

**THE RELIABLE SOURCE**  
**Didn't miss a thing**  
 Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler, right, had little time to be bored during his busy trip to Washington. **C2**



**BOOK WORLD**  
**The traveling fugue**  
 An affliction that forces its sufferers to keep on walking figures into Maud Casey's vivid tale of 19th-century science. **C2**

**MUSIC REVIEW**  
**In the Noh**  
 The Cantate Chamber Singers do wonders with a Britten piece that is influenced by a spare, ritualistic style of Japanese drama. **C8**

**MUSIC REVIEW**  
**Full-on fabulous**  
 Promising Aussie singer Betty Who, right, proves blondes have more fun during her D.C. stop. **C3**



## NSO director extends stay

BY ANNE MIDGETTE

In the climate of transition at the Kennedy Center as President Michael Kaiser prepares to depart, one thing will stay constant. On Monday, the center announced that the contract of Christoph Eschenbach, music director of the Kennedy Center and the National Symphony Orchestra, which was due to expire at the end of 2014-15, will be extended for two more seasons, through 2017.

"It was due to be [extended] in August, actually," Eschenbach said in a phone interview. "But with the transition of Michael Kaiser, to the presidency of Deborah Rutter, there was a kind of a vacuum because Michael didn't want to sign anything any more after the end of last season, and Deborah, not yet. They agreed immediately that it should happen, [but putting] it into writing and the discussion of details took a little bit of time."

There was, he said, no hitch on Rutter's side. "I was with the Chicago Symphony [where Rutter is currently president] in December," he said, "just a week after the announcement of the Kennedy Center was made. We had very intense and cheerful and productive conversations."

"For the past four seasons, Maestro Eschenbach has

ESCHENBACH CONTINUED ON C5

### RECORDINGS

## Shakira, as varied, charming as ever

BY ALLISON STEWART  
 Special to The Washington Post

Is there anyone alive who doesn't have a special, secret fondness for Shakira? Besides maybe that famously angry sea lion who attacked the singer in 2012 and was presumably unaware of her selfless work with the United Nations and had probably never even heard "She Wolf" because he would have really liked it.

Everyone else seems to have long ago succumbed to Shakira's hip-swiveling charms. She's an avatar of pop-culture globalization — a Colombian singer-songwriter of Lebanese descent whose songs are a multicultural grab bag of melodies from the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and, most prominently on her new, self-titled album, the American South. She's a social-media giant. Statues have been erected in her honor. (Okay, one statue. Made of metal, not the hand-chiseled marble she deserves. And it depicts Shakira wearing pants she probably would never wear. But it's a start.)

RECORDINGS CONTINUED ON C3



KAYT JONES/RCA RECORDS

**APPEALING:** Shakira's spirit mostly shines through on her new, self-titled album.

## An agricultural hero, defined in bronze

BY ADRIAN HIGGINS

Benjamin Victor and his son Caleb, who is 12, walked briskly the other day from the White House to the U.S. Botanic Garden, on the Mall side of the Capitol. They arrived unflushed; Caleb is young and vital, and his father, 35, is clearly an athlete, with broad shoulders and a thin waist. But the journey was longer than they imagined.

"Phew," Benjamin Victor said. "Made it."

Benjamin Victor is from Aberdeen, S.D., and is carrying a little pouch that houses a camera. He might be mistaken for millions of other tourists in cherry blossom season, but if Victor is a mere springtime visitor, he will leave a Washington legacy more enduring than most of the rest of us in this town. The work of guileless Benjamin Victor will be around long after we are forgotten.

In 2005, he sculpted the figure of a woman named Sarah Winnemucca, a Native American from Nevada, for the National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol. Tuesday, dignitaries will gather on the Hill to com-

VICTOR CONTINUED ON C2

# D R O N E S !



KATHERINE FREY/THE WASHINGTON POST

They'll clean our gutters.  
 They'll tend the crops.  
 They'll let us take aerial selfies.

These are no flights of fancy, say local drone enthusiasts who meet to compare their machines and dreams of the future

BY DAN ZAK

The drone settles back on the cracked asphalt after a brief ascent into the lower reaches of the suburban troposphere. ¶ "Yeah, it flies," says Christopher Vo, director of education for the D.C. Area Drone User Group. His thumbs release the remote-control levers that animate the three-pound vehicle, which is the size of a large pizza. ¶ "I want to give it a try," says the quadcopter's creator, Herndon resident Karl Arnold, a telecom sales engineer who got into drone building as a hobby. "Just get it up a few feet." ¶ "Right now?" Vo says, a bit incredulous. "Have you flown in the simulator?" ¶ "For two minutes." ¶ Vo hesitates, then hands over the controls. "All right, everyone, step back," he says. ¶ "My car is right there," says Frank Bi, a digital news developer for "PBS NewsHour," as he backs up toward a large trash bin. ¶ "Mine, too," Vo says, looking at Arnold and then at the contraption. "It's *your* drone." ¶ It is indeed his drone, which Arnold built in about nine hours over a couple of weeks, with help from fellow drone enthusiasts. They're a niche group, for now, living in the world they think we will all be inhabiting before too long: using drones for fun and convenience, like any other toy or gadget, and for the betterment of society.

DRONES CONTINUED ON C3

**ROTOR ROOTER:** Christopher Vo, director of education for the D.C. Area Drone User Group, does a test run of a unmanned copter during the group's recent monthly workshop in Reston.

## 'Shakira': Shaking things up yet again

RECORDINGS FROM C1

Shakira has weird, very specific tastes: "Shakira" is not her first album to feature near-lethal doses of reggae and '90s alt-rock, as if she hasn't realized that those things are mostly awful. Yet she also has the broadest canvas of any pop diva in memory — she can contain multitudes, from cumbia to country, and still sound instantly, recognizably like herself.

"Shakira," her charming, awkward, immensely appealing new disc, tests this theory. It was assembled by a murderers' row of expensive producers and writers, including Dr. Luke, Max Martin and Cirkut. Any student of recent pop history knows what comes next: dignity-killing, one-size-fits-all dance-pop songs predestined for success and oblivion in the same month.

Shakira submits to Dr. Luke's dehumanizing ministrations and manages to come out the other end sounding only slightly less like herself. "Dare (La La La)" doubles as the background music for Shakira's new commercial for Activia yogurt, and it sounds like something Lady Gaga would have made before she became ridiculous. It's wonderful.

Most of the rest of "Shakira" seems like an uneasy bargain between what she wants (rootsy, often acoustic-based pop with a rangy feel and an affinity for early Alanis Morissette) and what the producers want (hits). It's familiar territory for the singer, who has routinely employed of-the-moment production teams to contemporize (and Americanize) her sound, but seldom has the divide seemed so great.

The best tracks split the difference: The new wave/reggae hybrid "Can't Remember to Forget You" is an energetic duet with Rihanna, pop's favorite inanimate object. "Loca por Ti" (one of a handful of Spanish tracks on the standard edition of the



RCA RECORDS

**AT TIMES UNSTEADY:** Shakira's comfort level seems to ebb and flow throughout her latest album.

album) is '80s jukebox country, finely rendered. The midtempo Latin pop track "You Don't Care About Me" recalls vintage Marc Anthony.

Shakira has four fully formed emotions — Reproachful, Cheery, Let's Dance and I Want to Do Things to You. That's two more than Dr. Luke usually has to work with, and she also has a voice that's hiccupy and distinct, especially at the wildest, warbliest reaches of her register. To make Shakira sound like everybody else takes some effort. On the disc's weakest track, "Spotlight," she sounds unerringly, depressingly, like Taylor Swift; the song sounds like a reheated "Red" outtake, and the vocal similarity is too marked to be accidental.

Swift is the unlikelyst of specters. But, if only because she is one of Shakira's few rivals who can credibly deliver a slender love song backed by an acoustic guitar, she also haunts the folk ballad "23," one of the album's starkest and best songs. Shakira has never been much of a lyricist, but "23" is clunkier, and braver, ("I used to think that there was no god / But then you looked at me with your blue eyes / And my agnosticism turned into dust") than Swift would ever dare to be.

Shakira's comfort level seems to ebb and flow throughout the album: She's commanding on the Spanish-language songs, playful on the bangers, subdued on the songs that are obviously ill-suited for her, such as the Nashville ballad "Medicine," a collaboration with Blake Shelton, her fellow judge on "The Voice." It's one of those duets where two famous people from different genres are joined by their business managers in pursuit of a crossover hit. They sing at each other and both sound as if they'd rather be anywhere else. Shelton, also at half-wattage, treats her with unusual delicacy, as if he was enlisted partly for his hit-making skills and partly to stop her from running away.

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## MUSIC REVIEW



JOSH SISK FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**ROCKING OUT:** Betty Who (a.k.a. Jessica Newham) bounded around the stage at the Rock & Roll Hotel on Sunday night as she energetically performed tracks from her upcoming studio album.

## She's got charisma to spare

Betty Who playfully and winningly entertains at the Rock & Roll Hotel

BY ASHLEY FETTERS

Somewhere in the handbook of "How to Succeed in Pop Music These Days," it's probably recommended that women outfit themselves with a sense of fun and a short, funky pouf of peroxide-blond hair. It's been a winning combo for acts such as Pink, Robyn and Miley Cyrus — and it's worth hoping that it works for the deserving Australian newcomer Betty Who.

The 22-year-old Who (or Jessica Newham, as she's known to her family and professors at the Berklee College of Music, from which she graduated last year) burst onstage in a glittering gold jacket and sporting cherry lipstick, her little shock of glow-in-the-dark hair gleaming. But the most blindingly fabulous aspect of Sunday's all-too-brief show at the Rock & Roll Hotel was the playful lady, whose

electric charisma never faded.

Who performed tracks from her upcoming first studio album, as well as from her debut EP "The Movement," released last year. With its dreamy synth-pop confections, "The Movement" drew comparisons to the likes of "Oracular Spectacular"-era MGMT and songs used in John Hughes montages. But while Who's live act seemed inspired by specific musicians — platinum-coiffed and not — she proved to be much more surprising and disarming than your garden-variety pop performer.

Yes, she wagged her tongue and gamely grinded all up on her keyboardist (a la Cyrus) during "All of You" and paused every so often as she bounded around the stage to laugh at her goofy dance moves (a la Pink); she also snarled like Elvis and called herself the "Taylor Swift of indie pop." ("I write about a lot of different men," she said, laughing. "I hate you, but I just wanna have sex all the time. But I hate you.")

As with her energy, her charm never flagged. During an interlude, she invited two fans up to the stage to model their Betty Who shirts — one of which she'd

signed at a previous show. She informed the audience that merchandise was available upstairs and, brandishing one fan's bicep, added merrily, "Your arms could look this nice, too!"

Later, she said a special hello to the fans in the back. "Is that where all the straight guys are?" she joked, and the room erupted. "Oh, I saw one!" she giggled. Then she went on to say she'd just met with the Human Rights Campaign, which had given her the equality pin that was fastened to her skirt. Before she launched into her ethereal ballad "Right Here," she announced, "This song is about loving who you want to love!" The audience exploded into cheers again.

"Right Here" gave way to the fizzy "Somebody Loves You," during which fans bounced around joyously as Who marched and vamped onstage. By the time she got to the '80s-tinged "High Society," the club had become a room full of warm, sticky, exhilarated humans, but it wasn't clear who was having the most fun — the fans or the radiant Who.

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## Pritzker goes to Japanese architect Ban

BY PHILIP KENNICOTT

Shigeru Ban, the eminent Japanese architect who has pioneered the use of unorthodox materials, including paper, in construction and design, has been awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize, the profession's highest honor.

Ban was an almost inevitable choice. A deeply respected figure with a powerful humanitarian track record, he has created temporary housing for victims of natural and man-made disasters around the world. Among his innovations is the use of cardboard and paper — lightweight, cheap, easily transportable materials — to create shelter and public spaces for displaced people and refugees. But he has also used those same materials and many others in the design of architecturally finished structures that are distinctively sleek, minimalist and understated.

The Cardboard Cathedral in Christchurch, New Zealand, features a soaring, A-frame sanctuary space supported by thick, loglike cardboard beams.

Ban's work is internationally renowned, admired for its consistently experimental approach and its profound integration of traditional Japanese building techniques with a modernist commitment to functional elegance. The 56-year-old architect will be given the prize in June at a ceremony in the Netherlands. Previous Pritzker laureates include Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid and Rem Koolhaas.

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RICHARD DREW/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**HONORED:** Shigeru Ban has created housing for disaster victims.

## Drone devotees get a buzz from promise of flight

DRONES FROM C1

We're living in drone-y times. Reports surfaced this month that Facebook is considering purchasing a drone production company. In December, Jeffrey P. Bezos, who founded Amazon and owns The Washington Post, made headlines by suggesting that Amazon could deliver orders by drone within five years. Three weeks later, the Federal Aviation Administration announced a multiyear process to study and test the application of unmanned aerial vehicles in the various climates and geographies of the United States.

At the drone user group gathering, Arnold activates the four propellers, which make a sound like an electric weed cutter or a mutant wasp. He nudges a lever on the remote control, and the drone hiccups upward an inch, tilts back and skids on the ground. "Okay, maybe I'll wait," Arnold says, humbled by the sensitivity and latent power of his creation.

"Have fun," Vo says, heading back inside Nova Labs, a nonprofit "makerspace" hidden in a Reston office-park labyrinth. "Don't break it. Don't break other things with it."

Outside the labs, at least one car bears a bumper sticker that says, "My Other Vehicle Is Unmanned." Inside the labs Sunday, the drone group's all-day building workshop is underway. Thirty people crowd two small rooms with folding tables and every tool imaginable. They talk with great energy about the unmanned aerial vehicles in front of them, which are in various stages of assembly. There is buzzing and beeping and the odor of soldered wiring. Men walk in with plastic tubs of parts as if they're meeting up in a friend's garage to break things and make their mothers nervous.

Speaking of which, Leslie Shampaine arrives shortly after the 10 a.m. start to drop off her 15-year-old son, Brahm Soltes, who is building a drone for a class project at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. She found the group online and connected Brahm in order to make sure the drone parts — which average about \$500 for a basic model — were actually put to use.

"I didn't want them to be sitting around the house," she says before leaving. (She'll be one of just two women — both mothers passing through — who will enter the space Sunday.)

Hovering nearby the high school



KATHERINE FREY/THE WASHINGTON POST

**ROUTINE MAINTENANCE:** Dennis Kappeler of Lorton checks out his drone, which needs soldering, at a recent workshop for drone enthusiasts in Reston.

sophomore is Ken White, here for higher-altitude reasons than a class project. White is an enterprise architect for the Department of Homeland Security.

"I'm on a mission, but it's low," he says, referring to the priority of his attendance, which is his way of absorbing the mechanics of civilian drone work so that he can integrate it into his own. "My belief is you have to walk the walk and build a skill set."

The D.C. Area Drone User Group is the largest of its kind, with about 1,000 members, and the monthly workshop is an open forum for experts and rookies to learn, build and share best practices. Other group events include regular "fly-ins," where users congregate on open terrain to launch their drones, and occasional competitions such as a search-and-rescue challenge scheduled for May, when organizers will stage a missing-person scenario and drone users will hunt for photographic aerial evidence.

The people gathered at Nova Labs are hobbyists who get a kick out of extending their reach to the sky as well as businessmen who see a golden opportunity to robotically monitor agriculture or deliver products. Think of the drone possibilities for wedding photography and videography, they say, although the average news consumer might picture

drones delivering Hellfire missiles into foreign wedding convoys, as was the case in December in Yemen, where a U.S. strike by an unmanned aerial vehicle killed more than a dozen revelers.

"You hear the word 'drone,' and everybody has that military connotation," says Ken Druce, an avionics systems engineer from Leonardtown, Md., who makes the drive to Nova Labs several times a week. "There's no delineation

*"Is a drone going to drop on people's heads on K Street during rush hour? . . . That's what's going to give this thing a black eye, unless we all figure out these rules of flying."*

Peter Lewis, telecom executive and drone novice

between the light quadcopters here and the 100-pound drones" made by private contractors for military surveillance and offense. "The applications are different."

Suffice it to say that none of the devices (or people) here at Nova Labs look threatening, although users are aware of the public's concern about privacy and safety as well as the FAA's attempts to regulate the use of personal drones. Drone technology still has some maturing to do, and its relationship to

telecommunications and aviation needs to be streamlined and solidified, says telecom executive Peter Lewis, who dropped into the Sunday workshop as a self-described drone novice interested in commercializing the technology.

"Is a drone going to drop on people's heads on K Street during rush hour?" Lewis says, a notepad in hand as he meanders between work spaces. "Is it going to disrupt a symphony at Wolf Trap or buzz a funeral at Arlington Cemetery? That's what's going to give this thing a black eye, unless we all figure out these rules of flying."

The D.C. Area Drone User Group hopes to help figure out the rules, and it will continue to bring the curious into its fold and fantasize about using civilian drone fleets for everything from crop dusting to crisis mapping.

"I think probably one in five people will have their own drone" eventually, says the group's president, Timothy Reuter, who is leaving his government job next month to focus on his drone start-up company. "It's going to be a great accessory for people who want to have a system to automatically check their gutters or to document their lives. I can see people doing aerial selfies. It's an extension of that same philosophy: Let's see the world and document your adventures from a new perspective."

The collaborative energy in Nova Labs among teenagers, PhD students, federal technicians and robotics junkies feels like a preview of communal tinkering on a much larger scale. Imagine, for

a moment, a world in which we have ceased staring down at our smartphones and started looking up all the time at that buzzing airborne extension of ourselves.

"Did you get up flying?" Druce asks Arnold as he leaves with his quadcopter. "You've stabilized?"

"Yeah," Arnold says. "Good. I'll see you after your next crash."

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