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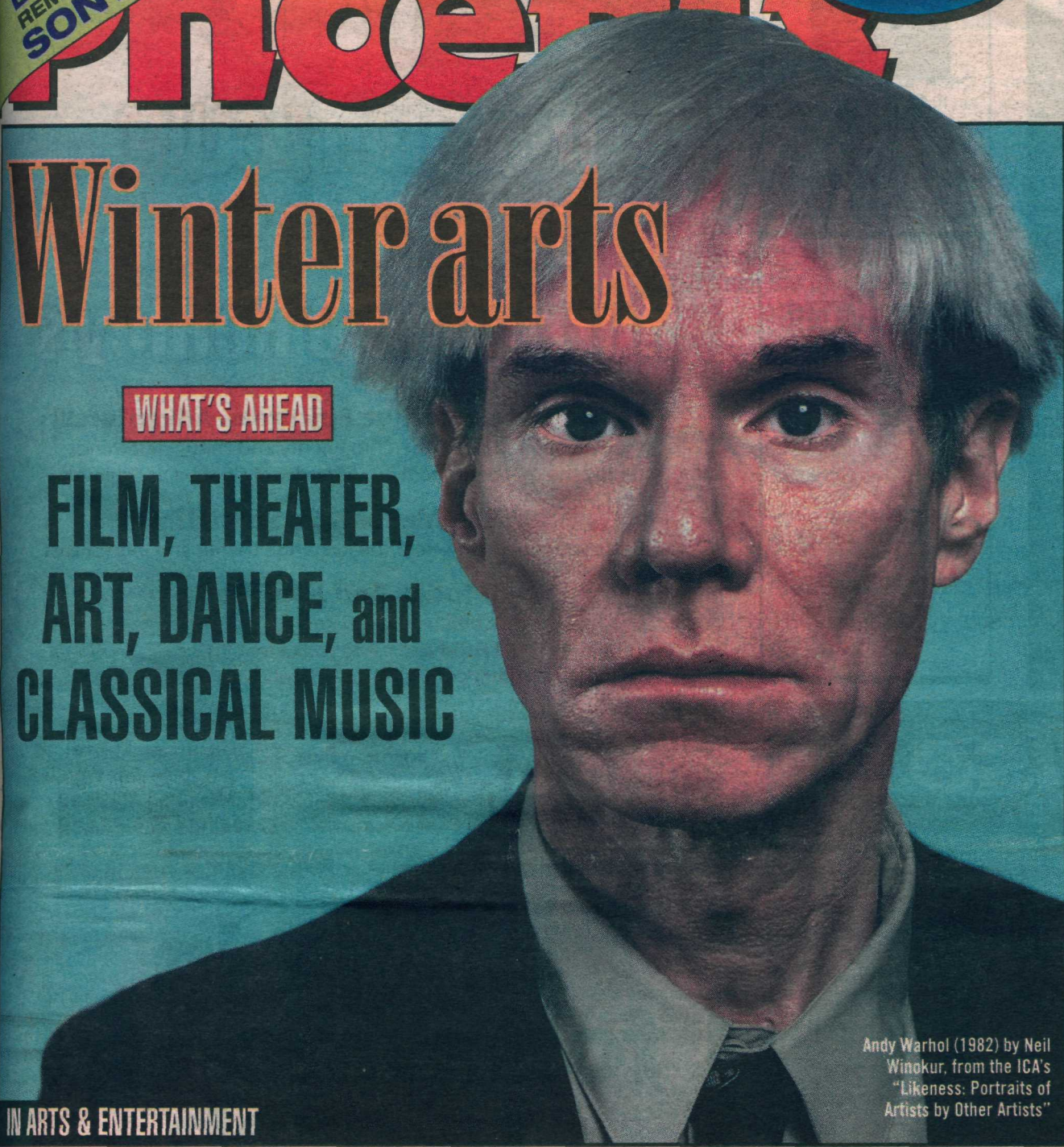
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WHAT'S AHEAD

FILM, THEATER,
ART, DANCE, and
CLASSICAL MUSIC



Andy Warhol (1982) by Neil Winokur, from the ICA's "Likeness: Portraits of Artists by Other Artists"

IN ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

2005: WHAT TO EXPECT

Seeing things

More war? Less money? Presidential scandal? Life on Mars? Lactose intolerance?

BY MIKE MILIARD

We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.

— Charles Franklin Kettering

SO, 2005. A year whose first month will see scores of lavish inaugural balls, with all the venal Washington plutocrats donning formalwear to toast a man whose concocted war has killed 1300-plus American soldiers — folks who, according to our dispassionate defense secretary, “can have all the armor in the world ... [and still] be blown up” — and untold numbers of Iraqi civilians. A war that will kill who knows how many more as the years roll on. How fitting. January 20

will represent the perfect distillation of the cupidity, pomposity, dishonesty, inequality, and mortality that seem to be the hallmarks of our times.

A bit much? Maybe. I confess that I look toward to the future with a dread that's leavened with only the tiniest pinch of optimism. In so many ways, it seems the gleaming technotastic promise of a post-historic tomorrow, one that seemed so possible as the century turned, has vanished. For the past several years, with omnipresent media delivering ever-worsening

news, I've sometimes wondered if I've caught some new strain of the “future shock” Alvin Toffler described four decades ago, the “shattering stress and disorientation” that occur when someone is exposed to “too much change in too short a time.” Maybe I'm just paying more attention these days. But I often wonder if things will only get weirder from here on in. Francis Fukuyama may have posited “the end of history,” but lately — with the United States' actual commitment to democratic ideals increasingly dubious, with some lawmakers hell-bent on mortgaging our economic future, with fundamentalists here and abroad threatening liberal democracy, with China and India inexorably on the rise, with the

Stanhope Grille

See 'Dining Out,' page 22

See **YEAR AHEAD**, page 18

NEW MUSIC

CDs to watch for

- Bright Eyes
- Lou Barlow
- Ani DiFranco
- Kings of Leon
- Shivaree
- Marianne Faithfull with PJ Harvey



Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes

local rock

New action from the Rudds, the Information, Josh Ritter, Brett Rosenberg, Bourbon Princess, and the Dents



The Information

live concerts

The Arcade Fire, Dropkick Murphys, Duran Duran, Ashlee Simpson, and Theo Epstein (!)



Duran Duran



Hubert Sumlin

blues

Hubert Sumlin, Ronnie Earl & Duke Robillard, and Solomon Burke

jazz & world

Live shows

- Herbie Hancock
- Branford Marsalis
- Wadada Leo Smith
- Ladysmith Black Mambazo



Wadada Leo Smith

What can we expect in the coming year?

SEEING THINGS

YEAR AHEAD, continued from cover

environment threatened on any number of fronts — “history” seems to be chugging right along. And I’ve found myself agreeing with Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*: “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.”

Or maybe it’s not as bad as all that. And I’ve never been too good at predicting stuff, anyway. So I talked to some folks who might see the year ahead a little more clearly. A psychic medium. An astrologer. A futures trader. The president of the World Future Society. Some saw basically more of the same. Some thought things would get worse. Some saw hope that the fissures in this divided America will heal. Some predicted coalescence of a genuine anti-war movement. Some saw hope for more and bigger communities brought together by technology. But they all predicted change. Can the center hold in this widening gyre? We’ll just have to wait and see.

INSIDE THE Tremont Tea Room (est. 1936), the oldest psychic parlor in Boston, there’s a creepy half-light, with illumination coming from flickering candles and the glowing mystical gewgaws that choke the walls. At a table in the corner, owner Alex Palermo explains that he’s a psychic medium, not a clairvoyant. “I can see the future, but it’s short-range, rather than long-range,” he says, “whereas most clairvoyants would have more of a long-range vision. A year, sometimes even six months is better for me.” As he explains that he feeds off “thoughts and feelings and intuition about things,” his eyes seem to go blank. He looks down and away, gesticulating fluidly as he speaks.

“February is a really powerful, fiery month,” he says. “There are extremely dangerous aspects to it, and they’re very explosive.” Palermo foresees “attacks or major threats to our security. Terrorist warnings: yellow, orange, red alerts. It’s also a time where scandal could take place, especially in the White House. [Bush] might have won the election, but he’s not going to get through completely unscathed. A lot of things are going to come back to haunt him in February. Failed or marred Iraqi elections will probably dog him, as well as a revelation of a White House scandal that will be reported in mid February. So February is really one of the worst months of his second term. He could be bombarded from all sides.”

Then, chillingly, Palermo gets specific. “Terrorism also plays a role in Chicago. I keep getting Chicago a lot. A lot of weird stuff. Explosions. I saw the Sears building on fire, it was weird.” Not only that, but “there might be a nuclear accident around North Korea.” He laughs darkly. “Doom and gloom, man! But, on the flip side, some sort of life will be discovered on Mars by the rovers they have up there.”

It should surprise no one that Michael Jackson will continue to plague the headlines in 2005. “This is wild, but I think there are going to be a couple attempts on Michael Jackson’s life. I don’t know why anyone would try to kill Michael Jackson and fail, but” — Palermo chuckles wickedly before he amending his prediction — “I do think he’ll go to jail. But they better get his passport, because he’s already got a bag all packed and money put away. That shouldn’t surprise anyone, right?”

Then, Palermo’s voice drops and his face goes blank as he augurs that “a vicious thing will hit Hollywood as hard as the Manson murders. A vicious, vicious thing.” I ask what that might be, exactly. But that’s all he’ll say.

Back in Washington, Palermo says, “Social Security reform will also probably stall, and either fail or else end up being compromised to the point of being completely different than what was originally proposed.” And, he says, “there will definitely be three Supreme Court justices replaced in the next four years. Two of

which in the next 12 months. One is expected, and one is a complete shock.”

Here in the Hub, he doesn’t foresee a whole lot of excitement. “I do think that Mitt Romney will continue to attack and attempt to dissolve Massport, and of course the Big Dig will probably have a federal prosecutor involved,” he says. Any catastrophic deluges in the Dig’s tunnels? “I don’t see anything with lives lost.” But, Palermo says, “the MBTA is in serious trouble. They’re, like, totally screwed.... Definitely they’re in big budget trouble.”

On the state level, he predicts that “in Massachusetts, I do think that cities and towns will have the right to impose a one percent meal tax. Probably as early as March.” Maybe that one will be okay, at least as far as I’m concerned.

When I selfishly ask for a prediction or two about myself, Palermo suggests that maybe I should plan on eating out less. “I think you need to look out for things involving your digestive system,” he says. “Stomach. Pancreas. Anything with the digestion of food, anything that would bother your digestive system. Lactose intolerance, maybe.” A dairy-free 2005? Awesome.

SITTING IN HER warm and sun-suffused ninth-floor Cambridge condo, a tawny cat lolling next to her, Joyce Levine lays out her astrological bona fides. She cites, for instance, a client back in the ’80s who liked to gamble. “So I was picking out some lucky days for her. She and her husband went to Atlantic City during that time frame and won \$200,000.”

Works for me. Even more striking is when Levine reads from her book, *A Beginner’s Guide to Astrological Interpretation*. “With Pluto transiting Sagittarius from 1995 until 2009, religion, philosophy, higher education, and even long-distance travel take their turns being regenerated.

Since Pluto brings out the dark side of a sign before regenerating it, scandals involving financial misappropriations and sexual misconduct and religious organizations... will be even more prevalent than they are today. Increased terrorist activity on airlines is another likely manifestation before the world changes its current religious and philosophical tenets.” Hmm. Enron... the Catholic Church... 9/11. Levine wrote the book in 1992.

Astrological changes, of course, are not demarcated into tidy 365-day years. So, predicting what will happen over the 12 months of 2005 is something of a fool’s errand. But Levine says she foresees pretty much more of the same until Pluto moves out of Sagittarius in 2009. “Now until 2009, the likelihood of more terrorism

worldwide is just higher than normal,” she says. “In terms of another terrorist attack, I think until 2009 we can’t count that out. Because Sagittarius also has to do with religion. Pluto was in Sagittarius when Christ

started preaching, it was in Sagittarius when Martin Luther was ordained.” And, she says, it’s a big reason why lately the “the fundamentalists have taken over everywhere.”

Levine doesn’t claim to always have a clear sightline on future happenings — though she did predict that Pedro Martinez would split town for another team (she also predicted Jason Varitek would re-sign with the Sox). But she didn’t expect President Bush to be re-elected. “Truthfully, I thought things would catch up with him sooner,” she says. Still, she thinks the Teflon might be wearing a bit thin on this guy. “I think his term is going to end up like Nixon’s,” she says. The reason? Saturn is in Cancer, and will be until July of 2005. “Saturn in Cancer has been very unkind to US presidents. Saturn was in Cancer when Nixon resigned. The only ones

who were ever re-elected with Saturn in Cancer were FDR, who died in office, and Bush.”

So expect things to get worse for the Bushies. “I think there’s going to be more scandal with Cheney and Halliburton, and that’s going to have an effect on everybody,” Levine says. “I think we’ll start to see, in May or June of 2005, more revelations coming out, and more questionable things about [Bush]. And I think around September there will be even more skeletons that come out of the closet. His popularity is going to start to sink. That may not get him out [of office] right then, but it’s the beginning of a trend.”

“I think the relationships between Washington and Saudi Arabia are [going to deteriorate]. I looked at Halliburton’s chart — corporations have charts, apparently — and I think Halliburton’s stock is gonna go down. I think there’s more military problems in Iraq late January and into February, and, if I was Rumsfeld, I’d stay out of the war zones in June.”

For his own personal safety?

“Mmm-hmm.”

Levine predicts that Massachusetts will do better economically than the rest of the nation in 2005, but does fear that “the country’s in trouble. There’s only one way for the stock market and the dollar, long term, to go, and it’s not a pretty picture.... The economy of the country is clearly precarious. And all the budget deficits are going to start catching up. Jobs are hemorrhaging out of the country, and those jobs are not coming back. So we’re becoming more and more like South America. We have the rich and the poor, and the middle class is disappearing.”

On the other hand, when looked at on a global scale, “we’re headed in a direction where, in 100 years, everything will probably be equal. But the timing... between the developed countries and the non-developed countries, it’s not going to be pretty for the developed countries. The East is coming up and the West is going down. We, in this country now, are like where Britain was at the end of the 1800s. Americans today think that we’re the center of the world. [But] this country’s in bad shape.” Still, says Levine, one aspect inherent to astrological cycles is that “when something gets bad enough, it changes.” So it’s got to get worse before it gets better? “Oh, it’s not going to get better. I don’t know if it’s going to get worse. After 2009 it will start to heal, but not before then.”

AS PRESIDENT of the nonpartisan, nonprofit World Future Society, Timothy Mack takes a more grounded view of what might happen in the year ahead. The educational and scientific organization, founded in 1966, scours think tanks and research groups, gleaning the latest scoops on current trends, and extrapolating what they might bode for the future. It’s “sort of a clearinghouse for people to talk to each other,” Mack says. “We kind of disseminate esoteric information about the future that might not otherwise be available to the general population.” With members ranging from government analysts to corporate strategic planners to academics, WFS centers around the credo that “the future doesn’t just happen. People create it through their action — or inaction — today.”

Looking toward 2005, Mack doesn’t only see war and strife, economic stagnation and environmental despoliation. He sees the benefits of new technologies and telecommunications growing apace. “One of the things I’ve seen a lot of, and I think there will be a lot more of, is the growth of technology in terms of building new kinds of communities,” he says. “Look at the growth of groups like Craig’s List. Or there’s a site called Deviant Art, where essentially you work on each other’s art.” Other examples he cites include the collaborative composition system Wiki. Or a group like MoveOn.org, an Internet meeting place that has significant and tangible effects on real-world goings-on. With all this

Better? Worse?

More war? Less money?

Presidential scandal?

Life on Mars?

Lactose intolerance?

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coming together, with these new definitions of community, Mack says, he's hoping that perhaps "this red-state/blue-state stuff is part of the past."

Other WFS predictions are a bit more arcane, but might have wider-ranging implications. For instance, did you know that 2005 might see a global worm shortage? "Worldwide demand for fish is creating a shortage of worms to supply anglers and fish farmers," the WFS's bimonthly magazine, the *Futurist*, reports. "High-tech worm-storage methods such as cryogenics will be needed to shore up dwindling supplies." On the other hand, worms may be dwindling, but the WFS is predicting that the world's fly population may double. (Plagues of locusts, perhaps?)

Also look for "water wars," in which sovereign states in arid deserts (hello, Middle East!) might be less likely to engage in *real* wars once cooperation over management of scarce H₂O — say, among Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians — leads to better understanding of each other. Hopeful? Sure. But how else would you prefer we look at the future?

Mack is really looking forward to scads of interesting new technologies. Like computerized fabrics, where "the keyboard is on your sleeve, the screen can be a sheet — or what looks like a sheet — tacked on the wall. It connects wirelessly and for 20 bucks a village in Africa can have a community Internet." Medically, too, the future looks bright. He sees "self-diagnostic micromachines ... [and] stuff you put in your bloodstream that kills cancer cells by identifying them and zapping them one at a time."

But if Mack is rapturous about new technology, or about the possibility for "very, very rapid and dramatic growth in the Third World that

wasn't possible before," he also has words of warning. Communities brought together by technology are wonderful things, but communities "can also be created for destruction." Think Al Qaeda. "It's possible for groups all over the world to unite for bad ends as well as good through technology," Mack says. "But one of the things I think we're hopeful of is that this kind of mutual and global communication will lead people to see that we're not all so different — and that there's mutual understanding that can be reached through communication."

NANCY MROCZEK, PhD is a veritable Jill-of-all-trades. She's a psychologist. She howls down-and-dirty rock and roll in boozy hipster haunts like T.T. the Bear's Place and O'Brien's (see "Mrock Out!", News and Features, June 13, 2003). And she's a certified trading adviser with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. She likes speculating on the cost of those basic building blocks of human existence, "like wood and butter and interest rates and copper and gold and oil and cocoa and wheat," stuff that's "as basic as you're ever gonna get." It's a game, in a way, to gamble on a commodity's price fluctuation, to augur the future by close study of the present and the past.

But her financial acumen wasn't the real reason I wanted to pick Dr. Nancy's brain about the year ahead. Her weekly public-access show, *Toward a Quality of Life* (on Boston Neighborhood Network's channel 23), shows her as a serious student of human behavior, and of the way we deal with the world around us. Her topics have included everything from Vietnam and Iraq to animal welfare to national politics. And, yes, she's a practicing psychologist, spe-

cializing in behavior and neuropsychology. So maybe she can shed some light. As we stand on the precipice of 2005, with one delusional messianic warmonger in a white house and another delusional, messianic warmonger in a dark cave, with seemingly unbridgeable chasms between the rich and the poor and, supposedly, between the blue and the red, with explosions and beheadings turning the nightly news into a Grand Guignol, does it ever look to her like the world has gone, well, completely fucking nuts?

No, she says. "Things swing. Things go in cycles. When the '60s opened up, it was an expansive time, people put flowers in the guns of policemen that were coming at them, people got naked, people held each other's hands and sang. There was really true love. All the rules broke down." But can that happen again? For instance, where's *our* anti-war movement? Mroczek blames the media. "There is great anti-war sentiment in this country. But when we had that [in the Vietnam era], the cameramen and the people from the *Boston Phoenix* were out there plastering it over the newspaper. Night and day, with vivid pictures. That is not what's happening. Really, we are not getting the news on Iraq. We're going about our lives. That's because of the media. And when thousands congregate, they either don't get covered, or they put them behind barriers. Some have been taken to jail for wearing protest signs. There are people out there, so opposed. But they don't have a voice."

That will change. She's sure of it. "Evolution continues. Because even while you have some really horrible things going on, there are justices and mercies and right-thinking people who come to conscientious conclusions. People

who win the lottery and use the money for doing good, or parents that are trying really hard just to do the right thing. All the young people who are smart as a whip and concerned and capable." Yes, she says, there are "massacres and pollution and hatred. But in tiny, tiny increments, things continue to evolve. The world at large, in a very gross sense, even though it tends to be violent, is saying 'I'm not gonna take it. I'm going to be counted, too. I'm going to get what I deserve.' The whole world is captured by that fever. To not be denied. Egalitarianism is on the move."

Whatever next year brings, Mroczek says that, apart from trying in earnest to better the space around us, there's not all that much we can do except sit back and enjoy the ride — and remember that we're all in the same boat. "There may have been a time when I looked at the world and said, 'Freaky deaky! This is a weird world!' Which it is. It's a wild world. It's a dangerous world. It's a strange world as we're all more strange to each other." But now, she says, "I'm just accepting that this is the time that I live in. It's sink or swim. So you just accommodate yourself to the way things are, and move with the tide. And it's freaky, and it's going to get freakier. But this is the way things are, and you have to keep moving along with 'em and make the best of what you've got. If we all did that, we'd be there. There's gotta be something inside us that is moving towards something bigger and more mutually respectful and loving. In other words, I am you and you are me and we ... are ... all ... together." ■

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SCOTT GETCHELL