

CALENDAR

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CASSY COHEN Los Angeles Times; UCLA, Library Special Collections

A ROLLER skater performs at Venice Beach in 1986. A decade earlier, Black skaters began entertaining crowds by mixing in break dancing and fancy footwork.

‘Equal’ rights their battle

The seismic impact Black queer activists had on movement is felt in new docuseries.

BY LAURA ZORNOSA

It’s 1959 in New York City. A 28-year-old Lorraine Hansberry descends the steps of a theater in a black dress with jeweled earrings — a stark contrast from her typical chinos or corduroys, button-down shirts, cardigans, white sneakers and socks.

Her play “A Raisin in the Sun” is about to premiere. It will make her the first Black female playwright and first Black director on Broadway.

“Never before in the entire history of the American theater,” writer James Baldwin would say, “had so much of the truth of Black people’s lives been seen on the stage.”

Hansberry, played by Samira Wiley (“The Handmaid’s Tale”), appears in Episode 3 of the four-part docuseries “Equal,” which premiered Thursday on HBO Max.

“In a lot of ways, what we’ve done is a primer: a very slick, beautiful, edgy, hip primer for all this history,” showrunner Stephen Kijak said, “that we hope kicks open the door for people to discover more and to be inspired to do their own activism.”

[See ‘Equal,’ E2]

Family drama faces reality

The new season of NBC’s “This Is Us” will tackle protests and the pandemic. **E3**

‘Time’ marks a lesson in love

A woman’s devotion to her family amid adversity powers a new documentary. **E3**

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She’s rolling back the years

How a TikTok-inspired pandemic pick-me-up turned into a skate through L.A.’s Black history.

By Makeda Easter

Some people turned to sourdough. Others became plant parents. My quarantine hobby of choice? Roller skating.

In the early months of the pandemic, roller skating was suddenly everywhere on TikTok and Instagram, bite-size clips of beautiful and carefree-looking skaters gliding gracefully down palm tree-lined streets, overrunning my feed. But it was the video of Berlin skater Oumi Janta that pushed me over the edge.

In the 50-second viral video, Janta grooves on skates to house music, effortlessly smooth and completely unbothered. As I watched the clip over and over, I realized I *had* to do that too. Or at least try to learn. After being cooped up for months, missing my favorite dance studios and feeling totally despondent about the state of the world, I was desperate for something joyful in my life.

So in early July, I set out on my roller skating journey — and quickly learned that during the pandemic,

the first hurdle to learning how to skate is actually finding them.

The popular outdoor skates — vibrant, multicolored Moxis, Impalas, Sure-Grips — were sold out online and on back order for months. Long Beach-based Moxi has temporarily suspended sales of its most popular adult skates to catch up on back orders.

After stumbling across a tip to check local shops, I began frantically calling around town before finding a pair in my size at a skate shop in South Gate.

Elated, I picked up my skates, drove home and tested them out almost immediately, skating around and around in circles in my apartment garage. It didn’t take long for the garage circles to become boring though. YouTube became my guide as I binged tutorials on the basics of stopping, skating over uneven surfaces, conquering hills, dancing specific steps — so many tutorials.

I wasn’t starting from scratch. [See **Skate**, E2]

Hope for a storybook ending

MARY McNAMARA



Once upon a time, in the hills above Los Angeles, where owls hoot, bear cubs frolic and deer

trip daintily down the street, there lived a family with two little girls, named Jessica and Amelia, who loved to read.

Almost every week, their mother would take them to a little bookstore on the main street of their town. It was called Once Upon a Time and it had lots of toys and puppets they could play with and, most important, shelves and shelves of every kind of book for children. The girls loved the little bookstore, which changed with the season and the

[See **Bookstore**, E6]



FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

ELLI TATIYANTS, 7, of Glendale, plays with Pippi the cat at Once Upon a Time in Montrose. The pandemic has left the beloved children’s bookstore struggling.

Artists auction future income

Some are selling rights to residual payments and more to investors via Royalty Exchange.

BY RANDEE DAWN

When singer Jake Broido wanted to kick his musical career out of the background-singer ranks and into a project called the Truth Experiment, he hit a wall pretty fast. For all his ambition and solid resumé, he was not exactly flush with cash.

“I’d moved to Austin, Texas, and had very little money to my name,” Broido says. “I was just trying to be an artist. And then I saw this ad on Facebook for the Royalty Exchange.”

While Royalty Exchange might sound like a dating service for those in the peerage, it’s actually a company geared to assisting artists looking to auction off some of their most valuable assets: their royalties and residual rights. Royalties and residuals are contract-guaranteed percentages doled out to creators and performers based on the use or performance of works they were involved in. And participation in a hit song, movie or TV show can mean they rack up pretty fast.

In Broido’s case, he had a particularly good royalty to auction: his steady stream of about \$10,000 each year from his background vocals on Wiz Khalifa’s 2015 hit “See You Again” (featuring Charlie Puth). Ten grand is a nice chunk of cash to count on each year, but at that pace it would take him 10 years to amass the money he’d need to kick off his career as indie pop artist the Truth Experiment.

So, in 2017, he paired with Royalty Exchange, which auctioned his domestic royalties to the song for \$102,000 for Broido to pocket, minus a percentage the company collects.

“It gave me a three-year runway to focus on my music

[See **Royalty**, E6]