

# Musicians by night

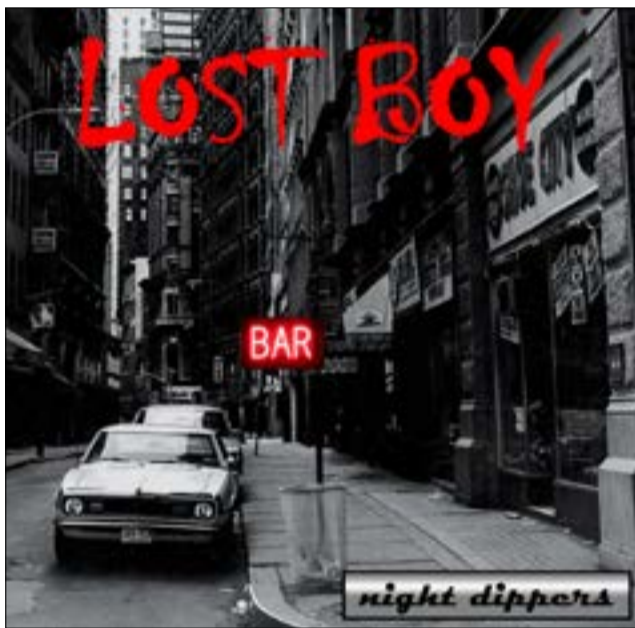
MUSIC REPORT  
By MELISSA NAZARETH  
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**A**N emerging Bahrain-based band Night Dippers is set to release four new singles this summer, inspired by a spectrum of emotions and experiences ... from love to a casual night out.

Offering an eclectic mix of influences from blues to punk, and rock and roll to country, song writers and vocalists Alex Craine, who is also on bass, and Alex Longden, on guitar, along with Matt Cowley on drums, are set to present *Lost Boy*, *On The Road*, *One Minute 47 Second Love Song*, and *Cyber Stalker*, two of which are currently being mixed and mastered in the UK and will be released next month.

All three band members work day jobs but share a passion to create music in their off time.

"*Lost Boy* is about meeting mysterious women," Craine told *Gulf Weekly*. "I took my own mysterious woman, my wife, (smiles) and we visited



MYSTERIOUS: The *Lost Boy* single cover

a legendary bar – Johnny's Bar – in Greenwich Village, which is famous for having a fantastic punk rock juke box. The song is based on that night out in New York but fictionalised a bit and Alex (Longden) came up with the music for it."

Night Dippers' creations are collaborative - whether it's the tunes or the lyrics, and while there's no set formula, Craine and Longden try to

meet at least once a week to exchange ideas and play. Drummer Matt usually adds his beats later.

*On The Road*, set for release next month along with *Lost Boy*, brings to life Craine and Longden's shared experience of coming home to family after a long time apart. In the past, they have both held jobs that entailed being away from home. *One Minute 47 Second Love Song* and *Cyber Stalker* will follow in June and have equally interesting back stories.

"My wife said to me, 'why do you never write love songs', so that was the answer to it," Craine said about *One Minute 47 Second Love Song*.

After years of playing covers, the bass enthusiast felt he needed to take his passion for music to the next level, which is how he got into song writing eight years ago. Craine's words are influenced by stories and television shows, among other things, and while they might be inspired by his personal experience, they are often fictionalised, like on *One Minute 47 Second Love Song*,



WILD: Alex Craine during a past performance in Dubai



ARTIST: Alex Longden

which is about somebody who finds himself getting in and out of love often.

"I came up with a bass riff one day and shared it with Longden who is now working on the guitar part and we will soon get together and record *Cyber Stalker*," the artist and chief executive officer of Bahrain Financial Harbour added.

The Saar resident, who has been part of many bands since his teenage years, including Dubai-based punk rock ensemble Gone Rogue Dxb, met Longden through a work acquaintance. Together they decided to collaborate on their love for music and Night Dippers was formed in November last year.

"I was having my annual health check-up, and my doctor prescribed a quick blood pressure test. When I went to show my reports, he told me I was a night dipper – I thought that's a great name for a band but had no idea what it meant. I later found out that when you sleep, for some people their blood pressure climbs, which is not good, and for some their blood pressure dips and doctors call them night dippers," Craine revealed.

Last year, Night Dippers released two singles *Whole Again* and *Half Life*. They are determined to record at least one song a month and have 10 roughly demoed songs in the pipeline.

While they are more of a 'recording project' for now, the artists are open to new ideas of showcasing their work. So, is a gig on the cards anytime soon? "Never say never," quipped Craine.

Night Dippers has around 20,000 hits across platforms from more than 26 countries including the UK, US, UAE, Dominican Republic, and India. Their work is available on *Spotify*, *Amazon*, *iTunes* and *YouTube*, among others.

For more details, follow @nightdippers on Instagram.



UNITED FOR A CAUSE  
Autism events roundup  
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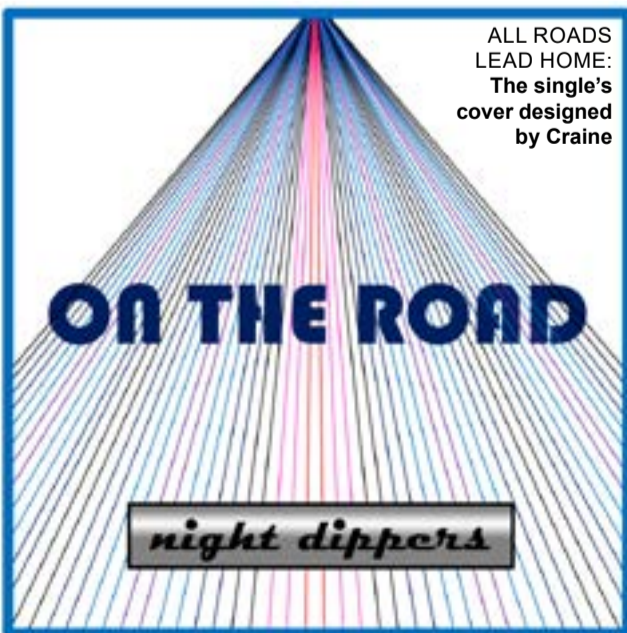
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LEISURE SCENE  
Dining and night life  
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BETWEEN THE LINES  
Upcoming art  
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ALL ROADS LEAD HOME:  
The single's cover designed by Craine



COMMUNITY REPORT  
By MELISSA NAZARETH  
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**A** SERIES of events to raise awareness about autism are set to be staged by local groups working for the cause, coinciding with Autism Awareness Month in April.

Supporters and volunteers from the community have come together in solidarity to organise marathons, interactive sessions and fun activities for children with autism, including lively story-telling sessions.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain and the affected people often have problems with social communication and interaction, besides showing restricted or repetitive behaviours or interests. They may also have different ways of learning, moving, or paying attention.

The United Nations General Assembly designated April 2 as World Autism Awareness Day to educate about autistic individuals around the world. The theme this year is 'Moving from Surviving to Thriving: Autistic individuals share regional perspectives', underpinning the shift from merely raising awareness to also promoting acceptance and appreciation of autistic people and their vital contributions to society.

In keeping with the spirit, Bahrain Society for Children with Behavioural and Communication Difficulties – Alia for Early Intervention is organising its annual Run For Autism on April 27 from 9am to 1pm at Exhibition World Bahrain, Sakhir. Participants of all ages, abilities and fitness levels can register. The event will be attended by dignitaries, including Tourism Minister Fatima Al Sairafi and Social Development Minister Osama Al Asfoor. Cash prizes and gifts await top performers at the finish line.

In addition to the race, Run For Autism will also feature children's entertainment and family fun, including a story session. Those who wish to

# Help them thrive

KINDNESS: A child joins the Think centre campaign



share their stories and autism journey, as a way to promote understanding about the disorder, are welcome. All proceeds from registrations and optional donations will be used toward the Alia Comprehensive Autism Centre. For more details, follow @aliaautismcenters on Instagram.

"The Alia Comprehensive Autism Centre is poised to become a beacon of hope and progress," director Dr Rania Al Khalifa told *GulfWeekly*.

"It leads the community with its unique blend of Applied Behaviour Analysis therapies and in-centre programmes designed to enhance socialisation skills crucial for our students' development," she added.

Earlier this week, Naval Support Activity (NSA)

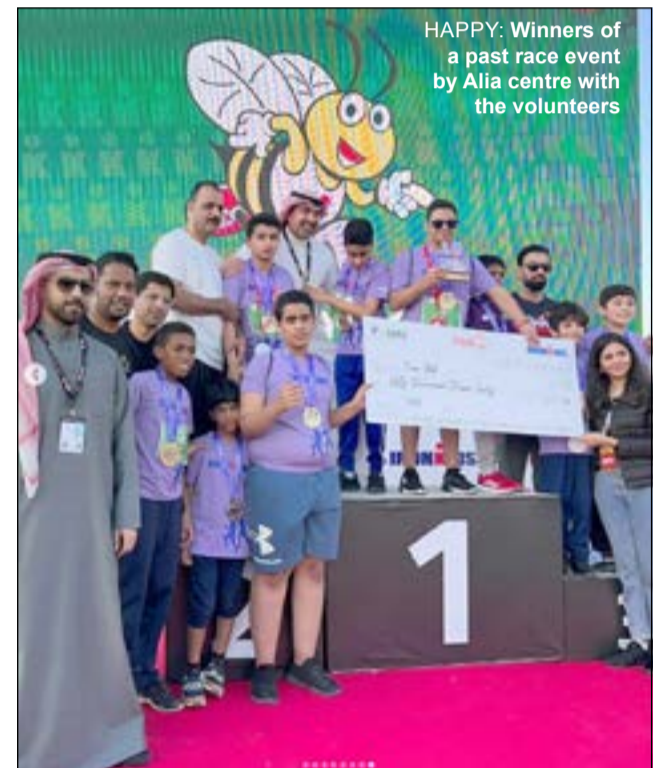
Bahrain sailors visited the Alia centre and interacted with students through cooking classes, physical training and musical sessions, among other activities. The sailors also had an educational experience as they joined the students during occupational therapy, cognitive behaviour therapy and applied behavioural analysis sessions.

There will be activities exclusively for children on the autism spectrum as well. Interactive Minds Centre for Rehabilitation in Salmaniya is organising an awareness and support event tomorrow (April 26) from 2pm to 6pm. Volunteers from the non-profit community group Special Families Support (SFS) will accompany their children in fun activities, from Zumba dance to movies and painting. For more details, follow @sfs.bahrain on Instagram.

"We are happy to be participating in this event and will be joined by volunteers from the non-profit group One Heart Bahrain," an SFS representative added. "SFS Global is celebrating 25 years this year, and the Bahrain chapter completes 11 years. We work with children on the autistic spectrum and their parents, offering support, which is truly enriching."



FUN: Teams from REACH centre and Neo Books and Coffee interact with children during the story-telling session



HAPPY: Winners of a past race event by Alia centre with the volunteers



ENGAGE: A sailor and an Alia centre child during an art activity supervised by the centre's faculty

Omnia Centre for Autism and Special Education is organising social and fun activities for its children in co-operation with the medical undergraduate students of Arabian Gulf University today (April 25).

REACH Behaviour and Development Centre co-organised two story-telling sessions earlier this month, with the British School of Bahrain and Neo Books and Coffee, where *The Adventures of Talal the Teddy Bear*, following his journey with autism, were read out loud to children.

Think Behaviour and Development Centre with Radio Bahrain organised Bubbles of Kindness this month. The event encouraged individuals, families, and businesses to step outdoors any day in April and fill the sky with bubbles, capture the moment with a photo, and tag it as #BubblesOfKindness – if you haven't already, go ahead and join the campaign. "Bubbles remind us of a spectrum, representing different shapes and sizes and even reflecting different colours. They serve as symbols of hope and happiness and our journey as a community towards understanding, acceptance, and inclusivity," a Think representative explained.

## BRAIN-BUSTERS

Quizmaster and *Radio Bahrain* host Shannon Crockett, who has been entertaining people across the island with his brain-teasing quiz night sessions, has offered to put *GulfWeekly* readers' general knowledge to the test. Join in the fun every Thursday with Shannon's seven brain-busters.

1. What is the capital of Slovakia?
2. In golf, what name is given to the score of three-under-par on an individual hole?
3. Which Mary Poppins song won the 1964 Academy Award for Best Original Song?
4. Name the only animal species whose full scientific name is identical to its common name?
5. What is the name of the final course of all Mario Kart video games?
6. What is the name for cloud that touches the ground?

Catch Shannon's weekly BRAIN-BUSTERS every Thursday in Gulf Weekly

7. Rihanna's hit *Umbrella* was originally written with which other popstar?

- ANSWERS
1. Bratislava
  2. Albatross
  3. Chim Chim Cher-ee
  4. Boa Constrictor
  5. Rainbow Road
  6. Fog
  7. Britney Spears



STARLIT: Ambience at La Med's Amber Nights



CATCH OF THE DAY: The local hammour



TENDER: Succulent lamb ghouzi

**EMBARK** on a culinary journey like no other at La Med's Amber Night, housed within the luxurious confines of The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain, writes Jayne Houghton.

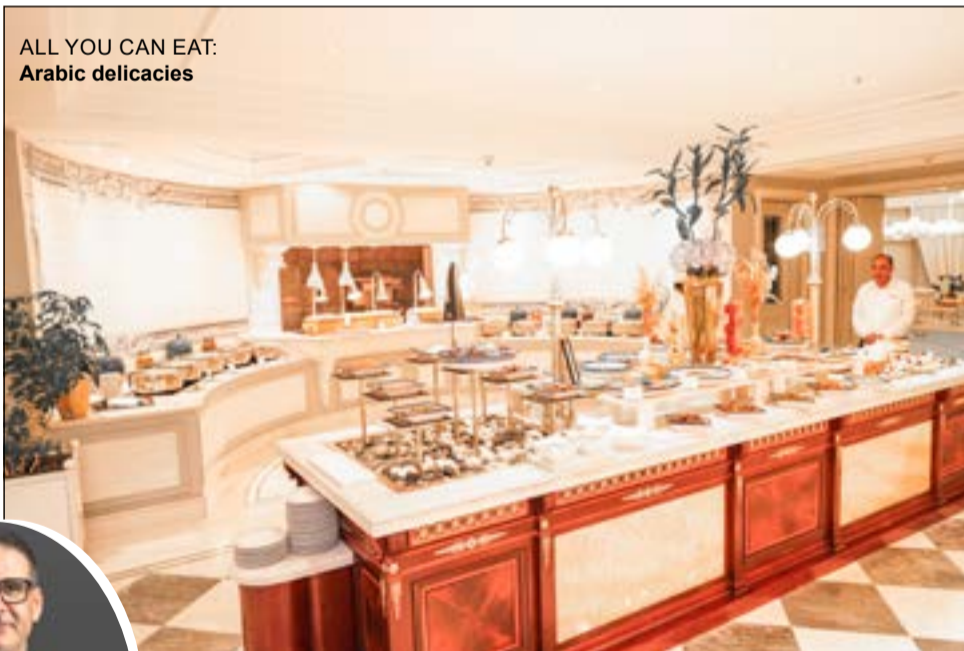
As I was welcomed to the outside seating area, I was immediately captivated by the ambience that enveloped me; a symphony of twinkling lights and Arabian-inspired decor that created an enchanting setting over the entire evening. The live DJ's melodic Arabic tunes added an extra experiential layer, setting the stage for an evening of indulgence and relaxation, which can be enjoyed Tuesday to Thursday from 7pm.

From the moment I arrived, it was evident that no detail had been spared in crafting an authentic sensorial experience of Arabic culture. The attentive staff ensured that my every need was met, from keeping my glass filled to ensuring that each plate was impressive in its own right. Their impeccable service spearheaded by Ritz-Carlton's food and beverage director William Fily only enhanced the already charming atmosphere, leaving me feeling cared for throughout the evening.

As I perused the extensive beverage menu, I was delighted by the array of options available. From

# Art of Arabian hospitality

ALL YOU CAN EAT: Arabic delicacies



Executive Chef Joergen

soft drinks that refreshed the palate to mocktails and select beverages, there was something to suit every taste and preference. Each sip complemented the bold flavours of the dishes, adding an extra blend of complexity to the culinary journey.

And what a journey it was! As a connoisseur of fine food, I was thoroughly impressed by the creativity and quality

of the dishes on offer. Each plate was a masterpiece, thanks to Ritz-Carlton's executive chef Joergen Sodemann and Arabic chef de cuisine Hanan Osman, with vibrant colours and artfully arranged ingredients throughout the buffet showcasing the skill and care of the chefs.

Chef Hanan has been dishing up Bahraini cuisine for over 18 years, which is lovingly evident throughout the Amber offerings. From

the tender and succulent lamb ghouzi, smoky grills ranging from marinated lamb chops to tender chicken and fresh and flavourful seafood, every bite revealed new layers of taste and texture.

One dish that particularly stood out was the local hammour; a traditional Middle Eastern delicacy that was expertly prepared and presented. The delicious flesh, infused with rich and aromatic spices, paired perfectly with my selection of fresh hot and cold mezze.



William



Chef Hanan

leaving me craving more, long after the last bite had been savoured.

La Med's Amber night beckons guests to indulge in Arabian-inspired delicacies. Each meticulously crafted dish promises to evoke the vibrant spices and time-honoured traditions of the Arabian Peninsula, offering an unparalleled fusion of flavour and sophistication.

To cater to diverse preferences and desires, La Med presents four distinct packages: The introductory option, priced at BD29, invites guests to savour an array of tantalising dishes paired with traditional tea and Arabic coffee.

For those seeking an elevated experience, another option, priced at BD35, offers the same delectable cuisine alongside a selection of soft beverages.

For connoisseurs desiring a touch of luxury, the next option, priced at BD45, encompasses all the offerings of the previous package with the addition of select beverages, ensuring a refined dining experience. Lastly, for those yearning for exclusivity, the final option, priced at BD55, invites guests to a VIP dining encounter in a private setting, complete with personalised service and luxury ambience.

For more information or reservations, call 17586499 or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com

# Leisure Scene

What's on guide by  
Jayne Houghton



LAVISH:  
Diverse  
flavours

## FEASTS FOR ALL SEASONS

**UNTIL** the end of this month, Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay guests and visitors can kickstart their weekends with the Lazy Breakfast at Bahrain Bay Kitchen, a laid-back affair featuring an extensive spread of breakfast favourites, specialty egg dishes, Arabic mezze, and more.

Held every Saturday, the breakfast feast runs from 11.30am to 3pm, offering guests the chance to savour an array of flavours. With a price of BD20 per person, children aged six to 12 enjoy 50 per cent savings whilst those under six dine free. For a refined afternoon treat, visit the Bay View Lounge any day of the week for Traditional Afternoon Tea. Indulge in meticulously prepared sandwiches, scones, and artisanal pastries, accompanied by your choice of exquisite teas or coffee; priced at BD16.500 net per person.

On Fridays, brunch like royalty at CUT by Wolfgang Puck.

From 12.30pm to 3.30pm, executive chef Brian Becher presents a selection of Wolfgang Puck's favourite dishes. Enhance your experience with an extended beverage package, priced a la carte, and kick off the weekend in grandeur.

Craving Asian flavours? Head to re/Asian Cuisine by Wolfgang Puck on the 50th floor. Enjoy contemporary twists on traditional favourites like Szechuan Lamb Dumplings and Whole Steamed Sea Bream in stunning surroundings.



And for the ultimate relaxation, treat yourself to The Spa's Signature Hammam followed by the Sensory Journey Candle Massage. Available daily from 10am to 10pm, escape the everyday with prices starting at BD135 on weekdays and BD140 on weekends.

For more information or reservations, call 17115500 or 17115070.

## CULINARY EXTRAVAGANZA

**ROYAL** Golf Club Bahrain invites guests to indulge in two delightful dining experiences.

Experience the ultimate steak sensation at the Steak Fiesta, every Wednesday starting at 6pm.

Delight in premium-quality meat expertly crafted by their talented chefs for a culinary extravaganza that will leave your taste buds ecstatic. Live music and a charming atmosphere complete the evening.

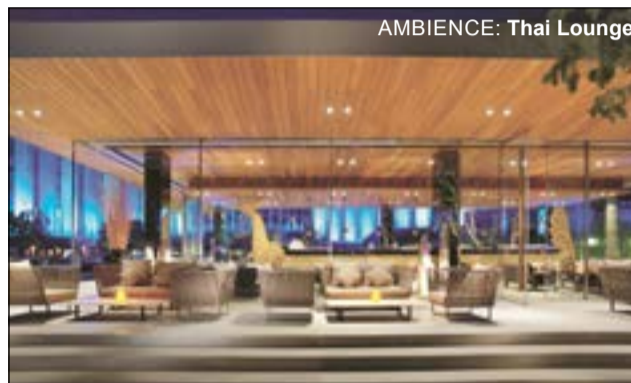
Immerse yourself in the regal ambience of the Royal Tea at Links, where delightful treats and savoury temptations await amidst panoramic views of the greens. Available

# TASTE THE BEST OF JAPAN AT LE JARDIN

**GUESTS** at The Ritz-Carlton, Bahrain are invited to indulge their senses at Le Jardin and Thai Lounge.

In Le Jardin, patrons are transported to the heart of Japan as the establishment proudly introduces Kushiyaki; the art of Japanese skewered grilling.

The chefs blend tradition and innovation to create an unforgettable dining experience. From succulent meats to fresh seafood and vibrant vegetables, there's a



AMBIENCE: Thai Lounge

dish for everyone.

The culinary journey at Le Jardin is available Wednesday to Saturday,

from 1pm to 9pm. Prices are offered a la carte, ensuring guests can tailor their experience to suit their

## SHEER INDULGENCE!

**A FABULOUS** lineup of promotional activities are available at Hilton Bahrain this month.

Start the day the right way with a sumptuous Breakfast Buffet at Origin Kitchen and Culture, available daily from 6.30am to 10.30am.

Priced at BD13 net per person, guests can indulge in a lavish spread of breakfast favourites amidst the elegant ambience of the sixth floor.

The last 'Blast From The Past Friday Brunch' will be held tomorrow (April 26) and is guaranteed to be a memorable one, as guests

are invited to transport themselves through time and musical eras, relishing in the nostalgic tunes of the 70s, 80s, and 90s.

With a never-ending flow of beverages and an extensive spread of delectable dishes, this brunch promises an unparalleled dining experience. Opt for unlimited beverages at BD39 net or indulge in soft beverages at BD28 net.

Following brunch, the festivities continue at Cocoluna Lounge.

Every Friday from 5pm to 7pm, guests can partake in the After Brunch Offer, featuring endless pour of a

specified premium drink for just BD10.

With a DJ spinning the decks, you can unwind and revel in the lively atmosphere. On Wednesdays, from 7pm to 12am, mark Ladies' Night, offering three complimentary selected beverages for female guests. For bookings and more information for Origin and Cocoluna, call 33692013.

Elevate evenings to new heights at Block 44 on the 44th floor, where Hilton Bahrain presents Old School Party every Wednesday from 10pm to 2am.

The rhythm continues with the Afro Series, a celebration



tastes.

Meanwhile, Thai Lounge captures the vibrant energy of Thailand in an evening dedicated to friendship and indulgence.

Guests are invited to Suay Ma, Ladies' Night at Thai Lounge, where they can enjoy 50 per cent savings on



DISHY: Friday  
Brunch

of Afro beats, every Thursday from 9pm to 2am.

Thursday nights also feature Happy Hour from 9pm to 11pm, offering 50 per cent off on selected beverages.

All of these Block 44



REGAL:  
Royal Tea  
at Links

daily from 11.30am to 7pm. Choose from two packages: BD13 net for two guests inclusive of tea and coffee or BD17 net for two, inclusive of tea, coffee and two glasses of premium bubbles. For more information or reservations, call 39007546.



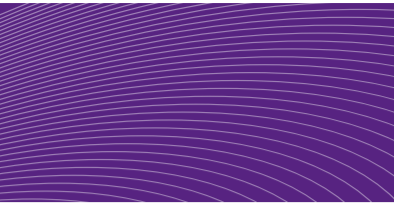
Bettina

## SWAYING STARS

**A CONFLUENCE** of various dance forms from around the world will take centre stage at a cultural event organised by an expat group in Bahrain.

Borders and Beyond,

organised by Indian Fine Arts Society, will feature diverse styles including Indian kathak and Manipuri, the Spanish flamenco and traditional Korean dances. The audience will witness the magic unravel on stage as international talents perform



# Culture Weekly

# Chats on canvas

SCENIC:  
Le Jardin



select beverages in elegant surroundings. Suay Ma takes place every Saturday from 6pm to 9pm. For reservations and more information, call 17586425 (Le Jardin), 17586499 (Thai Lounge) or email rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.



events are inclusive of two complimentary drinks for ladies, including Salsa Nights, every Friday from 9pm to 2am. For further information, call Block 44 at 3369008.

throughout the evening. The lineup features renowned kathak and lavani (dance form) expert Aditi Bhagwat and classical Manipuri dancer and choreographer Latasana Devi from India, the fascinating flamenco figure Bettina Castaño who is known to experiment with international music elements and integrate them into her performances, and popular Korean artist Yi (Lee) Chul-jin who will bring alive her meditative moves through 'monk dance' as it's commonly known or Seungmu. The event will happen today (April 25) from 7.30pm at the Cultural Hall. Doors open at 6.45pm. For details, call 39617094.

**E**XPLORING how canvases can spark conversations, a new art exhibition is set to feature 13 emerging artists and open this weekend, writes Naman Arora.

The *Canvas & Conversations* art exhibition, opening on Saturday, April 27, will run until May 11 and is being held at the Bahrain Artistic Frames Centre in Budaiya. It is being organised and curated by Bahrain-based Indian artist and creative Sudeep Deshpande.

"Visual art needs to be heard, just as it needs to be seen," the 43-year-old architect, painter and metal sculptor told *GulfWeekly*. "Experiencing a work of art becomes more of a tour in an art gallery and is merely left to a visual experience. If a painting or a sculpture catches an eye, it is admired by the viewer, looked upon and enjoyed by the audience.

"But the moment there is conversation about the very purpose of making of that painting or that sculpture, the viewer can then dive into the process from conception to completion.

"The dynamic of looking at it enhances the work, changing the impression of that particular work of art and the artist.

"To be able to converse over



DESERT NIGHTS: A piece by Sagarika



PLUS: A piece by Nirela



Mukta



Nirela



ARTISTS: From left, Sagarika, Sudeep and Deepa

a canvas I feel has always been inspiring and therefore the theme of the group show *Canvas & Conversations* came to my mind."

A total of 45 paintings by 13 artists are being showcased

at the exhibition. In addition to Sudeep, Brainy Tomar, Deepa Parthiban, Dr Sunila Abdutty, Ina Jane Marie, Nirela Sahinagic, Sagarika Konukollu, Mukta Surana, Sriparna Ghosh, Pia Banerjee,

Richa Maurya, Sylvia D'souza and Laxmi Dha are showcasing their work.

Diverse artistic processes, styles and techniques are being highlighted in the exhibition by each of the creatives involved, and the goal is to offer viewers an opportunity to interact with artists on the opening night to better understand their process.

For 50-year-old Bosnian and Herzegovinian Nirela, who is exhibiting three pieces, her artistic journey began after she got her professional photography diploma from the New York Institute of Photography.

She mainly works with textured art and acrylic colours in creating masterful abstract pieces, like the Covid-19 pandemic-inspired painting titled *Plus*.

"I created this during the pandemic when I tested positive for the virus, hence the name," she added. "I was trying to express a different kind of chaos within my designated zone, leading to this abstract piece."

Meanwhile, nature is the primary inspiration for Deepa, 53, who has distilled its diversity and complexity into beautiful simplicity in her pieces.

"A free spirit and a soul in sync with the universe is how I perceive myself and art, to me, is spiritual expression," she explained.

"More than the big things in life, it is the small little



GEOID: A resin art on canvas piece by Mukta

details which give the utmost satisfaction and happiness.

"Nature touches a deep chord within me, evident from the positive energy emanating from my artistic expressions."

Deepa is exhibiting three acrylic on canvas pieces in the exhibition, centred on different elements she experienced in nature and how they evoke human emotions.

In *The Divine Bond*, inspired by a picture taken by a friend of his wife and daughter in Germany, she explores the unconditional love between a mother and child, with twilight hues and a luminescent glow, making the captured moment seem ethereal. In *Enchanted Forest*, she takes a walk through the beauty and allure of the deep woods in minute detail.

The art pieces and their artists will be available during the opening of the exhibition on Saturday, April 27 at 6pm.

For more details, follow @sudeep\_deshpande3 on Instagram.



SUBMERGENCE & EMERGENCE: Acrylics and charcoal on canvas, by Sudeep



ENCHANTED FOREST: Acrylic on Canvas, by Deepa

# Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY NAMAN ARORA



ACTION: A still from the series

**H**ORROR and mystery fans are in for a chaotic treat, with the upcoming, highly anticipated Netflix series *Dead Boy Detectives* set to premiere today, April 25.

This darkly comedic, supernatural detective show, based on the popular DC Comics characters created by Neil Gaiman and Matt Wagner, promises a thrilling exploration of the unseen world, all through the eyes (or lack thereof) of two undead teenagers.

Charles Rowland and Edwin Paine are not your typical detectives. Tragically murdered in their youth, they opted out of the traditional afterlife and instead chose to stay on Earth, forming the *Dead Boy Detectives* agency. Operating from a hidden location, they tackle paranormal cases that the living world cannot handle.

The series, developed by Steve Yockey, takes inspiration from the source material while carving its own path.

"It's definitely set in the *Sandman* universe," Steve explained, referring to Netflix's previous foray into the world of Neil Gaiman, "But it's very much its own story."

Fans of Neil's work can expect the signature blend of dark humour and unsettling horror, all wrapped around a

compelling central mystery.

Leading the charge are actors Jayden Revri and George Rexstrew as Charles and Edwin, respectively. While both characters are deceased, their personalities couldn't be more different. Charles, the sardonic cynic, finds solace in logic and deduction. Edwin, on the other hand, embraces the chaos of the afterlife, often relying on intuition and a touch of the macabre. Their contrasting styles create a dynamic partnership, fuelled by their shared desire to solve mysteries and perhaps, just maybe, find some semblance

of peace in the afterlife.

Joining them is Kassius Nelson as Crystal Palace, a quirky psychic who acts as their reluctant connection to the living world. Crystal's abilities allow them to bridge the gap between the mortal realm and the spectral plane, providing them with much-needed information and occasionally landing them in sticky situations.

*Dead Boy Detectives* promises laugh-out-loud moments as the boys navigate the absurdities of their post-mortem existence. They'll encounter strange entities, battle otherworldly

demons, and all the while, crack a few morbid jokes. However, beneath the surface of the humour lies a deeper exploration of loss, grief, and the search for meaning in the face of mortality.

The series boasts a visually stunning aesthetic. The world of the *Dead Boy Detectives* is a vibrant tapestry of the macabre, where abandoned buildings pulsate with unseen energies and the veil between realities is paper-thin. The show's creators have gone to great lengths to create a unique visual language, one that reflects the bizarre beauty of the afterlife.

## BOOK UP!

**A** CAPTIVATING new novel, *Miss Morgan's Book Brigade* by Janet Skeslien Charles, hits shelves on Tuesday, April 30.

This heartwarming tale weaves together the stories of two remarkable women, separated by decades, yet united by their love of books and a mission to bring solace and knowledge during times of hardship.

The narrative centres on Jessie 'Kit' Carson, a passionate librarian working at the New York Public Library in the early 1900s. When the horrors of the first World War engulf Europe, Kit stumbles upon a life-changing opportunity. Inspired by Anne Morgan, daughter of JP Morgan, Kit joins the Library War Service – a real-life programme that sent American librarians overseas to establish mobile libraries for soldiers fighting on the frontlines.

Kit's journey takes her to war-torn France, a world away from the familiar comfort of her library stacks. The novel vividly portrays the devastation Kit encounters, as well as the resilience of the human spirit. She witnesses firsthand the power of books to offer a temporary escape from the battlefield, a connection to home, and a flicker of hope amidst the darkness.

Running parallel to Kit's story is that of Wendy, a writer living in 1980s



New York City. While researching a historical piece, Wendy stumbles upon a forgotten box containing letters and photographs detailing the experiences of the Library War Service. Intrigued by this hidden piece of history, Wendy becomes determined to uncover the story of the brave librarians who risked their lives to bring comfort to the troops.

*Miss Morgan's Book Brigade* is more than just a historical fiction novel. It's a tribute to the real-life librarians who defied societal expectations and ventured into war zones to share the solace and connection offered by literature.

The story also highlights the enduring power of books – their ability to transport us to different worlds, offer solace in times of hardship, and spark a sense of connection, even amidst the chaos of war.

Janet masterfully weaves together these two narratives, creating a captivating story that resonates with readers of all ages.

**T**UNISIAN-AMERICAN artist Emel Mathlouthi is back with a purpose with her groundbreaking new album, *MRA*, which translates to 'woman' in Arabic.

*MRA* breaks the mould by being created entirely by women, challenging the male-dominated music industry.

Emel is no stranger to pushing boundaries and throughout her career, she has championed social change. Her early days fronting a metal band in Tunis foreshadowed her rebellious spirit.

*MRA* is a sonic odyssey, seamlessly blending genres while maintaining a powerful narrative. The

## A SONIC ODYSSEY



Emel

opening track, *Massive Will* sets the tone with its thrilling African rhythms that morph into an electronic soundscape. This

unexpected shift reflects the album's multifaceted exploration of self-discovery and empowerment.

The album is a multilingual and stylistic feast. *Nar* features a pulsating electronic beat with hip-hop verses by guest artist Ami Yerewolo. *L'amour* dives into an ambient soundscape before transitioning to a multilingual rap by Mathlouthi herself. The song's haunting melody is punctuated by thought-provoking questions, culminating in an

exhilarating climax.

*Souty* ('My voice' in Arabic) evokes Emel's earlier works with its raw power. A simple piano melody lays the foundation for her soaring vocals, accented by ethereal backing harmonies. The track explodes in its second half with Eastern instrumentation, featuring soul-stirring strings and powerful vocals. The lyrics, translated to 'My voice has no limits, my voice has no end', resonate through the breathtaking production. Lyrically, *MRA* delves

into themes of unity, self-belief, and overcoming societal constraints. Songs like *Pride* and *IDHA* are anthems of empowerment, urging listeners to break free from limitations. The album's powerful metaphors paint a vivid picture of this struggle.

*MRA* showcases Emel's artistic evolution. The electrifying blend of genres creates a dynamic listening experience that perfectly complements the album's message of female solidarity.

More than just music, *MRA* is a testament to the power of women working together. It's a celebration of creativity, resilience, and the fight for a more just world.

# Motoring Weekly

The top motoring and motorsport news

# Boring dominance?

**R**ED Bull boss Christian Horner rejected suggestions that Max Verstappen had made Formula One boring after the triple world champion took his domination to new heights in China at the weekend.

The Dutch 26-year-old's first win in Shanghai sent him 25 points clear of Mexican team mate Sergio Perez after five races and was his fourth win of the season. He has also started all five from pole position.

Verstappen has now won half of all the races held since Formula One last raced in China, in April 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic.

McLaren's Lando Norris, runner-up on Sunday, told reporters earlier that the sport was witnessing a greater dominance than ever and "the only exciting races have been the ones that Max is not in."

"If you see the same driver winning every single time without a fight then of course it does start to become boring and that

is obvious."

Horner said Verstappen's performances needed to be appreciated.

"Max is a special talent and it's a golden moment for him," he told reporters.

"As we've seen with every single driver it doesn't last forever and I think it's enjoying the moment, being in the moment and there's no guarantees that we'll be able to give him a car like this every year for the next five years.

"It's doing what you can, while you can.

"He's just like a metronome. The pace that he showed last year, he's just continued that through," added Horner, whose team also won four straight titles with Sebastian Vettel from 2010-13.

"Since the last Chinese Grand Prix he's won 50 per cent of all the races. He's won 21 of the last 23 races. He's in fantastic form, at one with the car and at one with the team and enjoying his racing."

Horner said there was 'no ambiguity' about

where Verstappen would be racing in 2025, referencing public overtures by Mercedes boss Toto Wolff despite the champion having a contract to 2028.

Mercedes were dominant from 2014 to 2020 and have a vacancy for 2025, with seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton switching to Ferrari -- who had a similar golden era with Michael Schumacher in the early 2000s.

"I think sometimes it's just designed to create noise," said Horner of Wolff's comments.

"We've moved today ahead of the amount of races Mercedes have won in the modern era. The team's in form, why on earth would you want to leave this team?"

"His (Wolff's) time would be better spent perhaps focusing on the team rather than the driver market.

"Have you heard George Russell is out of contract at the end of 2025? Maybe he might not be so keen to stay in '26. The market moves around."



CHAMPION: Verstappen



Alonso

## CHINESE GRAND PRIX WAS A 'CRAZY RACE'

**T**WO-TIME world champion Fernando Alonso described the Chinese Grand Prix as a 'crazy race' after battling to secure P7 for Aston Martin, while teammate Lance Stroll received a 10-second penalty for a collision with Daniel Ricciardo.

Alonso had a promising start, jumping into P2 on the opening lap, but the race quickly devolved into a series of safety car periods that disrupted his strategy. Forced to make an additional pit stop, Alonso almost lost control of his car in the final corner, adding another layer of drama.

"Yeah, definitely, [a] crazy race," Alonso admitted, reflecting on the unexpected twists and turns.

"A lot of things happened for us in the race. We had a great start, P2 the first

couple of laps, then a few Safety Cars that probably didn't help our strategy and made us save the tyres a little bit and last until the end. We had to make another stop, so that was not ideal. At the end [I] nearly crashed, but then fastest lap and P7, so all in all I think a good weekend."

Despite the challenges, Alonso managed to salvage a decent result, finishing seventh and securing the extra point for setting the fastest lap.

While Alonso ultimately salvaged points, his teammate Lance Stroll faced a different fate. After starting the race from P11, Stroll looked poised to potentially challenge for points, but his race took a turn for the worse following a collision with Daniel Ricciardo during a safety car restart.

When Alonso locked up on the approach to the hairpin, a concertina

effect occurred where the drivers behind had to brake to avoid the car in front. Stroll, though, did not slow down in time and crashed into the back of Ricciardo's RB, with the damage significant enough to put the Australian out of the race.

"I don't understand it," Stroll commented on the incident. "I think it was a concertina effect in the hairpin. Someone braked in front and then I think it was like everyone kind of braked. The car in front of me just stopped right in front of me, I had nowhere to go and, yeah, it was just one of those really weird racing incidents."

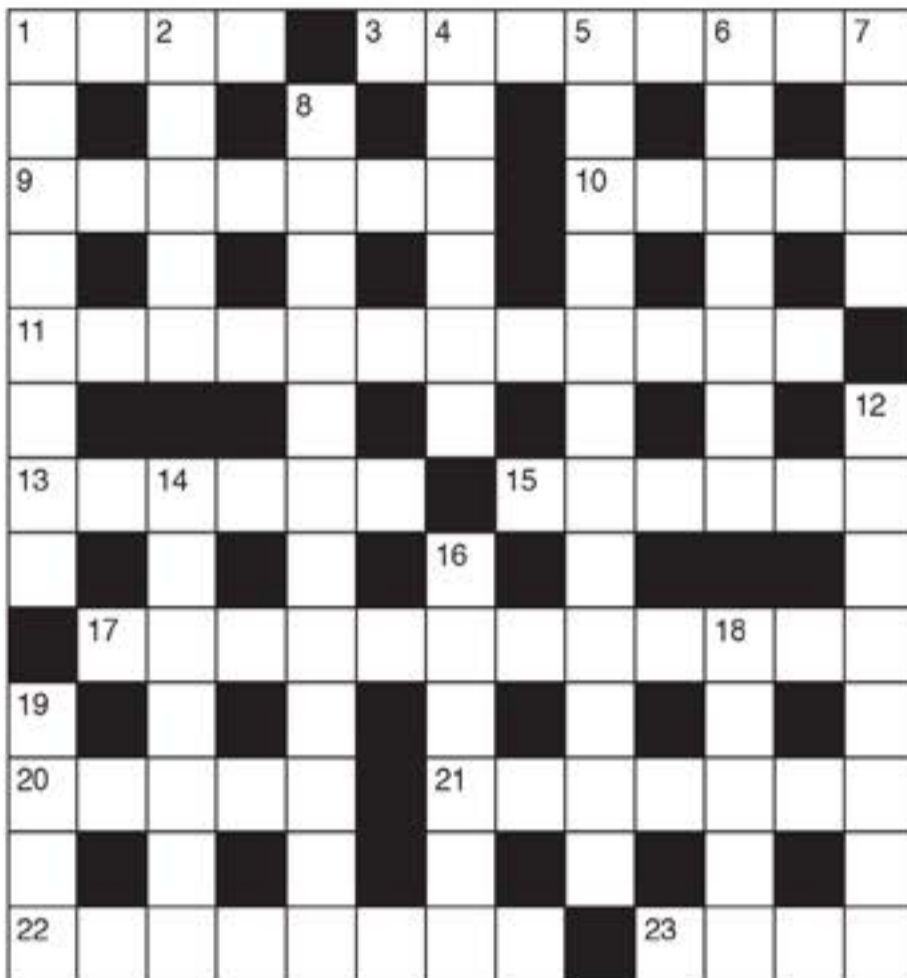
The stewards deemed Stroll to be at fault and handed him a 10-second penalty for the incident. He expressed his disagreement with the decision, arguing that the collision was a result of the chain reaction triggered by the car in front.

# Time Out



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## crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

### ACROSS

- 1. Adorn (4)
- 3. Falls back (8)
- 9. Monkey wrench (7)
- 10. The present time (5)
- 11. Politely (12)
- 13. Benefit (6)
- 15. Frustrate (6)
- 17. Shipments (12)
- 20. Jewish teacher (5)
- 21. A cloth (7)
- 22. Fatherly (8)
- 23. Tidy (4)

### DOWN

- 1. Portray (8)
- 2. Stupid (5)
- 4. Mistakes (6)
- 5. Proclamation (12)
- 6. Vest (7)
- 7. Prophet (4)
- 8. Interval (12)
- 12. Old joke (8)
- 14. Jimmy (7)
- 16. Items of business (6)
- 18. Female relative (5)
- 19. Support (4)

### who, what, where, when

**WHO** ... wrote the novel *Bill The Galactic Hero* in which spaceships stretch using Bloater Drive?  
**WHAT** ... UK television and radio presenter released the single *Alcatraz* under the name Kirk Houston?  
**WHERE** ... did the UK children's television character Mr Benn live?  
**WHEN** ... did the author Rex Stout die?  
**WHO** ... directed the 1953 film *The Big Heat*?  
**WHAT** ... 1980s Broadway musical featured the songs *The Lambeth Walk* and *Leaning on a Lamppost*?  
**WHERE** ... did the children's character *Paddington Bear* hail from?  
**WHEN** ... was the Harold Pinter stage play *The New World Order* first produced?

### just so

DOUBLE

from

2

E CABT  
E CABT

baskkkt

## darn tough sudoku

So you think you're good enough at Sudoku to crack this baby? Remember, we were the first in the Gulf to bring you this bit of Japanese mayhem...so we don't kid around

### Last week's sudoku

7	6	4	5	8	2	1	9	3
5	8	2	3	9	1	4	6	7
9	1	3	7	8	4	8	5	2
3	5	1	6	7	9	2	8	4
6	7	9	2	4	8	3	1	5
2	4	8	1	5	3	9	7	6
4	2	5	8	1	6	7	3	9
8	3	7	9	2	5	6	4	1
1	9	6	4	3	7	5	2	8

6	3	2	4	1	7	5	8	9
8	5	7	6	2	9	4	3	1
9	4	1	3	5	8	7	2	6
2	6	5	7	8	4	9	1	3
1	8	4	9	3	2	6	5	7
7	9	3	5	6	1	2	4	8
5	2	9	1	7	3	8	6	4
3	7	6	8	4	5	1	9	2
4	1	8	2	9	6	3	7	5

### darn tough sudoku

4	6	9	1	3	8	5	7	2
5	1	8	7	4	2	9	3	6
3	7	2	9	6	5	4	8	1
8	9	7	3	1	4	6	2	5
2	3	4	5	8	6	1	9	7
6	5	1	2	7	9	8	4	3
1	4	6	8	2	3	7	5	9
7	2	5	4	9	1	3	6	8
9	8	3	6	5	7	2	1	4

Sudoku

1	2			3				9
	8			5	7			4
	6		8			5	3	
		1	4			2		
	4		9		1		6	
6		3		8	5			4
	3	4			9		8	
		6		7				
8		5	3			7		6

Sudoku

						8	2	
5			8		4		7	3
	7		1				9	4
		6		1	3			8
			7		8			
8		3	4	5		9		7
2					6		8	
9	8		2					
	3	4						1

### Last Week's Leisure Solutions

#### CROSSWORD BREAK:

**Across:** 6 Release; 7 Halma; 9 Tepid; 10 Complex; 12 Retribution; 14 Consequence; 18 Allowed; 19 Annoy; 21 Tread; 22 Reverse.

**Down:** 1 Never; 2 Revise; 3 Use; 4 Carpet; 5 Emperor; 8 Cobbler; 11 Croquet; 13 Forlorn; 15 Slogan; 16 Cancel; 17 Hoist; 20 Wed.

**JUST SO:** A reversal of fortune, Fast forward, To be or not to be, Ground beef

#### WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Alan Milburn; ZE Records; Between South Africa and Mozambique; 1980; Richard Morant; Genesis; 7, Eccles Street; 1960.

### Darn Tough Sudoku

			7	3		5		
4			9					
	6	1			8		3	9
		9						2
	1						5	
2						8		
8	2		3			4	6	
					4			3
		4		7	1			