

4 concerts to catch in D.C. over the next several days

By Anying Guo

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Heartless Bastards

Heartless Bastards owes its name to a wrong answer to a bar trivia question about Tom Petty's band. Frontwoman Erika Wennerstrom found the incorrect response of "Tom Petty and the Heartless Bastards" funny and thus, Heartless Bastards was born. After several lineup changes the past few years, Wennerstrom sees the newest album, "A Beautiful Life," released Sept. 10, as more of a solo effort. Hitting on similar existential musings as Fiona Apple's "Fetch the Boltcutters," the album oozes a hope for peace and for a happier, more equitable future, while recognizing you can't control how life shakes out — set against the effortless grooves the band is known for. "I did it all for love and I'd do again," she sings on closing track "The Thinker," a sincere cliche that soars and catches in your throat. Heartless Bastards knows the world isn't perfect, but insists that we enjoy those perfect fleeting moments to their fullest extent.

Oct. 2 at 8 p.m. at Union Stage, 740 Water St. SW.

unionstage.com. \$30.

Rei Ami

Rei Ami's silky vocals are a perfect fit for her electro-R&B, surprisingly rocker sound. The University of Maryland alum demands attention in the sharp angles of her songs. On "Dictator," she growls over a warped bass line, "I'm not your queen, I'm your dictator." But halfway through the song, there's a sudden spasm of static noise and the mood morphs into a quiet, guitar-plucked ballad. "You say you love me, but I don't know," Rei sings. "You got me wishing I was dead,

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Sheila the Band

The D.C. trio's music, a blend of rock-and-roll, R&B, sick instrument solos with powerful vocals, begs to be performed live. Sheila the Band's 2016 album "We Gon' Be Alright," ruminates on love, forgiveness and everything in between. Their new album "Protect Your Heart," released in July, is about how art is anything and everything you need it to be — from the work you create, to your self-worth and more. The trio — Sha'Air Hawkins, Courtney Tucker and Rhea Tucker — creates music that soothes the soul, critiquing systems of power while weaving musical reveries that wash over you anew. On the defiant "With All Disrespect," the band wants change, asking, "Why you telling me that this life ain't fair, when my hands were already up in the air?" And in "Land on Your Feet," there's a steady drum buildup that explodes in a repeated vocal proclamation with an eternally relevant, universal question: "Do you see the light?" Yes, yes we do. *Oct. 3 at 8 p.m. at DC9, 1940 Ninth St. NW. dc9.club. \$12.*

Jackie Venson

Venson didn't pick up the guitar until her last year at Berklee College of Music, by then disillusioned with the ultracompetitive spirit of the school. The guitar has become the centerpiece for her blues-inspired, life-affirming songs. Borrowing from legends such as Gary Clark Jr., her guitar solos are masterful and are the slick, satisfying center in

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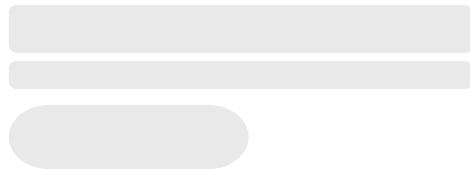
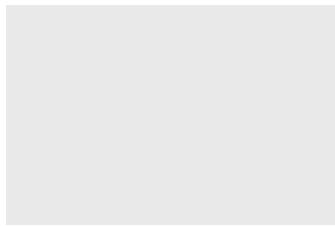
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