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READER

PUNK'S NOT DEAD—

AND IT'S NOT WHITE EITHER

The Black, Brown, and Indigenous Crew connects underground music with radical politics to make a community with room for everyone.

By **KERRY CARDOZA** 24



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Why Haven't Senior Homeowners Been Told These Facts?

Keep reading if you own a home in the U.S. and were born before 1955.

It's a well-known fact that for many senior citizens in the U.S. their home is their single biggest asset, often accounting for more than 50% of their total net worth.

Yet, according to new statistics from the mortgage industry, senior homeowners in the U.S. are now sitting on more than **6.1 trillion dollars** of unused home equity.¹ With people now living longer than ever before and home prices back up again, ignoring this "hidden wealth" may prove to be short sighted.

All things considered, it's not surprising that more than a million homeowners have already used a government-insured Home Equity Conversion Mortgage or "HECM" loan to turn their home equity into extra cash for retirement.

However, today, there are still millions of eligible homeowners who could benefit from this FHA-insured loan but may simply not be aware of this "retirement secret."

Some homeowners think HECM loans sound "too good to be true." After all, you get the cash you need out of your home but you have no more monthly mortgage payments.

NO MONTHLY MORTGAGE PAYMENTS?² EXTRA CASH?

It's a fact: no monthly mortgage payments are required with a government-insured HECM loan;² however the homeowners are still responsible for paying for the maintenance of their home, property taxes, homeowner's insurance and, if required, their HOA fees.

Another fact many are not aware of is that HECM reverse mortgages first took hold when President Reagan

signed the FHA Reverse Mortgage Bill into law 29 years ago in order to help senior citizens remain in their homes.

Today, HECM loans are simply an effective way for homeowners 62 and older to get the extra cash they need to enjoy retirement.

Although today's HECM loans have been improved to provide even greater financial protection for homeowners, there are still many misconceptions.

For example, a lot of people mistakenly believe the home must be paid off in full in order to qualify for a HECM loan, which is not the case. In fact, one key advantage of a HECM is that the proceeds will first be used to pay off any existing liens on the property, which frees up cash flow, a huge blessing for seniors living on a fixed income. Unfortunately, many senior homeowners who might be better off with HECM loan don't even bother to get more information because of rumors they've heard.

That's a shame because HECM loans are helping many senior homeowners live a better life.

In fact, a recent survey by American Advisors Group (AAG), the nation's number one HECM lender, found that over 90% of their clients are satisfied with their loans.

While these special loans are not for everyone, they can be a real lifesaver for senior homeowners.

The cash from a HECM loan can be used for any purpose. Many people use the money to save on interest charges by paying off credit cards or other high-interest loans. Other common uses include making home



FACT: In 1988, President Reagan signed an FHA bill that put HECM loans into law.

improvements, paying off medical bills or helping other family members. Some people simply need the extra cash for everyday expenses while others are now using it as a "safety net" for financial emergencies.

If you're a homeowner age 62 or older, you owe it to yourself to learn more so that you can make an informed decision. Homeowners who are interested in learning more can request a free 2018 HECM loan Information Kit and free Educational DVD by calling American Advisors Group toll-free at 1-(800) 791-4346.

At no cost or obligation, the professionals at AAG can help you find out if you qualify and also answer common questions such as:

1. What's the government's role?
2. How much money might I get?
3. Who owns the home after I take out a HECM loan?

You may be pleasantly surprised by what you discover when you call AAG for more information today.

¹Source: <http://reversmortgagedaily.com/2016/06/21/seniors-home-equity-grows-to-6-trillion-reverse-mortgage-opportunity>. ²If you qualify and your loan is approved, a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) must pay off any existing mortgage(s). With a HECM loan, no monthly mortgage payment is required. A HECM increases the principal mortgage loan amount and decreases home equity (it is a negative amortization loan). AAG works with other lenders and financial institutions that offer HECMs. To process your request for a loan, AAG may forward your contact information to such lenders for your consideration of HECM programs that they offer. When the loan is due and payable, some or all of the equity in the property no longer belongs to borrowers, who may need to sell the home or otherwise repay the loan with interest from other proceeds. AAG charges an origination fee, mortgage insurance premium, closing costs and servicing fees (added to the balance of the loan). The balance of the loan grows over time and AAG charges interest on the balance. Interest is not tax-deductible until the loan is partially or fully repaid. Borrowers are responsible for paying property taxes and homeowner's insurance (which may be substantial). We do not establish an escrow account for disbursements of these payments. A set-aside account can be set up to pay taxes and insurance and may be required in some cases. Borrowers must occupy home as their primary residence and pay for ongoing maintenance; otherwise the loan becomes due and payable. The loan also becomes due and payable when the last borrower, or eligible non-borrowing surviving spouse, dies, sells the home, permanently moves out, defaults on taxes or insurance payments, or does not otherwise comply with the loan terms. American Advisors Group (AAG) is headquartered at 3800 W. Chapman Ave., 3rd & 7th Floors, Orange CA, 92868. (MB_0911141), (Illinois Residential Mortgage Licensee; Illinois Commissioner of Banks can be reached at 100 West Randolph, 9th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60601, (312) 814-4500). V2017.08.23_OR

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

THERE'S NEVER BEEN a more important moment for alternative newsweeklies in America. Nor have they ever been so difficult to pull together. There's no funding, little support. The very notion of unfake news has been degraded in recent years—it's downright reviled by the White House. Daily newspapers are shrinking as they struggle to keep themselves afloat. How can we possibly think about recommitting to alternative journalism?

Citizens across the nation are facing this question, although they hardly know it. The loss of the great *Village Voice* and the *Missoula Indy* in recent weeks barely cut through the haze of the president's latest tweet storm about—whatever. Few armchair pundits offered more than a snarky “Coulda seen that coming” on Twitter or Facebook. Legacy media—many perpetrators of which emerged from the trenches of alternative newsweeklies—offered deeper analysis. Welp, it's over, seemed to be the general sentiment of the independent reporter set. (You may know them as freelancers.)

So how, in this moment, can we possibly consider voicing a collective nope from the *Reader* offices? Because Chicago.

This is the home of the jibarito. What's a jibarito, you may ask? It's a Puerto Rican sandwich that replaces bread with fried plantains. That's right, one of our local signature sandwiches bypasses the only thing that is consistent across sandwiches in general and improves upon it.

It's the city that works. Who among you has not secretly snickered while friends in New York complain of interminable subway delays and rerouted transport lines while you hop the Green Line to work or greet your morning bus driver as you swipe your Ventra card?

We dye our river green once a year, because we like it that way, and if that same river isn't flowing in the right direction, we'll just reverse it. No biggie! (OK, very biggie, but we'll front like it was nothing, also because Chicago.) We survived a fire. Consider our public parks, our fashion sense,

our public art, the collective cultural contributions of individual neighborhoods from the south, north, and west sides alone! We're even starting to hold police officers accountable for murdering young black men.

What this city can accomplish once it sets its mind to a task astounds me every day.

So I'm back. Ostensibly lured here to work with the brilliant staff of the *Reader* (even if secretly responding to the twin siren calls of the jibarito and functioning citywide public transportation), I've been overwhelmed and deeply gratified by the response. E-mails, phone calls, social media posts, press coverage, and people stopping me on the street because they recognize my picture: several times a day I am brought nearly to tears by a city proud of its alternative newsweekly and thrilled for its future.

What we'll show you of that future in the pages that follow is a look at the extremely diverse and thriving world of punk music in the city. (Side-note: Sicangu Lakota rapper Frank Waln's new video “Wokiksuye” was conceived of and shot by youth on that rez at the Outlast Film Camp on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the plot of land next to the Rosebud Reservation, where Waln lived, and where I was born while my parents were working on the rez.) We'll also peek at the fight for fair labor practices in the elite-seeming world of opera, and take a closer look at some of the city's transportation options that aren't (yet) working as well as hoped. We'll preview the Chicago International Film Festival's unique offerings—don't miss the complicated biopic/doc *Becoming Astrid*, about Astrid Lindgren, the creator of my favorite comics character, Pippi Longstocking, and the Brazilian drama about gay male sex workers, *Hard Paint*.

And none of that can even give you a sense of what's to come in the future. There's never been a more important moment for alternative newsweeklies in America. And there's never been a city more capable of letting them thrive. —ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE

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DISTRIBUTION CONCERNS ted@chicagoreadercorp.com

STM READER, LLC
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TREASURER EILEEN RHODES
SECRETARY JESSICA STITES

CONSULTANT CAROL E. BELL

READER (ISSN 1096-6919) IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY STM READER, LLC 2930 S. MICHIGAN, SUITE 102 CHICAGO, IL 60616

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CITY LIFE

STREET VIEW

Kimono clad

Sarah Beharovic, 20, was introduced to *kitsuke*, the art of wearing a kimono, at this year's Ginza Festival.



© ISA GIALLORENZO

SARAH BEHAROVIC WAS ROCKING a kimono earlier this fall at the Ginza Holiday Japanese Cultural Festival, an annual event held at the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Lincoln Park. But her roots are far from Japan—Sarah's parents were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and her family endured the hardships of the Bosnian war in the 90s. After a time as refugees in Germany, they came to America with whatever they could fit in two suitcases.

Sarah's own wardrobe has expanded considerably since then. The 20-year-old resident of Crystal Lake picked up her latest acquisition at the festival itself: a kimono from Ohio Kimono, one of the largest online stores of its kind in the States. Manning the booth was Kerry, aka the Kimono Lady (she preferred not to give her last name), who painstakingly styled Sarah in traditional attire.

"It was an absolute joy to introduce Sarah to *kitsuke*, the art of wearing a kimono," Kerry said. "Hers is a casual piece known as a *yukata*, which is made from a cotton print fabric." Kerry paired this with an informal version of the sash worn around the waist, a *hanhaba obi*. "The kimono and obi have their own rules, and it is important to match them correctly," she said.

Kerry admires the slow and intricate ritual of donning a kimono and laments our hasty modern ways. But for those with less patience she recommends a *haori*, the coat worn on top of a kimono: "A *haori* looks great with a shirt and pants, and they do not require any special knowledge or accessories to wear." —ISA GIALLORENZO

artist, writer, performer?

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POLITICS

Why no pol tells the truth about raising taxes

At last week's gubernatorial debate, both candidates danced around the main issue. Who can blame them when it's the kiss of death?

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

They were about 12 minutes into the most recent gubernatorial debate on Wednesday when ABC Seven political reporter Craig Wall asked J.B. Pritzker the tax-rate question.

"Mr. Pritzker," Wall asked, "don't you think the voters deserve to know how much you intend to raise taxes and what those rates would be?"

Pritzker responded by saying why he thinks the state needs a progressive or "fair" tax that sets a higher rate for the rich. But he said he wouldn't be settling on rates until he had negotiated a deal with state legislators.

In other words, he ducked Wall's question.

Don't feel bad, Craig. You're not alone. Dozens of reporters have unsuccessfully asked Pritzker a variation on your question for the better part of the last year.

In fact, I asked him that question on my radio show several months ago. In general, he did so much ducking and dodging that I started calling him Sugar Ray Pritzker—in honor of the quick-on-his feet boxer, Sugar

Ray Leonard.

Well, I don't blame Pritzker for ducking and dodging on the tax-rate question—but I'll return to that later.

The larger point is that Rauner and Pritzker represent two diametrically opposing views of how to pay government.

Rauner's wedded to the fantasy that you can run government on nothing. That is schools, police, road construction and all the other things people want from government will magically pay for themselves.

In 2011, Governor Pat Quinn and General Assembly temporarily raised the state income tax rate to 4.95 percent. In 2015, Rauner let it fall back to 3.75, then resisted any attempt to raise it even as the state debt rose by the billions.

Last year, House Speaker Michael Madigan rounded up enough votes to override Rauner's veto and raise the tax rate to 4.95. And for the past few months Rauner's been shamelessly waltzing around the state taking credit for programs the tax hike paid for while blasting Madigan for raising taxes.

Now he's back to pretending we can fund government—and pay our pension obligations—by letting the tax rate fall back to 3.75 percent. As he did in the recent gubernatorial debate.

It's straight-up Reaganomics—what George H.W. Bush called voodoo economics. Give the rich a tax cut and hope they'll create so many tax-creating jobs that the cuts pay for themselves.

You fell for Rauner's line back in 2014, voters. Shame on you if you fall for it again.

In contrast, Pritzker's more or less wedded to the reality that someone has to pay for government. And so he's pushing for a progressive tax with a graduated rate. He's proposing to hike the rates on the state's wealthiest residents—like himself and Rauner—so he can cut it for people who make less.

But he won't reveal the rates no matter how many times he's asked.

Like I said—I don't blame Pritzker for ducking the tax-rate question. History is littered with the carcasses of candidates who dared to tell the truth about taxes.

Consider the case of Walter Mondale, the Democratic candidate for president in 1984. At his nominating speech at the Democratic convention, Mondale made the mistake of admitting that he would have to raise taxes.

Noting that Reagan had created an enormous budget deficit, Mondale declared: "By the end of my first term, I will reduce the Reagan budget deficit by two-thirds. Let's tell the truth. It must be done—it must be done. Mr. Reagan will raise taxes, and so will I. He won't tell you. I just did."

Reagan won in a landslide.

In 1994, Dawn Clark Netsch tried a different tack in her gubernatorial campaign right here in Illinois. She proposed to raise the state income tax while lowering property taxes across the state. That way the state would provide more money for education and towns, and cities wouldn't be so dependent on the property tax to pay for schools.

Her Republican opponent, Governor Jim Edgar, hammered Netsch as a tax-and-spend liberal. Guess what? He won in a landslide—just like Reagan.

Eventually, Edgar sheepishly admitted that Netsch might have been right as he tried to implement a funding plan similar to the one she'd proposed.

Alas, his Republican colleagues in the statehouse blocked it. And it's been downhill for Illinois, fiscally speaking, just about ever since.

So I don't blame Pritzker for ducking the tax rate question. If Pritzker were to come out and state how much he intends to raise tax rates, Rauner would turn it into an attack ad with ominous music playing in the background and a narrator offering distorting information in a deep, scary voice.

It's not as though we live in a bipartisan and refined society, where Republicans and Democrats harmoniously work together to craft fair and equitable budgets that actually cover our obligations.

No, our elected officials either figure ways to put off paying the bills so someone else has to deal with them (hello, Mayor Daley) or, like Rauner, they preach the fiction that the obligations will magically pay for themselves.

Walter Mondale was right. Sooner or late you have to pay the bills.

Pritzker is just trying to win without telling you who'll pay how much. He'll probably be bobbing and weaving right up until Election Day on November 6.

@BennyJshow

TRANSPORTATION

Loop Link isn't yet up to speed

FOIA'd documents show the \$41 million project has had only a modest impact on travel times.

By JOHN GREENFIELD

For years, my feelings about Chicago's \$41 million Loop Link bus rapid transit corridor have been like those of a parent whose lovable kid has been getting mediocre grades. I'm proud of what it is: a smart reconfiguration of downtown streets to help move people—not just cars—more efficiently through the city. But I've been concerned that it's not living up to its full potential.

And the data bear out my misgivings: according to figures acquired through a Freedom of Information Act request, the corridor's performance has generally seen only modest improvements in recent years, and in some cases travel times have actually gotten worse. (In fairness, this isn't necessarily the system's fault, as I explain below.)

On top of that, the city has dragged its feet on taking steps that might have a bigger impact on travel times, such as prepaid boarding and better bus lane enforcement.

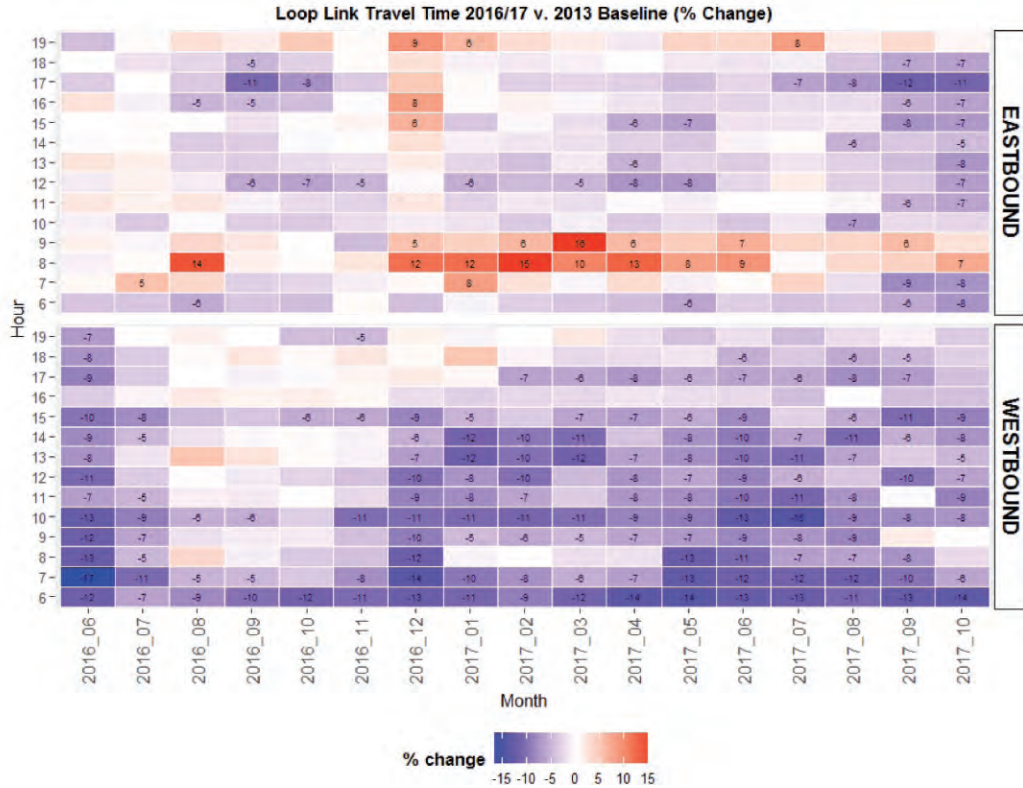
Loop Link debuted in December 2015 with the goal of speeding up service between Michigan Avenue and the West Loop on seven CTA routes from the glacial rush-hour average of 3 mph to a whopping 6 mph. As part of the project, the Chicago Department of Transportation remixed Canal, Clinton, Randolph, Madison, and Washington, adding

red bus-only lanes to most of them, plus eight bus stations with giant, rakelike shelters on the latter two roadways.

CDOT also constructed the Union Station Transit Center to ease transfers between buses and Metra and Amtrak trains. The department built protected bike lanes on Canal, Randolph, and Washington. And it converted some mixed-traffic lanes to bus and bike lanes, creating shorter crossing distances for pedestrians and calming motor vehicle traffic.

In addition to the car-free lanes, other time-saving features include fewer stops, raised boarding platforms at the stations (so operators spend less time “kneeling” the bus for people with mobility issues), and white “queue jump” signals that give buses a head start at stoplights.

For all that, when the Loop Link corridor first opened, there seemed to be little improvement in bus speeds, partly due to an infuriating rule requiring the operators to approach the raised platforms at a 3 mph crawl to avoid clocking customers with rear-view mirrors. That decree was eventually relaxed, and when I tried out the system in early 2016, trip times seemed to have shortened a bit, although they were still well above the CTA's goal of eight minutes for a cross-Loop journey.



red bus-only lanes to most of them, plus eight bus stations with giant, rakelike shelters on the latter two roadways. Since then, whenever I've asked CTA officials for an update on Loop Link performance, they've provided vague statements, promising that the agency would release a report sometime in the future. It turns out that the CTA had already put together a Loop Link performance report, and though officials wouldn't share the whole thing with me, citing a loophole in the FOIA rules that excuses them from releasing preliminary drafts, they did send a number of charts and graphs from the study (see above for the most pertinent).

These show that Loop Link hasn't resulted in any dramatic speed improvements, and that in some cases trip times have gotten worse. But that may be partly due to factors beyond the CTA's control.

One thing that's happened during the last five years is the rise of Uber and Lyft, which studies have shown is increasing congestion.

Another factor could be the recent boom in online retail, which has likely increased the number of downtown deliveries. Earlier this month, CBS Chicago reported on numerous cases of USPS, FedEx, and UPS drivers stopping in NO STANDING zones, creating traffic bottlenecks. (CBS called the bus- and bike-centric layout of Washington Street “the crux of the problem,” as opposed to the drivers' decisions to break the law.) While the red

lanes should theoretically make CTA buses immune to traffic jams, that's not the reality because they're not well enforced.

That leaves prepaid boarding as the best hope for cutting travel times, but the CTA has dragged its feet about implementing it. The city originally said Loop Link would launch with prepaid boarding, which reduces the “dwell time” at stops. But, almost three years later, it still hasn't rolled it out.

In fairness, it's a somewhat tricky problem. NYC's Select routes have kiosks at every stop where you buy a ticket before boarding, and then fare inspectors occasionally ask for proof of payment. But since the Loop Link corridor represents only a small portion of the CTA routes that use it, that method would probably require installing kiosks at every stop along all seven routes, a major investment.

It would also be challenging to retrofit the Chicago bus stations with turnstiles in such a way that scofflaws couldn't simply bypass them by walking in the street and then stepping up onto the boarding platform.

In fall 2016 the CTA did a three-month pilot in which employees were stationed at the busy Madison-Dearborn Loop Link stop with a portable fare card reader during the evening rush, so that customers could pay before the bus arrived. Since summer 2016 the agency has been using the same method at the Belmont Blue Line station.

“The Belmont Blue Line station has been very successful, and we have seen positive results in time savings,” spokesman Steve Mayberry told me, adding that the system will be made semipermanent as part of the Belmont Blue Gateway rehab project, currently under construction.

But the Madison-Dearborn test was deemed a flop. “Unfortunately, we saw only a minimal reduction in boarding times, which did not lead to any travel-time savings,” Mayberry said.

The time savings at Belmont, where large numbers of people coming off the train also board buses at the same time, averages 38 seconds. At Madison-Dearborn, where fewer people board any given bus, the savings only averaged 16 seconds. In addition, since the Loop Link stations have two entrances, staffing costs were higher.

“That said, we continue to look for ways to implement prepaid boarding in other [non-Loop Link] locations,” Mayberry said.

Another thing blocking the way to faster travel times is unauthorized vehicles, especially corporate shuttles, using the red lanes designated for buses only. ➔

HOUSING

Help for the little people

Landlords for rent control? You heard that right.

By **MAYA DUKMASOVA**



A member of the Jane Addams Senior Caucus listens to state senate testimony about a bill that would enact rent regulation in Illinois.
 © MAYA DUKMASOVA

Last week several hundred people packed a state senate hearing room and spilled out into the overflow seating for the latest chapter in the local fight for rent regulation. The hearing, chaired by state senator Mattie Hunter of Chicago, was one of a series soliciting responses to a bill that would not only repeal Illinois's Rent Control Preemption Act but actually establish rent control within the state for the first time since the early 1970s.

Hunter introduced Senate Bill 3512 last February as a companion measure to state rep Will Guzzardi's House Bill 2430. Guzzardi's bill merely proposes to repeal the 1997 Rent Control Preemption Act—a prohibition on any kind of rent regulation, anywhere in the state, that was crafted by real estate interests and jammed through many U.S. statehouses beginning in the 1980s, with the help of the ultra-conservative American Legislative Exchange Council. But Hunter's bill goes much further.

The latest version of the bill seeks to eliminate no-cause eviction—which would prevent landlords from evicting tenants simply because they want to increase the rent—and to establish six elected “rent control boards” spread around the state, each composed of landlords, tenants, and tenant advocates. The seven members of each board would implement and monitor local rent regulation.

While the bill doesn't cap rents or set baseline rents, it pegs annual rent increases to inflation and allows the regional rent control boards to establish the median rent for their areas. Landlords wouldn't be allowed to increase rents for a unit more than the rate of inflation regardless of whether a new tenant moves in or a new landlord takes over

ownership. All landlords would be charged an annual fee set by their regional rent control board to cover the cost of administration and to create a “repair fund” from which smaller landlords could get grants and no- or low-interest loans to cover capital improvements. (“Smaller landlords” are defined by the bill as owners of 12 or fewer rental units in one of the six regions who also live in one of their units and who set their rents at or below the area median.) Finally, the bill creates a 3 percent tax credit just for smaller landlords and another tax credit worth up to 25 percent of their total property tax liability for any landlord who makes qualifying capital improvements or repairs.

These tax benefits and access to repair funds are a major reason why a small cadre of mom-and-pop landlords in Little Village have mobilized in support of Hunter's bill.

“Rising property taxes can be a burden on small property owners,” says Simone Alexander, 37, who also testified at the hearing. “This bill would create property tax relief if you're a small owner renting at affordable rates.” Alexander has owned a two-unit building in Little Village since 2010, and rents out one of the apartments to her disabled sister. She needs the financial support because raising her rent beyond what her sister can afford is out of the question.

Alexander is one of about a dozen small landlords in Little Village who've joined the Lift the Ban Coalition to mobilize support for repealing the Rent Control Preemption Act and establishing rent regulation in Chicago. She says many of the landlords she knows in the community are, like her, owner-occupants who may have a unit or two they rent

to family or friends. While there are ways for landlords like Alexander to secure financial assistance for lead or mold abatement, she says that there isn't enough government support for emergency repairs or renovations and that, as a result, costs end up getting passed on to renters or repairs, even serious ones, just go unmade.

Alexander says she and her neighbors want to see the lower-income tenants they rent to stay in their community, because to them renters aren't just a source of income. “While it's a business transaction to a certain extent, it's also a relationship,” she says, adding that she spent her childhood moving around as her family was priced out of various north-side neighborhoods. “I come at this from the perspective of knowing what it means to lose community,” she says. “It's heart-wrenching to see everyone you know leave, to be forced to leave as well.” Alexander says that Hunter's bill will allow tenants, especially those with families who depend on local schools, to stay in communities longer while supporting property owners' needs.

Alex Velazquez, 30, another Little Village homeowner and president of the Little Village Community Development Committee, says that many of his relatives are landlords in the community, and that he sees a stark contrast between their approach to the market and those of investors from outside the neighborhood. He's worried about both tenants and landlords with deep roots in Little Village getting pushed out by gentrifiers moving west from Pilsen. “The reason we support lifting the ban is because there are very specific measures in that bill that would benefit land owners, and we see it as part of fair housing

policy,” he says. “We understand the connection between development and the displacement of people.”


To be sure, most of the landlords—big and small—who testified at last week's hearing didn't share Alexander's and Velazquez's perspectives. Many seemed not to think that the bill's financial carve-outs for small landlords were sufficient and expressed concern about not being able to cover their expenses. Some small landlords and investors expressed some sympathy for tenants facing spiking rents, but real estate industry representatives from powerful groups like Illinois Realtors and the Chicagoland Apartment Association chafed at the idea that landlords should have to compromise their property rights to prioritize a longtime tenant when they could get higher rent from someone else interested in their unit.

Greg St. Aubin, chief Springfield lobbyist for Illinois Realtors, who worked to pass the Rent Control Preemption Act in the mid-90s, says the current consideration of rent control measures is precisely the situation the realtors and their allies wanted to preempt. He appreciated the hearing and Hunter's consideration of a wide range of viewpoints, but said that now as then he doesn't know any landlords in support of rent control—or anyone who considers it sound policy. “I represent thousands of landlords, and I've never heard a single one of them say that this bill or rent control in general would be anything but disastrous for rental property owners,” he says. “If people can't afford to go buy groceries you don't tell grocers they can only charge 75 cents for a gallon of milk.”

But St. Aubin's perspective on the issue

seems to exist on a different logical and philosophical plane than the Lift the Ban Coalition's. While he's worried about what might happen to his constituents if Hunter's proposed legislation is enacted, the coalition is worried about what has already happened to theirs. On one hand, St. Aubin and others who oppose rent control tend to speak theoretically (about price controls being bad for free markets), or philosophically (about the fundamental value of private property rights to our society), naturalistically (chalking up tenants' support of rent control to the basic human tendency to want a good deal), or comparatively (erroneously blaming rent control on the rapacious speculation in the real estate markets of New York and San Francisco). On the other, Alexander and her allies talk about hyperlocal conditions in the specific circumstances of neighborhoods like Little Village.

Whose perspective aligns with the widest swath of Illinois's population is still hard to say. Most renters in Chicago and the state are considered "burdened," meaning they spend more than a third of their income on rent. In Cook County, more than three quarters of the poorest households spend more than half of their income on rent. It's perhaps no surprise that a nonbinding referendum last March showed that 75 percent of the 16,000 voters who saw the question on their ballot said they were in favor of lifting the ban on rent control. (The wording of the question was far from neutral, but little seems to be when it comes to landlord-tenant relations.)

There's one aspect of Hunter's bill that may make it appealing to good-government types beyond the ranks of renters, neighborhood advocates, and progressive culture warriors. The Rent Control Preemption Act overrode home rule powers—neutering Chicago's and Cook County's ability to consider any local rent regulation measures for more than two decades. But in the latest amended version of SB3512 home rule local government are exempt if they decide to craft their own version of rent control. So far, Hunter's bill has eight cosponsors—15 percent of the 59-member senate. Guzzardi's bill has garnered nine cosponsors—just 8 percent of the 118-member house. 

 @mdoukmas

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Employing traffic cameras to enforce the lanes would require approval from Springfield, and such surveillance is highly unpopular with many Chicagoans, especially in the wake of our city's red-light bribery scandal. (Similar systems like New York City's Select Bus Service feature both prepaid boarding and camera enforcement.)

With camera enforcement and prepaid boarding off the table for the foreseeable future, Loop Link is unlikely to get much faster anytime soon. I don't mean to throw the CTA under the bus here, but when it comes to dramatically improving transit commute times, the system has turned out to be something of an underachiever.


Does that mean that the Loop Link corridor is an overall failure, or that it should be dismantled to give more real estate to private motor vehicles again?

Mayberry says no. "Loop Link has shown that you can have a bus lane and not cause Carmageddon," he said. "It's the heart of downtown and, while there will always be tough traffic days downtown for any number of reasons, Loop Link has not been responsible for negatively affecting traffic. In fact, it's raised the profile of bus service in the corridor and made it more obvious how much service we run and made our bus service more accessible for people."


He added that while CTA bus ridership has been falling in recent years, ridership at Loop Link stops has steadily grown since the system launched, averaging a 2 percent increase so far this year compared to 2017. "When you look at the overall project, those are points of success."

I'd also point out that Loop Link has better organized the streets along the route, especially Canal Street by Union Station, and has created better conditions for walking and biking, while discouraging speeding by private drivers, which makes everyone safer.

And then there's the question of what bus speeds would be like nowadays if Loop Link hadn't been built, given the general increase in downtown car traffic in recent years.

So while the FOIA'd data suggests that you can't call Loop Link a roaring success, it would also be wrong to dismiss it as a dismal failure. Rather, it's an OK transit corridor that could someday become very good if the city can figure out a way to add prepaid boarding and/or better enforce the bus lanes. 

John Greenfield edits the transportation news website Streetsblog Chicago.

 @greenfieldjohn

We march.

We vote.

October 13

Grant Park at
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9AM - 1PM

Enjoy the festival atmosphere in the **NEW Voter Village**; connect with candidates and activists! Show that women are engaged in protecting our democracy.

9AM

First Time Voters, celebrate your voting power in a NEW space dedicated just for you!

10AM

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12:30PM

As the rally comes to a close, let's **March to the Polls!** Early voting sites are open throughout the day.

For more information, visit womensmarchchicago.org

March to the Polls



Women's March Chicago

CITY LIFE

NEWS

Musicians on the picket line

Lyric Opera Orchestra is on strike, and performances have been canceled.

By DEANNA ISAACS



DEANNA ISAACS

The Lyric Opera Orchestra went on strike at 10 AM Tuesday, canceling rehearsals and Thursday's 2 PM performance of *La Bohème* and Saturday's 7 PM opening of *Idomeneo*.

A statement from the orchestra says the strike is necessary "because a world-class opera company needs a world-class orchestra. That is now in danger." The statement adds that Lyric management is demanding "radical cuts that would decimate the Orchestra."


These include cutting five musician positions, cutting pay by 8 percent, reducing the number of working weeks for the orchestra from 24 to 22, and eliminating all Lyric radio broadcasts.

According to the orchestra's statement, while the Lyric's budget grew from \$60 million in 2012 to \$84 million in 2017, the weekly salary for musicians increased an average of less than 1 percent annually and, when adjusted for inflation, decreased by just over 5 percent since 2011. The orchestra is represented by the Chicago Federation of Musicians.

Lyric management acknowledged in a

statement this morning that performances and other events may have to be canceled. "Lyric simply cannot agree to the terms CFM demands, given our current financial circumstances," the statement read. "Our proposed changes are necessary to ensure Lyric's survival. . . . We offered CFM wage increases in exchange for a reduction in guaranteed work weeks that better aligns with audience demand and increased scheduling flexibility that will allow us to access additional rental income."

William Cernota, speaking on behalf of the orchestra members, says the orchestra offered Lyric scheduling flexibility months ago, and that "Lyric is lying because they want to distract from what they're doing with their cut-and-slash agenda—demolishing Lyric Opera and asking the musicians to pay for the demolition."

The American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) recently signed multiyear Lyric contracts. 

 @deannaaisacs



Photos: Ben McKeown

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Volunteer sign-in table at the Blue Wave Rave JULIA HALE

POLITICS

Yes and . . . vote

Indivisible Chicago's Blue Wave Rave uses improv to mobilize political action.

By JULIA HALE

Last week the Athenaeum Theatre hosted the Blue Wave Rave, a free improv show featuring cast members from iO, the Second City, and the Annoyance Theatre and put together by Indivisible Chicago, a coalition of 12 chapters around the city that was created after the 2016 election.

"I spent almost ten years as the CEO of the League of Chicago Theatres, so I know lots of theater folks," says Marj Halperin, the cofounder of the Blue Beginning chapter that meets at the Hideout. She was one of the main organizers of the Blue Wave Rave. "Also, I have this political life where I've managed campaigns and been a volunteer." Halperin got the idea to combine canvassing with improv after attending an event put on by Swing Left, another group that organizes progressives.

"Swing Left had a small event for Sean Casten and then I saw onstage T.J. Shanoff, the longtime music director for Second City, who I knew. So after the show I went up and said hello to him and thanked him for doing this, and he said, 'I just want to do as much as I can.' And I said, 'Well, let's do a second event.'"

"I have never been involved in politics," says Shanoff, a director, producer, and musician from Chicago. "I've always had an interest in politics, and the last couple of years it has increased to almost a desperate interest because of how distraught I've been [since the 2016 election]. Ranting on social media and complaining to people who feel the same was getting me nowhere."

So when Mark Burns of Second City Works, an offshoot of Second City that focuses on events, content, and professional development, reached out to him to direct and play piano for Swing Left, he jumped at the chance. "Literally the least you can do is vote. The second-least thing you can do is encourage voting. Time is limited, but if I can inspire others, it feels great. Putting together a show seemed like something I could do, and when Marj reached out to me, I reached out to Mark, because it had gone so well before." Shanoff and Burns coproduced Wednesday's event, and Shanoff played piano.

Indivisible Chicago is generally focused on canvassing. According to Halperin, it's the most powerful method of building support for

candidates. "There are a lot of ways to support candidates—phone banking, text banking, postcards. But honestly, knocking on a door and talking to a voter is the most effective field tool that we have."

Leading up to the Blue Wave Rave, Halperin had worked with Shanoff within her Blue Beginning chapter to organize training for canvassers using improv actors. "I was telling T.J. what we were doing with canvassing, and then I stopped and said, 'Wait! Improv actors are like the best canvassers ever! You know how to talk to people, you know how to keep a positive conversation, the whole "yes, and" thing that Second City is known for, you need to be out there canvassing.'

"People will say, 'Yeah, but I can't canvass.' They're afraid or unsure of what it would be. We needed to demystify it and provide a training," Halperin says. Improv actors turned out to be the perfect people to be those trainers.

"You don't persuade someone to join where you're at [when canvassing], you collab," says Shanoff. "Everything in improv is rooted in listening and agreement. Improv isn't persuasion [either]." This is how improv actors can help canvassers. "Even the mere act of knocking on a door is jarring," he says. But if canvassers follow the teachings of improv actors, who are trained to meet their partners halfway, it's not as intimidating.

Halperin sees the natural connections between politics and art in a bigger sense too. "When monumental things happen in this country, we look to artists to help us understand them and interpret them and accept them. That's what theater does. Improv does it in some particularly creative ways here in Chicago, and I just think it's a perfect fit for those of us struggling to understand our world."

With a goal of activating 1,000 volunteers for canvassing, the Blue Wave Rave started off with a casual soiree outside the actual theater, with beverages available for purchase as well as five volunteer tables set up, one for each of the five races that Indivisible Chicago is focusing on. "There's [Sean] Casten in Illinois six, there's [Lauren] Underwood in Illinois 14, there's Randy Bryce in Wisconsin who is running for the seat vacated by Paul Ryan," says Halperin. "There's a lot of satisfaction in working for that seat. In Indiana we're supporting their coordinated campaign but focusing especially on Joe Donnelly, who's an incumbent Democratic senator who's been targeted [by opposition] with a lot of Koch brothers money, so we're sending people to help keep Joe in place in

the Senate. And we're working on the Illinois statewide ballot: Pritzker-Stratton, Raoul, Mendoza, and Frerichs."

Upon entering the building, everyone received a canvassing sign-up sheet with a schedule on it, but once the theater doors opened and everyone sat down, Halperin got onstage and pushed the audience to actually fill them out and sign up for a weekend before the show started. She also reminded the audience not to forget about the March to the Polls on October 13, organized by Women's March Chicago. The actual show consisted of ten interactive bits in which the cast did different things like coming up with skits based on interviews with volunteers from the audience or making up scenarios using audience suggestions. There was also an American Sign Language interpreter onstage for those who were hard of hearing.

"Theater—and I want to say Chicago-style theater in particular—is about putting it all out there, having the direct spotlight on difficult conversations, highlighting challenging content," says Halperin. The Blue Wave Rave certainly did that. The show was full of jokes alluding to ongoing political scandals and Fox News. There was even a scripted segment in which iO cast member Abby McEnany discussed gender presentation and how passing as a man while still identifying as a woman has led to several uncomfortable (to say the least) incidents.

Indivisible Chicago has never done an event this big. "In March we did a summit that was sort of a kickoff to the election year to energize our network of people. We brought in speakers to motivate [our network], we got people focused on different projects, one of them being Take Back the House. That was the beginning of a larger effort that we've been working on all year to mobilize our folks behind progressive candidates throughout the region."

Halperin has already begun to see the effects of this year's work. "We have hundreds of volunteers working every weekend for these progressive candidates, many of whom have never canvassed or volunteered before." Halperin also talked about "remobilizing" people who haven't canvassed in a while.

"We're organized at the grassroots. The Tea Party did it . . . and we know it made a difference, but they've died out, and now we're stepping up on the left," says Halperin. "The impact on this fall election remains to be seen, but I guarantee you, it will be seen."

@huliahale



The Chicago International Film Festival, Part 54

Our critics weigh in on 24 of the most interesting prospects.

There are two overwhelmingly positive developments to this year's Chicago International Film Festival. One is that the fest will present a program of experimental cinema for the first time in decades; that screens on Monday, October 15, at 8:30 PM and features short works by Apichatpong Weerasethakul and local filmmakers Melika Bass and Deborah Stratman. The second is that the festival will screen more features directed by women than ever before, most of them first- or second-time filmmakers. The festival is also trying out a new virtual reality sidebar, with five "immersive cinema" experiences that attendees can engage with for free (admission is on a first-come, first-served basis). I've never experienced VR myself, so I can't speak to its quality as a storytelling medium, but its inclusion in the festival speaks to the programmers' willingness to explore new ideas.

As usual, the Chicago International is defined as much by the movies that aren't showing as by the movies the programmers have selected. Reports from this year's festivals at Cannes, Locarno, Venice, and Toronto have created the impression that 2018 is an especially exciting year for world cinema. Alas, many of the movies that have generated this excitement—Ryusuke Hamaguchi's *Asako I & II*, Federico Veiroj's *Belmonte*, Lee Chang-dong's *Burning*, Wang Bing's *Dead Souls*, Hong Sang-soo's *Grass* and *Hotel by the River*, Alex Ross Perry's *Her Smell*, Claire Denis's *High Life*, Jean-Luc Godard's *The Image Book*, Bi Gan's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, Frederick Wiseman's *Monrovia, Indiana*, Jennifer Kent's *The Nightingale*, Lav Diaz's *Season of the Devil*, and Jafar Panahi's *Three Faces*—are not in Chicago's lineup. Thankfully our town has no shortage of great film programmers; between Facets Multimedia, the Nightingale, the Music Box, Block Cinema, Doc Films, Asian Pop-Up Cinema, the U. of C. Film Studies Center, and the Gene Siskel Film Center, I'm confident that most (if not all) of these titles will arrive here eventually. —**BEN SACHS**

At War

French writer-director Stéphane Brizé's fourth collaboration with actor Vincent Lindon, the follow-up to their thematically similar 2015 film *The Measure of a Man*, feels like a combination of a Kartemquin documentary and a Bertrand Bonello film. Lindon stars as a blue-collar worker who leads the charge when corporate executives shut down the factory where he works, laying off 1,100 people. Brizé plops the viewer into the midst of the struggle and never lets up, going from the boardroom to the streets, from peaceful mediations to violent demonstrations. Intercut between the straightforward narrative sections, shot with a handheld camera to give the effect of a docudrama, are news reports of the action and atmospheric vignettes over which lamenting synth-rock grouses. Its ending is almost surprisingly apoplectic—the key word being almost. The melding of clear-sighted and insurrectionary modes doesn't quite cohere, but the film is still an

ambitious effort worthy of its title. In French with subtitles. 113 min. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** Sat 10/13, 4:15 PM, and Fri 10/19, 5 PM

RR Becoming Astrid

Children's books can take their unconventional heroes to some dark places, frequently inspired by the authors' own hard lives. This absorbing Swedish-German-Danish biopic of *Pippi Longstocking* creator Astrid Lindgren presents her turbulent, formative teen years without any sugarcoating. An internship on her Småland village newspaper leads to an affair with the editor and an unplanned pregnancy, followed by heartbreaking choices as she clashes with her loving but religiously observant family, farmers that work land owned by a nearby church. Under Pernille Fischer Christensen's astute direction, the actors never descend into bathos. As Astrid, Alba August is high-spirited, rebellious, and resourceful; Maria

Bonnevie as her strict mother shows where the writer got her backbone; and Henrik Rafalsen as Astrid's undeserving lover delineates a seducer whose urbanity masks a woeful ineptitude. In Swedish and Danish with subtitles. 123 min. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** Sat 10/20 5:30 PM, and Sun 10/21, 7 PM

Before the Frost

Greed vies with parental duty as the key motivating force in this grim drama set in rural 19th-century Denmark. The first act is sluggish, as a poor but stubborn elderly farmer (Jesper Christensen of *Spectre* and *Melancholia*) haggles with neighbors over the price of everything from livestock to his comely daughter (Clara Rosager), whom he will not allow to wed unless her marriage contract provides for the rest of the family. Intrigue unfolds when a dashing, prosperous Swedish widower (Magnus Krepper of *Becoming Astrid* and *The Bridge*) offers to buy a marshy plot of the farmer's land for a cash crop of sugar beets, the next big thing. The prospect of feeding his family, as well as rising in the eyes of the community, nearly blinds the old man; to the movie's credit, writer-director Michael Noer and his cowriter, Jesper Fink, provide enough plot twists to upend viewer expectations about the nature of evil in this study of human savagery. In Danish and Swedish with subtitles. 104 min. —**AG** Tue 10/16, 6:15 PM; Wed 10/17, 8:30 PM; and Thu 10/18, 1 PM

Ben is Back

Conspicuously sterile, this opportunistic drama tackles the opioid crisis in white middle-class suburbia. Ben (Lucas Hedges) visits home from rehab; his mother, Holly (a compelling Julia Roberts), is overjoyed, while his sister and stepfather are rightfully suspicious. After Ben's former associates steal the family's beloved pup, he and his mom embark on a journey through his nefarious past to rescue it. Writer-director Peter Hedges (*Pieces of April*, *Dan in Real Life*) seems to grasp the seriousness of the crisis, but only insofar as it affects people who look and live like him—a throwaway comment from Holly's black husband about how Ben would be in jail if he weren't white doesn't count for much. The film's didacticism, evidenced in a scene where Holly learns how to use the overdose reversal drug naloxone, is artless if well-intentioned. Anxious handheld camerawork presents the illusion of realism, but the film's sentiment is contrived. With Courtney B. Vance



Diane



The Etruscan Smile

and Kathryn Newton. 103 min. —**KS** Director Peter Hedges will attend the screening. Sun 10/14, 7:30 PM

RR The City That Sold America

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, a daily glass of OJ, and regular toothbrushing (though not just before drinking the juice) are ubiquitous in American life—and they're all inventions of Chicago admen. *The City That Sold America* explores Chicago as the quintessential expression of "New World" living during the early 20th century, and how, as an epicenter of shipping, processing, and broadcasting, it spawned an industry that forever shaped how we view and interact with the world. Today we're endlessly inundated with ads, and many of us harbor misgivings toward the industry for past evils—such as pimping cigarettes and sugar to kids—and ongoing concerns, including the perpetuation of consumerism, falsehoods, and stereotypes. So it's interesting to consider a time before modern advertising, and how some ingenious thinkers from a single city helped promote public education (see above: dental hygiene),

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Through 10/21: screening dates and times vary; see website, AMC River East, 322 E. Illinois, 312-332-3456, chicagofilmfestival.com, individual screenings \$15, \$12 students and seniors; \$8 Mon-Fri before 5 PM; \$20 special presentations; \$140 10-admission pass; \$265 20-admission pass.

break taboos, fuel art, and importantly, provide people with a positive image of themselves and their communities. 67 min. —**JAMIE LUDWIG** Director Ky Dickens, producer Mary Warlick, and subject Bob Scarpelli will attend both screenings. Thu 10/11, 5:45 PM, and Sat 10/13, 11:30 AM

Core of the World

This gloomy Russian character study follows a young veterinarian who works at a training center for hunting dogs in a remote wooded area. He lives a monkish existence, thinking almost exclusively of his work and keeping at arm's length the family who own the facility, despite their efforts to forge a deeper relationship with him. Director Natalya Meshchaninova aspires to the look and feel of a direct-cinema documentary—there's no music, every shot is handheld, and the narrative (at least for the first hour or so) emphasizes everyday behavior over dramatic incident. Only after a while does it become clear that the veterinarian is an emotionally disturbed sociopath who devotes himself to animals to avoid getting close to people. Meshchaninova doesn't have much to say about the character apart from this; once she reveals his true nature, the film doesn't really have anywhere to go. In Russian with subtitles. 125 min. —**BS** Sun 10/14, 7:15 PM, and Mon 10/15, 8:45 PM

RR Diane

For decades Kent Jones has been one of the most eloquent and perceptive film critics in the U.S.; with this devastating chamber drama (his first narrative feature as ➔



Facing the Wind

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writer-director), he also proves himself to be a keen observer of psychology and American social mores. Mary Kay Place, in a heartbreaking performance, plays the title character, a single, 60ish woman in upstate New York who devotes herself to helping the homeless and the terminally ill but can't help her resentful grown son beat his addiction to drugs. Jones doesn't exploit the scenario for simple dramatic irony—Diane is no saint, and her son is to some extent justified in his resentment of her—nor does he steer the story toward predictable emotional payoffs. What he wants to explore is ultimately harder to define—call it the longing for transcendence that's always underpinned American life. His handling of time's passing is subtle and mysterious as well. 96 min. —**BS Jones will attend the Monday screening. Mon 10/15, 9 PM, and Tue 10/16, 6 PM**

Dreamaway

Directors Marouan Omara and Johanna Domke shot this offbeat documentary in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm El-Sheikh, where the tourism industry has been decimated in recent years due to social upheaval. The movie profiles several men and women who work at a luxury hotel; they go through elaborate routines to keep the place attractive, even though tourists are never seen. Declining to touch on Egypt's political climate, Omara and Domke mine the situation for cuteness, and the whimsy gets stale pretty quickly. In one recurring scene, employees lead dance exercises in front of an empty swimming pool; in another, various subjects



Non-Fiction

converse with a large inflatable monkey on the back of a moving truck. Some of the images are arresting, but the film lacks insight. In English and subtitled Arabic. 86 min. —**BS Omara will attend both screenings. Sun 10/14, 5:15 PM, and Mon 10/15, 3:30 PM**

Echo

Hearing is a metaphor that plays throughout this somber Israeli marital drama from its earliest scenes. The first depicts a traffic tunnel explosion in Haifa and workers on walkie-talkies summoning their construction boss, Avner (Yoram Toledano), to the site; the second shows Avner, against the protests of his wife (Yaël Abecassis), dislodging a cotton swab from her ear. Later, after he suspects she may have a lover, Avner taps the family phone to monitor her calls, and his angst spirals into obsession. Writer-directors Amikam Kovner and Assaf Snir rely on the soul-

ful intensity of Toledano (star of the Israeli TV hit *Prisoners of War*, on which Showtime's *Homeland* is based) to carry the slender plot, but even his considerable magnetism can't drum up a rooting interest in a character who wouldn't listen to what was said, and what was left unsaid, until the damage was done. In Hebrew with subtitles. 92 min. —**AG Kovner will attend the Monday and Tuesday screenings. Mon 10/15, 5:45 PM; Tue 10/16, 8 PM; and Fri 10/19, 2:45 PM**

The Etruscan Smile

Based on José Luis Sampedro's best-selling novel, *The Etruscan Smile* is the heart-wrenching directorial debut of Mihal Brezis and Oded Binnun. The film follows Rory MacNeil (Brian Cox) as he moves from the Scottish Hebrides to San Francisco to live with his estranged son and seek medical treatment for a terminal illness. During

his stay, despite his declining condition, he finds new life through a bond with his infant grandson. This bond, in turn, helps repair old familial wounds between him and his son. It's a quiet film, full of pain, love, life, and death that highlights generational divides. Brezis and Binnun offer little camera movement, making for simple shots that show the characters' emotional complexity. In English and Scottish Gaelic. 107 min. —**MARISSA DE LA CERDA Sun 10/14, 7:45 PM, and Mon 10/15, 5:45 PM**

RR Facing the Wind

Meritxell Colell Aparicio's directorial debut honors the village of her grandparents and the way its culture disappears with their passing. After 20 years away, choreographer Mónica (Mónica García) must return to the Spanish village where she was born to visit her father on his deathbed and help her grieving mother (Concha Canal) sell their family home. Throughout this visit, Mónica must face her own feelings of grief and remorse over leaving behind her roots to pursue her passion for dancing. The film considers the issue of uprooting in all its complexity. Mónica feels a huge sense of liberation when she leaves her village behind, but also a disconnect from her family and culture that leaves a void. With minimal dialogue, Aparicio uses silence and movement to illustrate the tension between mother and daughter who are now strangers seeking to reconcile but lacking the words to do so. In Spanish with subtitles. 108 min. —**MD Aparicio will attend both screenings. Wed 10/17, 8 PM, and Thu 10/18, 6 PM**

Friedkin Uncut

William Friedkin has made some of the most thrilling, unconventional films in Hollywood history. He's also known for voicing blunt, often controversial opinions. Unfortunately, Francesco Zippel's fawning, cookie-cutter tribute would be nothing more than an add-on for a DVD box set, were they still making those. A parade of notables sings the man's praises, interspersed with clips from his greatest hits, then, every now and again, the man himself appears to pronounce some important-sounding aphorism. Perhaps for someone who's never seen *The Exorcist* or *The French Connection*, this might be a useful entry point to the director's work; everyone else would be better off just watching or rewatching Friedkin's movies. —**DMITRY SAMAROV Friedkin will attend the Monday screening; Zippel will attend both screenings. Mon 10/15, 6 PM, and Tue 10/16, noon**

The Good Girls

With this subtle drama about high-society social maneuvering, writer-director Alejandra Márquez Abella essentially transplants Edith Wharton's thematic concerns to Mexico City in 1982. The heroine is a callous socialite who gets taken down a notch after her businessman husband, a self-important drunk, loses one too many deals in the midst of Mexico's currency crisis. Márquez Abella employs a supple visual style, rooted in Ophülsian camera movements, to convey the seductive charm of the characters' ostentatious milieu and the graceful flexibility they need to navigate it; art director Claudio Ramirez Castelli and costume designer Annai Ramos clearly have fun re-creating the tacky styles of the early 1980s. This isn't bad, but I wish the film's bitter humor were more pronounced, as the social observations, when presented straight, don't feel particularly fresh. In Spanish with subtitles. 101 min. —**BS** Márquez Abella will attend both screenings. Wed 10/17, 6 PM, and Thu 10/18, 8:15 PM

RR The Great Buster: A Celebration

Writer-director Peter Bogdanovich brings his formidable knowledge of movies to bear in this incisive portrait of Buster Keaton, a giant of American cinema who along with Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin was one of the top comedians of the silent era. As a child in vaudeville, Keaton earned the nickname "Buster" because

he took pratfalls so well; scenes from his two-reelers show how this very physical actor refined his technique, but the documentary gives pride of place to the ten independent features Keaton directed before his disastrous move to MGM. A trove of clips from many of his newly restored classics—including his masterpiece, *The General*—are augmented by archival materials and interviews with comedy pros Dick Van Dyke, Bill Hader, Nick Kroll, Johnny Knoxville, Richard Lewis, and Mel Brooks, who either knew him or his widow, Eleanor, or simply make the case for why Keaton matters. 102 min. —**AG** Fri 10/19, 1 PM, and Sun 10/21, 3:15 PM

RR Hard Paint

Pedro is a painfully introverted young man living in Porto Alegre, Brazil. He's

also awaiting trial for accidentally maiming a school bully in a nightclub attack. Thankfully there's one thing he enjoys—smearing his body in neon paint and giving sexually charged performances and one-on-one sessions for patrons on a gay video site. Pedro's loneliness and alienation are palpable, and they only intensify when his sister and only friend, Luiza, leaves town for a new job. But things turn when he meets Leo, a dance student who's pilfered his Day-Glo shtick and his fan base. Leo's a ray of sunshine, and his easy-going warmth contrasts with Pedro's tight-wound awkwardness. Still, the spark between them is brighter than any color in Pedro's collection. *Hard Paint* explores what makes a true human connection in an era when emotional and sexual gratification can be obtained with a click, and when, for some people, exposing themselves to faceless strangers (literally and figuratively here) can seem less scary than opening up to someone in real life.



Retablo

117 min. —**JL** Codirectors Felipe Matzembacher and Marcio Reolon will attend both screenings. Fri 10/19, 8 PM, and Sat 10/20, 9:15 PM.

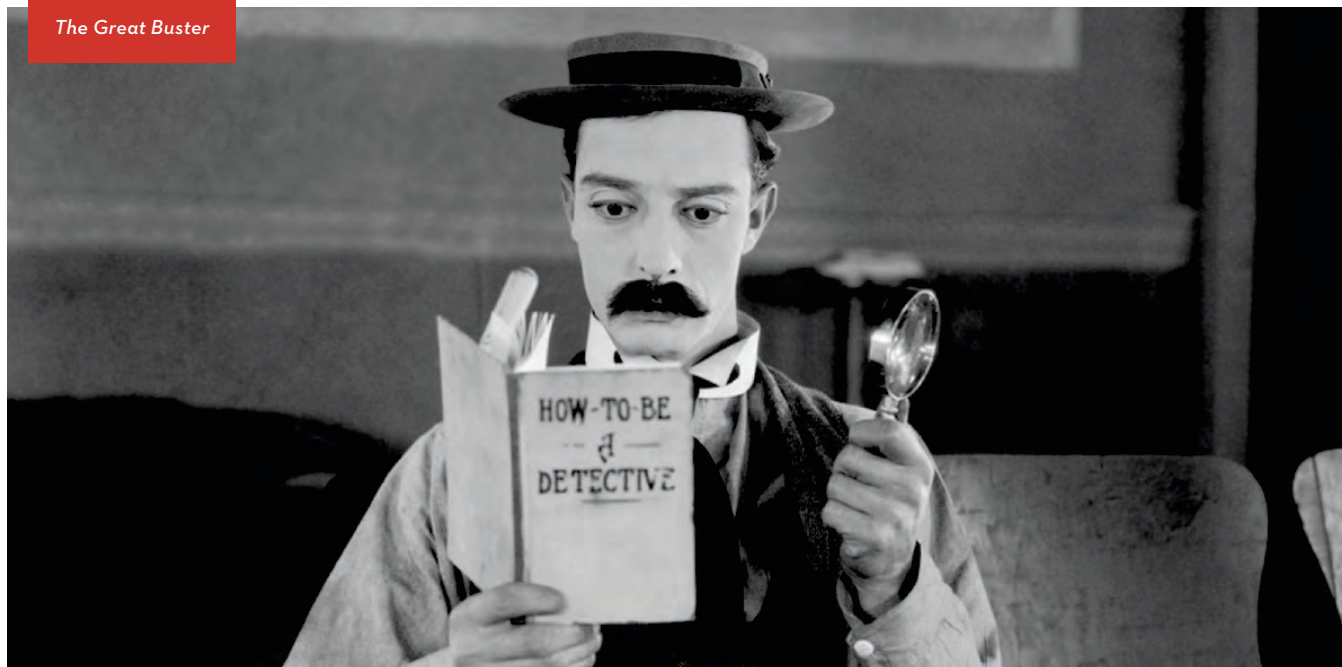
In the Aisles

The German film *In the Aisles* could be a workplace drama, if only there were any drama. Instead, it tries to be a kind of understated, slice-of-life offering that follows workers at a grocery superstore. However, it's a view of blue-collar life from a privileged perspective that assumes said workers are too trapped to truly effect any kind of change in their lives. Director Thomas Stuber does capture the minute details that make and break their world to some extent. There's the emotional investment in minute tasks, the gatherings where everyone bonds and gossips. But Stuber refuses to allow any action his protagonist Christian (Franz Rogowski) takes to truly go anywhere. It's less a portrait of modern malaise than of the filmmakers' longing for meaning in an increasingly corporate world. Such assumptions amount to little more than yet another casual dismissal of those who are often deemed unworthy of notice. 125 min. —**ANDREA THOMPSON** Rogowski will attend both screenings. Thu 10/11, 8:30 PM, and Sat 10/13, 1 PM

RR Non-Fiction

Like Jean-Luc Godard, Olivier Assayas often uses cinema to interrogate the zeitgeist; here, he employs a romantic roundelay narrative to contemplate the future of written communication and the Internet's strong hold on many people's lives. The film takes place around France's literary world—the setting of Assayas's *Late August, Early September* (1998)—and snakes elegantly through the lives of a publishing executive (Guillaume Canet), his actress wife (Juliette Binoche), a writer of autobiographical novels (Vincent Macaigne), and the writer's political-adviser girlfriend (Christa Théret). In terms of surface tone, this is one of the airiest things the director has made, though what it has to say about the Internet is as unsettling as *Demonlover* (2002), his darkest film. Assayas suggests that the Internet has trained us to dissociate ourselves from our behavior, as revealed by the ease with which most of the characters lie to their romantic partners (tellingly, the original title translates to "double lives"). In French with subtitles. 107 min. —**BS** Thu 10/11, 8:15 PM, and Sat 10/13, 3:30 PM

The Great Buster



Rafiki

Lively but a little too on the nose, this Kenyan drama delivers a straightforward lesson about antigay bigotry in Africa. It concerns the romance between two teenage girls in Nairobi whose fathers are running against each other in a local election. They try to keep their love a secret, knowing they would harm their fathers' careers (and bring untold punishment upon themselves) if they were to be exposed; after a short period of happiness, their worst expectations come true. Cowriter-director Wanuri Kahiu elicits sensitive performances from the cast, and her use of color is attractive as well. But it's hard to escape the feeling that the film is basically an extended public service announcement; Kahiu has few discernible goals apart from drawing attention to an important subject. In English and subtitled Swahili. 82 min. —**BS** Thu 10/11, 6 PM; Sat 10/13, 1:30 PM; and Thu 10/18, noon

RR Retablo

The Andes form the rugged backdrop for this stark coming-of-age tale about a sensitive Peruvian teen (Junior Bejar) who, with his artisan father (Amiel Cayo), constructs vibrant altarpieces and commemorative story boxes, folk art that sells well at the town market. One day they hitch a ride from their farm, and the son sees his father pleasuring the male driver. In their hardscrabble rural area of Ayacucho, which was plagued by terrorism decades earlier, the macho locals practice vigilante justice; fearful, the boy keeps what he observed a secret, one that festers and threatens to tear his family apart. Making his feature directorial debut, Alvaro Delgado Aparicio examines societal notions of masculinity, and how an artistic temperament can be both a vulnerability and a lifeline in a harsh world. In Quechua and Spanish with subtitles. 95 min. —**AG** Fri 10/19, 5:45 PM, and Sun 10/21, 6:30 PM

Sofia

Moroccan-born writer-director Meryem Benm'Barek's feature debut is a strained drama dealing in issues of reproductive rights and class-bound tensions. The film begins when the 20-year-old title character—emotionally detached and a victim of her middle-class social status—gives birth out of wedlock after months of denying her pregnancy. Sex outside of marriage is illegal in Morocco, so Sofia and her family rush to find the father

Transit



Too Late to Die Young

and plan a wedding before both parties are sentenced to at least a year in prison. Compelling by virtue of its insight into the struggles faced by women and impoverished people in other parts of the world, the film is also a sad reminder that those same people are often the ones responsible for drawing attention to the injustices they face. Here's to hoping we'll someday live in a world where previously marginalized artists can explore other subjects. In subtitled Arabic and French. 80 min. —**KS** Fri 10/12, 3:45 PM; Tue 10/16, 8:30 PM; and Sat 10/20, noon

RR Too Late to Die Young

Set shortly after the fall of Chile's dictatorship, this tantalizing art film centers on a 16-year-old girl living on a rural commune with her single father and several other families. Writer-director Dominga Sotomayor moves fluidly between the characters, advancing a ghostly, disembodied perspective that somehow manages to generate a subtly erotic sense of fascination. (Lucrecia Martel's *La Ciénaga* is a likely point of reference.) The girl's discovery of liberty—in smoking cigarettes, kissing boys, and talking back to her father—suggests an intimate version of what the nation is experiencing as a whole, though Sotomayor's storytelling is too nuanced and oblique to make the connection seem obvi-

ous. In fact the film is so commanding in its presentation of social rituals and the natural world that it takes a while for the story to come into focus, yet for all the loping camera movements and narrative digressions, this never feels meandering. In Spanish with subtitles. 110 min. —**BS** Mon 10/15, 5:45 PM; Tue 10/16, 8:45 PM; and Wed 10/17, 12:45 PM

RR Transit

Films about Nazis may be common, but the German film *Transit* stands out. In the modern world it presents, Nazis are on the march through Europe (again), forcing everyman Georg (Franz Rogowski) to flee. Desperate, he impersonates a deceased author in order to gain the papers he needs to immigrate to safety before the "cleansing." However, things get complicated when Georg encounters the author's wife, who is desperately searching for the husband she's unaware is dead. Even if Georg does escape, *Transit* never allows us to forget many won't, and the characters' very realistic reactions to the increasingly encroaching violence means their stories hit home. Everyone around Georg is trying to flee to some kind of safety, but the film's warning that such horrific scenarios are in danger of repeating looms above all. The subsequent refusal to allow any kind of uplifting heroism becomes less

a punishment than the natural consequences of our folly. 101 min. —**AT** Rogowski will attend both screenings. Thu 10/11, 6 PM, and Fri 10/12, 8:30 PM

Volcano

A Ukrainian government worker inspecting military checkpoints on the Russian border gets stranded in the hinterlands after his car breaks down; one unfortunate circumstance follows another (he loses his cell phone, ID, and all his money) until he gives up hope of ever going home. Director Roman Bondarchuk plays the story for angry satire, scoring uncomfortable laughs off the brutishness and provincialism of rural Ukraine. (A few crucial scenes involve the hero getting the shit kicked out of him for no reason.) The narrative structure, organized around the hero's increasingly bad luck, may remind you of Scorsese's *After Hours* (1985), though this is much slower and more contemplative than that film. Unfortunately Bondarchuk doesn't have as much to contemplate as he lets on; the movie often disintegrates into superficial art-film moodiness. In English and subtitled Ukrainian. 106 min. —**BS** Bondarchuk and producer Olena Yershova will attend the Thursday and Friday screenings. Thu 10/11, 8:15 PM; Fri 10/12, 8:45 PM; and Mon 10/15, 3:45 PM

Wolkenbruch's Wondrous Journey Into the Arms of a Shiksa

This Swiss-German romantic comedy delivers on its whimsical title as it charts a virginal Orthodox Jew's picaresque, irreverent romp through the realm of women. Enduring yet another awkward *shidduch* (matchmaking attempt), a cutie-pie university student in Zürich (Joel Basman of *Land of Mine* and *Hanna*) breaks the fourth wall to complain to viewers about the chaste prospective brides picked for him; he much prefers his flirtatious non-Jewish German classmate (Noémie Schmidt), musing, "This is what is called, I think, a cognitive dissonance." Further rebellions, like shaving his beard and getting hipper glasses, prompt his family to compare him to Woody Allen. Basman actually more closely resembles the movie's screenwriter, comedic novelist Thomas Meyer (here adapting his own best seller), but the spirit of an earlier, more lighthearted Allen prevails in director Michael Steiner's several nods to *Annie Hall*. In Yiddish, German, and Hebrew with subtitles. 92 min. —**AG** Wed 10/17, 5:45 PM; Thu 10/18, 8:30 PM; and Fri 10/19, noon **FI**

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ON CULTURE

The Jeff Awards go nonbinary

And still somehow manage to nominate more men than women in the non-gendered performance categories.

By DEANNA ISAACS

This is the year that the Jeff Awards, given every year for excellence in Chicago theater, kissed their venerable best actor and best actress categories goodbye and created a controversy.

Seeking to be more inclusive, the awards became less so, squeezing women out of their list of nominees even as they called attention to a larger issue: With a few obvious exceptions, why should anything be gender specific?

That's the question that came to mind as I was perusing a list of Jeff committee members, using first names, faulty a method as it may be, to determine its gender demographics. As far as I could tell, there are 32 men and 23 women on the roster. So the committee—already saddled with the public perception that it's too old, too white, and not particularly influential—is also too male to accurately represent theater professionals, audiences, or the world.

Which might or might not explain a tilt that favors the guys.

The Jeff Awards committee had its nose rubbed in its image problem last year when Tracy Letts famously went off on it in an interview published in the *Tribune*, calling it “a club to get free tickets” and “a sea of white faces.”

Shortly after that, the committee commissioned a no-holds-barred study of the Jeffs and their reputation, and in February announced that it was making changes: ramping up public communication and outreach; cutting in half the enormous time commitment for new committee members (who had been required to see 150 shows in the first year); and actively recruiting “younger and minority candidates”



Michael Shannon with his 2013 Jeff Award for Best Actor for *Simpatico* and director Guy Van Swearingen of *A Red Orchid* Theatre JOHNNY KNIGHT/JEFF AWARDS

“I think, however, attention must still be paid to equity, to understanding that—although it's shifting—there are less lead roles in place for women.”

And what about the results in areas that were already nongendered? “It's one of ten directors in large theaters,” Portes said. “I saw a lot of incredible shows last year helmed by really talented, nationally known women directors. And the fact that the Jeff committee could come up with only one of ten directors in large theaters is incredibly frustrating.”

Also: “One in five scenic designers in large theaters; one in five scenic designers at mid-sized; zero of five sound designers at large theaters. As you go to midsize theaters, things look a little better, but once you hit the larger theaters, we're quite lopsided. I was chagrined to see so few women represented in the nominations; you don't want gender nonbinary to mean a heyday for men.”

Brad Erickson, executive director of San Francisco's Theatre Bay Area Awards, the first among the American theater awards to announce that it would go gender nonbinary (following the *MTV Movie & TV Awards*, which made the change in 2017), told me their results in the first year have been balanced. But, he said, regarding any potential imbalance, “This came to me in the last month or so: The old system of male/female awards potentially masks the problem. It's a kind of fun-house mirror. We say, ‘Oh look, an equal number of men and women won awards.’ Of course they did, so you're making it seem like there's parity, when there's not. If there really isn't a balance, these [non-gender-binary] award systems are [more accurate] mirrors of the field. If there's a big imbalance in the awards, it's not the awards' fault. It's what's happening in programming.”

Says Marks: “The issue of diversity in theater for awards does not start with the Jeff Awards. It ends at the Jeff Awards. It's up to the theaters to put on the [work of a variety of] stage directors, actors, set designers, lighting designers, choreographers. All we do is judge the excellence of what they put on.

The winners of the 2018 Jeff Equity Awards will be announced at Drury Lane Oakbrook on October 22.

for the committee (which is capped at 55 members and has a waiting list).

Jeffs spokesman Jeffrey Marks says it was also in the last year that the committee began to discuss a problem with the “best actor” and “best actress” categories. “We had a couple nominations coming up, [and] some actors that didn't identify either way.” Also, he says, Jeff judges saw portrayals of Oscar Wilde's *Lady Bracknell* in two different productions, one by a man, the other by a woman, and asked why they weren't competing with each other. “Because it's the character you're assessing,” Marks explains, “not the sex of the actor.” They decided that, beginning with the 2018 awards, the Jeffs would be nonbinary.

In fact, that's what many of the awards already were. There's never been an award for best female director or best male designer, for example. But in the acting categories, awards had traditionally been divided by sex. Now, instead of best actor and best actress, the designation would be simply best performer. To maintain the number of winners, two awards would be given in each category.

The Jeff Awards are divided into Equity and non-Equity wings and are handled in two sep-

arate programs. The first non-Equity awards in the new categories were given out in June, with little comment about the change; Marks notes that the split among winners “worked out pretty evenly.”

But after the Equity nominations were announced in August, there were protests on social media. It looked like gender parity had been collateral damage: the nonbinary categories had produced a list of nominees that was markedly male dominated.

Director and DePaul University Theatre School faculty member Lisa Portes was among those who took notice. When I reached her by phone last week, she said she was in favor of the change but concerned about the apparently unintended effect. She cited the numbers: “Three women of ten nominees for performer in a principal role in a musical; four women of ten nominees for performer in a principal role in a play; two women of ten nominees for performer in a supporting role in a play. The only one where women seem to be doing well is supporting role in a musical, where they're six of ten.

“Moving to nongender-binary classifications is the right thing to do,” Portes added.

@Deannalisaacs

THEATER

Steep Theatre strips Amelia Roper's *Zürich* of all its humor

All that's left of the angry satire is punishment.

By **TONY ADLER**

I hardly ever consult another critic's review of a play before I've written my own, but when I noticed that Amelia Roper's *Zürich* was enthusiastically received in its original production by a Brooklyn company called Colt Coeur, I just had to find out why. My experience of Steep Theatre's current Chicago staging, directed by Brad DeFabo Akin, was anything but positive. I found it grim, tedious, reductive, contrived, pedantic, self-evident, and confrontational in petty ways. No, I didn't care for it. The best I could think as I went over it in my head, considering a moment here, an exchange there, was how much better it would've played as a comedy.

Well, sure enough. In his review written six months ago, Ben Brantley of the *New York Times* called *Zürich* a comedy. A "dark" one, to be sure. And definitely "astringent." But also funny. A *New Yorker* review gave special attention to the hilarity of the opening passage.

What's happened, it seems, is that Akin has leached away a good 99.6 percent of the play's humor, turning what might be an angry, acid satire into a dull screed with a Young Jean Lee-like desire to indict its audience.

Zürich is a sort of political *La Ronde* involving a handful of guests staying on the 40th floor of a sleek hotel in the title Swiss city. Watching through floor-to-ceiling windows, as if observing from a drone hovering outside, we meet the guests and the particular form of Western perfidy they exemplify during a series of five vignettes that interrelate in one way or another and build toward a small apocalypse very much in the modern idiom.



Elizabeth Wigley and Debo Balogun © GREGG GILMAN

In that first scene that so tickled the *New Yorker* critic, two nameless near strangers face the morning after their one-night stand, "He" feeling good enough to belt out "The Star-Spangled Banner" while standing half naked atop the bed, "She" warily trying strategy after strategy for getting him out of her room. The second scene pits an up-and-coming but ethically challenged African-American lawyer against a hotel housemaid with an agenda of her own. Three introduces us to two kids, an 11-year-old boy and his 13-year-old sister, who go through their dysfunctional parents' luggage, finding things they don't care to see, while waiting for said parents to return from the argument they've decided to take outside. Four gives us Fryda, a German Jew who makes phone call after frustrating phone call attempting to penetrate a Kafkaesque Swiss banking hierarchy as she searches for an account confiscated from her grandmother during the Holocaust. Finally, we visit with the oddest couple of the bunch: an elderly American lady and the twentysomething orderly who helped her escape an old people's home.

Each interaction touches on—or, more

accurately, whales on—some aspect of the capitalist patriarchy. The propositions are so bald they can be tagged. He and She: male sexual entitlement (à la Kavanaugh) and the threat of violence that underlies it. Lawyer and housemaid: how capital both corrupts the oppressed and pits them against one another. Fryda: the complicity of ostensibly respectable nations and institutions in monstrous crimes. And so on.

Roper has to ignore certain problems in order to make her points; the scene between the siblings, for instance, would be over in a second if there were only a TV in their room, as there is in practically every other hotel room in the civilized world. Yet that's a minor annoyance inasmuch as the playwright is clearly on fire with indignation and potentially piercing in her wry wit.

Which is why she doesn't deserve the treatment she gets here. Akin's humor-stripping approach is evident right off the bat, in the morning-after sequence. The sight of an aggressively exuberant Jeff Kurysz waving his dick around as he warbles Francis Scott Key's greatest hit makes for a promisingly

antic start, but the ensuing duel between his He and Sasha Smith's She goes dead due to an overzealous attempt to evoke the menace of He's frat-boy moves at the expense of She's agency. Normally a strong performer, Smith is reduced to second banana (read "victim") status, even though the language of the script suggests She's ability to hold her own. Another result: Kurysz's blithe implacability becomes fascinating.

The biggest wit killer of all, though, is Akin's idea for punctuating transitions from scene to scene. Roper's stage directions specify a "bright white light" followed by a blackout; in a tragic misreading of the phrase "alienation device," Akin focuses that light (actually, an array of lights) directly into the audience members' eyes, like we're convicts discovered scrambling over a prison wall. "Don't laugh" the lights say—and, more importantly, "Don't learn. You're here to be punished." By the time we get to the final moments, which could be a deep, dark hoot in the manner of the final scenes from *Dr. Strangelove*, all is lost. **✂**

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Lady in Denmark

By **Dael Orlandersmith**
Directed by **Chay Yew**

After the death of her husband, a Danish American woman finds solace in the hauntingly beautiful music of her favorite singer, Billie Holiday. A journey through the couple's time together—from the smoky jazz clubs of post-war Copenhagen, to the home they shared in present-day Chicago—*Lady in Denmark* is a passionate reflection on life and love.

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Whodunnit?

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time blooms up on its journey to the stage.

Mark Haddon's 2003 smash-hit young adult novel was a notable staple on bookstore best-seller tables throughout the aughts for a handful of reasons, not the least of which was its stark brevity. First, the atmospheric kind: using the unadorned first-person voice of Christopher, a 15-year-old boy presumed to be on the autism spectrum, *Curious Incident* unravels a domestic whodunnit from an unsentimental—yet often heart-wrenching—point of view. And second, the literal kind: the book can easily be read in one or two sittings.

Playwright Simon Stephens's bloated two-and-a-half-hour stage adaptation ditches that brevity by adding a totally superfluous plotline about a theater troupe adapting the work, which plays out like an unnecessary attempt to justify and explain the adaptation's existence. So... there's that.

But exceedingly patient (and properly caffeinated) audiences will find a lot to like in director Jonathan Berry's capable, serviceable production for Steppenwolf's Young Adults lineup. Terry Bell is magnetic and charming as Christopher, the amateur detective who's out to solve the case of his neighbor's pitchfork-impaled dog. What he discovers along the way is an even thornier and more personal mystery that guides him on a path far outside his comfort zone.

And gripping, fully fleshed-out performances by Cedric Mays and Rebecca Spence as Christopher's parents emphasize one element present in but less highlighted in Haddon's book: the emotional highs and lows experienced by parents navigating their own faults while raising a child with special needs, something Berry's production showcases in frank clarity. —**DAN JAKES** *THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME* Through 10/27: Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30 PM; sensory-friendly performance Sat 10/27, 3 PM, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted, 312-335-1650, steppenwolf.org, \$20-\$30.

RR The incredibly true adventure of two early American girls in love

The passion is in the music in *Patience and Sarah*.

The much-loved 1969 historical novel *Patience and Sarah*, penned by lesbian writer and activist Alma Routson under the name Isabel Miller, inspired this chamber opera by composer Paula M. Kimper and librettist Wendie Persons, which premiered in 1998 at New York's Lincoln Center. It's the story of two small-town women in 1816 Connecticut who fall in love and hatch a plan to travel together as a pioneer couple.

Patience White, a genteel "spinster" who lives with her brother and his wife, spends her time painting Bible-themed folk art; the much poorer Sarah Dowling, who dresses like a man while helping her pa out with chores, yearns to leave home and invites Patience to join her. But the moral objections of both women's families—and Patience's own timidity—present obstacles to the pair's happiness. Kimper's lyrical melodies express a passion that belies Persons's prosaic text. The soaring, silvery sopranos and sweetly shy smiles of Diana Stoic as Patience and Liana Gineitis as Sarah highlight Third Eye Theatre Ensemble's intimate production, which features



Patience and Sarah
CLINT FUNK

a fine chamber orchestra conducted by Alexandra Enyart. —**ALBERT WILLIAMS** *PATIENCE AND SARAH* Through 10/21: Fri-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont, 773-975-8150, thirdeyete.com, \$20-\$30.

RR Scrumdiddlyumptious! Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is exhilarating and satisfyingly gross.

You only have to recall how poor James's parents get devoured by a bizarrely carnivorous rhinoceros in *James and the Giant Peach* to know that a big and rambunctious nasty streak runs through Roald Dahl's writing. And it continues into his *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, where Augustus Gloop disappears into a chocolate river, Violet Beauregarde turns into a blueberry, Mike Teavee becomes miniaturized, and Veruca Salt—well, let's not talk about what happens to Veruca Salt.

So my greatest worry with regard to the 2013 musical adaptation of Dahl's book—which ran for nearly nine months on Broadway and has come to Chicago now in a national touring production—was that it would dilute the mayhem in deference to a mass audience. My misgivings seemed justified too, when the show started with one of history's most insipid songs, explaining how the Candy Man mixes rainbows, dew, chocolate, and love to make the world taste good.

But as it turns out, Augustus, Violet, Mike, and Veruca all get what's coming to them in delightfully grotesque (and nicely engineered) ways. A squirrel ballet during the Veruca segment makes for an amusingly macabre parody of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, and there's something weirdly liberating about the sight of Oompa Loompas toting knives.

I still have my quarrels with *Charlie*. Noah Weisberg's Willy Wonka, in particular, is too transparently benign in the way he manipulates events so that Charlie is sure to succeed him as the chocolate king. He'd be more interesting if he were taken by surprise as Charlie causes his misanthropy to crumble. Also, the second act devolves into an arbitrary succession of set pieces. The spectacle is exhilarating, though, and, yes, satisfyingly gross. —**TONY ADLER** *ROALD DAHL'S CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY* Through 10/21: Wed 2 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, Tue 7:30 PM, Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, 800-775-2000, broadwayinchicago.com, \$22-\$95.

RR Farewell, comrades Rock 'n' Roll sifts through the failed embers of history and kindles a glorious blaze.

On its surface, Tom Stoppard's magisterial play is a jargon-heavy requiem for the Eastern bloc, oscillating scene by scene between the high-table gossip of a Cambridge Marxist academic named Max (H.B. Ward) and the tumultuous ordeal under communism of his hippie transfer student Jan (Julian Hester). Close to three decades in the saga of Czechoslovakia's tug-of-war between the Kremlin and commercial capitalist hegemony play out at the grittiest level of detail: in Prague, Jan and his friends debate the viability of President Gustáv

B-FREE
Through 10/13: various times and locations; see website, 312-369-8330, dance.colum.edu, \$30, \$24 seniors, \$10 students, jam is free.

Husák's normalization policies, while Max and others, in a dozen extremely dense English rows, weigh in on subjects ranging from physicalism versus innatism to Sappho's papyri in the Ashmolean.

If that were all this play was—the ramblings of an unreconstructed tankie, a flower child's forlorn obsession with Western classic rock as his personal antidote to politics—it would hurt to sit through it. Instead, underneath that density of material is a grand object lesson in the loss of innocence. With vehement intensity, the courageous cast of this mammoth two-hour, 45-minute show, directed by Kathy Scambiatterra, sift through the failed embers of history for the theatrical experience of a lifetime.

With the exception of *Ward*, my new favorite Chicago actor, the cast could be less afraid to let their chatterbox lines be the white noise they're written as, evasive smokescreens for unspeakable truths that will out. Nota bene: the key thing with the English is that even they think they're boring. —MAX MALLER **ROCK 'N' ROLL** Through 11/18: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, the Artistic Home, 1376 W. Grand, 866-811-4111, theartistichome.org, \$34.


RR Look what you made me do
The devil's bargains in *Witch* take on extra resonance in the current political climate.

When the devil comes a-knockin' on the door of village pariah Elizabeth (Audrey Francis) to offer a Faustian bargain for her soul, he tries out a unique sales pitch: Everyone in town already believes her to be a witch and treats her accordingly. So why not lean into it and actually reap some perks?

A colloquial, contemporary-language riff on the 1621 drama *The Witch of Edmonton*, Jen Silverman's one-act dark comedy flashes between Satan's (Ryan Hallahan) long-game hard sell to Elizabeth and the much easier time he has raking up the souls of his castle-dwelling male clients. The murder of a personal rival, the inheritance of a name; folks at the top, it would seem, are eager to rationalize cashing in on their sense of morality upon the slightest slip down the social ladder.

In our present moment, when the abuser logic of *look what you made me do* has somehow become a salient political argument, Silverman's meaty, messy, whip-smart script takes on extra resonance.

But Marti Lyons's absorbing and thoughtful production for Writers Theatre touches upon far more than gender and class alone. In noble banquet scenes (gorgeously rendered by scenic designer Yu Shibagaki and prop master Scott Dickens), an entitled brat (Steve Haggard) and his far more admirable adoptive brother (Jon Hudson Odom) debate the expiration dates of humble origin stories and their supposed virtues.

Lyons's cast is compelling from top to bottom (Francis, as a deadpan, strong-willed Elizabeth, is a consistent scene stealer), and without spoiling anything, a shocking sequence fight-choreographed by Matt Hawkins is undoubtedly one of the richest, most visceral scenes to play out on a Chicago stage all year. —DAN JAKES **WITCH** Through 12/16: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2 and 6 PM, Tue 7:30 PM; also Wed 10/17 and 10/24, 3 PM; no 6 PM performances Sun 10/21 and 10/28, Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Ct., Glencoe, 847-242-6000, writerstheatre.org, \$35-\$80. 



HP/COURTESY THE ARTIST

DANCE

B is for 'break' . . . and many other things

Columbia College's B-Free festival spotlights hip-hop and Ephrat Asherie Dance

THE B-SERIES RETURNS to the Dance Center at Columbia College with B-Free, a festival that spotlights hip-hop artists and street dancers who are blurring boundaries between the foundational forms of the art. The *B* in "B-Series" stands for many things, says assistant professor Kelsa Robinson, who has curated the program since its inception in 2013. Originally it meant the "break" in funk and soul records where a drum solo would occur. "Kids at the time considered it the funkier part of the track," Robinson explains, and the dancers who took the floor during that section of the music became known as "B-boys" and "B-girls." It can also mean a breakdown—being swept away by the music "like catching the Holy Ghost in the black church." And finally, she says, it means "'be' as in manifestation—you be whatever you proclaim to be. We have the agency to take whatever condition we're presented with and turn it into a manifestation of our choosing and our vision."

For the first time, the B-Series will be presented in coordination with the Dance Center's Dance Presenting Series, which features the breaking/hip-hop/house/voguing fusion company Ephrat Asherie Dance. In addition to panels and workshops, the festival's central draw is the community jam, featuring a freestyle battle for prizes. "We have been bringing hip-hop more into credit-bearing spaces and into the curriculum [at Columbia]," says Robinson. "We can't re-create the authentic culture of hip-hop in a studio. This is an opportunity for students to experience it in practice." —IRENE HSIAO



Photos: Matthew Murphy

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Beer cheese soup with rye croutons and a back of Miller High Life for drizzling. © MATTHEW GILSON

sociates—“the guy who did the Cheesecake Factory,” a bartender told me, standing under a shimmering copper-etched back bar depicting the Duke and the Dauphin from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Dan'l Webster, the eponymous amphibian from “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County.” On the opposite wall is a 60-foot-long felt collage featuring various other creatures from Twain’s writings.

The food is said to be inspired by the spiral-bound community cookbooks Graham began collecting as a lad in his hometown of Columbia, Missouri. He says he’s amassed around 300 titles as crusty, disparate, and bizarre as *Kissing Wears Out*, *Cooking Doesn’t* and *The Art of Chinese Cooking* by the Benedictine Sisters of Peking, all together featuring everything from calico salad to Watergate cake to lotus root sandwiches.

The chef spins affectionate jokes out of this material. Some of these are presentational—crudites are served with aioli and ranch and Green Goddess dressings in an orange ceramic flower pot. Others are executional: a long beef femur, split and piled with meaty sloppy-joe sauce, is a suburban subdivision version of the luxe marrow beef tartare he served at Travelle, but every bit as pleasurable when the hot, jiggle bone jelly scrambles with a sweet Middle American bolognese on a thick, toasty slice of white bread.

On a large menu to match the sizable 90-seat dining room, Graham indulges in all sorts of improbable-sounding dishes, more than a few of them so unexpectedly successful that you wonder what other secrets the churches and ladies’ clubs of central Missouri have been quietly disseminating among themselves.

Here’s one secret from Columbia, the signature appetizer of a thirtysomething-year-old jazz club called Murry’s: rings of green bell pepper battered, deep-fried, and sprinkled with confectioners’ sugar like a state-fair nightmare mom might foist upon you just to get a vegetable down your throat. Graham has jacked this dish (with credit to its inventor, a mysterious “Brock”), and it’s a surprisingly reasonable drinking snack, the sweetness balancing the greenery clad in irregularly adhered patches of crunch, light tempura.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Logan Square’s Twain blows up rural midwestern classics

Former Travelle chef Tim Graham’s menu channels a Mississippian wit.

By MIKE SULA

Ants on a log is a good walk spoiled.

—MARK TWAIN

He didn’t say that. But he probably would have, because whoever it was that first thought of smearing peanut butter into the cavity of a raw celery stick and then punctuating it with a line of black raisins was barely human.

So it’s alarming to see that the very first dish on the menu at Twain, a new restaurant from chef Tim Graham and his sommelier-partner-spouse, Rebekeh Graham, is “ants on a log.”

But if you’ve followed this chef’s career from Tru to Paris Club to Travelle, you know this will be something different. And it is. The celery’s raw vegetal punch and mandible-resistant structure remain, while the stalk is filled with duck liver mousse, thickened and sweetened with peanut butter and brown sugar, then topped with a row of bourbon-preserved cherries. It’s still a weirdo in the world class of after-school snacks, but it’s

actually something that defies expectation, and is therefore something worth eating. Once is probably enough.

Twain sits in an old auto body shop in Logan Square, along the stretch of mostly quality clubs, bars, and restaurants that have sprouted like mushrooms over the last few years in what is subsequently becoming a place to avoid on weekends, when it’s descended upon by people who don’t live in the city, much less the neighborhood.

The last time a Milwaukee Avenue entertainment venue tried even indirectly to associate itself with a dead white writer, all hell broke loose. That was last June, when a bunch of people got mad at a bar named Neon Wilderness that opened in Nelson Algren’s old hood.

The Grahams’ references to Samuel Clemens and Mississippi River lore are a little less circumspect, but if any English professors are triggered, nobody else seems to mind. Twain himself is referred to in design elements by architects Jordan Mozer & As-



Wedge salad with roasted tomato, Green Goddess dressing, and a “bacon steak.”
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Cream puff with blueberries and ice cream
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The 60-foot-long collage features creatures from Twain. © MATTHEW GILSON

The menu is a parade of the irresistibly absurd. There's a thick, hollowed-out baked russet potato shell—the crunchiest potato chip on the river—cradling a deposit of soft, squishy gnocchi loaded with bacon, smoked sour cream, and gooey cheddar Mornay sauce. For beer cheese soup you're meant to dilute at your own discretion a thick alloy of sharp Hook's white cheddar, pureed carrot, and red pepper with dribbles from a High Life pony bottle like a splash of sherry. An abrupt swivel toward Japan is expressed by a surf-and-turf tower of meat loaf with thick, nori-seasoned onion rings and glazed freshwater eel. These rise from a pool of swampy, slightly sweet beef gravy alongside smooth mashed potatoes whipped with red miso, a

trick I'm confident will go over huge at any Thanksgiving provided you don't tell anyone over the age 50 or below the age of ten.

More straightforward supper-club and Caucasian country-cooking classics are nonetheless swollen with an exaggerated meatiness and the tongue-in-cheek attentions of a chef trained in the crowd-pleasing ways of the Lettuce Entertain You empire. A rich, livery braunschweiger pâté, smeared on rye with spicy mustard and raw onions, feels like a day-drinking snack in Janesville, Wisconsin. A wedge of iceberg thoroughly smothered in tarragon-powered Green Goddess and sided by concentrated roasted tomatoes props up a “bacon steak,” a slab thick enough to inflict a bruise in the wrong

hands. Thyme- and rosemary-scented dumplings are larded with crispy chicken skin and a chicken-fat roux that thickens their gravy, while a similarly easy-on-the-jaws crock of spoon bread is saturated with the discharged juice of cider-glazed pork shoulder. The same piece of Catalpa Farms pig is cured, shaved, and plated with sharp cheddar, which makes for a fine ham-and-cheese sandwich between the soft, superrisen Amish-style white bread smeared with butter compounded with chile-tinged beef fat. The VFW hall of your dewey-eyed daydreams is conjured up with crispy battered-and-fried fresh lake perch and fried spuds, preboiled and shaken in the colander to achieve a crispy, scuffed multitexture.

Executionally it's not all warm and fuzzy. One evening my table took a wrong turn toward Mexico with a stringy overbraised hunk of short rib atop a heap of pinto and red beans with pico de gallo, while a duo of lush pork cheek and overdone pork chop put up too much resistance under a light application of creamy veal-based blanquette sauce with poached onions, mushroom, and cauliflower. On another night, thick and undercooked cream-cheese-blended turnover dough engulfed a scant filling of mushroom duxelles.

Desserts—which, in full disclosure, appeared en masse one evening unordered—are by former Travelle/Langham Hotel pastry chef Stefanie Bishop, and they hit the same target as the savory side of the menu does, with an intensely bittersweet mud pie, its chocolate crust nearly as thick as its dark mousse topside. A tottering cream puff barely contains blueberries and a full moon of hand-cranked corn ice cream. The iconic, gooey butter cake of Saint Louis is here a

risen puck, half as gooey as your mom's, set on a smear of peach sauce and topped with rosemary-scented roasted peaches and a tangy yogurt mousse.

Rebekah Graham handles the drinks and goes a bit off script with a fine manhattan, poured in a NYC-style Greek diner paper cup that does it no favors, and other oddities like the Shrimp Cocktail, a gin daiquiri garnished with a whole shrimp, and the Jam Jar, a concoction in which orange marmalade and dill-infused aquavit duke it out. The beer list is short and almost all local, and the wine list is manageable, though the sommelier herself one evening picked out the perfectly tannic Greek red Glinavos, suited to a broad range of the dishes, that I never would have suspected.

A few weeks ago I wrote about Mark Steuer's irreverent approach to both the German food of his ancestors and the southern food of his upbringing at West Town's Funkenhausen, and that's of a kind with the way Graham has tackled the rural, white midwest. I don't know how essential the ghost of Mark Twain is to the concept, but the food here is definitely tied to a real place and is expressed though a talent that confounds and surpasses expectations of it. I don't know if Mark Twain would be into it—he didn't like tamarind after all, or the people who eat it.* But he really did say this: “Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.” So maybe he would be. I'm definitely on board.

* “Only strangers eat tamarind—and they only eat them only once.”

@MikeSula



Punk's not dead— and it's not white either

The Black, Brown, and Indigenous Crew connects underground music with radical politics to make a community with room for everyone.

By **KERRY CARDOZA**

In 2012, Shanna Collins went to her first black-run DIY punk show in Chicago. It wasn't long after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot dead in Florida while walking to the home of his father's girlfriend carrying a can of Arizona fruit juice cocktail and a bag of Skittles. "I was experiencing a lot of anger," she says. "A lot of disenchantment with a lot of systems."

At that show, Collins saw right away that punk might be a good outlet for that anger. She was 23 and growing increasingly interested in radical politics. "I was looking for answers that institutions weren't giving me," she says. ➔



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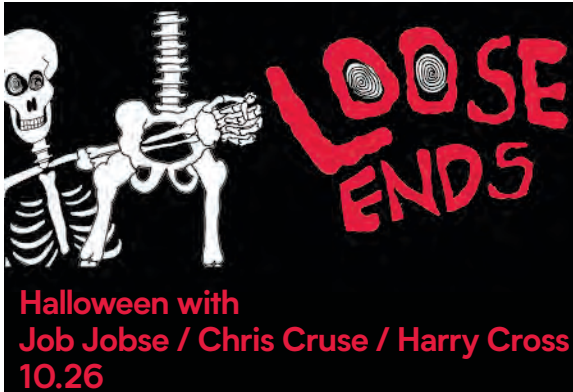
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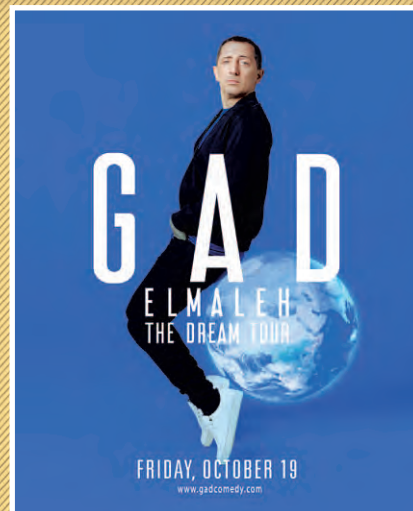
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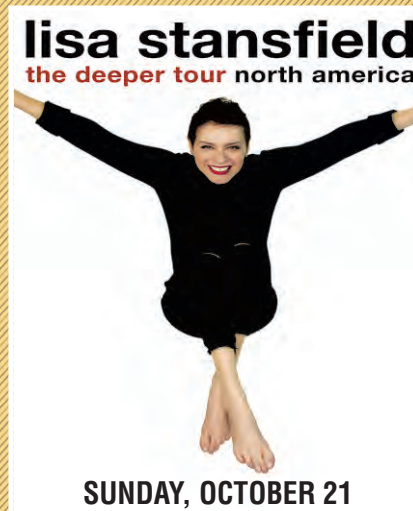
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continued from 24

A few years earlier, while enrolled at Knox College in downstate Galesburg, Illinois, Collins had traveled abroad to study in Botswana. “Being one of the few black folks at college was taking its toll on me,” she says. “I needed to be as far away from the United States as possible.”

Once back in the U.S., she continued to look for pathways to liberation that felt authentic to her, and in 2013 that search led her to her first Black and Brown Punk Show festival. This more or less annual event, also known as BnB Fest, was launched in 2010 by Monika Estrella Negra and Donté Oxun, founders of the Black and Brown Punk Show Collective. It explicitly showcased bands featuring people of color, with proceeds from the door donated to inclusive, revolutionary political causes and organizations. The collective and its festival supported communities of color through arts, activism, and fund-raising, and worked to challenge oppressive attitudes in the DIY scene, particularly against LGBTQ people.

Estrella Negra met Collins, who identifies as queer, through the basement punk scene, and invited her to that black-run show in 2012. Collins remembers her first BnB Fest as an eye-opening experience. “I was learning about radical politics. I was learning about environmentalism. I was learning

about black rights, black power,” she says. “I wanted to be part of that.”

In 2017, Collins became a member of the Black and Brown Punk Show Collective herself. After that year’s festival, the group decided to reorganize itself as the Black, Brown, and Indigenous Crew (BBIC), which they consider an extension of the Black and Brown project Estrella Negra and Oxun began. “We wanted to continue to do the work that previous organizers were doing,” Collins says.

The festival is also a little different this year, though with the same mission in its heart. Previously it lasted an entire weekend, but for 2018 it’s just one day: On Saturday, October 20, at DIY venue Caliwaukee North, BBIC hosts a mini fest featuring seven local bands and three workshops. (If you need the address, e-mail the organizers at bbicchicago@gmail.com.)

BBIC hadn’t planned on throwing a festival this year (the BnB Fest was usually in August), but a few months ago its members decided that the good it could do would be worth the effort—as the collective put it, “The presence of black, brown, and indigenous people is needed in punk.” The name of this year’s event, “The Resurrection,” doubles as a reassurance that the festival, though it’s happening late, isn’t going anywhere—and as an announcement that the

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The fest also includes the workshops “Decolonizing Punk Rock: Understanding Indigenous Identity,” “Alternatives to Calling the Police During Mental Health Crises,” and “Punks and Zines: Self Publishing for Our Movements.” Sat 10/20, workshops at 4 PM, bands at 8 PM, Caliwaukee North, bbicchicago@gmail.com for details, \$5-\$10 donation requested, all-ages

forgotten about,” he says. But every music scene needs fresh blood to stay healthy, as older folks age out and start staying home. Most of the kids in the YouMedia program are into hip-hop, Ramirez says, and the preshow let them see young people making other styles of music—and it gave everyone the chance to perform for a wider audience.

Ramirez was a teenager himself when he got hooked on punk. As a student at East Leyden High in northwest suburban Franklin Park, he was mostly a loner, having moved there from Canaryville on the south side. But one day when he was about 16, some classmates he played with in the school band invited him to hang out after classes—and through them, he first heard punk music. “I started going to basement shows and living in houses that had shows,” he says. “It was all about feeling accepted, finally feeling like there was a group of people I fit in with as an outcast. That’s what drew me in.”

Ramirez, now 32, started going to DIY shows in 2004, and he says the scene has gotten noticeably more diverse since then—though there’s plenty of room left for improvement. Kyle Ozero, singer and guitarist for the Breathing Light, gives Black and Brown a lot of credit for that change. The Breathing Light has played the festival every year since 2012, and Ozero remembers that the BnB collective began in part because so few such events catered specifically to black DIY bands. The shortage was even more painfully acute after Afropunk cofounder James Spooner parted ways with that festival in 2008—since then it’s become more and more corporatized.

The punk scene in Chicago has always been segregated, much like the city. White punks tend to live and play shows on the north side, while people of color tend to live and have shows on the south side. Ozero says that the original BnB organizers’ goals included closing the gap between black and Latino punks on the south side.

“A lot of people have kind of felt validated and seen,” Ozero says. “The Pilsen Latino punk scene—it had its own politics. Those were the politics of all the punks around. And that was great—because, as a black person, I got to see the Latino experience and their politics and issues that they’re going through. A lot of conversations and viewpoints opened up. We were able to bridge cultural experiences and shared experiences.”

Estrella Negra, who’s moved to Philadelphia and no longer participates in the ➔

spirit of Black and Brown lives on in BBIC.

The festival includes plenty of hardcore, but not every act plays fast, aggressive punk. Frank Waln is a Sicangu Lakota rapper, born on the Rosebud reservation in South Dakota, who moved to Chicago to pursue a hip-hop career. The Breathing Light play Sun Ra-inspired, futurist punk. Blacker Face combine gospel-inflected vocals with blues and funk in their otherworldly tunes. The lineup is sonically diverse on purpose.

Ephran Ramirez Jr., the newest of BBIC’s four current members, points out that the variety of sounds in the lineup—with several artists who don’t play “your typical punk music”—is a deliberate choice. For the collective, punk is an outlook and an approach more than it is an aesthetic.

Ramirez, who identifies as queer, cisgender, and Puerto Rican, joined BBIC this past summer, after getting involved with an early iteration of BnB in 2013. He believes it’s crucial to have a fest centered on punks of color. “People forget that punk has its roots in black music, and that black people and other people of color have been involved in punk since the beginning,” he says. “A lot of people see punk as a white genre. It’s pretty frustrating.”

Ramirez helped organize a preshow for the BBIC festival last week at the Harold Washington Library, where he works as the lead STEM mentor for the YouMedia Center. The bill included teen performers from the YouMedia program. “I feel like youth often get



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- Oct 25**  **Soulection:**
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- Oct 26**  **Tank and the Bangas & Big Freedia**
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continued from 26

Chicago collective, says she initially focused on creating a welcoming environment for queer, trans, and intersex people of color (QTIPOC). “Chicago has a pretty expansive underground music scene, but it can be ofentimes homogenous, with a lot of cis white men gatekeeping,” she says. “We had this idea of creating a safe space for us to actually exist and also network with other black and brown folks in subversive spaces from around the country.”

What Estrella Negra and Oxun started in Chicago has since spread to other cities: Break Free Fest in Philadelphia, the Universe Is Lit in Oakland, and BnB-inspired events in New Orleans, Houston, and Atlanta. “They started a whole revolution from Chicago—black people and other brown people starting festivals and giving platforms to bands that never had it before,” Ozero says. “It’s way bigger than Chicago, and I kind of wish people knew that, because it’s growing. It’s growing like crazy.”

Estrella Negra is especially glad to see other organizers stick with the model of self-sufficiency and self-determination. “I’m really happy that the idea is getting spread

around, versus the corporatization of Afro-punk and co-optation of radical subculture,” she says. “I like it just to be a very fluid thing, because every festival is different depending on where you are in the country, and every culture is different. I just want to keep it kind of in the hands of the people that actually want to create those spaces for themselves.”

Representation is a huge motivator for everyone who gets involved in the Black and Brown fests. “People talk about punk as this very white-dominated, this very cis-dominated, male-dominated space,” Collins says. “My introduction to punk was not through that. It was through black folks, people of color, who were doing really radical things. I really want other black folks, other people of color, who are not familiar with punk to be introduced to it that way.”

Blacker Face bassist PT Bell applauds the collective for what it does not just at the festival but also throughout the year—which includes putting together benefit shows, DJ nights, movie screenings, and art shows as well as posting educational content on



Megjiapa
MICHELLE PEARSON

acknowledge that indigenous cultures and indigenous people deserve our support here. So we wanted to bring that to the forefront at this festival.”

The workshops offered at the festival also intend to educate and uplift. “Decolonizing Punk Rock: Understanding Indigenous Identity” is an opportunity for participants to learn what it means to be indigenous in punk. “Alternatives to Calling the Police During Mental Health Crises” is a hands-on workshop, facilitated by a local group of the same name, aimed at training people in de-escalation in order to protect mentally ill and psychiatrically disabled people from the danger of police intervention. And “Punks and Zines: Self Publishing for Our Movements,” presented by Brown and Proud Press, teaches the basics of making a DIY zine.

This year’s BBIC participants—organizers and musicians alike—hope that the festival can continue to open up the Chicago scene to more black and brown folks.

“To me, what’s important is empowering people to do more, to get involved in punk, to not feel alienated from these scenes, to dispel all the myths about this being a white genre of music, and just to make our scene more diverse in general in the long run—because obviously the more diverse, the better,” Ramirez says. “And I would really love if more bands that are primarily black and brown just started coming up out of the woodwork.”

Collins hopes that she can share her experience of being embraced by the scene with other people of color. “Punk has just been a great way for me to express my anger at the system—my anger at racism, sexism, and all types of oppression,” she says. “They made a space for me, and so that’s what I continue to want to introduce to other people—other people who look like me, other people who are just as oppressed as me.”

She also stresses that music can be an accessible pathway to radical politics. “What I hope that people get out of this is that punk is a valid form of resistance,” she says. “Our understanding of punk and hardcore music is in no way ever apolitical. This music articulates the rage of our ancestors. This is as much for them as it is for the next generation of kids who have a chip on their shoulder toward policing, prisons, immigration raids, and trauma. We’re here for them.”

BBIC also keeps in mind the group’s original goal of uplifting communities. In 2017 its members hosted a series of fund-raising events for a local punk named JT who’d been picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and held in a deportation center. (JT was eventually released.) And earlier this year, BBIC hosted an art show whose proceeds benefited not only the festival but also two community groups: Chicago Boricua Resistance, which advocates for Puerto Ricans on the island and in the diaspora, and Brown and Proud Press, a local POC collective that offers opportunities for healing through creative writing, public readings, workshops, and more.

The beneficiary of this year’s festival, the Chi-Nations Youth Council, is a local youth-led Native American organization with a focus on environmental and social justice. “We have to acknowledge that we live on stolen land,” Collins says. “And we have to



Blacker Face
EGON SCHIELE

Twitter @booksnotboys

PICK OF THE WEEK

Resurrected NWOBHM greets Satan conjure timeless evil on *Cruel Magic*



STEFAN ROSIC

SATAN, DAMIEN THORNE, MIDNIGHT DICE

Thu 10/11, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$20, \$18 in advance. 17+

SATAN FORMED IN 1979 and went on to become one of the biggest names in the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. The band brought a meaner, faster sound to the movement than their peers, operating closer to the vein that thrash bands would come to dominate in the metal world a short time later. Satan broke up and got back together a couple times following their initial ten-year run—at different stretches they even transformed into the bands Blind Fury and Pariah—but since officially reuniting in 2011, they've maintained the same lineup that recorded their 1983 debut, *Court in the Act*, and throughout

this decade they've been releasing a steady stream of totally great records. Last month's *Cruel Magic* (Metal Blade) is a heavy-hitting classic-metal masterpiece that brims with all the over-the-top delights of the band's early days: joyous choruses that praise the Prince of Darkness, double-timed drums galloping along, harmonized guitar leads, and crushing riffs. *Cruel Magic* has to be one of the most epic, perfectly evil, and beautifully timeless records ever put together by a resurrected metal giant. Nostalgia be damned—Satan are forever the real thing.

—LUCA CIMARUSTI



Air Credits GRAHAM GARDNER

THURSDAY 11

AIR CREDITS *Sims and Serengeti* open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$15. 21+

The members of Minneapolis hip-hop collective Doomtree appear to have a soft spot for Chicagoans. In June, their label (also called Doomtree) dropped a full-length collaboration between their producer Lazerbeak and veteran Chicago rapper Longshot. In August, Doomtree put out *Arteria Verité*, an album that brings together group member Sims (and his recent go-to producer, Icetep) and futuristic Chicago rap group Air Credits—i.e., Hood Internet producer Steve Reidell and rapper ShowYouSuck). Air Credits' debut album, 2016's *Broadcasted*, features two guest verses from Sims, who soon enlisted the Chicagoans as support for his headlining tour behind 2016's *More Than Ever* (Icetep was behind six of the 13 songs on that album). The foursome clearly established a rapport before they began working on *Arteria Verité*, and it's evident in the postboogie flair of "Bitchin Technology" and the jittery, dramatically triumphant anthem "All I Do Is This." *Arteria Verité* focuses on the dystopian near future Air Credits have explored throughout their brief time as a band, and here, Sims's playfully punchy verses and ShowYouSuck's lackadaisical yet forceful flow combine to find inspiration and joy in a tumultuous world. Before Sims headlines tonight's show he'll join Air Credits to perform songs off *Arteria Verité*. —LEOR GALIL

SATAN See *Pick of the Week* at left. Damien Thorne and Midnight Dice open. 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$20, \$18 in advance. 17+

FRIDAY 12

TOBY DRIVER *Uuskhy and Canter* open. 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 235 N. Ashland, \$13, \$10 in advance. 17+

Few people in heavy music are as versatile or prolific as New York multi-instrumentalist and ➔

3/2ures

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MUSIC

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Kuzu: Tyler Damon,
Dave Rempis, and
Tashi Dorji
© JULIA DRATEL

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singer Toby Driver. With his exploratory bands Kayo Dot, Maudlin of the Well, and Vaura; his electro-goth group Piggy Black Cross; and his long list of other collaborative and solo projects, he's consistently digging into new sounds and textures, sometimes engineering unlikely combinations of influences—avant-garde metal, jazz, postrock—even within a single track. On his second solo album, last year's *Madonnawhore* (The Flenser), he annexes still more fresh territory, making his first full-scale venture into ballads. With a palette of spacious atmospheres created by minimalist guitars and electronics, these somber, cinematic songs occupy a space of contemplation, longing, and grief, but the inventive arrangements and the gossamer touch of the processed vocals and guitars keep the music from feeling weighed down by those emotions. If Driver was dipping a proverbial toe into these waters on *Madonnawhore*, then on last month's *They Are the Shield* (Blood Music) he's immersed himself completely. With a team of like-minded talents, including avant-garde violinists Conrad Harris and Pauline Kim Harris, experimental pianist Kelly Moran, and Yeah Yeah Yeahs drummer Brian Chase, Driver augments the lonely, dreamy moods of his previous album with shimmering string arrangements and a bigger, more complex backdrop of cool electronics and darkly romantic atmospheres—it feels like a midnight sky embracing the lights of a city beneath it. Driver foregrounds vocals here more than he ever has before, both his own and those of Bridget Bellavia from Piggy Black Cross (who also works with Driver and Chase in synth-rock band Paranoid Fiction)—she delivers a stunning guest turn on “Scaffolds of Digital Snow.” Fans who love only Driver's noisy, jarring bands should probably move along, but if you're wondering what a committed adventurer like him would do with the torch song, this show is a great way to find out. —JAMIE LUDWIG

tial to Chicago's jazz and improvised music scene, they aren't entirely altruistic; they create multiple opportunities for him to play his alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones. Since he formed Triage with drummer Tim Daisy and bassist Gordon Lewis (later replaced by Jason Ajemian) 21 years ago, Rempis has thrived in improvising trios with collaborators who project musical identities as distinct and uncompromising as his own. His latest such project is Kuzu, with electric guitarist Tashi Dorji, who operates out of Asheville, North Carolina, and drummer Tyler Damon, a recent transplant to Chicago from Bloomington, Indiana. Damon and Dorji, who've been playing together since 2015, are improvisers who bonded over common formative experiences in punk subcultures (hardcore for Dorji, skateboarding for Damon) and a shared desire to make music that uses loudness, spontaneity, and untethered chops to project intensity but not aggression. As a duo their music is in constant flux, shifting from nuanced rhythmic explorations to monolithic walls of sound. On Kuzu's debut LP, *Hiljaisuus* (Astral Spirits), which was recorded a year ago at Elastic Arts, Rempis plunges right into the duo's evolving dynamic. His low baritone moans add gravity to the avalanche flow on “Gash,” and his peppery alto amplifies the lurching extremes in “Fontanelle 2.” Tonight the trio will return to the scene of the recording to celebrate its release. —BILL MEYER

RESTORATIONS *Wild Pink and Signals Midwest*
open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western,
\$15. 21+

The best emo bands are the ones led by artists who follow the genre tradition of using music as a tool for self-examination in a lifelong quest toward maturity and growth, and capturing specific moments of personal evolution each time their band cuts an album. On September's *LP5000* (Tiny Engines), Philadelphia fivesome Restorations sound like the same great band that for a decade has been translating blue-collar Springsteenisms into bursts of well-fed emo catharsis. The difference between their albums is in the small details, and with the recent *LP5000*, it's in their lyrical exploration of that revelatory moment in your mid-30s where you stop focusing on just yourself and start establishing a new life with a family (and all the minutiae that come

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IDRIS ACKAMOR
& THE PYRAMIDS

FRI
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NEW ON SALE: 11/7: AJANI JONES & BOATHOUSE, 11/17: THE SEA AND CAKE, 11/25: CHASTITY, 11/29: DRAB MAJESTY, 12/16: ADRIAN YOUNGE & ALI SHAHEED MUHAMMAD, 12/21: PLATTENBAU, 1/22: ANIKA, 2/9: NAKED GIANTS

SATURDAY 13

KUZU Shells open. 9 PM, Elastic, 3429 W.
Diversey, \$10. 21+

Dave Rempis is an indefatigable concert organizer and bandleader. While his activities are essen-



Idris Ackamoor & the Pyramids
 © PAT MAZZERA

with that). On two of the best tracks on the record, "Remains" and "The Red Door," Restorations wrestle with gentrification, and they do so on a molecular, everyday level, capturing what it is to feel powerless

against the forces that erase communities of color and build spotless spaces for the wealthy. Restorations put forth no solutions, but their clear-eyed, forceful songs offer fuel for those fighting seeming-

ly hopeless struggles, and suggest that some resolution is possible through a lifetime dedicated to improving the world around you. —LEOR GALIL

SUNDAY14

IDRIS ACKAMOOR & THE PYRAMIDS 8:30 PM, *Empty Bottle*, 1025 N. Western, \$15, \$12 in advance. 21+

More people of consequence have passed through Yellow Springs, Ohio, than you might imagine. The home of liberal-leaning Antioch College, the town hosted Coretta Scott King as a student in the 40s; punk vocalist Mia Zapata founded the Gits there

in 1986; and comedian Dave Chappelle currently calls the place home. In 1972, the Pyramids, a jazz band made up of Antioch students and led by Chicago-born saxophonist Idris Ackamoor, began performing while studying abroad in Europe, Ghana, and Kenya. Following their return to Yellow Springs, the troupe cut two albums before decamping to San Francisco. *Birth/Speed/Merging*, from 1976, serves as a culmination of the group's work during that period, and on that sought-after slab, Ackamoor takes an approach not unlike that of Pharoah Sanders, throwing off knotty melodies, free passages, and finding support in a coterie of percussionists. The record, which serves as a culmination of the group's work during that period, also marks the Pyramids' end until 2011, when the saxophonist resurrected the troupe and set out on a run of ➔

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10/28 - Brett Newski / Miles Nielsen / Even Bigger
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MUSIC



Lou Mallozzi
(left) and
Douglas Ewart
SANDRA BINION;
GLEN STUBBE



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three recordings. The group's most recent release, this year's *An Angel Fell* (Strut), amps up their funk influences and extends the bandleader's ties to Chicago with unabashed Sun Ra references: "Land of Ra," for example, features some chants about exploring, traveling through space, and looking for ways to heal the planet. "Soliloquy for Michael Brown" takes a solemn tone throughout its nine minutes as Ackamoor, violinist Sandra Poidexter, and guitarist David Molina mourn the young black man whose death in Ferguson, Missouri, ignited protests against police violence. Live, the Pyramids might come off like a funkier version of the Arkestra, a sonic persona they explore throughout the album—poignantly so on "Message to My People." Ackamoor's desire to investigate vast modes of expression (he coruns the San Francisco music and performance arts organization Cultural Odyssey with performer and educator Rhodessa Jones) might have taken him away from Chicago, but his music clearly remains rooted here. —DAVE CANTOR

KEN MODE *Birds in Row, Something Is Waiting, and Meth.* open. 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$12, 17+

When a band has been hammering out metallic noise rock with enough intensity to blow down a skyscraper for nearly 20 years, a new release full of expertly crushing music is always welcome,

but hardly a surprise. On their seventh full-length, *Loved* (Season of Mist), Winnipeg trio KEN Mode (named after Henry Rollins's bleak expression "kill everything now mode," from his days on the Black Flag tour for *My War*) lay out another blistering nine tracks of the hard stuff they've become known for, though they never settle into a formula. The group channel Unsane, Helmet, and Rollins Band but loosen up the laserlike focus of those influences to produce explosive, dirgey noise that swings, groins, and drags along through walls of feedback and sax squonk (the latter provided by guest musician Katherine Kerr). On top of all that, vocalist and guitarist Jesse Mathewson issues some of the most emotionally gutting and larynx-shredding vocals I've ever heard. KEN Mode isn't reinventing itself on *Loved*, but when a band has mastered the art of creating something this raw and powerful, that's just fine. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

MONDAY 15

LOU MALLOZZI & DOUGLAS EWART 7:30 PM, Experimental Sound Studio, 5925 N. Ravenswood, \$70, \$8 for students. 18

Lou Mallozzi and Douglas Ewart are both seasoned interdisciplinary artists who approach sound and music from a multitude of perspectives. Mallozzi, who founded Experimental Sound Studios (ESS)

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT GOTTEN THEIR JUST DUES by PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE



IN MEMORIAM OTIS RUSH

THE WORLD LOST ONE OF ITS GREATEST ELECTRIC BLUESMEN ON SEPTEMBER 29. OTIS RUSH IS HARDLY A SECRET, BUT HE'S TOO IMPORTANT TO CHICAGO MUSIC TO LET HIS PASSING GO UNACKNOWLEDGED. BORN NEAR PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI, ON APRIL 27, 1935 (OR 1934 ACCORDING TO MOST BIOGRAPHERS), RUSH MOVED TO THE WINDY CITY WITH HIS FAMILY IN 1948. HE WAS INSPIRED TO PURSUE MUSIC AFTER SEEING MUDDY WATERS PLAY, AND SOON BEGAN GIGGING ON THE WEST & SOUTH SIDES. HE MADE HIS DEBUT RECORDINGS FOR COBRA IN 1966, AND HIS 1ST OF 8 SINGLES FOR THE LABEL, THE HUGE INFLUENTIAL "I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY" (WRITTEN BY WILLIE DIXON), WAS ALSO HIS ONLY CHART HIT. IT SHOWCASES RUSH'S DISTINCTIVE HIGH-ENERGY, SLOW-BURNING GUITAR STYLE, AND WAS FAMOUSLY COVERED BY LED ZEPPELIN ON THEIR 1ST LP, THE LIVES OF ERIC CLAPTON, PETER GREEN, AND MIKE BLOOMFIELD WERE ALSO INSPIRED BY RUSH'S COBRA SINGLES, INCLUDING "DOUBLE TROUBLE" AND "ALL YOUR LOVE (I MISS LOVING)," WHICH EXEMPLIFIED WHAT BECAME KNOWN AS THE "WEST SIDE" STYLE OF CHICAGO BLUES. RUSH WAS A LEFTY, AND PLAYED RIGHT-HANDED GUITARS FLIPPED OVER OR LEFT-HANDED GUITARS STRUNG UPSIDE DOWN, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO HIS SINGULAR SOUND. AFTER COBRA FOLDED IN 1969, RUSH SIGNED TO CHESS, RECORDING A FLURRY OF SINGLES, SOME OF WHICH APPEARED ON THE '69 COMPILATION "DOOR TO DOOR." HE WENT ON TO RELEASE MUSIC THROUGH MANY LABELS—AMONG THEM DUKE, VANGUARD, AND COTILLION IN THE 60S AND BULLFROG, DELMARK, AND SONET IN THE 70S—ALL WHILE TOURING THE WORLD, INCLUDING WITH THE 1966 EDITION OF THE AMERICAN FOLK BLUES FESTIVAL. HE TOOK A BREAK AT THE END OF THE 70S, THEN RETURNED IN 1988 WITH THE LIVE LP "TOPS." HE HITA LATE CAREER-HIGH WITH 1994'S "AIN'T ENOUGH COMIN' IN," THEN WON A GRAMMY IN 1999 FOR "ANY PLACE I'M GOING." RUSH KEPT PERFORMING UNTIL 2004, WHEN HE SUFFERED A STROKE. HE WAS HONORED AT THE 2016 CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL, AND JUNE 12 WAS DECLARED OTIS RUSH DAY.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC" ON "OUTSIDE THE LOOP" ON WGN RADIO 720 AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN. COMMENTS, IDEAS TO ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDE THE LOOPRADIO.COM pl2sticcw@hotmail.com

Mallozzi) commissioned a sound installation created by Ewart and George Lewis titled *Rio Negro*. For this show, Mallozzi and Ewart will play a duo improv set under the name Lunch With Money, and while they'll focus on music, it's hard to imagine that their vast experimentation in other disciplines won't inform their playing. —IZZY YELLIN

TUESDAY 16

CHRISTINA AGUILERA See also Wednesday. *Big Boi* opens. 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$79.50-\$199.50. 

The musical catalog of Christina Aguilera has always been erratic and somewhat frustrating. Gifted with a powerful, operatic voice, she's struggled to find material worthy of her natural talent. In her nearly 20 years as a solo artist, she's never managed to make an album consistent enough from front to back to rival those of her Disney Channel peers, such as Britney Spears's 2003 record *In the Zone* or Justin Timberlake's 2006 release *FutureSex/LoveSounds*. That hasn't chaged on *Liberation* (RCA), her first album in six years. The record is too long and unfocused, and there's no single that rivals the lascivious hook of her breakout hit, "Genie in a Bottle." But for pop fans, it still has its pleasures. It's always fun to hear Christina Aguilera display the full gospel power of her battle cry over some disposable dance beat, as on "Sick of Sittin,'" where she wails about how she's not going to just sit by and let herself be constrained by people or circumstance, with the fervor usually reserved for sending prayers to the pearly gates. The slinky reggae-flavored "Right Moves," which features Jamaican singers Keida and Shenseea, delivers a calculated but effective sexy charge that ➔



Christina Aguilera @ LUKE GILFORD

over 30 years ago, most recently exhibited a site-specific installation at gallery Sector 2337 that's composed of two works, one of which involves sound and its interaction in space. That's a common thread for Mallozzi no matter which primary medium he's working in, but while his installation centered around barely audible sounds in a room with subtle visual manipulations, his performances often have him expressing another side of his explorations, often using turntables and electronics to produce twitchy organic figures that

boldly take up the room. Beyond his endeavors as a composer and woodwind artist, Ewart invents and builds instruments—some of which he'll play at ESS tonight. He values the visual aesthetics of his creations as much as their functionality; repurposing old crutches and skis, he makes didgeridoos from scratch, and always adds ornate details that make them sculptures worthy of display whether or not they're being played. As peers and collaborators, Mallozzi and Ewart go way back. Notably, in 1992 ESS (then under the direction of

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 1/10 Isabella Rossellini
 1/13 Kathy Mattea

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13 8PM

Glorietta featuring Matthew Logan Vasquez (Delta Spirit), Noah Gunderson, David Ramirez, Kelsey Wilson (Wild Child), Adrian Quesada (Groupo, Brown Out, Spanish Gold), and Jason Blum

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13 5PM

Melanie In Szold Hall

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14 7PM

James McMurtry

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16 7:30PM

Lisa Loeb

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18 7PM

Henry Kapono

Welcome 2 My Paradise Tour
 In Szold Hall

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20 8PM

The Martin Hayes Quartet

featuring Dennis Cahill, Liz Knowles, and Doug Wieselman

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21 7PM

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continued from 33

demonstrates that Aguilera can coo as persuasively as she roars: "Banging in my chest / I must confess / It's not the only thing that's pounding out." On the same track the gigantically schmaltzy statement of eternal love "I don't want a canary / Unless it's with you" is as ridiculous and overwhelming as anyone could want something so excessively sentimental to be. And though Aguilera may never deliver a great album, her performance on *Liberation* suggests she's in no danger of losing her voice anytime soon.

—NOAH BERLATSKY

WEDNESDAY 17

CHRISTINA AGUILERA See Tuesday. *Big Boi* opens. 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$79.50-\$199.50. 🎧

THIN LIPS *Cheer Up, Black Sandwich, and Girl K* opens. 8 PM, Subterranean, 2011 W. North, \$8. 17+

Chosen Family (Lame-O), the new record from Philadelphia trio Thin Lips, opens with a snippet from a conversation in which vocalist Chrissy Tashjian lays out her understanding of queerness, saying, "Queer to me means boundary pushing and



Owen Ashworth of
Advance Base
 © JEFF MARINI

love and community and relationship." Fittingly, on this album the band reach beyond the rambunctious indie punk of their debut, *Riff Hard*. They put a lot of thought into the slow simmer of "It's Hard to Tell the Difference When You're Afraid of Literally Everything" or the bass-forward "I Know That I'm the Asshole," and their use of synths and slide guitar expands their sound without compromising their core of catchy tunes and crunchy riffs. Though there's an abundance of joyful freedom in their music, Thin Lips don't ignore the hardships of liv-

ing outside of heteronormative society. Tashjian's lyrical targets include the complexity of queer sex, dating while touring, losing loved ones, and failing to fulfill the expectations of family and society. It's a heavy mixture, but even in the album's darkest moments, there's always an anthemic chorus head to provide much-needed catharsis. When Thin Lips were here last year, they opened for kindred spirits Worriers. After seeing their growth on *Chosen Family*, I'm not surprised they've snagged the headlining spot this time. —ED BLAIR

ADVANCE BASE *Friendship and Spencer Radcliffe & Everyone Else* open. *Hideout*, 1354 W Wabansia, \$10. 21+

In 2015, Chicago singer-songwriter Owen Ashworth told me he considered *Nephew in the Wild*, the then-forthcoming second album of his solo project Advance Base, a make-or-break effort: "The fate of this record will decide how much time I can put into music in the future, as far as how much I share with the world." Since then, the indie veteran has noticeably ramped up his label, Orindal, which began as a vehicle to release his own work but has since blossomed into a valuable outlet that champions a loose coterie of musicians who share his deft grip on atmosphere and intimacy (the July debut album from Gia Margaret, *There's Always Glimmer*, is the latest great addition to the label). Though juggling fatherhood and Ordinal made it difficult for Ashworth to find time for his own work, he continued writing Advance Base material. But when it came to making a new album, the pressures of that juggling act combined with the complexities of self-producing and self-releasing *Nephew* caused him some apprehension. As he recently told Stereogum, "I just didn't want to record another record, I didn't want to go through that again." Fortunately, Boston emo and indie powerhouse Run for Cover gave Ashworth the support and financial resources to fly to Los Angeles to record with engineer-producer

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- 10.20 TERISA GRIFFIN - 2 UNIQUE SHOWS
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- 11.1 PAUL THORN WITH TRAPPER SCHOEPP
- 11.3 LOOSE ENDS FEAT. JANE EUGENE
- 11.4 VUSI MAHLASELA - TOWNSHIP TOUR
- 11.5 KATHARINE MCPHEE
- 11.6 PETER ASHER & JEREMY CLYDE
- 11.8 KELLER WILLIAMS DUO
- 11.9 DAVID PHIPPS OF STS9
- 11.13 ELIANE ELIAS - MUSIC FROM MAN OF LA MANCHA
- 11.14 PETER WOLF & THE MIDNIGHT TRAVELERS





Thin Lips SCOTT TROYAN

MUSIC

Jason Quever, front man for Papercuts (Quever has also worked on albums by Beach House, Cass McCombs, and Ashworth's former project, Casiotone for the Painfully Alone). Finally, Ashworth emerged last month with *Animal Companionship* (Run for Cover/Oriental), on which he balances complex themes of aging and relationships while occasionally examining bonds people develop with dogs. Early single "True Love Death Dream" concerns a woman who adopts a pup and names it after her teenage boyfriend who passed away; Ashworth's sweet, solemn vocals and cinematic synths exude her evolution of grief, love, and hope over decades, and leaves it open-ended; though the heartache is ever present, there's also a sense of relief. —LEOR GALIL



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1434 S. SPAULDING AVE. Ogden/Kedzie, Newly Remod. 2 & 3BR. \$1000-\$1300. Section 8 OK. David, 773-663-9488

2107 E. 67TH ST. 2BR, 1BA, hwd flrs, SS apps, cent heat & air, dishwasher & W/D in unit. Starting at \$1100/mo. Call 773-704-3505

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1ST FLR APT. Avail, now, 7914-16 S. May St. Auburn Gresham. 2BR, living rm & family rm, kitchen, heat & water incl. 773-651-0711

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EVANSTON: 1005F 1BR, new kit, SS appls, oak flrs, Indry. \$12 50/htd. ONE MO. FREE. NO DEP. urbanequities.com 773-743-4141

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7109 S. EMERALD AVE., 5BR, 2BA, brick house w/ full LR & DR, hwd flrs, newly decorated, ten pays heat. Sec 8 welc. \$1500/mo + 1 mo sec. 773-457-7963

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RIVERDALE, 3BR ranch, 1.5BA, ceramic kitchen, new apps & W/D, wood floors in LR & BR, Side drive with garage, 773-719-5453

RIVERDALE 145TH/LASALLE

Games people shouldn't play

Advice for handling secrets—especially the kind that detonate—and more

Q: I was involved with a straight man who enjoys cross-dressing and taking explicit photos. The problem is that the props he uses belong to his three children, all under age 12. For example, he dressed up as a slutty schoolgirl and wore his daughter's backpack. He dressed up as a slutty cowgirl and posed with his son's stuffed horse. He even had the horse eating his "carrot." I told him he should stop using his children's things as props. He believes that his children will never see the photos, so no harm will come of it. I'm horrified at the thought of these kids (perhaps as adults) stumbling over these pictures. He posts them on Instagram and Facebook, so they aren't private and he can't control where they go. It's one of the reasons I ended the relationship. Is there anything I can say to him? —**CANCELED DEFINITELY PROMISING RELATIONSHIP OVER PHOTO SESSIONS**

A: You told him what he's doing is wrong, you explained the enormous risk he's running, and you dumped him, CDPROPS. You could take one last run at it and try to explain that his children finding these photos isn't one of those "low-risk, high-consequence events," i.e., something that's unlikely to happen but would be utterly disastrous if it did. Nope, if he's posting these photos online, at least one of his children will stumble over them—or one of their friends will. ("Hey, isn't this your dad? And your backpack?") Your ex needs to knock this shit off, and will most likely need the help of a mental health pro in order to do so.

Q: My father and late mother were married for

almost 40 years—and on paper, things seemed fine. Recently, I found writings by my dad revealing he had several casual encounters with men over the course of their marriage. Do I tell him I know? We are close, but sex isn't something we usually discuss. What should I do with this information, if anything? —**A DEEPLY UPSETTING LIE THAT SCALDS**

A: When you say their relationship seemed fine "on paper," ADULTS, what you mean is their relationship was decent and loving. Well, now you know it wasn't perfect—but no relationship is. Either your mother made peace with this fact about her husband long ago or she never knew about it. Either way, no good will come from confronting your father.

Q: I'm a 47-year-old virgin straight man. What advice can you give me on losing my virginity? —**WANTING AND HOPING**


A: There are lots of 40-year-old-and-up women out there who are virgins—they write in too—so putting "middle-aged virgin seeks same" in your personal ad wouldn't be a bad idea. Find someone in your same situation, WAH, and treat her with kindness, gentleness, and patience—the same as you would like to be treated.

Q: I'm married and poly, with one partner in addition to my husband. My partner has a friend-with-benefits arrangement with a woman he's been with since before we met. The FWB is not poly, but she's always known my partner is. She has always insisted they're not a couple, but he knows she would be hurt if she found out he was with someone else, so


he's avoided telling her he's now also with me. I don't like being someone's secret. My husband knows I'm with someone else and is fine with it. If my partner's FWB felt the same, I wouldn't see a problem. But this feels oddly like I'm helping my partner cheat on his FWB, even though they're "not a couple" (her words). So it's not cheating... is it? —**PRETTY OBVIOUSLY LOST, YEAH**

A: It's not cheating—it's plausible deniability. Your partner's FWB would rather not know he's seeing anyone else, so she doesn't ask him about his other partners and he doesn't tell. Accommodating his FWB's desire not to know about other partners—doing the DADT open thing—does mean keeping you a secret, POLY, at least from her. If you're not comfortable with that, you'll have to end things with your partner.

Q: If I write you a letter asking for advice and don't want it published, even anonymously, will you answer? —**KEEPING IT CONFIDENTIAL, 'KAY?**

A: While I can't respond to every letter I receive, KICK, I do sometimes respond privately. Just one request: If you send a letter that you don't want published, please mention that at the start. I will frequently read an extremely long letter only to discover "please don't publish this" at the bottom. So again, if a letter isn't for publication, please mention that at the beginning. 

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NEW

Anika 1/22, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
David August 2/16, 10 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 10/12, 11 AM, 17+
Jacob Banks 3/2, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM, 18+
Derez De'Shon 11/8, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 18+
Empty Pockets 12/6, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/11, noon 18+
Flesh Eaters 3/10, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM
Galantis 12/30-31, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Jess Glynne 3/30, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
Joe Jackson 2/21-22, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM, 17+
Japanese House 12/4, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
G Jones 2/21, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM, 18+
Dom Kennedy 10/31, 9 PM, Park West, 18+
Talib Kweli 1/5, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/11, noon 18+
Leftover Crack, Negative Approach 11/28, 8 PM, Metro, 18+
Lost Kings 2/1, 7 PM, Chop Shop 18+
Macabre 12/22, 6:30 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Charlie Mars 1/6, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
Trey McLaughlin & the Sounds of Zamar 1/28, 7 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/11, noon 18+

Mud Morganfield 1/4, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
Mumford & Sons 3/29, 7:30 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM
Ellis Paul 1/26, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
Peekaboo 10/26, 8:30 PM, Logan Square Auditorium, 17+
Noam Pikely & Stuart Duncan 2/23, 7 and 9:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
Rezz 11/16, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
The Sea & Cake 11/17, 7 PM, Empty Bottle
Sheer Terror 1/12, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 18+
Kandace Springs 2/17, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 10/11, noon 18+
Surfbort 10/29, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle 18+
Tritonal 3/1, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Veil of Maya 12/21, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge 18+
Jack White 11/19, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+
Danny Worsnop 11/18, 5:30 PM, Bottom Lounge 18+
Chely Wright 1/27, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM 18+
Ry X 3/26, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 10/12, 10 AM, 17+

UPDATED

Jon Dee Graham 12/5, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, rescheduled from 12/1
So So Def 25th Cultural Curren\$y Tour with Jemaine Dupri, Xscape, Anthony Hamilton, Jagged Edge, and more 10/30, 7:30 PM, United Center, canceled

UPCOMING

Acid Dad 11/2, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Alcest, Cloakroom 10/31, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Appleased Cast 10/20, 9 PM, 10 AM 18+
Courtney Barnett, Waxahatchee 10/18, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Martin Barre 10/27, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Nicki Bluhm, Gill Landry 11/7, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Bring Me the Horizon 2/5, 6 PM, Aragon Ballroom 18+
Pieta Brown, David Huckfelt 11/8, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 18+
Caamp 12/7, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Chromeo 12/14, 10 PM, the Mid
Circa Survive, La Dispute 11/3, 7:30 PM, the Vic 18+
Cowboy Junkies 4/13-14, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 18+
Cupcakke 11/10, 9 PM, Thalia Hall 18+
Cursive 11/15, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Death From Above, Les Butcherettes 11/16, 8:30 PM, Metro 18+
Dirty Projectors 11/11-13, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Echo & the Bunnymen 11/24, 8 PM, the Vic
El Ten Eleven 11/10, 9 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
English Beat 10/24, 7 PM, City Winery 18+ 10/23, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston 18+
Roky Erickson 11/9, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall
Alejandro Escovedo with Don Antonio Band 11/31-2/2, 8 PM, City Winery 18+
Exploded View 11/1, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Father 11/2, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 18+
Fisher 11/17, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Flasher 12/4, 9 PM, Hideout
Flow 10/27, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Get Up Kids, Remember Sports 11/10, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Goon Sax 10/30, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Grapetooth 11/11, 7 PM, Thalia Hall 18+
Hands Like Houses 11/16, 6 PM, Bottom Lounge 18+
Hawktail 10/27, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music 18+
Interpol 2/7, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre
Jawbreaker, Naked Raygun, Smoking Popes 11/4, 6:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom 18+
Kimbra 12/5, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Kindred the Family Soul 12/29, 8 PM, Portage Theater
Lawrence Arms 12/13-15, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Lemon Twigs 1/25, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Los Lobos 12/9-12, 8 PM, City Winery 18+
Mandolin Orange 2/16, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
J.D. McPherson 11/30, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Jim Messina 10/21, 8 PM, City Winery 18+
Mom Jeans 11/8, 6 PM, Subterranean 18+
Matt Nathanson 3/9, 8 PM, Thalia Hall 18+
New Orleans Suspects 10/26, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston 18+
Odonis Odonis 11/4, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Pale Waves, Candescents 11/21, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge 18+
Panic! At the Disco 2/4, 7 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont
Piano Guys 12/8, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
A Place to Bury Strangers 10/19, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Procol Harum 2/20-21, 8 PM, City Winery 18+
Jonathan Richman 10/27, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Rozwell Kid 11/15, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Russian Circles, Bongripper 11/23, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Saint Jhn 11/24, 9 PM, Metro, 17+
Saints of Valory 11/2, 9 PM, Schubas
(Sandy) Alex G 11/4, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Saves the Day, An Horse 11/2, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Travis Scott, Trippie Redd 12/6, 7:30 PM, United Center
Ty Segall, William Tyler 11/2, 7:30 PM, Thalia Hall 18+
Jake Shears 11/7, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Single Mothers 11/6, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

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Troye Sivan 10/19, 7 PM, Chicago Theatre
Snail Mail 1/17, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Soft Moon 1/24, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Teenage Fanclub 3/6, 7:30 PM, Metro, 18+
This Will Destroy You 11/2, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
James Blood Ulmer 11/2, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Kurt Vile & the Violators 12/22, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Ryley Walker 12/28, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Weepies 12/9, 7 PM, Park West 18+
Bob Weir & the Wolf Bros 10/31-11/1, 7 PM, Chicago Theatre
Windhand, Satan's Satyrs, Genocide Pact 11/7, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Xibalba Itzaes, Unholy Lust 12/7, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge
Pete Yorn 10/23, 7:30 PM, Park West, 18+
Yungblud 10/18, 7 PM, Subterranean 18+
Yuri & Pandora 3/16, 8 PM, Rosemont Theater, Rosemont

SOLD OUT

Bully 10/18, 9 PM, Hideout
Cavetown 12/8, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge 18+
Billie Eilish 10/28, 7 PM, Metro 18+
Every Avenue 10/28, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Every Time I Die, Turnstile 11/12, 6 PM, Metro 18+
Laura Jane Grace & the Devouring Mothers 11/8, 8 PM, Hideout
Conan Gray 11/13, 7 PM, Schubas
Greta Van Fleet 12/12, 7 PM and 12/14-15, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom 18+
Jim James, Alynda Segarra 11/9, 7:30 PM, the Vic 18+
Max, Bryce Vine 10/31, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge 18+
Mitski, Jessica Lee Mayfield 10/25, 7:30 PM, the Vic 18+
Andy Shauf 11/29-30, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Tenacious D 11/13-14, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Kali Uchis 10/24, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre 18+
Lucinda Williams 11/17, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry Benefit
Thom Yorke 12/4, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre 18+



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

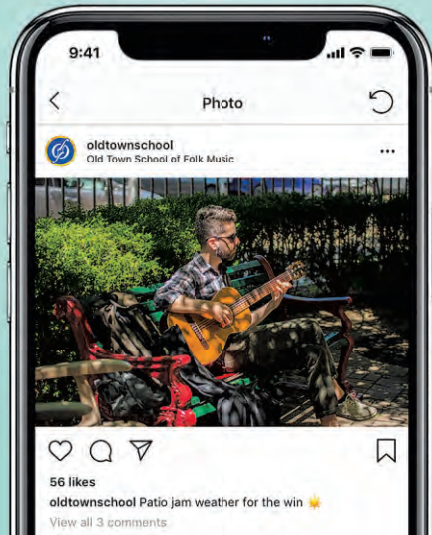
NINETIES CHICAGO pop-punk favorites the **Smoking Popes** reunited in 2005, but they haven't made a full-length with their "classic" lineup—brothers **Eli, Josh,** and **Matt Caterer** and drummer **Mike Felumlee**—since the 2001 covers album *The Party's Over*. On Friday, October 12, though, they release *Into the Agony* via Asian Man and throw a free meet-and-greet at **Bucket O' Blood Books and Records**. Guitarist Eli Caterer says, "It's the most natural and inspired album we've made since getting the band back together, which has a lot to do with Mike rejoining on drums." At the party 350 Brewing will give away beer and prizes, and the band will sell the new album and rare Popes records from Eli's stash. On Sunday, November 4, the Popes open for **Jawbreaker** at the **Aragon**.

Since leaving the game in 2008, renowned local rapper **E.C. Illa** has been quiet as a sphinx, releasing only the rare guest verse and a 2017 comp of old material called *Seeds, Stems & Gems*. But last week he dropped a signed white-vinyl seven-inch of "**Struggling**" b/w "**Mask & Pump**," both of which are 2002 collaborations with **Kanye West**. Available only via his website, the record includes a custom 45 turntable adapter and a cassette of "**Beautiful (I Used to Love H.E.R. Pt. 2)**," a new cut from local rapper **Griffen** with a typically swaggering verse from Illa.

On Friday, October 12, **SoFar Sounds Chicago** and rapper-singer **L.A. VanGogh** present a benefit for arts nonprofit the **John Walt Foundation**, established in memory of Pivot Gang singer-rapper **Walter Long Jr.** SoFar Sounds' Chicago chapter often works with local hip-hop acts, and Long (aka **Dinner With John**) was scheduled to make his SoFar debut the day after he was stabbed to death in February 2017. SoFar hosts shows in unconventional spaces, and tells only ticketholders where; to apply for a spot, visit bit.ly/s_walt. The benefit doubles as a release party for VanGogh's *Everything Is Subjective: Episode 2*. —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

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OCT 21 **TYLER CHILDERS**

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POETS: **Tyehimba Jess • Sterling Plumpp • avery r. young** | *Bitten by the Blues* BOOK RELEASE

American Epic FILM SCREENING | **Fernando Jones' Blues Kids** | **Barry Dolins** | **Ernest C. Withers** PHOTO EXHIBIT

loganbluesfest.uchicago.edu MOST EVENTS ARE FREE; FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CONCERT TICKETS tickets.uchicago.edu

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