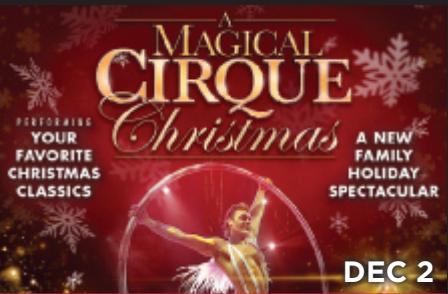
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BROCKHAMPTON

6:45pm, Miller Lite stage

A packed, melting-pot multitude reflected Brockhampton's widespread appeal and how their new major label debut *Iridescence* debuted at No. 1 just a year after the San Marcos group undertook its first national tour.

Opener "New Orleans" found Dom McLennan emerging first through a smoke machine haze. As the caffeinating beat built momentum, he rapped into a mistakenly muted mic until it abruptly turned on halfway through his verse, thrusting a bewildered crowd into a riot in the blink of an eye.

Although the 13-song set tallied the second stop on the I'll Be There tour for the new release, the energy peaked during the group's hook-driven hits from last year's *Saturation* trilogy of LPs. "Bleach" had the crowd belting its angelic hook a cappella, while "Sweet" moved everyone to beg for honey butter chicken biscuits with UT dropout Merlyn Wood. The blatant mix out of verses from

departed MC Ameer Vann felt awkward to a crowd subconsciously expecting them. When "Gummy" skipped his bombastic verse, murmurs of his absence moved through the audience as others recited the lyrics anyway.

Iridescence resonates with upbeat techno juxtaposed by dark, Auto-Tuned, introspective lyrics. Vulnerable raps on self, sexuality, and mental health capture and spew 2018's ethos with new pop sensibility. It helps that live Brockhampton follows up tracks making you want to mosh with those like "Weight" and "J'ouvert" that pivot on universal insecurities while dancing to British electro.

At just under an hour, the performance flew by in a blistering blur, possible justification for two of *Iridescence*'s most popular but slower songs, "Tonya" and "San Marcos," not making the set list.

— Jeremy Steinberger

CONTINUED ON P.6



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FATHER JOHN MISTY**6:45pm, Barton Springs stage**

Almost resurrected as a dirty messiah of awful relationships, Josh Tillman showed up at his Friday ACL slot dressed in a white suit, shirt, and jacket. Starting at 6:45pm sharp on the Barton Springs stage, the indie rocker known as Father John Misty and his black-clad septet, plus a string section, launched into his trademark, highbrow sardonic.

Digging into strong notes from his catalog, including latest album *God's Favorite Customer*, the singer delivered faithful renditions of "Hollywood Forever Cemetery Sings" and "Mr. Tillman," remarkable for their unsullied melodies and distinctive vocals. He also kept his man Friday busy, the suited tech giving the bandleader a new guitar for each of the first four songs. Once, he moved his employer's microphone stand six inches to the left.

"Nothing Good Ever Happens at the Goddamn Thirsty Crow" found the headliner jumping into his vintage Jim Morrison schtick,

doling out some off-the-strip Vegas theatrics as he effortlessly strolled and strode. "Nothing impresses me much/ I've got a great attitude," he crooned on "Date Night," played up into a vibrant, carefree rock tune as if a broken man didn't write it while listening to Billy Joel. He borderline orated his great cynicism of humanity in "Pure Comedy," intoning, "We emerge half-formed and hope whoever greets us on the other end is kind enough to fill us in."

Ultimately, Tillman performs as a romantic disguised as a person too cool, too cold, too damaged, too smart to love and receive love with conditions. The rapt crowd did get an earnest take on "I Love You, Honeybear," a song about the conditions of his bond with his wife – and also possibly his misanthropic worldview: "You're bent over the altar, and the neighbors are complaining/ That the misanthropes next door are probably conceiving a Damien."

– Kahron Spearman

DAVID BRENDAN HALL

**PAUL McCARTNEY****7:45pm, American Express stage**

Picture a 76-year-old man, looking 20 years younger on the Jumbotron, leading a sea of humanity in singing, "Na na na nana na na nana na na, hey Jude." You can't help but wonder if Sir James Paul McCartney CH MBE ever asks himself, "Damn! Did I write that?!"

If he does, he must do that with virtually every song in his set list. The sheer amount of hits he lays at you live – "From Me to You," "Love Me Do," "Lady Madonna," "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "Live & Let Die," "Band on the Run," "Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da," "Maybe I'm Amazed," etc. – is dizzying.

You start to wonder if the man's ever written a bad song. He has, but he's not playing them!

McCartney looked like a 1964 Beatles film clip retouched so he had a graying mop top: brown denim Levi's jacket, his iconic Hofner violin bass, and two old Vox Super Beatle amps behind him. Beginning with the first three songs, "A Hard Day's Night" and "Can't Buy Me Love" sandwiching Wings' stomper "Hi Hi Hi," Zilker Park rocked. McCartney and his expert band – guitarists Brian Ray and Rusty Anderson, drummer

Abe Laboriel Jr., keyboardist Paul Wickens – loaded the set with iconic movers and shakers: "Back in the USSR," Wings' "Let Me Roll It," and a "Helter Skelter" surely heavier than anything Metallica will play Saturday.

Sir Paul reminded everyone that he voiced most of the Beatles' hardest rockers.

As the man proclaimed early on, the night was about "old songs, new songs, and in-between songs." At least three highlights from the new *Egypt Station* were dropped in. The Silver Beatles' first recording, 1958 doo wop acetate "In Spite of All the Danger," even got aired alongside George Harrison's "Something," arranged for ukulele. For a good chunk of the set, Macca strapped on a Les Paul and blasted raw-toned blues solos. Then there were the piano-driven epics: "Let It Be," "Hey Jude," "Carry That Weight."

No "Yesterday," no "She Loves You," and thankfully, no "Silly Love Songs." Yet for two hours, Paul McCartney rocked hard, while also demonstrating his historic musical range. And he did it as casually as wearing that Levi's jacket.

– Tim Stegall

MARK MILLER

**NATALIE PRASS*****The Future and the Past* (ATO)**

Natalie Prass' second album takes inspiration from classic pop songwriting while imagining a new future. Though grounded in the warm-bath soul of the Seventies and slick pop of the Eighties, the Cleveland native and producer/childhood pal Matthew E. White give the tracks an electronic gleam and rhythm-focused arrangements, letting her breathy soprano soar. Soulful single "Short Court Style" makes the strongest case for her vision, though the sultry "The Fire" and reticular "Ship Go Down" demonstrate a delightfully diverse range. If the midpoint between *The Future and the Past* is modernity, Natalie Prass nails it. (Noon, American Express stage)

★★★

– Michael Toland

**Lily Allen****4:45PM, MILLER LITE STAGE**

If eponymous hit "Fuck You" was her introduction, then *No Shame* is her rebirth. The UK songbird has been through divorce, motherhood, and home invasions, but instead of exclamations, this time she looks within. "Three" looks through her daughter's forgotten eyes, "Family Man" finds her fighting for her husband, and "Come on Then" has her confronting her inner demons. An amplified introspection set to a piano-driven pop soundtrack.

– Isabella Castro-Cota

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ACL 2018 SATURDAY

Charley Crockett NOON, BMI STAGE



Charley Crockett may be Austin's best kept secret. Despite living the past three years on the Eastside, the 34-year old troubadour rarely plays locally, even as his national profile has risen. The San Benito native spent over a decade traveling and busking across the U.S. and Europe, honing his suave roots blend of country, soul, honky-tonk, and blues.

"I played the streets for my entire 20s, so I feel I got a late start," he offers. "There was a moment where I got tired of sleeping on floors and squatting in warehouses. I really survived for years off the goodwill of other people, and I appreciate that. Up to a certain point, I was just imagining my talent being discovered by somebody who would change everything for me."

Crockett landed a management deal in New York, but balked at signing over his publishing, and instead retreated to Northern California to wait out his contract. When he re-emerged

in Texas, he began a relentless recording streak that hearkened the yearly releases of classic country artists, unloading four albums in the past three years. Each LP showcased another side of the songsmith, from the soulful *In the Night* to last year's mix of covers *Lil G.L.'s Honky Tonk Jubilee*, and this year's four-star set of originals, *Lonesome as a Shadow*.

"I did the record deal stuff in my 20s where I didn't have creative control, and I wasn't ready for that," he admits. "The music business behaves in a way these days where they really want you to

promote a record for two years, and there's an overemphasis on original material. I think it's really hard to reinvent the wheel. I write out of a traditional format."

"I learned that on the street: that the better handle I got on traditional music, the better I'd be able to express myself with the songs I'm trying to write."

- Doug Freeman

TODD W. WILSON

Donna Missal

12:45PM, HONDA STAGE

Buoyed by echoed patters and soft percussion, Donna Missal voices a stiletto strut, transforming into barely whispered croons and rasped belts on opener "Girl" from Oct. 19 debut *This Time*. Over wax-dipped sexiness in "Keep Lying," reverb intimacy on "Skyline," and soul bravado for electronic warbler "Jupiter," the album kick-starts the Jersey native. - Alejandra Ramirez

Rhye

4:30PM, TITO'S STAGE
Mike Milosh's dulcet tones prove far from the typical, bass-laden festival fare, but the Canadian singer reiterates you don't need volume to make an impact. For the better part of this year, he's worked second album *Blood*, captivating live audiences with a delicate mix of pop aesthetics and R&B stylings.

- Abby Johnston

Disturbed

6PM, AMERICAN EXPRESS STAGE

The gritty rage metal of Disturbed seems like it should have a limited audience, but they remain a consistently platinum act. Credit the Chicago quartet's many hits with knowing how to mold downtowned riffs into hooks and emphasizing frontman David Draiman's charismatic growl. *Evolution*, the group's seventh studio album, drops the week after ACL Fest.

- Michael Toland

Mon Laferte

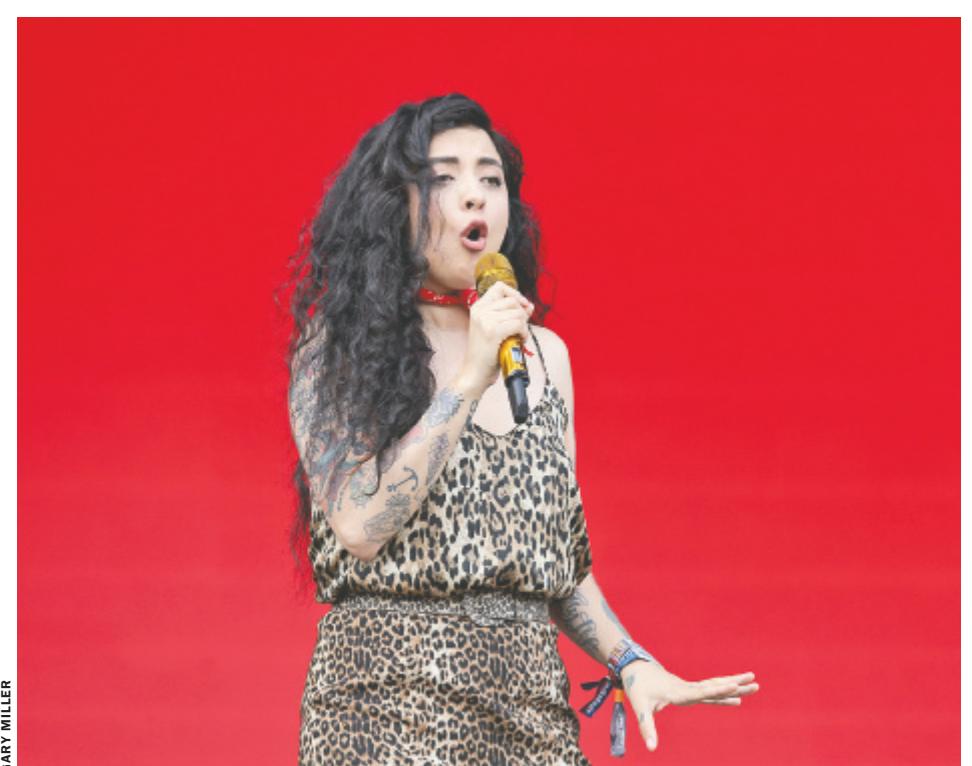
2:30pm, Honda stage

Although rain delayed gates opening on Saturday, all acts went on at their scheduled times. Mon Laferte, born Norma Monserrat Bustamante Laferte, kicked off her 2:30pm set on the Honda headliner stage to a crowd bathed only in sweat.

The 35-year-old Chilean entertainer known for her union of Latin folk and pop sang cumbias, tango-inspired reggae, and boleros from her latest three albums, *La Trenza*, *Mon Laferte Vol. 1*, and *Tornasol*. First out of the gate, new single "Por Qué Me Fui a Enamorar de Ti," a love-lamenting salsa, introduced her band's horns section and Laferte's romantic vintage sound, echoed in her outfit of a red neck scarf, leopard print mini-pencil skirt, and leopard print camisole.

With a dancer's precision, she moved across the stage clutching a golden microphone, singing like a Latin Björk-burlesque hybrid. Each movement timed out thrillingly, lending even pedestrian moves a huge payoff. She strapped on a guitar for "Amor Completo," a red rose ballad to all-consuming love, and delivered this year's single "El Beso" with coy charm.

The Latin Grammy-winning duet with Juanes from *La Trenza*, "Amárrame," captured in one song what pop psychologists spend entire careers studying. Mexican by residence for more than a decade, Laferte read her crowd



GARY MILLER

perfectly with a tribute to Tejano queen Selena Quintanilla. "Si Una Vez" received an inspired reggae twist.

"Tormento" coincided with the one cluster

of gray clouds that provided a few minutes of relief from the heat, along with Laferte herself, a stunning talent who provided the best *refresquito* all day.

- Christina Garcia



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CURTIS HARDING

2:45pm, Tito's stage

"It's beautiful when you can sweat under the same tent," nodded Curtis Harding, making the absurd, early fall stickiness appear desirable. On this sweltering Saturday afternoon, he ripped down the Tito's tent with a vintage romp through his self-proclaimed "slop 'n soul," authentically evoking the early rock pioneers and soul men of yesteryear.

The flashy, bespectacled leader with a golden voice pushed through a look back at what could've been had he existed in soul's transcendent, decades-long heyday. Harding's quartet opened with blazing table-setter "The Drive" from 2014's *Soul Power*. In vehicular metaphors and a touch of emotional exposure, he warns, "Ignore my direction/ Neglecting all the signs/ That's why love leads you astray."

"Go as you are/ But don't come back the same/ If you don't get too far/ You've got no one to blame," he exclaimed on the similarly explosive "Go as You Are" from last year's exemplary *Face Your Fear*. On it, Harding reaches into the annals of a so-called simpler time, and so-called real men, with lyrics steeped in testosterone-driven sonnets. To this point, "Need My Baby" vocalizes over funky backing: "Cause you got that something that it's all about/ And now that you're here I can't live without."

Nothing the colorful Harding sang or attempted musically felt forced through a particular hue, the Georgia native adding onto the significant legacy of his great influences. Simultaneously warm, suggestive, and compelling without the alpha tendency, Curtis Harding's soulful labors rank as unique deliverance bordering on the spiritual.

DAVID BRENDAN HALL

JAPANESE BREAKFAST

5:30pm, Barton Springs stage

Save for a few scattered shows, a brimming Barton Springs stage crowd witnessed one of Japanese Breakfast's last live performances for a spell. During an extremely well-attended Saturday afternoon set, Michelle Zauner relayed that the Philly quartet hadn't stopped hustling out on the road for the past two and a half years.

During that time, the Eugene, Ore., native dug out a distinct aesthetic of shoegaze-influenced Pacific Northwest indie rock. In fact, touring fatigue reared its head in the brevity of the frontwoman's typically bubbly stage antics throughout the 45-minute set. Even so, Zauner and husband/guitarist Peter Bradley still managed to look contagiously cheerful despite having been up late the night before at a sold-out Antone's show.

Starter "Diving Woman" introduced the singer's celestial, reverb-washed sensibilities. The steady guitar track also opens latest sci-fi-inspired LP *Soft Sounds From Another Planet*. In alien style, the *Vogue*-declared fashion star molted her sheer, floor-length dress to assume otherworldly warrior status in shiny shorts and a blue bra.

For the glossy alt-rock of "Road Head," the artist deftly looped her voice into a high, Grimes-like chime. Drummer Craig Hendrix sang harmonies throughout, echoing on Eighties prom dance "Boyish." The Cranberries' "Dreams" proved a spot-on match for the crew's lush instrumentation and Zauner's crystalline, dream-pop pitch. Her voice warped into metallic Auto-Tune for finale "Machinist," a futuristic disco take about falling in love with a robot. — Rachel Rascoe



JANA BIRCHUM

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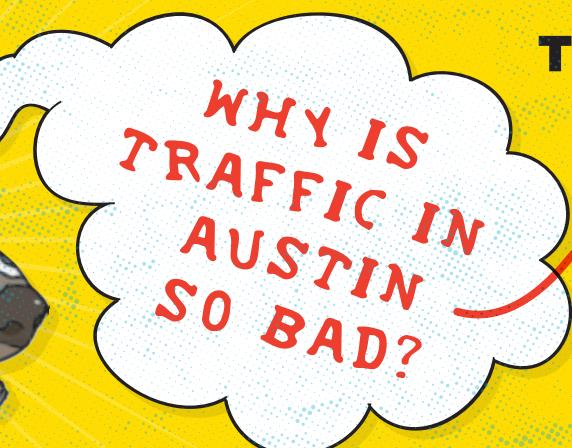
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RUSTON KELLY *Dying Star* (Rounder)

Rising to notoriety behind Tim McGraw hits, the viral self-deprecation of "Asshole," and as Kacey Musgraves' husband, Ruston Kelly makes a more official mark with debut LP *Dying Star*. The Nashville-based artist plays stylistic chameleon, from the pop swell of "Cover My Tracks," vocoder ballad "Son of a Highway Daughter," contemporary country hook of "Bluebird," and easy rolling stumble odes "Faceplant" and "Blackout." Kelly's natural narrative and lyrical talent becomes plain as the album settles behind "Mercury," "Trying to Let Her," and "Jericho." *Dying Star* fills with gems, even as Kelly remains somewhat elusive. **(1:30pm, BMI stage)**

★★★



— Doug Freeman



DAVID BRENDAN HALL

BLOOD ORANGE

5:30pm, Miller Lite stage

Devonté Hynes' ACL debut began with a prophecy his Saturday set soon fulfilled.

"We are not limited by biology.

We get to make ourselves.

And we get to make our families."

The monologue by writer and activist Janet Mock appears on the singer's recent *Negro Swan* track, "Family." As it came to a close, the British multi-instrumentalist took the stage draped in a Blood Orange-branded bandanna and his patented white tank. Hynes describes himself as sexually fluid and much of Blood Orange reflects the search for refuge in our heteronormative culture. During a Saturday dinnertime slot, he found it on the ACL stage.

Free as a kid singing to a hairbrush in the comfort of his room, Hynes commanded the stage with calm confidence as he danced and juggled between instruments. Thumping 808s on "Saint" livened a crowd battered by the day's heat, while "Out of Your League" and "Charcoal Baby" had them bobbing like broken bobbleheads to its rubbery funk accents. *Negro Swan* set the agenda for the 32-year-old Londoner, whose sixpiece ensemble delivered sunny melodies over sparse, dystopian, Eighties dance-pop that commingled synth blips with bursts of jazzy horns and lush grand piano and guitar from Hynes.

The mastermind behind these deep textures made sure each member of the ensemble got their close-up, too. Rhythm sectioners soloed often, and the most impressive vocal performance of the show came from backup singer Ian Isiah during gospel ballad "Holy Will." He and crooner Eva Tolkin brought depth to Blood Orange's airy melodies throughout.

The audience didn't help much except during hits "You're Not Good Enough" and "Best to You." In fact, a predominantly white crowd couldn't truly empathize with Hynes' reflections on the anxieties of the black experience, but his unquestioned self-love and free expression united most into a single Blood Orange family. Those grooves are universal. — Jeremy Steinberger

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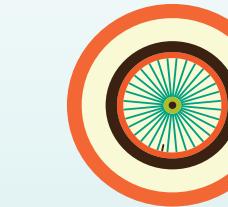
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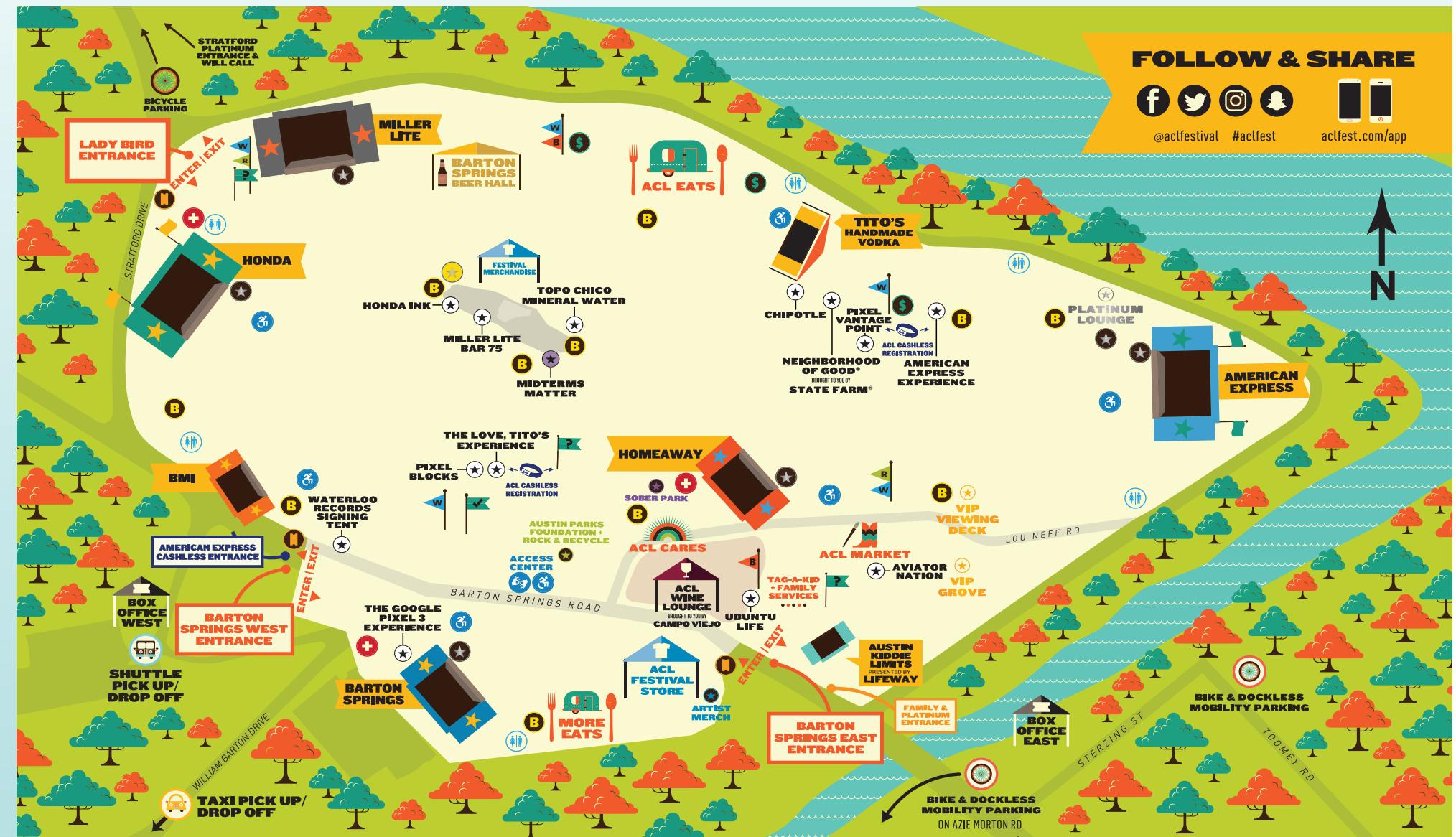
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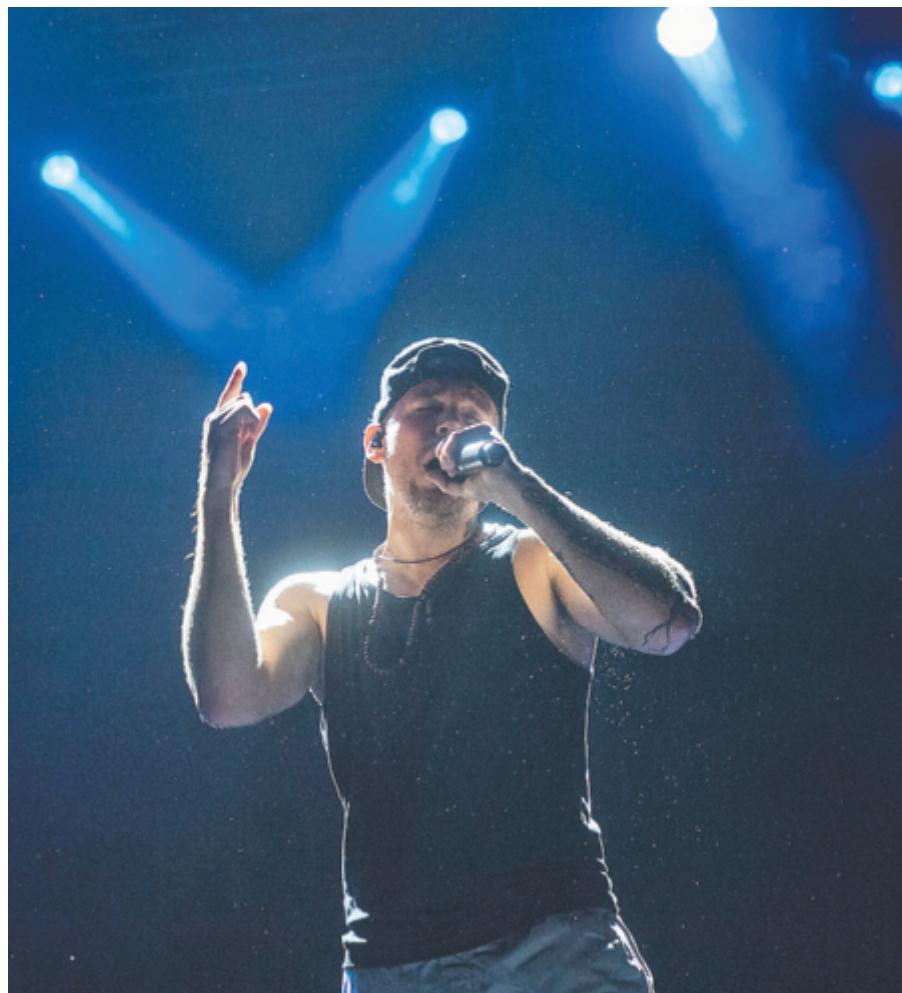
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JOHN ANDERSON

RESIDENTE 7:30pm, Barton Springs stage

Born René Pérez Joglar, the founding member of Calle 13 fills songs with incredibly dense wordplay and rapid-fire rhyme schemes. How dense? A recent diss track packed 1,900 words into 10 minutes, which might be a Guinness World Record.

And these aren't empty *palabras*. His recent self-titled solo project uses a DNA test as a springboard for self-discovery, exploring his globe-spanning roots through music.

Backed by a sevenpiece band with members from Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Morocco, opener "Somos Anormales" featured Mongolian throat singing and nods to his Siberian ancestry. A searing rock guitar solo bolstered my personal theory that rap-rock only ever works en español. The entire band pounded percussion on the thundering Ghanaian rhythms of "Dagombas en Tamale."

"Everyone has African blood," Residente quipped. "Even Donald Trump's mother."

He decried not just U.S. immigration policies, but how Spain treats the Senegalese, arguing that without migration, the cumbia-funk fusion of Calle 13 classic "Atrévete-Te-Te" wouldn't exist. The MC then commanded that everyone put their phones in their pocket and hug someone next to them, a request he repeated a few minutes later. Multiple groups of strangers pulled me in for joyous, jumping group hugs as the band stirred a pot of hip-hop, rock, reggaeton, funk, cumbia, y más.

The entire set proved a compelling case for a world without walls, and recalled the last time a Spanish-language act played this late into the night at ACL: headliner Manu Chao in 2011.

"Tonight," declared Residente, "the future is ours."

— Thomas Fawcett

**TRAMPLED BY TURTLES**
Life Is Good on the Open Road (Banjodad)

Returning from a short hiatus while frontman Dave Simonett became Dead Man Winter, Trampled by Turtles' eighth studio effort picks up without lag. Although the eclectic Duluth, Minn., string act leads with barn-burning fiddle and blazing bluegrass speed on "Kelly's Bar," the album rides the sextet's harmony-touched ballads. "We All Get Lonely," "I'm Not There Anymore," and "Thank You, John Steinbeck" all string a melancholic but satisfied restlessness alongside the title track. Weary last word "I Learn the Hard Way" leaves off suggesting Simonett still hasn't found what he's looking for. (5:30pm, BMI stage)

★★★

— Doug Freeman

METALLICA

8pm, American Express stage

As revolutionary an ACL booking as Kendrick Lamar in 2013, Metallica on the mainstage Saturday – following Paul McCartney in the same slot Friday – crossed over, but singularly so perhaps. As EDM fades somewhat at the fest and Lamar opened the floodgates to hip-hop, you can lay odds Megadeth won't follow up Metallica next year in Zilker Park.

Which raises the question what effect, if any, Metallica's torpedo ACL set will have on the ever-changing genre eddies of the annual Zilker Park party. The 37-year-old Bay Area thrash metal legacy likely played to what the Rolling Stones faced in the same spot in 2006 – not ACL but staged by its promoter C3 Presents – and to similar outcome: a cross-generational communion of classic rock. Consider the abyss Metallica bridged over those decades.

Hard rock of the Seventies sounds like pop next to the extremity that Metallica and two-time Fun Fun Fun Fest headliners Slayer (R.I.P. both) imbued on the format in the early Eighties. Their reduction of blues-based bombast into pure riff peaked the very art of guitar hooks. For two hours, that electrified locals as frontman James Hetfield passed lightning back and forth with lead guitarist Kirk Hammett.

In most other rock, rhythm guitar remains about as sexy as a carburetor – essential, but not exactly a lady killer. In thrash, the tight, hard, chopping hooks Hetfield's famous for created their own universe of sound, and as shot through with the searing lyrical filigree of Hammett, they fire ever forward, ever aggressive. Louder, harder, faster. To that, add the dry, flat smack of drummer Lars Ulrich and bass synesthesia from Robert Trujillo for a protean outcome.

Four "new" tunes from 2016 comeback of sorts *Hardwired... to Self Destruct*, a Stevie Ray Vaughan tribute solo by Hammett, and canonical standards of progressive anthemery in "One," "Sad But True," and "Master of Puppets" fused into a battering ram of audio defiance. The mark of a truly great band is when other bands dare not follow them. What metal band could ever succeed Metallica at ACL 2018?

— Raoul Hernandez

Set list: "Hardwired," "Atlas, Rise," "Seek & Destroy," "Creeping Death," "Welcome Home (Sanitarium)," "Now That We're Dead," "For Whom the Bell Tolls," "Fade to Black," SRV tribute (Hammett)/"Anesthesia (Pulling Teeth)" [Trujillo], "Fuel," "Moth Into a Flame," "Sad But True," "One," "Master of Puppets," "Battery," "Nothing Else Matters," "Enter Sandman"



DAVID BRENDAN HALL

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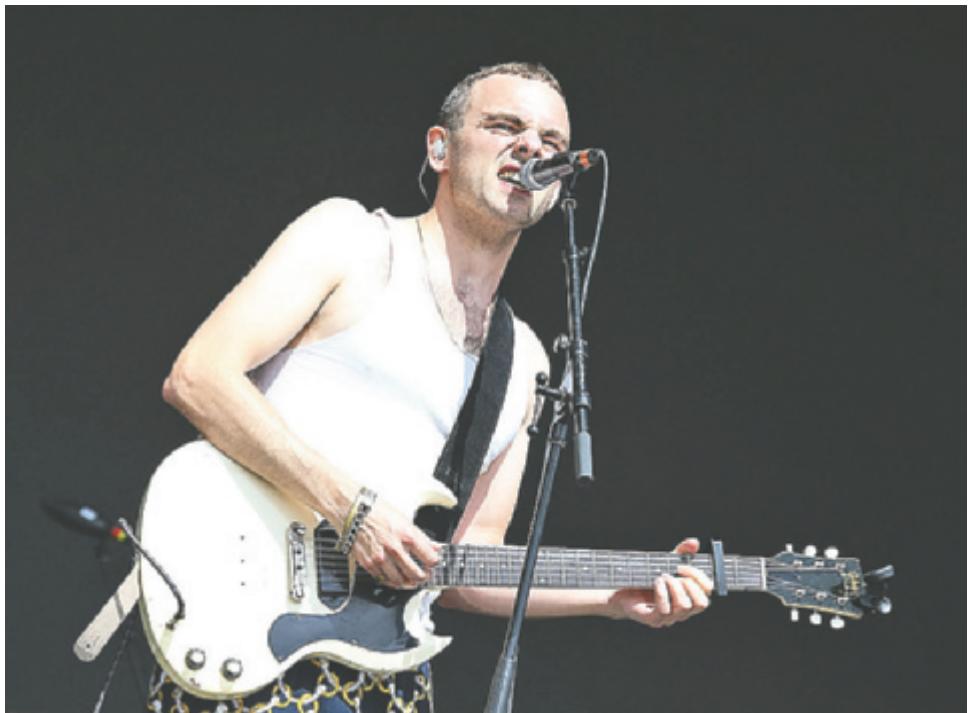
AMEN DUNES

1pm, Miller Lite stage

Amen Dunes, born Damon McMahon, doesn't do choruses, but he's created a sleeper dance LP full of dreamy, synth-laden folk and surf on his fifth album, *Freedom*, which he and his band performed almost in its entirety. Sweating in his grandmother's black and gold, chain-print, Hermès track pants from the Eighties and a white cotton tank top, the New Yorker played songs about the men he grew up with and around.

First tune "Satudarah," about his father and an outlaw motorcycle gang, introduced the theme of machismo and its typical paradigms, which resurfaced in "Blue Rose" and "Skipping School." Meanwhile, Sunday's small crowd languished in the heat. To huddles near the stage and people spread like melted ice cream across blankets, McMahon's clear as dirt voice – a throat full of grit and gravel – rasped "Lonely Richard" from 2014's *Love and Song to the Siren*, a Jeff Buckley cover from 2015's *Cowboy Worship*.

Though he's preferred anonymity up until recently, eschewing radio-friendly unit shifters and major labels, McMahon's changed his mind. His picture is on the cover of *Freedom*, and he's writing more accessible music. He wants to be of use that way.



GARY MILLER

"To help people who can relate," he said.

"Believe," about his mother after she was diagnosed with terminal cancer, brought excited cheers from the crowd. The emotional

song quotes his late mother, building slowly to a fevered, crashing, Western apotheosis.

– Christina Garcia



DAVID BRENDAN HALL

JANELLE MONÁE 4pm, American Express stage

"Women are to be respected," proclaimed the leader. Dressed as a funky commandant from a (one could only hope) feminist near-future, singer/actress Janelle Monáe destroyed her 4pm Sunday mandate at the American Express stage.

Regally clad in her signature black and white with red accents, the Atlanta dweller claimed the sexuality, femininity, and self-given royalty for herself and her fellow "electric ladies" in attendance. Commencing with "Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30," aka the Ric Flair entrance theme, General Monáe and her candy canes fivepiece, plus dancers,

didn't shortchange on spectacle.

"Remember when they used to say I look too mannish/ Black girl magic, y'all can't stand it," the *Hidden Figures* actress sang, almost vindictive and petty, on the disruptive, funky "Django Jane." Monáe changed into numerous outfits, and each equally majestic. A throne makes an appearance during the set.

"Pink is the truth you can't hide, maybe," she sings on "PYNK," wearing what can only be described as amazing vagina pants. On the Prince-influenced "Primetime," Monáe and crew dipped into his bag of sexualized purple panache. A faithfully upbeat rendition of "Electric Lady" turned into a boisterous, D.C.-centric go-go tune. Stone-cold mover, "Make Me Feel" featured more Prince magnetism. It also fused another foundational influence, James Brown, complete with the kneeling godfather's "baby, baby, baby" chants from "I Got the Feelin'."

The 32-year-old Kansas City native dons enough personas that some people think she won't be able to lock into an audience. That couldn't be further from the truth. Her inclusivity is rooted in consummate connection.

"Tightrope," the obvious and yet natural closer, concluded her sex-positive and inclusive musical missive with an outsize Brownian finish. A rapt audience witnessed a tremendous performance blending the men of a soulful, grounded past with a powerful, feminine tomorrow. – Kahron Spearman

SUPERFÓNICOS

Suelta

Stirring a thrilling brew of funk, cumbia, merengue, psych-rock, Afrobeat, and hip-hop on debut *Suelta*, Superfónicos offers remarkable stylistic variety in six songs. The local octet peaks on "El Miedo," painting traditional Colombian merengue with funky flourishes, frontman Jaime Ospina's gaita flute front and center. The slinky, sax-fueled "Ethiopian Dust" nods at jazz giant Mulatu Astatke, while the ancient rhythms of cumbia in "Rio Negro" come peppered with a parade of percussion and searing organ. The title track skewers societal ills (racism, xenophobia, homophobia) in a rap-rock-funk fiesta, the kind of upbeat burner that carries a live show. (12:15pm, Tito's stage)

★★★

– Thomas Fawcett



Davie

11:30AM, BMI STAGE

New Jersey native James David Treadwell comes by his talent through family connections. His grandmother Genee Harris hit with "Bye Bye Elvis" in the Fifties, and his preacher father led the family church band. Both sacred and secular inform 2017 debut EP *Black Gospel Vol. 1*, a soul stew with limbs in Motown, Stax, and modern R&B.

– Michael Toland

B.A.G.

3PM, BMI STAGE

San Francisco's Blimes Brixton (born Sam McDonald) and Seattle's Gabrielle Kadushin (Gifted Gab) take turns spitting, with the latter's stream-of-consciousness raps juxtaposing the former's song-style flows. 2017's "Come Correct" introduces the unbothered: "I've been amazing/ It's been debated/ They love to hate it." This year's "Nasty" continues the theme with "never let another punk bitch slip past me" through old-school scratching.

– Isabella Castro-Cota

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JOHN ANDERSON

THE REVOLUTION

6pm, Tito's stage

In the days leading up to their initial set at the Tito's stage, many didn't realize that the Revolution listed on the bill was Prince's prime backing unit. Seeing the sheer numbers crammed inside ACL's quonset-like hut at 6pm, word must have gotten out.

No mistaking this band, as a tape of their introduction from the *Purple Rain* soundtrack unspooled over the PA. Suddenly, it's 1984, you're at Minneapolis' First Avenue club, and cameras are rolling over your shoulder. Onstage: guitarist Wendy Melvoin and bassist Mark Brown in head-to-toe white; keyboardists Lisa Coleman and Matt Fink in his surgical scrubs; and Bobby Z behind a kick drum featuring a prominent, *Purple Rain* font band logo!

Then came the Minneapolis funk dance party: "America," "Computer Blue," B-side

"Erotic City." The beat dropped hard and energy skyrocketed with the Revolution adhering to the songs' original arrangements. Brown and Melvoin shared vocals in the absence of their late leader, until Mint Condition's Stokley Williams joined five songs in.

Nonstop hits fired from that point forward: "1999," "Let's Go Crazy," "When Doves Cry," with Melvoin reproducing the fallen bandleader's crazed lead guitar breaks, and a joyous "Raspberry Beret." Come "Purple Rain," Melvoin urged the audience to take the lead vocal. Hundreds sang every word, joining the Revolution in honoring a musician who cut across all parameters.

At that moment, Prince entered the room.

— Tim Stegall

THUNDERPUSSY (Stardog/Republic)

These four Seattle women answer prayers for a distaff Led Zeppelin tribute that plays originals. Thunderpussy wields Odin's hammer like they were born to the task, and have received the endorsement of no less a stadium god than Pearl Jam's Mike McCready for their troubles. Singer Molly Sides purrs far more appealing than Robert Plant's old trouser-stuffing shriek, and dousing cock rock clichés in estrogen may be the ultimate feminist rock move. The album's at its best with opening crunge "Speed Queen" and punkish theme song "Thunderpussy." (1pm, Honda stage)

★★★



— Tim Stegall

BAHAMAS Earthtones (Brushfire)

Afie Jurvanen's fourth LP notches irresistible, almost defiantly chill grooves. Although opener "Alone" floats low on a Bill Callahan vocal, the album defines behind the rhythm section for D'Angelo's *Black Messiah*, Pino Palladino and James Gadson, who lend the recording a sly and cool funk ethos, laid-back but invigorating. "Opening Act (The Shooby Dooby Song)" slides soulful against Jurvanen's scattering wordplay and "Show Me Naomi" jags with sharpened guitar licks ahead of the mellow tones to "No Expectations." The entire production is clever and suave, with effervescent female backing vox, even as the backside ranges more adventurous with the low-down "Bad Boys Need Love Too" and tinkering "Everything to Everyone." (3pm, Miller Lite stage)

★★★



— Doug Freeman

ST. VINCENT

7pm, HomeAway stage

Hours before this Dallas native's ACL appearance, the U.S. Senate approved Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court appointment in a 50-48 vote. For women who had hoped that reopening and publicly probing painful wounds would make a difference, it was devastating. St. Vincent, in her omnipotence, could feel it.

"It just reminds me that no matter how much insane shit is going on outside of here, this moment is ours," Annie Clark, the woman behind the moniker, offered between songs. "There's a reason to dance."

And dance we did. We swung our hips through the sexy groove of "Los Ageless," which Clark ended in a guttural "whoa." We bounced around to the frenetic energy of "Pills," only stopping to watch her shred the shit out of a guitar solo, which will never not be an incredible experience.

Clark seemed to be hyper charged, though she wasn't always as overt as punching her first in the air and screaming "Fight the power," which she did shortly after taking the stage. Her voice, normally understated if pristine, crackled with electricity, taking on new heft. The already riotous guitar lines of "Rattlesnake" took on extra venom that seeped into the stage lighting, which flashed at triple time as Clark ripped up and down her frets.

As the set wound down, she launched "Fast Slow Disco," one of those rare remixes that's better than the original, to which even the last few stationary hold-outs started to sway. What Clark had insisted finally came true: the moment really did belong to the crowd.

"Don't it beat a slow dance to death?" she sang, her voice soaring effortlessly into the scales.

— Abby Johnston

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DAVID BRENDAN HALL

Moses Sumney

4PM, TITO'S STAGE

Ghanaian-American Moses Sumney creates longing, beautiful, soulful music. After a promising EP, 2017 LP *Aromanticism* showcases his ability to discuss the jagged difficulties and definitions of love and relationships within an ever-changing Tinder/Bumble universe. This year's extended play, *Black in Deep Red*, 2014, traffics socially conscious protestations.

— Kahron Spearman

Vince Staples

6PM, AMERICAN EXPRESS STAGE

Long Beach native Vince Staples rose to public consciousness on notable features for the Odd Future collective and a collaborative mixtape with recently deceased rapper/producer Mac Miller. The MC ascended atop solid debut EP, *Hell Can Wait*, and first major label full-length, the critically acclaimed *Summertime '06*. Staples pulled from house and Detroit techno for *Big Fish Theory*, one of 2017's best releases.

— Kahron Spearman

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DAVID BRENDAN HALL

ARCTIC MONKEYS

8pm, Honda stage

Arctic Monkeys' brilliant but divisive sixth studio album, this year's *Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino*, set up their fourth ACL Fest appearance on Sunday and raised the question whether the intimate, lounge-y concept album would translate across a festival field or even mesh with their previous arena-rock hits. The answer at their headlining set was a mixed bag. Ultimately, the new material failed to connect no matter how compelling. Yet, the group's familiar explosiveness revved the crowd to a proper first weekend closeout.

Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino, with its disaffected lunar cabaret schtick, delivers deliberately difficult fare, asking fans to follow Alex Turner's crooning ballads as he plays Ziggy Stardust stuck in an extraterrestrial piano bar. That's a long trip to make from the thumping skuzz and hard dance-floor bangers from 2013's AM, and knowingly, the Sheffield UK sextet leaned heavily on that previous outing, with seven of the set's 21 songs served from that platter over a 90-minute span.

Exception to the new material was opener "Four Out of Five," the lead single dishing deep groove and followed immediately by the

pummel of "Brianstorm" from 2007's frenetic *Favourite Worst Nightmare*. Also notable was how Turner torqued the set-list to align older songs with the five new tunes he offered up, especially in his shift to keyboards for the languid "505" and the title track to *Tranquility* before "Do Me a Favour" and ripper "Don't Sit Down 'Cause I've Moved Your Chair" brought the crowd back to an uproar.

That coincided with the point at which Travis Scott's earth-rattling bass blast from down the Zilker Park hill upturned the Monkeys, crushing the slow sway of "The Ultracheese." Punk barrage "Pretty Visitors" punched back, but suave closer "Arabella" lost the fight and seemed to threaten any encore.

The band's short, three-song return triumphed, however, new "Star Treatment" giving way to the debut LP's frantic "I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor" and the show closing with AM's audience blow-up "R U Mine?" The new platter might not play well for the festival set, but Arctic Monkeys have enough firepower to provide ample air cover.

— Doug Freeman

SHAWN MENDES (Island)

There's a reason Mendes' third album is self-titled. The 20-year-old Canadian rose to fame singing covers on Vine and up until this album played catchy, somewhat mediocre pop hits. Now, with the help of producers John Mayer and Ryan Tedder (Paul McCartney, Adele), he's graduated his diary entries into fully dimensional/confessional string ballads. Groovier tracks "Lost in Japan" and "Particular Taste" anchor the heaviness of "In My Blood," "Youth" featuring Khalid, and "Perfectly Wrong," tying together his falsetto-driven journey into figuring out love, whiskey, and sex. (6pm, Honda stage)

★★★



— Isabella Castro-Cota

TRAVIS SCOTT

8:45pm, American Express stage

Travis Scott's music is too sporadic, momentary, and Auto-Tuned to succeed anywhere but within the ephemeral conscious of the smartphone generation. His weekend one closing set proved songs are merely the Houston rapper's overture.

Like metal or punk, his mystique is only realized in a live setting. The Houston rapper embodies the "La Flame" moniker because his concerts set venues ablaze, inciting more mosh pits, riots, and hysteria with each show. None of this was lost on Juul-ripping Snapchatters who arrived early for Scott's 8:45pm set.

Ten excruciating minutes later, stage screens turned black before a cheeky intro asked, "Where in the world, but Astroworld, can you have so much fun?" Scott adored the Houston-area theme park as a kid, and was devastated by its premature closure. His new album takes the park's title, but like much of his catalog, hovers through a projection of Scott's memory.

As such, his ACL set brought us through the album's gold, wide-mouthed cover and into the grounds of his own Astroworld.

Beginning with the paranoid "Stargazing," Scott toured his discography's biggest attractions. From the bone-chilling "Mamacita" to the club conundrum of "No Bystanders," hits old and new built momentum like the slow crawl to the top of a roller coaster before 808s dropped, smoke and fire shot through the air, and Scott's rasp brought the crowd to a moshing frenzy. For "Goosebumps," the rapper brought onstage a high school kid to perform his biggest hit to date. Pubescent vocals radicalized by the mic's Auto-Tuning, the moment moved the youngster, Scott, and the crowd to reckless abandon.

Astroworld's theme park trope reflects the ups and downs of Scott's childhood, but starting 10 minutes late and ending 15 minutes early, the condensed set only made time for the highs. Introspective slow cuts such as "90210" and "Maria I'm Drunk" were left out for more obliterating hits "Sicko Mode" and "Butterfly Effect." Instead of the roller-coaster ride finishing after its biggest drop, it looped back to free fall again and again.

— Jeremy Steinberger

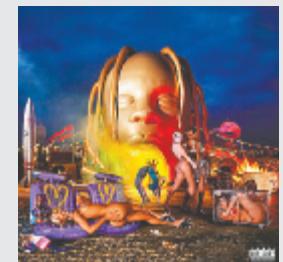


GARY MILLER

TRAVIS SCOTT *Astroworld* (Epic)

In his expertly curated third major-label LP *Astroworld*, Houston-area native Travis Scott realizes the breadth of his abilities. The rapper/producer's best attributes lie in his high-level facility to collect and reassemble voices and sonics the way a fashion designer organizes a runway show. The album's trap-psych spaciousness blends so that most of *Astroworld* plays out like a single long, spectacularly mixed track. From the start, "Stargazing" and the Frank Ocean-assisted "Carousel," Scott weaves himself into the cosmic production. Even *Astroworld*'s best moments, "Stop Trying to Be God" and "Sicko Mode," are the compositional flips featuring big-name players — James Blake, Kid Cudi, Stevie Wonder; and Drake, respectively. (8:45pm, American Express stage)

★★★★



— Kahron Spearman

ARTIST SIGNINGS

WEEKEND TWO SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

- 1:00pm **Sasha Sloan**
- 1:00pm **Bishop Briggs**
- 1:00pm **Curtis Roush**
- 1:30pm **Natalie Prass**
- 2:15pm **Nicole Atkins**
- 3:30pm **Gryffin**
- 5:15pm **Golden Dawn Arkestra**

SATURDAY

- 2:00pm **Donna Missal**
- 2:00pm **Wallows**
- 2:30pm **Chvrches**
- 3:00pm **Ikebe Shakedown**
- 3:00pm **Verite**
- 3:00pm **Ruston Kelly**
- 3:15pm **Durand Jones & The Indications**
- 3:00pm **Naked Giants**
- 5:30pm **Japanese Breakfast**

SUNDAY

- 1:00pm **Lemaitre**
- 1:30pm **Superfonicos**
- 1:30pm **Thunderpussy**
- 2:30pm **Mt. Joy**
- 3:00pm **YUNGBLUD**
- 3:00pm **Shakey Graves**
- 3:30pm **Twin Shadow**
- 6:30pm **Houndmouth**

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AC FOOD FIGHT: DESSERTS

SWEET TREATS ARE NATURALLY OCCURRING MOOD BOOSTERS

With a hurricane blowing into the Gulf Coast, and catastrophic judicial decisions at the federal level, dessert is pretty much imperative these days. On the second weekend of ACL Fest, ice cream will not only help power you through the dizzying number of strangers who appear to be on the at-risk list for accidental death by selfie, but hey, it's 2018 and these three local vendors give us borderline healthy options. Go classic cow's milk and butter or opt out and spring for a you'll-never-know-it's-vegan treat.

But which one of these offerings is the best bet? The Chronicle investigates. — Jessi Cape



These masters of the ice cream arts have been perfecting their craft longer than a huge percent of the ACL crowd has even been alive.

Frosted raspberry lemonade non-dairy ice with gummi bear topping

It's Austin, so the likelihood of needing a chill factor is high. Find some shade and eat your cup o' Mexican vanilla slowly.

Metallic snakeskin-print Birkenstocks

Residente

This vegan craft bakery certainly doesn't skimp on bling — they're big fans of sprinkles and icing and sheet cake add-ins.

Chocolate chip cookie dough topped with chocolate sauce and sprinkles

With savory menu offerings too, these cats balance the temperature zone just right.

Vegan leather ankle boots

The National

FINAL VERDICT

Honestly, most of us are eating our feelings these days, so just get one of each.

WINNER

America (hopefully)



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ACL Eats Vendor List 2018

AMY'S ICE CREAMS This local crew has been folding up handcrafted ice creams and vegan fruit ices for 34 years. See the Food Fight! www.amysicecreams.com

AUSTIN'S PIZZA You can't go wrong with some simple pepperoni or cheese slices from a hometown favorite. www.austinspizza.com

BANANARCHY REVOLUTIONARY DESSERTS Frozen bananas dipped in chocolate are practically a health food. www.bananarchy.net

BLENDERS & BOWLS Fuel your fest with clean energy from tasty bowls of acai and toppings. www.blendersandbowls.com

BURRO CHEESE KITCHEN Using local artisan bread, small-batch cheeses, and custom-blended sauces and jams, these sammies take a childhood staple to the next level. www.burrocheesekitchen.com

CHI'LANTRO Where Korean cuisine meets BBQ; try the house-made kimchi fries. www.chilantrobbq.com

EAST SIDE KING This Japanese street food – like chicken karaage – is worth the wait. www.eastsideking.com

FLYRITE CHICKEN This local chain offers fast food with real ingredients, like their crispy chicken sandwiches and tempura cauliflower wraps. www.flyritechicken.com

FRANK Their “hot dogs, cold beer” slogans sums it up for this artisan sausagemaker. www.hotdogscoldbeer.com

GOODPOP Local popsicles so good they'll balance out the junk food and alcohol. www.goodpops.com

HIGH BREW COFFEE Cold-brewed coffee in a can! Mexican vanilla FTW. www.highbrewcoffee.com

JUICELAND Let these fresh juices and smoothies refresh your dancing legs. www.juiceland.com

KABABEQUE Mediterranean plus South Asian flavors equals can't-miss dishes like chicken shawarma and falafel wraps. www.kababequetx.com

LAMBA'S INDIAN KITCHEN Traditional North Indian cuisine with wraps for days. www.lambasindiankitchen.com

LONESOME DOVE WESTERN BISTRO Maybe it's “kick ass nachos,” maybe it's truffle mac & cheese, but whatever chef Tim Love serves will hit the spot. www.lonesomedoveaustin.com

MAINE ROOT BEVERAGES Take a break from the booze with these Fair Trade-certified, organically sweetened beverages. www.maineroot.com

MICKLETHWAIT CRAFT MEATS This East Austin food trailer does barbecue right, and their vinegar-based slaw adds the perfect complement. www.craftmeatsaustin.com

THE MIGHTY CONE If you're new to ACL, stop what you're doing and try the Crunchy Avocado Cone. They're literally designed for this festival. www.mightycone.com

MMMPANADAS Empanadas are fest favorites: self-contained pockets of deliciousness, with options for veggies and carnivores. www.mmmpanadas.com

THE NOBLE PIG It doesn't get much better than these scratch-made sandwiches stuffed with goodness. www.noblesandwiches.com

THE PEACHED TORTILLA Delicious modern Asian cuisine with a Southern flair comes in the form of bánh mì and fancy fries. www.thepeachedtortilla.com

SHADE TREE ORGANIC LEMONADE Cool off with USDA-certified organic, low-calorie lemonades in original, strawberry, and blueberry flavors. www.shadetreelemonade.com

SHAKE SHACK Diner-style burgers that originated in New York. www.shakeshack.com

SKULL & CAKEBONES Vegan, handcrafted, sweet and savory treats are ideal for any sweet tooth. See the Food Fight! www.skullandcakebones.com

SNO-BEACH Cool off with sno-cones from an Austin original. www.snobeachatx.com

SOUTHSIDE FLYING PIZZA Huge slices of scratch-made local pies are great for a midday shade break. www.southsidesflyingpizza.com

TACODELI Quintessentially Austin, this local fave makes just about anything work in a taco. www.tacodeli.com

TAMALE ADDICTION Traditional tamales using gluten-free ingredients with no lard or trans fat oils. Stuff one in your mouth and one in your pocket. www.tamaleaddiction.com

THE SALT LICK This Central Texas staple has served up tasty meats for more than 50 years. www.saltlickbbq.com

TIFF'S TREATS Tiff's has been delivering warm cookies for years, so it's high time we come to them. Snickerdoodle forever. See the Food Fight! www.cookiedelivery.com

TINOS GREEK CAFE Greek food with options for everyone. www.tinosgreekcafe.com

TORCHY'S TACOS Republican, Democrat, Independent – no matter your affiliation, these generous tacos are always tasty and even just one will satisfy. www.torchystacos.com

TRUDY'S You can't go wrong with these powerhouse tacos. www.trudys.com

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