

Every
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R.I.P.



ZINE // MAR 2021

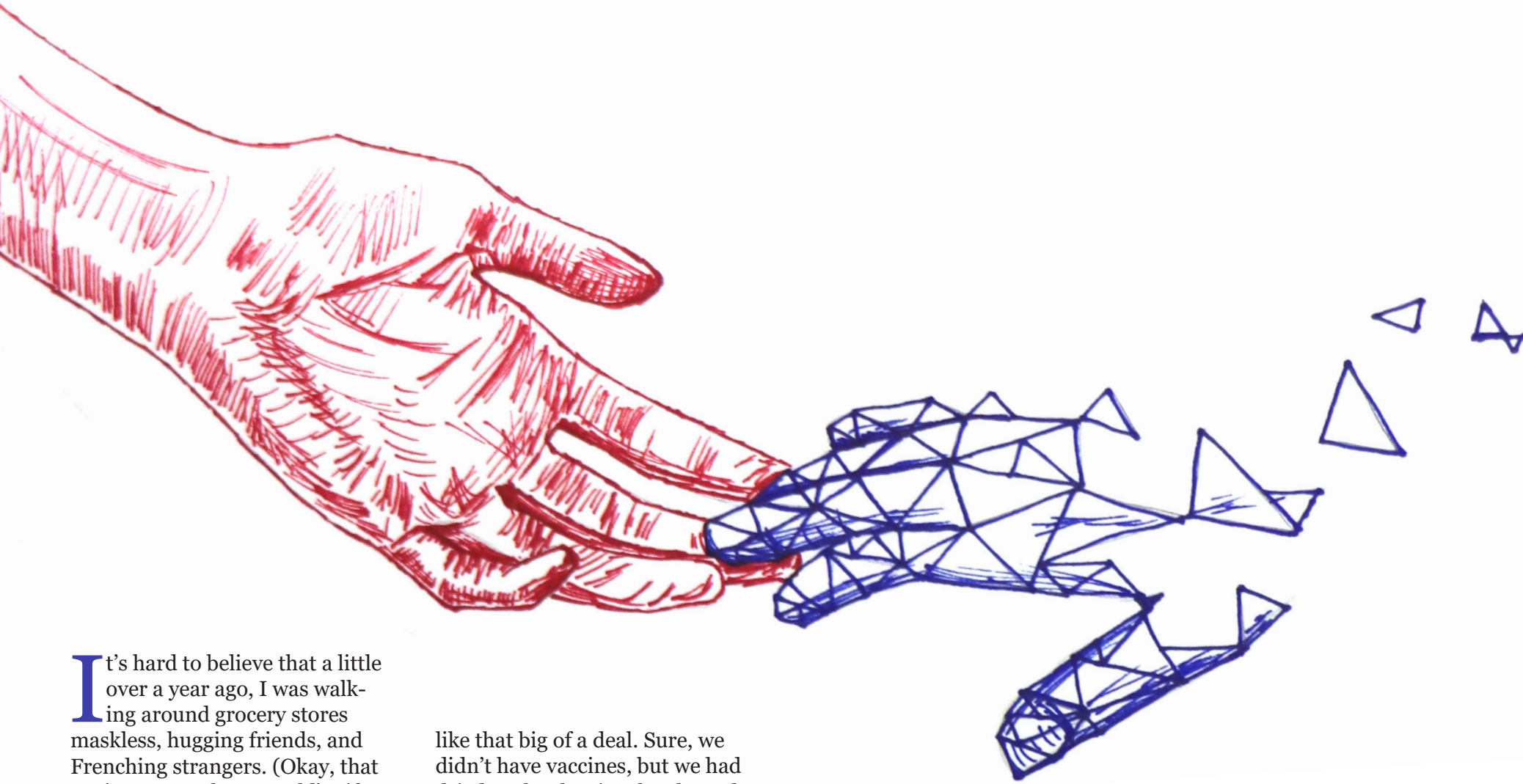
Contents



- 4** P.S. I Miss You (and Other Things), Marriya Schwarz
- 8** The Best Shows in the Cities You Wish You Could Travel To, Silvana Smith
- 14** If Revolutionary Women Had Theme Songs, Misha Mullany
- 18** Small Bands That No Longer Exist but Still Go Hard, Silvana Smith

Notes:

Covers by Marriya Schwarz



P.S. I MISS YOU (and Other Things)

By Marriya Schwarz

It's hard to believe that a little over a year ago, I was walking around grocery stores maskless, hugging friends, and Frenching strangers. (Okay, that one's not true, but I *could've* if I wanted to (with consent.)) Early March was a time of recklessness—a time when I celebrated that *Parasite* Best Picture Oscars win and boasted proudly that “this was going to be our year.” Sure, I might have heard about the COVID-19 pandemic, but in my safe how-can-we-get-hit-from-a-2019-virus-when-we're-forever-living-in-pre-or-post-Revolutionary-War-actually-it's-kind-of-confusing-because-some-parts-of-town-act-like-we're-set-during-the-war-and-others-act-like-we're-still-under-British-rule-and-I-wish-someone-could-give-us-just-a-set-year Colonial Williamsburg where I attended undergraduate education at William & Mary, it didn't seem

like that big of a deal. Sure, we didn't have vaccines, but we had dried-up leeches in a bottle *and* *moxie*. The first time we were really advised to take the pandemic seriously was when we were told to not leave the country for Spring Break. But other than that, we ran off of pure blind hope that there weren't outbreaks in Virginia yet, and thus the disease wouldn't be able to break the ranks of Civil War battlefields, Revolutionary War battlefields, and more Civil War battlefields. There was this feeling that if everyone could just do their part, we wouldn't have to deal with the virus—like I know Virginia's for lovers, but come on... there's a time and place.

And yet, on March 7, 2020, we had our first confirmed Virginia case while we were on Spring Break from school. And just like

that, that last little bit of my Ben & Jerry's ice cream would sit waiting and alone on the right side of my dorm room freezer for the next four months as they canceled the remainder of in-person classes for the semester. Chaos quickly enveloped the country. The stores were all sold out of toilet paper, bleach, and beef jerky for some reason. Students studying abroad were trying to find impromptu ways back home. And not unaware of my own privilege of being in my childhood home with a full bag of laundry and most of my textbooks, I was penning a frantic email to my school's library, asking “This is the craziest question to ask on the brink of a

pandemic, but is there any news on how the school closing for the coronavirus will affect library books?” (No matter what kind of dystopian apocalyptic situation, it's nice to know I don't lose my fear of authority and library fees.) But in my own dorm room, my yoga mat stayed rolled up under my bed, clothes stood by on their designated hangers, and shoes sat biding their time in a disorganized heap. And above all else, those nonchalant “see you later”s to friends stretched into unspoken goodbyes.

Even when we were in school, I was already terrified about what would come next and how we would all be going our own

separate ways. My roommate was already knee-deep in job applications and acceptances, which I was happy about, but it only meant that it would take her farther and farther away from me and our little life in a dorm room with a broken A/C unit and walls lined with posters I had forged out of markers and sheer dismissal of copyright laws. I had developed a habit for going up a floor to my best friend's room after bad days, dressed in a Snuggie, just so she could hug me and I could vent. Sitting on her ottoman and watching her hand-make a birthday card with my colored pencils, I thought about how things would never be this way again.

“We need to have more game nights and more movie nights,” she said. We needed to make the most of it, she meant.

Even today, there are friends I haven't seen or even really talked to since 2020. The relationships that already had a strong texting component—the friends who were studying abroad at the time, the roommate I regularly texted frustrations to, the friends who had already graduated and escaped the dirt roads and horse poop of Colonial Williamsburg, etc.—all survived. But there was just no way to translate those Sadler dinners of eating chicken a little too pink in the center and bonding over food poisoning. There's only so many times a person can text a friend out of the blue, “Hey, remember how we didn't trust the dining hall sushi? I think that was a good call” before it becomes outdated. Everyone has new lives, and nostalgia only gets me so far.

And there's a lot of regret there: It's hard to know what I would have done if I had known it was my last week at William & Mary.

Maybe I would've actually auditioned for the stand-up comedy show. Maybe I would've hugged my friend goodbye when she left to meet her mom in the parking lot. Maybe I would've told my roommate what an honor it's been to share a room with her for the last three years, and I'm sorry I talk so much during our viewings of *Rapunzel's Tangled Adventure*, and no, I'll clean the shower. Maybe I would've memorized every colonial brick and every smeared window, knowing I would be stuck looking at the insides of my professors' homes for the next few months. Maybe I would've tried the dining hall sushi. (Scratch that last one.)

But I hear there's always something weird about graduating: I mean, for the first time in 22 years, your life isn't structured by what grade you're in. Some people find the freedom of being outside the classroom liberating and some find it debilitating. And I just happened to fall into the latter category. The future possibilities left me dizzy and terrified,

while I felt as though everyone else had a plan and were adapting it virtually. Really, I had spent four years majoring in American Studies and hoping to figure out what the heck it was, and suddenly I had a degree in it, and I still don't know. And I started wondering

if maybe I was only really good at school, and there was no place for me in the real world. (Except for the select few jobs a high school career test had chosen for me based on my personality: A farmer, a mortician/funeral director, and a nun. That's right, INFJ friends, we're dying alone.) Then,

“There was the added pressure of graduating during a pandemic, which was less like graduating but more that I just stopped going to classes”

there was the added pressure of graduating during a pandemic, which was less like graduating but more that I just stopped going to classes. There was no closure to it, and instead of having organized time slots in my day where I talked about book history and read about the Beatles, I replaced it with

hours of competing to watch as many *Blacklist* episodes as I could in one sitting—either no one told me that no one else was competing or I just didn't care. And just like I was when I was finishing my degree virtually, I was trapped in my childhood bedroom filled with *Cat in the Hat* puppets and a self-made poster of Aslan from *Narnia* that I'm pretty sure is just made from cut-out Google images of generic lions.

I had always heard the stories of your college years being your best years, and I started fearing that maybe they were all true (even though I had never even gotten proper drunk once in undergrad.) And mostly, I looked at all of the cool things my friends were doing, and I just felt so out of sync. So, although I had put it off on every summer vacation, every Spring Break, and every free moment prior, I decided to deep clean my childhood bedroom as a way to do *something, anything*, that wasn't revising my resume or putting together half-hearted cover

letters.

And in the span of one week, I got to see my whole past come to life in front of me in the forms of my Limited Too charm bracelet, four whole *High School Musical* board games, a whole box full of Aeropostale-branded shirts I shoved under my bed instead of

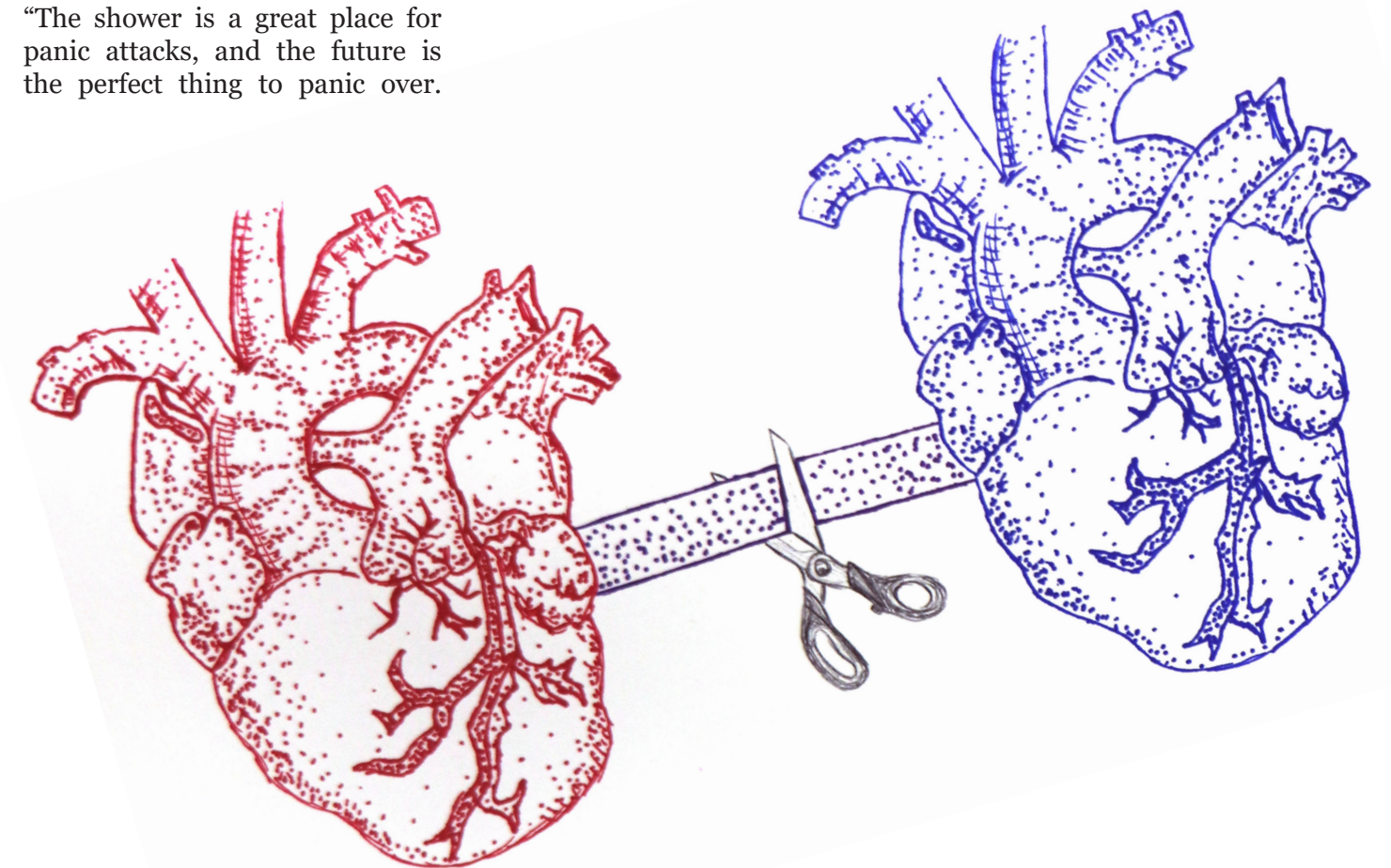
giving away years ago, and other blasts from the past. One particularly odd find was my old Barbie diary where I tracked what little thoughts I had. For the first few pages, I don't think I understood what a diary was and I just scribbled ink blot-esque shapes on the pink stationary pages. But once I got the gist of it, I wrote little historic milestones like “I had my first cut in 2004, April 27” and “I had my first splinter in 2004.” (2004 was a big year for first-aid kits.) But then I stumbled upon this one little passage: “On May 7th we had are [sic] show, we did Cha Cha Slide and This Little Lite [sic] of Mine and the Music Bus and the Bird. I Have a Tuff [sic] Life.”

And it reminded me of my favorite piece of advice I ever personally received from one of my heroes, Amanda Stern. She once told me: “The shower is a great place for panic attacks, and the future is the perfect thing to panic over.

That said, there was a time when you were panicked over being the age you are right now. There was a time you were panicked over being in high school, and middle school, and those things came and went, and you got through it and now you're here.”

The thing is she's exactly right. There were times when I worried about where I would go to college, whether I would get asked to go to the prom, and even times when I dreaded the “Cha Cha Slide.” And I'm still here after all of that. It's taking a long time, but I'm slowly learning how to find strength in my own history and the things I've gotten through. Our past suffering isn't proof that everything sucks all the time, but it's proof of all the things we've endured through.

Don't get me wrong: I still miss my friends every single day, I still don't know what I'm doing with my life, and I still have *absolutely no idea* what an American Studies major does (but I don't think it's watching as many Max Fosh YouTube videos as I do.) But I'm making a pact with myself to stop looking at uncertainty as failure. As my therapist explained to me, the only sure way that things will never change is if I never try to grow. And maybe that's the big secret: No one really has anything figured out completely. You just gotta put your best foot forward... and cha cha real smooth. ■



of personal recommendations as well as a few shows I've heard very good things about and are on my personal to-watch lists. Hopefully by the time you finish this list, you'll have learned enough about the cities these shows are based in that you can act like locals when you visit in person (or at least you can recreate your favorite scenes).



Filmed partly at the Bryn Mawr campus in the suburbs of Philadelphia, this plot-heavy thriller drama is set in a fictional university similar to the many prestigious real-life colleges that surround the city of Philadelphia.

Television



Although I've never been, Seattle has always seemed like such a cool city to me. The nature, the eco-friendly crowds, the '90s Nirvana clout, the '00s *Twilight* clout—as an east coaster, I've always been drawn to the cool indie vibes of the pacific northwest. But alas, these four picks are the closest I'll get until that sweet sweet vaccine hits my bloodstream.

iCarly

Is it really childhood nostalgia or trauma-induced regression? Either way, this TV show about the baby days of social media influencing and content creation is worth the rewatch.

Twin Peaks (Technically set in North Bend)

This is a classic David Lynch story oozing with pacific northwest aesthetic and dark early 90's moods. A cult classic cut too short with one too many reboots, this enigmatic

whodunit is a slow burn but very captivating. It's the show all your Tumblr friends were obsessed with and they weren't wrong.

Frasier

This is the show to watch if you're in the mood for a spin off series of the classic sitcom Cheers and finally understand all the references your parents make. The show follows psychiatrist Frasier Crane as he moves back to his hometown of Seattle and starts a talk radio show (you know, like the OG podcasts but live).

Grey's Anatomy

This is the infamous hospital drama of our generation and Shonda Rhimes' crowning glory chalk full of signature plot twists. Although I only really recommend the first nine seasons, the heart-wrenching scenes are very addictive, and the soundtrack includes a lot of Tegan and Sara.



Seinfeld

This show is for anyone who wants to know what the Upper West Side was like in the '80s. (Spoiler alert: a surprising amount of characters own and operate cars during multiple episodes, lol so weird). A cultural phenomenon to be witnessed; a surprising amount of episodes hold up comedy-wise, and this show is definitely worth a binge.

Suits

Although a bit more glam than grit, *Suits* is about a scrappy outsider using his photographic memory and quick wits to infiltrate the highly elitist and rigged

world of corporate law. It also stars Meghan Markle, whom we all love; dismantle the monarchy!

Mad Men

Although there's definitely a lot of glam, there's also a good amount of 1960s counterculture grit. Visiting New York is a lot more gratifying when you can also appreciate its rich history—what's a better way to learn the history than through one of the most awarded dramas in television?

Broad City

This show stars a couple of modern working gals trying to kick it

in present-day NYC. Developed from a web series produced by the show's creators and stars, *Broad City* is hilariously authentic to their real experiences in the city.

Nora from Queens

The oft forgotten borough, Queens is the setting of Awkwafina's show on HBO, which is based on her life as a 20-something trying to be an adult while living at home with family. Although I haven't seen it myself, I've only heard great things, and despite this only seeing the trailer, I do in fact quote the line "floating through life like a townie log" in my Instagram bio.

One of the most popular settings for TV shows, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who hasn't seen a show that portrays the city in the stereotypical *Sex-and-the-City-Friends*, why-is-their-apartment-so-big, how-can-they-afford-all-those-lattes way. So, below I've made sure to include shows that try to portray the city a bit more authentically; more grit, less glam.

Television

Weeds

Nancy Botwin is not your typical LA suburban mom. The opening title song, “Little Boxes” by Malvina Reynolds, perfectly sets the tone for a show about a recently widowed suburbanite who begins selling marijuana to support her family after her husband’s unexpected death. *Weeds* is a great comedy that exposes the unsightly underbelly of the picture-perfect image the upper middle class tries to project.

Crazy Ex-Girlfriend

A musical comedy that more than delivers on its premise, *CXG* follows a successful lawyer, Rebecca, as she abruptly quits her high-paying job to move to the less than picturesque West Covina, California to follow her ex-boyfriend.

Arrested Development

This is a cult classic about a family filled with terrible and hilarious people from Orange County. The show follows son, Michael, as he tries to keep the family afloat after they lose all their money when their father is charged with white collar crimes. Its dry wit and niche humor are addicting, and it’s honestly one of the few shows recently that genuinely makes me laugh out loud. 10/10. Having watched the series off the recommendation of fellow *Everything But...* writer Setareh, I can guarantee this series is worth the watch.

Barry

One of my favorite dark comedies I got into during the early lockdown days and one of the best written shows of recent years, Bill Hader’s *Barry* follows an ex-mili-

tary hitman as he moves to LA and starts taking acting classes. With a somewhat random premise, this Emmy-winning show will have you hooked from the beginning.

Party Down

Party Down is probably the most realistic portrayal of the entertainment industry in LA yet. And by that, I mean this show is about the food service industry. With a lot of recognizable cast members that went on to do great things (Adam Scott, Lizzy Caplan), this two season gem is a more cynical catering business version of *The Office*. It centers around a group of young people in LA who are trying to make it as actors but mostly working as cater-waiters waiting for their big break that will probably never come. (Stay on the lookout for its revival currently in development at STARZ).

If you want the LA experience without the stereotypical LA crowd of Insta baddies or TV gimicks, here are some shows that maybe show the more realistic and somewhat underwhelming underbelly of the land of dreams.

CALIFORNIA



WASHINGTON D.C.

As a type of antithesis to the city of angels where every 40-year-old in the industry acts like they’re in their 20s, D.C. is known for being the city where every 20-year-old acts like they’re 40. With politics playing a huge role in our modern lives especially over the past year, why not take a look into the city where it all happens? As a hometown of sorts for yours truly, it was always a bit of a thrill to see places I grew up around being featured on TV. Although only some capture what it’s like accurately, it’s always cool to see the city I know the best through a different lens.

The West Wing

The West Wing, Aaron Sorkin’s brainchild, is a Bush-era hour-long drama about a fictional and liberal White House that follows the senior staff as they tackle trying to make the world a better place in the face of 2000s politics. More heartwarming than scandalous, the show features great writing and that classic D.C. dialogue.

Veep

Probably one of the most authentic portrayals of D.C. politics, culture, and dialogue, this dark-humored and slightly wacky comedy

stars Julia Louis-Dreyfus as our less than charismatic Vice President; always a VP, never just the P. Written to be a bit of an exaggerated version of the politics in D.C., the absurdity and the show’s obnoxious characters end up mirroring quite a bit of the reality of American politics. This HBO show also manages to offer a hilarious but accurate satire without revealing their political party affiliation.

The X-Files

Although there are more than a few cop procedurals set in our nation’s capital, my favorite is definitely The X-Files. Aliens, govern-

ment conspiracies, and the ship that started it all? Yes, please.

The Americans

Centering around two KGB agents posing as Americans living in the suburban D.C. Metropolitan Area, *The Americans* is set in Reagan era America during the contentious Cold War. Created by former CIA agent-turned-author, Joe Weisberg, this drama explores the complicated life of these undercover spies at odds with their identities. Although I’m pretty sure I didn’t grow up next to any Soviet spies, who knows?

With the help of various streaming services (and *ehem* illegal but free streaming sites), the world is at your fingertips. So grab a blanket, curl up in bed, and travel safely :)

If Revolutionary Women Had Theme Songs

By Misha Mullany

In honor of Women’s History Month and all of the revolutionary women who paved the way for us, here’s a part history lesson, part girl-jam playlist for when you want to empower yourself with the accomplishments of your ancestors. And don’t worry, my full playlist is on Spotify, so whether you’re primping for girl’s night or sipping wine on the couch and relaxing, you can feel like the Baddest B- around. So without further ado—let’s go!

JOSEPHINE BAKER

Josephine Baker (1906-1975) was an American-born dancer who made a name for herself by dancing semi-nude and singing in vaudeville shows throughout America and France. Then during WWII, she served in the French Resistance forces as a spy and passed messages in her lyrics to Allied Forces. She later adopted 12 children from different nationalities and raised them in what she called her “Rainbow Tribe.” She travelled around the world, enacting political and social change that can be considered revolutionary in any time period.

Theme Song: “Q.U.E.E.N.” by Janelle Monae
*Am I a freak for dancing around? (Queen)/
Am I a freak for getting down? (Don’t judge me, oh)/
I’m cutting up, don’t cut me down (don’t cut me, no)/
And yeah I wanna be, wanna be queen (I just wanna be)*

A no-brainer pairing in my opinion. Both Janelle and Josephine unapologetically flaunt what they’ve got, while championing civil rights and empowering women around the world.

MALALA YOUSAFZA

Malala Yousafzai (1997-Present) was born the daughter of a teacher in Pakistan, and she became an outspoken advocate for girl’s education. At just 11 years old, she gave her first speech: “How Dare the Taliban Take Away My Basic Right to Education?” She later survived an assassination attempt by the Taliban on her way home from school when she was hit by a gunshot to the head. Despite this, Malala has continued to fight for access to education and women’s rights, specifically for young girls. In 2014, she was the youngest person awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She is the youngest designated UN messenger-of-peace, and has a book published (*I Am Malala*) and a documentary was made about her (*He Named Me Malala*).

Theme Song: “I Am Malala” - Girls of the World (Not on Spotify)
*With the power of our speech/
We can change our world and how it’s perceived/
We’ve got doubts and beliefs/
But not one thing’s truly out of our reach*

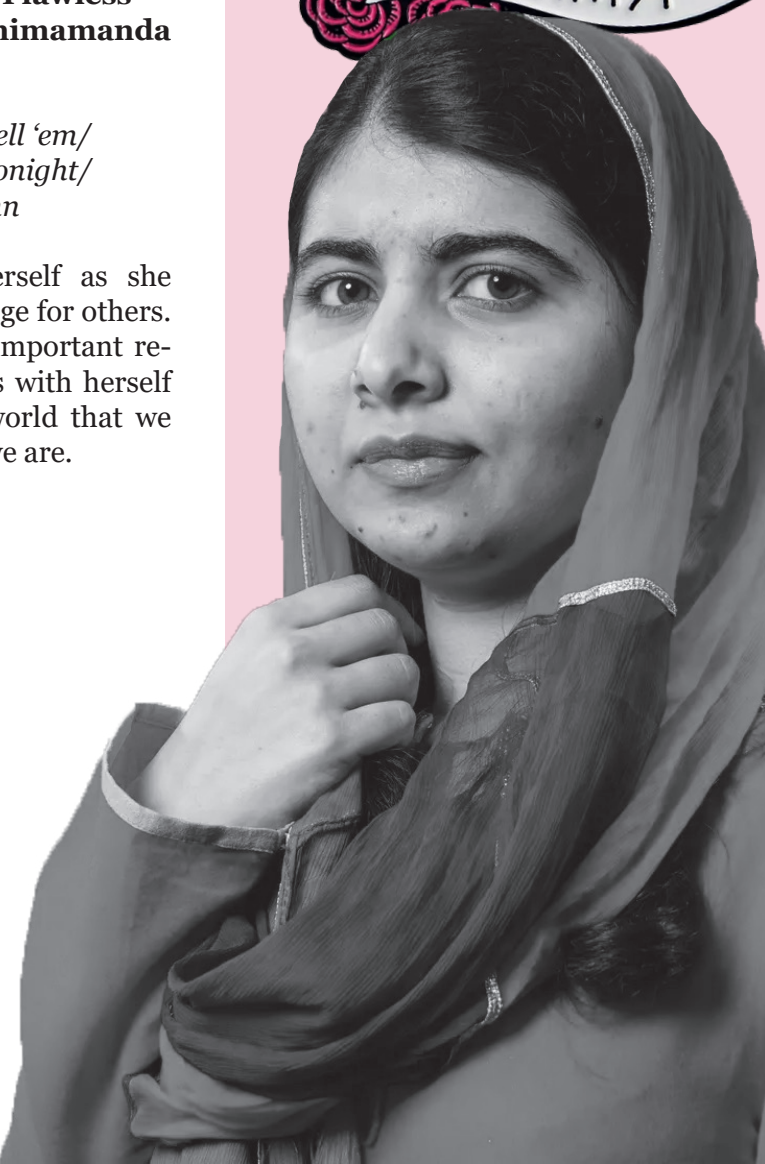
Because Malala is so inspiring to young women, multiple songs have actually been written about her. This version by Girls of the World is my favorite because it calls us all to stand up for what we believe in and not allow ourselves to be limited by others.

FRIDA KAHLO

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was a Mexican artist who is known for her surrealist paintings and self-portraits. She challenged conventional ideas of beauty, identity, and gender norms and is considered a feminist icon. Plus, she celebrated real women and their experiences and was openly bisexual (one of her most famous relationships was with Josephine Baker!). Her work has been showcased around the world, including in the Louvre, and she is considered one of Mexico’s greatest artists.

Theme Song: “*Flawless” - Beyoncé feat. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**
*I woke up like this/
We flawless, ladies tell ‘em/
Say I, look so good tonight/
God damn, God damn*

Frida celebrated herself as she was, refusing to change for others. She knew the most important relationship in life was with herself and proved to the world that we are flawless, just as we are.



Music

ANGELA DAVIS

Angela Davis (1944-Present) is a civil rights activist, feminist, accomplished writer, and educator. She is an advocate for the dismantling of the prison-industrial complex and is a founding member of the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS). She has published over ten books including *Women, Race, and Class* (1980), and *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture* (2005). She is currently a professor in the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies Department at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Theme Song: “Sisters Are Doin’ It for Themselves” - The Eurythmics feat. Aretha Franklin

*Now this is a song/
To celebrate/
The conscious liberation/
Of the female state*

Angela Davis is a prime example of using your voice to resist oppression and enact change, especially on topics like prison abolition, feminism, and civil rights.

LIZZO

Lizzo (1988-Present) is a singer, rapper, songwriter, and flutist who is known for her trailblazing views on self-care, mental health, and body positivity. She is an inspiration to women around the world to love themselves and celebrate their uniqueness. She champions

LGBTQ+ rights and diversity, and she continually uplifts others with her music.

Theme Song: “Bo\$\$” - Fifth Harmony

*C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T/
That’s me, I’m confident/
Don’t want yo compliments/
Use common sense/*

I could’ve easily used ANY of Lizzo’s own songs as her theme song (“Soulmate”, “Good As Hell”) but since I love bridging artists, this banger fits perfectly with Lizzo’s message of self-love, confidence, and not taking sh-! from anyone.

JAZZIE COLLINS

Jazzie Collins (1958-2013) was an HIV-positive African American transgender woman who was involved in tenant’s rights, labor rights, transgender rights, and aging and health issues. She represented minority communities and served on many community boards, including the Senior and Disability Action and the Lesbian Gay Transgender Senior Disabled Housing Task Force, and she was one of the founders of *Queers for Economic Equality Now* (QUEEN). She also founded the annual Trans March in San Francisco among many other accomplishments, and she will be remembered for her work for justice for all.

Theme Song: “I’m Every Woman” Chaka Khan

*I’m every woman, it’s all in me/
Anything you want done, baby/
I’ll do it naturally/
I’m every woman, it’s all in me*

It’s clear how much Jazzie Collins cared about her community and fellow humans. I think in some ways, her compassion really led her to view herself as every woman, taking on the responsibility to fight for the rights for all.

TAMMY DUCKWORTH

Tammy Duckworth

(1968-Present) is a United States Senator from Illinois and an Iraq War veteran. While in Iraq, her helicopter was hit by an RPG causing her to suffer injuries that caused her to lose both legs and partial mobility in one of her arms. Despite this, she is the first Thai American woman and the first woman with a disability elected to Congress, as well as the first female double amputee in the Senate and the first senator to give birth while in office. She supports comprehensive immigration reform, abortion rights, and gun control.

Theme Song: “Fight Song” - Rachel Platten

*Starting right now I’ll be strong
I’ll play my fight song
And I don’t really care if nobody else believes
‘Cause I’ve still got a lot of fight left in me*

If anyone’s an example of a fighter, it’s Tammy Duckworth. Despite all odds, she has persevered and shown us all that when you’re knocked down, get back up again and nothing can stand in your way.



RUTH BADER GINSBERG

Ruth Bader Ginsberg (1933-2020) was a Supreme Court Justice who fought for liberty and justice for all. She became a feminist icon both professionally and socially for her accomplishments progressing women’s rights. Here are just a few: she made it illegal for state-funded schools to bar women, she paved the way for the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, she fought for equal pay, she secured a woman’s right to choose, she fought for protection for pregnant women in the workplace, and she was a key vote in granting same-sex marriage. She continues to be an ideal for dignity and power that young women and grown women alike look up to, earning her place in history as the Notorious RBG.

Theme Song: “Run the World (Girls)” - Beyoncé

*Who run the world? Girls (girls)
Who run the world? Girls (girls)
Who run the world? Girls (girls)
Who run the world? Girls (girls)*

Period.

KAMALA HARRIS

Kamala Harris (1964-Present) is the 49th Vice President of the United States and the first woman to hold the position! She is the highest-ranking female official in U.S. history, and the first African American and first Asian American vice president. Before becoming Vice President, she

was the second African American woman and the first South Asian American to serve in the United States Senate. She is an advocate for healthcare reform, the DREAM Act, and progressive tax reform.

Theme Song: “The Future is Female” - Madame Gandhi

*We have to value girls more than their looks
The biggest threat is a girl with a book
The system must make room for all that we do
We’ve been bleeding each month till we gave birth to you!*

“Wear shoes ladies, there’s glass everywhere.” Kamala may be the first, but she certainly won’t be the last. Women are continuing to make history everyday.

Of course there are many many more incredible women who are trailblazers in their fields and are continuing to pave the way for our future—including you! So, go out there and shine, claim your destiny, and live your best life! You deserve it. Happy Women’s History Month.



Small Bands That No Longer Exist but Still Go Hard

Here is my personal list of bands I listened to and loved that unfortunately were gone too soon from our airwaves. (Figuratively lol, not a lot of these bands ever got radio play)

Many of these bands are from the bygone era of Warped Tour and pop emo. Once the days of indie pop came into full swing, emo music's heyday slowly faded back into the underground (prepping for its comeback in 2015), and so did these bands. Others simply never got the traction they needed, suffered too many lineup changes, or eventually moved on to other projects. However don't let the passing of time make you miss out on some killer tracks that still go hard today.

VERSAEMERGE (2007-2015)

VersaEmerge was one of the first smaller bands that I discovered before their debut album, back when I was a preteen and getting really into the emo music scene for the first time. Still one of my favorite bands, I sadly was never able to see them live. Their EPs, *Perceptions* and *VersaEmerge*, featured an original orchestral/experimental twist on the pop punk music of the '00s. And their unique sound only got better as they released their highly anticipated first album, *Fixed at Zero*, which still holds up today, I swear—so good. After the release, the height of their Warped Tour days were actually documented on an episode

By Silvana Smith

of an old MTV docu-series called *World of Jenks*, where you could witness the manic, music-packed, party days on tour. The show also brought the band more fans and notoriety.

After more than a few lineup changes, the duo ended up making the transition to indie pop a lot sooner than most alternative bands during the early 2010s and changed their hard-to-pronounce name to simply Versa. A band that was once lauded as being the next paramore, they reportedly ended up being neglected by and eventually let go by their label (a grudge I still hold against Fueled by Ramen) Some say the departure was more to do with changes in their sound, but their newer songs sounded exactly like the direction the label ended up going in the next five years anyway.

After being let go from their label, Blake Harnage went on to produce music with bands like All Time Low and PVRIS, while Sierra Kay saw some success with beach goth project Neaux and later with some solo work under the name Bad Daughter in 2019—all of which are great and worth a listen. Although I still may never see VersaEmerge perform songs live, seeing them find success in other areas of their career softens the blow.

Recommendations: “Moments Before Sleep,” “Fixed at Zero,” “Domesticated,” “Paint it Black (Cover)”

HEY MONDAY (2008-2011)

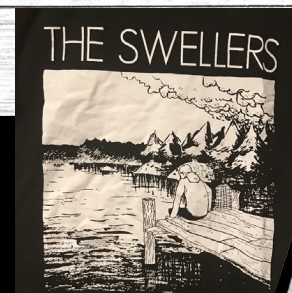
Although lead vocalist Cassadee Pope is still working today after winning *The Voice* as a solo country artist, a few people may not know that she had a moderately successful run as an emo pop darling and frontwoman of Hey Monday before they were let go of their record contract with Fueled by Ramen. You can still find remnants of her emo past in her cameos in Fall Out Boy's music video, “American Suitehearts” or in guest vocals on All Time Low's track “Backseat Serenade” (whose drummer she dated for the better part of a decade).

During their heyday, Hey Monday's tracks “Homecoming” and “How You Love Me Now?” were playing at Hot Topics all over America, and they were very indicative of where pop punk was at the time. With bright poppy hooks, edgy side bangs, and classic emo angst, I was sad to see them go so soon after their debut, especially after the more commercial success of their single “Candles.” However, after leaving their label, self-releasing a Christmas EP, and losing a few members, they announced a hiatus at the end of 2011. Pope, of course, went solo and members Mike Gentile and Chris Gentile

went on to form the band Rescue Kid. However, in 2019, Cassadee Pope, Mike Gentile, and Alex Lipshaw actually played a reunion show in Nashville and re-lived their emo glory days—if only for one night.

Sidenote: It was definitely a situation in which I saw Pope on *The Voice* and was like “isn't it cheating if you were already a successful signed recording artist who got radio play at some point and already have a fanbase and veteran vocal abilities? Like, of course she won, but she probably would've gotten signed without the help of a competition (and without all the strings attached) meant for people who didn't already have connections within the industry. But also she was hella talented, so I'm still glad she was able to revive her career for a second life in the country pop genre.”

Recommendations: “Homecoming,” “Josey,” “How You Love Me Now,” “I Don't Wanna Dance”



ADORA (2010-2013, 2016ish?)

A female-fronted band from Chicago, Adora was a piano-y pop punk band from the early '10s. Think female-fronted early Panic! At the Disco with heavier, less complicated riffs. I originally found them after watching old YouTube cover videos from lead singer Stormie Rae. Coincidentally, Rae was actually buds with previously mentioned VersaEmerge members Sierra and Blake and covered a few of their songs. Adora gained a little traction online, releasing a few music videos and a few solid EPs (*Save Yourself* (2010) and *One Word* (2012)), but after a few years with limited success Rae eventually left the band, moved to Nashville, changed her sound and was never really heard from again. The band continued with a new lead singer until around 2016, but it never really found success, and I never really listened after the vocalist change. However, I still enjoy their old EPs and listen to them from time to time.

Recommendations: “*With Closed Fists*,” “*Take a Breath*,” “*Safe and Sound*,” “*Room 401*”

THE SWELLERS (2002-2015)

With their debut album releasing the same day as they started their tour run opening for Paramore, things looked good for the freshly-signed, artist-on-the-rise, alternative punk band from Flint, Michigan. With a melodic punk rock sound reminiscent of '90s indie rock, I was gutted to see them hang it up. During their 13 years run, The Swellers toured with the

likes of Motion City Soundtrack and Bayside, and they released four full-length albums under various labels (and one album self-released). Despite early interest after signing with Fueled by Ramen, as the band evolved into a more mature rock sound with their album *Good For Me*, they struggled to keep and grow their fan base. Along with getting hit by hella taxes, financially it became incredibly difficult to remain a touring band and pay their bills. When they laid their project to rest, the drummer even penned an article for VICE, entitled “The Life and Death of a Mid-Level Band; The End of the Swellers,” detailing his experience of being in a semi-successful and recognizable band before going back to part-time work. (You can also read other articles by him on VICE, as well.)

Recommendations: “2009,” “*Prime Meridian*,” “*Ups and Downsizing*,” “*Best I Ever Had*.”

EVERYONE EVERYWHERE (2007-2012)

After finding their vinyl record by chance within the stacks of a record shop in San Francisco, their confusing name and indie aesthetic led me to look them up on the internet and discover a DIY Philly emo band with a melodic and indie punk sound. At the time, I was only 80 percent sure they were an actual band and not an inside joke. In fact, their Spotify bio reads: “Everyone Everywhere is a band from Philadelphia who released two albums, both of which were titled *Everyone Everywhere*, the exact same name as their band. This decision led to challenges with internet searches and royalty

collection. They achieved incredible levels of success during their days as active musicians and retired from the music business after earning enough money to sustain themselves for multiple lifetimes via sales of Everyone Everywhere branded t-shirts and coffee mugs.” Although the members have gone on to join and form other bands in their local scene, this Philly band never really set out to make money or a career out of the project but managed to release some solid emo tracks that are definitely worth checking out, including two EPs and a split with the band, Into it. Over it. My favorite track of theirs would probably be “I Feel Fine by Everyone Everywhere” off the album *Everyone Everywhere* by the band Everyone Everywhere.

Recommendations: “*I Feel Exhausted*,” “*Tiny Planet*,” “*Obama House*,” “*Fukui Prefecture*,” “*\$1,000,000*”

MS MR (2011-2017)

A band that definitely pioneered some of that indie pop dream wave sound that dominates today, MS MR unfortunately announced a hiatus after touring their sophomore album—but not without a good run. I first got hooked on their single “Hurricane” right before they released their debut album, *Secondhand Rapture* in 2013, which included many of the songs from their previous EP, *Candybar Creep Show*. That album went on to define my 2013 summer and really opened doors for me in terms of exploring indie alt pop artists. While they found many fans online, they gained some major traction after opening for Marina and

the Diamonds and charting in Germany. With their unique, neon surreal aesthetic, these Vassar graduates mixed sultry, dark, goth sounds with bright and complex pop hooks, attracting many fans of the Tumblr persuasion. Although they lost some enthusiasm during their second album cycle, lead singer Lizzie Plapinger continued from 2017 onward as solo artist LPX with some equally addicting and layered pop tracks. She even toured with MARINA back before COVID-19 times. I would highly recommend checking out both MS MR and LPX on Spotify, as well as their aesthetically delicious music videos on YouTube.

Recommendations: “*Hurricane*,” “*Head Is Not My Home*,” “*Fantasy*,” “*BTSK*”

STATES (2010-2014)

A Nashville band that soundtracked my 2011 freshman year of high school with their brilliant EP, *Line Em Up*, States was one of the first bands I found and streamed on Myspace (right before it faded into irrelevance lol RIP). As the brainchild of ex-Lydia vocalist Mindy White and former members from the band Copeland, the underrated indie rock outfit mixed pop-y hooks and captivating

riffs. Their debut saw a mature progression of their sound and was eventually re-released as *Room to Run* on Tooth and Nail Records. Despite producing some buzz with singles “Timebomb” and “Waiting for Too Long,” the project ended after a follow-up album, *Paradigm*. Avoiding outside influences, *Paradigm* was made on their own (funded with the help of a kickstarter) by producing and mixing everything themselves, and it was eventually released by Spartan Records. As of 2019, White has gone on to release a few singles featuring a poppier, electronic sound under the name Mindy White.

Recommendations: “*Waiting for Too Long*,” “*Anxious*,” “*Time To Begin*,” “*Timebomb*”

I hope you’ve enjoyed visiting the ghosts of my listening past. Hopefully, you’ve found some new-old acts to get into or some overlooked gems to add to your Spotify playlists. A lot of great acts never get that big break and fade away without recognition, so make you give your local or lesser-known bands the love they deserve before they’re gone for good. Happy listening <3



Honorable mentions worth hitting up Spotify for: *There for Tomorrow*, *Renfue*, *General Ghost* (not actually on Spotify RIP), *Driftless Pony Club*, *Set Your Goals*, and *The Audition*.

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About Everything But...:

A group of writers writing about... well... everything but the kitchen sink. From comedic opinion pieces to play-list suggestions, we've got it all! Email at morton3rdfloor@gmail.com to contribute.

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Adobe InDesign CC 2020 and Adobe Photoshop CC 2021 are used in layout and design. Georgia text is used in 11 point font, while headlines are in Garamond and pull-out quotes are in Century Gothic. All writing, design, and editing is done by the Everything But... staff.



Misha Mullany

Brooke Rees

Setareh Sanaei

Marriya Schwarz

Silvana Smith

Glenn Close

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