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11 There’s plenty of fun in store in the Florida Keys

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Full moon bike ride rolls on Aug. 15
Southernmost Slow Ride is hosting a grilled cheese full moon bike ride, beginning at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 15, at the end of the Edward Knight (White Street) Pier.

The group will attempt to answer the question “Is the moon made of cheese?” Participants can bring cheese sandwich ingredients, portable grills and deck their bikes with as many lights as possible.

For information, email Dee Dee Green at dgreen@cityofkeywest-fl.gov or call 850-602-8752.

Historical Trust hosts presentation Aug. 19
The Matecumbe Historical Trust will present “The Keys’ Worst Hurricanes,” from the Irving R. Eyster collection of keywest-fl.gov or call 850-602-8752.

Waterfront hosts Thursday farmers market
A farmers market will be held at Truman Waterfront every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Organizers are applying to make the show EBT/SNAP friendly so affordable fresh food will be available to more people.

Parking is plentiful and free with a resident parking permit. Visitors are encouraged to use the free Duval Loop bus, which stops close by.

The new splash park and tours of the historic Coast Guard Cutter Ingham are also available in the park.

For information or to participate, contact Sean Krikorian at 305-731-3385 or visit kwfarmersmarket on Facebook.

Craft shows seek artists’ submissions
The 35th Key West Craft Show, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 25-26, is accepting artists’ applications at http://www.KeyWestArtCenter.com until Sunday, Sept. 1.

The Old Island Days Art Festival, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 22 and 23, is accepting artists’ applications at http://www.KeyWestArtCenter.com until Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Home tours poster contest
The Old Island Restoration Foundation is looking for an image to be used for its home tour posters and advertising. Artists are invited to submit artwork that captures the OIRF mission of celebrating and sustaining Key West’s unique architecture, culture and history.

Artwork can be any medium or size, but must be reproducible to an 11 x 8.5-inch horizontal image.

The winner will be chosen by a jury of the OIRF board of directors and staff and will be announced at the Home Tours Kickoff Party on Thursday, Nov. 14.

Deadline to submit original art, application and $20 fee is Monday, Oct. 1 at The Oldest House Museum, 322 Duval St.

For information, email oirf@oirf.org or call 305-294-9501.
The subtropical island of Key West, internationally known as a top LGBTQ destination, will welcome visitors to a long weekend of all-male adult activities Wednesday through Sunday, Aug. 14-18, during the annual Tropical Heat celebration.

The roster of revelry includes pool parties, brunch with local female impersonators, sizzling dance parties and adult-themed gatherings at the island’s LGBTQ resorts, guesthouses and entertainment venues.

The kick-off party starts at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 14, at Island House Resort, 1129 Fleming St. A festival favorite, the launch will feature poolside drink specials, appetizers and prize giveaways.

Tropical Heat participants can make a big splash on Thursday, Aug. 15, at a noontime pool party at the Equator Resort, 822 Fleming St. Thursday’s schedule also includes a 2 to 4 p.m. “Drunken Drag Brunch” at Mangoes, 700 Duval St., featuring a Cuban-style buffet, performances by drag queens and bottomless mimosas.

Thursday’s after-dark activities are to include parties at local LGBTQ venues.

Revelers can cool down Friday at the Bourbon Street Pub/New Orleans House, 724 Duval St., with a pool party slated for noon. The lively event typically offers an afternoon of spirited pool games, a DJ and live entertainment, food and frosty libations.

As the sun sets, evening festivities heat up with events including “The Big Game Party” at Alexander’s Guesthouse, 1118 Fleming St.

Saturday’s highlights include the Equator Resort’s 13th annual Toga Party at 7 p.m. An anticipated festival event each year, the gala features prizes for the best togas.

The high-spirited merriment continues Sunday with attractions including Key West’s famed Tea Dance at 4 p.m. at La Te Da, 1125 Duval St.

Closing events include a late-night “Afterglow Party” at Saloon 1, 504 Petronia St.

Tropical Heat VIP access passes are available for $99 per person. Alternatively, attendees can pay individual event admissions.

For event information and VIP passes, visit https://www.gaykeywestfl.com/tropical-heat/

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**Key West BrewFest adds zest to Labor Day Weekend**

During a festival “crafted” for Labor Day weekend, attendees can sample nearly 200 beers and ales while also discovering the flavors of the continental United States’ southernmost city. The 10th annual Key West BrewFest is set for Thursday through Monday, Aug. 29 - Sept. 2.

Featured beers range from the intriguingly named Monk in the Trunk, Funky Buddha and Andygator to local favorites from the Florida Keys Brewing Co. and Islamorada Beer Co.

BrewFest starts at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 29, with a kick-off party at Key West’s Waterfront Brewery, 201 William St., home of Crazy Lady blonde ale and other offerings crafted in-house.

Subsequent festival events include beer-focused brunches, pool parties featuring specialty beers, daytime tap takeovers and dinners pairing each course with brews that complement the cuisine.

The undisputed festival highlight is Saturday’s BrewFest Signature Tasting Festival. Featuring nearly 200 beers from around the world, the tasting extravaganza is set for 5 to 8 p.m. on Key West’s South Beach beside the Atlantic Ocean at 1405 Duval St. General admission is $40 per person in advance or $45 at the door.

Event information, schedule and ticketing, visit http://www.keywestbrewfest.com.
A&B LOBSTER HOUSE
BERLIN’S
BRIA ANSARA
7 to 10 p.m. Friday, Saturday

AMERICAN LEGION
POST 28
CHUCK FOX
7 to 10 p.m. Friday

AQUA
Dueling Bartenders
featuring Rick Dery
5:30 to 8 p.m. Monday

BLUE HEAVEN
THE SHANTY HOUNDS
6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday

BLUE MACAW
CHRIS CASE
Noon to 3 p.m. Thursday; 4 to 6 p.m. Friday

NICK NORMAN
7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday

BOONDOCKS
TERRY and GARY
6 to 10 p.m. Thursday

SOUTHERN DIPITY DUO
7 to 11 p.m. Friday, Saturday; 6 to 10 p.m. Sunday

ANDY WESTPORT DUO
7 to 10 p.m. Friday

LARRY BAEDER
11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday; 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday

JEAN PAUL TRIO
3 to 6 p.m. Saturday

RICK FUSCO
3 to 6 p.m. Sunday; noon to 3 p.m. Tuesday

JANNIK
Noon to 3 p.m. Monday

TONY ROBERTS
4 to 7 p.m. Monday, Tuesday

SHARESE
7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday

ZACK SEEMILLER
7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday

JOHN LAMERE
Noon to 3 p.m. Wednesday

MARJORIE LEE
4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday

NICK WALKER
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Saturday

DAN HARVEY
Noon to 4 p.m. Sunday; 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday

OREN POLLACK
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Sunday

TERRY CASSIDY and FRIENDS
6 to 10 p.m. Tuesday

JOHN ANDREWS
6 to 10 p.m. Thursday

LANCE TAYLOR
6 to 10 p.m. Wednesday

CAPT. TONY’S
BO FODOR
4:30 to 8 p.m. Monday; noon to 4 p.m. Friday

CONCH REPUBLIC
EAFFIRE COMPANY
JOE THE SHOW
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday

MIKE NAUGHTON
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Friday

NICK NORMAN
1 to 5 p.m. Saturday

TONY BALTIMORE
6 to 9 p.m. Thursday

TONY ROBERTS
2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Friday; 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday

CLINT BULLARD
6 to 9 p.m. Friday, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Sunday

BEN TADDIKEN
2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Saturday

GARY HEMPSEY
6 to 9 p.m. Monday

MARJORIE LEE
Noon to 3 p.m. Monday

TONY ROBERTS
6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday

GARDENS HOTEL
NINA NEWTON
5 to 7 p.m. Thursday

MICHAEL ROBINSON
5 to 7 p.m. Friday

BOBBY GREEN
5 to 7 p.m. Saturday

MEGAN CLAY
5 to 7 p.m. Sunday

5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Wednesday

4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday

TONY BALTIMORE
Noon to 4 p.m. Saturday

Randy McCallister
9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Thursday

KENNY FRADLEY
and GUEST
Noon to 4 p.m. Friday

RUM ROW
TIM HOLLOHAN
4 to 7 p.m. Thursday

MARJORIE LEE
5 to 8 p.m. Friday

RUSTY LEMMON
3 to 6 p.m. Sunday

MICHAEL NAUGHTON
4 to 7 p.m. Monday

CHAD BURCH
4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday

GREEN PARROT
SAM PRICE and the TRUE BELIEVERS
5:30, 9 and 11 p.m. Thursday

HEAVY PETS
5:30, 9 and 11 p.m. Friday, Saturday; 5:30 Sunday soundcheck

HANK’S
HAIR OF THE DOG
ROB BENTON
8 p.m. Thursday, Monday; 4 p.m. Saturday, Sunday

ZACH LOVERING
8 p.m. Saturday

SHELDON MCLELLAN
8 p.m. Monday

LATIN NIGHT
8 p.m. Wednesday

HILTON
GARDEN INN
TOKO IRIE
2 to 5 p.m. Sunday

HOG’S BREATH
SALOON
JOEL NELSON
Noon to 4 p.m. Thursday; 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday

JESSIE BROWN PLUS ONE
4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday

RANDY MCCALLISTER
9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Thursday through Sunday

KENNY FRADLEY
and GUEST
Noon to 4 p.m. Friday

BARRY CUDA
Noon to 4 p.m. Saturday

TONY BALTIMORE
Noon to 4 p.m. Sunday

ZACK SEEMILLER
Noon to 4 p.m. Monday

CLIFF CODY
4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday

GATE’S HOTEL
MAY MIRANDA
6 to 9 p.m. Monday

MILES MANCUSO BAND
5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday

LAMIT MIRANDA
6 to 9 p.m. Wednesday

5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Monday

5 to 8 p.m. Thursday

8 p.m. Friday

8 p.m. Saturday

8 p.m. Sunday

KEY WEST
THEATER
HAVANA NIGHTS
8 p.m. Saturday

STEPHEN KELLOGG, TYRONE WELLS
with Emmanuelle Sasso
8 p.m. Sunday

LA TE DA
Piano Bar:
3 SUM
8:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday

THE FABULOUS SPECTRELLES
8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday
Florida Keys Music Scene

Cabaret:
CHRISTOPHER PETERSON
9 p.m. Thursday, Tuesday
RANDY ROBERTS
9 p.m. Saturday

LA TRATTORIA
PHIL SAMPSON
6 to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday

OREANSIDE

LITTLE ROOM
JAZZ CLUB

COFFEE BUTLER
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Tuesday
PETER DIAMOND
8 to 11 p.m. Thursday
KAREN HIENS
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, Wednesday
DENIS HYLAND JAZZ QUARTET
8 to 11 p.m. Friday
VICTORIA HORNE
8 to 11 p.m. Saturday
ANY MAYO
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sunday
BARRY CUDA
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sunday
and the SHARKS
8 to 11 p.m. Sunday

MALITHI
5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday
JAZZ JAM
with PETER DIAMOND
8 to 11 p.m. Monday
BLUEYD DAY TUESDAY
with LARRY BAEDER
8 to 11 p.m. Tuesday
CHRIS BURCHARD
8 to 11 p.m. Wednesday

MARGARITAVILLE
JONATHAN WILLIAMS DUO
8 to 11 p.m. Thursday through Sunday

SouthernDipity Duo,
a mother/daughter duo based out of Nashville, will perform at 6:45 p.m. Thursday and Monday at Schooner Wharf Bar. The Duo will also perform at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and again at 6 p.m. on Sunday at Boondocks.

DAVID WARREN
8 to 11 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday

RICK’S BAR
THE SHANTY HOUNDS
Noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday
SALTY ANGLER
DANI HOY
Noon to 4 p.m. Monday

SCHOONER WHarf BAR
MICHAEL McCloud
Noon to 5 p.m. Thursday solo, noon to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday with friends
SOUTHERNDIPITY DUO
6:45 to 11:45 p.m. Thursday, Friday
BUBBA SYSTEM BAND
6:45 to 11:45 p.m. Friday, Saturday
LAST MANGO DUO
6:45 to 11 p.m. Sunday
RAVEN COOPER
Noon to 5 p.m. Monday; 6:45 to 11 p.m. Wednesday
TONY BALTIMORE
Noon to 5 p.m. Sunday; 6:45 to 11 p.m.
JASON LAMSON TRIO
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday
THE BIG DADDY BAND
10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Wednesday

SLOPPY JOE’S
JOHN LAMERE
Noon to 4:45 p.m. Thursday; 10 a.m. to noon Tuesday
TIPSY and the DONUTS
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday
THE BENDERZ
10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursday through Tuesday
TIM HOLLIDAN
Noon to 4:45 p.m. Friday FOR PETE’S SAKE
Noon to 4:45 p.m. Saturday FRIENDS OF WAYNE
5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Saturday, Wednesday
BARRY CUDA
Noon to 4:45 p.m. Sunday, Monday

24 NORTH REPUBLICA
SHASTINA CHILES
5 to 8 p.m. Friday

SMOKIN’ TUNA
CAFFEINE CARL and the BUZZ
9 p.m. Thursday, Wednesday
BRANDON HOOKER
5 p.m. Friday
CAFFEINE CARL and FRIENDS
9 p.m. Friday, Saturday
MARJORIE LEE
8 p.m. Sunday
ELMORE’S REVENGE
5 p.m. Tuesday

TIPS ROOSTER
THE SHANTY HOUNDS
8 to 11 p.m. Saturday

TWO FRIENDS
AL SUBARSKY
3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday; 4 to 7 p.m. Friday; 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Sunday; noon to 3 p.m. Tuesday
THE SHANTY HOUNDS
7 to 10 p.m. Sunday

VIRGILIO’S
ADRIENNE Z BAND
with Chris Burchard, Rick Cleaver, Lee Venters
9:30 p.m. Friday, Saturday

WILLIE T’S
TIM HOLLIDAN
11 a.m. Thursday, Saturday, Monday, Wednesday
ZACK SEEMiller
2:30 p.m. Thursday, Tuesday, Wednesday
JOHN LAMERE
6 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday; 9:30 p.m. Sunday
JACK WOLF
9:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Tuesday
THE SHANTY HOUNDS
11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Sunday
TONY BALTIMORE
2:30 p.m. Friday; 6 p.m. Monday
KEITH FRANX
2:30 p.m. Saturday, Monday
DAN HARVEY
9:30 p.m. Saturday, Wednesday
BRAD SHADUCK
2:30 p.m. Sunday
TURNER HARRISON
9:30 p.m. Monday
JASON LAMSON
11 a.m. Tuesday
"Paparazzi in Paradise" is a photo-driven entertainment feature compiled by Citizen staffers from in-house and contributed photos. Snaps of social events, arts and entertainment, related activities and other ‘wild art’ is welcomed for submissions to these pages. Send invitations to cover events keywestphotos@gmail.com, and we will do our best to get a photographer there. If we can’t make it, send your photographs and information from the event and we will try to get them into publication.

David Street is packed with visitors to the 2019 Lobsterfest Saturday afternoon. In addition to fresh seafood, artisans and musicians rounded out the annual event that celebrates the spiny crustacean that draws seafood fans to the Keys.

Fantasy Fest Queen Bernadette Restivo joins Tanya Leto, representative of Samuel’s House, in presenting a furry friend up for adoption at the recent Samuel’s House Yappy hour fundraiser.

Leah Stockton, president of the United Way of the Florida Keys, gives the Key West Business Guild’s members an update on the organization’s activities.

Manita Peters and her furry pal Glory came out to support Samuel’s House’s Fundraiser Yappy Hour at the Sidebar on Duval Street Saturday night.

Susan Korf, left, and Greg Brown, Executive Director of the Habitat for Humanity of the Lower Keys and Key West, accept a $5,000 check from the Stoli Cocktail Classic from Alan Beaubien, right, president of the Key West Business Guild.
Come celebrate the growth we are having “Because of You” the Locals! Come get together with friends and supporters and the many people we have been able to help.

SUNDAY AUGUST 18TH
4 – 7 PM
The Blue Room at Capri

Come and enjoy lots of food, music, an amazing silent auction, a 50/50 raffle and videos of the past years. Special performance by Terri White!
First of all, let’s acknowledge that this movie is based on a video game. So don’t be surprised when we start talking about birds doing battle with green pigs.

Angry Birds is a video game franchise from a Finnish company called Rovio. It’s the most downloaded freemium game of all time. So far, there have been 12 games in the series. There’s also been a TV series. And a previous feature film.

“The Angry Birds Movie 2” is a computer-animated comedy that follows up on the “plot” of that first film. As you might recall, Piggy Island was destroyed last time around, but has now been rebuilt.

When purple-plumed Zeta (Leslie Jones), the leader of Eagle Island, launches an ice ball attack at both Piggy Island and nearby Bird Island, the multi-colored birds and their green-hued porcine enemies must call a truce in order to deal with this common adversary.

Yes, the titular short-fused anti-hero Red (Jason Sudeikis) and the boorish pig Leonard (Bill Hader) team up in this one.

The storyline has something to do with recovering three eggs that have drifted out to sea. (Don’t ask.)

“The Angry Birds Movie 2” is currently entertaining kids at Regal Key West.

For this sequel, Josh Gad, Danny McBride and Maya Rudolph reprise their voice roles. And such newcomers as Awkwafina, Nicki Minaj, Tiffany Haddish and Sterling K. Brown join the fun.

I suppose it’s an unspoken joke that 4-foot-4 Peter Dinklage is again cast as the Mighty Eagle.

And another Hollywood in-joke has the children of Nicole Kidman, Viola Davis and Gal Gadot voicing the cute hatchling chicks who lose their eggs.

There are enough “Saturday Night Live” alums (even Beck Bennett and Pete Davidson are here) to make this seem like a Lorne Michaels production, but it’s actually a joint production by Columbia Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation and Rovio Animation.

First-time director Mark “Thurup” Van Orman (best known as creator-star of the Emmy-winning Cartoon Network show “The Marvelous Misadventures of Flapjack”) does a pretty good job aiming at his juvenile audience with the neon-bright colors, snot jokes, and goofy eye-catching action sequences.

Non-spoiler alert: Although this film is sometimes referred to as “Angry Birds 2,” it has a totally different plot than the same-named video game. So players, electronic athletes, and nOObS should not be confused as what to expect in this silly Angry Bird outing.

In ‘Angry Birds Movie 2,’ find out why the birds are so angry. The movie is now playing at Regal Key West.

KEY WEST MOVIE SCENE

‘Angry Birds Movie 2’ flies back to the big screen

BY SHIRREL RHOADES

Reviewed by

SHIRREL RHOADES

Top 10 Baseball Biopics

Time to watch movies about baseball’s greatest and most influential stars—batters, pitchers, and baseball executives—who by their swagger, enormous athletic skills, courage, patriotism and love of the sport have made this grand game into our national pastime. Baseball buff Sheldon Davidson helped me compile this list of the Top 10 Baseball Biopics that tell the stories of successes, accomplishments and personal failures.

1) “42” (2013) – Jackie Robinson, the legendary New York Yankees first baseman who wore jersey number 42 through-out his Major League career, was the most significant person involved in the racial integration of baseball. The film stars Chadwick Boseman as Robinson and Harrison Ford as Branch Rickey.

2) “The Catcher Was a Spy” (2018) and “The Spy Behind Home Plate” (a 2019 documentary). – Paul Rudd portrays Jewish ballplayer Morris “Moe Berg, who played 15 seasons for a handful of major league teams, and came to be known as the “brainiest guy in baseball.” He spoke several languages, had an undergraduate degree from Princeton and a law degree from Columbia. He was also a U.S. government spy during World War II. An American patriot playing America’s favorite pastime.

3) “The Winning Team” (1952) – Ronald Reagan stars as Grover Cleveland Alexander, one of the greatest pitchers of all time, with Doris Day as his wife. A World War I veteran, Alexander overcame numerous personal problems to win an astounding 373 games.

4) “The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg” (1998) – This film follows the life of Hank Greenberg, first baseman of the Detroit Tigers, and a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. A Jewish player who, in 1934, chose not to play on Yom Kippur during a heated pennant race, Greenberg then and later had to face a great deal of anti-Semitism.

5) “The Pride of the Yankees” (1942) – Gary Cooper plays the legendary New York Yankees first baseman Lou Gehrig, who died at age 37 fromALS, which later became known as “Lou Gehrig’s disease.” His tragic and premature death, after playing in 2,130 consecutive games,” touched the entire nation.

6) “Fear Strikes Out” (1957) – Anthony Perkins plays Boston Red Sox great Jimmy Piersall. Based on his autobiography, this is a first-rate psychological film in describing Piersall’s relationship with a father obsessed with his son becoming a Major League player.

7) “Cobb” (1994) – Tommy Lee Jones plays Ty Cobb, the Georgia Peach, an outfielder for 22 seasons with the Detroit Tigers. This is a dark movie about an allegedly racist and a most difficult person—but what a baseball player. In 1999, editors at the Sporting News ranked Ty Cobb third on their list of “Baseball’s 100 Greatest Players.”

8) “The Babe” (1992) – This one stars John Goodman as Babe Ruth, who changed the nature of baseball by sluggish home runs (714) and, in so doing, brought millions of fans into the ballpark. No player matched his charisma and significance.

9) “The Stratton Story” (1949) – James Stewart plays Monty Stratton, a pitcher for the Chicago White Sox from 1934-1938. In the off-season of 1938, Stratton accidentally shot himself in his right leg, which was subsequently amputated. The film traces his attempts to play again. Inspirational.

10) “The Winning Team” (1952) – Ronald Reagan stars as Grover Cleveland Alexander, one of the greatest pitchers of all time, with Doris Day as his wife. A World War I veteran, Alexander overcame numerous personal problems to win an astounding 373 games.

Top 10 Baseball Biopics

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1) “Moneyball” (2011) – Based on Michael Lewis’s 2003 nonfiction book of the same name, Brad Pitt stars as Oakland As General Manager Billy Beane and centers on his historic adoption of sophisticated analytics/sabermetrics in scouting and evaluating players’ performances. Beane’s work has changed baseball forever and is the basis of the present success of many other teams. Batter up!

srhoades@aol.com
In the movie, ‘Blinded by the Light,’ Javed, played by Viveik Kalra, is a British teen of Pakistani descent growing up in 1987 England. When a classmate introduces him to the music of Bruce Springsteen, Javed sees parallels to his working-class life in the powerful lyrics. As Javed discovers an outlet for his own pent-up dreams, he also begins to express himself in his own voice. The movie opens Friday at the Tropic Cinema.

‘Blinded by the Light’ celebrates the music of The Boss

Reviewed by SHAIRREL RHOADES

Elton John, Queen, the Beatles, ABBA. Now Bruce Springsteen.

It seems each musical legend is getting a movie either about them, or with their music as a film’s backdrop. Jukebox movies, they’re called.

Elton John got an autobiography with “Rocketman.” “Bohemian Rhapsody” paid homage to Freddie Mercury and Queen. The music of The Beatles was the focal point of “Yesterday,” and ABBA’s music returned in “Mama Mia! Here We Go Again.”

Now the Boss’s working-class poetry about small-town life is front and center in “Blinded by the Light.”

“Blinded by the Light” (the title comes from one of the great anthems written and recorded by Springsteen, but also recorded by other artists) is currently rocking audiences at Tropic Cinema.

No, this is not a biopic about Springsteen – although one is overdue. This dramedy is built around the life of British journalist and documentary maker Sarfraz Manzoor. It’s based on his memoir “Greetings from Bury Park: Race, Religion and Rock N’ Roll.” It gives us the story of a Pakistani-born youth who finds parallels between his life and Springsteen’s music.

Manzoor himself co-wrote the script along with the film’s director Gurinder Chadha and her husband Paul Mayeda Berges (the team that gave us “Bend It Like Beckham”).

In “Blinded by the Light” we meet Javed (played by Viveik Kalra), a working-class kid growing up in a dreary town in southeast England during the ‘80s. Having been born in Pakistan, he is faced with intolerance, consumed with frustration and lacks the courage to assert himself. But like many alienated youths he finds his salvation in music.

Bruce Springsteen’s music, to be specific.

No, this isn’t the story of some kid who starts a band. It’s about the power of music to affect one’s life. When a classmate introduces Javed to the love songs of Bruce Springsteen, he finds himself — and the courage to become a writer.

Moviegoers have described it as “the sort of unguarded drama they used to make in the ‘80s” … “a coming-of-age tale of unabashed earnestness” … “a delirious and romantic rock ‘n roll parable” … and an “incandescent ode to the life force of pop music.”

Springsteen allowed 12 of his songs to be used in the soundtrack. You will hear classics like “Badlands” and “Hungry Heart,” along with rarities like the first-ever performance of “The River” and an acoustic rendition of “The Promised Land.” There’s also a previously unreleased Springsteen song called “I’ll Stand by You.”

Needless to say, you’ll also hear the title song, “Blinded by the Light.” Ironically, this one was commercially unsuccessful for Springsteen, but hit No.1 on the charts when performed by Manfred Mann’s Earth Band.

Although the Boss has collected a dozen Top 10 hits on the Billboard Hot 100, he’s never had a No. 1 song himself. He came closest with the No. 2 charting of “Dancing in the Dark,” from his “Born in the U.S.A.” album.

Not to worry about ol’ Bruce, though. He has sold more than 135 million records worldwide. And this film’s sure to encourage a few more sales.

srhoades@aol.com
There’s plenty of fun in store in the Florida Keys

There are always only-in-the Keys activities for visitors and residents eager to enjoy marine life and the unique environment, fresh dock-to-dish seafood and luscious cuisine and the engagingly laid-back atmosphere of the Keys.

This calendar highlights major events upcoming including the 40th anniversary of the colorful 10-day Fantasy Fest in late October. A more detailed schedule of Key West events can be found at fla-keys.com/calendar.

AUGUST


Key West BrewFest (Aug. 29 to Sept. 2; https://www.keywestbrewfest.com) See page 3.

Heroes Salute Weekend (Aug. 30 to Sept. 1; https://www.hawks Cay.com/about-hawks-cay-resort/heroes-salute) is a Middle Keys tradition at family-friendly Hawks Cay Resort on Duck Key honoring military, fire and rescue, law enforcement and medical personnel. Three days of patriotic All-American activities include a barbecue, athletic events, a live music concert and fireworks.

SEPTEMBER

Womenfest (Sept. 4-8; https://www.womenfest.com) brings thousands of women from across the globe to Key West for one of North America's largest gatherings of lesbians and their friends. Events created by the Key West Business Guild typically include active adventures, flag football, pool parties and live performances.

OCTOBER

The Southernmost (SoMo) Marathon and Half Marathon (Oct. 12; https://www.somomarathon.com) includes 26.2-, 13.1- and 3.1-mile challenges featuring Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico views and a course that passes iconic Key West landmarks. All participants get a T-shirt. Medals await all finishers and awards are presented after the racing action.

REEF Fest (Oct. 17-20; https://www.reef.org/REEFFest), held in Key Largo and hosted by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, the event celebrates the impact and success of marine conservation initiatives in the Keys. Attractions include educational seminars, social gatherings, diving and eco-adventures with leaders in diving and marine conservation. All REEF Fest events are open to the public, but pre-registration is requested. Seminars at the Murray Nelson Government Center are free.

Bahama Village Goombay Festival (Oct. 18-19; http://www.fantasyfest.com), a lively, family-friendly event in Key West's historic Bahama Village neighborhood, celebrates island-style food, arts and crafts, live entertainment and dancing in the streets. It's held noon to midnight both days on the first weekend of Fantasy Fest.

Fantasy Fest (Oct. 18-27; https://www.fantasyfest.com) marks four decades of masquerade madness with a 10-day extravaganza themed "In Tune but Off Key: Celebrating 40 Years of Fantasy!" The outrageous costuming and masking festival is recognized around the world. Highlights include a costume competition for pets, a headress ball, themed parties, street fairs, a madcap march and a lavish parade with dazzling large-scale floats, walking groups and island-style bands.

The Stone Crab Claw Eating Contest (Oct. 26; https://www.keysfisheries.com), presented by Keys Fisheries in Marathon, celebrates the much-anticipated opening of Florida's stone crab season that takes place Oct. 15 each year. In the wacky contest, participants 18 and older try to crack and cleanly consume 25 stone crab claws in the shortest time.
It seems no matter where you go these days, the landscape is always changing. Ask any longtime Key Wester and they’ll recall about the good ‘ol days at the Full ‘Spoon’ Saloon, or Logan’s Lobster House. Hell, I’ve only been here since the mid-90s and I, too, can think of lots of changes I could do without. I particularly miss the days before the stop signs around here started breeding like rabbits, but I digress.

Anyway, we’re here to talk about Cuba, not the government trying to make me late to work or prematurely burn out my brake pads. So, around 2002, I rounded up about 10 friends for an epic Cuba trip that ranged in attendance from the totally normal to David Sloan. Upon arrival, my friend Francisco from Pinar del Rio hired us an unsuspecting van driver named ‘Poncho’ and we hit the road for a 10-day, multi-province adventure.

This would be my first trip to the Bay of Pigs region and disappointed I was not. How was I to know that flamingos and hummingbirds were so abundant, and such a short distance from the mania of Havana, no less?

Back then, there were only a few attractions down there, which included a somewhat spooky petting zoo and a pair of working crocodile farms. The cool part is that the main focus of these places was (and still is) the protection of Cuban crocodiles, which, pre-1959, were highly endangered. The facility on one side of the road is geared more toward genetics where specimens range in size from that of a Key West gecko to major crocs measuring more than 12 feet. Across the street, at the much more touristy compound, a huge fenced lagoon teems with crocodiles, some swimming, while others, slathered in mud for cooling purposes, bask and bake in the sun. For one Cuban convertible peso, the dude at the gate will even dangle a chunk of ‘mystery meat’ over their heads and play ‘who’s gonna be the alpha male today’ game. Invariably, after a few tense moments, one of the God-only-knows-how-heavy monsters will suddenly lunge upward, snag the meat, and cause most of the tourists (present company included) to gasp in disbelief. Yes, this is kinda lame, but I believe any time humans can get safely close to and learn more about animals, it’s a good thing.

The bummer these days, though, is that on the touristy side, visitors are now greeted by hut after hut of toothy trinkets, t-shirts and other souvenirs. If nothing else, at least the items are actually made in Cuba! When was the last time you bought just about anything that wasn’t made in China.

Thankfully, the research continues and the dedicated, professional staff takes great care of these prehistoric reptiles. I must say, though, I don’t find much value in the faux Taino Indian dancer/drummers, ‘baby crocodile whisperers’ or multiple gift shops that have, well, reproduced like rabbits, but I digress.

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