



MUSIC REPORT

By NAMAN ARORA
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BAHRAINI bard Isa Najem is hard at work on the second season of the hit *Netflix* live action remake of popular anime *One Piece*, living out a childhood dream after his work on the iconic soundtrack of the first season.

The 30-year-old composer and multi-instrumentalist has seen his music appear in two TV series so far, infusing his Arab, Khaleeji and Bahraini heritage into globally loved moments on the small screen.

"Like many people, *One Piece* was a big part of my childhood and back in the early 2000's, I grew up watching it with my painter brother, Salman Alnajem, on a weekly basis," he told *GulfWeekly*.

"In our shared bedroom we hung up the 'wanted posters' of the main characters.

"The earliest documented recording of me on the cello is playing *Bink's Sake - Brook's Theme* from the anime.

"So it feels a bit unreal to be part of the universe mostly because of how influential this show was to us. The themes of camaraderie, perseverance and ethics, with a dash of whimsicality, played a major role in who I am today and what I stand for."

Isa's musical flourishes are scattered throughout the score of the *One Piece* first season, primarily featured in tracks like *The World's Greatest Swordsman* or *Women on the oud and cello; One Piece Tango, Training Montage* and *You All Must Stay for Dinner* on the cello, and *Buggy The Clown* on the oud and Ondes Martenot (one of the first-ever electronic musical instruments invented in 1928, sounding similar to the theremin).

While he did not reveal which tracks will make it to the final cut of the second season, production is underway and the new season is expected to start streaming next year.

His involvement with the *One Piece* universe started when his colleague and friend Rodion Belousov, a member of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and recording

'One Piece' of melody magic



TUNED IN: Isa plays the electric cello in his studio in Barcelona



INFUSED: The album cover of the *One Piece* sound track

the mythical treasure known as the 'One Piece' in order to become the next King of the Pirates.

"Today from my studio in Barcelona, where I am based, we continue to work virtually on the next seasons with much more experimentation!" he added.

Born in Bahrain, Isa's musical odyssey began at home under the tutelage of his father, renowned military musician Major General Dr Mubarak Najem.

After studying at the Bahrain Bayan School, Isa went on to receive his Master's in string performance from Boston University in the US and a Bachelor's in music from Emerson College, performing at the Boston Symphony Hall as principal cellist.

Feeling like a musical nomad, the self-professed 'sonic hunter-gatherer' seems to never settle on one school of practice as he explores everything from the rhythms of traditional Khaleeji music, the maqams (melodies) of classical Arabic, the polyphonic harmonies of Western classical, and the otherworldly soundscapes of electronics in film-scoring.

For more details, follow @isa.najem on Instagram.

soloist for *The Witcher* and *The Romanoffs*, mentioned that his sister is looking for a cellist to record some parts for a show she's working on.

Rodion's sister turned out to be Billboard chart-topping artist, film composer and music producer Sonya Belousova, who reached out to record a quick two-minute cello track that they needed last minute.

This led to his involvement with a 2022 show called *The Thing About Pam* starring

two-time Oscar winner Renee Zellweger, working alongside Sonya and her partner Giona Ostinelli.

"In the summer of 2022, I was travelling and hiking around the US - from Louisiana to Alaska, and received a message from Sonya when I was in New Orleans about recording a few cello parts for a show they were working on that they needed urgently," he reminisced.

Setting up a portable

recording rig in his friend composer, arranger, and a spectacular cellist-guitarist Chris Beroes-Haigis' bedroom, he recorded all the takes necessary on his cello for Sonya and Giona.

It was only when he reached California, that he realised that he was recording for the live-action adaptation of *One Piece* which follows the adventures of Monkey D Luffy and his crew, the Straw Hat Pirates, exploring the Grand Line in search of



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Royal Gourmet at RGC
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LEISURE SCENE
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Tender tales



BOOK REPORT
By MELISSA NAZARETH
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BAHRAINI children's author **Nada Fardan** launched her latest Arabic book at the Sharjah Children's Reading Festival this month and is set to release her first English-language book, underpinning her aspiration for global readership among children.

Mama Ladayha Magnatees, Arabic for 'my mom has a magnet', offers valuable lessons in kindness.

The 19-page narrative centres on Samar who is always observing her mother since she has an admirable character. From their elderly neighbour to the school janitor of a different nationality, and even the birds in the garden, all are strangely drawn to her. When Samar asks her why, she says it is because she has a magnet.

Through careful observation, Samar discovers the magnet is metaphorical, symbolising her profound kindness, which transcends all boundaries.

"The story was inspired by a personal experience where my son intervened to prevent his younger cousin from handling scissors," 39-year-old Nada told *GulfWeekly*.

"Despite my niece's initial resistance, she eventually agreed to hand them over

to me due to my gentle persuasion. From that incident, my son learned a valuable lesson about the power of kindness."

Bringing Nada's words alive are creative talent Maliha Ahmadi's illustrations. Whether it's Samar's mother, demonstrating infinite kindness, humility and a strong humanitarian attitude, the keenly observant Samar herself, or the story's other characters like the neighbours and wildlife, Maliha's clever use of colours and expressive facial features will ensure an engaging experience for the reader.

"The book is suitable for readers aged six and above," Nada adds, highlighting that the story's main theme of treating all individuals, irrespective of age, nationality, or socio-economic status, with kindness and respect, extending to both humans and animals alike, will appeal to all.

Though the book was launched this month, Nada wrote the story back in 2022 and submitted it for the Children's Literature category at the well-known Rashid Bin Humaid Award for Culture and Science based in the UAE. She won that year and eventually decided to publish the story as a book.

Nada discovered her talent for the written word during her primary school years. The former architect and now full-time writer's literary journey took a significant turn in 2014



PROUD: Nada at the Sharjah festival during a book signing for *Mama Ladayha Magnatees*

when she started participating and winning in various regional competitions.

"I advocate for increased focus on children's literature and the endorsement of artistic endeavours, including the adaptation of our written works into plays, anime, television programmes, and films. Such adaptations serve as authentic reflections of our environment, culture, and values, which is really crucial for the young generation in order to maintain their identity," the Sanad resident explained.

"It is my earnest hope that writers receive monetary backing, enabling them to devote themselves fully to their craft without concerns about financial stability.

"Given that earnings from book sales often fall short of meeting writers' basic financial needs, many find themselves torn between their professional commitments and their passion for writing," she added.

One to always push herself to achieve newer heights, Nada will soon venture into writing English books for

children. She is currently working on her debut English title, with hopes to attract a global readership in the near future.

"I had some reservations as English was my second language. However, upon the completion of my story concept, my confidence ascended. Writing in Arabic comes naturally to me, with words flowing effortlessly. However, in English, I find that I must be mindful of cultural distinctions that manifest in the language itself.

"Given my aspiration for global readership among children, I recognised that writing in English, as a universally spoken language, signifies a strategic progression towards that goal," she added.

Mama Ladayha Magnatees, published by Masabeeh Publications, is available for purchase in Bahrain @goldenbooksbh on Instagram, and at National Bookshop, Al Waqt Bookshop, Bahrain National Museum, and Sophia Bookshop, and Al Kashkool Bookshop.

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. In 2016, Bahrain entered *The Guinness Book Of Records* for the world's largest what?
2. What is the name of the arch rivals of the Harlem Globetrotters?
3. A goatsucker is what type of animal?
4. What element is the best conductor of electricity?
5. In Greek mythology who was the Goddess of love?
6. Which country is the biggest producer of dairy milk?
7. Using the numeric system from ancient Rome, aka Roman

GulfWeekly

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



numerals, how would one write the number 263?

ANSWERS

1. Crochet Blanket
2. Washington Generals
3. Bird
4. Silver
5. Aphrodite
6. India
7. CCCLXIII



BOOK: *Mama Ladayha Magnatees* front cover

PLANNING a gathering can be tricky. You not only want something delicious to share with loved ones, but also something impressive enough to feel like a real treat. Enter Royal Gourmet by the Royal Golf Club (RGC).

My journey with Royal Gourmet began innocently enough; a search for breakfast pastries to fuel a busy morning. Imagine my surprise to discover their in-house Café T, a haven offering exquisite sliced cakes alongside freshly baked croissants and other delectable treats (side note: their Paris Brest with raspberry and hazelnut is a must-try). But the real revelation came when I learned these delightful creations – dreamed up by the talented RGC executive pastry chef Varun Kanwal – were available to order for any occasion. Chef Varun, the mastermind behind RGC's phenomenal 1,200-piece gingerbread house over the festive period, no less!

The decision was agonising.

Royal Gourmet's selection boasts an impressive range, from classic favourites like Carrot Cake to decadent offerings like Ferrero Rocher Cake. In the end, I opted for a crowd-pleasing variety, including the ever-popular Lemon Meringue Tart, the exotic Fresh Mango Almond Cake, and a luxurious Chocolate Fudge Cake to name a few.

The arrival of the cakes caused a stir of delight at my gathering with my friends and colleagues. Beautifully presented and undeniably enticing, they were the centrepiece of our celebration.

The first bite confirmed what our eyes already suspected – these were exceptional cakes. Each one was a masterpiece of flavour and texture.

My colleague, *GDN* Media marketing and sales manager Jalal Jaffar, mused that the Strawberry Baked Cheesecake was his favourite. This was on account of

TROPICAL: Fresh Mango Almond Cake



TANGY: Lemon Meringue



Dreamy desserts

ROYAL GOURMET AT THE ROYAL GOLF CLUB KNOW JUST HOW TO ADD THE SWEET HIGH-NOTE TO YOUR CELEBRATIONS, WRITES JAYNE HOUGHTON

its light texture, alongside the cream cheese filling being whipped to perfection, ensuring that each mouthful was on point.

The Chocolate Caramel Hazelnut Tart was a symphony of rich cocoa and ganache, the smooth hazelnut adding a delightful depth. The Fresh Mango Almond Cake was a tropical dream come true, the vibrant mango perfectly complemented by the subtle nuttiness of the almond made it the winner in my eyes, albeit amidst tough

CLASSIC: Carrot Cake



competition. It offered up a delightfully fluffy and light start to the afternoon. And the Pistachio Forest Cake?

Pure indulgence. The moist layers of pistachio sponge and custard buttercream were simply divine.



TRIO: Delightful desserts

The incredible cakes from Royal Gourmet were such a hit that they disappeared in a flash.

This experience highlighted the versatility of Royal Gourmet. Whether you're enjoying a casual slice at their in-house Café T, ordering a custom cake for a special occasion, or taking advantage of their delivery service (coming soon!),

Royal Gourmet promises a sweet experience that will leave a lasting impression.

Treat yourself and discover why they're quickly becoming Bahrain's go-to for all things delicious.

For more information or to place your orders, visit Royal Gourmet at the Royal Golf Club, follow @royalgourmetbyrgc on Instagram, or call 32184647.

CROWDPLEASER: Sharing is caring

Leisure Scene

What's on guide by
Julia Cassano



CREAM OF THE CROP

H EAD down to the **Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay** for a weekend of fun and good food.

To start the weekend right, check out CUT by Wolfgang Puck's Bubbly Brunch where guests can savour the finest selection of beverages tomorrow (Friday), from 12.30pm to 3pm.

It costs BD70, inclusive of free flow of bubbly beverages.

Guests can also enjoy the restaurant's exclusive seasonal dishes, specially crafted by executive chef Brian Becher and his talented team.

Dishes such as buffalo mozzarella salad, spicy bluefin tuna tartar and hand-cut ricotta gnocchi will make for a special culinary affair. The lunch is offered from Monday to Saturday, from 12.30pm to 3pm, and dinner on Monday, Tuesday and Saturday, from 7pm to 11pm. It is priced a la carte.

Meanwhile, foodies can

look forward to the hotel's one-of-a-kind Latin American Brunch, which offers mouthwatering delicacies such as succulent beef salpicon, ceviche, enchiladas, nachos, tacos and crispy churros.

The brunch caters to everyone, as a newly-decorated children's corner will keep the children occupied. It features a buffet, fun activities and a magician and balloon artist, tomorrow (Friday) from 1pm to 4pm. It costs BD35 including soft drinks, BD48 inclusive of selected beverages, and BD65 with a premium beverage package and bubbly drinks. Children under six dine with the hotel's compliments and those aged six to 12 enjoy a 50 per cent discount.

Everyday except Sundays, guests can enter a world of taste and class at CUT Lounge's happy hour, from 5pm to 7pm. Blue Moon Lounge also offers elevated bites with special discounts



DELICIOUS: Enchiladas at the hotel's Latin American Brunch

during Blue Hour (5pm to 7pm) from Tuesday to Sunday.

For a one-of-a-kind relaxation experience, choose the hotel's spa, which offers guests a number of top-of-the-line face and body treatments, from 10am to 10pm. Prices range from

BD70 to BD95.

To unwind and relax after the hectic week, opt for the hotel's Full Moon Yoga tonight (Thursday) at 7pm. It costs BD6 for hotel guests and is held at the lawn area.

For more information or reservations, contact 17115044 or 17115500.

J OIN the Ritz-Carlton Bahrain for an array of culinary delights.

Embark on La Med's Amber Night, where a range of exquisite dishes, inspired by the rich flavours of the Arabian Peninsula, will make for the ultimate dining experience.

Tonight (Thursday) the dining affair costs BD29 inclusive of tea and Arabic coffee, BD35 with soft beverages, BD45 inclusive of selected beverages and BD55 for a private legendary experience, from 7pm to 10.30pm.

Meanwhile, guests can enjoy the warmer weather and summer vibes at Cantina Kahlo's Tropical Saturdays, from 6pm to 10pm.

They can also enjoy the restaurant's specials. Dos Corazones offers two beverages and Tres Amigos treats you to three delicious tacos and three mocktails. The price starts at BD12.



ARRAY OF CULINARY DELIGHTS AT RITZ-CARLTON

To end your weekend on a special note, opt for Thai Lounge's Peking Duck Pancake special.

Dig into succulent duck, paired perfectly with crisp cucumber, marinated ginger and leek, all drizzled with hoisin sauce. Visitors will also be treated

FUN TIME:
Summer camp
with a difference



PAR EXCELLENCE!

F OR a one-of-a-kind summer experience, opt for the Royal Golf Club's Summer Camp.

Children can jump into a season of fun with the camp's sports, dance and kindergarten activities.

They will also have the opportunity to learn golf techniques from Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) athletes.

Set to begin from June 30, the camp will be held on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, from 9.30am to 1pm. It costs BD25 per day or BD60 per week.

Add-ons are also offered, including a one-hour golf

season with PGA-certified coach for BD8 (one hour a week) or BD32 per month. To register, call 33001261 or 17750777.

Meanwhile, guests can enjoy the club's new and improved culinary delights which will make for an experience unlike any other.

Get ready for the ultimate steak experience at Links.

The evening which offers guests a range of steaks, all cooked to perfection, will leave your tastebuds dancing with joy.

The feast starts from 6pm on Wednesday, and is priced a la carte.

FEAST WITH MEXICAN TWIST

E LEVATE your week at Hilton Bahrain.

Spice up your weekend with the Origin Kitchen and Culture's Cinco De Mayo Brunch, which promises bottomless drinks, delicious food and entertainment that'll have you shaking your musical maracas all day long.

The brunch, tomorrow (Friday) from 12.30pm to 4pm costs BD28net with unlimited soft beverages and BD39net with unlimited beverages.

Plus, all military personnel can enjoy an exclusive rate of BD25, including unlimited beverages.

For the ultimate seafood adventure unlike any other opt for Origin Kitchen and Culture's Seafood Night tonight (Thursday). An array of mouth-watering dishes and fresh catches will make for an unforgettable experience with your family and friends from 7pm to 10pm.

It costs BD32net with unlimited selected beverages and BD25 with unlimited soft beverages.

Meanwhile, guests can enjoy the hotel's daily breakfast buffet for BD13net per person. It's available from 6.30am to

10.30am, also at Origin Kitchen and Culture.

Every Wednesday, from 7pm to midnight, mark Ladies' Night, offering three complimentary selected beverages for female guests at Cocoluna Lounge.

Block 44 is also holding the Old Skool Party on Wednesday from 10pm to 2am, where ladies can avail three complimentary beverages.

Tonight (Thursday), visitors can enjoy the tunes and vibes at The Afro Series, Block 44, from 9pm to 2am.

They can also avail a 50 per cent discount on beverages and ladies can relish two complimentary beverages.

Meanwhile Salsa Nights, also at Block 44, offers guests a party unlike any other from 9pm to 2am tomorrow.

End the weekend at Hilton Bahrain's Society Club Lounge. Perched high on the 44th floor, the Society offers a distinctive night-time experience, combining the energy of the city and captivating music from 9pm to 2.30am. Ladies can mark Ladies' Night with three complimentary beverages every Tuesday from 8pm to 2.30am.

For more information or bookings, contact 33690081 or 33692013.



COLOURFUL:
Mexican
celebration

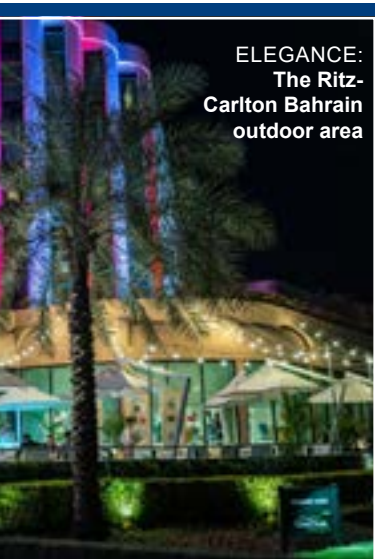
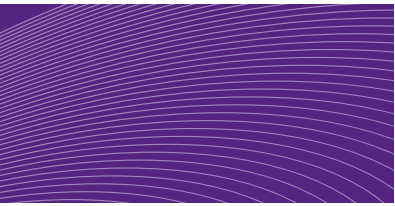


MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

W HETHER you're into Broadway shows or a fan of the London Theatre, the Manama Singers Musical Extravaganza is bringing it all to your doorsteps.

Get ready for a thrilling night of musicals and fun on June 4 at the Dilmun Club – doors open at 7pm.

This spectacular event will feature a diverse lineup of all-time favourite hits through the ages from the 60s until today, performed by the Manama Singers, one of the oldest multicultural community choirs in the kingdom; the 70's crowd pleaser *Mama Mia* by ABBA, the 90's hit *The Circle of Life* from *The Lion King* and much more. The



ELEGANCE:
The Ritz-Carlton Bahrain outdoor area

CULINARY DELIGHTS AT THE RITZ-CARLTON BAHRAIN

to traditional Oolong Chinese Tea. The culinary adventure costs BD7 until June 18, from 1pm to 11pm.

For more information or bookings, contact 17586401 or rc.bahrz.restaurant.reservations@ritzcarlton.com.



SERANADE: Manama Singers at the Choir Fest held in Bahrain earlier this year

TRAVAGANZA

show will offer a rich blend of genres and feature soulful solo acts and enchanting chorale ensembles.

In addition to the musical delights, you can savour a variety of delicious foods and beverages brought to you by the Dilmun Club's restaurant.

Scan the QR code to enter our competition. Winner gets a pair of tickets to the show!



Scan the QR code to enter the contest for tickets



CULTURE: One of Fareed's abstract figure pieces drawing inspiration from his heritage



TRANSCENDING: The oldest piece at the exhibition, created in 1995 with charcoal on paper



A journey within and beyond

In his first solo exhibition in more than a decade, Bahraini artist Fareed Buqais takes inspiration from the culture around him as he takes visitors on a journey through his environment and experiences, write Naman Arora and Rima Alhaddad.

The 69-year-old retired art teacher and professional artist unveiled some of his latest abstract pieces at the newly-opened 56 Art Gallery in Gudaibiya.

"I have experimented with many art styles throughout my artistic journey. My current exhibition focuses on the latest one I've delved into, which is abstract art," the Hamad Town resident told *GulfWeekly*.

"I like to allow the viewer to discover the meaning behind my artworks rather than to explain it myself, this allows different perspectives and adds to the meaning of my work, sometimes more than I have intended."

A total of 40 untitled abstract pieces promise to

take visitors on a journey within and beyond, as Fareed experiments with a range of materials and media.

While many of the pieces are high abstractions, familiar figures decked in traditional and bright clothing emerge in others.

"Through abstract figures, I wanted to represent my experience and environment as a proud Bahraini," he explained.

"So I painted them in traditional attire that showcases Bahraini culture, alongside some that wear modern clothing."

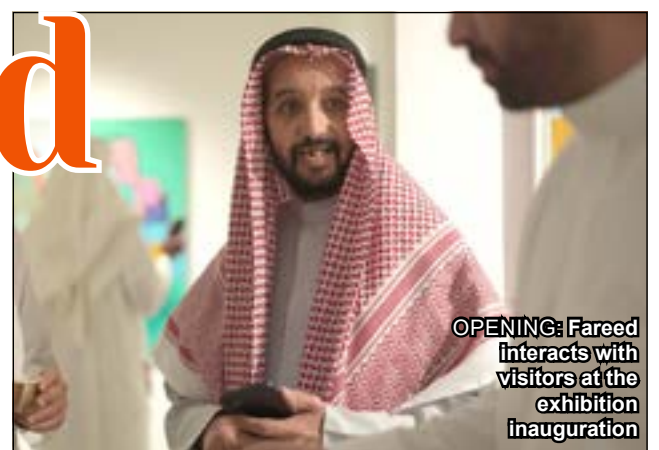
Curated by Hayfa Aljishi of Albareh Art Gallery, the exhibition showcases the evolution of Fareed's styles and his exploration of different mediums in a multitude of pieces, created between 1995 and 2024.

His pieces evoke energy, movement and emotion through the use of bold colours, dynamic brushwork and textural layering.

"My artwork depends on the canvas size and details I would like to add," he said.

"Usually, large paintings take me approximately two weeks.

"For small paintings, I



OPENING: Fareed interacts with visitors at the exhibition inauguration

could finish more than one a day. But once again, it depends on the result I'm aiming for.

"For some artworks, I like to paint continuously until I consider it finished. For others, I like to leave and come back to them with fresh eyes, which allows me to add and change details.

"My paintings take inspiration from my environment, surroundings and experiences, as this allows me to accurately deliver the artwork's message. I don't like to paint an environment I know little about or spent little time with."

Born in Gudaibiya, Fareed is a founding member of the Bahrain Fine Arts Society and holds a diploma from the Higher Teachers' Institute in Bahrain and a

bachelor's degree in fine arts from Egypt.

He has conducted several solo exhibitions in Bahrain at venues like Bahrain Arts Society and Henda Gallery.

He has also participated in group shows regionally and internationally in Egypt, the UK, Singapore, Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.

He has received numerous awards, most notably the prestigious Dana Award at the 35th Annual Bahraini Artists Exhibition in 2008.

The exhibition, which was inaugurated in the presence of Shura Council member Redha Abdulla Faraj, runs until June 14.

It is open from Saturday to Thursday, from 10am to 2pm, and from 4pm to 8pm.

For more details, follow @56.artgallery and @buqais_art on Instagram.



ODYSSEY: A visitor walks by two of Fareed's pieces at the exhibition

Pulse of Pop

AROUND THE WORLD IN MUSIC, TV, BOOKS AND MORE - BY RIMA ALHADDAD

GAGA ON A ROLL



FOLLOWING months of anticipation, Lady Gaga is finally releasing the concert film of her 2022 stadium tour *The Chromatica Ball*.

First teased in June 2023 on *Instagram*, the official release date was announced earlier this month, and the film is set to premiere on *HBO* on Saturday (May 25). It will also be available for streaming on *Max*.

The film is expected to showcase the American singer's full star power as she performs songs from her 2020 album *Chromatica*, including *Stupid Love*, *Rain on Me* and *911*, as well as her biggest hits such as *Poker Face*, *Just Dance* and *Bad Romance*.

The film will mainly feature recorded concert clips from her September 2022 show at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, US, which was attended by a sold-out crowd of 52,000 people.

The Born This Way singer is credited as a producer and director alongside Kerry Asmusen, who has worked with Billie Eilish in the past.

"I spent countless hours in the editing room bringing my vision for this film to life. It is my gift to you," Gaga said, in a post on social media.

This is her second concert film release since 2011's *Lady Gaga Presents the Monster Ball Tour: At Madison Square Garden*.

Born in New York City, Lady Gaga, the captivating persona of Stefani Germanotta, honed her musical talents from a young age, performing at open mic nights and in school plays.

After dropping out of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts to pursue music



GLITZY: Lady Gaga performs on the opening night of *The Chromatica Ball* world tour in Dusseldorf, Germany

full-time, she crafted her outrageous persona and infectious music.

Hits like *Poker Face* and

Bad Romance propelled her to superstardom, with their dancefloor beats and Gaga's unforgettable visuals.

She's also a captivating actress, having earned an Oscar nomination for her role in *A Star is Born*.



DUO: Tyler Joseph and Josh Dun

THE FINAL CHAPTER

AERICAN musical duo Twenty One Pilots are set to release their seventh studio album tomorrow, May 24.

Long-time fans expect *Clancy* by Twenty One Pilots to serve as a finale of the alternative rock duo's concept series, with the title referencing a protagonist previously introduced in their 2018 release *Trench*.

Three tracks from the album have been released since its announcement in February, with *Overcompensate* being the lead single.

Frontman Tyler Joseph revealed that each of the 13 tracks will have a music video, making *Clancy* a visual album.

"I love these songs and I believe in them enough to pretend to sing in front of a camera to each one, and that's what we're gonna do,

because that's how I want to present the album," Tyler said.

The duo's past achievements include a Grammy award in 2017 for their commercially successful hit *Stressed Out*, which appeared on their 2015 album *Blurryface*. Since then, they released two albums - *Trench* in 2018 and *Scaled and Icy* in 2021.



SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

NEW York Times bestselling author Freida McFadden is set to release the third instalment in her critically acclaimed *The Housemaid* series.

The mystery novel, titled *The Housemaid Is Watching*, will be released on June 11.

It takes place a decade after its 2023 predecessor, *The Housemaid's Secret*.

The convicted criminal-turned-housekeeper Millie is ready to leave her past behind as she moves with her husband and children to a new home. However, the protagonist grows

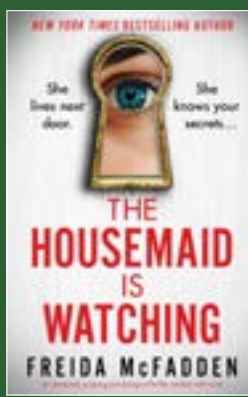


AUTHOR: Freida

wary of her new neighbour following an unsettling visit to the Lowell household.

Long-time fans of the series are expecting yet another page-turning thriller as it upholds a 4.3 out of 5 rating on *Goodreads* ahead of its release.

Freida is a practicing physician, specialising in brain injury, who has penned multiple bestselling psychological thrillers and medical humour novels.



BATTLING HIS INNER DEMONS

AWARD-WINNING actor Benedict Cumberbatch is pulling the strings in *Netflix's* upcoming thriller *Eric*, set to premiere on May 30.

Taking place in 1980s New York, the six-episode mini-series follows the story of Vincent, a puppeteer and creator of *Good Day Sunshine*, a children's TV show, whose nine-year-old son Edgar disappears.

Desperate Vincent finds solace in his son's old drawings of a blue monster puppet named Eric. Soon enough, his coping mechanism turns destructive as he believes that bringing his son's puppet to television will reunite them.

"This is a story about people finding their home," Benedict



explained. "Whether it's a child, a homeless person, a Black cop, a wife in an unhappy marriage, or even Eric on the show, it's all about finding a place."

The series was created by BAFTA and Emmy Award winner Abi Morgan and directed by Lucy Forbes, whose previous works

include *Netflix* hit *This Is Going To Hurt*.

Joining Benedict on screen are a bevy of actors including Ivan Morris Howe as Edgar, Gaby Hoffmann as Cassie Anderson, McKinley Belcher III as Michael Ledroit, Roberta Colindrez, Jeff Hephner, Wade Allain-Marcus as Ali Gator and Mark Gillis as William Elliot.

Going for gold



JIU JITSU REPORT

By MELISSA NAZARETH
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MARTIAL arts champion Ali Monfaradi will be the only Bahraini athlete to take part in the annual Vice President's Jiu Jitsu Cup to be hosted in the UAE next month.

This year, the 30-year-old will represent the Abu Dhabi-based Baniyas Club alongside other Emirati and international team mates as they fight for the cup at Shabab Al Ahli Dubai Club.

Monfaradi will participate in the men's under-69kg division.

"I'm going with peace of mind and a clear conscience," Monfaradi told *GulfWeekly*, "but also I understand that I've been hired for a reason, and the club has expectations because they want your rank and they get the team cup in this prestigious event. While I cannot definitively predict that I will get gold, I certainly will not accept anything less than that."

While the excitement is at its peak, this isn't Monfaradi's first time participating in the Vice President's Jiu Jitsu Cup. Last year and the year before,

VICTORY: Monfaradi being presented the gold medal at the Asian Championship



he represented Aljazira Club and bagged consecutive silvers in the men's under-77kg division.

"Being a lower weight division, I would hold more of a size and strength advantage," the Hamala resident noted, speaking about his decision to change to the men's under-69kg division this year.

Monfaradi's participation in the UAE comes at the heels of his golden victory at the eighth Jiu-Jitsu Asian Championship held at Mubadala Arena in Zayed Sports City, Abu Dhabi, this month.

The owner and head

coach of Elements Jiu-Jitsu Academy struck gold, his sixth in the Asian Championships, retaining his rank as number one in the world in the men's under-77kg division. His victory put Bahrain in third position among the Arab countries and sixth in Asia.

"Being number one means I couldn't fight in the first round," Monfaradi explained, adding that he started in the second round with one of his toughest fights yet. Monfaradi won 4-2 against Kazakhstan's Seilkhan Bolatbek.

The next match, which was both 'physically and technically' daunting, saw the

kingdom's Jiu-Jitsu star go head to head against Korea's Gyoseong Lee and win 6-4.

In the semi-finals, Monfaradi fought Thailand's Chanwit Aunjai and, despite his opponent having a size advantage, the match ended in a submission in less than a minute, propelling Monfaradi to the finals, which he fought against Kazakhstan's Olzhas Nurtakanov ending in a submission.

"Every year, the level of fighting is getting insanely higher, and the sport is getting more and more professional," he added, speaking about his experience in Abu Dhabi.

The Vice President's Jiu Jitsu Cup will take place from June 1 to 2.

Follow Monfaradi's upcoming Dubai adventure @alimonfaradi on Instagram.



CHAMPION: Monfaradi celebrating victory at the Asian Championship

MERCEDES IN 'NO-MAN'S LAND'

MERCEDES are in 'no-man's land', seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton said after finishing Sunday's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix sixth and 35 seconds behind Red Bull's race winner Max Verstappen.

Team mate George Russell came seventh and Mercedes have fallen further behind in the Formula One constructors' standings - fourth overall on 79 points while third-placed McLaren, who also use Mercedes engines, have 154.

"We are in no-man's land. There wasn't much more for us to get today," said Hamilton, the sport's most successful driver of all time who is moving to Ferrari at the end of the season and was racing in Italy for the first time since that was announced. "It is where we are and we have to do the best we can and that is the best we could do today."

Russell also referred to 'no-man's land' but said the once-dominant team were still 'super-motivated'.

"We have got to just keep pushing. The car was capable of P6 and P7 and that is where we finished."

Team boss Toto Wolff felt Mercedes had taken a small step forward.

"Our closest competitors have also done so recently, but we have closed the gap to the



GEARING UP: Hamilton before the race

front a little. We still have a lot of work to do and, of course, we are all frustrated finishing P6 and P7," said the Austrian.

"There is more to come though, and it is all about making incremental gains."

★★★★★

WOMAN THIS MONTH

★★★★★

GULF WEEKLY

PRESENTS

A MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

AN EVENING OF SONGS FROM BROADWAY TO THE SILVER SCREEN, AND PLACES IN BETWEEN

JUNE 04TH

19:30 | BD
21:00 | 5.00

DILMUN MARQUEE

WELCOME DRINK WITH ALL TICKETS

PART OF THE DILMUN CLUB'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS
LIVE MUSIC & KARAOKE AFTER PARTY UNTIL 11:30PM

TICKETS AVAILABLE ON PLATINUM LIST & AT DILMUN CLUB RECEPTION ON 17690926

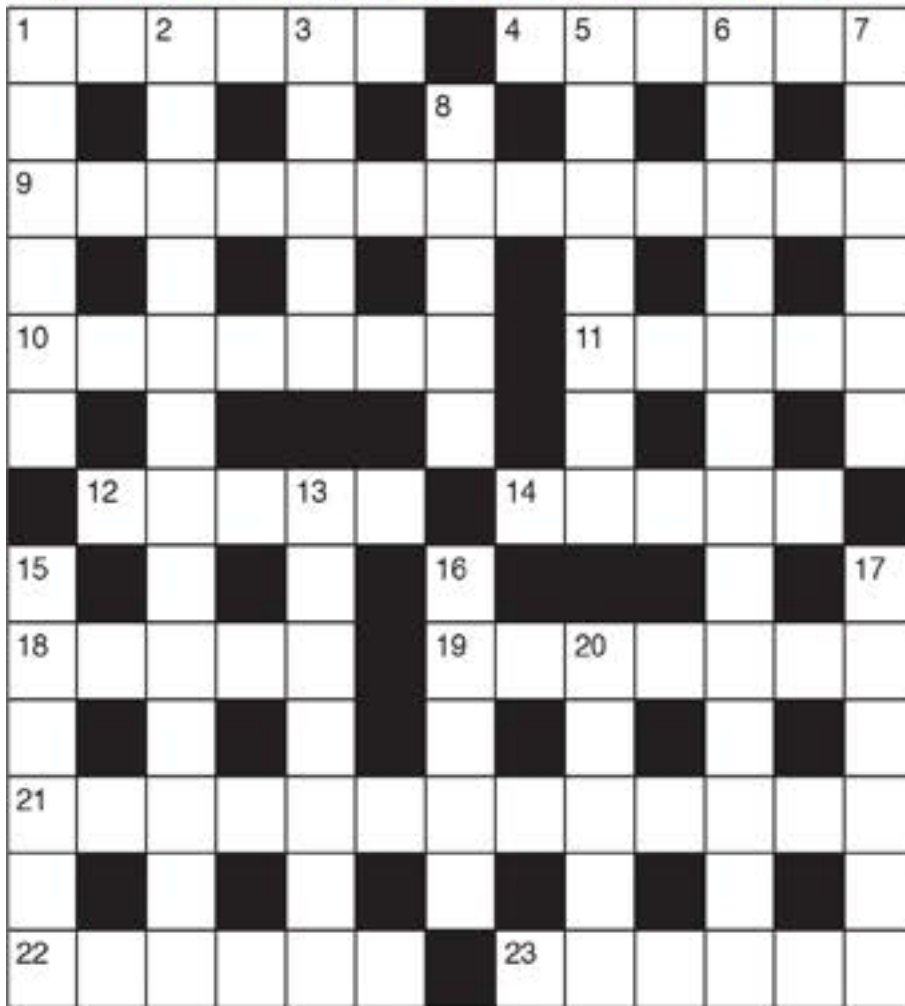
Time Out



Hilal Computers

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crossword break



Solutions in next week's issue.

ACROSS

1. Scattered (6)
4. Seasoned (6)
9. Absolute (13)
10. Distinguished (7)
11. Weary (5)
12. Wash out (5)
14. Chatter (5)
18. Accumulate (5)
19. Void (7)
21. Head of government (5,8)
22. Signify (6)
23. Took notice (6)

DOWN

1. Cup dish (6)
2. Counter-charge (13)
3. Flinch (5)
5. Artist (7)
6. Complimented (13)
7. Dupe (6)
8. Sanctity (5)
13. Mistrust (7)
15. Undermined (6)
16. Inflexible (5)
17. Worshipped (6)
20. Express (5)

who, what, where, when

WHO ... was the most decorated American soldier in The First World War?

WHAT ... is the home ground of the UK's Carlisle United F.C.?

WHERE ... was the 2007 Rugby World Cup Final held?

WHEN ... did the entertainer Al Jolson die?

WHO ... wrote the song *I'm Into Something Good* which was a No. 1 hit for Herman's Hermits?

WHAT ... is the tallest structure in the World Federation of Great Towers?

WHERE ... in Africa was Omar al-Bashir the President?

WHEN ... did the trawler Solway Harvester sink off the Isle of Man?

just so

gnirb life life

adoadoadoadoado
adoadozeroadoado
adoadoadoadoado

LAND
12° 12°

♂
board

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

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

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

darn tough sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Sudoku

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

Last Week's Leisure Solutions

CROSSWORD BREAK:

Across: 1 Protractedly; 7 Tress; 8 Plain; 9 Pie; 10 Pronounce; 11 Nature; 12 Harass; 15 Mischance; 17 Inn; 18 Not in; 19 Above; 21 Unrepeatable.

Down: 1 Postponement; 2 Rue; 3 Custom; 4 Espionage; 5 Learn; 6 Unreasonable; 7 Treat; 10 Perchance; 13 Arise; 14 Insane; 16 Set on; 20 Opt.

JUST SO: An axe to grind, The better half, The great white hope, Man of the house

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN:

Frank Marker; International Man of Mystery; Slovakia; 2002; Mark McGann; The King and I; Alaska; 1953.

Darn Tough Sudoku

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