

Insider

THING TANK

A REVIEW OF THE WEEK IN THINGS



1

FALLEN STAR

Stars Replaced With Hearts may sound like the name of a terrible emo band, but it's really just the latest news from **Twitter**. The seemingly-ever-more-beleaguered social network unexpectedly swapped out its once-neutral star icon (used to indicate once-neutral "favorites") for the far more effusive heart, which conveys something more like lasting devotion than "I enjoyed your tweet just then." Twitter made the switch in an attempt to lure humans into its existing user base.



2

TYPE CAST

Putting next to no effort into not quite saying what you want to say just got way easier, with the introduction of the new **EmojiWorks emoji keyboard**, which packs dozens of little symbols into the free real estate around those pesky letters. Imagine a world in which you never have to type the word "taco" or explain that you have an ambivalent look on your face. That future is today.



3

TRICK OR TRAUMA

In a now-hallowed Halloween tradition, Jimmy Kimmel gave his annual boost to the livelihood of future therapists by having parents film their kids' reactions to learning that all their Halloween candy had been eaten as they slept. (The reaction to learning that the only people you trust enjoy lying to you for laughs takes a lot longer to film.) The Internet, as is customary, delighted in the suffering of children, and many hearts were clicked.



4

SLOW JAMS

Of all the washed-up rock acts of yesteryear being dragged squinting back into the spotlight, I'm happiest to hear the (heavily tranquilized) return of **Alvin & the Chipmunks**. Toronto musician Brian Borcherdt (formerly of a band whose name I can't print here) took some classic Chipmunk records, slowed them to a slugly 16 rpm, and let the magic happen. The results are anguished, proto-stoner-metal takes on "Call Me," "Walk Like an Egyptian," "My Sharona," and "You Keep Me Hanging On" that sound like they were either left out in the sun or confined to the basement. Your move, Pixies.

MICHAEL ANDOR BRODEUR

PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK/20TH CENTURY FOX (ALVIN)



MARLOUX DIXES

HIGH FIVE

WHAT COUNTS IN MUSIC TODAY

It may be instinct to define music by genre, but for Dutch music producer and DJ Lodewijk Fluttert — better known by his stage name **Bakermat** — categorization has officially been broken. Despite being an electronic musician, Fluttert, 24, is an old soul. The samples he uses as templates for his energy-driven sound come from traditional genres — typically gospel and jazz. "I'm a bit of a gravedigger," he says by phone, laughing. "I just like to look for interesting samples and use them." With the spliced saxophone, speeches, and other audio he collects, Fluttert creates melodic house music that feels historically familiar, yet electronically invigorating. "I personally love electronic music specifically because it has the rhythm, the kick, the thump — it has energy," he says. "The energy is totally in the drums. . . . I think that's what electronic music adds, all the focus on the drums." Preparing to appear at Ascend Nightclub (formerly Umbria Prime) on Saturday, Fluttert spoke with us about five artists who helped him to bridge the divide between traditional and electronic music.

Moby "His old albums and stuff, back in the day, he already did the whole combo of dance music with old folk samples and blues, and jazzy kind of samples, so I really love that. I listen to his stuff a lot. He showed me that dance music and old folk and blues and soul music is a really good combination. And it inspired me to do the same, only I did it with jazz and gospel."

Fatboy Slim "I love his stuff . . . like, he has the classic albums, and I still take them as a reference for making a good album, and making good tracks in general, because I think they have

everything. They have energy, and they're very original and broad as well. He did kind of hip-hoppy tracks, but he also did dance tracks, and also pop tracks, so I like that about him."

Coleman Hawkins "He's my favorite jazz saxophonist, actually, because he really keeps his melodies very simple, but for me, it's always on point. . . . It's very catchy, and very nice to listen to, and I learned a lot from him, like to keep melodies simple sometimes, even in a genre like jazz. And that inspired me to do my own saxophone solos and stuff."

Klangkarussell "It's an Austrian DJ duo, and they were actually the first ones to make a track — it was in 2012 I think — in this genre. . . . I guess the 'melodic,' 'tropical,' whatever genre. When I heard their music, I thought it was really cool. I was already doing that as well, but they were the first ones to actually break the charts in Europe, and that opened the gate for that kind of music, and the radio's more open to that kind of music since then."

Digitalism "They're a duo, two German guys. I really love the chord progressions in their music. And that's the main thing that really influenced me in my music, is listening to theirs, and having an exciting chord progression. Chord progressions are not really different in every genre, but theirs really make you feel something — I can't really explain, but they always [are] very emotional."

Bakermat performs at Ascend Nightclub, Boston, on Saturday at 10 p.m. Tickets \$20. 617-963-4511, www.ascend.wantickets.com

MALLORY ABREU

BEHIND THE SCENE



WORLD MUSIC/CRASHARTS

What: Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba's logistical challenges touring with "Cuba Vibra."

Where: Cutler Majestic Theatre, Nov. 7-8, presented by World Music/CRASHARTS. Tickets \$40-\$79. 617-876-4275, www.worldmusic.org

Going to Cuba to experience that country's culture may be getting easier, but bringing that culture here can still be a major challenge. Juan Carlos Coello, company manager of Lizt Alfonso Dance Cuba, should know.

"The troupe has been bringing Cuban music and dance on tour for 25 years, with some productions involving up to 50 people, plus sets, costumes, and instruments. It makes its Boston debut this week with "Cuba Vibra," which involves 32 people.

When we spoke to Coello just eight days before the troupe was to arrive here, two musicians' visas had been denied and those of six others, including artistic director Lizt Alfonso, had yet to be approved.

Though the company has support from Cuba's Ministry of Culture and Coello says he has good relations with ambassadors to his country, getting visas is always stressful. "The biggest, most complicated issue is always the visa process, particularly for the US," said Coello by phone, fresh from visiting the American Embassy in Havana. "It is one you cannot control, in the hands of someone who doesn't know you or your work. We don't need permission to

leave Cuba. We need permission to get into the US, which is, in my opinion, ridiculous. I think they fear someone is going to defect, but they could have done that in Mexico or Canada, and they didn't."

Meanwhile, Coello has his hands full with other logistics, from air and ground travel to lodging. For the two days the group is in Boston, they are staying in a hotel 30 minutes away. "We travel in a big bus that becomes part of our home," said Coello, who is married to Alfonso. "But it's enjoyable that we are all together. We have a good time. It's important to keep everyone in the good mood."

In addition to extensive pre-tour preparations, Coello normally travels in advance of the group to make sure all the logistics are in place. "I joke to my people, when we start the tour, I'm already exhausted. But I want to make sure they don't have any problems but to do their work."

He calls "Cuba Vibra" a showcase of Cuban culture from the 1950s to the present day. "We have been living through a lot of difficulties and trouble for years, because of isolation, but we keep the happiness in our soul and our blood," he says. "We don't lose our smile, and that has helped us overcome those difficult years. We want to show that passion, feeling, and spirit, transmit all that to the audience and touch their hearts, lift the theater with a real taste of what we are and what we can do."

KAREN CAMPBELL

LAUGH LINES

TODD BARRY

"I was in a car with a friend of mine, I'd never been in a car with him before. I look over, he's not wearing his seatbelt. I'm like, "Hey, man, why don't you put that on?" He's like, "You know, Todd, I'm not really a seatbelt guy." Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to shove my quirky taste down your throat. I don't really enjoy sushi, you don't enjoy reducing the chances of smashing your head through a windshield. Different strokes."

Barry plays the Davis Square Theatre Friday and Saturday as part of the Boston Comedy Festival.

NICK A. ZAINO III



FERNANDO LEON