



## Satirist trolls US VP Pence with gay rabbit bestseller

The king of satire on US television is trolling US Vice President Mike Pence by spoofing a book about his family's pet rabbit, making the bunny gay and trumping the original in the bestseller lists. Not only does Pence pet Marlon Bundo have his own Instagram page, but since Monday Americans have been able to read all about him in new children's book "A Day in the Life of the Vice President."

Written by Pence's 24-year-old daughter Charlotte and illustrated by wife Karen, the hardback shows the world of Pence through the eyes of little Marlon Bundo. But British satirist John Oliver appears to have had the last laugh, coming up with his own version to highlight the conservative Pence's opposition to gay marriage.

He too has published a children's book featuring the vice presidential rabbit—"A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo."

Except this time the boy bunny falls in love with another boy bunny, before the two get hitched despite the best efforts of the vice president. The book, published Sunday and illustrated by EG Keller, has since shot to the top of the Amazon best seller list, outstripping the Pence version in at fourth place. Oliver told NBC television Monday that the book quickly sold out but that a new shipment had been ordered. Both books are being sold for charity. "The only thing better than one bunny book for charity is... TWO bunny books for charity," Pence's daughter wrote on her Instagram page.—AFP

## Howie Mandel, ICM buy Just for Laughs comedy festival

Canadian comedian Howie Mandel and Los Angeles-based talent agency ICM Partners on Wednesday bought the company behind Montreal's Just for Laughs comedy festival, which is the largest in the world. The festival was put on the chopping block after its founder and majority shareholder Gilbert Rozon was accused of sexual assault and harassment last year.

Financial details of the transaction were not disclosed, but in a statement the new owners said they were also in talks with "prominent local Quebec players to join the investment group." They also said the festival would be "run exactly as they have, with all the same leadership and personnel in place." "I have always been a big fan of Montreal and the Just For Laughs festival," Mandel said, noting that he has performed at the festival "many times" over the last decade.

"I consider it to be a cultural treasure not only for the Montreal and Quebec communities, but also for Canada; and I am very ex-

cited to be part of this group of investors that will ensure the festival's long term success, while growing their global comedy brand," he said. Since its inception in 1983, Just for Laughs has grown and diversified into television specials, tours and hosting other comedy festivals in cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Sydney.

It now has subsidiaries in France and the United States, and produces and distributes comedy shows in more than 135 countries. Rozon quit the company in October following accusations of sexual misconduct, which he has denied and have not been tested in court. This year's Just for Laughs festival runs from July 14 to 28.

But it will face new competition from upstart Grand Montreal comedy festival, which has been drawing away sponsors and talent from Just for Laughs. Grand Montreal is to debut in July, but will also host a one-night show in April with proceeds going to victims of sexual assault.—AFP

## Q-Tip to play Miles Davis in play reading

Rapper Q-Tip will portray Miles Davis in a reading of a new play about the jazz legend, the author announced Wednesday. Q-Tip, best known as the key voice of A Tribe Called Quest, which popularized a more alternative brand of hip-hop—has spoken for nearly a decade of plans to act as Davis.

Nelson George, a prominent music journalist, wrote on Instagram that his script will finally see the light on Monday—not yet fully staged, but as a reading. "My Funny Valentine" will focus on a day in the life of Davis in 1981, when the trumpeter and composer was embarking on a career revival. "By responding to a fan's letter



In this file photo, rapper Q-Tip attends the BAM 150th Anniversary gala at the BAM Howard Gilman Opera House in New York. —AFP

the trumpeter ignites a chain of life altering events." The Public Theater, a Manhattan venue that showcases contemporary work, said in its description.

The Public Theater is featuring "My Funny Valentine" as part of a series to highlight quality scripts that have not yet been turned into full-fledged plays or movies. Q-Tip, a frequent actor as well as the artistic advisor on hip-hop culture to the Kennedy Center federal arts complex in Washington, told XXL magazine in 2010 that he was eager to play Davis as

he related to him. In 2015, Davis was also the subject of a biopic film, "Miles Ahead," directed by actor Don Cheadle.—AFP

## Library of Congress to preserve Miami Sound Machine, 'Footloose'



In this file photo, US President Barack Obama presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom to singer Gloria Estefan as her husband Emilio Estefan, left, also a recipient, looks on at the White House in Washington, DC.—AFP

Miami Sound Machine's crossover hit "Rhythm is Gonna Get You," blockbuster film song "Footloose" and disco anthem "Le Freak" were selected Wednesday by the Library of Congress to be preserved for posterity. The federal research complex in Washington announced 25 more works to enter the National Recording Registry, in which the Library of Congress safeguards original editions due to their historic importance.

"Rhythm is Gonna Get You," by Cuban-born Gloria Estefan and her group Miami Sound Machine, was groundbreaking on its release in 1987 by finding a mainstream audience for a pop track with Latin undertones. Estefan said in a statement that the song "set out to create a fusion of rhythms that reflected the musical cultures of our native Cuba and our adopted country, the United States."

"So it is an accolade of particular significance to us that it be honored as an important part of the creative legacy of this great country with its induction into the National Recording Registry," she said. "Footloose," performed and co-written by Kenny Loggins, became one of film history's most successful songs as the theme to the 1984 movie

starring Kevin Bacon about a small, religious town that bans dancing.

The song "remains today deeply emblematic of the 1980s—fun, invigorating and, in its way, a little rebellious," the Library of Congress said in its announcement. Chic's 1978 song "Le Freak" was one of the biggest hits of disco, led by Nile Rodgers' funky guitar and lyrics that name-checked the era. "Despite the supposed 'death' of disco, Chic's 'Le Freak' has become a staple of wedding receptions, movie soundtracks and nightclubs," the Library of Congress said.

The Library of Congress also will preserve "(We're Gonna) Rock Around the Clock" by Bill Haley and his Comets, the 1954 track that was one of the opening salvos of rock 'n' roll, and the 1965 soundtrack to the film musical mega-hit "The Sound of Music."

Other selections included Harry Belafonte's 1956 album "Calypso," which marked an earlier commercial breakthrough for musical fusion, Motown classic "My Girl" by The Temptations and "Rumours" by Fleetwood Mac, a chart-topping 1977 pop album that found musical harmony within a band facing intense personal strife.—AFP