



The Cybertronic Spree

ARTS + CULTURE

ARTS FORECAST

CULTURE

Arts Forecast: Robot hair metal, drag pumpkins, the best New Wave...

By MARKE B. OCTOBER 12, 2021

A quickie Arts Forecast from me this week, because I am busy tallying up the more than 10,000 Best of the Bay Readers’ poll votes. But there’s still so much going on, so buckle up your rhinestone belt and let’s ride into the week, yeehaw! (PS Don’t forget to party with us October 20 at El Rio for our **8th anniversary Fall Fling**.)

2021 SF Ethnic Dance Festival... ON FILM



ONGOING THROUGH OCTOBER 31 SAN FRANCISCO ETHNIC DANCE DANCE FESTIVAL ON FILM This year the whirling, colorful, always joyful Ethnic Dance Festival has moved from the stage to the screen (see also: SF Dance Film Fest below), with a host of troupe performances on-demand and online events through the month as well. Soak in traditions and explorations from Cuba, Guinea, Hawaii, India, Iran and Turkey, Mexico, and even the US. [More info here.](#)

WED/12 SEPEHR AND MOZHGAN Persian techno, amiright? I was sad when DJ and producer Sepehr moved from the Bay, along with a couple other great club friends of Persian descent, but his wonderful output, including latest, sinuously dextrous album **Survivalism** on his Shaytoon label, still keeps him in my dancing life. Mozhgan is magic—I have no idea how she assembles the tracks she plays, which always add up to a deep, twilit experience somewhere between goth and psychedelia, but I can never get enough. She’s been touring the world with partner Solar, so having her back here, appearing with Sepehr, is a real treat. 9pm-2am at F8. [More info here.](#)



Megan Lowe in 'Meet Us Quickly With Your Mercy.' Photo by RJ Muna

THU/14-SUN/17 “MEET US QUICKLY WITH YOUR MERCY” An outdoor aerial performances that takes as its subject the devastating effects of mass incarceration, this collaboration from CounterPulse, the Museum of the African Diaspora, choreographer Jo Kreiter, and 2020 Pulitzer Prize Finalist Rahsaan Thomas, who lives behind bars at San Quentin State Prison, looks affecting and incredible. “*Meet Us Quickly* asks how Blacks and Jews can amplify the call for racial justice via an end to mass incarceration. Unfolding in three parts, *Meet Us Quickly* links the ‘caging of black bodies’ in the United States, from the period of slavery through the current era of mass incarceration, to the dehumanization of Jews that flourished on both sides of the Atlantic throughout much of the 20th century and which is becoming prominent again today with the rise of white nationalism.” [More info here.](#)

THU/14 “WHITE SPACE: ESSAYS ON CULTURE, RACE, AND WRITING” Author Jennifer De Leon discusses her new book, *White Space*, highlighting her coming-of-age journey as a Guatemalan-American woman navigating the space between two worlds, from cobblestoned Central American streets to posh university. 5:30pm on Zoom via the Mechanics’ Institute. [More info here.](#)

THU/14 THE CYBERTRONIC SPREE OK, imagine a hair metal band from 1986—except they’re Transformers from outer space? That’s the not-quite-basic premise of these rockstars in disguise, mashing up anime and video game themes with wild guitar licks and pelvic thrusts. They’re more than meets the ear! 7pm at Rickshaw Stop. [More info here.](#)

SFDDFF 2021 Festival Trailer



FRI/15 THROUGH OCTOBER 24 SAN FRANCISCO DANCE FILM FESTIVAL Considering that practically all dance performances over the past 18 month have been seen on a screen, this should be familiar press-play territory— but the 12th annual SFDDFF always kicks things up a notch in dazzlement. A combination of in-person and online screenings presents dozens of films, from docs on Ailey, Jones, and Balanchine to local shorts that brighten your interface with motion and storytelling. [More info here.](#)

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FRI/15 PORCHLIGHT STORYTELLING OUT OF THE FOG? This Litquake Festival event definitely heralds the return of author readings to local venues, with a panoply of exciting local women writers taking the stage, including Charlie Jane Anders, Kelly Beardsley, Beth Lisick, Miah Jeffra, and Monique Jenkinson. The theme? Uplift. (And don’t forget to check out more great [Litquake](#) events through the next couple weeks!) At Verdi Club. [More info here.](#)



NEW WAVE CITY
《THE FIRST & FOREMOST 80s DANCE PARTY》
29-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY
SATURDAY OCTOBER 16

DANCE TO
THE BEST OF
NEW WAVE
IN TWO ROOMS

FEATURING THE 40-YEAR
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
RELEASE OF DEPECHE MODE
DEBUT “SPEAK & SPELL”
ALL TRACKS PLAYED

CAT CLUB 1190 FOLSOM ST
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SAT/16 NEW WAVE CITY 29TH ANNIVERSARY '80s nostalgia nights were happening even before that splangly decade ended. I remember going to an “80s classics” night in 1989! And while the cultural import of those throwbacks has changed over the years ('90s reaction against harsh techno sounds, 2000s bachelorette singalongs, 2010s indie touchstones) nothing can beat hearing the Cure on a crowded dance floor, still. You'll get Robert Smith and a whole lot more at New Wave City, which for almost three decades has remained true to the music and vibe of those fluorescent goth times. Founding DJs Shindog & Skip bring you this extravaganza, which includes a full play-through of Depeche Mode's *Speak & Spell* album, marking 40 years since its debut. How's that for New Wave? 9pm-2am at Cat Club. [More info here.](#)

SAT/16 ALL-DRAG PUMPKIN PATCH POP-UP! I wish I had a child, I would take them to this! (I may just go anyway.) The talented queens of Media Meltdown are hosting a cute Halloween thingie: “Located at the brand new queer cafe MILK SF in the heart of the Mission, the pumpkin patch will feature drag hosts all day long and drag performances inspired by classic movie monsters every half hour for all pumpkin purchasers and perusers to enjoy! We will have a wide variety of pumpkin options for the whole family, secured from a Bay Area queer-operated farm! And after you've selected your pumpkin and seen a little drag, feel free to peek inside our all-ages haunted walk through (if you dare)!” 10am-6pm at Milk. [More info here.](#)

SAT/16-SUN/17 SAN FRANCISCO TROLLEY DANCES “Locals and visitors alike look forward to this annual festival of dance and performance. This year's route travels from the Castro to one of San Francisco's newest neighborhoods, the East Cut. Participating companies include Babatunji & Charmaine, Epiphany Dance Theater, Joe Landini & Dancers, La Mezcla, Parangal Dance Company and Rising Rhythm. A total of 10 tours are scheduled over the weekend, five each day starting at 10:15 a.m., 11 a.m., 11:45 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. Each tour runs approximately two hours. Admission is free with the cost of a Muni ticket.” [More info here.](#)



SAT/16 MEKLIT How much do I adore Meklit! “An Ethio-American singer, guitarist, Bay Area resident, and TED Senior Fellow, Meklit writes music steeped in traditional Ethiopian rhythms blended with her singer-songwriter's poetic core, with floating melodies and dancing grooves that draw on sources as varied as East African music, Nina Simone and Joni Mitchell. Meklit became a sensation with the release of her 2010 debut *On A Day Like This*, an enchanting album featuring her delicately luminous original songs and traditional Amharic melodies.” 7:30pm at SFJAZZ. [More info here.](#)

SAT/16 SHOW ME LOVE Who isn't ready for some classic house and disco after all this mess? Brilliant DJs Kenny Summit, Steve Fabus, and more will keep your heel pumping and your heart aloft. 9pm-late at Monarch. [More info here.](#)