

Comics journalist
Anya Davidson face to
face with Karen Finley

READER

The early risers of
Chicago's Best
Worst Drag Show



Inside Smashed Plastic,
whose brand-new
technology could bring
relief to labels and
artists stymied by long
waits for records

By LEOR GALIL

CHICAGO'S FIRST VINYL-PRESSING PLANT IN DECADES

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

LONG STORY OBVIOUSLY, but a friend of mine once got kidnapped by the Marxist revolutionary group FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), and subsequently lived with them in the Amazon rain forest for a year against his wishes. Of course, life in the jungle took some adjusting to, but it was really only after he returned home that, he's said to me, "things got weird."

He describes a moment in his kitchen several months after the ordeal had ended when his mother was unpacking groceries. He recalls reaching over while her back was turned and pocketing a plastic bag before he realized what he was doing. He was in the kitchen in his childhood home with his mom—the safest place in the world for him—and he was stealing a plastic bag from her in case he was forced at gunpoint to march in the rain and needed a way to keep his underpants dry. That's the moment he credits with his escape.

It's the cleanest description of the effects of trauma I've ever come across. We can be surrounded by all the trappings of comfort for weeks

or months or years, but if we've ever become accustomed to marching through a sopping-wet landscape against our will, it'll still take some time to feel comforted.

The *Reader* staff has done some metaphorical marching in recent years, but we're now safely ensconced in what we hope is our forever home in Bronzeville. Chicago's seen its share of relentlessly wet weather under Rahm Emanuel, and if Illinois suffers a bit of posttraumatic stress as Bruce Rauner leaves office no one will be surprised. Ben Joravsky's got some words of political advice this week to aid our return to normal; Maya Dukmasova shares a story about a first responder arrested during a neighborhood cleanup campaign that suggests our return to normal may take some effort.

Of course we have plenty of distractions in this issue, both comforting and scintillating: record-pressing plants, drag shows, reviews, Karen Finley, and more. It'll be great. Are you sure you need that plastic bag?

—ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE

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STREET VIEW

Seize the day

"If I own a beautiful pair of shoes, why shouldn't I wear them to the parent-teacher night?" asks real estate agent and Art Institute docent Terri Franklin.



© ISA GIALLORENZO

"**WHY DO WE NEED** permission to get dressed up?" asks real estate broker and mother of three Terri Franklin. "Sometimes after women hit a certain age they start to melt into this submission of 'I don't need to get dressed up anymore.' Moms who used to feel conscious about their style just seem to play everything down. If I own a beautiful pair of shoes, why shouldn't I wear them to the parent-teacher night? Don't hesitate to wear something you love." Following

her own advice, Franklin put her best heels forward while guiding high school students as a volunteer docent at the Art Institute. In keeping with her aesthetic, which she calls "classic with a twist," she complemented the neutral pieces of her outfit with a pair of statement pleated pants and a confident stride. "For me it's just important to be yourself and be comfortable. I'm all about a natural presence." —ISA GIALLORENZO

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Lauren Underwood, pictured here at her election-night party in Saint Charles, is the 14th congressional district's first female and first African-American member of Congress.

📍STEPHEN HANAFIN

POLITICS

Advice for the Republican Party

And some for progressives too

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

Far be it for me to give advice to the Republican Party, whose candidates I've not voted for since my disco-dancing days back in the late 70s.

But Republicans, if you want to win an election or two in Illinois, you might want to find a new bogeyman with whom to scare voters.

'Cause clearly this whole Michael Madigan thing isn't working out.

I mean, over the last few years Governor Rauner spent tens of millions of dollars on commercials, ads, and mailings depicting Madigan as an evil Svengali leading Illinois to ruin. And what does he have to show for it?

Not only did the Democrats sweep every statewide race, from governor to treasurer, by landslide-like margins, they bounced Peter Roskam and Randy Hultgren, two Trump rubber-stampers, from their congressional seats. And they picked up seats in the state senate and state house—so Speaker Madigan will have even more power than he had before the election.

Even more important, grassroots Democratic activists outmaneuvered and outhustled Republicans in county and legislative districts throughout the metropolitan area.

In the end, thousands of voters switched to the Democrats, and as long as President Trump heads the Republican Party, my guess is that they're not switching back.

So, yes, clearly, Rauner and his Republican pals overplayed the anti-Madigan card. Either voters didn't believe the anti-Madigan message Rauner was pushing, or they despised Trump (and Rauner) so much they didn't care.

Want some examples? Consider the case of state rep Peter Breen in the 48th district in DuPage County.

For the last few years, Breen—along with Jeanne Ives—has been a leader in the fight against reproductive rights. He introduced a bill intended to snatch away abortion rights almost as soon as Rauner signed HB 40.

Breen was also a particularly obnoxious voice in the ugly house debate last spring in which Republicans likened voting rights for

pretrial detainees to coddling criminals.

On Election Day, Terra Costa Howard, a pro-choice Democrat in DuPage County, defeated Breen with 25,483 votes to Breen's 22,724. That's 25,438 more votes than Breen's Democratic opponent got in 2014—because Breen had no Democratic challenger in 2014.

That's right, the Dems in DuPage were so disorganized and unfocused/alienated/apathetic (pick your word) that they couldn't even get it together to challenge one of the most vociferously antichoice Republicans in the house.

So much for Madigan's Svengali-like power over Illinois.

Want more proof? Consider the case of the 81st house district out in Downers Grove—once home district to state rep Ron Sandack, one of Rauner's top floor leaders. In 2016, Sandack stepped down after he got caught in a cybersex scandal.

Last Tuesday, Sandack's replacement, David Olsen, was defeated by Democratic challenger Anne Stava-Murray, who picked up 23,825 votes. That's 8,000 or so more votes than Elizabeth Chaplin got in 2014 when she ran against Sandack in his glorious pre-cybersex days.

The Democratic turnout spike wasn't limited to the burbs. J.B. Pritzker picked up more than 706,000 votes in Chicago—roughly 200,000 more than former governor Patrick Quinn got when he lost to Rauner in 2014.

I could go on and on with more examples. The point is that Democrats in Illinois have

more momentum going their way than at any point in my lifetime—and that's a long freaking time.

So, Democrats, allow me to give you some friendly advice as to what to do with it. Don't quit! Keep up the pressure—nationally, statewide, and locally.

On the national level, use the momentum to go after Trump in 2020. I know, Illinois will probably vote blue no matter who the Democrats nominate as their candidate. But part of the reason Lauren Underwood and Sean Casten defeated the aforementioned Hultgren and Roskam in the 14th and Sixth congressional districts is that Chicago Democrats poured out to the burbs to help the cause. (Take a bow, Mike Lenehan, Marj Halperin, and all you other Chicago resisters.)

Here's hoping that Democratic volunteers from everywhere in Illinois spill into Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana come 2020.

Statewide, don't let Pritzker, Madigan, and senate president John Cullerton off the hook.

Off the top of my head, I can think of at least three campaign promises that progressives should convince the big three to follow up on: legalizing marijuana, bringing an elected school board to Chicago, and establishing a progressive income tax, so our schools aren't as dependent on regressive taxes like the property tax.

Finally, as for Chicago, let's use some of this progressive momentum to keep Mayor Rahm from exercising his inner Republican as he heads out the door.

Yes, while you were distracted by the midterms, Rahm quietly unveiled proposals to spend upward of \$1.7 billion in property taxes on upscale developments in several fast-gentrifying downtown, near-north, and south-side communities.

The money comes out of the good old TIF program—in particular, the mayor's finally gearing up to launch the Cortland/Chicago River TIF project—which is intended to eradicate blight in low-income neighborhoods.

I'll be writing about this in greater detail in the next few weeks, but for the moment let me remind you that it's more trickle-down Republican economics. And Chicago shouldn't put up with that in the age of the resistance.

So, c'mon, Chicago Democrats, don't be wimpy—make like your suburban counterparts and wake the hell up. 📍

🐦 @BennyJshow

TRANSPORTATION

Divvying up the loot

After a 2016 slump, Divvy turned a record profit in 2017.

By JOHN GREENFIELD



LOWELL NELSON

Divvy's future wasn't looking so bright a year ago, when the city of Chicago acknowledged it had seen a major drop in income from the bike-share system in 2016, after the program expanded farther into the south and west sides. But numbers I recently obtained from the Chicago Department of Transportation via a Freedom of Information Act request paint a much rosier picture, showing that 2017 was the city's most lucrative year yet for Divvy revenue. Moreover, the explanation for the turnaround bodes well for the system's long-term viability.

A little background is necessary. Chicago, which launched Divvy in 2013, owns the bikes and docking stations, but it contracts with the New York-based company Motivate—owned, as of this summer, by ride-share company Lyft—to run the system. The city makes most of its profits from Divvy via advertising revenue and a sponsorship deal with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois—hence the insurance company's logo on the bikes. While the

city gets to keep all of the ad and sponsorship revenue, it splits any profits or losses from running the system with Motivate.

Last December the *Chicago Tribune* reported that in 2016 the city's net revenue from Divvy had fallen to \$1.97 million after reaching \$2.86 million in 2014 and \$2.84 million in 2015. That discouraging bottom line was caused by a spike in operating expenses, which went from \$6,682,067 in 2015 to \$9,322,881 in 2016, a 40 percent increase. CDOT officials said at the time that this was mainly due to the challenges of managing a larger service area and fleet after the system expanded from 300 stations and 3,000 bikes in 2014 to 580 stations and 5,800 bikes by late 2016.

In the early years, Divvy stations were concentrated downtown and in affluent north-side neighborhoods. To make the system more equitable, many of the new stations were installed in lower-income African-American and Latinx communities on the south and west sides. Ridership has

been relatively low in these areas due to factors such as the cost of membership, the relative scarcity of bike lanes, and the greater distances between destinations and Divvy stations, which makes bike share less convenient to use.

As a result, costs grew. In 2016 Divvy saw its worst-ever operations loss (the cost of running the system subtracted from the income generated by annual memberships, day passes, and late fees): a whopping \$1,756,420. Per the terms of CDOT's contract with Motivate, the city had to pay \$752,011 to cover its share of that red ink.

Offsetting that, however, Chicago earned \$1,146,220 in station advertising and \$2,250,000 from the Blue Cross Blue Shield sponsorship in 2016, so still turned an overall profit.

The good news revealed in the recently FOIA'd numbers is that Chicago's net income from Divvy ballooned by 72 percent in 2017, to \$3.37 million. So what explains that good fortune?

For starters, the city's income from ads and the Blue Cross sponsorship was higher than ever last year, \$1,343,942 and \$2,340,000, respectively. "2017 was really successful for us for advertising," said CDOT assistant commissioner Sean Wiedel, who oversees Divvy. "We really think the association with the Divvy brand is a positive one for advertisers." And since the sponsorship contract stipulates that Chicago gets a larger payment from Blue Cross each year, the city received an additional \$90,000 from it in 2017.

Operations income (from memberships, passes, and fees) was also at its highest-ever rate in 2017, at \$7,958,472. Wiedel said this was due in part to the number of trips taken last year—3,836,905, more than any previous year, and about 270,000 higher than the 2016 total. He also noted improvements in Divvy's handling of "rebalancing," the practice of redistributing bikes to parts of town where they're needed.

The combined income from ads, sponsorship, and operations revenue last year was \$11,642,414.

Meanwhile, 2017 losses were less than the previous year, and due to the terms of its contract with Motivate, the city was responsible for a smaller percentage of that loss in 2017—only \$311,708, or less than half as much as in 2016. Combined, these factors contributed to the city's record-breaking \$3.37 million profit from the Divvy program last year.

Yet CDOT records show that Divvy ridership on the south and west sides continues to be low. The city has been trying to address the Divvy gap by offering \$5 Divvy for Everyone memberships to low-income Chicagoans. Roughly 5,000 people have signed up since summer 2015, and there are currently about 2,000 active members, according to Wiedel. Divvy has also hired a handful of outreach workers to spread the word about the program.

But Active Transportation Alliance spokesman Kyle Whitehead said that in order to further boost Divvy use, CDOT should take action to calm traffic in underserved neighborhoods and build more protected bike lanes in those areas. "City leaders need to do more to address other barriers to bicycling in these communities," he said. "Adding Divvy stations by itself is not enough to get more people riding in areas that are built around cars."

And while Divvy had a good 2017, it's not clear what its bottom line will look like for 2018. After all, this was the year that the system saw a wave of bike thefts, the result of a shortsighted decision to remove a small but critical piece of security hardware from the docks. FOIA'd e-mails indicate that more than 500 cycles have gone missing. (Per the contract with Motivate, the city is only required to pay for 60 of those bikes, a \$72,000 expense.) Wiedel told me the security hardware is on track to be reinstalled in all of the stations by the end of this month, which should solve the theft problem.

Wiedel noted that ridership has been solid in 2018, with 3,439,237 Divvy trips logged as of November 8. That means the system is on track to rack up roughly the same number of rides as last year—3,836,905—by New Year's Day, even when you factor in the drop-off in bike-share use as the weather grows colder, he said.

Another positive recent development from an equity standpoint is Mayor Rahm Emanuel's announcement last month that he plans to use part of a \$2.5 million climate-change grant from the Michael Bloomberg Foundation to help bring bike share to the rest of the city. That may not help Divvy's bottom line, but for residents of outlying neighborhoods who've been waiting more than five years for the service, that expansion is way overdue. **A**

John Greenfield edits the transportation news website [Streetsblog Chicago](#).
 @greenfieldjohn



Vairunn Strickland

PHOTO COURTESY VAIRUNN STRICKLAND

THE COURTS

Markham firefighter sues Chicago cops for false arrest

After a community cleanup in Englewood, volunteers end up in violent confrontation with dozens of cops

By **MAYA DUKMASOVA**

On an April afternoon in 2017, 35-year-old Vairunn Strickland came to the intersection of 63rd and Ashland in Englewood with dozens of other people wearing black T-shirts and brandishing green, red, and black Black Liberation flags. As part of New Era Chicago, a community service and black empowerment group, Strickland and the others were there to clean up the neighborhood and mingle with residents. A firefighter with the Markham Fire Department who grew up in Englewood, he'd helped organize similar cleanup outings in other south- and west-side neighborhoods.

"We walk through the neighborhood with our New Era T-shirts and we pick up trash," Strickland explained in a recent interview with the *Reader*. "While we're doing that we make little chants to promote black love. We also go door-to-door and pass out literature to support black-owned businesses in the neighborhood."

Nothing about that morning was unusual, he said. As the procession wound its way from block to block, kids and neighbors joined in to help pick up bottles and food wrappers from vacant lots. A police car trailed the group for the three hours they were out there—something that always happens during New Era's outings, Strickland said, despite the group's having asked the Chicago Police Department not to send escorts so as not to discourage engagement with local youth who might be wary of cops.

"The police in that neighborhood make the neighborhood nervous," he said. "We tried to explain to [CPD] throughout the times I've been out there that we are acquainted with the neighborhood, that the neighborhood knows us." Their requests went unheeded. Still, Strickland said that on that particular day the police presence wasn't of any particular concern to the New Era members. Until

the cleanup ended and the group reconvened at 63rd and Ashland.

It's unclear why more police officers arrived at the scene then, but within minutes an altercation ensued that ended with Strickland and several others arrested. Later, CPD would claim that New Era members started the fight by not getting out of the road when asked to do so by officers. (The department declined to comment for this story because of pending litigation related to the incident.)

A couple of weeks after the incident, New Era's Detroit chapter—four of whose members were arrested after participating in the cleanup—compiled video footage of the incident and the preceding event to help draw attention to what happened and raise funds to get its members out of jail.

Four and a half minutes of video captured by a woman at the scene appears to show a massive, chaotic melee. Dozens of plainclothes and uniformed police officers in flak jackets appear to rush into a crowd of people dressed mostly in black, many holding Black Liberation flags. Women and children appear to be swept up in the chaos, as officers shove and yell at them to disperse. The cops appear to tackle several young men to the ground, beating some with batons. Several officers are captured shouting at the woman behind the camera and others nearby. Many people seem to be screaming in the background, and at one point the woman filming can be heard crying as she walks around the graveled vacant lot where the incident occurred.

"What is the problem? We're off the sidewalk—I don't even understand why people are being arrested right now," a woman in a pink hoodie who appears to also be recording the situation on her phone exclaims as she passes through the frame. "I have it all on tape."

"All right, that's fine, you can tape all of it, here's the deal," a bearded officer wearing plainclothes and sunglasses tells her. "I'm gonna walk over there to make sure everything's cool. If you guys are still here when I come back, everyone's going to jail, mark my words."

Another officer tells the women: "If you're gonna obstruct traffic, this is what happens."

Ultimately, Strickland was charged with obstruction of traffic and resisting a police officer—minor violations of the Chicago municipal code. Other members of New Era were charged with felonies, such as aggravated battery to a police officer—a charge that was

CITY LIFE

recently identified by the *Chicago Reporter* as among the most common “cover charges” filed after police use excessive force.

Eight months later, the case against Strickland was dismissed. Last month he sued the city and four of the officers involved in federal court, alleging false arrest, unlawful detention, violations of his First Amendment rights, malicious prosecution, and intentional infliction of emotional distress. The lawsuit names police officers Michael Jetel, R. Rodriguez, J. Motesdeoca, and Syed Quadri.

Strickland’s attorney, Brad Thomson of the People’s Law Office, didn’t want his client to give a play-by-play of his arrest to the media at this point. But the complaint states that as Strickland and other members of New Era “were standing on the sidewalk, Defendant Jetel aggressively charged into the crowd. Other Chicago police officers then charged into the crowd and began violently arresting members of New Era. Plaintiff Strickland verbally expressed his disapproval with the behavior of Defendant Jetel and other Chicago police officers. Defendant Jetel then directed Defendant Rodriguez and Defendant Montesdeoca to take Plaintiff Strickland into custody.”

The complaint also states that Strickland made no physical effort to resist arrest, though he continued to express his opposition verbally. It then says that he was transported to the Seventh District station, “where he was held in police custody for over eight hours.”

New Era Detroit’s video of the melee also shows footage of the cleanup. One man appears to give instructions to the group before they fan out through the neighborhood:

“We are not out here to antagonize or argue with or get into any altercations with the police,” he says. “We do not engage with them at all.”

The video then shows New Era members chanting and talking with people in the neighborhood as they walk down the road carrying garbage bags. Periodically, the person behind the camera shows the police SUV following the group. At the end of the nearly 35-minute video there’s more footage of the altercation captured by bystanders.

After his arrest, Strickland said he was “cursed at” by police officers, “kind of treated like a criminal based on my appearance, in my opinion.” That was until he proved that he was a fellow first responder. “After seeing the credentials in my wallet their attitude changed,” he said. “Then it seemed that I

was more respected and was talked to like a human being.”


He added that he was puzzled by the intensity of the police response to New Era. “During the incident, the flags we were carrying—they broke them in half. There were kids out there crying. They had no regard for that,” he recalled. “There’s a lot of things in Chicago that involve protests of the police. That’s not the reason we were out there. The way we were treated, it almost seemed like the Chicago Police Department thought that we were an anti-police group.”

Strickland was worried that the charges would put his job in jeopardy, though he had the support of his supervisors in Markham. He fought the case tooth and nail, he said, because he believed that being convicted of resisting a police officer would probably result in an automatic termination from the fire department. He knew he’d be filing a lawsuit too.

“I honestly think that the incident was probably due to poor leadership,” he said. “I think any leaders that were on that call that didn’t do their jobs to the best of their ability should be let go. Any of those officers who committed any bodily harm to people out there should be fired.”

He said that the officers’ “aggressive” actions were a sign of their inability to do their jobs correctly. “I know professional officers, and I’ve seen them make arrests, and what happened to me and the rest of the group—that wasn’t professional at all.”

Strickland said that the experience hasn’t stopped him from working with New Era. Though the group hasn’t conducted a cleanup in that part of Englewood since the incident, it’s continued to organize similar outings elsewhere in the city. But, he added, the ordeal altered his perception of police officers, with whom he’s collaborated nearly every day in 11 years as a first responder.

“I’ve had to deal with a little anxiety when it comes to the police now, which I’m not used to,” he explained. “Definitely since my arrest there’s been a personal change. If I’m driving I’m pretty nervous if a policeman pulls behind or on the side of me.” He’s come to the unpleasant conclusion that having his uniform on isn’t much armor against that fear: “Even sometimes when I’m on the job working with the police I’m used to working with, when I’m around them, I still have that nervousness.” 

 @mdoukmas

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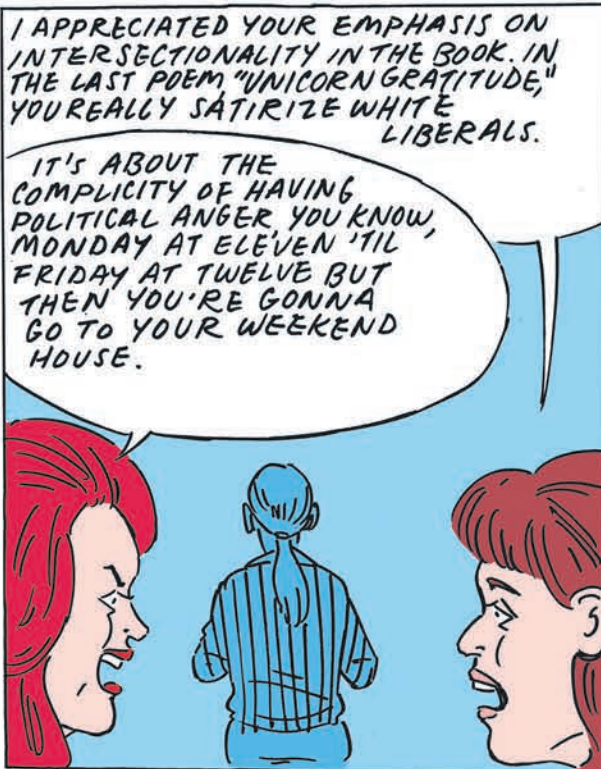
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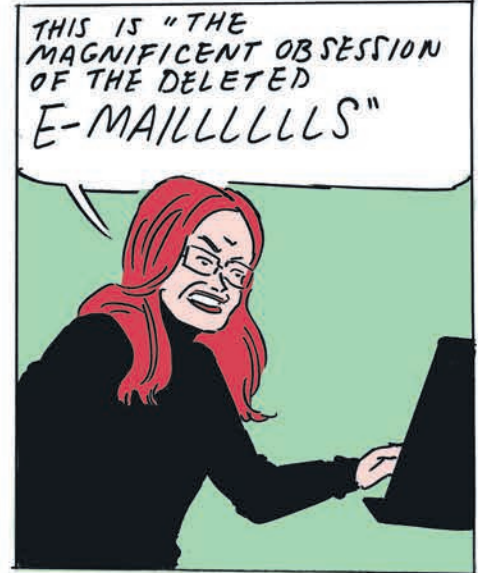


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IN THESE ROOMS, CHANGE DOES HAPPEN

ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER SECOND, I MET THE AWARD-WINNING POET AND PERFORMANCE ARTIST KAREN FINLEY AT KOPI CAFÉ IN ANDERSONVILLE TO DISCUSS HER LATEST BOOK, "GRABBING PUSSY." I THEN FOLLOWED HER TO THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST BOOKSTORE, WHERE SHE READ A NUMBER OF HER POEMS. WHAT FOLLOWS IS AN EXCERPT FROM OUR INTERVIEW, ALONG WITH WORDS AND IMAGES FROM KAREN'S EVENT.







You better work

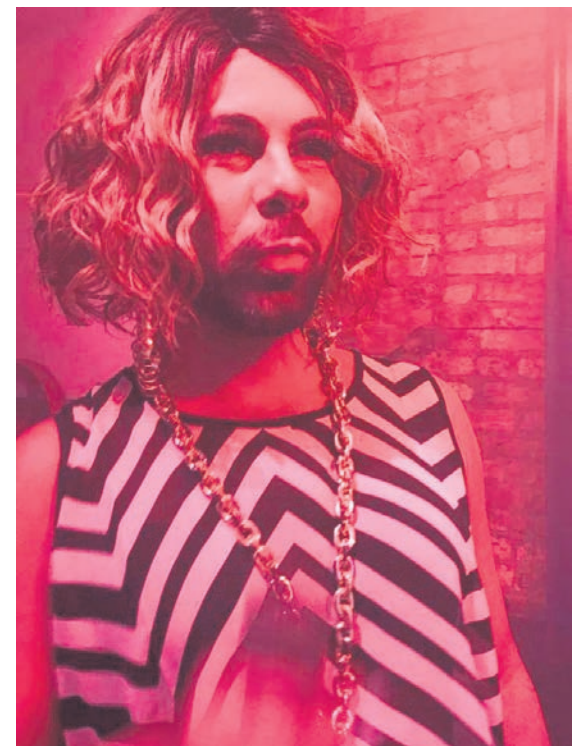
At 2 AM on a Monday, “Chicago’s Best Worst Drag Show” at Jackhammer is the place to be.

By **DAN JAKES**

Like a gayer, more magical Brigadoon, every Monday night—the wee hours of Tuesday, technically—Chicago’s drag community, closing-shift bartenders, and after-afterparty seekers congregate for one of the best queer celebrations in the city. For the past ten or so years, the Jackhammer Complex in Rogers Park on the city’s far north side (6406 N. Clark) has hosted the lovingly titled “Chicago’s Best Worst Drag Show” at the beginning of each week from 2 to 4 AM.

Publicizing a sanctuary for LGBTQ nightlife-industry folks who are looking to unwind might normally be considered gauche, but the more-the-merrier, come-as-you-are vibe in the air at “Best Worst” has been part of its attraction since its inception. Delmar Medina, who created the show with another bartender at the time, “would bring in wigs, shoes . . . there were like four, five racks,” says Arben Alper, who has hosted “Best Worst” for the past seven years. “He would go around and be like, ‘Hey, do you want to do a number?’ So these weren’t really performers in the beginning. And then people got wind of it. Slowly but surely, we became like one of the longest-running [drag competitions].”

Brendon Lawrence, who performs as Kennedy and hosts Jackhammer’s *American Horror Story* viewing party on Wednesdays, recalls a similar origin story. “The bartenders and the regulars would get wasted and get into really quick, crappy drag,” he says with a laugh.



“Best Worst” has long outgrown its days of having to solicit bystanders to take the floor wearing what queen Shalita Cake refers to as “Delmar’s drag droppings,” but a point of pride for the show is that the bar for entry hasn’t gotten much higher.

Alongside prime-time amateur nights like T Rex’s “Crash Landing” at Berlin and Frida Lay’s “Drag Race” at Roscoe’s, “Best Worst” is one of the sign-up gigs that gives new queens the opportunity to brush shoulders with more established names in a supportive, risk-encouraging environment. And for veterans of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, it’s a popular destination to mingle with the audience and watch colleagues. “They just like to come and be incognito,” says Alper.

Monica Beverly Hillz, who directs the late-night show “Babes in Boyland” at Jackhammer on Thursdays, discovered Jackhammer’s late-late scene at the suggestion of one of her girlfriends shortly after her run on the fifth season of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. It felt like an epiphany. “You know me,” says Hillz. “I like to make money, I like to have fun, and I like to go to new places, so we went to Jackhammer, and I absolutely fell in love with it. . . . I felt like it was probably one of the best shows I saw in a long time.”

More so than, say, at the notorious Lakeview IHOP (affectionately and unofficially dubbed “GayHop”) at 2 AM, the interactions at “Best Worst” are more digestible for recognizable queens after a long night. “After being on *Drag Race*,” says Hillz, “I have to be choosy where I go at this time of the morning. You’re going to be taking pictures with people. People are drunk. People are going to be really in their feelings, and it’s going to be too much at that time.”

Something else she noticed: the attentiveness and engagement of the crowd. For queens, the popularity of “Best Worst” among both queer and straight industry workers means a disproportionately chill audience of good tippers who by and large can handle their booze. And for the post-2 AM bar hoppers who aren’t effectively handling their booze, “Best Worst,” like many drag shows, endures as one of the surviving outlets for roast humor. “I told [Alper] he reminded me of Joan Rivers in a Paul Bunyan costume,” says Lawrence.

For Alper, reads—witty burns delivered by drag queens—are both a lighthearted feature of the show and an effective tool for checking spectators in the audience who are pulling focus from performers or, worse, invading their personal →



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space. “If somebody gets a little bit too touchy-feely with the girls or, you know, is bothering someone who is performing, then I’ll say something,” he says.

Up a few stairs from the main stage, the dozen or so performing queens set up a row of mirrors on the upstairs bars which becomes a makeshift dressing room, a better lit, calmer, unofficial staging area for queens to give each other pointers and grab a bite (in recent weeks, food has been provided by sponsor and next-door neighbor Leather64Ten). As Shalita Cake, who works the door for “Best Worst,” puts it, “We literally break bread together.” While she doesn’t want to give the impression that all drag queens are starving artists, the reality for many of the girls who compete is that they’ll have spent their last dollar for the week on that night’s look, then use tip cash to get home, so a hot bite at three in the morning goes a long way.


And for audiences looking to take a respite from the crowd on the main floor—or, as Alper jokes, for spectators who’d rather “put on a show”—the bathhouse-y, sex-positive downstairs bar referred to as the Hole is open throughout the night. After the closure of Man’s Country last year, the Hole, the back room at Touché next door, and Banana Video in Andersonville remain as the few old-school cruising spots north of Uptown, something that surprises newbies.

“I bring [guys I’m dating] to the Hole,” says Hillz, “and

they’re just like, ‘Whoa, I never knew stuff like this even existed, let alone in Chicago.’”

But as Shalita Cake notes, the Hole is a spot where everyone can celebrate who they are—especially on Fridays, when the dress code mandates shirtlessness. “We’ve had trans men, women, everybody in between, wear their first harness and feel a little freer,” she says. “I’ve seen it help so many people with their body issues . . . everyone is welcome there.”

During “Best Worst” on Mondays, though, most folks stay upstairs for the duration of the competition. Over the past decade, Alper has observed that the crowd has grown as *RuPaul’s Drag Race* has gained mainstream viewership. “In the beginning, it wasn’t as busy. Drag back then wasn’t as popular. It was like season-one *RuPaul*, and it was our season one too.”

And as details trickle out about the upcoming *Drag Race All Stars* season four, it’s worth remembering an observation former contestant Kim Chi made on Twitter last year: “If you can name every single drag race queen but can’t name ten local queens in your hometown, you’re a drag race fan, not a drag fan.” Luckily for Chicagoans, there’s no shortage here of opportunities to see fabulous queens do their thing live—no matter how late it gets. 

 @DanEJakes

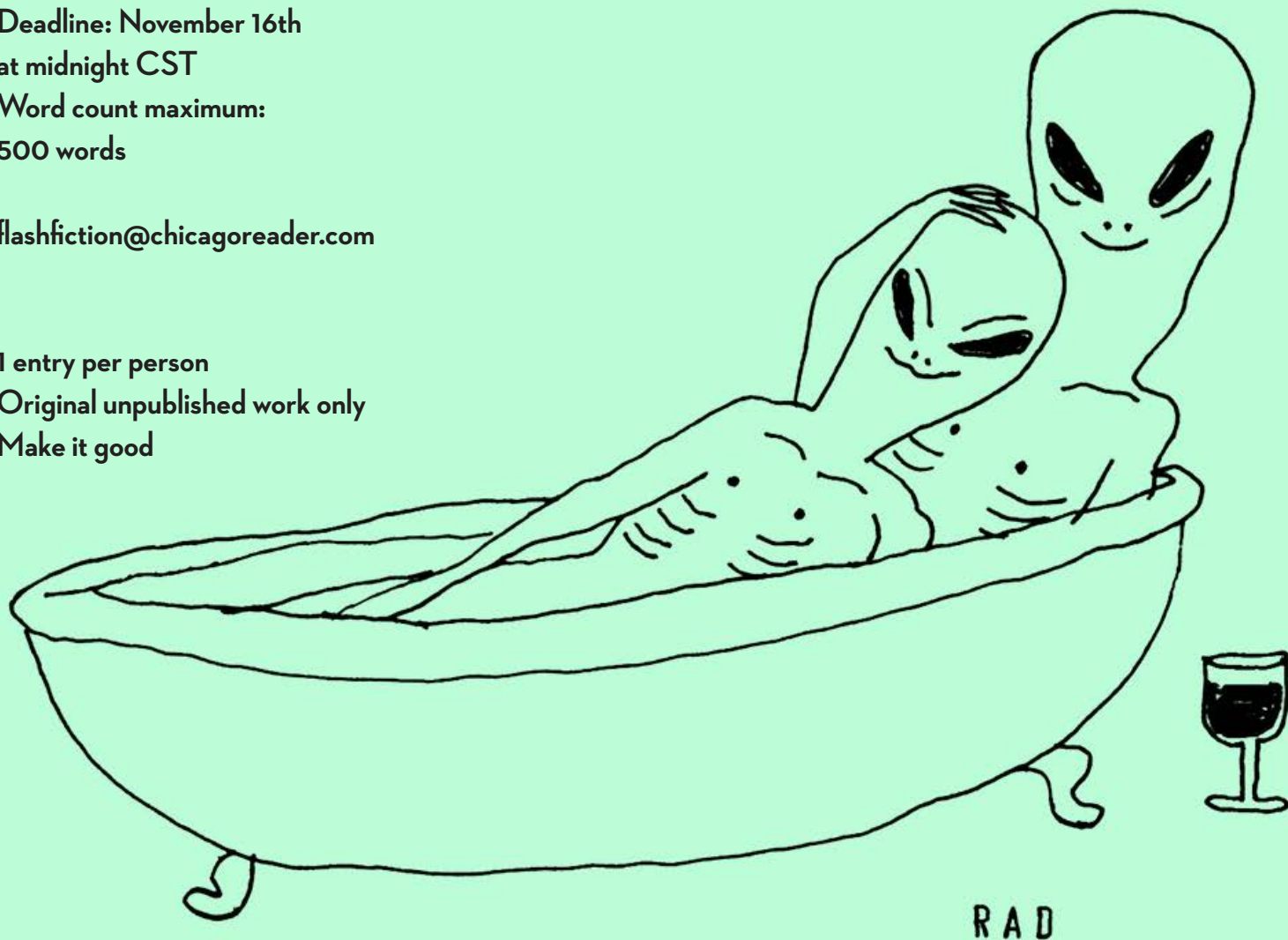
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Why Haven't Senior Homeowners Been Told These Facts?

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://reversemortgagedaily.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

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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Carnitas La Esquinita hides in plain sight

But it's a serious contender in the little-meats game.

By MIKE SULA

Taco plates and barbacoa; (below) carnitas fresh from the fryer  KATHLEEN HINKEL



I have a longtime friend of a certain fleshy girth who, one Saturday morning, stood outside the window of Pilsen's great Carnitas Don Pedro, in front of its famous mountain of steaming, glistening porky goodness, and thoughtfully observed, "This is what I look like when I get out of the shower."

The sustaining power of those hot, lard-simmered chunks of pork, slabs of skin, and ribbons of offal—especially exceptional on weekends, when the line goes out the door and turnover is high—is such that I can usually block this horrifying image when I'm confronted by them. They're so good when they're at their prime that it's hard to imagine wanting to go anywhere else.

Of course, *carnitas*, "little meats," are widely available, for better or worse, all week long, in hundreds of supermercados all over the city, where they serve their vendors as a useful means of avoiding losses on unsold pork. But specialists like Don Pedro, Carnitas Uruapan, and Carnitas Don Rafa—what you might consider the big three—are relative rarities, especially on the north side.

Or maybe they're just not widely known. For almost six years my own hyperopia led me to believe that consistently excellent carnitas were unavailable north of 18th Street. I can't count the number of times I've passed by →

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Posole rojo

by KATHLEEN HINKEL

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Carnitas La Esquinita, an unassuming corner spot in Irving Park, without a second look. The dim storefront windows do tend to obscure the weekend rush and the passable weekday lunch crowd that occupies the handful of tables in front of the register, which also handles a brisk carryout business.

Earlier this summer I was introduced to jackfruit “carnitas” at Mini Mott, and the less said about those the better. But balance was restored to the universe when friend of the Food Chain Kristina Meyer clued me in to the delights within Carnitas la Esquinita, where 29-year-old chef Oscar Hernandez makes extraordinary carnitas during the day shift before he heads north to his second gig in the kitchen at Khan BBQ (from which no pork has ever come).

Hernandez grew up in Hidalgo, in northeast Michoacan, cooking at his mother's side. He landed his first job in Chicago in 2005, as a dishwasher at the late La Cazuela in Rogers Park, and was thrown into the fire on his second day when the chef didn't show up for work. By the time his sister-in-law, Angelica Guijosa, opened Carnitas La Esquinita in early 2013, Hernandez was well equipped to handle the usual suspects produced in a professional Mexican kitchen.

CLE covers a lot of those bases, but there's a reason the carnitas are especially touted. Hernandez starts the pork low and slow in the lard, according to the accepted method, gradually increasing the temperature to achieve exterior crispiness.

The restaurant may not do the traffic of Carnitas Don Pedro, but the pork stays consistently moist anyway. That's because once it's done cooking, Hernandez doesn't keep it under



Owner Angelica Guijosa and chef Oscar Hernandez at Carnitas La Esquinita by KATHLEEN



The unassuming restaurant is at the corner of Irving Park and Bernard. by KATHLEEN HINKEL

heat lamps, but instead leaves it in the pan, effectively making confit, a meat cooked and preserved in its own fat. When an order comes in, he chops it up on the flattop, achieving an ideal matrix of tender shoulder and chewy skin, a perfect balance of the fatty, meaty, and crispy. Cilantro, raw chopped onion, and a squirt of lime are all that's needed to check the exquisite richness.

CLE isn't a specialist, but it certainly performs like one. Even so, there are other standouts on the menu. Posole rojo makes use of larger-than-usual chunks of spoon-tender pork that swim in a brick-red, full-bodied brew smoky with guajillo chiles and thick with hominy. Caldo de pollo is similarly teeming with whole legs of fowl and big pieces of potato and carrot, while the beef barbacoa nearly rivals

the carnitas in disintegrative tenderness.

Maybe if Hernandez made a mountain of little meats in the window, Carnitas La Esquinita would be spoken of in the same breath as the big three—or maybe they would just suffer from exposure. Hiding in plain sight certainly hasn't hurt their source. [📍](#)

[🐦 @MikeSula](#)



Kat Evans and Paul Chakrin STEVE GRAUE

THEATER

Based on a true story

Kristine Thatcher's *The Safe House* examines the deeper mysteries of life. Oh, and it's also funny.

By JACK HELBIG

*Good times and bum times, I've seen 'em all
And, my dear, I'm still here. . . .
I've run the gamut, A to Z
Three cheers and dammit, c'est la vie
I got through all of last year, and I'm here. . . .
Look who's here, I'm still here.* —Stephen
Sondheim, "I'm Still Here" (from *Follies*)

It is hard not to see Kristine Thatcher's latest play, commissioned by director Terry McCabe and City Lit Theater and currently receiving its world premiere, through the lens of her biography. And not just because it's described in the playbill as a "true story." The play is very much about surviving, and facing mortality, and adapting to change. And Thatcher's done a lot of all three recently.

In 2012, Thatcher was diagnosed with stage 3 ovarian cancer: the cancer had already spread to other parts of the body. This happened around the same time she closed the

little theater she'd founded in her hometown of Lansing, Michigan. She has since gone through several rounds of chemotherapy, the most recent of which, according to a December 2017 note Thatcher wrote to followers on her fund-raising website, "killed or calcified all the tumors, but also gave [her] something called myelodysplasia," which, Thatcher continued, means she has "a 25 percent chance of developing leukemia in the next three or so years." Not a perfect outcome, to be sure, but the chemo, or rather the successful completion of chemo, gave her a new lease on life, and on playwriting, which she didn't have the energy to do during her treatments. When she wrote that note, she was working on *The Safe House*, and though the play's not about cancer, it's very much about death and the infirmity of the body. It's also very much the kind of reflection one makes while heading into an uncertain future.

The Safe House concerns a 32-year-wom-

an (ably played by Kat Evans), fresh from a failed acting career in New York City and broken marriage (her second), who comes home to Michigan to visit her beloved grandmother (by turns fiery, defiant, and vulnerable, as played by Marssie Mencotti) and finds her heading into mental decline. The grandmother denies she has a problem, and wants to stay in the house she built with her husband, while her son, concerned for her safety—she loses track of her medication and almost burned the house down—wants to put her in assisted living.

RR THE SAFE HOUSE
Through 12/15: Fri-Sat
7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Mon
12/3 and 12/10, 7:30 PM, City Lit
Theater, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr, 773-
293-3682, \$32, \$27 seniors, \$12
students and military.

This is a classic Playwriting 101 dramatic conflict. But the beauty of Thatcher's play is that it transcends the problem it presents. The question the characters are trying to resolve is not nearly as interesting, or as compelling, as the deeper, thornier problems of living and life they face tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow—those tedious, messy, scary, unanswerable, existential questions we grapple with every day, or spend our days avoiding. Who are we? What do we want? Why do we do what we do? Why do we get trapped in destructive patterns? How do we cope with sudden rever-

sals in life? Why do the people we love have to die? Why do we have to die?

Thatcher, a graceful writer with a fine ear for dialogue and a gift for subtle character development, raises these existential questions without tossing her audience into an abyss of pure dread. Instead, she presents us with a charming, sometimes quite funny play that seems on the surface like mere slice-of-life, kitchen-sink realism. (The kitchen sink in Roy Toler's set actually works.)

The production re-creates onstage Lansing, Michigan, in the early 80s with the attention to detail of a museum diorama. Toler's set includes a wall phone in the kitchen with an absurdly long phone cord, like many middle-class homes (including my own) had in the pre-cell-phone era. McCabe's casting is pitch-perfect, and his ensemble's collective performance strikes a perfect balance of quiet desperation and anxious engagement in the knotty issues of the characters' lives.

McCabe's production also re-creates in loving detail the long-gone world of the grandmother's younger self. But if you open yourself up to the play emotionally, you begin to feel something deeper than mere realism pulsing beneath Thatcher's words. Thatcher clearly years for this past—you can feel it in every line—and the beauty of this play is that she makes her audience start yearning too. And immediately on the heels of that yearning comes something very hard to find the words for—a recognition of the terrible beauty and paradox of living, that life is at once painful and wonderful, terrifying and amazing, awful and too short.

How much has this play been influenced by Thatcher's experiences as a cancer patient? Or by her current status as someone in remission, with a threat of leukemia on the horizon? It would be presumptuous for me to think I know the answer to this. But I sensed that Thatcher is working at once on two levels: the petty details of everyday life and the deeper mysteries beneath our feet.

Thatcher wrote a play in the mid-80s about the Wisconsin poet Lorine Niedecker. And one of Niedecker's shorter poems describes well the bittersweet feeling I had leaving this all-too-brief play:

What horror to awake at night
and in the dimness see the light.
Time is white
mosquitoes bite
I've spent my life on nothing.

@JackHelbig

Visceral Dance Chicago's Noelle Kayser
in Nick Pupillo's *Soft Spoken*  MICHELLE REID



DANCE

They fell in love with the drummer

The Auditorium Theatre highlights some of the city's best dance companies—and Glenn Kotche of Wilco.

IN 2017, CHICAGO GOT A TASTE of Danielle Agami's choreography when Nick Pupillo, artistic director of Visceral Dance Chicago, commissioned *Pick a Chair* in 2017 to music by composer and Wilco percussionist Glenn Kotche. This Friday, November 16, Agami returns with her own company, Ate9, to present *Calling Glenn*, her first collaboration with Kotche, on a shared bill with Visceral and Chicago stalwart Deeply Rooted Dance Theater as part of the Auditorium Theatre's "Made in Chicago" 312 series.

**"MADE IN CHICAGO" 312
SERIES: ATE9/VISCERAL/
DEEPLY ROOTED**

Fri 11/16, 7:30 PM, Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Ida B. Wells, 312-341-2300, auditoriumtheater.org, \$29-\$68.

Born in Israel, Agami, a former dancer and rehearsal director with Batsheva Dance Company, founded Ate9 in 2012 in Seattle. The

company rapidly made waves with Agami's interpretation of Ohad Naharin's movement language, Gaga. Agami began working with Kotche long-distance when a donor, Catharine Soros, suggested the two collaborate. Kotche plays his compositions live in *Calling Glenn*.

"We wanted to showcase the great dance that Chicago has to offer, in addition to the amazing international dance companies that we bring to town," explains the Auditorium's chief programming officer, C.J. Dillon, noting that other companies the theater will feature in the "Made in Chicago" series include Milwaukee- and Chicago-based Trinity Irish Dance Company, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and Cuba's Malpaso Dance Company. "These companies embody the diversity of the dance landscape in Chicago. Each of the companies is of the highest caliber of dance and innovation. The artistic vision of these amazing companies is how they achieve their success." —**IRENE HSIAO**



Peter Pan
 LES RORICK

THEATER

Hey, look, another *Frankenstein!* Manual Cinema's version is technically dazzling and emotionally cold.

Onto Court Theatre's spacious, moodily lit stage, Manual Cinema shoehorns three makeshift video production studios—featuring live actors, shadow puppets, and hand-cranked scrolling images—as well as all manner of acoustic, automated, and DIY musical instruments in an elaborate attempt to create a live silent movie on a huge screen floating above everything. The film's subject is Mary Shelley's titular and, at least right now in Chicago, inescapable 1818 gothic novel (this is the third of four local stage adaptations this year), inflected with bits of the author's pre-*Frankenstein* biography. The intricacy of the proceedings is dizzying; just about every ten-second film segment requires tightly coordinated work from three or four semi-frantic people wielding props or puppets or both. And how the four instrumentalists spread across a darkened stage stay in perfect synchrony through Kyle Vegter and Ben Kauffman's demanding score is anyone's guess.

As a two-hour display of technical prowess, it's jaw-dropping. But as an evening of storytelling, it's a cold affair that struggles to find an emotional connection to Shelley's harrowing saga. The skilled troupe's exhausting efforts to hew to an exacting style—alternately childlike, campy, and folklorish—keep everything at multiple levels of remove. Simple, vulnerable moments are difficult to find. And for a show that attempts to foreground Shelley's personal investment in the book's creation, it's curious how much of this version isn't her novel at all—including a climactic scene borrowed from the 1931 Boris Karloff film. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** **FRANKENSTEIN** Through 12/2: Wed-Thu 10:30 AM and 7:30 PM, Fri 7:30 PM, Sat-Sun 2 and 7:30 PM; also Tue 11/20, 10:30 AM; no performances Wed 11/21, 10:30 AM, or Thu 11/22, Court Theatre, 5535 S. Ellis, 773-753-4472, courttheatre.org, \$50-\$74, \$37.50-\$55.50 students.

Norwegian gloom

A dramatization of eternal hell would be preferable to Redtwist's maudlin, moralizing *Ghosts*.

Henrik Ibsen's 1882 exploration of the rot at the core of a prominent family is meant to be a scathing

indictment of societal hypocrisy. But in this new take at Redtwist Theatre—adapted and directed by Erin Murray—the result is mostly maudlin moralizing.

A son comes home from abroad stricken with the venereal disease he inherited from his late, sainted father. He falls for the beautiful maid who's his father's illegitimate child. The matriarch wanted to run off with the town's priest in her youth but now presides over a house full of lingering bad memories. The maid's adoptive father, an alcoholic carpenter, seems to have her best interests at heart but is actually leveraging the rich people's secrets to shake them down. Every new person who appears on stage is worse than the last. But it's never clear why any of their wallowing is necessary or of any interest to anyone but themselves.

By making the carpenter and maid black, the production attempts to make a 19th-century play more current, but it's unclear what era or country is being represented, so the added dimension of racial conflict seems misplaced. Perhaps the producers were hoping to evoke some eternal hell in which well-to-do white people dress in Old World garb and sweep their misdeeds under the finest rugs. I would've enjoyed seeing that play instead of watching this lot of vaguely wrought devils torment one another for no apparent reason and without even a trace of humor. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** **GHOSTS** Through 12/10: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM; no performance Thu 11/22, Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr, 773-728-7529, redtwist.org, \$35-\$40, \$30-\$35 students and seniors.

Hey, look, another *Peter Pan!* Bros do Prose brings hip-hop to Neverland.

After the bows and applause on the night I attended this two-actor rendition of J.M. Barrie's classic story, a little girl in the audience wailed to her mother, "I don't want to leave!" It's a completely understandable reaction to this enchanting 90-minute one-act from the troupe Bros do Prose, directed by Christian Libonati and starring Breon Arzell and Ella Raymont.

While Arzell and Raymont primarily portray Peter Pan and Wendy, they also play a multitude of characters using accents, body language, props, and, most notably, infinite energy. Both actors demonstrate a rare command of language and control over their physical comedy; their exuberance is contagious. With limited set pieces ranging from a laptop DJ station to a blow-up alligator pool toy, the actors' stage presence and their commitment to the material elevate the

ARTS & CULTURE

production into excitingly imaginative territory. Hip-hop interludes showcase their impressive rap skills (there's a dance party to House of Pain's "Jump Around"), and the show program even comes into play during a dramatic water scene.

Bros do Prose, according to its website, "adapts epic literature into 2-person immersive and physically electric shows." Its version of *Peter Pan* is a mix of the well-told tale and modern, comedic updates. At its core, though, it remains a heartwarming story about how growing up isn't so bad as long as you remain young at heart. Wendy says it best: "If you can strengthen that beautiful imagination of yours, then every day of your life will be an awfully big adventure." —**MARISSA OBERLANDER** *PETER PAN* Through 12/23: Sat-Sun 11 AM, Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport, 773-325-1700, mercury-theaterchicago.com, \$20.

Wild thing

Ben Hollis looks back on his pre-*Wild Chicago* days in *Sex, Booze and Candy Bars*.

I was a little too young to catch Ben Hollis's local travelogue *Wild Chicago* during its original run on WTTW (1989 to 2003). But based on archived footage on YouTube, there was a lot about it to love.

Like a predecessor to Dave Attell's *Insomniac*, Hollis's news magazine roamed the city's neighborhoods to discover and showcase viewer-mail-suggested, not-for-tourist attractions, like indie wrestling matches and irreverent novelties in locally owned shops. In the process, he created a time capsule of Chicago memories not otherwise documented.

Now 64 years old, Hollis takes an admittedly self-indulgent look at his life leading up to his most notable professional accomplishment. Inspired to look inward after surviving brain surgery to address an arteriovenous malformation, Hollis chronologically sets major turning points—first loves, college, marriage, divorce—in his life to music, both covers and originals, performed by his friend, the guitarist John Siegle.

It's . . . weird. No less than four times does Hollis reference his mother's breasts as a "bed of bosoms," which makes sense in the context of a man walking audiences through his sexual development, but in practice, that translates to a lot of time listening to a senior reflect on his childhood "oozy-oozy feelings."

And yet, even though the songs are warbled and out of tune, I felt a bit inspired listening to his story

knowing the absurdist, irreverent streak that defined Hollis's youth is with him today. In a spot with as much young blood as Annoyance, that's something. —**DAN JAKES** *SEX, BOOZE AND CANDY BARS: A WILD MAN'S MUSICAL MEMOIR* Through 12/2: Sun 7 PM, Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont, 773-697-9693, theannoyance.com, \$20.

RR Love in the time of #BLM
An interracial couple struggles with differing levels of activism in *This Bitter Earth*.

Taking its title from singer Dinah Washington's 1960 R&B hit, this 2017 two-hander by Minnesota playwright Harrison David Rivers—a Chicago premiere from About Face Theatre—focuses on thirtysomething gay lovers Jesse (Sheldon Brown) and Neil (Daniel Desmarais). Jesse, a black man from a conservative religious upbringing in Kansas, has come to New York to become a playwright. Neil is a white trust-fund baby who, freed from having to work for a living, devotes himself to activism in the Black Lives Matter movement. They meet at a BLM protest where Neil confounds Jesse's skepticism about white "allies" when he recites, from memory, a poem by poet-activist Essex Hemphill: "If whales, snails, dogs, cats / Chrysler and Nixon can be saved, / the lives of Black men are priceless / and can be saved . . ."

Framed as a flashback playing in Jesse's mind, *This Bitter Earth* explores Jesse and Neil's struggle to forge a relationship despite obstacles both external and internal. While Neil's anti-racism activism is sincere and passionate, it's enabled by a privilege that blocks him from understanding Jesse as deeply as he needs to. And Jesse's seeming "apathy" about political engagement is really self-protective emotional camouflage for a man who believes he has to be tough in order not to be hurt.

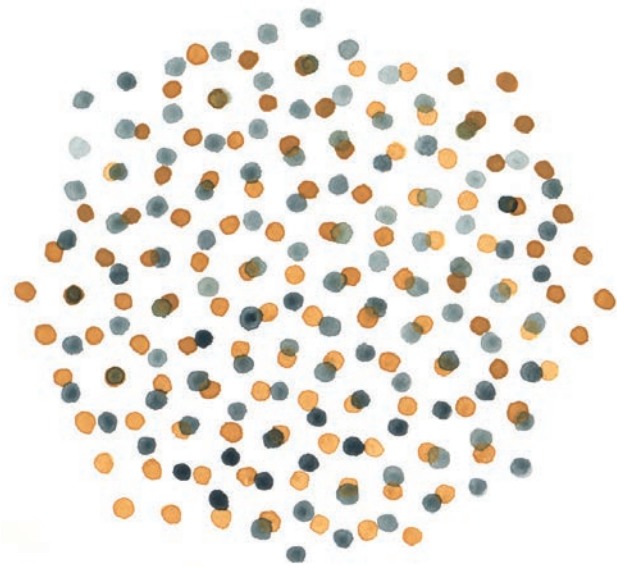
Chronicling the characters' relationship in fragmented, nonlinear fashion, *This Bitter Earth* challenges its actors to express the story's highly charged emotional through line authentically. Under Mikael Burke's direction, Brown and Desmarais meet the play's demands, with Brown especially delivering a performance of gripping, painful intensity. —**ALBERT WILLIAMS** *THIS BITTER EARTH* Through 12/8: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Sat 11/24 and 12/8, 3 PM; no performance 11/22, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont, 773-975-8150, aboutfacetheatre.com, \$38, \$20 students and seniors. **R**



This Bitter Earth
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BOOK SWAP

Lit recs for the recently repatriated Chicagoan

In Book Swap, a regular feature that is entirely unique, about books, and not at all related to the music feature In Rotation, a *Reader* staffer recommends three to five books and then asks a local wordsmith, literary enthusiast, or publishing-adjacent professional to do the same. It is awesome. Way better than it would be if it were about records.

In our inaugural edition, editor in chief Anne Elizabeth Moore swaps book suggestions with Salem Collo-Julín, a writer, comedian, and artist who lives in New City, a community area on the southwest side. From 2000 to 2014, Collo-Julín collaborated with the artists Brett Bloom and Marc Fischer in the art and publishing collective Temporary Services, and she cofounded the publishing imprint Half Letter Press. She was one of the “keyholders” at Mess Hall, the Rogers Park experimental cultural center that closed in 2013 after offering completely free programming for ten years.

AEM:

I read two incredible books this fall by Chicagoans:

SELLING THE RACE by Adam Green, a narrative about black Chicago in the 1940s and '50s, with a gripping (yes!) publishing procedural on the Associated Negro Press and the founding of Johnson Publishing. Published in 2007 by the University of Chicago Press, it is written in incredibly lively prose that's a sheer joy to soak in.

ON IMMUNITY: AN INOCULATION, Eula Biss's 2014 Graywolf Press book, is a series of personal essays that tease through notions of illness, politics, care work, and vaccinations to pose questions about what makes us feel safe. I loved the way Biss infused research into the story of the birth of her first child—although not being the childbearing type I was less compelled by her descriptions of maternity. Her arguments about immunity are nonetheless compelling: that it is a “shared space,” truly public, and one that will only last if we tend it together.

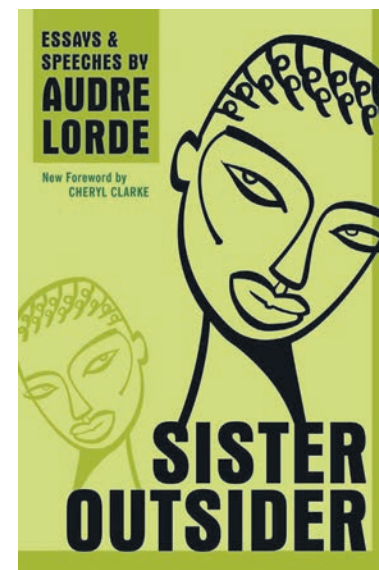
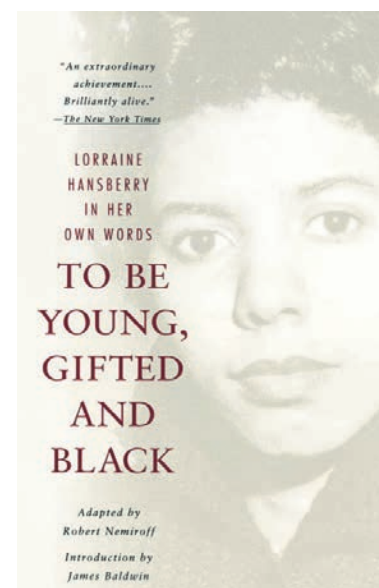
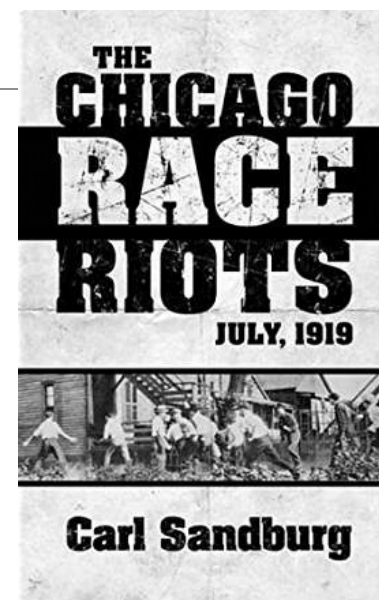
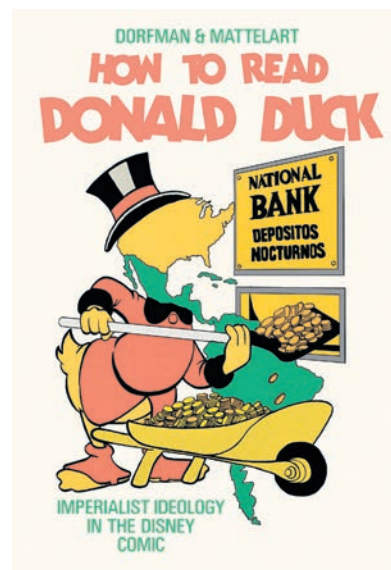
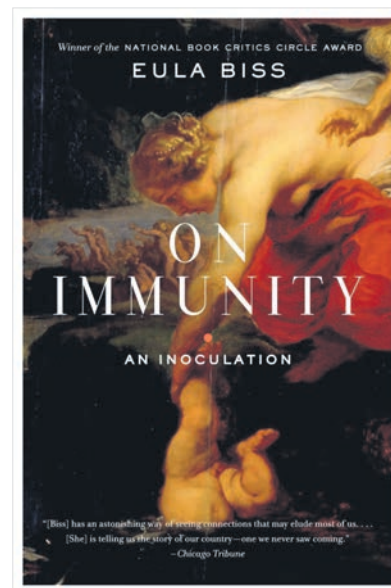
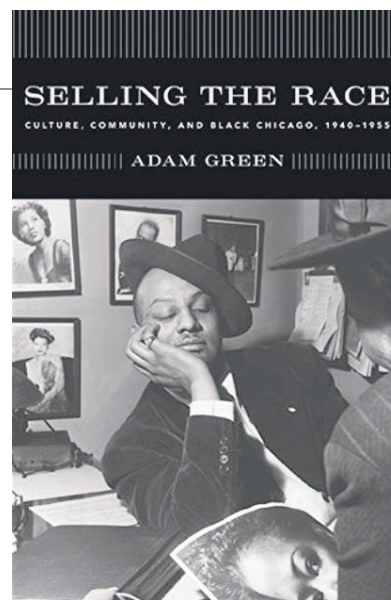
For Chicagoans who like to maintain a global perspective, OR Books rereleased one of my favorite books: ***HOW TO READ DONALD DUCK: IMPERIALIST IDEOLOGY IN THE DISNEY COMIC*** by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Matelart, which was originally published in Chile in 1971. The Chilean navy dumped the entire third printing into the ocean and burned all previous editions, yet the book and its steady narration of the economic infrastructure that underlies the Disney comics have persisted—and may be more relevant than ever. If you haven't read it yet but have ever in your life experienced a Disney media product, the clarity of this book nearly five decades on might stun you.

I asked Salem for a few Chicago book recs because she too just returned to the city after some years away.

SC-J:

Two or three books for Chicagoans who want some context (but not knowledge or clarity, because Chicago is not something one can understand by reading nor love by proxy):

THE CHICAGO RACE RIOTS: JULY, 1919 by Carl Sandburg (Dover Books reprinted this in 2013). The city was angry at itself, littered with knives, and anxious. Thousands of black workers at the stockyards lost their jobs when white veterans of WWI returned and forced them out. A black boy was killed on the beach, riots ensued, knives were grabbed and dis-



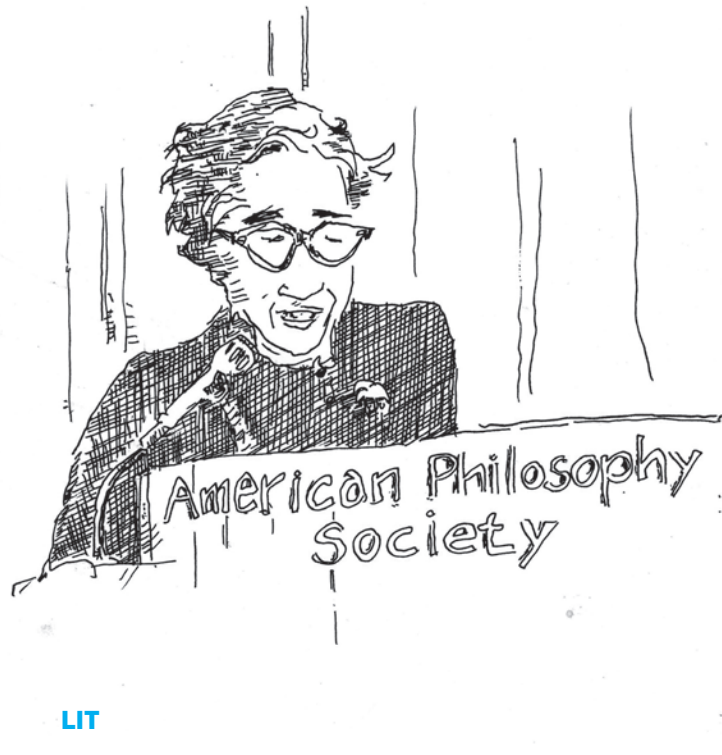
tributed, and by the end of it all, 38 people were dead. There is a good new book about this (*A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919* by Claire Hartfield, published in early 2018 by Clarion Books), but pick up the Sandburg first so you can transport yourself to early Chicago. These were columns Sandburg posted for the *Chicago Daily News* at the time, and some are raw, so you might want to take breaks with poetry. Sandburg's own poems "At a Window" and "Bricklayer Love" should shake you out of it. See also my friend Melinda Fries's publication *The Red Summer Self-Guided Walking Tour: Chicago* (viewable at temporaryservices.org/served/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Red_Summer_72.pdf).

TO BE YOUNG, GIFTED AND BLACK by Lorraine Hansberry (the "informal autobiography" has several reprints, including a Signet Classics version from 2011 that has a nice intro by James Baldwin). Hansberry's letters, notes from journals, and bits and pieces were curated into this portrait by her longtime friend and ex-husband shortly after her death in 1965. This was a play first, but I prefer reading the book version. These sometimes furious and sometimes longing interior dialogues between Lorraine and the universe will give you a entry point into what makes the soul of a Chicagoan—a belly that is hungry for justice and peace, a mind that is filled with guideposts to home. A bonus suggestion for those who prefer their agitators to have both big minds and big hearts: follow this one up with *Fire on the Prairie: Chicago's Harold Washington and the Politics of Race* by [longtime Reader contributor] Gary Rivlin (Henry Holt, 1992).

... And two suggestions for everyone who wants some love (but not clarity or context because love is not something one can understand by analysis or education):

Audre Lorde's books (**SISTER OUTSIDER**, especially the essay "Poetry is not a Luxury," and don't sleep on her **COLLECTED POEMS**, especially "Recreation") may seem like they are for someone specific from some specific time, but really, they are for you and you need to pick them up already.

THE WISDOM OF SUN RA (edited by my friend Anthony Elms and the mighty John Corbett for Whitewalls, 2006) will give you something to quietly memorize while you're waiting for the mothership to pull up. **▣**



LIT

The escape artist

The life and thoughts of Hannah Arendt—in pictures

By **ANDREA GRONVALL**

Ken Krimstein draws wacky gag cartoons—one classic shows two adjacent storefronts: the window sign in the left one reads **MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY**, while the window sign on the right reads **MEDICAL CHEEZ DOODLES DISPENSARY**—but the artist doesn't look the least bit demented. He's more like a cross between a boomer hipster and the favored uncle who shares his best anecdotes at first-night seder. I would never have pegged him as a midcentury philosophy buff.

Yet, after many years as a copywriter and creative director at top advertising and marketing agencies, he's turned his attention to the most arcane of disciplines. Cartoon sales to the *New Yorker*, among other places, led him to write his first book, *Kvetch as Kvetch Can: Jewish Cartoons*, in 2010—"a labor of love, definitely," he beams. He moved back to the Chicago area in 2011—he currently lives in Evanston and teaches at DePaul—and began delving into philosophy; now he's published his second book and first graphic novel, *The*

Three Escapes of Hannah Arendt: A Tyranny of Truth.

More than three years in the making, the book is a fictionalized biography of one of the 20th century's towering German-Jewish intellectuals. The "three escapes" refer to seismic upheavals in Arendt's life. She flees Berlin in 1933 for Paris; eludes the Gestapo in France after escaping from the Gurs internment camp in 1941; and lands in New York, where she becomes a celebrated author, makes the leap from philosopher to political theorist, and reaches closure over her decades-long relationship with the philosopher Martin Heidegger, her mentor and former lover, who, for reasons of political expediency and academic advancement, fell in with the Nazis in 1933. (During her decades in America, she also taught at various universities, including Northwestern and the University of Chicago.)

Krimstein's book arrives during a resurgence of interest in Arendt across print, film, and digital media. "It's 75 years, give or take, since World War II," he says. "There's a slight

shift in the zeitgeist, because the last people who were alive during the war are fading, and so the narrative is changing. We also now live in an age of podcasts, and I listen and am learning a lot, and Hannah started coming up on my radar. A publisher was interested in my work, and basically said, you can do whatever you want; show us some ideas. One of them was to take a complex essay or something like chess and make it accessible through pictures and words. Philosophy was like that; it was a puzzle." Krimstein says he started reading more modern philosophers, and was drawn to work coming out of the University of Chicago: Leo Strauss, Arendt, and others.

"When I was a kid I loved biopics—like *Young Abraham Lincoln*, *The Life of Louis Pasteur*, *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet*—and, I always say this, the comics cognoscenti have their pantheon of comic books from the 50s. Classics Illustrated is not one of them."

I tell him, defensively, that I've read those.

"So did I! My great uncle gave me plenty of them: *The Life of Joan of Arc*, *The In-* ➔

ARTS & CULTURE

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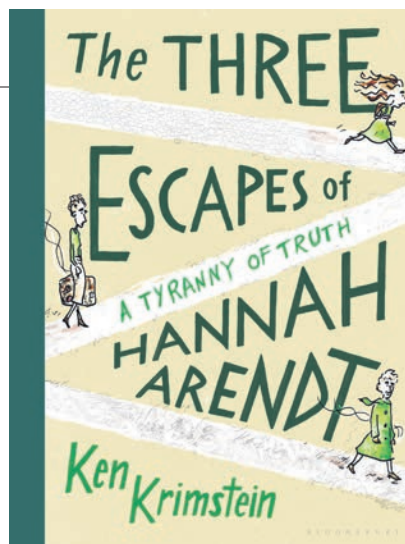
vention of *Atomic Energy*, *Moby-Dick*. I read those a hundred times. I guess in the back of my mind was, ‘I want to do that when I grow up.’ I read a lot of biographies, and find that I’m always drawn to the early days. What made the person? [When] I opened Elisabeth Young-Bruehl’s *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, it was like fireworks going off. Every incident grabbed me by the throat, from Hannah’s father having this very virulent type of syphilis that made him hallucinate and not recognize her to her learning ancient Greek at an early age and putting on Greek tragedies. OK, maybe she’s a genius, but what does that mean? Why did she do this? What I tried to connect in the book was the life that led to her thinking.”

It’s remarkable how lively Krimstein makes thought look in the book, with walk-ons by Arendt’s many friends and colleagues, including Strauss, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, Herbert Marcuse, and Albert Einstein—there’s even an imaginary encounter with Saint Augustine. He shows how her experiences led to her writing the landmark works *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *The Human Condition*. She comes across as a fully rounded person for whom intellectual and sensual passion were often entwined. And her many eccentricities, charming or not, add to her complexity.

“Quirky, and attractive, and audacious,” Krimstein agrees. “She loved life. She loved cooking; she loved food; she smoked too much; she loved her mother, as crazy as her mother was. Hannah was also an elitist, I believe, and a snob. I took some real liberties to make her a living, breathing human being. But I had some ground rules: I wasn’t going to put things out of sequence, and for those panels in the *Café Romanisches*, I made sure that the people were alive at that time and could have been in Berlin then.”

Those cafe society scenes in Weimar Berlin in particular show how propulsive Krimstein’s style is, how fluidly he conveys freewheeling conversations, how nimbly he switches gears. When he introduces multiple speakers within a frame, sometimes—as when Hannah visits Saint Augustine—dialogue flows down the page in a sort of “she says-he says” volley. At other times he resorts to a collage of captions, rotating the speakers clockwise or counterclockwise. I wonder if the counterclockwise mode was deliberate, or if it has something to do with his being left-handed.

“Yes, it’s totally to do with being left-handed,” he replies. “Counterclockwise is a very



comfortable way for me to deal with the world. Upside down and backwards is the way I deal with things. But I broke everything down in terms of what was the point I wanted to make at the end of every scene.” Krimstein also notes his love of print design.

“I love typography,” he says. “I always look at the spread. And we read with rhythm—I’ve learned that from gag cartoons. There’s a flow and a snap. Everything has a little snap to it, if it works.”

Krimstein used a variety of techniques to give that snap. “Due to the nature of cartooning, sometimes my approach could be like reportage; sometimes it could be more traditional, like *Classics Illustrated*, or the way Charles Schulz did *Charlie Brown*. And sometimes I lay it out like a textbook. I used mixed media, like the old Rapidograph pen that clogged up; I used washes, and I smudged things. And then I was limited to one color, so what was the color going to be? I read somewhere that she wore green; they called her “the woman in green.” And someone put it to me that green is the color of natality, birth, freshness, which is Hannah’s thing: newness.”

Krimstein’s novel ends with a coda about the postwar chapter of Arendt’s life that, outside the deaths of loved ones, brought her the greatest personal pain.

All of her vast experience, the events of recent world history, and her evolution beyond philosophy had led her to embrace freedom and plurality as essential for an authentic life and world peace. Her earliest qualms about the newly established state of Israel arose from its foundation along ethnic (rather than pluralistic) lines, and its lack of a formal, written constitution guaranteeing freedom for all residents. So when she accepted an assignment from the *New Yorker* to cover the 1961 trial in Jerusalem of Adolf Eichmann, one



Ken Krimstein
© RICHARD SHAY

of the chief architects of the Holocaust, she knew she needed to report the proceedings as dispassionately as she could. In a panel showing a long-distance phone call to her husband and soul mate, Heinrich Blücher, Krimstein shows Hannah figuring out her angle: “If we turn Eichmann into a demonic monster, we somehow absolve him of his crime, and all of us of our potential crime, the crime of not thinking things through. The sad truth is that most evil is done by people who never make up their minds to be good or evil.”

Her articles provoked outrage over what was perceived as her supercilious dismissal of Eichmann as a boring, pencil-pushing bureaucrat rather than a criminal mastermind, and for her airing the role the Jewish Councils, governing bodies the Nazis appointed to keep tabs on Jewish populations, played in the Holocaust. But after her reports were compiled in her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, they reached a much wider readership, and a true maelstrom of vilification descended upon her. She lost friends and writing commissions; she became a pariah. Decades after her death in 1975, her reputation was still tarnished. I asked Krimstein if he felt she was unfairly treated and if it was time for a reappraisal.

“If you look at *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, and reread it—and some of her many critics were people who had never even read it—it’s almost a satirical piece; it’s very tongue-in-cheek. Yes, the man was horrible, he did terrible things, but the trial is about something else. Let’s try

to be reasonable: the guy spoke in clichés. He didn’t think things through. I’m not defending every last thing about [her book], but I’m not knocking it. I think it’s worth reading.”

Krimstein began work on the book in 2015, the year his father, Jordan “Jordie” Krimstein, passed away. I didn’t know this when I first read *The Three Escapes*, but I was struck by the poignant way the death of Hannah’s father is drawn: across three panels, his outline gradually fades, followed by the caption, “And one day, Poppa is no more.”

After all the research and immersion in Hannah’s life and dark times, I ask, did you go to any dark places you had not expected to go?

“Yes,” he says. “It broke through a lot of internal barriers that I had. It caused me to question, deeply, how courageous of an individual am I, and what I would do if I was faced with making those sorts of decisions [that Hannah made]. What clarity of vision would I have? And how willing am I to be the kind of pariah she became? And then, the sense of loss [over] the destruction of not only humanity, but the cities, and culture—everything just wantonly destroyed.”

Given the growing trend of adult-oriented animation that deals with serious subjects, could he ever envision *The Three Escapes of Hannah Arendt* being adapted as an animated film?

“Yes. That didn’t take me long to answer, did it?”

Has someone bought the rights?

“Not yet,” he whispers. **R**

MUSEO ★★★

Directed by Alonso Ruizpalacios. In English and subtitled Spanish. 129 min. Fri 11/16–Thu 11/29. Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State, 312-846-2800, siskelfilmcenter.org, \$11.

ARTS & CULTURE**MOVIES****Sleight of hand**

The heist film *Museo* gives Alonso Ruizpalacios a showcase for his best camera tricks.

By **BEN SACHS**



Broadly speaking, the major filmmakers to have come out of Mexico over the last three decades—Alfonso Cuarón, Guillermo del Toro, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Gerardo Naranjo—are bound by a sense of showmanship. They design their films to astonish, incorporating some flashy camera movement, composition, or edit into every scene. Their work carries on a tradition that can be traced back to Orson Welles, F.W. Murnau, and even Georges Méliès—call it the cinema of attractions, in which practically every shot is meant to assert the medium's power to transform reality. *Museo*, the second feature by Mexican writer-director Alonso Ruizpalacios, belongs to this tradition too. Moment for moment, it's one of the most enjoyable movies around; Ruizpalacios is clearly drunk on the possibilities of filmmaking, and his enthusiasm is infectious. In fact his direction is so engaging that it successfully distracts from his shortcomings as a storyteller. The narrative of *Museo* pretty much falls apart in its last third, but even then the formal playfulness inspires goodwill. The film serves as a reminder of Welles's famous

assertion that cinema is the greatest train set you could ever give to a boy.

Fittingly, one of *Museo's* major themes is boyishness, as the adult heroes played by Gael García Bernal and Leonardo Ortizgris suggest overgrown children. Juan (Bernal) and Wilson (Ortizgris), who are both around 30, have been best friends since childhood and remain inseparable. Both are studying to become veterinarians and are taking a ridiculously long time to complete their education—Juan has been working toward his degree for nine years and doesn't seem close to finishing (the filmmakers don't divulge how long Wilson has been studying). Before the movie begins, the two men decide to rob the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. Ruizpalacios, directing a script he wrote with Manuel Alcalá, never gets into their motivation, but he suggests that it comes out of a combination of boredom, a sense of adventure, and a desire to accomplish something—anything—in their lives.

He also suggests that Juan has a strong personal attachment to the museum. Ruizpalacios flashes back early in the film to show

him visiting the site as a boy with his father, then cuts to an elaborate Steadicam shot that snakes through a group of schoolchildren visiting the place in the present to find Juan working there as a security guard. Wilson, who narrates the film, explains that Juan took the job in order to pay for his marijuana, thereby undercutting the sense of wonder engendered by the fancy camerawork. When the film gets to its stunning credits sequence—which features close-ups of ancient artifacts set to bombastic orchestral music—Ruizpalacios has already set a complex tone that's half sincere and half ironic.

The film maintains this tone as it introduces the setting and other characters. Presenting Juan's family home (where he still lives with his well-to-do parents), Ruizpalacios favors expansive wide-screen compositions cluttered with period details. *Museo* takes place in 1985, and Ruizpalacios approaches the production design as though he were creating a museum piece, arranging knickknacks generously around the frames and often cutting to fetishistic close-ups of such archaic technology as rotary phones, VHS tapes, and Atari video →

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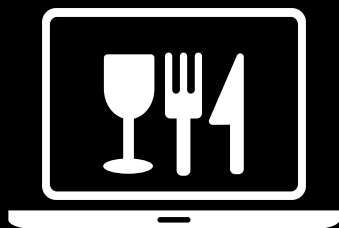
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ARTS & CULTURE

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games. He also likes to track or zoom into certain details (like Juan talking on a pay phone), and these devices create a sense of immersion in the past. Moreover, they draw us into Juan's point of view, though Ruizpalacios likes to interrupt these appeals to subjectivity by cutting to objective shots or overlaying narration that refers to things Juan doesn't know. Such techniques heighten the film's complex aesthetic, creating an environment that viewers can enter through multiple avenues.

The film's first climax is a lengthy sequence that plunges viewers into Juan's dysfunctional home life. Set during an extended family gathering on Christmas Eve, the passage finds Ruizpalacios switching to a documentary-style approach, with handheld camerawork and jumpy editing that communicate a sense of chaos. Viewers come to understand, through snatches of dialogue and the general milieu, Juan's complicated relationships with his four sisters, his parents, and his uncle (another black sheep of the family). These people all love him, though they've long been exasperated by his slacker lifestyle. Ruizpalacios returns to Juan's perspective with a graceful tracking shot toward him as he sits at the dinner table, a spotlight gradually rising over him; the change in perspective points to his alienation from the rest of his family as well as his fixation on robbing the museum. It's not long before he decides to move up the robbery to this night (he and Wilson originally planned their heist for closer to New Year's Day); before he leaves, though, he inadvertently shows his nieces and nephews where their parents hid the Christmas gifts, ruining the holiday.

The subsequent heist is the movie's centerpiece, and it represents a trove of cinematic invention. Employing the same music he used in the credits sequence, Ruizpalacios follows Juan and Wilson as they climb over the museum gate, run across the courtyard (the camera briefly turns upside down as they do), and enter the building. A wide shot of the museum's exterior throws into relief the close-ups that follow, which show the array of tools the men use to break open display cases, and their astonished reactions to their own cunning. This sequence, in its intricate detail, recalls the famous heist of Jules Dassin's *Rififi* (1955), and it's just about as suspenseful. An escape through the museum's ventilator shafts evokes numerous prison escape movies, though Ruizpalacios undercuts the allusion

with a subjective shot of Juan hallucinating—he thinks he sees the Mayan king Pakal watching him in the shaft. Soon after, the director undercuts the men's sense of bravado with another wide shot, this time of a collection of monuments in a town square where Wilson stops to pee on his way home.

This shot reminds us of how small these characters really are, and the remainder of *Museo* is essentially a string of variations on this insight, following Juan and Wilson as they lope toward defeat. The film's second act finds the men traveling to the jungle, where they meet a connection who promises to introduce them to a British art dealer who may be interested in purchasing the stolen artifacts. The characters loiter around the jungle until the dealer's ready to meet them, occasioning some impressive shots of the Mayan pyramids and surprisingly lyrical passages of time being wasted. From there, the characters venture to Acapulco to see the dealer; their meeting inspires the film's single most impressive passage, an elaborate tracking shot lasting several minutes that begins as a wide shot and ends as a close-up of Juan. This shot charts the men's fall from confidence, as the dealer realizes they have no idea what they've gotten into and calls them out on their naivete. Played by Simon Russell Beale in a memorably testy turn, the dealer explains that the artifacts (the theft of which has been reported by news outlets around the world) are simply too hot to sell. Juan and Wilson have no choice but to return them to the museum or hang on to them indefinitely.

As the protagonists lose their sense of purpose, so too does *Museo*. The film flounders for another 40 minutes as the characters stumble from one misadventure to another. Ruizpalacios still stages impressive set pieces as the movie winds to its conclusion—especially thrilling is a sequence in an oceanside bar, where Juan gets into a fight with several men to defend the honor of a belly dancer. Shot in another extended take and lit by a single spotlight, the fight showcases some nifty action choreography, suggesting that Ruizpalacios—after dabbling in realistic family drama, the heist film, and Malick-style reverie—wanted to try his hand at a kung fu picture as well. It also creates the impression that the director was having so much fun that he couldn't bear to end the movie, and given how entertaining *Museo* is, you can't really blame him. **A**

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LETTER FROM MASANJIA
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— Kevin Crust, Los Angeles Times
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Maria by Callas

MOVIES

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs

This may be the first movie by Joel and Ethan Coen to take place in the wild west, but it still feels like a greatest hits collection. It consists of six stories, beginning with a cartoonish musical comedy that recalls *Raising Arizona* (1987) and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) in its highfalutin dialogue, show-offy camera setups, and stick-figure characterizations. From there, the stories get progressively more somber and the reflections on mortality increasingly serious; the film ends up in the ruminative register of *Fargo* (1996) and *No Country for Old Men* (2007). My favorite episodes fall in the middle: the third episode (the strangest and most ambiguous) stars Liam Neeson as the tour manager of a quadriplegic stage performer, while the fourth is a relaxed soliloquy for Tom Waits, playing a lonely gold prospector. As with the Coens' oeuvre on the whole, the various stories are unified by an impressive sense of craft and a lamentable sense of smugness. With James Franco, Zoe Kazan, and Brendan Gleeson. **—BEN SACHS R, 132 min. Fri 11/16–Sun 11/18 10:50 AM, 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, and 9:40 PM; Mon 11/19–Tue 11/20 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, and 9:40 PM; Wed 11/21, 1:55, 4:15, 7:30, and 10 PM; and Thu 11/22, 10:50 AM, 1:55, 4:15, 7:30, and 10 PM. Landmark's Century Centre**

The Green Book

In 1962, a working-class Italian-American bouncer from the Bronx (Viggo Mortensen) becomes chauffeur to a world-renowned pianist (Mahershala Ali), who happens to be black and gay. They embark on a tour of Middle America, then the Deep South; both men learn a thing or two about prejudice (including their own) and surprise themselves by becoming best friends. Peter Farrelly directed this upbeat docudrama, and like the comedies he made with his brother Bobby (*Kingpin*, *There's Something About Mary*, et al), it's overstated, emotionally manipulative, and disarmingly bighearted. The film hits every dramatic point you'd expect it to make: the pianist teaches the driver about culture, the driver teaches the pianist to loosen up, both characters get to tell off southern bigots, etc. Yet Farrelly and his cast deliver the clichés with such sincerity and good cheer that the film won me over anyway. **—BEN SACHS PG-13, 130 min. Lake, River East 21, Showplace ICON**

Instant Family

Mark Wahlberg must have agreed to this loathsome family comedy out of loyalty to director Sean Anders, his collaborator on their previous hits *Daddy's Home*

and *Daddy's Home 2*. I'd much rather believe that than (a) the star is losing his touch for picking the right projects, or (b) he's realized there's a seemingly ever-widening market of ticket buyers who like their movies as stupid as can be, and he's bellying up to cash in. The story concerns a childless couple (Wahlberg and Rose Byrne) who implausibly embrace the notion that becoming foster parents to not one but three problem kids will be as painless as rescuing a shelter puppy. Every single joke is either hackneyed, insulting, or else falls flat because Anders's sense of comic timing is about as sharp as a garden tool that's been left outside for a year. Byrne's performance is shrill, the child actors' parts are one-dimensional, and it's embarrassing to watch Tig Notaro, Octavia Spencer, Julie Hagerty, and Joan Cusack struggle to find footing in this abyss. **—ANDREA GRONVALL PG-13, 117 min. ArcLight Chicago, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14 Theaters, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Crown Village 18, Ford City, River East 21, Showplace 14 Galewood Crossings, Showplace ICON, Webster Place 11**

Letter from Masanjia

An example of documentary at its most aspirational—here, human rights watchdogging—this hybrid of non-fiction and animation exposes the Chinese system of forced labor camps. In 2012 Julie Keith, an Oregon homemaker, was unpacking Halloween decorations when she found a message taped to the back of an item that had been made in China. The note was a cri de coeur from Sun Yi, a Beijing petrochemical engineer serving two and a half years at the Masanjia internment camp for his adherence to the spiritual practice of Falun Gong. Keith's story made headlines globally, and Sun Yi, at liberty again, resolved to take Masanjia down, so he began covert guerrilla filming under the long-distance supervision of Canadian director and political activist Leon Lee. As chilling as Sun Yi's animated pen-and-ink drawings of prison torture are, more so is the evidence of surveillance and intimidation as Chinese agents close in to silence him. In English and subtitled Mandarin. **—ANDREA GRONVALL 75 min. Fri 11/16, 4:30 and 6:15 PM; Sat 11/17, 7:45 PM; Sun 11/18, 3:15 PM; Mon 11/19, 8:30 PM; Tue 11/20, 6 PM; and Wed 11/21, 8:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

Maria by Callas

Asif Kapadia's documentaries *Senna* (2010) and *Amy* (2015) seem to be the primary reference points for this chronicle of opera singer Maria Callas. Like those movies, it's assembled almost entirely from archival footage,

leading viewers to reflect on the extraordinary amount of time the subject spent in the public eye. Unlike Kapadia's films, however, this doesn't conjure up the eerie sense that the events are unfolding in the present tense, nor is the assemblage of materials ever fully immersive. Director Tom Volf provides a detailed account of Callas's career, addressing her personal life only moderately, and the relative absence of gossip is refreshing in light of so many salacious documentaries about celebrities. The film asserts that Callas was, above all, a world-class performer; Volf plays numerous arias in their entirety, letting the singer's work speak for itself. **—BEN SACHS PG, 113 min. Fri 11/16–Thu 11/22, 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30 PM; also Sun 11/18, 11 AM. Music Box Theatre**

Overlord

Overlord takes many elements you've seen before and creates a mashup that's able to deliver some gory fun, riveting suspense, zombie horrors, and terrifying depictions of modern war in equal measure. In WWII, a group of soldiers is sent behind enemy lines to destroy a German radio tower in a church so the Allies can provide air support on D-Day. Things of course get complicated as their plane is shot down and most of the soldiers are captured or killed. The survivors are committed to finishing the mission, only to find there's more truth than fiction in the stories about the church they've targeted. Jovan Adepo is riveting as Boyce, whose blackness makes him vulnerable to Nazi aggression. Haters of gore won't find much to like, but there are plenty of sheer thrills and a bloodily satisfying climax. **—ANDREA THOMPSON R, 110 min. AMC Dine-In Theatres Block 37, ArcLight Chicago, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14 Theaters, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Crown Village 18, Ford City, Lake, River East 21, Showplace 14 Galewood Crossings, Showplace ICON, 600 N. Michigan, Webster Place 11**

Sadie

The title character of this low-budget drama is a 13-year-old girl living on a trailer park in Washington State; her father, who's in the armed forces, hasn't returned from fighting overseas in four years, and her mother (Melanie Lynskey), a nurse, has secretly started dating other men. Sadie doesn't know how to deal with these developments, so she sublimes her feelings with increasingly inappropriate behavior. Writer-director Megan Griffiths generates a certain dark fascination in charting the girl's emotional descent—in fact this verges on becoming a psychological horror film—yet the filmmaker is more interested in crafting an elegy for blue-collar America, touching on such issues as opioid addiction, broken

families, and economic stagnation. The movie doesn't hit as hard as it should since Griffiths strikes such a monotonously grim tone and the performances aren't very convincing. With Tony Hale and John Gallagher Jr. **—BEN SACHS 96 min. Fri 11/16, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 11/17, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 11/18, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; and Mon 11/19–Wed 11/21, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinematheque**

Searching for Ingmar Bergman

Margarethe von Trotta directed and serves as onscreen host for this documentary about the Swedish master, interviewing other filmmakers and some of Bergman's collaborators and reflecting on ways that Bergman inspired her. The film doesn't provide any new information for those already familiar with Bergman's life and work, though some of the interviewees are insightful. Olivier Assayas is particularly perceptive, commenting on how the French New Wave, with its emphasis on performances and psychology, might not have existed without Bergman's influence. Von Trotta seems uncertain of what to do with the details of Bergman's ugly personal life; she acknowledges that he was a bad father and controlling with women, but she takes pains not to let this information overshadow her laudatory portrait of his oeuvre. Felix Moeller and Bettina Böhrer codirected. In English and subtitled French, German, Spanish, and Swedish. **—BEN SACHS 100 min. Fri 11/16, 2:15 and 6 PM; Sat 11/17, 3:30 PM; Sun 11/18, 5 PM; Mon 11/19, 6 PM; and Wed 11/21, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

Widows

Director Steve McQueen tries his hand at a mainstream thriller, approaching that genre no differently than he does the art film. After a team of professional thieves is killed by police, the aspiring politician they robbed tracks down the thieves' widows and gives them a month to return the stolen money; the women improbably decide to become thieves themselves and carry off a big heist. As in *Hunger* and *12 Years a Slave*, McQueen sets a relentlessly portentous tone and employs lots of stark mise-en-scene, but all the fuss feels arbitrary here—the pulpy story simply doesn't warrant such grave stylization. McQueen and cowriter Gillian Flynn strain for seriousness by shoehorning in a subplot about the politician's rival (the son of a corrupt lifelong Chicago alderman) as well as reflections on contemporary race relations; these additions feel arbitrary too. With Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki, Colin Farrell, and Liam Neeson. **—BEN SACHS R, 128 min. ArcLight Chicago, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14 Theaters, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Crown Village 18, Ford City, Lake, River East 21, Showplace 14 Galewood**



Widows

Chicago's first vinyl-pressing plant in decades

Inside Smashed Plastic, whose brand-new technology could bring relief to labels and artists stymied by long waits for records

By **LEOR GALIL**

Photos by **ADAM JASON COHEN**

Chicago hasn't had a working vinyl-pressing plant for at least 20 years. The last one was allegedly shut down by the FBI in the 90s for making bootleg 78 RPM records to sell in India. The presses from that facility, acquired in 2003 by Chicagoan Joell Hays, sat dormant in a local warehouse after Hays failed to find investors to get his own plant up and running. By the time Quality Record Pressings, run by Chad Kassem in Salina, Kansas, bought them in 2015, the machines were in wretched shape—rusted, clogged, and missing parts. But such is the demand for vinyl that Kassem bought 13 of them.

Founded in 2011, QRP is one of a handful of new U.S. companies that have emerged to meet this increasing demand—the country has only about two dozen such operations, old and new. Independent artists now tend to wait at least six months for their vinyl orders—and that's if the test pressings turn out fine and nothing else goes wrong. Many a band has booked a record-release show and ended up with no records when the day arrives.

Record Store Day launched in 2008 with the aim of rescuing brick-and-mortar music retailers threatened by the transition to a digital marketplace—and the primary instrument it used to draw customers into those shops was vinyl. Sales of vinyl have gone up every year since, and according to *Billboard*, 7.6 million new vinyl records were sold in the first half of 2018—a 19.2 percent increase from the same period last year. But because new pressing capacity isn't coming online as fast as the quantity of orders is increasing, vinyl plants are often flooded with jobs.



PVC pellets are melted at 285 degrees Fahrenheit and formed into round pucks.



The melted pellets are extruded in a cord, which fills a mold for the puck. These pucks were discarded while the press was being tested.



Fresh records, several of them irregular, cool on a table during testing.



Andy Weber of Smashed Plastic listens for imperfections in a test pressing while his colleague John Lombardo examines another copy by eye.

This can leave indie labels and artists high and dry while the available presses deal with, say, RCA's vinyl version of G-Eazy's EP *The Vault*, one of many inessential Record Store Day releases this Black Friday.

In Chicago, four investors are looking to address exactly this problem. Andy Weber, a longtime CHIRP DJ; John Lombardo, another CHIRP DJ and founder of indie label Stationary Heart; Steve Polutnik, who's worked in banking; and silent partner Matt Bradford have just opened the vinyl pressing plant Smashed Plastic on the north side, hoping to shorten those waiting times for small bands and labels.

Based in the former Hammond organ factory in Belmont Gardens, northwest of Logan Square, Smashed Plastic soft launched last week, pressing records for a few local imprints. Their first order is a 12-inch by Chicago soul combo the Right Now, a release planned for January from boogie fiends Star Creature Universal Vibrations. The Smashed Plastic crew own just one press (with the capacity to add two more), and they want to fine-tune their processes before taking on more business. "We aren't as concerned with profits at the beginning as we are with get-

ting things right," says Weber. "We're gonna know how to operate that machine up and down, left and right."

The idea for Smashed Plastic came from Weber—specifically from a conversation he had with Bradford in January 2016 about his friends' bands waiting months to get their records pressed. "I had no idea how much a record press cost," Weber says. "I figured it could be a side business." New vinyl presses, however, are typically priced in the low six figures, and running a plant can require several full-time employees. But Weber had the promise of financial backing from Bradford to help get over the cost hurdle, so he investigated the viability of launching such an operation in Chicago—acquiring Polutnik and Lombardo as partners along the way.

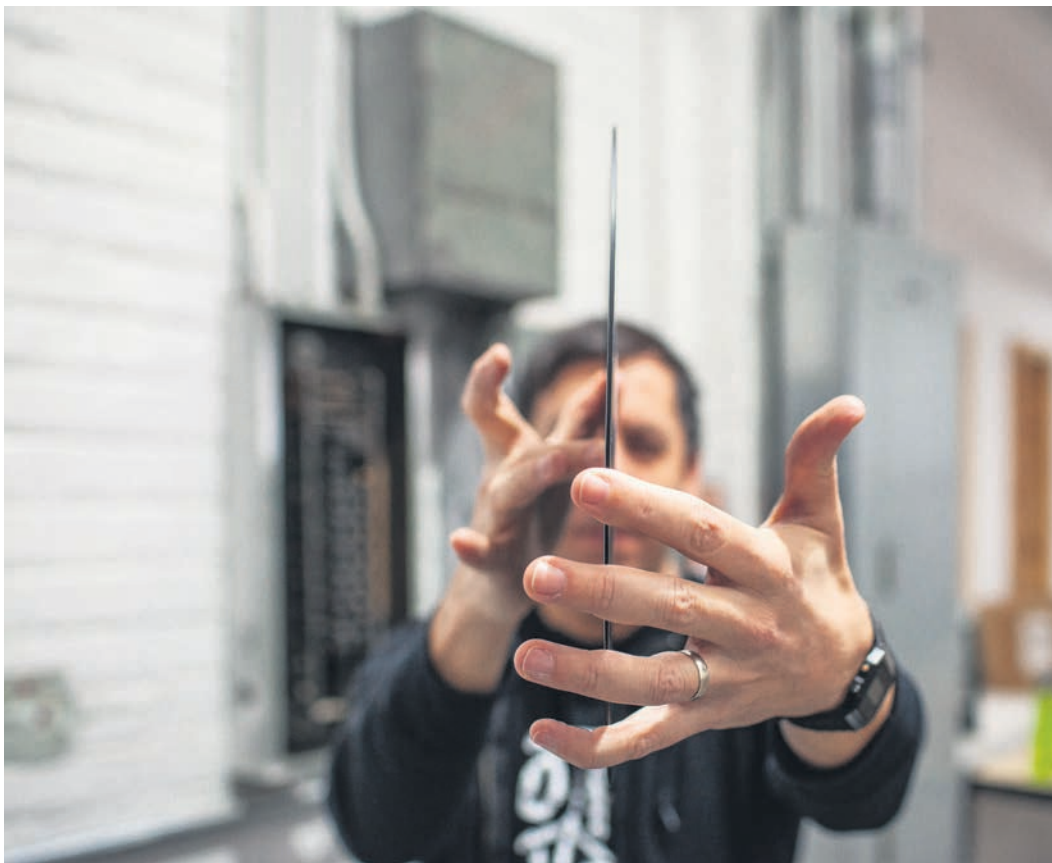
Like Kassem, the Smashed Plastic team first considered buying old presses—not because they understood how expensive new presses could be, but because they didn't even know anybody was still making them. "Old ones are tough to find," Polutnik says. "They're not cheap, and you still need maintenance to get them up online. It's 40-year-old technology that you're dealing with—stuff breaks →



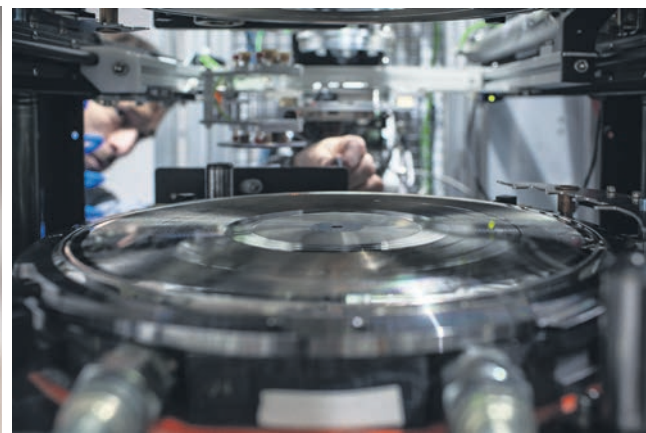
Andy Weber and John Lombardo test pressings.



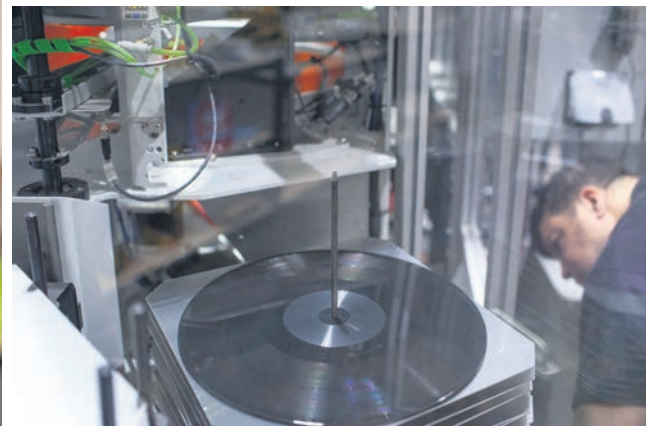
The steamless WarmTone press from Vinyl Technologies takes up surprisingly little space at Smashed Plastic.



John Lombardo inspects a record for warping.



The bottom of the two stampers that press the puck of melted vinyl into a record—the top stamper is mostly out of frame.



The press transfers the records onto a spindle, where they're left to cool for 12 hours. They're later sleeved and packaged by hand.

continued from 27

down, and there's only a handful of guys in the U.S. that can service them.”

Eventually they discovered the only two companies in the world that manufacture new vinyl presses: Newbilt Machinery in Alsdorf, Germany, and Viryl Technologies in Toronto, Canada. In October 2017 Smashed Plastic purchased a WarmTone press from Viryl for around \$200,000.

The computer-controlled WarmTone can turn a handful of PVC pellets into an LP in less than 30 seconds, and Viryl claims it spoils only 1 percent of the records it manufactures, as opposed to older machines, which can waste 30 to 40 percent. Viryl was established in 2015, and its presses first went online in early 2017—Texas-based Hand Drawn Pressing had contracted for two of them.

The WarmTone machine that Smashed Plastic bought is a modified version—an experiment by Viryl. “We’re the first steamless press in the world,” Polutnik explains. Vinyl presses usually require a steam boiler to melt the PVC pellets, but Viryl has designed a hot-water system that can achieve the necessary 285 degrees Fahrenheit without the use of steam or even a tank.

That saved Smashed Plastic a lot of trouble, because Chicago heavily regulates steam boilers. The team eventually would’ve had to



A freshly pressed record rests on the WarmTone's bottom stamper, about to be lifted by a suction arm that grips its center label.


bring in a stationary engineer just to maintain one, and many landlords balked at the additional construction a boiler would’ve required. “We were coming in \$200,000 over our budget,” Weber says. “We were all scratching our heads going, ‘Do we even have a business?’” The experimental machine solved all those problems. It uses electricity rather than gas to superheat water in a sealed

vessel without boiling it. In December 2017, Smashed Plastic signed a lease for 3,500 square feet in the Hammond factory, now called Workshop 4200—after real estate company Baum Revision acquired the building in December 2015, artists and boutique businesses began moving in within the year.

Viryl delivered the WarmTone in July, and Smashed Plastic ran their first test batch last

month. The “soft launch” period will last until January, if all goes to plan, at which point the plant will officially open for business—so far Smashed Plastic’s only customers have been people they already know. The owners are diligently posting their progress on the company’s Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts, and potential new clients are already getting in touch. “What we put on social media and word of mouth has launched us,” Polutnik says.

The Smashed Plastic space is divided into three rooms, one of which contains a bar built from rescued pine. The team envision it as a place where musicians and label staff who’ve placed orders can come in and relax while listening to their test pressings.

Because Lombardo runs his own label, he knows how stressful it can be to pour creativity, emotion, and money into a recording, only to send it off to a pressing service that turns out to be a black box. “It became so impersonal, and didn’t even feel like you were working with somebody,” he says. The Smashed Plastic crew want to run a plant where an order is more than just another number. “We’re gonna try to do the opposite, where you get to know the people—there’s only gonna be three of us that are working on the stuff,” Lombardo says. “It’ll be really direct, inviting people into our space.” 

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12.27 **EVERY AVENUE**

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12.31 **GUIDED BY VOICES**

01.26 **GNASH**
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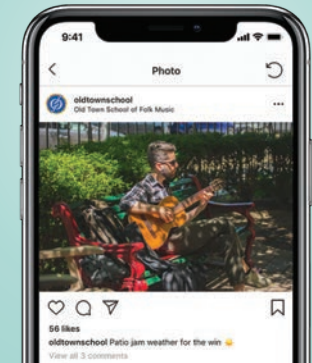
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PICK OF THE WEEK

The weirdness of R&B icon Swamp Dogg shines bright on *Love, Loss, and Auto-Tune*



SWAMP DOGG

Fri 11/16, 9 PM, the Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park, \$20-\$32. **ALL**

DAVID MCMURRY

JERRY WILLIAMS (formerly known as Little Jerry Williams) has been knocking out bizarre R&B records for 48 years under the name Swamp Dogg. Since his 1970 debut on Canyon, *Total Destruction to Your Mind*, he's taken his music down some weird back roads: a black-liberation song with an admitted Ku Klux Klan member on banjo ("Call Me Nigger"), a tender ballad about a man whose son is engaged to a hooker ("Or Forever Hold Your Peace"), and entire albums devoted to country and calypso—Dogg claims his version of John Prine's "Sam Stone" would have been a hit if only Al Kooper hadn't released his recording of the track around the same time. (Kooper later made up for overshadowing him with that release by playing keyboards on a couple of Dogg albums.) And with the holiday season coming up, it's worth noting that Swamp also penned the enduring Christmas standard "Santa's Just a Happy Fat Fart." Given all his eclecticism, it should be no surprise that on his latest album he's once again jumping on an altogether new bandwagon: Auto-Tune. The title of the record, *Love, Loss, and Auto-Tune* (Joy-

ful Noise), is an on-point description of its music. Though he takes cracks at pop standards such as "Stardust" and "Answer Me, My Love" (made famous by Nat "King" Cole), this is pointedly not the modern-day equivalent of Frank Sinatra's heartbreak albums from the 50s. Not only does Dogg sing through that Auto-Tune effect, he talks through it too, delivering love raps strange enough that Barry White might have shied away from them. And while some might be afraid that that studio effect would strip away some of his, ah, uniqueness, frankly, it enhances it. It is not clear whether the Dogg will use Auto-Tune in concert, but if he does, it will put an interesting spin on his earlier classics. As Swamp Dogg's music has progressed over time, it seems he's matured as well; rather than pose for the album cover wearing shorts or a hot dog suit or riding on the back of a rat like it's a bull at a rodeo, as he has in the past, on the cover of *Love, Loss, and Auto-Tune*, he's depicted lounging in front of an empty swimming pool, dressed casually in a robe and flip-flops. —**JAMES PORTER**

THURSDAY 15

MEAT WAVE *Cursive headlines; Meat Wave and Campdogzz open. 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$20-\$30. 17+*

Everyone loves Meat Wave, and for good reason. The local trio have been hammering out some of the best punk rock that's currently being made, and each of their three records has been better than its predecessor. On their newest release, a brand-new split 45 with local punks Lifestyles (out on No Trend Records), Meat Wave deliver another hit with "That's Alright." Riding on a hard-hitting, airtight rhythm, the song is signature Meat Wave, with Chris Sutter's melodic vocals equal parts pop smash and unsettling, dark rant. The band have spent most of the last month on tour with emo giants Cursive, but due to life obligations, powerhouse drummer Ryan Wizniak had to sit out for a huge chunk of the trip while Rad Payoff member Jon Olson (a punk-rock shredder in his own right) filled in. At this homecoming show, Meat Wave will expand to a four-piece for one night only, with Wizniak and Olson jointly holding down the set. A band this good, with two of the city's best drummers, makes for a performance you won't want to miss. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

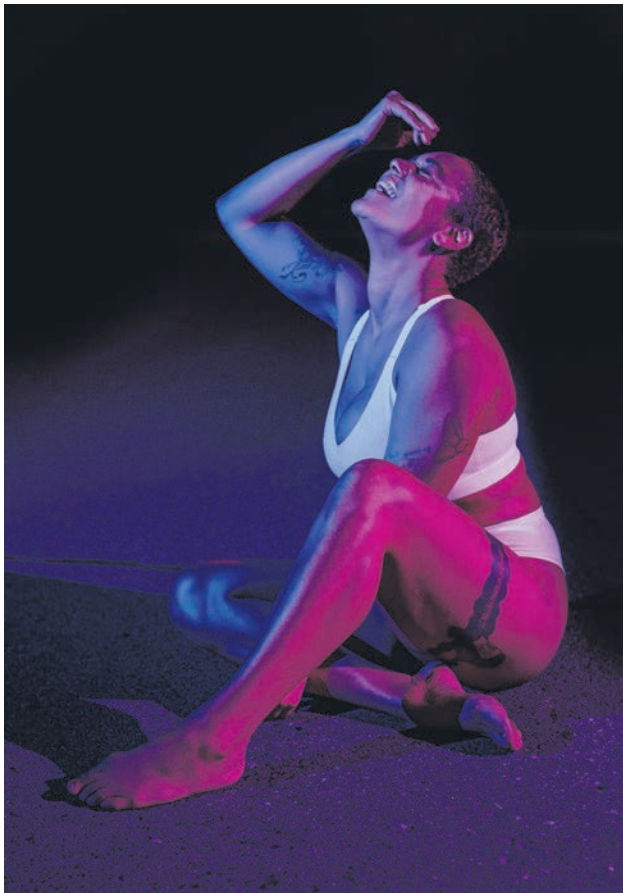
FRIDAY 16

AXIS: SOVA *David Nance and the Hecks open. 9 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$10. 21+*

Over the back catalog of Axis: Sova—which includes four full-lengths, a handful of singles, and one tape-only release—the local trio unfold a shocking persistence of vision. On their upcoming dispatch, *Shampoo You* (God?), they continue to embrace the freest moments of Brett Sova's thrumming guitar discord, and set them within a sturdier rock scaffolding than ever before. While aspects of the spacey, 12-minute title track from 2012's *Weight of Color* are still present, more tuneful early gambits, such as the classic-rock-imbued "Raising Hell," from the same album, now seem like woodshedding for *Shampoo You*. Sova started Axis: Sova as a solo project, and here he's joined by longtime guitarist Tim Kaiser and new bassist Jeremy Freeze;



Meat Wave **MA** MATTHEW SCHWERIN



Angel Davanport
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as always, a Roland TR-66 Rhythm Arranger backs the live instrumentation. The music on the album comes off as less synthetic than previous efforts, perhaps because of the more fully developed melodic conceits of its compositions. "We put a lot of work into getting the right sounds in the studio with this record, from the guitars and vocals to the drums," Sova wrote me in an e-mail. "As we were in the studio, we of course made use of additional percussion here and there, but it's still based on the drum machine and the specific beats we can conjure." Cuts such as "Dodger" and "Crystal Predictor" herald the deepening influence of downer 70s rock, and the latter tune contains some of the most distinct, harmony-laden vocal work the ensemble have produced. The sheer force of Sova's clamorous guitar playing—his succinct melodies as well as his shambolic solos—pushes tracks such as "Shock Recognition" far beyond the one-man kosmische material, even as hazy psych remains Axis: Sova's load-bearing pillar. —DAVE CANTOR

FOUR FISTS, ANGEL DAVANPORT 9 PM, *Empty Bottle*, 1035 N. Western, \$20, \$18 in advance, 21+

Astronautalis (Andy Bothwell) and P.O.S (Stefon Alexander) are both esteemed rapper-producers in the indie hip-hop underground. In 2013 they debuted the collaborative project **Four Fists**, releasing a two-song seven-inch that infused post-hardcore attitude into an electro-leaning, stylis-

tically diverse batch of beats, rhymes, and hooks. Five years later, the two are back with their first full-length, *6666* (released via Alexander's Doomtree collective/label), which is much more hard-hitting than its predecessor. Many of the duo's early indie-rap elements—including electric bass, string samples, and clean singing as well as their chill vibe—have been replaced by trap beats and synths that oscillate between ominous and poppy. For every track such as "Dork Court," which puts melodic synth scales and grooves front and center, there's a jarring counterpart such as "Annihilation," which features combative beats, sociopolitically informed lyrics, and distorted keyboards and vocal refrains. *6666* is marked by a pervasive fuck-off attitude, perhaps best embodied by Astronautalis in opening track "Nobody's Biz": "Some people look at me cross-eyed when I tell 'em I own guns / You should see how their jaw drop when I tell 'em I want more / I ain't talkin' a sawed-off to keep thieves from my front door / I want a Glock and an auto 'cause I don't trust the cops, y'all." Four Fists ratchet up the cut's rawness even further with a get-down outro, closing with a dance beat and arpeggiated synth lines. This dichotomy is one of Four Fists' greatest strengths, and their stop at the Bottle should be a grimy good time. —SCOTT MORROW

In the middle of P.O.S's "Gravedigger," which is tucked into the back of his 2017 album *Chill, Dummy*, the track opens up to make way for a verse from **Angel Davanport**. Credited as Ange-lenah, the Chicago MC and singer lets loose ➔

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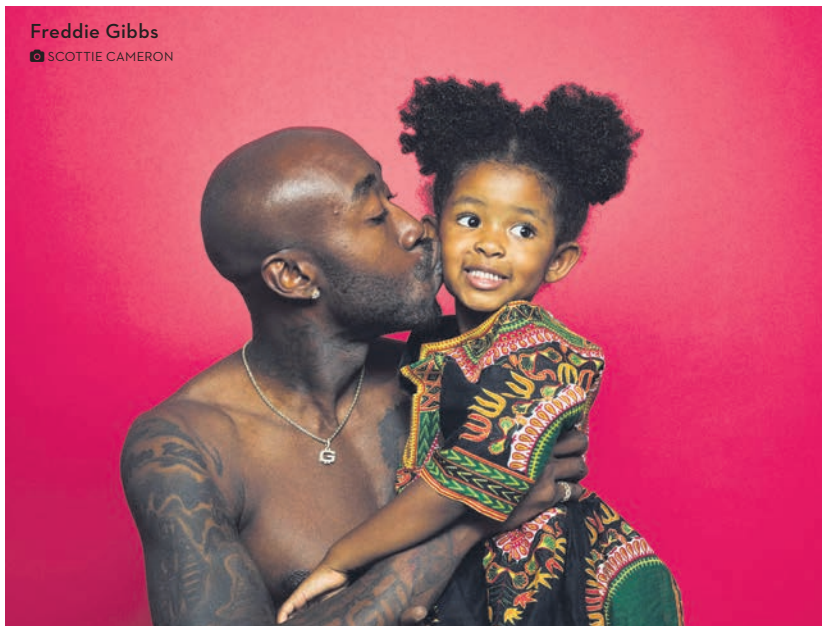
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MUSIC

Freddie Gibbs

SCOTTIE CAMERON



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as if her lines were pent-up in her stomach, just waiting to spring out. Her performance gives even more gravity to heavy lines such as "Work three jobs 'cause I just can't breathe / And when I do chase bread it's 'cause I need to eat." Whenever Davanport takes to the microphone—which unfortunately isn't as frequently as I'd like—she makes sure she never wastes a second. On her compact new EP, *Sore but Grateful* (released via her Rapper Chicks collective), she squeezes her red-hot energy, impassioned delivery, and larger-than-life personality into three lean tracks. On "Jesus" she raps about her sexuality with a lascivious bite atop an anxious, occasionally spooky party instrumental provided by the Hood Internet. At times Davanport's intensity can border on frightening, but her control and poise suggest she knows what's best for every listener. —LEOR GALIL

FREDDIE GIBBS *G Perico* opens. 8 PM, Park West, 322 W. Armitage, \$25. **ALB**

After his 2007 development deal with Interscope dried up, Gary rapper Freddie Gibbs gathered the pieces of his career and built a new one. His trek since then has been unconventional; for nearly a decade he's attracted a grassroots following, largely through a string of EPs, mixtapes, and full-lengths, many of which he's released through his own ESGN imprint. His flow is fierce, and his career has grown with a similar energy, blossoming in unexpected streaks. Gibbs has a strong grasp of his abilities and produces great volumes of material, and he's maintained a hold on a fickle public with works that catch people off guard, such as his 2014 album-length collaboration with renowned producer Madlib, *Piñata*. But in June 2016, Gibbs was arrested in France in response to a rape allegation from August 2015. He spent almost four months in French and Austrian jails, until he was acquitted at the end of September. Since then, he's maintained his innocence (he

told Complex last year that a friend of his had originally been charged with the crime) while getting back to his routine of dropping new music. These days his release schedule is a trickle in comparison to his previous torrent; his first postprison release, last year's *You Only Live Twice*, only has eight tracks. Gibbs recently hinted at the possibility of retiring after he and Madlib drop the sequel to *Piñata*, but he's held off putting it out in favor of two other full-lengths: June's *Freddie* (ESGN/Empire) and last month's *Fetti* (Jet Life/ESGN/ALC/Empire). On the latter, a collaboration with prolific rapper Curren\$y and producer the Alchemist, Gibbs's rounded verses and chopper-style curveballs frequently lend an adrenaline boost. —LEOR GALIL

SWAMP DOGG See *Pick of the Week*, page 30. 9 PM, the Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park, \$20-\$32. **ALB**

SATURDAY 17

DAUGHTERS See also Sunday. Jaye Jayle and Ganser open. 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, sold out. 17+

During their mid-2000s heyday, Providence foursome Daughters fed off their own recklessness to the point that it became an inextricable part of their identity. Excellent example: I caught them on tour in (maybe) 2007 in Covington, Kentucky, with Louisville hardcore-punk maniacs Lords during which an absolutely plowed member of one band stumbled onstage to take a piss while an absolutely plowed member of the other band cupped his hands to catch that piss. The latter absolutely plowed member then chucked said piss in the air and let it rain down onstage (and the small crowd) like he had just discovered a treasure chest of gold coins. It was very gnarly—but not shocking. After all,

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MUSIC



Daughters
© REID HAITHCOCK

Daughters began by making a fuck-all, blastbeat-ridden, offensive screed of noise topped by the shrieking of front man Alexis Marshall. Far from charming, their ten-track debut full-length, *Canada Songs* (2003), clocks in at barely 11 violent minutes. And when Marshall traded his screaming for sleazing and the band shape-shifted from grind to lashing noise-rock with 2006's *Hell Songs*, the tension created via the frenetic but tight drumming of Jon Syverson and the flailing, hyper riffs of guitarist Nicholas Andrew Sadler became even more chilling and calculated. Daughters split in 2009 because the members openly hated one another, but they somehow managed to release a self-titled album postmortem the next year. No tour followed, however—a shame given how enormous that record sounds. But Daughters refused to play dead, practically as a “fuck you” to their own self-inflicted mortality. And with the release of their new *You Won't Get What You Want* (Ipecac) last month, we should celebrate that defiant philosophy. This is Daughters' best record to date; it's more tempered and sophisticated than their previous efforts, but only so that there's more room to be bleak and sinister, two qualities that sound better with age. Sadler's whirl-

ing guitar work remains intact, while darker harmonies melt down the backbones of tracks. “Satan in the Wait” is downright operatic by Daughters standards, with Marshall soliloquizing like a madman with purpose, while the next two tracks, “The Flammable Man” and “The Lords Song,” recall the volatility of their other records, each mutating into a barreling mass by the end. For those followers of Daughters who lost track of the band during their hiatus—you won't realize how much you wanted a new record until you hear this. Here's hoping we don't have to wait another eight years for a follow-up. —KEVIN WARWICK

MONOBODY *Mother Evergreen and Twin Talk*
open. 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, \$15, \$12 in advance. 🍷

For the Tomorrow Never Knows festival in 2017, the Audioleaf talent-buying team for Lincoln Hall and Schubas booked Monobody to open for Tortoise. The move was a tacit endorsement of the position of the younger band as the new torchbearer for Chicago's decades-long postrock tradition. Mono- ➔



Drug Church © KAT NIJMEDDINITHCOCK

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MUSIC



Yowler
SAM SPLIT

continued from 33

body's nervy, whiplash-inducing take on the form bends toward metal, bleeds into prog rock, and gets its power from punk. Which is only fitting, since the members of the band's monster rhythm section cut their teeth playing in some of city's dirtiest DIY punk holes-in-the-wall; bassist Steve Marek and drummer Nnamdi Ogbonnaya previously played in erratic math-punk group the Para-medics, and the band's other bassist, Al Costis, still gigs with adrenalized punk experimentalists Pyramid Schemes. Keyboardist Collin Clauson and multi-instrumentalist Conor Mackey—who covers guitar, keys, vibraphone, and electronics—enhance their collaborators' compositions with nuanced textures that uplift, pulverize, and soothe. Monobody's new second album, *Raytracing* (Sooper), excels most when the band reconcile their tendency to whip up frenetic mayhem with their love of serene, contemplative passages, such as in the latter half of opener "Ilha Verde" and the prismatic "Echophrasia." Monobody remain unpredictably active even at their quietest, occasionally tossing a thundering guitar riff into a meditative moment, as if to encourage listeners to stay keenly aware of every detail. —LEOR GALIL

DRUG CHURCH, GOUGE AWAY *Heart Attack Man* opens. 1 PM, Cobra Lounge, 235 N. Ashland, \$12. 21+

Hardcore has always had a tenuous relationship with the mainstream. In the 90s, a number of hardcore bands signed to major labels seemed to be at the brink of crossing over to wider audiences, but the results were varied. For every Sick of It All who wound up dropping a classic record on a major label (1994's *Scratch the Surface*), there's an Orange 9mm or a CIV, who both suffered the indignities of alienating their fan bases while also failing to connect with the average music listener. In 2018, plenty of younger acts have learned the lessons of those major-label casualties, allowing them to make a play for mass acceptance without losing their own identities in the process. And while they aren't playing hardcore in the traditional sense, they're working inside that genre at a time when it's arguably at its most elastic. Two bands that have successfully shown how well gussied-up, cleanly produced hardcore can work are **Drug Church** and **Gouge Away**. While their most recent albums, *Cheer* and *Burnt Sugar*, respectively, don't resemble one another at first glance, repeated listens show a similar underlying approach. Drug Church takes Seaweed-style 90s alt-rock and reimagines it as a part of the Victory Records canon, while Gouge Away shows you don't need to cake on the distortion to make songs feel heavy, with a sound that borders on classic Pixies material while vocalist Christina Michelle growls on top of it. It feels appropriate that they're touring together and playing a classic, hardcore-style matinee show at Cobra Lounge: both bands engage

SUNDAY 18

DAUGHTERS See Saturday. *Jaye Jayle and Ganser* open. 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, sold out. 17+

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MUSIC

with the traditions of hardcore on a thoughtfully selective basis, playing small, all-ages matinees while discarding hardcore's traditionalist ethos of selling out. In the eyes of some, they may be opportunists for shifting to a more accessible sound, but what both Drug Church and Gouge Away demonstrate is that maybe all those major-label hardcore releases could have worked if the bands committed to breaking the rules instead of hedging their bets.
—DAVID ANTHONY

YOWLER *Mia Joy and Sorespot open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$12, \$10 in advance. 21+*

It's a hallmark of excellent songwriting when a tune delivered in a stripped-down format on acoustic guitar and vocals is every bit as alluring as if it were performed by a full band. Maryn Jones, whose previous projects include indie-folk bands Saintsenecca and All Dogs, creates solo material under the name Yowler, and she keeps her instrumentation minimal to allow her raw talent to shine. Jones's voice and deeply vulnerable lyrics demand an immediate intimacy; watching her onstage feels like a rainy-day crying session with a close friend. She's exhibited that quality on her 2015 debut, *The Offer*, as well as throughout her subsequent tours opening for Grouper, the solo project of Liz Harris, who like Jones has a strong intuitive streak and invites hazy sorrow into her musical atmospheres. Yowler's new album, October's *Black Dog in My Path* (Double Double Whammy), highlights Jones's courage and emotional intelligence, and while lyrics such as "Drenched in a planet's love / And she's drowning / And I'm drowning" (from "WTFK") feel deeply and uncomfortably personal to the songwriter herself, she's open enough to bring listeners in. The effect of it all is reminiscent of our own overwhelming existences, and the helplessness we feel in watch-

ing the world around us collapse through global warming and political strife. Though Jones's songs are deceptively straightforward on first listen, there are layers within them that reward careful listeners with richness. Just let go, and let the listlessness in.
—MEAGAN FREDETTE

WEDNESDAY²¹

BLACK TUSK *Goatwhore headlines; Casualties, Black Tusk, Great American Ghost, and Gozu open. 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$25, \$20 in advance. 17+*

Savannah-based swamp-metal band Black Tusk took a terrible hit in 2014, when their bassist and cofounder, Jonathan Athon, passed away following a motorcycle crash. Prior to the accident, the trio had largely finished recording their fifth album, *Pillars of Ash*, and with Athon's lines already laid down, his bandmates were able to complete the process for a release on Relapse in 2016. That makes the new *T.C.B.T.* (for "Taking Care of Black Tusk") the group's first full-length without Athon, but Corey Barhorst, best known as the longtime bassist of Black Tusk's friends and neighbors Kyleasa, steps up admirably; bass is crucial to the band's sludgy sound, even more so when they pick up the pace with speed and aggression informed by their hardcore roots. There's some quality raging against the dying of the light going on here: note the sizzling guitar work on "Closed Eye" and the crushing unity of the rhythm elements of "Ghosts Roam." It's as if by rearranging themselves around a loss, they woke up a giant beast—and that beast woke up pissed. Along with that newfound intensity, the band's live lineup is now thickened and densified by the addition of sound engineer Chris Adams on second guitar. —MONICA KENDRICK



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LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
COUNTY OF COOK, ss.

Circuit Court of Cook County. Public notice is hereby given that a hearing will be held on January 7th, 2019, at 2:00 P.M. in Room 1704, Richard J. Daley Center, 50 W. Washington, Chicago, IL, pursuant to a Petition heretofore filed in the County Division of said Court as Case Number 2018CONC001315.

Said Petition prays for the change of my name from Miriam Gomez to that of Miriam Bahena-Cardona Bisby, pursuant to the statute in such case made and provided.

— MIRIAM GOMEZ, Petitioner. (11/22/18)

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SAVAGE LOVE

By Dan Savage

Exploring bondage and indulging husbands

Advice on kink for the novice and the exhausted

Q: I've always wanted to tie girls up, but I can never convince a woman to let me. Lately, I've been exploring "bondage singles" sites online, but I'm totally new to this. How do I know which ones I can trust? There are hundreds of profiles, but it's hard for me to believe I can really just answer an ad, meet a girl in a hotel room, and tie her up. It can't be that simple, can it? —**THE INTERNET'S ENTICING DATES**

A: It can't be and it isn't, TIED. No woman in her right mind is going to let some man she's never met before tie her up in a hotel room. That's not to say it couldn't happen or hasn't ever happened, but women stupid enough to take that risk are rare—and it goes without saying that any singles website promising to provide lonely guys with an endless stream of stupid women is a scam.

But you don't have to take my word for it. Justin Gorbey is a bondage practitioner and educator, as well as a professional artist and tattooer. Gorbey ties up a lot of women, as you can see on his Instagram account (@daskinbaku), and he doesn't think you're going to find someone on a "bondage singles" site, either. "I would recommend educational group meet-ups or 'munches,'" said Gorbey. "TIED or any new person should focus on groups that match their own desires/interests, and connections will develop organically with time and effort—with a lot of fucking time and effort!" Kink social and education groups organize online but meet up offline—face-to-face, IRL, in meat space—at munches (educational talks, no actual play) and play parties (actual play, hence the name). To find the kink organization(s) in your area, TIED, Gorbey

suggests that you create a profile on FetLife, the biggest social network for kinky people, and start connecting with like-minded kinksters at munches. "Going to munches will not only give TIED a chance to meet people," said Gorbey, "they'll give him a guide for how to act—most groups generally go over house safe words/etiquette/rules and consent/risk awareness at the beginning of a munch." There are lots of men and women out there who are interested in bondage, TIED, and the organized kink scene is the best place to find safe and sane play partners.

Q: I'm a 44-year-old straight woman. I've been married for 14 years to a husband I love very much. We have two small children. Early in our courtship, I discovered his interest in bottoming during fem-dom pegging sessions. I GGG'd his desires, and we explored them. He bought a variety of dildos, strap-on harnesses, and kink ephemera, and I've thoroughly enjoyed the few times we've done this. But I've grown less interested over the years. How do I get more motivated to indulge him? Do I have to give him a pass to seek out a pro dom to indulge this? (Not sure how I feel about that.) Ultimately, I don't hate indulging his fantasy, and it really does it for him. Not sure what to do. —**FREQUENTLY EVADING MY DUDE'S OBSESSIONS MOSTLY**

A: You discovered your husband's kinks during your courtship—an unspecified period of time prior to the wedding, the kids, etc. And while you say you've GGG'd his kinks over the 14+ years you've been together, FEMDOM, it's hard to square that claim with this: "I've

thoroughly enjoyed [pegging him] the few times we've done this."

Being "good, giving, and game" for anything—with in reason—doesn't obligate us to do whatever our partners want. But if something is truly central to your partner's erotic self, then being GGG means making an accommodation, FEMDOM, finding a work-around that allows your partner to express this aspect of their sexuality without requiring you to do something you find tedious, a turnoff, or traumatizing. That accommodation can be something as simple as cheerfully allowing your partner to indulge their kinks with porn or during solo play (emphasis on the word cheerfully) to something as challenging as allowing your partner to explore their kinks with others. If your husband isn't feeling neglected—if he enjoys hurry-up-and-get-it-over-with sex as much as you do and wants to be tied up and pegged only once every five years—then you don't have a problem. But if he's feeling resentful, you do have a problem. So check in with your husband, FEMDOM, and be clear about your feelings: You don't hate indulging his fantasy, but you're both busy, you have small children, and his fantasies require a lot of prep and setup. Tell him you want him to be happy—and, hey, if he is happy, then great. But if he's not, then it's time to talk accommodation. So how about this: You get grandparents or good friends to look after your kids once a year while you spend a restful weekend in a nice hotel pegging the husband's ass between spa treatments. **✉**

Send letters to mail@savagelove.net. Download the Savage Lovecast every Tuesday at savagelovecast.com. **✉ @fakedansavage**



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Acid Mothers Temple, Yaman-taka // Sonic Titan 4/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Action Bronson, Meyhem Lauren 2/23, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+

Arkells 3/14, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Thu 11/15, 10 AM

Backstreet Boys 8/10, 8 PM, United Center

Billy Bragg 4/25-27, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 18+

Brother Osborne 1/10, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 18+

Alex Cameron & Roy Molloy 2/24, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Cherish the Ladies 3/24, 3 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 11/16, 8 AM

Cherry Glazerr 2/23, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 17+

Cherub 1/18, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall

Gary Clark Jr. 3/15-16, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Claudettes 12/8, 9 PM, Hideout

Coathangers 4/9, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Crystal Lake 2/18, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Chelsea Cutler, Anthony Russo 2/16, 9 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 18+

Dessa 2/21, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 11/16, 8 AM

Dido 6/13, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Dilly Dally 4/19, 9 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Dorothy 2/2, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 17+

Fifth House Ensemble and Alash present Sonic Meditations 3/2, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 11/16, 8 AM

Flat Five 2/14, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Gibson Brothers, Chicago Farmer 3/6, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Great Lake Swimmers 2/6, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Hudson Taylor 2/12, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 11/15, noon

Hunny 2/1, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Infamous Stringdusters, John Craigie 3/16, 8 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 18+

Iron Maiden 8/22, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Jared & the Mill 4/12, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 11/16, 9 AM, 18+

Marcus Johnson 2/6, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 11/15, noon

Junkie Kid 12/21, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Lady Lamb 4/17, 6:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Los Lonely Boys 3/16-17, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 11/15, noon

Mariachi Los Camperos 2/10, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 11/16, 8 AM

Jonathan McReynolds 4/15, 7 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 11/16, 9 AM

AJ Mitchell 2/28, 7 PM, Subterranean, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Muse, Jungle, Barns Courtney 12/9, 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+

Mustard Plug, Eclectics, Still Alive 12/30, 8 PM, Subterranean, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 17+

Meshell Ndegeocello 1/15, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 17+

Frank Orrall 3/9, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Anders Osborne 2/9, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 11/15, noon

Pom-Poms 1/12, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

R3hab 2/23, 11 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+

Robyn 3/6, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Sasha Sloan 3/26, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Mike Stud 2/1, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge

Tierra Santa 3/3, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Tourist 2/21, 8 PM, Sleeping Village

Train, Goo Goo Dolls, Allen Stone 7/20, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM

Verve Pipe 3/29, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 11/15, noon

Whiskey Myers 3/29, 8 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 18+

Wingtip 1/23, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 11/16, 10 AM, 18+

Zeke Beats 1/12, 8 PM, Subterranean, 18+

UPDATED

Gryffin 2/9, 6 and 11 PM, Concord Music Hall, late show added

Rainbow Kitten Surprise 2/8-9, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, second show added

Sharon Van Etten 2/14-15, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, second show added, 17+

UPCOMING

All Time Low 12/21, 7:30 PM, House of Blues

Ashlee & Evan 1/12, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall

Atreyu, Memphis May Fire 12/2, 7 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Band of Friends 11/23, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Jacob Banks 3/2, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Beirut, Helado Negro 2/22, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+

Brand X 12/8, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Cannabis Corpse 12/10, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Mariah Carey 3/11, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre

Dead South 11/26, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Direct Hit!, Copyrights 1/26, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Drab Majesty 11/29, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Dream Theater 3/29, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre

Alejandro Escovedo with Don Antonio Band 1/31-2/2, 8 PM, City Winery

Felly, Gypps 12/1, 6:30 PM, Patio Theater

Flasher 12/4, 9 PM, Hideout

Fleetwood Mac 3/1, 8 PM, United Center

Marty Friedman 2/13, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Gang of Youths, Gretta Ray 12/14, 9 PM, Metro, 18+

Jose Gonzalez & the String Theory 3/28, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre

Macy Gray 12/28, 8 PM, City Winery

Guided by Voices 12/31, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge

Helio Sequence 11/28, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Interpol 2/7, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre

Joe Jackson 2/21-22, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Jungle 3/13, 9 PM, Metro, 18+

Stephen Kellogg 12/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Khruangbin 11/28, 7:30 PM, the Vic

Kimbra 12/5, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Los Lobos 12/9-12, 8 PM, City Winery

Lotus 12/30-31, 9 PM, Park West, 18+

Nick Lowe with Los Strait-jackets 12/31, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston

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Jeff Lynne's ELO 6/27, 8 PM, United Center

Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks 1/23, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Nick Mason's Saucerful of Secrets 4/4, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre

Misfits, Fear, Venom Inc. 4/27, 7:30 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont

Peter Murphy 2/22-23, 7:30 PM, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel

Noname 12/29-31, 6 PM, Thalia Hall

Doug Paisley 11/29, 9 PM, Hideout

Parcels 3/1, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Procol Harum 2/20-21, 8 PM, City Winery

Queers 12/31, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 18+

Royal Trux 2/22, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Russian Circles, Bongripper 11/23, 9 PM, Metro, 18+

Travis Scott, Trippie Redd 12/6, 7:30 PM, United Center

Sheer Terror 1/12, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 18+

Slackers 11/30-12/2, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Suicide Machines, Goddamn Gallows 12/28, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Teenage Fanclub 3/6, 7:30 PM, Metro, 18+

Trans-Siberian Orchestra 12/28, 8 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont

Tritonal 3/1, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Carrie Underwood 10/29, 7 PM, United Center

Veil of Maya 12/21, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge

VHS Collection 3/14, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Kurt Vile & the Violators 12/22, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+

Waco Brothers 2/1, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Ryley Walker 12/28, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Weepies 12/9, 7 PM, Park West

White Panda 11/29, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

William Elliott Whitmore 12/13, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

With Confidence, Broadside 12/6, 6 PM, Bottom Lounge

Xibalba Itzaes, Unholy Lust 12/7, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge

Adrian Young 12/16, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Yuri & Pandora 3/16, 8 PM, Rosemont Theater, Rosemont

Thalia Zedek 12/13, 9 PM, Hideout



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

LAST MONTH singer, rapper, and songwriter **Jean Deaux** dropped the EP *Krash*, one of the best local releases in a season overwhelmed with great new Chicago music. Her minimal R&B beats, downy melodies, and serene singing ought to help you feel cozy throughout the long, cold winter ahead. Ever since the release of *Krash*, Gossip Wolf has been keeping an eye out for a local Deaux show, and this week one finally popped up: on Friday, November 16, she performs at the **Virgin Hotel's** rooftop bar, Cerise. Tickets are \$10 in advance, and the music starts at 8 PM.

Local singer and guitarist **Matt Baron** is probably best known to *Reader* readers as the man behind kid-friendly educational rock powerhouse **Future Hits**, but he's been known to entertain adults too—for instance, he cofounded **Coach House Sounds**, a rad concert-video website and record label (sadly now on hiatus). Baron also has a newish band called **Young Man in a Hurry** (with Nick Harris, Meyer Horn, and Teddy Rankin-Parker), and he tells Gossip Wolf that their music "reimagines the lo-fi substantive sounds of our 80s and 90s youth in a kind of postmodern millennial seance." For the past year they've been working with producer **Brian Deck** on their debut album, which features top-notch guests such as **Sima Cunningham** and **Macie Stewart** (both from Ohmme) and **David Vandervelde**. The album won't be out till next year, but on Friday, November 16, YMIAH play the **Hungry Brain**—their first show since September 2017.

Chicago shoegaze five-piece **Lightfoils** released their debut album, *Hierarchy*, in July 2014, but they've been quiet since then—until last month, that is, when they dropped a radio edit of the single "Summer Nights." If you want to hear that song in all its hypnotic glory—the original version runs more than eight minutes, compared to less than four for the edit—you can hear it on their second album, *Chambers*, which comes out Friday, November 16. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

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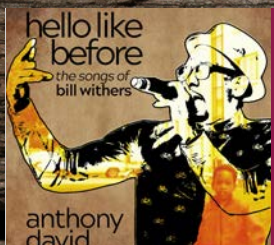
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11.27
POKEY LAFARGE

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12.2 - SUZY BOGDUSS
12.16 - VIENNA TENG
12.21-12.23 - MICHAEL McDERMOTT
12.26-27 - SHEMEKIA COPELAND
12.28 & 29 - MACY GRAY
12.30 - 1.1 - AVERY* SUNSHINE - NEW YEAR'S RUN



11.28
CANNED HEAT
WITH KEVIN BURT



11.29
DWELE



12.1
ANDREW RIPP & FRIENDS



12.3
DAVE HOLLISTER



12.4
KRIS ALLEN
SOMETHIN' ABOUT CHRISTMAS



12.5
JOE PUG
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LOS LOBOS



12.17-18
TAB BENOIT



12.19-20
90.9 FM
KURT ELLING



jam presents

Dweezil Zappa
World Tour 2018

CHOICE CUTS!

FRANK ZAPPA PLAYS HIS FAVORITE SONGS

This Friday! November 16
Vic Theatre

93XRT

TURKUVAZ
LIFE IN THE CITY TOUR

SPECIAL GUEST
ANDY FRASCO & THE UN
THIS SATURDAY! NOVEMBER 17
PARK WEST

silver Wrapper

NEW STUDIO RECORD
LIFE IN THE CITY
AVAILABLE NOW

RUFUS WAINWRIGHT
ALL THESE POSES
ANNIVERSARY TOUR 2018

SPECIAL GUEST **RACHEL ECKROTH**

THIS TUESDAY! NOVEMBER 20
VIC THEATRE

FREDDY JONES BAND

SPECIAL GUEST
SEAN KELLY OF THE SAMPLES
THANKSGIVING EVE
NOVEMBER 21
PARK WEST

93XRT

FREDDYJONESBANDOFFICIAL.COM

JOHN BUTLER TRIO
THE HOME TOUR

WITH SPECIAL GUEST
DUSTIN THOMAS

NOVEMBER 29

THE CHICAGO THEATRE
Presented by CHASE O

PHOSPHORESCENT

w/ liz cooper and the stampede

phosphorescentmusic.com

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30
VIC THEATRE

ALLEN STONE

FALL TOUR

WITH SPECIAL GUEST **NICK WATERHOUSE**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1 • VIC THEATRE

PARQUET COURTS

WIDE AWAKE! TOUR 2018

SPECIAL GUESTS **COMBO CHIMBITA**
DECEMBER 3 • VIC THEATRE

12 LITTLE SPELLS
ESPERANZA SPALDING

NEW MUSIC OUT NOW ESPERANZASPALDING.COM

DECEMBER 5 • VIC THEATRE

Holidays Tour 2018

THE WEEPIES

SPECIAL GUEST
MATT THE ELECTRICIAN

SUNDAY DEC. 9
PARK WEST

RAINBOW KITTEN SURPRISE
2019 TOUR

SPECIAL GUESTS:
MT. JOY

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 8
RIVIERA THEATRE

93XRT

FEBRUARY 9
SHOW IS SOLD OUT!

ON SALE THIS FRIDAY AT 10AM!

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