

Los Angeles Times

ENTERTAINMENT & ARTS

‘Ten-hut’ for ‘A Soldier’s Play’ and the Hollywood Fringe Festival this weekend



Norm Lewis as Captain Richard Davenport in the national tour of “A Soldier’s Play” playing at the Ahmanson Theatre. (Joan Marcus)

BY STEVEN VARGAS, LOS ANGELES TIMES STAFF

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The “**Barbie**” movie is a little more than a month away and I’m officially hyped to see it in theaters. This won’t be your average live-action movie; **Greta Gerwig’s** take promises to be much more layered than meets the eye. Don’t believe me, check out **Abby Aguirre’s** [Vogue cover story](#) on Margot Robbie and the upcoming film. I’m **Steven Vargas**, your **L.A. Goes Out** host, and here are the top events for this upcoming weekend recommended by the crew ([sign up here for the newsletter](#)):

Weekly countdown



Sheldon D. Brown, left, Branden Davon Lindsay and Will Adams round out the cast of "A Soldier's Play." (Joan Marcus)

1. 'A Soldier's Play'

This Pulitzer Prize-winning play by [Charles Fuller](#) is bringing its thrilling twists and turns from a Louisiana Army base to Los Angeles. "**A Soldier's Play**," which takes place in 1944, is centered on the death of a Black sergeant. As interrogations begin on the base, a complex story investigating race relations in America surfaces from the whodunit. Times theater critic **Charles McNulty** recommends this Tony Award-winning revival at the **Ahmanson Theatre** in downtown L.A. The production "seizes hold of the audience," McNulty wrote in his [review](#). The show is directed by Tony Award winner **Kenny Leon**. Tickets range from **\$40 to \$155** and "A Soldier's Play" runs until **June 25**. For more details, check out [Center Theatre Group's website](#).



Amara Stern in "The Hybrid Lab: Conversations in Merging Dance Cultures #2" at the LAX Festival. (Michael Palma / Los Angeles Performance Practice)

2. 'The Hybrid Lab'

Get into the groove with "**The Hybrid Lab: Conversations in Merging Dance Cultures.**" The event is part dance party, part research, part performance. "The Hybrid Lab" is centered on a cypher, or freestyle circle, and provides space for people of different cultures and dance styles — such as contemporary and Black social dance — to come together in conversation through dance. The performance is facilitated by choreographer, dancer and educator **Amy O'Neal**. The night also includes new works in progress by **Stephen and Aisha**, **Ardyn Flynt**, **Satori Folkes-Stone**, **G'bari Gilliam**, **d. Sabela Grimes**, and the latest iteration of O'Neal's "**A Trio.**" The dance event takes place **7:30 p.m. Saturday** at **Stomping Ground L.A.** in El Sereno. Tickets cost **\$20** and more information can be found on [Eventbrite](#).



Renée Fleming (Andrew Eccles / Decca)

3. ‘An Evening With Renée Fleming’

L.A. Opera will be closing its season with a concert by soprano **Renée Fleming**. The performance at the **Dorothy Chandler Pavilion** in downtown L.A. will feature “**Penelope**,” a new work by composer **André Previn** and librettist **Tom Stoppard**. “Penelope” follows a mythic heroine who has spent years waiting for her husband to return from war. Fleming’s performance is accompanied by narration by **Merle Dandridge** (“[The Last of Us](#)”), the **Emerson String Quartet** and **Simone Dinnerstein** on piano. Times classical music critic **Mark Swed** recommends the evening with Fleming. Tickets to the **7:30 p.m. Saturday** performance range from **\$29 to \$214** and more details can be found on [L.A. Opera’s website](#).



Penelope Gottlieb, "Colocasia esculenta," 2023. Acrylic and ink over a digital reproduction of an Audubon print. Paper: 60 x 40 in. Framed: 62 x 42 in. (© Penelope Gottlieb / L.A. Louver)

4. 'The Flower Show'

Ever been wowed by a beautiful flower? Get ready to be amazed by the dozens in **L.A. Louver's "The Flower Show."** The group show includes work depicting flowers by more than 50 artists of varying styles, mediums and backgrounds. While a majority of the botanical-inspired works are contemporary, some date as far back as the 19th century. Attitudes toward flowers in art have changed dramatically over the years, at one point seen as decorative and later viewed as a representation of spirituality. While you can't smell the roses, you can still take some time out of your week to step back and look at them. Times arts and culture reporter **Deborah Vankin** recommends this blooming exhibition. "The Flower Show" opens **Wednesday** with a reception from **6 to 8 p.m.** and runs until **Sept. 1**. The gallery in Venice is **free** and open from **10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday**. More details can be found on [L.A. Louver's website](#).



Alonzo King LINES Ballet performs "Deep River," a collaboration among director-choreographer King, pianist-composer Jason Moran and vocalist Lisa Fischer. (RJ Muna)

5. 'Alonzo King LINES Ballet: Deep River'

The **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** in Beverly Hills presents the return of renowned dance company **Alonzo King LINES Ballet** with "**Deep River**." The full-length work was made by company co-founder, artistic director and choreographer **Alonzo King** to celebrate the 40th anniversary season. "Deep River" explores family lineage by combining dance with Black spirituals and documenting the cycle of life. The performance is set to a score by MacArthur fellow **Jason Moran** and features live vocals by Grammy winner **Lisa Fischer**. Remaining tickets range from **\$39 to \$99** and performances are at **7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday**. More information can be found on [the Wallis' website](#).

Bonus round: Mighty Wurlitzer Pops with Mark Herman



The Barr-Fox Mighty Wurlitzer at Nathan Barr's Bandrika Studios. (William Short / William Short Photography)

Take a trip to film and TV composer **Nathan Barr's** studio, **Bandrika**, to hear some of his scores from projects like "**The House with a Clock in Its Wall**" and "**Hollywood**." Barr built his studio in Tarzana around a large 1928 Barr/Fox Wurlitzer Theater Organ that can be heard in films that include "**The Sound of Music**" and "**The Day the Earth Stood Still**." At the **Newman Scoring Stage** at Fox Studios from 1928 to 1998, the instrument is now under Barr's care and will be performed live by organist **Mark Herman** to accompany the 1929 **Laurel and Hardy** short silent film, "**That's My Wife**." Tickets to the **7:30 p.m. Saturday** event range from **\$30 to \$40** and details can be found on [Eventbrite](#).

Your L.A. weekend, all mapped out

For a more comprehensive roundup of exhibitions, concerts, screenings, festivals and other events, [check out](#) **Matt Cooper's Culture Guide**. The mapped list is a go-to for those who make plans based on the commute, and it also can be filtered by event type and price.

On my mind



Liz Larsen, left, and Daya Curley in "A Transparent Musical" at Mark Taper Forum. (Craig Schwartz / All Uses © 2023 Craig Schwartz)

On Wednesday, I went to the opening night performance of “**A Transparent Musical**” at the **Mark Taper Forum** in downtown L.A. The musical is based on the beloved Amazon Prime series “**Transparent**.” Creator **Joey Soloway** brought the [Pfefferman family back to life on stage](#) with sibling **Faith Soloway**. The story is similar to the series; after Maura shares that she is transgender, her three kids and ex-wife navigate the news of her transition. While Faith’s music was delightful, the book by Joey and **MJ Kaufman** seemed to bite off more than it could chew as a stage musical, resulting in straggling storylines and confusing time jumps. For more on the show, check out [McNulty’s review](#).

Liz Larsen, who plays the matriarch of the Pfefferman family, commanded the stage with her antics and bubbly personality — at one point shouting from the catwalk. In “**The Secret to a Marriage**,” her character shared the ways in which she must make sacrifices to make a marriage work. Larsen leaned into the lyrics’ unapologetically chaotic nature. As a result, her physical comedy packed a punch and her lyrics were full of emotion. While she wasn’t initially supportive of Maura’s transition, by the time the two met again for “**Emergency Contact**,” a heartfelt story of love after marriage beamed from Larsen and **Daya Curley**. Although they’re on different life paths, they decided to still be each other’s emergency contact. Their voices shined and the weight of platonic love took the story and performance to new heights. **Center Theatre Group’s** “A Transparent Musical” runs until **June 25** and tickets range from **\$40 to \$129**. More details can be found on [CTG’s website](#).

Insights: Your Guide to the Hollywood Fringe Festival

Theater lovers, our Superbowl has arrived. **Hollywood Fringe Festival** is here and it’s packed with hundreds of new shows and works in progress. Picking the right show for the night is a bit tricky. To make your decisions a little easier, I’ve compiled a list of 10 promising shows to check out. So grab your tickets (and some comfortable theater-going clothes to run from theater to theater) and get ready!

- **“Breakup Addict”** — Join the 12-step journey addressing love addiction in this solo comedy show by **Paige Wilhide**. [Details here](#).
- **“Annex”** — This dark comedy ensemble follows a queer family and the drama of their lives. [Details here](#).
- **“Runaway Rue”** — If you’re looking for something the whole family can enjoy, this puppet musical is a delightful story about a dog looking for the perfect home. [Details here](#).
- **“Will the Real Me Please Stand Up?”** — Actors can trauma-bond over the auditioning process with this solo show about the experience of taking on a new character with each self-tape and losing a bit of yourself with each submission. [Details here](#).
- **“90’s Hip-Hop Raised Me: A One Woman Show”** — **Malaika Jules** takes you back to the golden era of hip-hop to share a coming-of-age story about longing for a father’s connection and discovering oneself. [Details here](#).
- **“Apokalupsis”** — Adam tries to escape a tragic death crafted by his father in an epic mythological journey. [Details here](#).
- **“Les Millénniables”** — This parody pop musical takes a few satirical jabs at millennials — think **“Les Misérables”** meets **“Now That’s What I Call…”** pop songs. [Details here](#).
- **“Monkeys”** — This ensemble comedy dives into the protest by the San Joaquin County Filipino farm laborers in the 1930s and the friendships made during the strike. [Details here](#).
- **“The Allure of Thug Life”** — Mélia is a 15-year-old girl who escapes her bullies through hip-hop and rap. The only issue: she’s an upper-middle-class teen from Oakland. Will she succeed in her riches-to-rags journey? [Details here](#).
- **“Soundtrip: Fringe Edition”** — Ever wonder what inner monologue is running through a character’s mind? This immersive show brings you into performers’ heads with headphones that give you access to their every thought and cue during the show. [Details here](#).

Hollywood Fringe Festival starts **Thursday** and runs until **June 25**. Ticket prices and dates range depending on the show. Check out all the performances on [HFF's website](#).

Go out speed round



Installation view, "Chris Engman: Prism," Luis De Jesus Los Angeles, 2023. (IO STUDIO, Grau de Corral / Chris Engman / Luis De Jesus Los Angeles)

Go out before it closes: Chris Engman's exhibition at **Luis De Jesus Los Angeles** in downtown L.A. is coming to a close **Saturday**. "**Prism**" is a series of photographs Engman created in collaboration with his toddler. He observed his child's lack of hesitation and abundant curiosity when making art, and decided to join in. The exhibit showcases their paintings and drawings filled with childlike joy and vitality. The **free** gallery is open from **11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Friday** and from **10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday**. More details can be found on [Luis De Jesus' website](#).

Go out for free: The **Getty** in Brentwood kicks off Pride Month with a celebration at the museum courtyard. The event is filled with food, drinks and music by **DJ Daisy O'Dell**. And when you need to step away from the party, the “**Tim Walker: Wonderful Things**” exhibition will be available to view as well. The **free** celebration is from **7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday** and more information can be found on the [Getty's website](#).

Go out and learn: The **Academy Museum of Motion Pictures** in Mid-Wilshire is offering a series of drop-in puppetry workshops throughout the month of June. Participants of all ages can create storyboards and characters alongside **Bob Baker Marionette Theater** members. This recommendation comes from The Times' **Jessica Gelt**. The next workshop is from **12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday** at the **Shirley Temple Education Studio** at the museum. A marionette show will follow the workshop from **2:30 to 3:30 p.m.** The workshop is **free** and more details can be found on the [Academy Museum's website](#).

Go out with the kids: Get your hands dirty with the kids at **Craft Contemporary** for **Open Clay Time**. The weekly program welcomes families throughout the summer to create with air dry clay in conjunction with the biennial clay exhibition, “**Wayfinding**.” The workshops are first-come-first-served and cost **\$5**, in addition to museum admission, which ranges from **free to \$9**. The next gathering will be from **3 to 5 p.m. Friday** and more details can be found on [Craft Contemporary's website](#).



Volta Collective and the Poetic Research Bureau present "SALT." (Katy Shayne)

Go out on a date: Volta and the Poetic Research Bureau present "SALT," an immersive performance that activates the audience's senses. The show reimagines the story of Euripides' "Medea" with dance, live music and edible installations by artist and chef Heidi Ross. It'll be an experience sure to break the ice for the first date. Performances are at **4 p.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday**. Tickets to the show at **2220 Arts + Archives** in Westlake cost **\$30** and more details can be found on [Volta's website](#).

Go out all day: If you're looking for a full-day event, spend your Saturday at the **20th Tarfest**. The festival at **Pan Pacific Park** in Fairfax features live musical performances, art installations and creative activities by L.A. institutions like the **Academy Museum** and the **Petersen Automotive Museum**. The **free** event takes place from **2 to 7 p.m. Saturday**. More information can be found on the [event's website](#).

Go out with L.A. Times Book Club: The **Los Angeles Times Book Club** presents a discussion with **Elliot Page** about his memoir, “**Pageboy**.” “**The Umbrella Academy**” star will be in conversation with actor and film producer **Kate Mara** as they dissect Page’s book about his journey through Hollywood as a transgender star. The discussion is at **7 p.m. Thursday** at **the Montalbán** in Hollywood and tickets range from **\$25 to \$65**. More details can be found on [Eventbrite](#).

More from the crew here

Pride events are in full swing. The Times’ Matt Cooper brings you an art-filled [guide on ways to celebrate](#).

I’ve been out of town for a while and am absolutely craving L.A. cuisine. Time to bring out this guide to [the best places to eat and drink in the city right now](#), **according to our food writers**.

There are some foggy mornings ahead for L.A. If you’re trying to **make the most of “June gloom,”** [try one of these enchanting L.A. hikes](#).

Tired of biking in the city streets? **Try gravel cycling.** [Here are 11 spots around L.A. that get you biking freely in nature](#).

I’m all ears!

That’s all I’ve got for this week. Follow our feed of recommendations and itineraries on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), and if you have recs of your own, send them to steven.vargas@latimes.com.

Go out and wander: Wander through downtown L.A. during **Grand Performances'** summer season of **free** concerts at **California Plaza**. The upcoming iteration of the series is a Saturday evening filled with work by artists from the **City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship**. The lineup includes **Daniel Corral, David Ulin** and **Jasmine Orpilla**. The event is from **6 to 10 p.m. Saturday**. The location offers the perfect opportunity to wander through the art museums near Grand Avenue. More details on the **free** event can be found on [Grand Performances' website](#).



Installation view, "Adrian L. Burrell: The Game God(S)," Micki Meng, 2023. (Paul Salveson / Adrian L. Burrell and Micki Meng, San Francisco)

Go out to a new gallery: **Micki Meng** recently opened a new gallery space in Culver City, launching with **Adrian L. Burrell's** exhibition "**The Game God(S)**." The exhibition features a film that uses mythology and documentary to investigate anti-Black capitalism. The **free** gallery is open from **noon to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday** and more details can be found on [Micki Meng's website](#).

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/newsletter/2023-06-07/what-to-do-this-weekend-hollywood-fringe-festival-guide-l-a-goes-out>