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FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS BOCA

AN AMERICAN MUSICAL MASTER

T Bone Burnett looks back on a rich career and looks forward to his new Miami-bred project.

By **Leslie Gray Streater**
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

T Bone Burnett just turned 70 years old in January, and as one does if one is lucky enough to reach a milestone like that, he's started reflecting on his life and career.

"I haven't looked back ... but I'm beginning to," he says. Which is not to say he's stopped looking forward.

"I'm in a more of a gathering strength place. I wanna learn as much as I can as I go into the last phase of my work," says the prolific Grammy and Oscar-winning producer, who will present the culmination of that career — so far — today at the Festival of the Arts Boca.

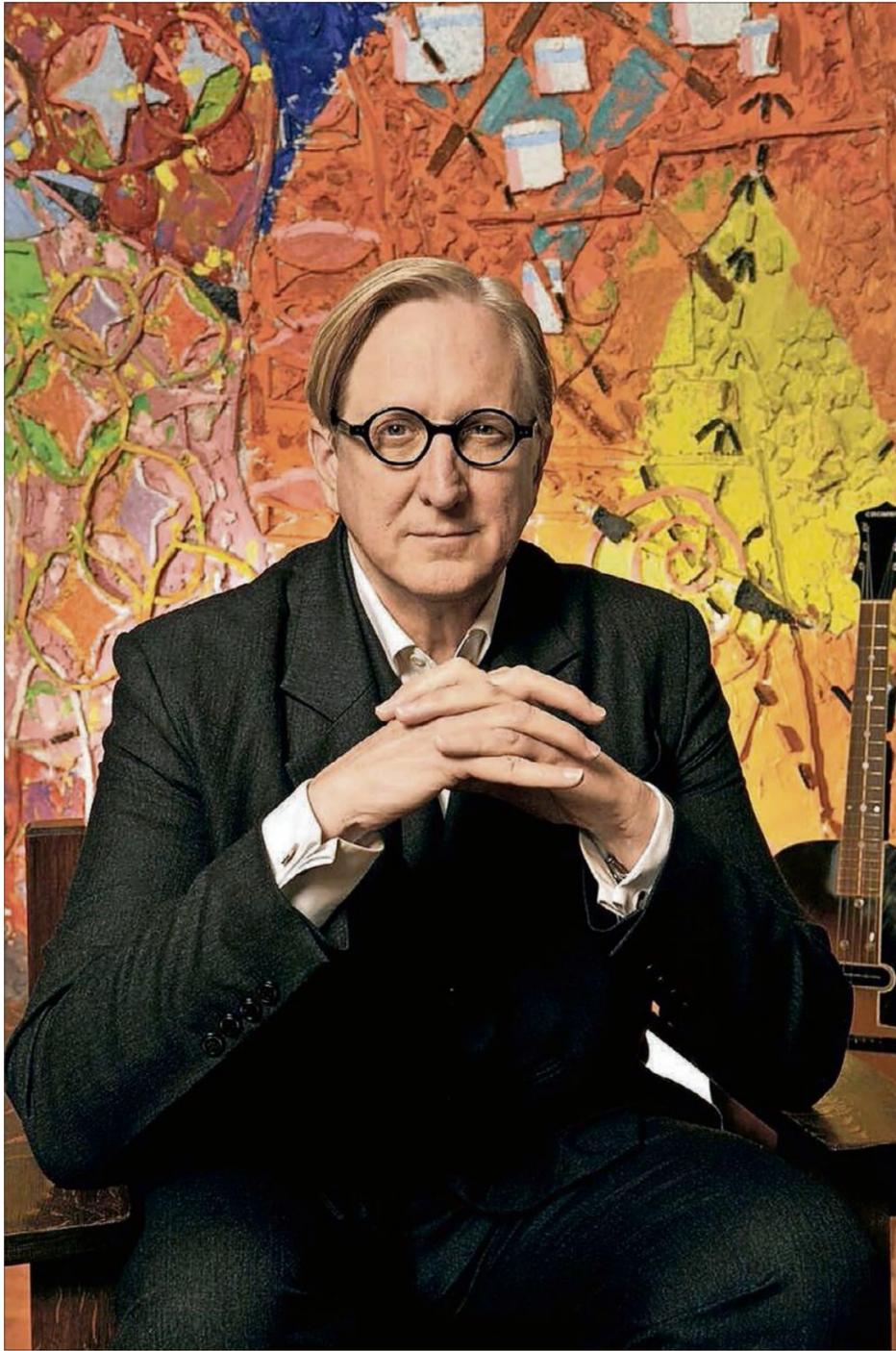
Burnett is the man behind the "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," "Cold Mountain," "Walk The Line" and "Crazy Heart" soundtracks and the music for the first season of "Nashville," the ABC/TNN series created by wife Callie Khouri. He's also collaborated with everyone from Roy Orbison to Bob Dylan to Robert Plant and Alison Krauss.

So, he's got a lot to draw upon. "It's always thrilling. That's the wonderful thing about recording music," says Burnett. "The wonderful thing is that you go in and there's nothing, and you come out with something. There's a piece of something that's been created and it's always an exciting phenomenon."

Burnett's appearance at the festival is essentially "a DJ show," with himself and his guitar, narrating film clips and telling stories. In culling those pieces, he says he realizes how important collaboration has been in his career, as "I've found myself in one situation after another one that I realized were all collaborative ventures, from the Rolling Thunder Revue to Roy Orbison's 'Black and White' show to 'O Brother,'" he says. "I realize I was trained very early on by Bob (Dylan) and (songwriter) Jacques Levy to be able to tell a story through different artists, through different mediums, how to pace it and keep it cohesive through different voices."

You might think that so accomplished a producer would be most comfortable calling the shots, but Burnett says he's found joy, over time, in the complete opposite.

"When I started out, when I was a kid, I tried to control everything, tried to write arrangements that had every note delineated," he says. "Now I rely on all of these extraordinary musicians who know so much



T Bone Burnett will perform Festival of the Arts Boca today. CONTRIBUTED

more about their instruments than I do ... I don't like anything I can control. I'm fascinated by things I can't control ... I think that generosity is the hallmark of an artist. I

believe we learn generosity along the way. I'm gonna work on that from now on."

One of the things Burnett is committed to doing, as he said, is to

never stop learning, even if it's scary. Recently, that's meant scoring "Happy Trails," a Broadway

Burnett continued on D2

ACADEMY AWARDS

Will Kobe Bryant score an Oscar?

By **Charles Solomon**
© 2018 New York Times

When Los Angeles Laker superstar Kobe Bryant decided to make a film of "Dear Basketball," his farewell poem to the sport he loved, he chose two collaborators who knew nothing about the game: former Disney artist Glen Keane, who had animated Aladdin, Beast and Tarzan, and Oscar-winning composer John Williams.

They were good choices. Their film won the Annie Award, the animation industry's most prestigious prize, for best short film of 2017, and is considered a likely favorite for the Academy Award for animated short.

"Even though, in his own words, I couldn't have picked a worse animator for basketball, I felt Glen and I shared an emotional connection that enabled him relate to the piece at a deeper level," Bryant, who retired in 2016, said in a recent telephone interview. "He was at a time in his career that was parallel to my own — leaving Disney after so many years and starting something new."

"It was pretty surreal to see myself animated," he added with a laugh. "I once dreamed of having a signature Nike shoe, but I never thought I'd be animated by Glen Keane — that pretty much tops everything!"

Keane said it "was the most difficult thing I've ever animated," adding: "I was trying to draw a moving sculpture in space that had to look exactly like Kobe. I could draw Beast any way I wanted: Nobody knows what Beast really looks like. Everybody knows Kobe."

The film has generated considerable excitement in the animation industry for its celebration of traditional drawing. "Lou," from Pixar, which has won the category four times, "Revolving Rhymes" and "Garden Party" are computer-animated; the fifth nominee, "Negative Space," was done in stop-motion.

There is also some controversy surrounding the nomination: #MeToo activists say a 2003 sexual-assault case against Bryant is reason not to reward the movie. (The case was dismissed.) An online petition is seeking to rescind the nod, and the argument has been taken up on social media.

Bryant continued on D2



Musician Win Butler of Arcade Fire. KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES

THINGS TO DO

Going to Okeechobee Fest?

Here are some of the bands you don't want to miss.

By **Meghan Faiella**
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

It's that time of year again. That time where the flower crowns come out and the music dial is turned up to 11. That's right. It's the closest South Florida is going to come to Coachella. It's the Okeechobee Music Festival and here are the bands we are most excited to see.

If you like... The Strokes, Radiohead, Kings of Leon
Listen to... Arcade Fire

This indie band is probably number one on everyone's hipster playlist, with the low-key vibes and

IFYOUGO

What: Okeechobee Music Festival
When: Today through Sunday
Where: Sunshine Grove, 12517 NE 91st Ave., Okeechobee
Information: okeechobeeefest.com

salacious guitar riffs. Even though they are the headliner and that 'hipster band' and 'headliner' don't usually go together, this is Okeechobee Music Fest where rules were made to be broken. Is there a more perfect band to lead the show?

Fest continued on D2

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Bryant

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Bryant deliberately chose an artist who didn't know basketball: "Someone who's been watching basketball their whole lives – and playing it – tends to miss the small moves, the details. When you come at it with fresh eyes, you look at every single thing because it's all new."

Keane said, "I've always believed animation can help an audience understand an action in deeper ways than live action."

"You can edit the movement, leaving out extraneous details and emphasizing the important points," he added. "There's something deeper and more emotional that art can communicate, even though you can take a photo of the same thing."

Bryant's poem begins with recollections of himself as a boy, practicing dribbling with a basketball made of his father's tube socks. He attains his dream of playing professionally, then realizes his career must eventually end: His aging body can no longer endure the demands of the sport. Keane's drawings juxtapose the boy and the adult.

Bryant, who spent two decades with the Lakers in a run that included five NBA titles, said he wanted a younger generation of athletes to see the film and learn "about the emotional journey of having



Retired NBA star Kobe Bryant teamed up with Glen Keane on the Oscar-nominated animated short "Dear Basketball." Bryant wanted an artist who didn't know basketball well and found Keane, who had animated Aladdin, Beast and Tarzan for Disney. "When you come at it with fresh eyes, you look at every single thing because it's all new," Bryant said. BRYAN DERBALLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

a dream, believing it'll come true; it comes true, then the realization that you have to wake up from that dream and move on to another."

Keane added, "The film doesn't have to be 'Dear Basketball,' it's 'Dear Animation,' it's 'Dear Medicine,' it's 'Dear Whatever-You-Dreamed-of-When-You-Were-a-Child.'"

At Disney, Keane was known for loose, powerful drawings. Some of their strength was inevitably lost when they were traced, inked and painted for the films. Although this practice is standard throughout the animation industry, Bryant wanted the spontaneity and roughness of Keane's original drawings – which appear on screen.

"My career – like other

things in life – was never perfect. There's beauty in those imperfections, and the last thing I wanted to do was create a film where all the lines were perfect and the coloring was perfect," he explained. "That would have taken away from the humanity of the piece, which is about creating and enjoying that journey of imperfection. It was really important for the animation to be 2-D and feel almost sketchy."

Three years earlier, Bryant had reached out to John Williams, but not about film. He thought understanding the composer's writing and conducting process might help him on the court: "How did he lead a large orchestra to create such beautiful music?"

I was trying to relate the art of conducting to leading a basketball team to a championship."

The composer was surprised when the athlete contacted him. "I couldn't imagine why Kobe wanted to meet me," Williams recalled. "I told him I had never been to a basketball game – high school, college or professional."

Nevertheless, they quickly became friends, and when he was asked to compose the score, Williams agreed immediately: "I thought 'Dear Basketball' was a very reassuring and contributive little piece."

Although they're excited about the Oscar nomination and enjoyed working together, Keane and Bryant will not be collaborating in the immediate future. Keane is slated to direct the feature "Over the Moon" for Pearl Studio in China. "This has been an amazing moment in my artistic life, pushing me into a field where I felt I had no business," he said. "Then I realized, animation can go anywhere, can't it?"

Bryant is developing other ideas for films. "Aging can be very difficult for athletes," he said. "We train our whole lives, we dedicate ourselves to a craft we have to leave early because our bodies will not allow us to go on."

"What you've done for so long becomes who you are, and it's very, very difficult to walk away from it and do something else," he continued. "So to be two years into retirement and have an Oscar nomination means so much."



Musician Mark Foster of Foster the People. THEO WARGO/GETTY IMAGES FOR FIREFLY

Fest

continued from D1

Songs: "Ready to Start," "Rebellion (Lies)," "Wake Up, Neighborhood #1"

If you like ... MGMT, Arctic Monkeys, Two Door Cinema Club

Listen to ... Foster the People

I may be biased, but I am so looking forward to seeing this band perform ever since their debut album *Torches*. You may know them from their radio-hit "Pumped Up Kicks" or "Don't Stop (Color on the Walls)" because yes, that was featured in a car commercial. Their songs are catchy and you can't stop yourself from bopping around. Their mix of pop and techno flows so perfectly that you could aptly call them 'alternative dance'.

Songs: "Helena Beat," "Call it What You Want," "Waste"

If you like ... Alabama Shakes, Lake Street Dive, St. Paul and the Broken Bones

Listen to ... Leon Bridges

Anyone a fan of the award-winning HBO mini-series "Big Little Lies"? If so, you may recognize this artist whose soulful voice can be heard on the compilation album. This man knows his blues and is ready to share his songs with listeners. Be prepared to sway and to get all the feels.

Songs: "River," "Coming Home," "Better Man"

If you like... Grizzly

Bear, Band of Horses, The National

Listen to...Local Natives

Who doesn't love a group of guys with their guitars? The answer could be 'a lot of people', but if you're reading this then you're excited for this fest and for these guys with guitars. This indie-rock band is perfect for the vibe of Okeechobee with their laid-back sounds.

Songs: "Wide Eyes," "Mt. Washington," "Who Knows Who Cares"

If you like ... Vampire Weekend, Capital Cities

Listen to ...Magic City Hippies

We loved them at SunFest, and now they are making their way to the Okeechobee stage. This Miami-based band, who we can kind of call a local band because Miami is considered south Florida, is genre-bending with their mix of indie, hip-hop and soul – all in one get-up-and-dance package.

Songs: "Bull Ride," "BRNT," "Fanfare"

If you like ... Mild High Club, Sugar Candy Mountain

Listen to ... Chicano Batman

This psychedelic, soul, funk, tropicalia band is as entertaining as it is hard to explain. With a lounge-y downtown vibe, this still fairly underground band is sure to take the Okeechobee stage by storm. It's best if we just let you listen.

Songs: "Freedom is Free," "Passed You By," "Black Lipstick"

BILL MURRAY IS IN BOCA?

You probably know Bill Murray as a deeply funny man and fervent Chicago Cubs fan, the soul of irreverent laughter from "Saturday Night Live," "Caddyshack," "Ghostbusters," "Tootsie," "Groundhog Day" and others. So his appearance in "New Worlds: An Evening of Music, Poetry and Prose" at the

Festival of the Arts Boca on Friday might be puzzling. Here's what it's about.

■ A collaboration with cellist Jan Vogler, violinist Mira Wang and pianist Vanessa Perez, *New Worlds* "showcases the core of the



Bill Murray

American values in literature and music," according to its official website.

■ The show combines readings from quintessential American authors like Ernest Hemmingway and

everyone from Stephen Foster to Steven Sondheim and Leonard Bernstein.

■ Murray sings throughout the show, but it's not Nick The Lounge Singer. His selections include songs from "West Side Story," "Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair" and "It Ain't Necessarily So."

Burnett

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musical based on the life and career of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, even though he'd never done such a thing.

He admits reading about Broadway legends Frank Loesser, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, and realizing that "every song was a great song. I was like 'Great. Now I have to write 20 great songs.' I don't know if I've written 20 great songs in my life. To do that on a Loesser level was frightening. I would wake up and start writing. And once I started I couldn't stop, and now I've written about 50 new songs."

Burnett's reverence of musicians and songwriters goes back to his youth, and it's set the tone for a career that's been a celebration of the music created in America, which he believes "is our greatest accomplishment as a people. I believe we've invented of couple of precious musical languages, that we've invented blues, jazz, rock n' roll and hip-hop. All four of those things are really our best evidence of the creed of invention and creative freedom we have in this country. They're evidence of the goodness of this country ... Our music is a mongrel, so so

IF YOU GO

What: "On The Road with T Bone Burnett: Stories, Music and Movies."
When: 7 p.m. today
Where: Festival of the Arts Boca, Mizner Park Amphitheater
Information: 561-368-8445; www.festivaloftheartsboca.org

Everyone knows that mongrels are better dogs than purebreds. They're a more hearty dog."

His awe of the greatness of some of the legends who created those sounds gave him pause.

"When I was a kid ... I would listen to Muddy Waters. I was an 18-year-old white kid from Fort Worth, Texas, and Muddy Waters was a grown man and ferocious. I knew I couldn't do what he did. I couldn't get close to it. (It was the same) with Ray Charles, and how far I was from that stopped me a lot of times. It's still true that those guys are eternally gifted, blessed artists and I could never do what they did. But I can do something wonderful, nevertheless. The stuff I'm working on can be as powerful

and beautiful and loving as I can (make it.) I find a lot more freedom in that than I did when I was younger."

One of his latest projects is "Deep City," an upcoming TV drama created by "From Dusk Till Dawn"'s Juan Carlos Coto and Khouri. Set in Miami's creatively alive Midtown area, it's another look at the combination of elements that have made a specific segment of American music so vital.

"There are so many different cultures that have mixed in Miami, which is truly an international city. It's an axis of race and immigration and globalism and tribalism," he says. "Where those things intersect is Miami. We're going to tell about the tensions of those very strong forces through that town in modern life. I'm only a part of the team on that – before it, I had spent very little time in Miami. But I went down a couple of years ago and it's an incredibly fascinating city. The bulk of the story we are telling happens in Midtown, where the arts are burgeoning."

Whatever he's doing, Burnett says, the genesis will always be the thing that will be onstage in Boca Raton – a guy and a guitar, trying to make sense of the world and his place in it.

"I've never really wanted

to do anything besides play music," he says. "The rest of it has been figuring out a why, when and where to do that."

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