

ENTERTAINMENT

Arts & Culture Newsletter: Project [Blank] presents the sonically adventurous ‘Paradise TBD’



Clinton McCallum's "Paradise TBD" — not your garden variety operatic production — will be presented by Project [Blank].
(Courtesy of Project [Blank])

This week, Oceanside Museum of Art, Wilco, Strawberry Festival and more

By **David L. Coddon**

May 26, 2022 5:30 AM PT

Start with four strangers on a raft, each a survivor of a devastating natural disaster: Hurricane Katrina, the Mexico City earthquake of 1985, the Central China floods of 1931

and the Bengal famine of 1770. Add an electronic soundscape created on a laptop computer. Then cast doubt on reality. Is it happening, or is it a dream?

Suffice to say, **Clinton McCallum's "Paradise TBD"** is not your garden variety operatic production.

"It doesn't fall into the typical opera categories of love and tuberculosis," said Leslie Ann Leytham, co-artistic director of **Project [Blank]**, which is staging this world premiere chamber opera Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Bread & Salt in Logan Heights. "It addresses how communities can come together in the face of disasters and make their own communities."

The 90-minute "Paradise TBD" is also sonically adventurous. "Because the orchestration is a laptop, there's a wider sound palette that Clint (McCallum) paints with," said Leytham, who is also one of the five vocalists in the show and portrays the existentially named Nowhere. "He's using electronics as a way to create these sonic patterns that feel uneasy. It is unsettling. It doesn't sound out of tune, but it doesn't sound like what we're used to."

This approach is representative of the Project [Blank] spirit.

"Our intent is always to present something that people may have never heard before," Leytham said. "The takeaway is to be more curious about other forms of sound making and the ways that voices can be used and instruments can be used."

Leytham's co-artistic director, Brendan Nguyen, is "Paradise TBD's" musical director. The "Paradise TBD" cast also includes Jonathan Nussman, Mariana Flores Bucio, Anishka Lee-Skorepa and Miguel Angel Zazueta.

READ MORE ABOUT NGUYEN: [Musician Brendan Nguyen has kept busy during the pandemic with Project \[Blank\]](#)

Visual art



Tijuana-based artist Shinpei Takeda's current exhibition at the Oceanside Museum of Art titled "Limit Of Your Safe Space."
(Courtesy of Oceanside Museum of Art)

Tijuana-based artist [Shinpei Takeda's](#) current exhibition at the [Oceanside Museum of Art](#) is not so much about the safe space we all crave sometimes but those spaces' limitations.

Takeda's "**Limit Of Your Safe Space**" is about "the negotiation of space between each other," he explained. "That became apparent in the past years with social distancing. My interest lies in this space between you and me. I was able to look through the eyes of the people who don't necessarily have a safe space but are looking for one, those who are migrating or fleeing one country or another."

Last fall Takeda conducted virtual-reality workshops with five people from around the world, including refugees and U.S. military veterans. Each told their story about seeking safe space, on multiple levels, from digital to psychological. The result is Takeda’s mixed-reality installation, which invites visitors to experience a kind of living documentary.

“I’m hoping,” he said, “that this mixture of dimensions of reality and artistic expression is a way for people to see that there are also different realities to ourselves and our stories.”

The exhibition runs through Sept. 10.

READ MORE ABOUT SHINPEI TAKEDA IN THIS 2021 INTERVIEW: [The magical hope of Shinpei Takeda’s ‘Fantasia Moral’](#)

Pop music



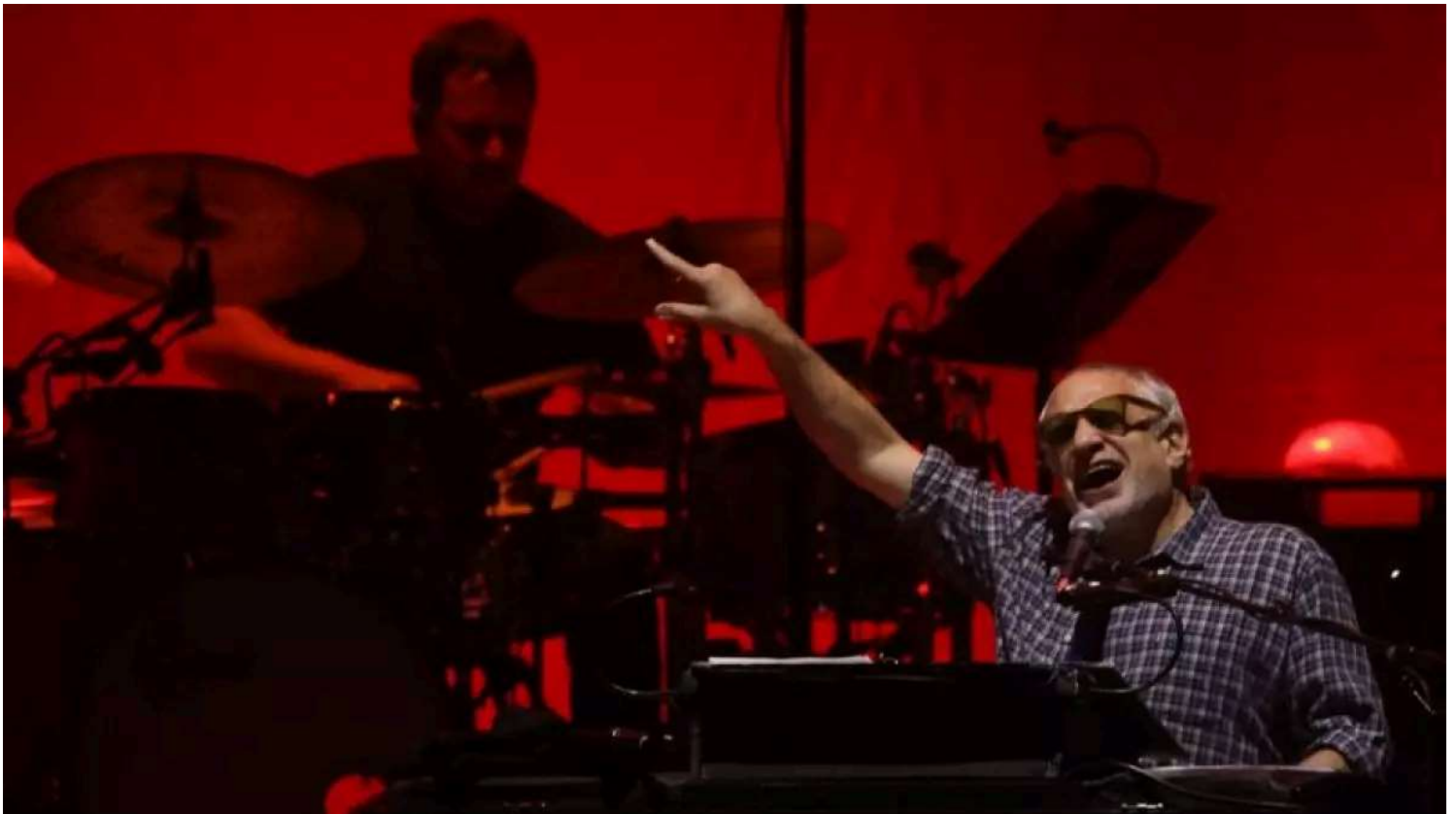
Wilco’s Nels Cline, left, and Jeff Tweedy (Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times)

Here's good news for **Wilco** fans who can't wait for the band's "Cruel Country Tour" stop in San Diego on Sept. 17 (at SDSU's Open Air Theatre): From the comfort of your home this weekend you can enjoy Wilco's **Solid Sound Festival livestream**.

Three shows are accessible: Friday and Saturday at 6:15 p.m. PST and Sunday at 2 p.m. in a show billed as Jeff Tweedy & Friends. Tickets start at \$20.

All concerts are streaming from the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in the picturesque Berkshires.

More pop music



Donald Fagen (at right) is now the sole founding member of Steely Dan still on board in the pioneering band. (Genaro Molina / Los Angeles Times)

Though the prolific Donald Fagen remains, I have a hard time thinking of **Steely Dan** as Steely Dan without Fagen's co-founder Walter Becker, who passed away in 2017. But still under the Steely Dan name, Fagen carries on. That brings him and, I'm certain, a

versatile ensemble of supporting musicians to North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre on Saturday night.

“The Dan” attained mega-stardom when it began to explore the fusion between rock, funk and jazz, arguably beginning in earnest with its third album, “Pretzel Logic,” in 1974. But I find myself more often playing my worn-out albums that preceded it: “Can’t Buy A Thrill” and “Countdown to Ecstasy,” which featured tasty licks from guitarist Jeff “Skunk” Baxter and Rick Derringer respectively. It was a different sounding Steely Dan, one now lost in the nostalgia of “Reelin’ in the Years” and “Show Biz Kids.”

Theater



Reeve Carney, of the cast of “Hadestown” performs at the 73rd annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall on Sunday, June 9, 2019, in New York. (Charles Sykes / Associated Press)

Who'd have figured a musical adaptation of a couple of Greek myths would be a smash on Broadway? Anais Mitchell's "**Hadestown**" was, and how. It won eight Tony Awards in 2019 including Best Musical.

Now "Hadestown" comes to San Diego in a [touring production presented by Broadway San Diego](#) that opens Tuesday and runs through June 5 at the Civic Theatre downtown.

I'm looking forward to this one, which the Los Angeles Times' theater critic Charles McNulty called "[mesmerizing](#)" in its performance at the Ahmanson Theatre.

READ MORE ABOUT THEATER: [New romantic comedy at Lamplighters about what not to say to breast cancer patients](#)

Dance



Dancers with San Diego's Malashock Dance perform "Swells" at last month's Without Walls Festival at Arts District Liberty Station. (Courtesy of Malashock Dance)

After more than 30 years, Malashock Dance company has begun a campaign to find a new artistic director while it continues to evolve with its strong legacy of performance and service to the community.

That said, John Malashock, who founded the organization in 1988, is a hard act to follow. He has choreographed more than 100 modern dances and collaborated with numerous local and national arts organizations.

He is known for creating work for companies in other states and for inviting emerging choreographers to set work on Malashock dancers, an effort that has helped to make

San Diego and Liberty Station, headquarters for the company, an entertainment destination.

“Times do change,” says Malashock, who will share artistic director duties for a season and continue to mentor the chosen candidate.

READ MORE: [San Diego dance company looks to ‘Horizons’ while searching for an artistic director to replace its legendary founder](#)

KAABOO: What’s next?



Fans watch the Wu-Tang Clan at KAABOO Del Mar on Sept. 13, 2019. (K.C. Alfred / The San Diego Union-Tribune)

The saga of the dormant KAABOO music festival has taken a new twist, with lawsuits in San Diego and Delaware that pit the event’s new owners — whose identity appears to be

shrouded in mystery — against the San Diego Padres.

READ MORE IN THIS SUBSCRIBER-ONLY REPORT: [Is KAABOO festival returning to Del Mar, moving, or finished? Lawsuit against San Diego Padres may decide](#)

UCTV



Activist Dolores Huerta (Jay L. Clendenin / Los Angeles Times)

University of California Television invites you to enjoy this special selection of programs from throughout the University of California. Descriptions courtesy of and text written by UCTV staff:

“A Conversation with Dolores Huerta, Danielle Feinberg, Aprille Ericsson and Lynn Scherr – Women in Leadership 2022”: Labor leader and activist Dolores Huerta, visual effects supervisor at Pixar Animation Studios Danielle Feinberg, and NASA aerospace engineer Aprille Ericsson join journalist Lynn Scherr to talk about what it means to be a woman and a leader in our challenging times. Sharing stories of childhood dreams, career challenges, social justice and more, the panel gives insight into their own journeys, providing inspiration for women and girls everywhere.

“Still We Rise: Celebrating American Diversity in Music”: When UC San Diego music professor emeritus Cecil Lytle plays the piano, you can’t help but pay attention. His commanding figure is a sharp contrast to his elegance and poise. He’s been called a Renaissance man for his innovative work, which is on display in his latest concert “Still We Rise.” The program features music and poetry from the African American experience, featuring works by Maya Angelou, Amanda Gorman, Langston Hughes and Stevie Wonder and performances by Yolanda Marie Franklin, Ernie McCray, the Rob Thorsen Jazz Quarter, Nathan and Noah East, Steph Johnson and students from The Preuss School.

“FoodGate: The Break-in, the Cover-up and the Aftermath”: You can’t fix health care until you fix health. You can’t fix health until you fix the diet. You can’t fix the diet until you know what’s wrong. Preventable disease rates keep going up, even while behaviors have improved: smoking rates are down, cholesterol and blood pressure are down and physical activity is up. We should be reaping a health benefit, but we’re not. Why? Endocrinologist Robert Lustig, dentist Cristen Kearns and health policy expert Laura Schmidt explore how the U.S. food system, which supports the intake of too many refined carbs and too much sugar, has led to higher rates in obesity and related metabolic diseases in the last 50 years.

And finally: Top weekend events



(LightFieldStudios/Getty Images/iStockphoto)

Here are the top events happening in San Diego from Thursday, May 26 to Sunday, May 29.

Coddon is a freelance writer.