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ROCKTOBER, COMMENCE! Despite reports to the contrary, rock is not dead. It's getting old, but the oldsters aren't going anywhere (see the Rolling Stones' new album, *Hackney Diamonds*, out Oct. 20). And the youngsters are still picking up guitars as well (see Amyl & The Sniffers, for one), they just aren't making it to the pop charts, which is probably for the better. It's much more rewarding to snoop around Bandcamp and take chances on touring bands on our tiny local stages anyway.

As is usually the case in these parts, the rock is strong in October. Here are a few of my picks for Rocktober 2023:

XDS and Sunny Acres in the Plaza (Oct. 6, 7 p.m., City Plaza): The free Friday Night Concert series is winding down for the season in the raddest way possible—with the hyper pop-rock of Sunny Acres and disco-punk of XDS. The latter might at first appear strange to the uninitiated general public—with spray-painted amps stacked precariously on stage—but I'll bet XDS wins over the hula-hoopers and Tommy Bahamas alike with its infectious dance grooves. Get weird, Chico!

Surrogate, Kid Cops, Sunny Acres (Oct. 12, 7 p.m., Naked Lounge): The time has finally come. No disrespect to the other great Chico bands on the bill, but this rec is all about the debut of Kid Cops. This was supposed to happen in 2020, but a certain worldwide outbreak quashed those plans, and it's taken more than three years to reschedule the meeting of three of Chico's most kick-ass musical minds: guitarist Mathew Houghton (aka Cat Depot), guitarist Travis Wuerthner (Americas), and drummer Casey Deitz (Americas, The Velvet Teen). Looping worlds will collide, and I feel we are all about to lose our minds.



Leah Senior, Solar Estates (Oct. 12, 8 p.m., Argus Bar + Patio): I wish this show wasn't the same night as Kid Cops, but if you're looking for something on the more chill side, this show is special as well. Last year, Leah Senior toured North America with King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, and this month the Australian singer/songwriter and her band bring a mix of folk and warmly delivered baroque pop to the Argus patio. Local bootgaze heartthrobs Solar Estates open.

Black Ends, Similar Alien, Infinite Kamikaze (Oct. 20, 7 p.m., Naked Lounge): This might be the sneaky frontrunner for show of the season. Seattle's Black Ends is something different. Self-described as "Gunk Pop," the trio warps what might have otherwise been described as garagey psych-rock into something much, well, gunkier. The special ingredient is vocalist/guitarist/songwriter, Nicolle Swims, whose sleepy-eyed demeanor belies the wild, weirdly effected guitar stylings that color the band's sound. It's noisy, unpredictable and fun as hell. Local weirdmakers Similar Alien and Infinite Kamikaze open.

Cheap Trick (Oct. 21, 8 p.m., Gold Country Casino): Wait, no Bun E. Carlos on drums? Is this even Cheap Trick? By most accounts, his replacement—Daxx Nielsen, son of guitarist Rick Nielsen—has filled in capably, and the live shows for the greatest power-pop band in history are still kicking ass. It's a no-brainer. Just surrender.

