Daily Life

MOONDOG ON DOING YOUR THING

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There is no shortage of new and innovative music being released today, but even in this modern flood of music creation, brought on by cultural development and the dawn of streaming, several old gems have withstood the test of time and still shine in their uniqueness today. Today, it's time to look at a one-of-a-kind composer, musician, poet, performer and visionary in New York City history: Moondog.

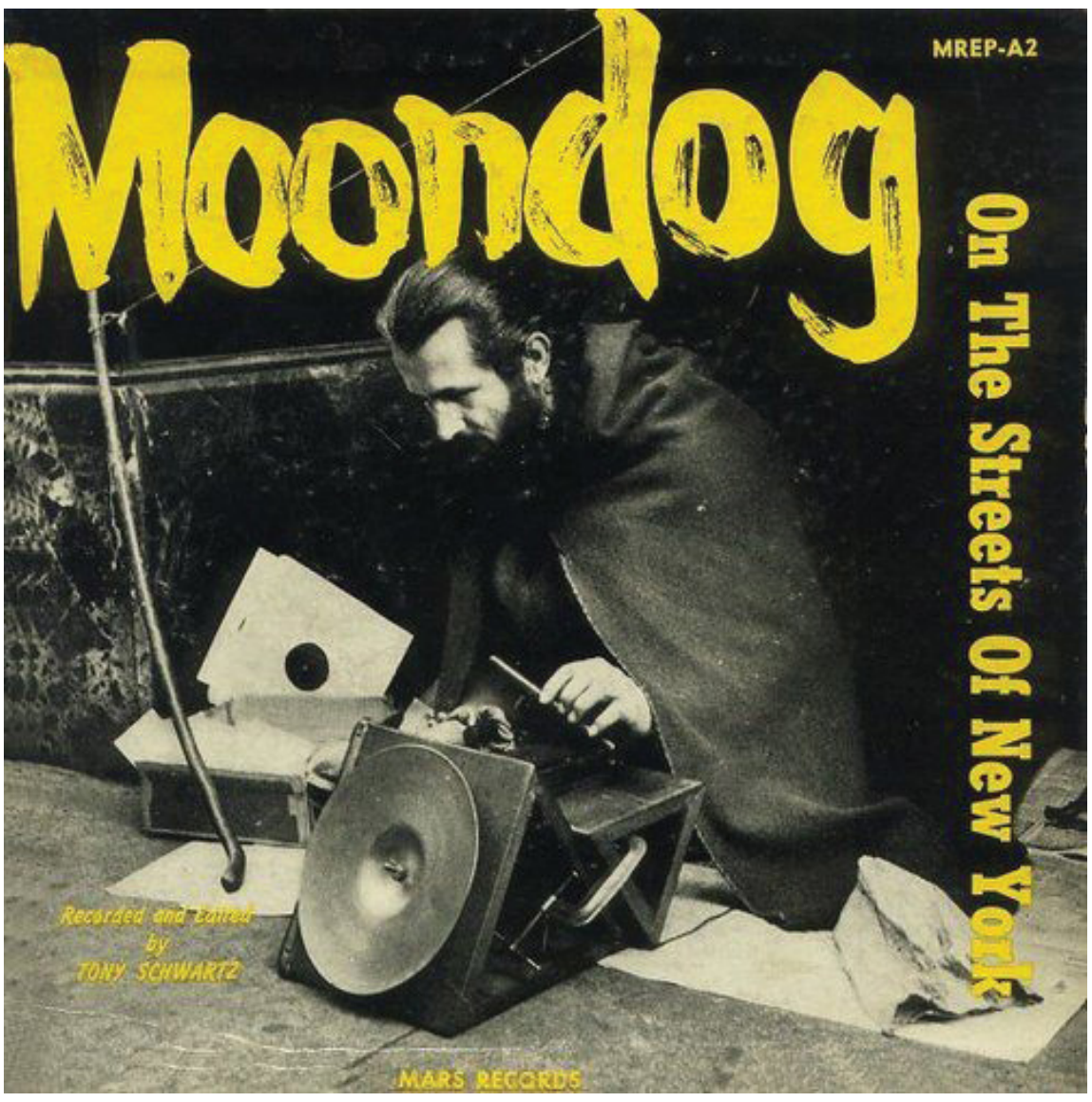
If you were to walk through the streets of New York City in the 1960s, you might come across a strange figure clad in leather and fur, wearing a horned hat and brandishing a spear. This is Moondog: one of the most eccentric figures in American music, a veritable Leif Erikson charting his course far beyond the shores of conventionality.

Moondog was born in Kansas on May 26, 1916 as Louis Thomas Hardin to a missionary family that soon relocated to Wyoming. He began making his own drums at five years old, but his infatuation with music really began after attending an Arapaho Sun Dance as a child and being allowed to play a buffalo-skin tom-tom at the event. Moondog later lost his vision at age 16 after an accident with dynamite.

Despite his lack of formal training, Moondog moved to New York City as a young man to pursue his passion for music. It was here that he developed his characteristic style — with a deep interest in Norse mythology, he began wearing the long beard and Viking hat he was so notorious for. During his time in New York City, he became friends with several music legends including jazz saxophonist and composer Charlie Parker, and conductor Leonard Bernstein.

Moondog spent his days wandering through the streets of New York, handing out poetry and sheet music and listening in on the orchestral rehearsals at Carnegie Hall. Eventually, his loud fashion sense pushed the staff at Carnegie Hall to give him an ultimatum: dress formally or hit the road. Moondog chose to leave.

It's hard to distinctly classify Moondog's compositions, but the majority of his music falls somewhere in between classical and jazz, with heavy influence from Indigenous American music. Percussion is at the heart of Moondog's creative ethos. A defining trait of his music is the use of intense, repeating rhythm to create a hypnotic tone; it is here that his love of Native musical traditions shines through the most. Moondog called his sense of rhythm "snaketime," saying that he seeks to create a "slithery rhythm, in times that are not ordinary." It is this emphasis on nontraditional rhythms that best encapsulates Moondog's outlook on life: refusing to buckle to societal norms, to abandon even an ounce of his self-expression for the sake of acceptance, Moondog put it bluntly: "I'm not gonna die in 4/4 time."



The album cover for "Moondog, On the Streets of New York." Throughout his career, Moondog spread a message of self acceptance. PHOTO COURTESY OF ALBI VINEHART ON PINTEREST

By far, my favorite piece from Moondog is the song "High on a Rocky Ledge," which was composed in 1978 and released in the album "H'art Songs." This song is a morbid, bittersweet love ballad about wishing to die alongside a loved one. Moondog's gentle singing is accompanied by a lone piano, and there's a slight echo audible in the production. The song is hopeful yet heartbreaking, a good accompaniment for anyone trying to get through a tumultuous spring.

For fans of Colin Stetson's compositions (he's the composer that wrote the score for the 2018 film "Hereditary"), I would suggest Moondog's piece "Fujiyama 1" from the album "Elpmas," for its haunting and trancelike use of horns.

The world sorely needs people like Moondog who refuse to compromise their expression and who go out in search for ways to push boundaries past their breaking point. If you're looking for a role model, an interesting historical figure to learn more about, or just some new music to populate your playlists, there's nothing I suggest more than the wild and wonderful Viking of Sixth Avenue.

RATING: 4.5/5

HBO's 'DTF St. Louis' is boring



A frame from the first episode of the new HBO series "DTF Saint Louis". The first episode aired March 1st, 2026, with future episodes premiering weekly. PHOTO COURTESY OF @MULTIIVERSAL ON INSTAGRAM

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A new miniseries on HBO, "DTF St. Louis", dropped its first episode Sunday, and it was very disappointing.

With an intriguing premise and a stacked cast of David Harbor, Jason Bateman and Linda Cardellini, the first episode was 51 minutes of just waiting for something interesting to happen.

The show follows Floyd and Carol, a married couple, and Clark, Floyd's colleague and close friend. When Floyd and Clark admit their marriages lack excitement, they turn to the DTF St. Louis app to explore extramarital affairs. This leads to a love triangle and, ultimately, Floyd's death.

The series premiere is slow and puts a lot of effort into developing our characters. It also jumps around in time, which doesn't help the feeling that the show you're watching isn't actually showing you anything. I would like to think, considering how the episode ended, that the series would go back to explain what happened in those time jumps, but I won't be sticking around for that.

And jumping around in time is a great way of storytelling because it allows there to be a sense of mystery at all times, but I think that this show would've been better off only doing one time jump to show that Floyd was murdered and actually allowed the audience to see how Clark and Floyd began their friendship. In the first episode of a show, you want to grab the viewers' attention and make them jump through time with a promise that the rest of the series will go back to those moments.

The show is also promised to be a dark comedy, which was something I was really looking forward to, but girl, I wasn't laughing.

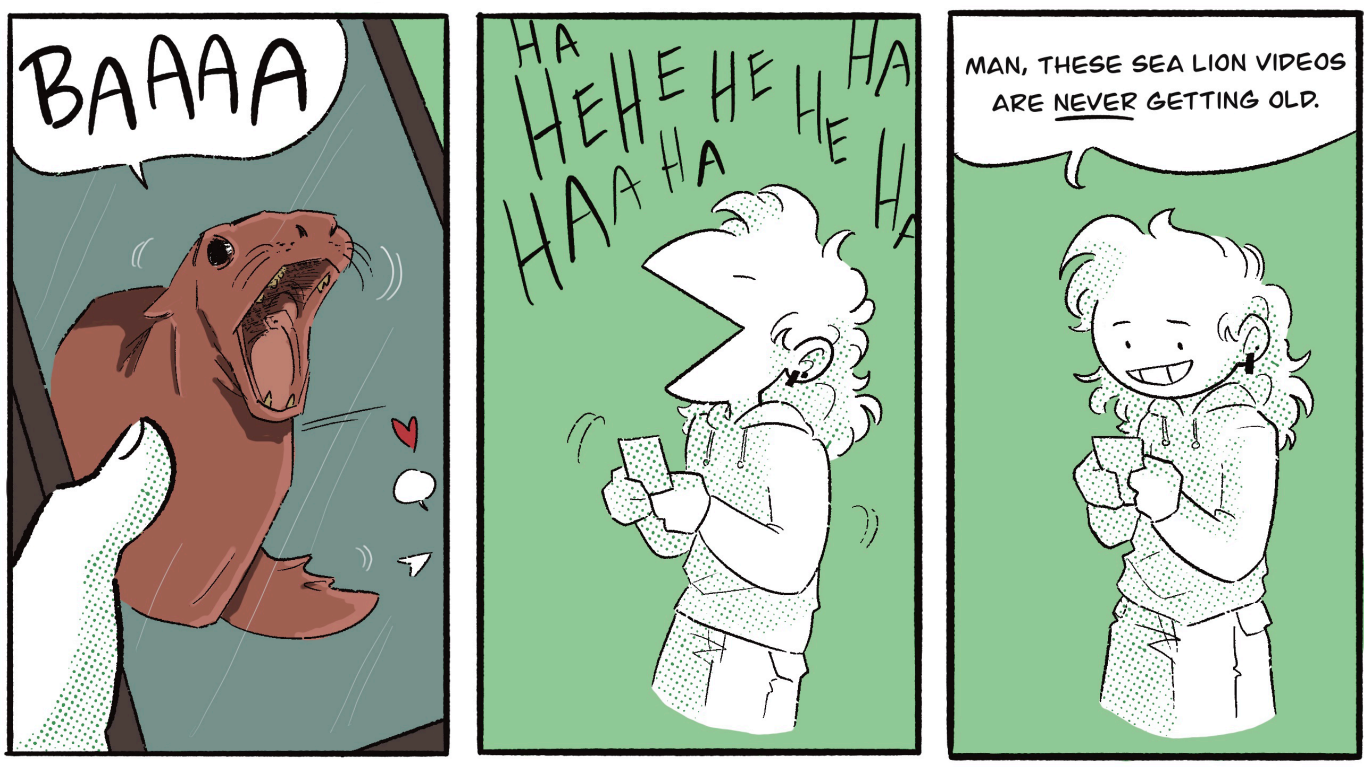
The show places an emphasis upon male friendship, which I think is something interesting, especially in the age of the male loneliness epidemic. However, I don't know if having an affair with your best friend's wife and then killing him is the kind of friend men should be modeling themselves after.

I will say the show does pick up towards the end when the police are figuring out that Floyd's death wasn't from natural causes but was murder, and they start looking at Clark as a suspect for it.

Unfortunately, this show is weak and drags on. It's the perfect show to put on if you want to be on your phone the entire time. I would've thought a story about cheating and murder would be right up my alley, but this one just isn't doing it. Maybe that's because they want me to care about middle-aged men who aren't turned on by their wives anymore, but I don't have that in me for seven episodes.

Rating: 2/5

COMICS



CARTOON BY SAM HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS