

BEST FESTIVAL

Miami Book Fair



Monica McGivern

Are you being shunned from your workplace book club because they found out you were listening to this month's selection on audiobook? That's the 305 bibliophile pride talking. Some of y'all were raised in cities without an eight-day literary festival, and it shows. Miami is home to the largest book fair in the nation, drawing hundreds of thousands of book nerds every November for a jam-packed week of events. From readings and discussions with world-renowned authors to the highly anticipated Friday-through-Sunday street fair, the Miami Book Fair is a spectacle that can't be missed. It's safe to say Miami is experiencing a renaissance of sorts when it comes to arts and culture. But the real OG is the Miami Book Fair.

Readers' choice: III Points

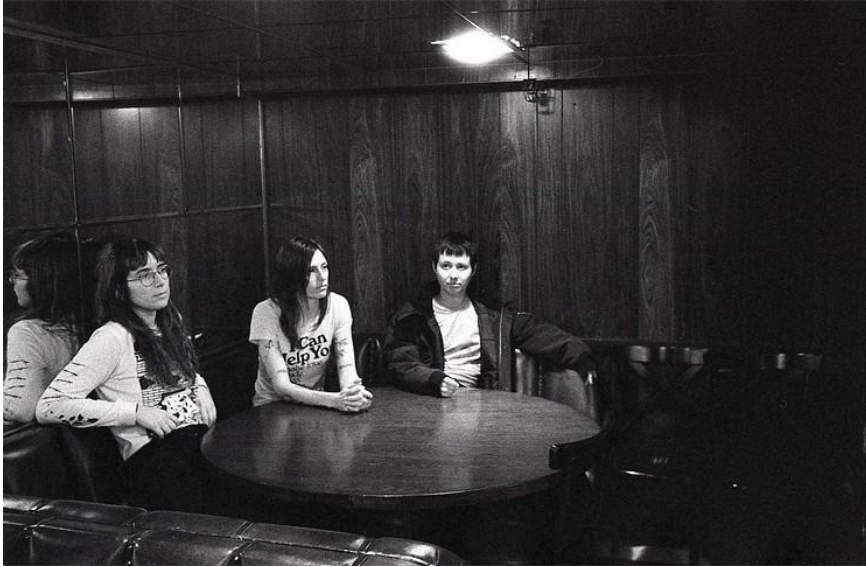
300 NE Second Ave., Miami, 33132 [MAP](#)

305-237-3000

mdc.edu

BEST BAND

Las Nubes



Gabriel Gavidia

On a cloud in the depths of the 305 live the lo-fi garage pop goddesses better known as Las Nubes (formerly Smvt). Ale Campos' solo project evolved into a trio and now features Emile Milgrim and Nina Carolina delivering raw and grungy dream fuzz with '90s sensibilities. "Songs meant to be listened to on headphones while lying prostrate on the floor" is how the emerging band instructs fans to listen to its *The First Three EP's + Emotional Debris* on Las Nubes' Bandcamp page. The group's catchy Spanish single "QSW," from its upcoming first full-length album, *SMVT* — out this year on Sweat Records Records — recently landed the bandmates on NPR's alt.Latino, BrooklynVegan, and Remezcla. File under "cloud core."

Readers' choice: Locos por Juana

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST LOCAL ALBUM

Haute Tension by Haute Tension



Jayme Gershen

Haute Tension used to rock Miami crowds as Mo'Booty, but its new name offers better descriptors of the trio's sound. The band — one of the most active in Miami's rock scene — offers equal parts surf-rock, psychedelic, and tropical rhythms on its self-titled, full-length debut. The album cover pays homage to the band's home base, with two gators seemingly kissing or eating each other's faces in the sunlight — it's all very "Florida Man." The album begins with the band's 50-second, self-titled theme song, which opens with a riotous drum fill that could be confused for a spray of bullets. From there, the band slows things down for the jazzy, trumpet-laden "Dano" and the psychedelic-blues haze of "Daily" and then perks back up to toy with tropicalia on "What Would You Say." In the end, Haute Tension accomplishes an often attempted but seldom achieved feat: bottling the kinetic energy of its live shows and putting it on wax for posterity.

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST POP ACT
Baybe



Courtesy of Baybe

Abbey Loren's vocals glide effortlessly on her single "Winter Air." "Can you hear what they say?/About me and you, babe/They're wondering if you will fall/For me like they did back in the day/Baby, it's your call." On the song, the Fort Lauderdale singer known as Baybe — formerly known as Love, Abbey — channels equal parts Lana Del Rey and Gwen Stefani. But fast-forward to her latest cut, "IKYMM," and she's more like Ariana Grande. That is to say, Loren, who is in the early stages of her career, is still experimenting with her sound, but her vocal chops are unquestionable. And if South Florida already birthed one pop-vocal powerhouse, who's to say it can't do it again? The odds are definitely in Loren's favor. She grew up around music thanks to her parents, who own 42nd Street Recording Studios in Oakland Park, where her father is a sound engineer. "[My dad] was always very harsh on me with pitch and tone and really trained me to be a well-rounded musician," Loren told *New Times* in 2018. Well, it seems like that tough love paid off.

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST SOLO MUSICIAN

Megan Morrison



Ptah Quammie

Singer-songwriter Megan Morrison has played in her fair share of local bands, including Dorothy's Surrender and Revolver, but in 2019, she stepped out into a new genre all on her own. The first hint she was headed in a new direction came in March, when Morrison released "Warrior Woman," a collaboration with beatmaker Miichii. Just a few days later came her solo track "9 Lives," on which the operatic vocalist keeps her vocals midrange to sing about overcoming dark periods in her life. *"Now that I'm living peacefully/No one can take that away from me,"* Morrison sings as her voice floats stoically above the beat. She could be singing about the past substance abuse she's been open about in interviews. Or perhaps she's singing about overcoming the fear of navigating the ups and downs of the music business as an independent artist. No matter the inspiration, Megan Morrison is crafting songs almost anyone can relate to.

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST DJ
Gami



Karli Evans

Miami boasts a plethora of great DJs who spin hip-hop, house, disco, and many other genres — hell, there are even some great open-format spinners too. Every once in a while, you'll encounter a great DJ in the making, the kind of sound selector that has the potential to make an impact. Nobody seems to be better equipped to be the city's next big thing than Gami — that's if only the major clubs would book her. Often relegated to spinning at underground warehouse parties and queer events, Gami has a sound that often feels like a Tumblr page come to life. Her sound isn't for everyone, but it's hard to deny it's forward-thinking. If you caught her set during the Boiler Room's Art Basel party at 1306 last December, you witnessed a DJ who is reclaiming dance music's queer roots while adding sounds that represent her Latinx background. You can't help but feel she's sonically ahead of the pack. It's time to catch up, Miami.

Readers' choice: Cedric Gervais

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST R&B ARTIST
Nil Bambu



FieldOfFocus

R&B has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years as new artists remix the basic elements of the genre — soulful lyrics, sexy rhythms, and a helping of heartbreak — with modern messaging and attitude. Nil Bamu, with slow-dance tracks that highlight the clear, whispery tones of her voice, is no exception. And on her 2019 single "Right There," she adds some feminist revenge to the mix. Lyrically, the song is a seduction, with a chorus repeating, "*I wanna kiss it right there/I wanna touch you right there, right there, right there.*" But its video imagines Bamu as a spy who's double-crossed by her partner — with deadly consequences. Watch it; then listen to the song again and hear the double meaning in lines like "*Call me crazy, crazy/You know I'm crazy, crazy*" and "*I would never disrespect you, no/Baby, I just gotta check on you.*" This is the evolution of R&B we've been waiting for.

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST HIP-HOP ACT
MC Jumanji



Rod Deal

MC Jumanji is obsessed with grime — not the stuff under your fingernails, but the British music genre where fast breakbeats are narrated by gritty rhymes. To help popularize grime on this side of the Atlantic, Jumanji cofounded the local music label American Grime. Its monthly Friday-night parties at Kill Your Idol, dubbed "Proper," are a sure opportunity to witness Jumanji rock the mike with his distinctive, brooding pitter-patter as he guides guests through a late-night introduction to the genre. Once you're hooked, continue your education with his 2019 single "Atlantic."

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST RADIO STATION

Vibe 92.7

Hearing a throwback jam on the radio can send your mind spiraling back to a time of high-school parties and first kisses. If you enjoy nostalgia — and God knows we need it when the present is so bleak — unplug your aux cord and tune your car radio to Vibe 92.7. The old-school hip-hop station plays hits strictly from the '80s, '90s, and '00s, so it's ideal for hip-hop fans who want to remember a time before mumble rap came along. Tune into the station during a short car ride and you might hear Jay-Z and pre-MAGA-hat Kanye's "The Bounce," Usher's "Burn," or your fair share of Wu-Tang Clan and A Tribe Called Quest. Remembering just how old you are is an unfortunate side effect of listening to the station where "classic hip-hop lives," but it's well worth the #tbt journey.

Readers' choice: Y100

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST LATIN ACT
Cortadito



Edwin Cardona

It's named for your favorite caffeinated pick-me-up, and it might just be your favorite Latin band in Miami. As Latin artists top the charts and the world falls in love with the contemporary music coming out of Latin America, Cuban band Cortadito wants to remind listeners that the boleros and *son* of the 20th Century can still get you dancing in 2019. In late 2018, the band released a set of songs in those musical styles on *Canciones de Julio*, aptly named for Cortadito's songwriter, Julio Cesar Rodriguez Delet. The band keeps its itinerary stacked with appearances at festivals such as GroundUp and Afro Roots Fest, as well as performances throughout South Florida. In late June, the band will open for legendary Cuban pianist Chucho Valdez as part of the Rhythm Foundation's concert series Hollywood ArtsPark Experience.

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST REGGAETON ACT
James Lance



Courtesy of James Lance

With reggaeton and Latin trap reaching new heights in mainstream popularity, it's only a matter of time before Miami produces a hitmaker to call its own within those genres. *Colombiano* James Lance has a good shot at being that artist. Since 2017, he's been working hard on pushing the local Latin-trap scene to the forefront. His style is darker than the stuff by chart-toppers such as Bad Bunny and J Balvin, but his flow remains hypnotic, with hooks in the right place to make sure the songs can't escape your head. On the lover-scorned track "Traicionera," he emotes, "*Oye, mami, hasta el día que te fuiste/No te diste cuenta del daño que me hiciste/Queriendo regresar del error que cometiste/Pero el amor a ti baby ya lo perdiste.*" Lance has also cut tracks in English, such as "Bout It" and "2AM," but he's undeniably stronger — and more memorable — when he sings in Spanish.

BEST OF MIAMI® /// ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT /// 2019

BEST LATIN CLUB
La Victoria



La Victoria Social Club

Some places are perfect for turning up the heat on the dance floor in Miami, and one of those spots is La Victoria. Get ready to sweat it all out as you groove to salsa, bachata, merengue, and more at this Design District hideout. Go solo and low-key or big and bougie with a table reservation or private event. La Victoria offers everything you could possibly want in terms of drinks, including bottles of champagne for a cool \$1,400. But you won't need to break the bank for snacks such as empanadas de carne (\$8) and yuca fries (\$7) or full-on meals like tostones con carne (\$14) and chicken caesar salad (\$13). After you've done some damage, get back out on the dance floor and sweat off those tostones. Hours are 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Readers' choice: El Patio Wynwood

28 NE 40th St., Miami, 33137 **MAP**

305-336-0701

lavictoriamiami.com