

Music Review: Noah Cyrus

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

THE 2021 GRAMMY NOMINEES have been announced, and Noah Cyrus has been nominated for best new artist. Noah is usually best known for either her voice acting in *Ponyo* as the title character, and of course, for being Miley Cyrus's little sister. Noah is successfully stepping into her own spotlight with numerous singles and her new album, "The End of Everything."

This album is a quick listen, as it has eight songs that come to about 24 minutes total. It is perfect if you're in the mood for an existential cry. Noah's impressive alto range adds an intense emotion over her already incredibly emotional lyrics, and to top it all off, she sounds very similar to Miley, so there's a lingering feeling of nostalgia over that. While several of her numbers are love songs, most reflect her existence and place in the world. Songs like "young and sad" is a direct cry to her depression, and it opens with a voicemail from her dad, Billy Ray Cyrus, telling young Cyrus that she is not alone.

Some of her songs are a little more metaphysical. "I got so high that I saw Jesus" is ultimately a reflection of the times calling out the poor state of the Earth and its economy. The album closes with a riveting send-off, "The End of Everything," which is a somber reflection on how everything is going to someday die, so you better start appreciating what you have. It is a beautiful way to end the album, given it, as a whole, appears to be an ode to acceptances: accepting depression, accepting the state of the world, and accepting that she can only do so much.

If you are the kind person who is into music inducing a good cry, I would highly recommend Noah Cyrus's "The End of Everything." She gives a whole new tone to the Cyrus musical legacy, and it seems as though her music is here to stay.

Food Review: Zait & Za'atar

BY RICHARD MAHLE

ZAIT AND ZA'ATAR IS one of my favorite restaurants out there. They have a beautiful menu for Middle Eastern cuisine. With their baba ganoush and falafel appetizers that provide the perfect start to a meal and main courses of either a sandwich or plate, their options are amazing.

The sandwich options are chicken shawarma, beef shawarma, musakhan chicken, souq veggies, or falafel. I have been lucky enough to try each sandwich except for the souq veggies over my time living in the area, and I can confidently say that you will not be let down by any of these. My personal favorites are the musakhan chicken and the beef shawarma combo meals. For roughly nine dollars you can get a sandwich, fries, and a drink. Something to note would be that these two sandwiches are the priciest ones on the menu, so if you choose a different sandwich, you can expect to pay

less. The beef shawarma is grilled spiced beef, pickles, and tahini sauce wrapped in pita bread with potentially a side of house made fries. The musakhan chicken is chicken marinated in olive oil and sumac, grilled with caramelized onions, and wrapped in pita bread. If you love the taste of onions, you will adore this sandwich.

One of the other main entrees are the plates. They offer chicken shawarma, \$9.49, beef shawarma, \$9.99, musakhan chicken, \$9.99, falafel, \$8.49. souq veggies, \$8.99, and kushari, \$7.99. While I have not been able to try each of these plates, I enjoy the beef shawarma immensely. The dish had turmeric rice topped with grilled beef shawarma and tahini sauce, served with a simple salad with an olive oil and lemon dressing that is made in house. When delightful yellow rice is topped with juicy beef and flavorful tahini sauce, I know my stomach will be satisfied.

The last entrée is more of a fancy side that is in a larger portion. The restaurant offers a series of fry dishes with different toppings. They have shawarma fries, musakhan fries, falafel fries, and souq veggies fries. While I have not personally had this dish, my girlfriend enjoyed the shawarma fries, which are fries topped with beef and chicken shawarma, tahini sauce, garlic mayo and their house-made hot sauce, which is set on the side. I was lucky enough to steal some of these fries, and I believe that the really spicy hot sauce is fantastic. The meat is always cooked amazingly perfectly, which just makes any dish you eat with it something to enjoy.

Senior Swan Song: Jared Greenberg Presents "Speed-the- Plow"

BY HARRY LIEN

CONCORDIA, ST. PAUL SENIOR Jared Greenberg is presenting "Speed-the-Plow," a 1988 play written by David Mamet. Set in 1980s Hollywood, the play lends a satirical dissection of the American movie business. Bigshot Hollywood producer Bobby Gould, played by Nathan Kleppe, receives a screenplay from a longtime friend Charlie Fox, played by Kyle Baker. While in cahoots with one another, the two wage a bet on whether or not Gould is able to sleep with his temporary secretary Karen, played by Lindsey Bahr. Determined to win the bet, Gould assigns Karen to read over a script he has and meet up later at his place to discuss it. Karen, unaware of the bet and his ulterior motive, has her own agenda as well.

Greenberg has made a few changes from the original "Speed-the-Plow" script. Namely, he has cut the first half of Act I and all of Act III. The original play has three acts in total. Another change was the removal of most explicit language and curse words. However, in a few cases he left it in to maintain emphasis in the dialogue. Greenberg chose this play because he is a fan of Mamet, the play's writer, and finds him talented at what he does.

Greenberg is looking forward to showing off his production and is appreciative of the actors, as he says,

"They help breathe life to the script and make it feel alive. I can't wait for people to see the culmination of all our hard work putting this together."

"Speed-the-Plow" will be available in three showings via a video live stream December 11, December 12, and December 13. In order to receive the link to the performance, simply email cspstage@gmail.com.

Dark and Deliciously Wicked: Mark Rosenwinkel Presents "A Sentimental Tale"

BY HARRY LIEN

AMIDST THE PANDEMIC, Concordia St. Paul's theatre department remains determined to put on a show. Mark Rosenwinkel's upcoming production, "A Sentimental Tale," warps us back in time to the days of radio dramas presenting a vintage noir story. According to Rosenwinkel, radio dramas were noted for dark and menacing stories about ordinary people committing terrible acts. He also uses the term "noir," which is French for "black," to describe the melodramatic subject matter and black and white photography, emblematic of this genre. That said, the production will be a video live stream in the form of a radio show on camera with sound effects and music to accompany it. Additionally, the script is being read by fully-engaged actors donning 1940's period costumes. These combined elements will look to make the production immersive and reminiscent of the era depicted.

To preface the story, "A Sentimental Tale" concerns the conflicts of social class and character between a gossip reporter and her daughter in law. In order to get a sense of the narrative structure, Rosenwinkel credits listening to and watching a number of radio and television dramas from the 1940's and 1950's. Staples of the noir genre, such as plot twists and moral questions, are also aspects he uses. However, Rosenwinkel distanced the production from the noir's traditional use of the "helpless female" which he sees as a sexist trope. That said, in his play, the primary struggle is with the female characters, because, being a noir story, they are as wicked as everyone else.

Overall, Rosenwinkel is excited with how the script turned out, as it was a great read for him and the cast. Rosenwinkel continued on, saying, "It's a dark, deliciously wicked story of twisted ambition, and it takes advantages of the limitations that theatre is working under during the pandemic, turning them into opportunities for something new and different."

Performances are free and will be live streamed at 7:00PM on December 11, 7:00 on December 12, and will wrap up on December 13 at 2:00PM. In order to receive the link to the performance, simply email cspstage@gmail.com.