



## WHAT I'M LISTENING TO

### **Kaeley Pruitt-Hamm**

MUSICIAN AND CHRONIC-ILLNESS SURVIVOR

### LEAH LAKSHMI PIEPZNA-SAMARASINHA

*I am really into reading and listening to work by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, a disability justice activist, writer, and poet who has a great analysis about the intersections of environment, sexism, immigration, racial justice, the prison-industrial complex, chronic illness, and disability. I'm surrounded by beautiful brilliant artists that help me feel less alone as a chronically ill artist myself.*

everything-is-fine flourish to the overwhelmed “Flowing Over.”

Beyond its powerful storytelling, *A Place I'll Always Go* offers a public declaration of identity that Palehound's earlier work avoided. Though Kempner is openly gay, she previously limited any lyrical references to sexuality, sometimes substituting male pronouns in romantic roles to distance herself from a simplistic gay-artist narrative. *A Place I'll Always Go* confidently steps away from that concern, most notably in “Room,” a celebration of queer love. Its a reevaluation of artistic values, but it doesn't dominate an album full of equally strong material. *A Place I'll Always Go* is the sound of Palehound coming into its own, calling for listeners to recognize the band's complexities. —KAREN MULLER

RATING:   

## YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS PODCAST

Host: Karina Longworth  
{ PANOPLY }

Films are modern folklore: The stories they tell play a crucial role in social history, not as a mirror of society, but as an idealized narrative created by a dominant group.

In her podcast, *You Must Remember This*, Karina Longworth shares the “secret and/or forgotten history of Hollywood's first century.” Though many hold up the early 20th century as the heyday of glamour,

Longworth chronicles the abortions, heavy drinking, abuse, prostitution, sexual assault, racial discrimination, and hypocrisy that characterized the era. Balancing well-researched biographies with a conversational tone and somewhat cheesy voice acting, Longworth explores the scandalous pop culture of the past. She ties trends onscreen and in the lives of stars to larger political and cultural events in the United States, from Hays Code censorship to the Red Scare.

One of the podcast's running themes is the often exploitative relationships between men and women in an industry where women often found opportunities through their romantic partnerships. This is especially prominent in “Dead Blondes,” a recent miniseries about white women whose careers made them sex objects and whose deaths made them infamous. Longworth turns a critical eye on the PR-produced quotes and posthumous claims of men taking credit for the careers and creativity of female stars. She tries to uncover the “real” woman behind each fantasy, with varying degrees of success, since in some cases all existing accounts were written by men.

While the podcast does an admirable job of exploring women's roles, the series is overwhelmingly white. Longworth describes the obstacles faced by Rita Hayworth and Lena Horne, explaining the racist audiences, morality codes, and studio biases that initially hindered Hayworth's career and permanently limited Horne's. But the lack of diversity in

the film industry doesn't excuse the fact that only four out of the more than 100 episodes are dedicated to minorities, ignoring big names such as Carmen Miranda, Bill Bojangles, and Dorothy Dandridge. Minorities in Hollywood were rare, but they did exist. By ignoring them to resurrect the “forgotten histories” of white performers, *You Must Remember This* misses a crucial opportunity to explore the groundbreaking careers of people of color and their impact on film history. —MICAELA MARINI HIGGS

RATING:   

## EXTRA ORDINARY

Nappy Nina  
{ LUCIDHAUS }

*Extra Ordinary* is a quality manifesto from a new artist who wanted to prove herself as a “capable and worthy mc.” Nappy Nina's debut EP floats in the air between Oakland and Brooklyn—refined like coconut oil, but also rough and biting.

*Extra Ordinary* asks probing questions such as “What does it mean to be inspired?”—a theme that surfaces multiple times. “Ahmad,” produced by rap artist Afro-Internet, toys with this idea through a high-energy collaboration between Nappy Nina, Moruf, and Stas THEE Boss. The track contains no chorus, but it is clear in its synchronicity that these artists are kindred spirits. Nina and Stas THEE Boss are both members of Brooklyn's Black queer community, part of a collective of artists that don't hide their sexuality.

Nappy Nina's queerness is seamlessly wrapped into her lyrics. In “YSNW,” she reveals that she is “nervous around fine women.” While the album doesn't have a single story arc, it explodes with intricate details that make Nina vulnerable and emotionally accessible. She doesn't separate her queerness from her Blackness on “Mofiya” and “Loose Leaf,” both of which create trust between the artist and her audience.

I hope Nappy Nina's next album comes with liner notes, because it's easy for listeners to get lost in the smooth sound of her voice over the hypnotic beats. I have to see the words to fully understand how she is collaging meaning, like on “Growth Groove,” where she uses repetition, wordplay, and cadence to create and deconstruct definition.