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that shook the world

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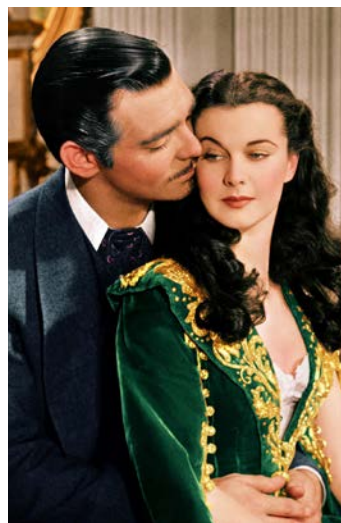
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THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



Movie Tuesday: Four hours or bust!

Ben Sachs introduces five capsule reviews from the Reader archives of movies that are more than epic.



Legacy! Legacy! private listening party

Hosted by the Reader. Jamila Woods will be interviewed by Tiffany Walden before the album plays. [Enter to win tickets at chicagoreader.com/jamila](http://chicagoreader.com/jamila). Thu 5/9, 7 PM

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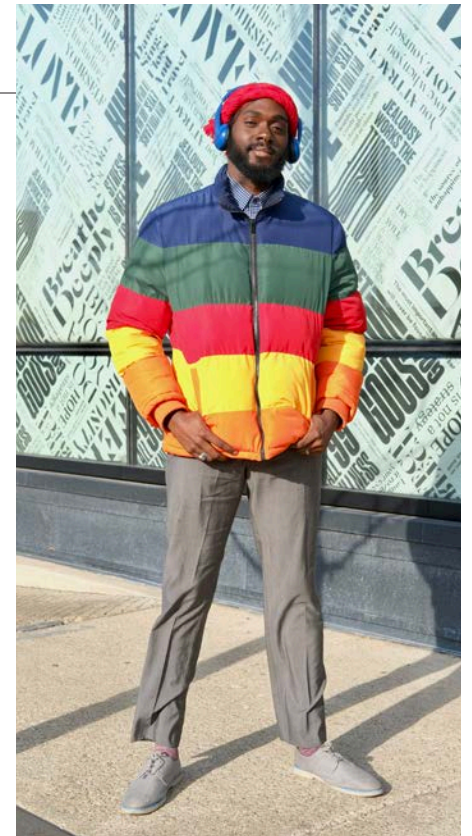
STREET VIEW

For the win

Clean style, full heart, can't lose

"**NO MATTER IF** you're stunting, tumbling, jumping, or sitting on the sidelines, you always need to look clean, tight, and confident," says Charles McDavid Jr. The 26-year-old cheerleading coach is speaking about "perfect posture," but he might as well be describing his style. McDavid, who works for the Keeping Adolescents Off the Street (KAOS) Bulldogs, is calm and self-assured in his rainbow puffer jacket on his way to a job interview in Lincoln Park. He says he chose to build his outfit around burnt-red suspenders because his spirit was screaming *Family Matters*. "Clothes aren't alive," he says. "You wear them. They don't wear you. You want them to look good. Own it." McDavid says he pushes his athletes to strive for more than just trophies. "Be the best you for tomorrow and not today," he says.

—ISA GIALLORENZO



Three cheers for perfect posture. © ISA GIALLORENZO

— COMING —

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CITY LIFE



Quimby's participates in Free Comic Book Day. © PAT LOIKA/Flickr

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Bam! Boom! Pow!

Marvel at the super offerings on Free Comic Book Day.

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY is upon us again! The 17th annual celebration of independent comic book stores happens on Saturday, May 4, and promises plenty of local programming (and, more importantly, free issues of select comic books). The official website at freecomicbookday.com/catalog lists all the titles that may be available for free. Individual stores are free to make their own rules, so don't go in thinking you're going to walk out with a wheelbarrow full of titles. Some stores, like Challengers on

Western, will have a day full of in-store appearances by local artists and illustrators. And parents who are interested in teaching their children the value of the disco nap can haul out the family at midnight to be first in line when Chimera's in Oak Lawn opens. Some of the following stores will be open but not necessarily participating in the official Free Comic Book Day proceedings, so be sure to call ahead or check out the store's websites to see what they are planning. —**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

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THE CHICAGO SHORTS THERMOMETER

by Madeline Hester



Office Shorts: trick question since I've never seen an office that allows shorts, even on Casual Summer Fridays, but wouldn't that be great if they did? then we could save money on the AC and thus, possibly, maybe, save the planet?



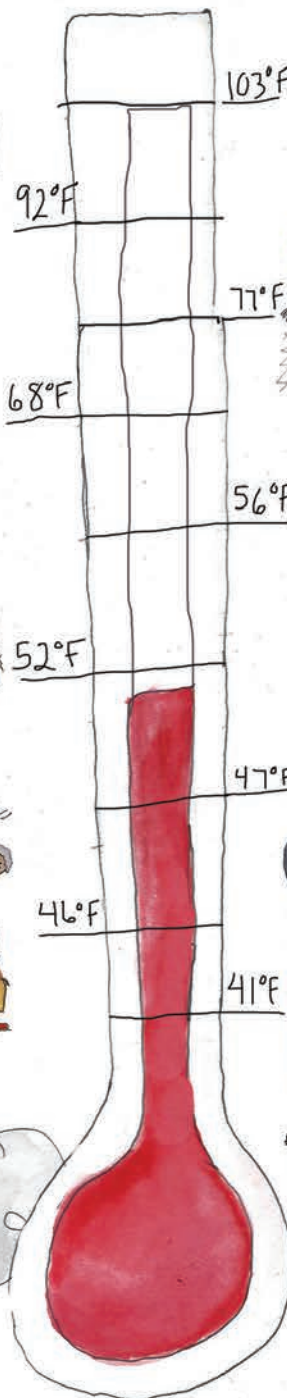
Short Shorts For Shivering At Night: When the day weather is perfect patio, instagram, all day rose, it's easy to forget that when the sun drops, so do those temps. But it's summer nights baby and you just got hit up by a tinder date who wants to know "if you're in the 'hood." You reply eloquently with the eggplant emoji and as you wait for your Uber, you couldn't help but wonder: is shivering hot?



Running Shorts: Great temp for runners. For joggers and/or those who frequent the "let's walk a bit" method add five degrees and don't forget to factor in wind chill or goosebumps galore.



Convertible Shorts: Just in case a miracle ray of hot sunshine beams down, you're prepared to let those dogs breathe. Just a reminder: no one looks good unzipping in public.



Never Shorts: Shout-out to the person who refuses to wear shorts even in the heat of summer. there's something to respect about commitments except, joke's on you pal because pants are just extra-long shorts! Let those leg hairs free!



Regular Shorts: Before you embrace the holy months of Chicago in its ritual wear, ask yourself: are you going to scare the children with your pasty pale gams? If the answer veers yes, consider a tan or at least giving out sunglasses until they regulate.



Shorts over tights: If the weather can't commit why should you? You're tired of your pants but not ready to bare legs yet so put a pair of fishnets under those cutoffs. It'll make you feel three degrees warmer, which is not a lot!



Courier Bicycle Shorts: Finally, all those car losers can see your sprocket calf tattoo! they totally wish they were you and not stuck in a red light!



Basketball Shorts: Bro, it's spring! time to put away the sweatpants and unpack those roomy basketball shorts you never actually played basketball in! Sure there's still snow on the ground and you gotta wear your winter coat but like brah, it's not even that cold out!



Lollapalooza Shorts: Never an appropriate temperature to wear denim thongs but if you're young, wild, and free... still don't do it.

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Left: Author Robert Caro © JAY GODWIN/FLICKR

Right: Mayor Rahm Emanuel © DANIEL X. O'NEIL/FLICKR

POLITICS

Rahm v. Caro

Robert Caro fights to expose the truth while Rahm tries to hide it.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

As part of a late-in-life effort at self-improvement, I'm trying to become a better journalist by studying Robert Caro and Rahm Emanuel.

OK, that's a joke—at least in regards to Mayor Rahm.

It's a different story with Caro, the great investigative journalist. I was recently up until dawn reading *Working*, Caro's latest book.

In gripping detail, Caro explains how he dedicated hours of his life poring over millions of mind-numbing documents to find the truth behind the dastardly deeds of powerful men.

In contrast, Rahm falls into the category of powerful men committing dastardly deeds. And yet in his latest essay in the *Atlantic*, he offers interview tips to journalists.

Word of warning, people—taking advice from Rahm on truth-telling is like turning to Donald Trump for lectures on ethics.

Buyer beware.

Welcome to another installment in my

latest series—the remaking of Rahm by Rahm, aka, Rahm's attempt to convince the rest of the world that he's not as bad as people in his hometown say he is.

In recent columns, I've written about how Rahm's changed the record on taxes, police, and schools.

For the record, this is the second recent series. The first was on the Lincoln Yards TIF deal—aka, the fleecing of Chicago by Mayor Rahm.

I was hoping to convince the City Council to vote no on those deals.

No chance. The council overwhelmingly approved the deal. Enjoy your rising property taxes, Chicago.

But back to Rahm's rewriting of Rahm.

The recent article in the *Atlantic* is not the first essay Rahm has written. Or, should I say, it's not the first to go under his name.

Mick Dumke—my old pal and colleague—has long debated whether Rahm actually writes the columns under his byline.

Bending over backward to be fair, Mick says there's no proof that Rahm didn't write them—which, of course, is not quite the same thing as saying he did.

I, on the other hand, insist that the real issue is whether he even reads them.

To be continued—right, Mick?

In his latest essay in the *Atlantic*—“What the Press Is Missing About Pete Buttigieg”—Rahm criticizes journalists for being too shallow in their coverage of the 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana, who's among the front-runners in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

“Voters relying on mainstream coverage to keep them informed probably know only three things about him,” Rahm writes. “He's a candidate for the Democratic nomination. He has a funny-sounding last name. And he's gay.”

Then Rahm chides journalists for not “digging much deeper than his orientation.”

Then he offers a theory as to why journalists are so obsessed with sex. “In the places where they live—in the pockets of the country that the Donald Trump minion Stephen Miller has disparagingly labeled ‘cosmopolitan’—sexuality is a hot topic. Maybe even the hottest topic. Military service? Not so much. Religious faith? Not at all.”

Then he offers an example of a question they should ask Mayor Pete.

“When lots of his peers at Harvard and Oxford grabbed their diploma and headed off to Wall Street or Silicon Valley, Buttigieg decided to serve his country in the military. Why?”

And then—oh, god, read the rest of this drivel, if you dare.

This is Rahm in full spinning glory. As he, one, tries to distinguish himself from the rest of the “cosmopolitans”—you know, like he's a regular guy.

And two, tries to promote Buttigieg under the guise of asking him a tough question. I mean, Rahm's sample question is a textbook example of pretending to interrogate someone by asking something that highlights their strengths. He might as well have asked: “Hey, Mayor Pete, what's the greatest challenge in your life, being astoundingly brilliant or exceedingly good looking?”

Mayor Pete's sexual orientation—like his

religious beliefs and his military service—are part of a larger narrative about Mayor Pete's life that Mayor Pete's campaign has carefully constructed to divert us from the fact that Mayor Pete's barely taken a stance on any of the major issues of the day.

Concentrating on any piece of the narrative—military, religion, or sexual orientation—helps Mayor Pete dazzle voters into supporting him, even if they have no clue as to what he stands for.

In any event, I hope there are no aspiring journalists out there who really think it's a good idea to take journalistic advice from Rahm.

Good god, this is the guy who spent the last eight years ducking and dodging almost every question he was asked with clumsy stabs at sarcastic humor.


Rahm's attitude toward transparency and truth and government is best symbolized by what Joanna Brown—a Logan Square activist—received when she filed a public records search on a school closing . . . a blank piece of paper.

Rahm's flunkies at the Chicago Public Schools might as well have just flipped her the bird.

In contrast, Caro has dedicated his life to finding the truth. He's finishing up the fifth volume of his study of former president Lyndon Johnson. But my favorite Caro book is *The Power Broker*, his massive biography of Robert Moses, the all-powerful bureaucrat who built the expressways, parks, and bridges of New York City.

“During the decades of his power, [Moses] used that power to bend the city's social policies to his philosophical beliefs, skewing . . . the allocation of the city's resources to the benefit of its middle, upper-middle, and upper classes at the expense of the city's lower middle class and its poor,” Caro writes in *Working*.

Sounds like Rahm's Chicago.

Someday a journalist will do to Rahm what Caro did to Moses—dig deep into the files to find the truths that our mayor fought hard to conceal. Let's hope the *Atlantic* publishes that. 

 @joravben



The Chicago Symphony Orchestra

MARK ORDONEZ/FLICKR

ON CULTURE

State of the unions

Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians and Columbia College part-time faculty reach agreements with management.

By DEANNA ISAACS

It's been a busy few weeks on the labor front for both the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Columbia College.

Last Saturday, one day after meeting in Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office and issuing an announcement that they'd come to a tentative agreement that would end a seven-week strike, both the musicians of the CSO and management, known as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, ratified a five-year contract that sounds very similar to a "best and final" offer the CSOA had presented to the union nearly three weeks earlier.

The musicians managed to squeeze the CSOA for a fraction of a percent more in salary increases beyond the earlier offer in each of the contract's final three years (base salaries will rise 13.25 percent over the five-year period) but were forced to give up on their campaign to retain a traditional "defined benefit" pension plan that would guarantee a specific income in retirement. They settled for an arrangement that will shift everyone to a riskier

"defined contribution plan," but will protect current employees with a backup annuity and an initial bump in employer contributions based on seniority. No such protection has been specified for future orchestra members.

"We would have loved to have kept a defined benefit plan and we still think it's the best way to go forward," CSO bassist and negotiating committee chair Stephen Lester said by phone on Sunday. "The Association was absolutely unwilling to compromise and they basically threatened to cancel the rest of the season, which would have put Ravinia in doubt and would have been a catastrophe for everyone. It's a scorched-earth, mutual assured destruction strategy, which has no place in trying to come to an agreement. So we had no real choice.

"But," Lester added, "we were able to get a secure guaranteed benefit for the [current] members of the orchestra going forward." And he said they're "studying" what to do about new hires. "We're working with the

Association to come to an agreement on a plan for them; the expectation is that we will work cooperatively to get this done."

Meanwhile, on April 17, after prolonged negotiations and under an imminent strike threat, Columbia College issued a joint statement with CFAC, its famously independent part-time faculty union, announcing that they'd reached a tentative agreement on a contract.

According to the statement, the college and the union just need a little more time to get the details down in writing before presenting it to the union membership for ratification.

Union members I talked with were guardedly optimistic about what kind of deal their controversial longtime president, Diana Vallera, had worked out. "Whatever else you say about [Vallera], she negotiates good contracts," English department adjunct Joseph Fedorko told me. He also thinks a strong contract would give Vallera, who's been CFAC president since 2010, her best chance at getting reelected in the fall. But he's not betting that she'll win. "She's made too many enemies," he said. "She's alienated a lot of people." (Vallera did not respond to an e-mailed request for comment.)

Among the alienated: the five union members CFAC put on trial last fall. In November, amid a contested appeal for a strike, CFAC created a mysterious new "Integrity Committee" that notified the five that they'd been anonymously charged with conduct harmful to the union and summoned them to hearings that could result in fines and/or other punishment. They were instructed not to bring attorneys. Not wanting to legitimize the process, they told me, they refused to appear. In March, the committee issued a report on its findings, and the five were informed that they'd been expelled from the union.

According to the report, the committee found them guilty of theft of the union's list of member e-mail addresses, of "undermining the union as collective bargaining representative" (in part by trying to get rid of its officials "other than through regular elections"), and of "conduct threatening the survival of the union" by encouraging members to stop

paying dues. Exhibits attached to the report consisted mostly of e-mails between the five accused members (along with a sixth person, who wasn't technically a union member at the time).

Now some of the expelled members are voicing their own charges against the union: they say their e-mail accounts must have been hacked in order for the union to access the messages it used as exhibits. A complaint about that has been filed with the Chicago Police Department. Since a Vallera-led separation from CFAC's former state and national affiliates—the Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association—in 2015, union members concerned about what they say is a lack of communication and transparency haven't had a higher authority under the union umbrella to go to for help.

Those most likely to campaign against the current leadership in the fall election are the activists who've been expelled and can't participate. But one of them, cinema and television arts adjunct Carey Friedman, says they accomplished what they set out to do. "Our intention was always to get back to the bargaining table. Our actions last fall forced CFAC leadership into at least partially transparent communication with membership and definitely off the strike train. There's now a contract for CFAC members to vote upon."

At press time, CFAC members were still waiting for that contract to appear.

@Deannalisaacs

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Top: Panko pork tonkatsu; spicy poke tuna; Japanese chicken curry; bottom: California kani salad; tomato-meatball risotto; spicy deviled egg MELISSA BLACKMON

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Arigato Market slings tacos with a side of beef

The West Town storefront is part butcher shop, part Japanese American taqueria.

By **MIKE SULA**

Brett Suzuki is a purist. He sells pasture-raised beef at Arigato Market but he will never serve you a carne asada taco. When you own the only Japanese taco stand/butcher shop in town—maybe in the world?—you have to take a stand on cultural appropriation.

“We’re not Mexican,” he says. “Like—I’m not. And there’s tons of great Mexican food right around us as well. So it’s not really what we’re into. We’re more like American-style tacos, with Japanese influence. I only use Japanese ingredients.”

He means his tacos are built and garnished with things like soy sauce, panko, *shichi-mi tōgarashi* powder, and Tamaki Gold rice.

There’s a popular dish in Japan known as Okinawa taco rice, so Suzuki has some kind of footprint to follow. And there is one Mexican ingredient he uses at this tiny six-stool West Town storefront that might earn him a pass: flour tortillas made at the Tortilleria Atotonilco in Back of the Yards.

White flour tortillas, or something like them, the theories go, were possibly developed in northern Mexico by Spanish Jews (or

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Spicy poke tuna MELISSA BLACKMON



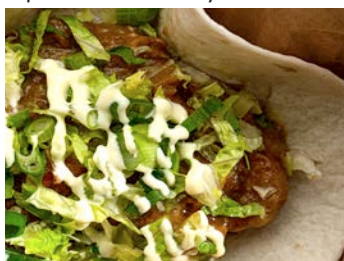
Tomato-meatball risotto



Spicy deviled egg



Japanese chicken curry



Muslims) during the time of the Inquisition, adapting their own foods to the conditions of the colony they were lamming it in.

Suzuki is adapting them to his own conditions. He thinks that the flavor of corn tortillas overpowers the flavors of his fillings. More neutral flour tortillas, served just warm, act like cotton blankets swaddling generously portioned, and frequently hearty, compositions such as Japanese curry, pork *tonkatsu*, and the quintessential Japanese-American hybrid: a California roll taco with cucumber, avocado, aioli, and soy-yuzu dressed crab salad. There are more overtly American-style tacos too, most of which could credibly be placed in the category of stoner food: a cheeseburger taco with cheddar-parmesan bechamel and a tomato-meatball risotto taco invite indiscriminate wolfing.

Suzuki didn't get this concept from his Magic 8 Ball. While growing up in Bannockburn, his Japanese father was a silent partner in a sushi restaurant. After college he worked in an Italian restaurant in Tokyo, then spent a few years in China at an import-export restaurant-equipment company before moving to New York and landing at Morgan Stanley. After the financial crisis he attended culinary school and found work exporting pork and eventually beef to Japan before heading back to the midwest. There he bounced around various kitchens (Next, the Pump Room), and opened a short-lived Italian restaurant in the suburbs.

Two years ago a friend hooked him up with an irregular pop-up gig at West Town's On Tour Brewing, where he introduced high-end tacos, such as Côtes du Rhône-braised short rib, that didn't particularly resonate with the swillers. It wasn't until he adapted simpler

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variants, playing off both his Japanese heritage (curry) and his American upbringing (buffalo chicken) that the tacos really took off, and he started working four nights a week.

He also looked for his own space with that same friend, Ethan Wautelet, whose father owns a 75-head cattle ranch in Nappanee, Indiana, just south of South Bend. That's the source of the other half of their unlikely-sounding model: selling cuts of cryovaccinated, antibiotic-free, pasture-raised meat alongside the tacos. So while you won't see any carne asada on his menu, Suzuki is about to introduce an Italian beef taco made from the same animals.

The ground beef is featured on the aforementioned tomato-meatball risotto taco and the cheeseburger taco too, which behaves a bit like the Akutagawa plate from Wrigleyville's Rice'N Bread. I can't see a corn tortilla stand-

ing up to loaded tacos such as these, but the flour tortillas tend to overwhelm some of the more delicate ones, like the spicy poke tuna, whose fresh soy-derived brininess is smothered by a double pillow of white rice and white flour, and which is only relieved with a bit of surgery around the edges of the flatbread. Others, such as a spicy deviled-egg salad taco, the chicken curry, and the crispy pork tonkatsu, command compulsory scarfing.

Arigato Market is my favorite kind of business model: a specialist that does one (or two) things really well. Most of the tacos are well-balanced innovations that borrow from seemingly disparate cultures and cuisines—the F word, or what people with straight faces used to call fusion. One, in this case, that follows a few rules.

@MikeSula

LIT

The secret history

In *How to Hide an Empire*, Daniel Immerwahr pulls back the curtain on American imperialism.

By RACHEL HAWLEY

Reading Daniel Immerwahr's latest book, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, feels like an exercise in pulling back a carefully maintained curtain. Immerwahr, a Chicago-based historian and Northwestern University professor, spares no crucial details in his survey of the history of the United States outside the 50 states. Through a sweeping examination of American colonialism past and present, including now-states Alaska and Hawaii, former holdings such as the Philippines, and enduring territories like Puerto Rico, Immerwahr paints a picture of imperialism as an intractable force in American history from the very beginning. "The history of the United States," he concludes, "is the history of empire."

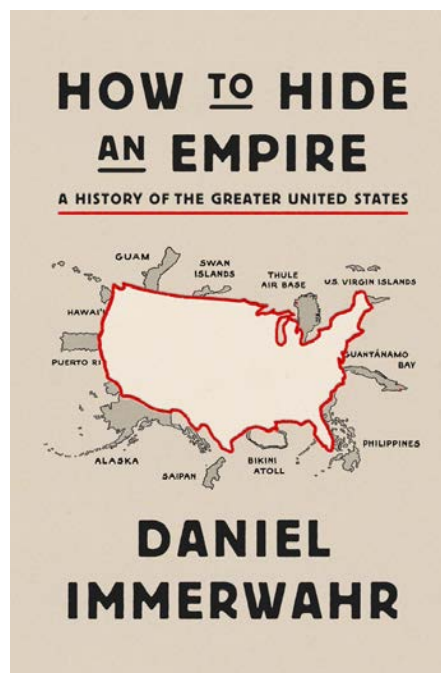
How to Hide an Empire reads like a secret history, and in some sense, it is. Vignettes of imperial foibles contain both unspeakable violence (more than a million people killed in the Philippines during World War II, bystanders shot dead in the street during a Puerto Rican police massacre) and absurd episodes (bird

shit as a highly valued commodity; an attempt by a former U.S. senator to condense the entire English language into a series of scribble-like symbols). Most fascinating, perhaps, is Immerwahr's exploration of how language, culture, and technology serve as tools in a softer and subtler but perhaps equally pervasive form of American imperialism. This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

Why do you think the history and current reality of U.S. imperialism and territorial holdings is such a collective blind spot for mainlanders?

The truth is that, in a lot of ways, mainlanders have been able to not have to think very hard about what happens overseas, and that's true even when things that happen in the overseas parts of the United States have an enormous effect on the U.S. mainland.

There are right now five inhabited territories of the United States: Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. In the last two years, four of them have faced some kind of existential threat: Hurricanes Maria and Irma to Puerto Rico, North Korea's threatening to surround Guam "in an enveloping fire," and something we don't talk about: Typhoon Yutu, which hit Saipan and Tinian in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas and was the largest storm to hit the United States since the 1930s. It's just another reminder that these places remain on the front lines of history. Sometimes they are harbingers of what's going to be happening on the U.S. mainland. That's certainly been the case in times of war, [and] it's probably going to be the case with climate change. These are the parts of the United States that are going to be hit most quickly and worst by the storms, and they're also the



To what extent does the way the United States represents itself—with the U.S. map for example—influence the way we think about who is a “part” of the United States?

It's funny, after the state quarters were issued, representatives from the territories asked that they also get quarters, and they did. And this little thing—I mean, how often do you actually look at the back of a quarter?—has had a galvanizing effect on people I know. They look at quarters and they think, "Oh my gosh, I didn't realize the Northern Mariana Islands were part of the United States!"

I think how the country represents itself to itself matters a lot, whether it's through numismatics, cartography, or through statistics—for most of its calculations, the census still doesn't offer statistics that are based on the full United States. In so many official ways, it's hard for mainlanders to see their full country.

The issue of Puerto Rican statehood has gained a lot of traction and spurred much debate in recent years. Should the 2020 presidential candidates be talking more about the possibility of making Puerto Rico the 51st state?

I think the issue of Puerto Rican statehood is changing really quickly. Elizabeth Warren visited Puerto Rico on the campaign trail, and I believe it was her third stop when she was officially campaigning for president. There's a bill right now, I believe, on the floor of the House for Puerto Rican statehood, and my understanding is that senators are preparing a bill of the same kind. It's a complicated issue, because it's not just a matter of rights, it's a matter of identity. Puerto Ricans have a good reason to be, for some of them, quite enthusiastic about the prospect of statehood, and for others, quite disturbed by the prospect.

I think it's something we absolutely should be talking about. Even if this isn't resolved through statehood, I think this system where we have people who, because of where they live, cannot meaningfully participate in any of the three branches of government, has got to change. We're talking about millions of people, and we've seen what happens when you have a part of the country that has no effective representation at the federal level. I would love to see candidates talk about it. Historically, all of the decisions about the territories have been made by mainlanders, people like me, and I think that's got to stop.

places, like Guam, that are going to be the most exposed as U.S. military alliances fray. So there's a lot of reasons to pay attention from the perspective of the mainland.

You dedicate a chapter in the book to the ways in which English, as a language that is spoken around the world, reinforces our global power. Might this change in the future, and if so, what might that look like?

That's one thing that's so interesting about linguistic standards, is that they're sticky. It's not like whoever just became powerful as of yesterday suddenly gets to determine the language that everyone speaks. Often once a linguistic standard is locked in, it just becomes standard. And right now, the United States is not in the position of predominance of power that it used to be. It simply doesn't have the global power that it had in 1945, but it's been able to lock in so many of its privileges that are still enduring even in this moment of hegemonic recession.

China is obviously gaining power, and what that's going to look like is to my mind an open question. To what extent will China be willing to conduct its business using dollars? To what extent will it be willing to conduct its business in English? Because there's two ways to deal with it: one is that everyone learns Mandarin, and the other is that everyone works in English. We could be approaching a world that's less monoglot, that is not dependent on a single language in the way that it has been.

REVIEW

Proud to be an American

In *Language Rooms*, an Egyptian American interrogator struggles to prove his loyalty to the U.S.A.

By **KERRY REID**

Egyptian American playwright Yussef El Guindi is mostly known to Chicago audiences from several productions with Silk Road Rising, including the world premiere of his 2005 comedy *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*, about an Egyptian immigrant family wrestling with assimilation in America. *Back of the Throat*, in which an Arab American man in post-9/11 America faces down government agents who take over his home in an increasingly hostile “investigation,” followed a few months later.

Assimilation and oppression twine together in El Guindi’s 2010 dark comedy *Language Rooms*, now in a riveting local premiere at Bro-



Language Rooms © AUSTIN D. OIE

ken Nose Theatre under Kaiser Zaki Ahmed’s direction. Set in an “undisclosed location” circa 2005, El Guindi’s taut and increasingly clammy play focuses on Ahmed (Salar Ardebili), an Egyptian American translator and interrogator, whose lack of facility with small talk seems to call his abilities—if not his loyalties—into question, at least according to his coworker, Nasser (Bassam Abdelfattah). “You can’t just be yourself here,” Nasser cautions. “We have to fit in.”

A meeting with Kevin (Bradford Stevens), his cunning superior, adds to Ahmed’s unease. An interrogation he conducted with Nasser left the impression that Ahmed was sympa-

thetic to the suspect. Now Ahmed has a chance to redeem himself by interrogating another prisoner.

Samir (Bilal Dardai) is an Egyptian immigrant and grocery-store owner accused of funneling money to terrorist organizations. He’s also Ahmed’s father. (This isn’t really a spoiler; the foreshadowing is thick.)

El Guindi’s blend of menace and absurdity recalls Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil*, not to mention almost everything Harold Pinter wrote. But El Guindi isn’t imagining dystopia—not when images of Abu Ghraib remain in our minds and daily xenophobic and Islamophobic assaults from the White House fill the news.

RR LANGUAGE ROOMS
Through 5/18: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Mon 5/6 and Wed 5/15, 7:30 PM, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave, 773-697-3830, brokenosetheatre.com, pay what you can.

His gift for taking small personal moments and enlarging them into bigger cultural ruptures comes into sharpest focus in the encounter between Samir and Ahmed. Dardai in particular is heartbreaking: proud of having a son with such an “important job” and confused why that son abandoned him years before. “Your Arabic has improved,” he tells Ahmed, a sign of how much his son, who was embarrassed by his father’s immigrant ways as a child, has assimilated. But in the U.S., being Muslim means Ahmed’s patriotism will always be called into question (just ask Ilhan Omar).

El Guindi deliberately pushes the answer to the question of Samir’s guilt or innocence to the side of the narrative. After all, as Samir tells Ahmed, “Unless your being innocent is as interesting to them as being guilty, you will not be believed.” Broken Nose’s chilling production makes the case that what seems absurd and unthinkable today will be documentary fodder tomorrow. **R**

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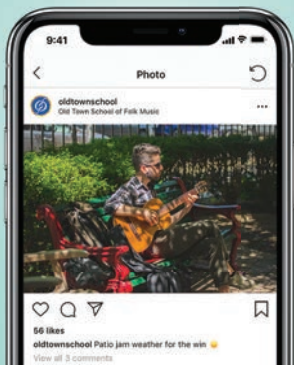
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RR Native son
A new *Hamlet* puts the prince of Denmark in a context all too familiar to Chicago.

Though the Bard wrote *Hamlet* sometime on the cusp of the 17th century, Chicago Shakespeare Theater's minimal, grayscale revival has plenty to say about contemporary masculinity and race.

With Black men as both King and Prince Hamlet, this particular production draws upon the concept of a legacy interrupted and destroyed by racialized violence. The show begins with a son singing at his father's grave while his mother, a woman of color, gets intimate with a white man. Maurice Jones stars as the doomed prince, offering a performance that feels less like a melancholy Dane and more like Bigger Thomas. As systemic, familial oppression triggers bursts of violence, the production is careful not to excuse Hamlet's behavior, especially his treatment of Ophelia (Rachel Nicks), another woman of color.

Of course, Hamlet is surrounded by well-meaning white friends who can't fully understand why he's falling apart, but they stick around as long as they believe they can repair him. It's also important to note that Claudius, the king's brother and murderer, is played by Tim Decker, who oozes around the stage like a Wall Street villain. If you're familiar with the plot, you know that Queen Gertrude, played by Karen Aldridge, fell in love with Claudius and the two plotted together to kill off Hamlet's father. In this production, there's a suggestion of internalized racism, as if Gertrude is trying to purge her Blackness by offing it.

Director Barbara Gaines gives us the truth of Hamlet in a context all too familiar to Chicago: Here is a man ripped from his heritage, plummeting into a tragic destiny with sparse options. There's a method to the madness indeed. —**KT HAWBAKER** *HAMLET Through 6/9: Wed 1 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM, Sun 2 and 6:30 PM, Tue 7:30 PM; no performances Sun 5/12, 5/19, and 5/26, 6:30 PM, Chicago Shakespeare, 800 E. Grand, 312-595-5600, chicagosshakes.com, \$58-\$88.*

RR They too are untranslatable
The power of Walt Whitman brings two high school students together in *I & You*.

The premise of Lauren Gunderson's two-hander is remarkably simple: a socially isolated, housebound high school girl receives an unexpected visit from an on-ly-slightly-less introverted classmate she barely knows. He brings the unwelcome news that the two of them have been assigned to collaborate on a class project—due tomorrow, OMG!—about Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," a poem she has barely read and loathes. But from this Spartan setup, Gunderson spins a sweet, rich, nuanced story in which, over the course of 90 minutes, we watch two socially awkward adolescents open up and become a little less awkward. Gunderson's gift for writing compelling, realistic dialogue and creating relatable characters serves her well.

Under Bryan Wakefield's direction, Erica Bittner and Matty Robinson are utterly charming and quite believable as teenagers. They wisely avoid the easy stereotypes of teen behavior, preferring instead to plumb the richly complicated and contradictory depths of adolescent psychology.



Hamlet  LIZ LAUREN

This coproduction between Oak Park Festival Theatre and Open Door Theater isn't perfect. At 90 minutes without an intermission, the play feels a little long, though it is hard to tell if the problem is in the script—which could be trimmed—or in the performances, which still felt a little rough on opening night. The pace flags about 50 minutes in, but then picks up again. In the end, though, Gunderson, Wakefield, Bittner, Robinson, et al., win us over, sending us out into the night with these lines from Whitman echoing in our heads: "For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you." —**JACK HELBIG** *I & You Through 5/26: Fri 8 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Open Door Theater, 902 Ridgeland, Oak Park, 708-300-9396, oakparkfestival.com, \$35, \$28 seniors, \$15 students.*

RR Daddy's little girl
I'm Gonna Pray For You So Hard shows the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree.

Things it would be good to inherit from a famous playwright father: deep industry connections, flawless technique, a broad handle on what being an artist is about. Things it would be less good to inherit from a famous (belligerent, out of touch) playwright father, but which Ella (Amanda Caryl Fink), his actress daughter, is irremediably saddled with in Halley Feiffer's astonishing play: everything else. Love has strings in this taut, searing two-hander, directed by Cole von Glahn for First Floor Theater. By that I mean Ella is the best little girl David (Tim Kidwell) could ever want, only he'd rather she be cast as Masha and not lowly Nina in *The Seagull* off Broadway. Ella worships David—his wisdom, his accolades, his impossibly high standards—until she doesn't anymore. Then this turns into father-daughter theater in complete tailspin, one generation's follies T-boning the next's at full throttle.

Fink turns in one of those performances that diagnoses the lifestyle it portrays. Her chardonnay tirades

are a critique of chardonnay and of tirades. By the end of the show, Kidwell hasn't so much redeemed himself as he has participated in a reversal of fortune; Fink musters a pigheadedness we had failed to see at first, and it looks in an uncanny way like David's own mean self. In its study of how people can become the thing they hate most, this play is serious business indeed. It's also a wild-ass time and not to be missed. —**MAX MALLER** *I'M GONNA PRAY FOR YOU SO HARD Through 5/18: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Mon 5/13, 7:30 PM, and Sat 5/18, 3 PM, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 773-697-3830, firstfloorthater.com, \$25, \$20 students.*

RR Here comes a regular
One 4 the Road has a rich sense of history and humanity.

It's 1972 and Haskins' bar has been a fixture on the south side of Chicago for 30 years, passed down to Ray Haskins (Darren Jones) by his father, Big Ray, who laid every brick and installed every pipe in the shop. Malört takes pride of place on the shelf, and the names of those chosen few with a taste for it are carved into the wall—but everyone who comes through the door for the first time gets a shot as a rite of passage. Like every watering hole, it has its regulars: retiree Slocum (Donn Carl Harper) sometimes shows up at 8 AM for a beer, and busybody Lizzie (Tina Marie Wright, in a pompadour) sometimes locks the door for an extra pour. When JD Youngblood (Omari Ferrell), a soldier recently returned from Vietnam, wanders in, Ray welcomes him like family. Ray's bar is his home, and he's the loving master of it. But the world outside isn't so sweet, and Black and the Woodlawn Youth Coalition, as the local gang calls itself, have an insistent way of demanding "donations."

One 4 the Road, veteran actor and MPAACT company member Leonard House's debut play, directed by Runako Jahi, draws the specificity of time, place, and

character with remarkable economy in a narrative that's heartbreaking and familiar—in other words, the essence of nostalgia. In combination with a pitch-perfect cast that develops each character's particular sheen in relation to the others, this play is rich in its sense of humans and history. —IRENE HSIAO **ONE 4 THE ROAD** Through 6/2: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, mpaact.org, \$36-\$38, \$28 students and seniors.

RR Listening in
Walnut Spaceship debuts with *Reverse Gossip*, a polyphonous portrait of city life.

Barrie Cole presents a series of overheard phone calls on the CTA that add up to a beautiful, polyphonous portrait of city life. Nine performers, sitting among the audience like fellow riders on a train, occasionally changing seats—prompted by familiar-sounding station arrival announcements—talk into their phones and inadvertently reveal more than they intend to a roomful of strangers.

It's a deceptively simple setup and, on the face of it, doesn't offer much more than the vicarious thrill of hearing something one isn't supposed to be privy to. But as the one-sided rants, whispered pleas, and philosophical musings accrue, one can't help but fill in the blanks and identify as either the speaker or the listener.

Cole and director Jen Moniz first staged this piece as street theater on actual CTA trains, then moved it inside as part of Rhinofest a year or two back. This run



Reverse Gossip © JEN MONIZ

serves as the debut of a new performance space called Walnut Spaceship Studio housed within the Bridgeport Art Center. Besides Cole's skillful heightening of common speech, it's an added treat not to have to trudge up to Rogers Park to take in a piece of theater. This marks the first time in my two-year play-reviewing tenure that I could walk to a performance. For a piece whose essence is bridging the gap between strangers, the fact that it's being presented in a neighborhood that rarely gets the opportunity to take in theater is no small accomplishment. This is a train any Chicagoan should count their lucky stars to catch.—DMITRY SAMAROV **REVERSE GOSSIP** Through 5/11: Fri-Sat 8 PM; also Mon 5/6, 8 PM, Walnut Spaceship Studio, 1200 W. 35th, reversegossip.brownpapertickets.com, \$20 in advance or pay what you can at the door.

RR A jury of their peers
City Lit presents not one, but *Two Days in Court*.

The two short, rarely-seen comedies on this engaging bill share a common plot point. In each, a young man is put on trial before a jury of his peers for misdeeds the jurors themselves could be guilty of, or at least sympathetic to.

The Devil and Daniel Webster, Stephen Vincent Benét's 1938 stage version of his 1936 story, is set in 1841 New Hampshire. It tells of a farmer, Jabez Stone, whose marriage party is interrupted by the arrival of Satan. In return for success in business, politics, and

love, Stone had sold his soul to Old Scratch ten years before, and now the devil has come to collect his due. But the bargain is challenged as unenforceable by Stone's friend, the esteemed New England lawyer and statesman Daniel Webster. A hearing is quickly arranged before a jury of the damned—"twelve great sinners, tried and true," summoned from hell, who end up serving as a sort of Greek chorus. Though Stone did indeed sign a contract with Scratch—in blood—Webster argues that the ideal of freedom is more important than any wrongs Stone has committed.

The program's second half, Gilbert and Sullivan's 1875 operetta *Trial by Jury*, concerns a breach-of-promise suit brought by a woman against a rascal who promised to marry her but then took up with another woman. The judge and jurors, all male, can relate to the defendant's wayward conduct, but now, being respectable gentlemen seated in court, they feel obliged to side with the lady plaintiff. It's vintage G&S, packed with sly digs at hypocrisy and incompetence among the powerful and privileged, all couched in whimsical, wittily rhymed lyrics and genteel melodies.

Director Terry McCabe's 17-member ensemble is much larger than the casts usually seen on City Lit's intimate stage, and the choral work, both spoken and sung, is excellent. —ALBERT WILLIAMS **TWO DAYS IN COURT: A DOUBLE-HEADER OF CLASSIC ONE ACTS** Through 5/26: Fri-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Mon 5/13 and 5/20, 7:30 PM, City Lit Theater, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr, 773-293-3682, citylit.org, \$32, \$27 seniors, \$12 students and military.

STEPPENWOLF THE CHILDREN

By Lucy Kirkwood Directed by Jonathan Berry

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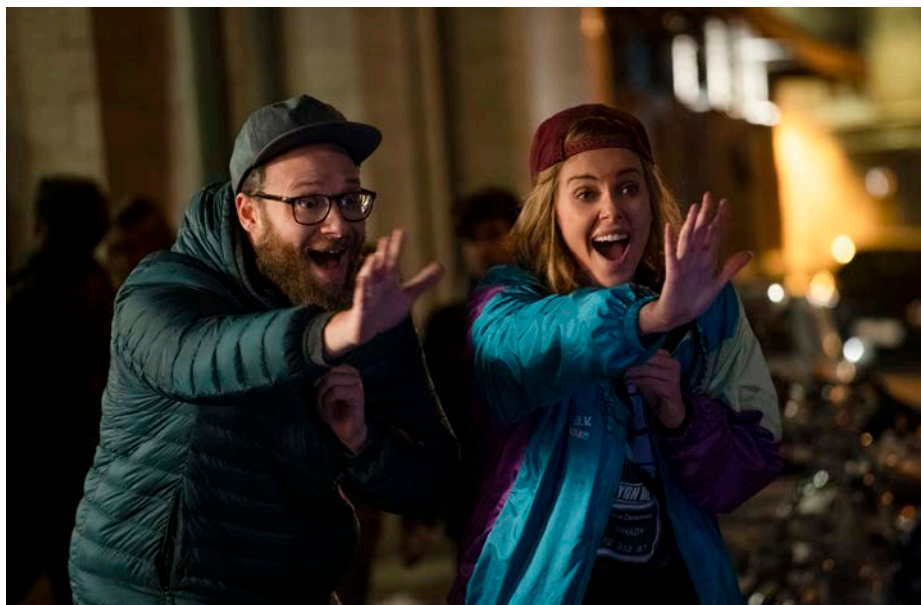


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Long Shot PHILIPPE BOSSE

REVIEW

Against all odds

Can the two crazy kids in *Long Shot* work out their differences and find happiness?

By LEAH PICKETT

In essence, what endears romantic comedies to their most ardent supporters also is what bothers a lot of critics. Rom-coms, on the whole, are formulaic fantasies about everyday people who behave unrealistically in exceptional (and exceptionally well-lit) situations. The films usually adhere to a simplistic three-act structure that hinges on the viewer's emotional catharsis. The lovebirds meet and get to know each other in a montage scored to an upbeat pop song; clash, separate, and miss each other in a montage scored to a melancholy pop song; and ultimately reunite, with a coda scored to a cathartic pop song.

In *Long Shot*, the upbeat song is Blondie's "One Way or Another," the melancholy song is Roxette's "It Must Have Been Love" from the *Pretty Woman* soundtrack, and the cathartic

song is Robyn's "Dancing on My Own," which is odd, given that the couple ends up together. By the way, given the genre, that's not a spoiler.

Pedestrian song choices aside, *Long Shot* is hit-and-miss. What works about it also is what works in all the good rom-coms: fundamentally, it's a story about two likable people putting in the time and effort to understand each other. As critic Wesley Morris wrote in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article about the dearth of modern rom-coms and why that's unfortunate: "Romantic comedy is the only genre committed to letting relatively ordinary people—no capes, no spaceships, no infinite sequels—figure out how to deal meaningfully with another human being." It's a fair point, and one that explains why *Long Shot* warrants a fair shake.

The more ordinary half of this movie's duo is a Brooklyn-based reporter named Fred Flarsky (Seth Rogen, playing the raunchy/cuddly version of himself that he honed in *Knocked Up* and perfected in *This Is the End*). The object of Fred's affection is Charlotte Field (Charlize Theron), who was Fred's babysitter when she was 16 and he was 13. Now, Charlotte is the U.S. secretary of state—celebrated, of course, for being the youngest and hottest person to hold the office—and she plans to run for president in 2020.

Like Harry and Sally, Edward and Vivian, Joe and Kathleen, and other exalted rom-com pairs, Fred and Charlotte represent a case of supposed opposites attracting. Fred, who writes for a local rag that evokes a mash-up of *Vice* and the *Village Voice*, is brash, unkempt, judgmental, and uncompromising. Charlotte, in her ambitious quest to actually save the world while climbing a slippery political ladder, is tactful, chic, open-minded, and persuadable. These two are idealistic humanitarians at heart; they bonded in adolescence over how deeply they cared about issues that most Americans ignored, like recycling and global warming. When they bump into each other as adults at a Manhattan charity event, one can almost see their kindred sparks. Obviously, it is unlikely that a guy who looks and acts like Rogen's character would enchant Theron's—and even more unlikely that she would hire him to punch up her speeches after watching him pillory a media mogul and then nosedive down a staircase. But common sense matters little in the pursuit of feel-good, against-all-odds, shoot-for-the-stars romance.

Director Jonathan Levine, who previously teamed with Rogen on *50/50* and *The Night Before*, works some glimmers of political satire and ribaldry into *Long Shot's* cavalcade of tropes. Many of the jokes are weak, eliciting light chuckles if anything; but the few knee-slappers that emerge from the film's most outrageous situations will likely be the moments for which *Long Shot* is best remembered, like when Charlotte negotiates the release of a hostage while high on MDMA.

Long Shot's strongest asset, though—which, upon reflection, also exposes the movie's greatest flaw—is Theron. For years

she has excelled at dark comedy, evidenced by her prickly turns in the Jason Reitman-Diablo Cody films *Young Adult* and *Tully*, not to mention her off-kilter guest spot on *Arrested Development*. She's funny here, but only when the script gives her some edge to chew on, which doesn't happen enough.

Many critics have already categorized *Long Shot* as more like *Veep* meets *Notting Hill* than *The American President*. I, however, longed for Charlotte to be as acerbic, outré, and uproarious as *Veep's* Selina Meyer. I also bristled at *Long Shot's* conclusion: that the woman has to change for her man while he basically stays the same. (I guess he learned how to be less judgmental, or at least that's what the screenwriters want me to think.) In one of several explanation-laden scenes, Fred's best friend (O'Shea Jackson Jr.) tells him that he judges people too much in the name of white-knight liberalism. Meanwhile, Charlotte jeopardizes what she has wanted and worked for her entire life in the name of integrity, but also to publicly endorse and hold on to her man. It's a huge sacrifice that Fred does not reciprocate; but they're cute together, so the outcome is less offensive than it is disappointing.

Still, the movie ticks its post-Trump, post-MeToo feminist boxes in other ways, like showing how Charlotte and her advisers' concern with optics is justified. As a woman in politics, Charlotte knows full well that the general public will view her anger as hysterics, her assertiveness as bitchiness, and any misstep as more damning than one made by a man. Cowriters Dan Sterling (*The Interview*) and Liz Hannah (*The Post*) handle this material and the romantic side of Charlotte and Fred's relationship best, though neither element is as daring or clever as it could have been.

But here's the thing: rom-coms, probably more than films of any other genre, are supposed to be vehicles for escapism. Rom-com fans rely on them for this, too, especially when the current climate—both the political and literal—is inflamed. Ergo, *Long Shot* accomplishes what any decent romantic comedy sets out to do: induce some laughs, awwwws, and sighs of relief at a tidy, happy ending.

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NOW PLAYING

RR N Ask Dr. Ruth

"When a woman is frigid . . ." begins a male audience member in archival footage from *The Dr. Ruth Show*, a 1980s television talk show hosted by this documentary's subject, sex therapist Dr. Ruth Westheimer. "Hold it!" exclaims the four-foot-nine grandmotherly figure in her German accent. "That word you can't say on my program." A feminist icon before the term crystallized in popular discourse, Westheimer is perhaps best known as a media personality who frankly discussed sexual dynamics, AIDS, and women's pleasure at the height of the Reagan era. But producer-director Ryan White (*The Keepers*, *The Case Against 8*), who follows the busy and ebullient Westheimer as she nears her 90th birthday, provides ample space for the luminary to tell her full story. Mostly conveyed through voiceover, with resplendent animation to color in her memories, that journey brims with tragedy and triumph. A self-described "orphan of the Holocaust," she went on to become an Israeli soldier, a professor in Paris and New York, and the most famous person in America to ask about sex. Westheimer continues to provide an essential public service, which the film, an affectionate tribute to her life and work, continues. —LEAH PICKETT 99 min. At Century Centre. Visit landmarktheatres.com for showtimes.

RR N Black Mother

Sound and image are never in sync in Khalik Allah's experimental documentary about Jamaica, which forces viewers to consider the imagery and soundtrack as separate, equally complex entities. The subject matter is also rich and fragmented, as Allah shifts between a range of themes (the most pronounced are poverty, sex work, and womanhood), resulting in a mosaiclike portrait of Jamaica that makes the country seem at once beautiful and dire. A street photographer before he turned to filmmaking, Allah understands the power of portraiture: he often has his subjects pose for the camera as the world goes on around them. The camera sometimes regards the men and women as if they were sculptures, studying their specific physical attributes to gain insight into corporeal experience as a whole. This is highly sen-

suous filmmaking, not only in its vivid close-ups of flesh, food, and the natural world, but in the varied textures of Allah's cinematography. —BEN SACHS 77 min. Fri 5/3, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 5/4, 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 5/5, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; Mon 5/6, 7 and 9 PM; Tue 5/7, 7 and 9 PM; and Thu 5/9, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinéma

A Bread Factory

Patrick Wang's ambitious two-part feature (2018) suggests the cinematic equivalent of a David Foster Wallace novel, employing a wealth of formal devices, ranging from brilliant to precious, to contemplate what it means to live in modern-day America. Set in an idealized but not implausible everytown, it centers on the longtime director of the local arts center (Tyne Daly) and her actress wife (Elisabeth Henry); the expansive story also considers members of the town school board (which has to vote on whether to cut funding to the arts center), the feisty editor of the community newspaper, some visiting artists, and several kids. In the first and superior part, Wang builds on the understated long-take style of his acclaimed *In the Family* (2011) by introducing brazenly theatrical devices (Albee-like mannered dialogue, actors breaking the fourth wall); in the second part, he heads full-throttle into theatricality, with musical numbers and a Greek chorus. Throughout Wang demonstrates he's a gifted, idiosyncratic director of actors, and his patient affection for many of the characters can be disarming, as when one of the main villains of the first part transforms into a lovable supporting character in the second. —BEN SACHS 242 min. Sat 5/4, 12:30 PM. Northwestern University Block Museum of Art

RR Charulata

Also known as *The Lonely Wife*, this relatively early (1964) film by Satyajit Ray (*The World of Apu*), based on a Tagore novel of Victorian India, may be the first of his features in which he really discovers mise-en-scène, and it's an exhilarating encounter. It's typically rich in the nuances of grief and in extraordinarily allusive dialogue, though not very much happens in terms of plot (a sensitive woman is neglected by her newspaper-publisher husband and drawn to his younger cousin). But at every moment, the gorgeous cinematography and expressive camera movements and dissolves have

plenty of stories of their own to tell. You shouldn't miss this. In Bengali with subtitles. —DAVE KEHR 124 min. 35mm. Wed 5/8, 7 and 9:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

Cure

The prolific Japanese director Kiyoshi Kurosawa has been at work for nearly two decades, sometimes making straight-to-video features but more recently receiving some belated international recognition. The engrossing *Cure* (1997) stars Koji Yakusho (*Shall We Dance?*, *The Yell*) as a troubled detective exploring a series of murders committed through hypnotic suggestion (as in *The Manchurian Candidate*), and while its creepy mystery plot is easy enough to follow even when it turns metaphysical, it's unsatisfying as a story precisely because it aspires to create a mounting sense of dread by enlarging questions rather than answering them. Like other recent thrillers by this director, it's fairly grisly, though Kurosawa's frequent long shots impart a cool, detached tone to the cruelty and violence. Stylistically it's the most inventive Japanese feature I've seen in some time, much more unpredictable than Takeshi Kitano's recent *yakuza* exercises. In Japanese with subtitles. —JONATHAN ROSENBAUM 111 min. 35mm. Sun 5/5, 7:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

Don't Look Back

D.A. Pennebaker's 1967 record of Bob Dylan's English tour two years earlier is a genuine blast from the past, evoking the 60s like few other documents; Dylan's relentless heaping of scorn on the mainstream press, before the coercive tentacles of "creative management" made such things virtually impossible, is especially telling. But I'm entirely with Andrew Sarris when he writes, "*Don't Look Back* makes me want to fill in on Dylan's recordings, but not Pennebaker's movies"; the raw cinema verité look bears fruit only when its subject does, and as with Madonna's *Truth or Dare* (1991), the pretense of confidentiality is merely that. But the music is great, and the film would be memorable for its goofy, syncopated opening sequence alone (a quirky illustration of "Subterranean Homesick Blues"). With appearances by Joan Baez (Dylan's steady at the time), Donovan, Allen Ginsberg, Dylan's manager Albert Grossman, and Alan

Price. —JONATHAN ROSENBAUM 96 min. Thu 5/9, 9:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

Dressed to Kill

Brian De Palma plunders *Psycho*, with incidental grabs from *Murder*, *Spellbound*, and *Vertigo*. Originality has never been a high value in the genre-bound aesthetic of filmmaking, but De Palma cheapens what he steals, draining the Hitchcock moves of their content and complexity. He's left with a collection of empty technical tricks—obtrusive and gimmick-crazed, this film has been "directed" within an inch of its life—and he fills in the blanks with an offhand cruelty toward his characters, a supreme contempt for his audience (at one point, we're compared to the drooling voyeurs who inhabit his vision of Bellevue), and a curdled, adolescent vision of sexuality. The smirking, sarcastic tone is supposed to make the sex killings "fun," but mostly it undermines whatever credibility the enterprise might have had. This is Brian De Palma's personal fantasy, and he's welcome to it (1980). —DAVE KEHR R, 104 min. 35mm. Fri 5/3-Sat 5/4, midnight. Music Box

Drifting Clouds

Finnish mannerist Aki Kaurismäki (*Ariel*, *The Match Factory Girl*, *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*) takes on the theme of contemporary unemployment in a tender love story that, by his own account, places "Frank Capra's emotional rescue story *It's a Wonderful Life* in one extreme corner and Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* in the other, and the Finnish reality in between." The film was conceived in part for actor Matti Pellonpää, who died before it went into production; it's now dedicated to his memory, and a photograph of him as a boy plays a key role in the emotional orchestration. Despite some careful color coordination in the sets and some quiet humor in the mise-en-scène and plot, not to mention a mournful seriousness in the overall treatment of the theme, this is arguably one of those instances in the filmmaker's touching but reductive minimalist oeuvre where less becomes less (1996). In Finnish with subtitles. —JONATHAN ROSENBAUM 1985 97 min. 35mm. Showing with Kaurismäki's 1986 short *Rocky VI* (9 min., 35mm). Wed 5/8, 7:30 PM. Northeastern Illinois University

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Filming “Othello”

The last completed essay film of Orson Welles, and the last of his features to be released during his lifetime (1978), this wonderfully candid, rarely screened account of the making of his first wholly independent feature offers a perfect introduction to that movie and to Welles’s “second” manner of moviemaking that was necessary once he parted company with the studios and mainstream media. Significantly, the only part of *Othello* we see and hear in its original form is from the opening sequence; everything else—usually shown silently with Welles’s narration—involves an intricate reediting of the original material. Whether he’s addressing us beside his *Moviola*, delivering new versions of Shakespearean speeches, chatting with his old Irish friends and collaborators Micheál Mac Liammóir (his lingo) and Hilton Edwards, or speaking to college students, Welles is at his spellbinding best. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 84 min. Former Reader film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum lectures at the screening. Tue 5/7, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

RR The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T.

One of the most underrated children’s musical fantasies and conceivably the most interesting movie Stanley Kramer ever produced (1953). Dr. Seuss wrote the screenplay (with Allan Scott); his wartime buddy Carl Foreman was originally supposed to direct, but the Hollywood witch hunts soon made this impossible, and Roy Rowland took Foreman’s place. The plot basically consists of the florid nightmare of a ten-year-old boy (Tommy Rettig) about his authoritarian, prissy, and vaguely foreign piano teacher (Hans Conried), who forces 500 boys to play his monotonous exercise on a continuous keyboard located in his gargantuan palace, while the boy’s mother (Mary Healy) is locked, hypnotized, in a gilded cage. A very inventive form of delirium, with songs by Frederick Hollander and choreography by Eugene Loring; the use of Technicolor is especially impressive. If you’ve never seen this, prepare to have your mind blown. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 89 min. 35mm. Fri 5/3, 6:15 PM and Sun 5/5, 5 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Hail Satan?

The talented documentarian Penny Lane (*Nuts!*, *The Pain of Others*) directed this portrait of the Satanic Temple, focusing on the religious organization’s efforts to subvert the presence of Christian ideology in U.S. political life. It’s an upbeat film that depicts members of the Satanic Temple as eloquent, principled people and the Christian right as power-hungry hypocrites; the overarching argument is that the Satanists, in their commitment to exercising their rights of religious liberty and free speech, are more patriotic than their Christian counterparts. Lane succeeds in communicating this argument early on, making the second half of the movie seem somewhat redundant (this may have worked better as a short). Brian McOmber’s cutesy score can be grating, and Lane’s tone borders on smug; still, the movie provides valuable food for thought about the role of religion in American society. —**BEN SACHS** 95 min. At Music Box Theatre. Visit musicboxtheatre.com for showtimes.

Key Largo

A little windy and rhetorical for my taste, but still one of John Huston’s best efforts (1948), a melodrama of ethics that soundly represses the Maxwell Anderson play it was based on (the ending is actually a lift from *To*

Have and Have Not). Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Lionel Barrymore are held in a run-down Florida resort by hoods Edward G. Robinson, Thomas Gomez, and Marc Lawrence. The hard-to-take element is Claire Trevor, doing her damaged-goods number (naturally she won an Oscar). Richard Brooks worked with Huston on the screenplay; the atmospheric cinematography is by Karl Freund. —**DAVE KEHR** 100 min. 35mm. Sun 5/5, 11:30 AM. Music Box

N Mary Magdalene

This is a peculiar biblical drama in that it communicates very little feeling for religious experience. Helen Edmundson and Philippa Goslett’s script portrays Mary Magdalene as a headstrong, chaste young woman who joins up with Jesus and the apostles out of personal spiritual conviction. It comes off as very 21st century—one always gets a clear sense of how Mary is growing as an individual, even though the depictions of religious ceremony are muted and awkward. Director Garth Davis (*Lion*) adopts a generically arty approach, filming much of the action handheld and eliciting annoyingly sincere performances from his cast. Neither Rooney Mara (as Mary) nor Joaquin Phoenix (as Jesus) are especially compelling; in fact the film contains Phoenix’s first bad performance in over a decade. Phoenix tries to emphasize Jesus’s human rather than his divine side and downplays Jesus’s self-doubt and oratorical skills, but his subtlety results in a dull, dispassionate performance. —**BEN SACHS** R, 120 min. Fri 5/3, 2 and 6 PM; Sat 5/4, 2:45 and 7:45 PM; Sun 5/5, 4:45 PM; Mon 5/6, 7:45 PM; Tue 5/7, 6 PM; Wed 5/8, 7:45 PM; and Thu 5/9, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

—**BEN SACHS** R, 120 min. Fri 5/3, 2 and 6 PM; Sat 5/4, 2:45 and 7:45 PM; Sun 5/5, 4:45 PM; Mon 5/6, 7:45 PM; Tue 5/7, 6 PM; Wed 5/8, 7:45 PM; and Thu 5/9, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Millennium Mambo

My first two looks at this Hou Hsiao-hsien feature (2001), initially announced as the first in a series, led me to conclude it’s one of the emptiest good-looking films by a major director that I can recall—even though it was also the first of his films to get a U.S. release (not counting the barely-noticed 1987 *Daughter of the Nile*). The characters are terminally familiar zeros, and this Taiwanese master’s gifts as a prescient historian of the present appear to have deserted him. Visually, he works much closer to his actors than usual and moves them in and out of focus, defining a much more claustrophobic world than he has in the past. But the story—a young bar hostess (Hong Kong star Shu Qi) shuttles between her jealous boyfriend and a gangster while taking ecstasy and throwing tantrums—seems standard issue, apart from the somewhat unorthodox voice-over narration, at least until an unexpectedly lyrical finale. In Mandarin with subtitles. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** R, 120 min. 35mm archival print. Thu 5/9, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

RR Rancho Notorious

A perversely stylized western by Fritz Lang (1952), his last and best. The combination of unrestrained Technicolor and painted backdrops removes any sense of reality from the proceedings, which are set in a safe haven for gunslingers operated by Marlene Dietrich. Arthur Kennedy arrives, looking for the man who killed his fiancée, as an insistently repeated theme song pounds out a quintessential Lang chorus of “hate, murder, and revenge.” —**DAVE KEHR** 89 min. 35mm. Fri 5/3, 7 and 9:30 PM; and Sun 5/5, 1:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

N Satan & Adam

For a movie full of music as earthy, rambunctious,

infectious, and electrifying as the blues, this documentary about the celebrated duo of Black session and street guitarist Sterling “Mr. Satan” Magee and Jewish musicologist and harmonica player Adam Gussow is surprisingly flat. Too bad, since their story would seem like a can’t-miss: New York suburbanite Gussow was 28 in 1986 when he respectfully approached the Mississippi-born Magee, then a 50-year-old one-man-band dynamo passing the hat on a Harlem sidewalk, and asked if he could join him. The two instantly clicked; at a time when America’s Black-white divide was widening, they became a fixture on 125th Street, and after inclusion in Phil Joanou’s 1988 documentary *U2: Rattle and Hum*, graduated to clubs and concert stages, record albums, and overseas tours. Director and longtime fan V. Scott Balcersek shot this tribute over 23 years; to have stuck with it indicates enthusiasm, but perhaps the years not spent actively working on it took a toll. It’s as if he lost the shape of his narrative while waiting for something to happen after Magee abruptly dropped out of sight in 1998. The circumstances of the guitar man’s resurfacing years later are fascinating, but Balcersek doesn’t have the storytelling chops of Gussow, who launched a successful writing career in 1995 with an essay for *Harper’s* called “Winter Blues,” a far more vibrant and insightful account of life with Satan than this one. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** 80 min. Balcersek attends the Saturday screening. Fri 5/3, 4:30 and 8:15 PM; Sat 5/4, 5 PM; Sun 5/5, 3 PM; and Mon 5/6, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

Saturday Night Fever

John Travolta found the escape hatch from *Welcome Back, Kotter* with this 1977 update of *Rebel Without a Cause*; he acquits himself honorably as a teenager dead-ended in Brooklyn who finds his only chance to shine at the local disco. Director John Badham, a refugee from TV movies, gets a firm grip on a slippery Norman Wexler screenplay and turns up some unusual New York locations. A small, solid film, made with craft if not resonance. —**DAVE KEHR** PG, 108 min. Fri 5/3-Mon 5/6, 11 PM. Logan

70 Acres in Chicago: Cabrini Green

Every Chicagoan should see this documentary (2015) about the history of the Chicago Housing Authority and the controversial destruction of Cabrini-Green Homes on the north side to make way for a 21st-century model based on mixed-income housing. Filming over 15 years, director Ronit Bezalet tracks three longtime Cabrini residents as the hellish high-rises come down and new town houses go up, lodging an uneasy mix of lower-class Blacks with government subsidies and middle-class whites paying market rates. As Bezalet reports, many more of the project’s original residents were screened out due to negative drug tests and criminal-record checks and shunted off to the south and west sides. “I stay in it, I play in it, I live in it, and it’s home to me,” declares young Raymond McDonald, one of the voices that animate this story of a community in transition. But for those at the bottom of the economic ladder, home is wherever the city says. —**J.R. JONES** 56 min. Showing with the 1968 short Newsreel documentary *The Case Against Lincoln Center* (12 min.). Sat 5/4, 3 PM. Stony Island Arts Bank

Viva Las Vegas

Vulgar, spirited, and neglected director George Sidney (*Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Eddy Duchin Story*, *Kiss Me Kate*) meets his match with this 1964 Elvis Presley vehicle: Presley, Ann-Margret, and Las Vegas itself are all ready-made for his talents, which mainly have to do with verve and trashy kicks. Unfortunately not as many sparks fly as one might hope. Still there’s Presley as a race car driver who doubles as a singing waiter, and, as critic Tom Milne describes it, “Ann-Margret revs her chassis at him.” There’s also William Demarest and, among the songs, “The Yellow Rose of Texas.” —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 86 min. Tue 5/7-Thu 5/9, 10:30 PM. Logan FREE



Satan & Adam

Wedding in Blood

Yet another facet of Claude Chabrol's view of the bourgeois life as a facade behind which lurk extravagant, destructive, and often totally ridiculous passions (1974). Like his idol Alfred Hitchcock, Chabrol loves to work variations on the disintegration of an ordered world; but unlike Hitchcock, who keeps his order and his chaos neatly separated, Chabrol concentrates more on character, so that when the bottom drops out, it does so precisely and inevitably. Stéphane Audran and Michel Piccoli star as adulterous lovers who never manage to realize that there's an easier way out of their predicament than murder. A smashing work from a master craftsman. In French with subtitles. —**DON DRUKER** PG, 95 min. 16mm. Mon 5/6, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

RR The White Crow

Ralph Fiennes doesn't shirk from a challenge; after directing and starring in *Coriolanus* (2011), about Shakespeare's tragic Roman general, and *The Invisible Woman* (2013), the story of Charles Dickens and his mistress Nelly Ternan, he here turns to another difficult, uniquely talented figure, dancer Rudolf Nureyev, in a richly textured drama that very nearly reincarnates the legendary artist and the Cold War era from which he sprang. Fiennes, who speaks Russian, takes the supporting role of Alexander Ivanovich Pushkin, the ballet master of the prestigious Vaganova Academy in Leningrad, where the 17-year-old Nureyev enrolled in 1955. The onscreen mentor-student relationship parallels the director-actor one off-screen, because with the dazzling Ukrainian Oleg Ivenko, a principal dancer of the Tatar State Academic Opera and Ballet, Fiennes has launched a star. There can never be another Nureyev, but Ivenko comes remarkably close in conveying the athleticism and grace of the firebrand who revolutionized ballet by appropriating the more dramatic flourishes previously associated with female dancers; Nureyev insisted on being much more than the ballerina's staid prop, injecting his solos with bravura jetés and pirouettes, and enthralled audiences with his charisma and heat. It's astonishing that this is Ivenko's first movie role, because he projects Nureyev's drive, seductiveness, intellectual curiosity, imperiousness, vulnerability, and mercurial temper with a naturalism that seems effortless. Enhanced by the deft cutting of film editor Barney Pilling, David Hare's screenplay (inspired by Julie Kavanagh's book, *Rudolf Nureyev: The Life*) continually flows back and forth across time periods, simulating the connective tissue of memory: the 1961 defection sequence in a Paris airport plays like a taut thriller, while the scene that follows, from the icon's childhood, is achingly poignant, illustrating how a dancer's tumultuous journey toward liberation began with a few baby steps. In English and subtitled Russian and French. —**ANDREA GRONVALL** R, 127 min. At Century Centre. Visit landmarktheatres.com for showtimes.

ALSO PLAYING

Branding Broadway

William S. Hart directed and stars in this 1918 silent film, which is a comedic variation on his bad-guy-turns-good persona. He plays a rowdy cowhand who finds himself in New York City where he becomes the "guardian" of the adult son of a millionaire. 53 min. 35mm. Showing with Hart's 1915 short *Angel of Hell's Kitchen* (10 min., 35mm). Live accompaniment by Dennis Scott. Sat 5/4, 11:30 AM. Music Box

N El Chicano

Ben Hernandez Bray directed this all-Hispanic-cast crime film about a Los Angeles cop investigating a gang and finding clues about his own criminal twin brother's death. He turns to using a mythological/superhero figure from his youth, the Ghetto Grim Reaper, to aid in his search. R, 107 min. City North IMAX, Roosevelt Collection

Future Language: The Dimensions of Von LMO

Chicago filmmaker Lori Felker directed this experimental documentary about singer, musician, artist, and maybe space alien Von LMO. 87 min. Felker attends the screenings. Tue 5/7-Wed 5/8, 9:30 PM. Music Box

N The Intruder

A former owner plans to get his house back after a young couple buys it in this horror film directed by Deon Taylor. With Meagan Good, Dennis Quaid, and Michael Ealy. PG-13, 102 min. ArcLight, Block 37, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham, City North, Ford City, River East 21, Roosevelt Collection, 600 N. Michigan, Webster Place

Lost & Found

Liam O Mochain directed and appears in this 2017 Irish comedy drama of seven connecting stories that all transpire in or around the lost and found of a train station. 96 min. Fri 5/3, 6:30 and 8:30 PM; Sat 5/4, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30,

and 8:30 PM; Sun 5/5, 2:30, 4:30, and 6:30 PM; Mon 5/6, 6:30 and 8:30 PM; Tue 5/7, 6:30 and 8:30 PM; and Thu 5/9, 6:30 and 8:30 PM. Facets Cinémathèque

N Love Blooms

Michaël Dacheux directed this French drama that follows the lives of two 25-year-olds over the course of a year after their breakup. In French with subtitles. 83 min. Dacheux attends the screening. Wed 5/8, 6:30 PM. Facets Cinémathèque FREE

Me & Stella / Roberta Flack

A program of two documentaries, Geri Ashur's *Me & Stella* (1976, 26 min.), on blues musician and folk singer Elizabeth Cotten, and David W. Powell's *Roberta Flack* (1971, 30 min.), about the titular singer. 56 min. Storyteller, musician, and artist Shanta Nurullah leads a post-screening discussion. Tue 5/7, 7 PM. DuSable Museum of African American History

Some Films: The Sound of Vision

A program of sound-related experimental films: John Cage and Henning Lohner's *One11* (1992, 90 min.), a Stan Brakhage film, and an excerpt from a Phil Niblock film. Curated by sound artist/musician Adam Sonderberg. Sonderberg introduces the screening. Sat 5/4, 7 PM. Filmfront

N Stockholm

Ethan Hawke and Noomi Rapace star in this dramatization of the 1973 bank holdup that originated the term "Stockholm Syndrome." Robert Budreau directed. R, 92

min. Fri 5/3, 4:15 and 8:15 PM; Sat 5/4, 5 PM; Sun 5/5, 3 PM; Mon 5/6, 6 PM; Tue 5/7, 8:15 PM; Wed 5/8, 6 PM; and Thu 5/9, 8:15 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N Turkish Ice-Cream

Can Ulkay directed this period drama about two Turkish ice cream vendors in 1915 Australia whose lives are affected by World War I. In English and subtitled Turkish. 123 min. Sat 5/4 and Mon 5/6, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

N UglyDolls

Kelly Asbury directed this animated film based on the popular stuffed toys. With voices by Kelly Clarkson, Nick Jonas, Janelle Monáe, Pitbull, Blake Shelton, and Wanda Sykes. PG, 87 min. ArcLight, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14, Cicero Showplace 14, City North, Ford City, Galewood Crossings, River East 21, Roosevelt Collection, 600 N. Michigan, Webster Place 11

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Jamila Woods upstairs at the South Side Community Art Center, 3831 S. Michigan. Opened in 1940, the SSCAC was declared a “national treasure” in 2017 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

📷 LAWRENCE AGYEI

Jamila Woods

builds on legacies that
shook the world

The Chicago singer and poet’s new album lovingly details how art can learn from the past as it shapes the future.

By **TIFFANY WALDEN**

As soon as Black Chicagoans step foot outside the crib, we become de facto spokespeople for the city. It's wild, really, the way it goes down. It's not a job we necessarily aspire to or even apply for. It just happens, mostly without our consent. Once outsiders catch wind of where we're from, the question inevitably arises:

Why is there so much violence in Chicago?

Because we're Black and from Chicago, obviously we must have seen a murder up close, or at least heard a shoot-out around the way. And this question almost always rears its presumptuous head whenever a national publication interviews a Black artist coming out of Chicago.

Singer, poet, and teaching artist Jamila Woods did a stint as city spokesperson during the press run for her 2016 debut, *Heavn*. She's an activist herself, and mentoring is her method of choice. At Young Chicago Authors, a youth literary nonprofit where she serves as associate artistic director, she helps developing minds tap into their poetic selves and use their voices for change.

The album itself is also a form of protest, though: on the *Heavn* track "Vry Blk," for instance, Woods uses a lullaby-like melody to sing out against police brutality. Woods stitched Black Lives Matter activism into the seams of *Heavn*, and in doing so became the latest artist pressed by journalists for answers to Chicago's violence problem.

"I've talked to other musician friends about that too. Like, I used to come to interviews, like—" Woods pauses and breathes heavily, dramatizing her apprehension. She felt the weight of having to speak not only for herself and her music, but also for the whole city of Chicago, for Black women, for all Black people.

"It wasn't even necessarily that journalists were so terrible," she explains. "I would have this anxiety. Like, I have to get it right. I have to properly represent myself." Hanging over everything, she says, was fear that she would be misrepresented or misunderstood.

That experience changed Woods in ways that shaped her new second album, *Legacy! Legacy!*, which drops May 10 via Bloomington label Jagjaguwar. It helps that she's

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Hosted by the Reader. Jamila Woods will be interviewed by Tiffany Walden before the album plays. Enter to win tickets at chicagoreader.com/jamila. Thu 5/9, 7 PM, location shared with ticket holders, free, 18+

**JAMILA WOODS,
NITTY SCOTT**
Sun 5/26, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$26-\$41, 17+

almost 30—she has fewer fucks to give—but she also spent months soul-searching with her ancestors, a group of Black and brown creative trailblazers who'd shaken up the world with their artful acts of resistance.

Poet and activist Nikki Giovanni lit the fuse: while Woods was teaching Giovanni's 1973 poem "Ego Tripping" to her YCA students, she was inspired by its braggadocious homage to Black women. Then YCA artistic director Kevin Coval asked Woods to write a "cover" of his poem about Chicago blues legend Muddy Waters, and she saw light in his guitar work—an electricity so raw and mighty that white bands as big as the Rolling Stones tried to bottle it for the masses. Woods also remembered that she'd been experimenting for a while with a song called "Baldwin," inspired by writer James Baldwin.

With those three cuts—"Giovanni," "Muddy," and "Baldwin"—Woods realized she had the makings of a new album, one that would track her journey of self-reflection and self-discovery. She seeks enlight-

enment throughout the 13 songs on *Legacy! Legacy!* On "Eartha," she learns from an old interview with Eartha Kitt, who's asked whether she'd compromise her wants and needs if a man came into her life. "Compromise?" she replies. "For what?" On "Basquiat," Woods responds to the power she sees in visual artist Jean-Michel Basquiat and his smirking refusal to shuck and jive in an interview of his own—he won't play into the racially loaded preconceptions of a journalist who asks what makes him angry.

So today, when Woods faces journalists—and the inevitable questions about Chicago violence—she no longer feels her old anxiety. Not only has she taken strength from the elders, but she's also developed answers that allow her to resist and reshape the dangerous narrative those questions carry.

"Yes. There's so much violence in Chicago. The mayor closed 50 schools. That was super violent," Woods says. "All of these structural violences is what I think about when I think of violence in Chicago."

Legacy! Legacy! demonstrates Woods's connections to some of the Black and brown artists whose legacies have helped guide her, and it points the way toward the legacy she herself will leave behind. I asked her to comment on what each track means to her.

"Betty"

Produced by Chicago's Oddcouple, the first track on *Legacy! Legacy!* is inspired by erotic funk pioneer Betty Davis, who was married to trumpeter Miles Davis for about a year in 1968 and '69. (Woods honors Miles on a different song.) Davis's second studio album, 1974's *They Say I'm Different*, pushed back against the narrow societal boundaries used to define and contain womanhood. She embraced her sexuality in her dress and lyrics: "I'm gonna move it slow like a mule / I'm gonna love him funky free and foolish."

Woods stays in her comfort zone here, rather than experimenting with funk or soul. Her light, sweet vocals contrast sharply with ➔



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Davis's raw, earthy singing, but Woods's lyrics do share Davis's feminist attitude.

"I've always had this obsession with women artists who were in relationships with men artists who are more prominent than them," says Woods. "It's also this idea of the way she presented herself. No one was dressing like that. She was producing a lot of her own music, writing songs for other people. She was just very innovative and different for the time, and I like the way she owned that difference and didn't try to fit in. So many men closed doors in her face, including Miles Davis at times. They became a barrier, instead of letting another representation of a woman come to the forefront."

"Zora"

Writer and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston didn't get her due. She wrote brilliant novels, most notably 1937's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, but because her work used African-American dialect, other Black writers (famously Richard Wright) criticized it for perpetuating stereotypes of Black people as uneducated and inferior. Hurston saw beauty in our dialect, and a way to resist assimilation and conformity.

"Zora" feels like Hurston's writing: the drums demand your attention, while the piano creates a quiet, burning desire for freedom. Woods breathes Hurston's energy into the lyrics: "None of us are free, but some of us are brave / I dare you to shrink my wave, I'm on a new plane."

Woods was particularly inspired by a piece Hurston published in 1928. "With Zora, it was really thinking about her essay, 'How It Feels to Be Colored Me,'" she says. "She writes this essay about literally how she learned her Blackness and how it felt to be in all-white spaces versus all-Black spaces. She said, 'I feel most colored when I'm thrown up against a sharp white background.' And I really related to that growing up in Beverly, and often going to schools where I was the only Black person in my class. That taught me an idea of what Blackness was,

based off of white people reflecting what they thought Blackness should be. And then going into Black spaces, like church, and feeling like I wasn't fully what people expected of me."

"Giovanni"

The first single released from *Legacy! Legacy!*, "Giovanni" oozes with the rhythm of the poet's iconic 1973 piece, "Ego Tripping." Let's be real: Black excellence has largely been left out of the white history taught in schools. The whole time, though, Blackness—particularly the Black woman, who births all Blackness—is the reason for the marvels of this world. Giovanni tells it like it is: "I designed a pyramid so tough that a star / That only glows every one hundred years falls / Into the center giving divine perfect light / I am bad."

Whew, chile! *Black women are bad*. Woods extended the poem's praise in the video for "Giovanni," paying homage to the Black women in her own life.

"I just love her work in general," Woods says. "That 'Ego Tripping' poem, it's the perfect way to write such a braggadocious-style poem. I was trying to think of what are all the hyperboles that I can say to write this poem celebrating myself and then my grandma. The women that I come from are such a point of pride. I think the video speaks to that."

"Sonia"

Improvisation is an art form. Not everyone can move their tongue at the speed of a creative mind at play. Poet Sonia Sanchez can—and it's a privilege to see her do it.

Woods got a chance to watch Sanchez perform live. On Sanchez's Middle Passage poem "Improvisation," first published in 1995, she takes on the voice of an enslaved Black woman: "It was the raping that was bad. It was the silence, th-the noise, th-the silence, th-the noise." It made Woods reflect on intersectionality and the lived experiences and traumas of Black women.

Woods takes the phrase "it was bad" as a refrain in "Sonia."

Jamila Woods in the Dr. Margaret Burroughs Gallery, named after the SSCAC cofounder who also helped open the DuSable Museum of African American History in 1961. The gallery currently hosts the group exhibit "Flowers in the Garden: A Tribute to the Struggles and Triumphs of the Black Woman." @LAWRENCE AGYEI



Afro-Latina rapper Nitty Scott guests on the track, deepening it with a second perspective—she comes in spitting about emptying her soul while pouring her all into a man. But the energy of Sanchez’s vivid “Improvisation” dominates the song.

“She embodies the spirit of that woman. It’s amazing,” Woods says. “The way people often talk about slavery—there’s kind of this exhaustion around talking about it. That made me think of other traumas that Black women experience, from gaslighting in a relationship to sexual abuse. Having the power to say ‘this happened and it was bad’ is such a freeing experience.”

“Frida”

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo imprinted the souls of her ancestors on her canvases. Her thought-provoking, sometimes surreal paintings, which marry postcolonial political rigor to a naive folk-art style, critique oppressions that operate along lines of gender, class, and race. The inspiration for this up-tempo track, though, was Kahlo’s relationship with her husband, painter and muralist Diego Riviera—Woods sings about “doing it like Frida” with a significant other.

“I love Frida Kahlo, and I’ve loved reading her diary and looking at her work. I think reading about her love for Diego has always been just very fascinating, because she’s so in love with him. It’s such a powerful, all-encompassing love,” Woods says. “I relate to that in how I love people. Like, I love very deeply and hard, and even if the relationship isn’t great, it’s this laser focus. He was cheating on her and doing all sorts of shit, so it’s not, like, idealizing their relationship, but more so that house as a symbol of how balance or respect for each individual’s personal space could look. That seems ideal to me. As an introvert, I’m learning that I just need that.”

“Eartha”

If you live on Twitter, you’ve seen the viral Eartha Kitt video—the one where she’s schooling a male journalist on how loving her real-

ly works. But if you’ve experienced Kitt playing Catwoman or singing “Santa Baby,” then you already knew about her fiery fierceness and immaculate confidence.

On the song “Eartha,” though, Woods doesn’t try to imitate the legend directly, not even by giving us the signature Eartha Kitt purr—instead she taps Kitt’s swagger to power the track, produced by frequent Chance the Rapper collaborator Peter Cottontale. But Woods’s best friend, poet and screenwriter Fatimah Asghar, is a big comic book fan, and when she directed the video (produced by VAM Studio), she couldn’t pass up the opportunity to turn Woods into Catwoman.

“‘Eartha’ is inspired by that viral video,” Woods says, “where she’s talking about compromise, love, and relationships. It’s very much me just trying to apply that to my own life. Writing myself a mantra to encourage myself to take that belief. It’s hard. You’re taught that what you’re supposed to do in a relationship is compromise. I loved seeing how empowered she seemed in that video, but then me also recognizing where I’m at, or where I have been. I used to be afraid of myself, holding my smile on a shelf. Literally, I used to laugh with my hand over my mouth because I didn’t like my gap in my teeth. So it’s me going from linking insecurities and how that makes you feel like you have to compromise, to having more self-acceptance and pride.”

“Miles”

In the world of jazz, Miles Davis is the originator of cool. You can hear the cool in this track, produced (like most of *Legacy! Legacy!*) by Chicago-based Slot-A. The groundbreaking trumpeter wasn’t about pandering to white audiences, and Woods embodies this in song: “I’m bad like my mother, so don’t disrespect / There’ll never be another, I’m better than your best.”

“This is thinking about the cool-jazz Miles—the Miles that performed with his back to the audience. Just thinking about power,” Woods explains. “Turning his back to the audience because he’s just, like, ➔

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'I'm a fucking musician. I'm going to direct my band and play my instrument. I'm not going to shuck and jive for you white people,' basically. We create the things that are cool. We create the things that everybody wants to take part in and appropriate. Black culture is constantly appropriated, but there's no counterfeiting the original source."

“Muddy”

No one played the blues like Muddy Waters. And no one played a more important role in transforming it from the raw, mostly acoustic Delta style to the modern, electric Chicago style. His influence was vast, and everyone wanted a piece of his sound: Bo Diddley jacked the signature riff of Waters's 1954 cut “Hoochie Coochie Man” for 1955's “I'm a Man,” and uncountable artists have borrowed from him since—among them Elvis, the Beach Boys, and the Rolling Stones.

“Muddy” isn't a blues track by any means, but it crackles with the power of Waters's guitar and attitude: “They can study my fingers / They can mirror my pose.”

“It came from doing a cover project from Kevin Coval's book, *A People's History of Chicago*,” Woods says. “But it was more so thinking of this interview with him. The interviewer was asking, like, oh, the Rolling Stones, they covered his songs too. He was like, ‘White people really like your music. These white teenagers, they're trying to play the blues like you.’ And he's like, ‘Like me? You must be kidding.’ Black people, we created these sounds, and they can't replicate that. They can attempt, but they can't replace that.”

“Basquiat”

This ethereal track suggests the otherworldly aura maintained by visual artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. Influenced by graffiti and hip-hop, he inspired a generation with the social commentary in every stroke of his brush.

For “Basquiat,” Woods studied an old video interview where a journalist asked Basquiat what makes him

angry. He seemed to consider the question for a long time in silence, then smirked and quietly replied, “I don't remember.” At the time, the world expected Black rage to be loud—a way Basquiat didn't often express himself.

Woods likewise doesn't present as the stereotypical “angry Black woman.” But that doesn't mean she isn't angry about the injustices and inequalities around her. She added Pivot Gang rapper Saba to “Basquiat” because he also seems gentle on the outside but makes emotionally powerful music packed with outrage and anguish.

Woods sees Basquiat's evasion as a moment of resistance. “Not giving access to this random white dude to his interior space—I just related to that in terms of the way that Black anger or non-anger is interpreted,” she says. “This dichotomy of angry Black women as bad—calm and quiet Black women are good. It seems like Basquiat was perceived as this kind of quiet, strange artist. It's like this fascination of, oh, could you ever be angry? It's kind of like this exotification of Black rage.”

She remembers that during the press cycle for *Heavn* she was complimented—almost congratulated—because her album didn't sound angry. “It just started to rub me in a weird way. But then, just wanting to own that protest can sound different ways,” she says. “Emotion doesn't have to just sound one way. Emotion can be very beautiful. Black women's anger has been the birth of so many movements. I'm sure Emmett Till's mom was angry in addition to sad, which led to her opening the casket. So anger can also be beautiful.”

“Sun Ra”

On *Legacy! Legacy!* “Sun Ra” is the deep cut. Woods comes out swinging: “I'm a fable, you and me,” she sings. “My twist-outs shitting on gravity.” She pulls ancestral energy from experimental jazz keyboardist and cosmic poet Sun Ra, who spent a formative period in Chicago between 1945 and '61. His wisdom was light-years ahead of its time, and his ability to live out ➔



Jamila Woods at the SSCAC exhibit “Flowers in the Garden.” The photo at upper left is a 2019 print titled *Worldly Roxi* by Chicago-based multimedia artist, educator, gallery owner, documentary filmmaker, and musician Tony Smith.

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a future of his own design survives today in artists such as Woods, singer Solange Knowles, and producer Thundercat.

"It's on that same Afrofuturism tip, but drawing inspiration from Sun Ra's certainty of his lineage," Woods says of her song. "He's like, 'I'm from space.' I've always felt this lack of a homeland or lack of knowing where my people are from. I found Sun Ra's answer to that very beautiful. 'My wings are greater than walls.' It's a line from a Sun Ra poem, and that makes me think of Black imagination and the power to create your own narrative for yourself."

"Octavia"

Octavia E. Butler kicked ass in the white-male-dominated world of science fiction. Her writing helped popularize Afrofuturism, a socially conscious aesthetic and philosophy that addresses the African diaspora through the lens of speculative fiction or fantasy—since its first flowering in the 1950s, it's grown to include the Marvel blockbuster *Black Panther* and even several works by Chicago storyteller Eve Ewing.

One of Butler's most popular books, 1979's *Kindred*, bends time—its protagonist skips back and forth between Los Angeles in the 1970s and a Maryland slave plantation in the 1810s. Producer Slot-A uses synthesizer to make "Octavia" feel like a time warp, and Woods's gentle vocals are a perfect fit for the song's mystical vibe.

Woods sees Butler as an example of Black excellence thriving on its own terms. "She had these notebooks where she wrote down everything she wanted to happen, and then basically manifested it for herself," she says. "I had read her book *Kindred*. Being a person who works with young people a lot, and seeing a lot of Black young people who are brilliant poets, artists, and rappers, there's still this idea that you're not smart unless you can pass this test or unless you go to college. Meanwhile everybody's on fleek, using Black language to be cool. You're



Jamila Woods at the piano in the Burroughs Gallery of the South Side Community Art Center. Nat King Cole often played this instrument, and Gwendolyn Brooks liked to write poetry at it. © LAWRENCE AGYEI

not being rewarded for inventing a whole new term for talking about your eyebrows. The idea that we don't have the right kind of language or intelligence is false."

"Baldwin"

There's so much to say about literary genius James Baldwin. His impact reaches far beyond his writings, his televised debates, his critiques of the racist shitshow plaguing the Black world around him. He understood the temperature and frustration of 1960s and '70s Black America. He knew the ways white privilege and bias suffocated the

country's Black ghettos.

Woods begins "Baldwin" with a declaration to white America, the gatekeepers whose own success depends in part on the erasure and manipulation of Black history: "You don't know a thing about our story, tell it wrong all the time." Thanks to the addition of trumpet by Nico Segal, the track feels triumphant, like Woods crossing a metaphorical finish line. That's intentional, considering that she had trouble finding the right way to complete the song.

"'Baldwin' is inspired by his letter to his nephew in *The Fire Next Time*," Woods says. "I wrote this

song a long time ago for *Heavn*, and I struggled with it. There was this point in the essay where he says, 'We have to love these innocent white people. They think we're inferior but we have to accept them with love.' And I was like, 'Mmm really? That's a lot.' I realized that it's kind of directed towards white people, in talking to white people about their whiteness and how their privilege and perception of Black people can be a form of violence when they're blind to their own racism. Slot-A helped me with that song. He's like, 'OK. We gotta watch some battle rap, because in battle rap, you really have to love your opponent. You have to know them so well that you almost love them in order to successfully battle them.'"

"Betty (for Boogie)"

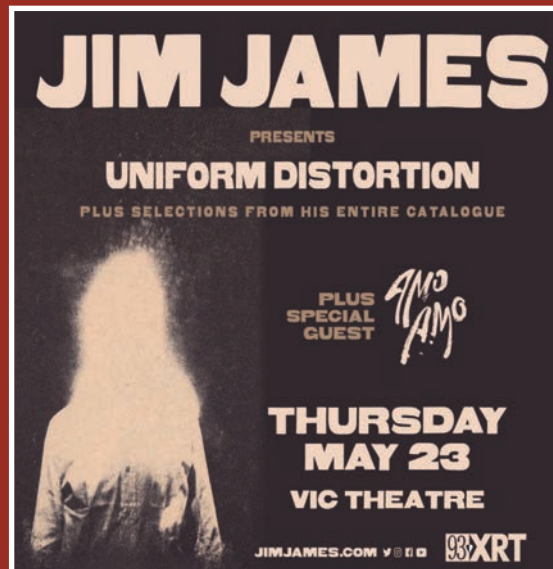
The last song on *Legacy! Legacy!*, "Betty (for Boogie)," seems like a bonus track because "Baldwin" feels so much like its finale. Woods honors the roots of Chicago house music, specifically teaching artist and choreographer Boogie McClarin.

"The remix for Boogie is a shout-out to Boogie McClarin," she says. "She's a Chicago house dance instructor, but she's really how I learned about Chicago house music. I wanted to shout her out for what she does for the culture."

Woods discovered new parts of herself, personally and musically, while studying the lives and work of these Black and brown artists. Though *Legacy! Legacy!* doesn't begin to cover all the muses in her life, it provides a glimpse inside her creative mind—and inside the minds of those on whose shoulders she stands.

"I love seeing what inspires people to make things," Woods explains. "I think that's what I've always loved about watching interviews of artists in general, especially visual artists—just knowing that you can own your lineage and celebrate it and it doesn't make you less of an original artist." 📷

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IN ROTATION

LEOR GALIL Reader staff writer

Harold Washington Library discards Whenever I stop by the Harold Washington Library, I visit the nook next to the DVDs, CDs, and newest books, where media removed from circulation is free for the taking. I've gotten some great music-related reading material—including bound volumes of the Cambridge University Press journal *Popular Music*. In December, artist Marc Fischer used the Instagram account of his publication *Library Excavations* to post pics of a bevy of seven-inches in the discard corner; I returned to the library that afternoon, and I'm still listening through the odd pile of records I brought home.



Seven-inch vinyl in the discard corner at Harold Washington Library © LEOR GALIL

Respire, Gravity & Grace In early April, Indiana screamo label Middle-Man reissued the 2016 debut by Toronto six-piece Respire, which somehow corrals together solemn mid-western emo, contemplative Canadian post-rock, and nasty skramz. "Ascent" surprised me by opening with forlorn horn, sprinting blast-beats, and a blur of harsh screams, and that's the kind of experience I relish.

Joshua Virtue, "Loosey" Joshua Virtue raps in the duos Free Snacks and Udababy, which both put out music this winter—the former *Eat Good Tape* in December, the latter a self-titled EP in January. Virtue released the full-length *Post Faith Dialogues* in March, which includes the killer "Loosey." When he performed it at his release party that month, dozens of people screamed along as he belted out rubbery rhymes on the song's hook. That moment convinced me that Virtue and his prolific collaborators are something special.

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.



Infinite Spirit Music's 1980 album *Live Without Fear*

ALEJANDRO AYALA DJ King Hippo, hosts on Lumpen Radio, Worldwide FM

London's music scene Can you imagine living in a city where the mayor cares about its musical heritage, nightlife, small venues, and cultural well-being? As a resident of Chicago, I would answer, "No way!"—if it weren't for the city of London. That city floors me in so many ways—they have a thriving jazz scene that belongs more to the dance floor than it does to stuffy clubs. Their mayor, Sadiq Khan, knows the role small venues play in artist development; he was vocal when one of its most beloved clubs faced closure; and he even installed a Night Czar. I recommend reading Emma Warren's *Make Some Space*, which invites us to remember the venues and community centers that generated London's culture and asks its citizens to protect the few that remain. Anything familiar about that?

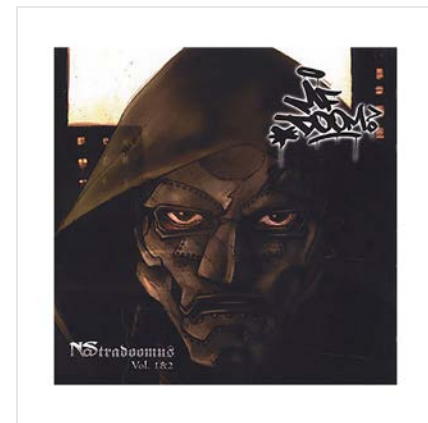
Azymüth, Demos (1973-75) I haven't gone out to Record Store Day as a customer in years. This year, the semi-Satanic being worshipped on RSD managed to lure me out, knowing that only unreleased material by Brazilian jazz-funk band Azymüth—which predates their debut album—could make me wake up at 5 AM and go wait in line outside with a smile.

Infinite Spirit Music, Live Without Fear When I told pianist Soji Adebayo about his 1980 record fetching \$3,000, he said, "I'm glad I made something that people are willing to pay that much money for." Originally, Infinite Spirit Music was only available to 300 people in Chicago, but now, thanks to a Jazzman reissue, the group's cosmic messages of love can be heard worldwide.

WILL MILLER Resavoir bandleader and Whitney trumpeter

Broadcast's Black Session from La Maison de la Radio, Paris, May 4, 2000 It really bums me out that I'll never get to see this band play live. The way they blend samples with live instrumentation makes the production sound huge and weird, but it's just the four of them, tight AF, playing without backing tracks, and Trish Keenan singin' so cool over the top of everything. They only play "Come on Let's Go" (their biggest song) for 39 seconds! Badass. I love how they're able to go from a superweird experimental vibe to a pop-song vibe and it all makes perfect sense.

Nas x MF Doom, Nastradoomus I discovered this album in college, soon after hearing Doom for the first time, and downloaded it off a campus-wide file-sharing server. Been jamming it for years, and I only recently found out that it's fan made! Had me fooled. Someone put all the a cappellas from Nas's *Nastradamus* over MF Doom beats off the first two volumes of *Special Herbs*. Crazy that music can work that way.



The cover of the fan-made Nas/MF Doom mashup *Nastradoomus*

Clicking around on YouTube This reminds me of the early days of Wikipedia, going down a wide-eyed blue-link wormhole. Adblock is on and the rarities are a-flowin'. There's so much stuff on YouTube that isn't on streaming services—lots of it insanely rare, probably unfindable in any record store within a 1,000-mile radius. It keeps me in the crate-digging mindset when it's too cold to leave the house. I still love going to record stores, but I certainly appreciate the folks who upload. 📺

PICK OF THE WEEK

Santigold celebrates the tenth anniversary of her bold debut



© CRAIG WETHERBY

SANTIGOLD

Wed 5/8, 8 PM, the Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield, sold out. 17+

ON THE COVER of her 2008 self-titled debut album, Santigold vomits glitter. The image—a black-and-white portrait of the artist with gold sparkles spilling from her mouth—is part photo booth and part DIY craft project, and it immediately demands attention. Now, Santigold is on the road celebrating the album's tenth anniversary with her 10 Years Golder tour. The album made an immediate impact: Santi gives off a vibe that echoes other artsy weirdos of the era, such as M.I.A. and Björk (both of whom she opened for in 2008), as she jumps from pop to reggae to new wave. Her lyrics explore what it means for an artist to come into her own power: in “Creator” she promises, “Tell me no, I say yes, I was chosen / And I will deliver the explosion.” The album remains

fresh and tough to pin down today: the guitars and dreamy vocals on “Lights Out” hint at mid-aughts alt-rock, while the chorus on “Shove It” has the cadence of a playground taunt. Santigold’s next three albums were fun, but they didn’t get quite the same buzz; the most recent is 2018’s mixtape *I Don’t Want: The Gold Fire Sessions*. She’s stayed busy behind the scenes, though: she’s written for Christina Aguilera, produced for Devo, and collaborated with the likes of Lil Yachty and Matt & Kim. A decade after its release, the confidence of Santi’s debut still makes you feel cooler for listening—as if some secret power might slip out of the speakers and into your bloodstream while you bob your head to “L.E.S. Artistes.” —MEGAN KIRBY



Claire Rousay © DEVIN DE LEON

THURSDAY²

DORO See also Sunday. *Metal Church, Images of Eden, and Wrath* open. 6 PM, Reggie’s Rock Club, 2105 S. State, \$25-\$30. 17+

German-born metal vocalist Doro Pesch, who now divides her time between New York and her native Düsseldorf, became the front woman of Warlock in 1983, at which point she was one of the very few prominent women in metal. (Thankfully the floodgates have opened since then!) Doro’s career has held strong, and whether the straightforward traditional sound she loyally sticks to is in fashion or not, respect is due. Six years passed between 2012’s *Raise Your Fist* and last year’s long, generous double CD *Forever Warriors, Forever United*. It’s 25 tracks of what her fans want: fist-pumping rockers and gloriously unironic power ballads, with the occasional star duet (in this case, with Johan Hegg of Amon Amarth; other guests include German comedian and jazz musician Helge Schneider and Whitesnake and Dio guitarist Doug Aldrich). Doro has said in interviews that she drew much of the emotional energy behind this album from the death in late 2015 of her close friend and favorite duet partner, Lemmy Kilmister of Motörhead. The song “Living Life to the Fullest” is his official Valhalla send-off—and Doro’s striking delivery can give even the reaper’s hoofbeats a highly motivational quality. —MONICA KENDRICK

CLAIRE ROUSAY See also Friday, Saturday, and Monday. *Part of Exposure Series 2019. Forbes Graham/Angel Bat Dawid/Lia Kohl/Kent Kessler headline; Ava Mendoza solo and Carol Genetti & Claire Rousay* open. 9 PM, Elastic Arts, 3429 W. Diversey, \$10. 18

In jazz, soloists step in front of the band to show their stuff and then retreat back into the ➔

continued from 31

ensemble's framework. Percussionist Claire Rousay, based in San Antonio, Texas, doesn't play jazz, but her improvisations are just as conscious of the relationship between self and surroundings. She is queer and transgender, and her music addresses the experience of having to be aware of her physical state as well as the gender-associated stereotypes assigned to her instruments. Her approach to performance conscientiously avoids macho forcefulness in favor of patient and fluidly evolving explorations of the timbre, texture, and resonance of her drums, metal bowls, and other objects. Though Rousay hasn't played in Chicago before, she'll make up for lost time by playing in three different situations as part of Exposure Series 2019—the fourth annual iteration of an event that introduces new and challenging improvisers to the city's audiences and musicians—and by participating in Experimental Sound Studio's Option Series. She opens Thursday night's concert in a duo with local vocalist Carol Genetti; she appears on Friday in a trio with cellist Katinka Kleijn and trumpeter Graham Stephenson; and as part of Saturday's free afternoon concert, she gives a solo performance. For her Option Series show on Monday, Rousay plays another solo set and a duet with clarinetist Emily Beisel. Exposure Series 2019 also hosts two other musicians, both of whom will perform solo and in group improvisations with Chicagoans. Brooklyn-based electric guitarist Ava Mendosa



Knife Knights © JUSTIN HENNING

za plays sci-fi-themed prog-punk in the power trio Unnatural Ways and roughly abstracted blues on her own. Forbes Graham, a trumpeter from Boston, has played full-force free jazz with Marc Edwards and Weasel Walter as well as electronically spatialized solo music. —**BILL MEYER**

KLAUS JOHANN GROBE *Vinyl Williams opens.* 9 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$12. 21+

As Klaus Johann Grobe, Swiss musicians Sevi Landolt (organ, synths, vocals) and Daniel Bachmann (drums, vocals) play groove rock that feels full despite its minimalist arrangements. Because they sing in German and build their songs atop sparse, hypnotically repetitive rhythms, Americans tend to describe Klaus Johann Grobe's music as Krautrock, but the group begs to differ: "We've never been that much into Krautrock to be honest," Landolt told Pitchfork in 2014. "It's superb when it works, but it has never been something we've been too enthusiastic about." On their recent third album, *Du Bist so Symmetrisch* (Trouble in Mind), they foreground their love of disco, house, boogie, and other U.S. dance subgenres that emerged after Roland introduced the TR-808. The battery of retro synths animating "Siehst du Mich Noch?" prove that boogie's classic sounds, in the hands of a group as sophisticated as Klaus Johann Grobe, can feel as new and vital as anything currently in the Top 40. —**LEOR GALIL**

TURNOVER, TURNSTILE *Turnover headlines; Turnstile, Reptaliens, and Vortex open.* 6 PM, Concord Music Hall, 2047 N. Milwaukee, \$25. **ALL**

Virginia Beach's Turnover and Baltimore's Turnstile have similar-sounding names, but their approaches to punk are vastly different. On **Turnover's** latest full-length, 2017's *Good Nature* (Run for Cover), the foursome lay out 11 tracks of intricate but breezy emo-influenced dream-pop with stirring verses that play into big, swing-for-the-cheap-seats choruses. The band's roots skew toward pop-punk, and over the years it's been great to hear them cool out and breathe—their latest music showcases their knack for beautiful melody and lush instrumentation. **Turnstile** operate on the other end of the spectrum: this groovy, rhythmic, hyper-posi hardcore band have been on a seemingly endless tour that started even before they put out their 2015 debut full-length, *Nonstop Feeling* (Reaper). They've established themselves as one of the best live acts in the world, decimating packed houses night after night with their explosive energy and massive riffs. Turnstile shows put into practice the power of positivity, uplifting crowds with the message that everyone should be proud of who they are. The band's much-hyped second full-length, last year's *Time & Space* (Roadrunner), was easily one of the best rock records of 2018, and completely deserves all the accolades it's picked up. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

FRIDAY³

KNIFE KNIGHTS *Lando Chill, Curta opens.* 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$15. **ALL**

If the woozy, intergalactic raps on Knife Knights' debut full-length, *1 Time Mirage* (Sub Pop), remind you of Seattle hip-hop outfit Shabazz Palaces, they should. Ever since rapper Ishmael Butler and multi-instrumentalist Tendai "Baba" Mairaire launched Shabazz Palaces more than a decade ago, they've grown their catalog by finessing songs in

jams with engineer Erik Blood—and the core of Knife Knights is the duo of Butler and Blood. Shabazz Palaces is so closely linked to Knife Knights that "offshoot" or "side project" falls short of describing the incestuous relationship between the two. Most of the songs on *1 Time Mirage* were recorded in improvisational sessions with pals in Knife Knights' circle, including OCnotes and Marquetta Miller, and three tracks list guest contributions from . . . Shabazz Palaces. This makes me wonder where Butler's contributions as half of Knife Knights end and his contributions as half of Shabazz Palaces begin, but the guests mostly seem to want to set a mood, not flex their individuality, so I doubt I'll ever know. Only three songs don't feature guests at all, but two of those are the album's strongest: the clattering "Seven Wheel Motion" and the anxious "Mr. President" (whose foreboding, metallic synths and murmuring percussion will stick in your head like the best of Shabazz Palaces) stand out as complete, self-contained gestures amid the record's loose, shape-shifting structure and spontaneous feel. —**LEOR GALIL**

CLAIRE ROUSAY See Thursday. Part of Exposure Series 2019. **Claire Rousay/Katinka Kleijn/Graham Stephenson headline; Forbes Graham solo and Ava Mendoza & Dave Rempis open.** 9 PM, Elastic Arts, 3429 W. Diversey, \$10. **ALL**

SATURDAY⁴

HERB ALPERT & LANI HALL 8 PM, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph, sold out. **ALL**

Among the many accomplishments of Herb Alpert—which include cofounding A&M Records, releasing 28 *Billboard*-charting albums (including five that reached number one), and being the only artist to top the *Billboard* Hot 100 as an instrumentalist and as a vocalist—the easy-listening legend has nine original sculptures on permanent display at the Field Museum. But that isn't even the trumpeter's most important connection to Chicago: for nearly five decades he's been married to a local native, Grammy-winning vocalist and former Sérgio Mendes & Brasil '66 member Lani Hall, who's joining him for tonight's show at City Winery. As a musician, Alpert is arguably best known for his time with the group he created in 1962, the Tijuana Brass, an early example of white popular music borrowing Latin sounds for fortune and fame. The Tijuana Brass started as Alpert and the iconic group of session musicians known as the Wrecking Crew. On their debut single, "The Lonely Bull," they play a lite version of mariachi, complete with corny shouts of "Olé!" As the popularity of the group grew, Alpert assembled a permanent ensemble and moved away from Latin sounds and toward the smooth pop-oriented jazz that would define the rest of his career. Alpert's warm tone hasn't diminished over the years, which has allowed him to carve out a solid niche as a jazz player with an infectious sense of joy and playfulness. Hall left Brasil '66 in 1971, embarking on a solo career that peaked with a Grammy win in 1986 for her album *Es Fácil Amar*. In the midst of that success, she contracted the Epstein-Barr virus, which

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led to her retirement from the stage for almost ten years. Since making a return to music in the late 90s, though, she's expanded her talents—not only recording as a vocalist with Alpert but also working as a producer on a number of their releases. Expect Hall and Alpert's performance to briefly nod to their most popular moments (they've been playing Tijuana Brass and Brasil '66 medleys as part of their regular sets) as it spans the lengths of their extensive careers. Alpert recently reinterpreted a number of Tijuana Brass classics as lush space-lounge jams for his latest CD, *Music Volume 3: Herb Alpert Reimagines the Tijuana Brass*, so with any luck you'll also get to hear some old favorites in delightful new configurations. —**ED BLAIR**

CLAIRE ROUSAY See *Thursday, Part of Exposure Series 2019, Ava Mendoza/Forbes Graham/Joshua Abrams/Tyler Damon headline; Claire Rousay solo and Forbes Graham & Tomeka Reid open. 2 PM, May Chapel at Rosehill Cemetery, 5800 N. Ravenswood. FREE *

PUP *Ratboys and Casper Skulls open. 7:30 PM, Metro, 3730 N. Clark, sold out.* 

On their self-titled 2013 debut, Toronto-based four-piece band Pup were all about crafting poppy hooks from high-octane punk brashness. The album's massive choruses scream, the guitars roar, and the beats stampede. It's been six years, and as far as punk rock goes, the boys in Pup have grown up. On the brand-new *Morbid Stuff* (a joint release between Rise Records and their own new label, Little Dipper), Pup balance the fury of their past with deliberate rhythms, massive dual-guitar leads, and non-stop epic hooks and vocal harmonies. They haven't gone soft by any means—they can still rage when they want to, especially at their famous live performances—but there's clearly more thought behind (and more breathing room in) their latest material. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

SUNDAY⁵

DORO See *Thursday, Metal Church headlines; Doro and Images of Eden open. 5 PM, Arcada Theatre, 105 E. Main St., Saint Charles, \$25-\$69.* 

HEART ATTACK MAN *Seaway headline; Free Throw, Heart Attack Man, and Young Culture open. 6 PM, Subterranean, 2011 W. North, \$18.* 


Cleveland's Heart Attack Man have a good grip on what makes emo powerful, but they also know what can make it awful. On their second album, this month's *Fake Blood* (Triple Crown/You Did This), they mock the worst of the 2000s emo community—a subset of musicians who dabbled in pushing an incel agenda—with the tongue-in-cheek anthem “Out for Blood.” On that track, Heart Attack Man use the hot-blooded pop-punk hooks of emo's commercial peak to soundtrack the self-righteous narrator's misplaced indignation—showing that they



Saicobab  RYO MITAMURA

can be as sly as their melodies are big (which is to say, “very”). These guys know that a focused guitar melody, a propulsive rhythm section, and some raggedy, mournful screams can help convey the strength, poise, and determination we need to deal with a confusing world—and in their lyrics, they go even further, demolishing toxic fantasies and working toward a more inclusive future. —**LEOR GALIL**

MONDAY⁶

CLAIRE ROUSAY See *Thursday, Claire Rousay performs solo, then in a duo with Emily Beisel. 7:30 PM, Experimental Sound Studio, 5925 N. Ravenswood, \$10.* 

SAICOBAB 8:30 PM, *Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$15.* 18+


With her band Saicobab, semilegendary Japanese noise weirdo YoshimiO (Boredoms, 00100) has taken a sharp left turn in a career of sharp left turns. The group, which also includes Yoshida Daikiti on sitar, Akita Goldman on bass, and Motoyuki Hamamoto on percussion and gamelan, perform deconstructive surgery on Indian music, revealing (or forcing) a connection with Japanese classical traditions. On their 2017 debut, *Sab Se Purani Bab* (Thrill Jockey), the result is something like noise-punk raga or “The Boredoms Do Bollywood”: fractured bursts of South Asian melodies sped up and interspersed with YoshimiO shrieking, hissing, and yipping. “Awawa” starts with YoshimiO yodeling in a bizarre imitation of Daikiti's sitar; electronic effects drop in partway through, over a repetitive series of notes—as if the song has glitched and transformed YoshimiO into a robot cricket. “Bx Ax Bx” has a bizarre pop hook woven into its herking and jerking; when the band shout a chorus of “B! A! B!” before entering a mind-expanding psychedelic section, they sound like an alternate-dimension funhouse Beatles led by George and Yoko. Even by the open-ended standards of experimental music, Saicobab are unique and uncategorizable. It's rare to find music so transcendently preposterous and so preposterously transcendent. —**NOAH BERLATSKY**

WEDNESDAY⁸

CURSIVE *Mewithoutyou and Applesseed Cast open. 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake, \$25.* 17+

Twenty-one years after releasing their debut album, *Such Blinding Stars for Starving Eyes*, emotion-

al posthardcore sextet Cursive resurfaced in 2018 with their first LP in six years. *Vitriola* (15 Passenger), which came out in October, isn't just a collection of their catchiest and most cutting songs in a decade; it's a callback to the sound of the band's 2003 breakout, *The Ugly Organ*, on which they paired discordant but infectious melodies with strings, keyboard, brass, and more. *Vitriola* is the first Cursive album since *The Ugly Organ* to feature a full-time cellist, and new member Megan Seibe plays an integral role in establishing a dark vibe that deftly accompanies the nihilistic lyrics of singer-guitarist Tim Kasher and the group's gnarly distortion and grooves. Album standout “Ouroboros,” named after the ancient symbol of a snake eating its own tail, most directly speaks to Kasher's fascination with humanity consuming itself: “We were blessed with an enlightened intellect / Enlightened intellect made the Internet / The Internet gave the world a mouthpiece / That swallowed our enlightened intellect.” Tonight Cursive are joined by a pair of excellent emo contemporaries (albeit with a softer edge), MewithoutYou and the Applesseed Cast. —**SCOTT MORROW**

SANTIGOLD See *Pick of the Week, page 31. 8 PM, the Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield, sold out.* 17+ 

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SAT 5/4	ORVILLE PECK	CLAUDE • SIMULATION (MATCHES + GEL SET)	
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NEW

Acoa, Scotch the Filmmaker, Safari Room 6/28, 8:30 PM, GMan Tavern
Amber Run 11/7, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Arizona, Morgxn 6/12, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Avatar, Devin Townsend, Dance With the Dead, '68 5/22, 7 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Bear Hands 5/19, 9 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Belvederes, Bart Alonzo 5/25, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Berlin 9/10, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 5/2, noon **ALL**
Bev Rage & the Drinks, Baby Magic, These Casual Hex 5/24, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Jenny Bienemann's Haiku Milieu 5/16, 7:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Big Lagniappe 5/10, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Big Loser, All The Wine, Pretty Pleased, Jeff Schaller & the Long Way Home 5/13, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Bleached 9/29, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Boulevards 6/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Wed 5/1, noon
Greg Brown, Bo Ramsey 7/12, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **ALL**
Derrick Carter 5/31, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Chelou 9/19, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Circuit Des Yeux (solo performance), Paul Beaubrun, Yadda Yadda 6/27, 8:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Cocoa Greene, Rotten Mouth, Jack Minogue 6/6, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Matt Costa, JD & the Straight Shot, Matt Hartke 6/11, 8 PM, City Winery **ALL**

Delta Heavy, Kedzie, Ayoo, Bass-III 6/28, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Eris Drew, Sevron, Sold 5/17, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Esso, Kaleta & Super Yamba Band, Radio Free Honduras 6/28, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Expo '76 with Kelly Hogan & Robert Cornelius, Katie Belle & the Belle Rangers 5/31, 9 PM, Martyrs'
Kelly Finnigan & the Atonements, Renaldo Domino with Heavy Sounds 6/1, 9 PM, Martyrs'
Flashbulb 7/18, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
John Fullbright Band, Brian Dunne 6/22, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Maitre Gims 11/3, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall **ALL**
Golden Vessel, Instupendo 7/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Herbie Hancock, Kamasi Washington 8/10, 6:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Van Hunt 7/16, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
I Prevail, Issues, Justin Stone 5/21, 6 PM, House of Blues **ALL**
Iris Temple 6/15, 7:30 PM, Subterranean **ALL**
Josh Garrels, Gray Havens 6/8, 8 PM, House of Blues **ALL**
Jude Shuma, Jungle Green, Fran 6/25, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Keep Bouncing with Altered Tapes (DJ set) and more 5/24, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village **FREE**
K.Flav 9/19, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Chris Knight 6/6, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Eric Krasno Trio 6/13, 8:30 PM; 6/14, 10 PM; 6/15, 10 PM, Martyrs'
Raja Kumari 6/13, 8 PM, Schubas **ALL**
Kedr Livanskiy 7/2, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Lunar Ticks, Goose Corp., Railway Gamblers 7/27, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Jesse Marchant, Pinc Louds 6/9, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Marianas Trench, Scott Helman, DJ George Thoms 5/24, 8 PM, House of Blues **ALL**
Pedrito Martinez Group 11/10, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Mastadon, Calcium, Elevatd 6/28, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Sergio Mendes 6/30, 5 and 8 PM, City Winery **ALL**
Los Mirlos, Buyepongo 5/24, 9 PM, Martyrs'
AJ Mitchell, Marteen, Brynn Elliott 5/9, 7 PM, Subterranean **ALL**
Mystic Braves, Thee Casual Hex, Douglas Slur 6/20, 8 PM, Subterranean
Daniel Norgren 9/18, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Northlane, Erra, Currents, Crystal Lake 8/24, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Jakob Ogawa 8/13, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM, 18+
Frank Orrall 9/7, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 5/2, noon **ALL**
Over The Rhine 8/16, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **ALL**
Panic Priest, Conformco, Shannon Funchess 9/19, 11:59 PM, Smart Bar
Gretchen Peters 7/14, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**

Kim Petras 6/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Chuck Prophet & the Mission Express 7/19, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 5/2, noon **ALL**
Psybles, Next Planet, Ars Nova 5/10, 9 PM, Martyrs'
Tony Richards Trio 5/17, 8 PM, GMan Tavern, Two sets; benefit for The Night Ministry
Sabatón, Hammerfall 10/26, 8 PM, The Vic, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Son Volt 7/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Soul Clap 5/11, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Speedy Ortiz, Froth 6/29, 10:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Wesley Stace, Dag Juhlin 7/21, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Stick To Your Guns, Counterparts, Terror, Sanction, Year of the Knife 7/25, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM, 17+
Subdudes 10/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Sunday Papers (Joe Jackson tribute) 6/23, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Kiefer Sutherland 6/29, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Sweet Honey in the Rock, Walt Whitman & the Soul Children of Chicago 5/11, 7:30 PM, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel **FREE** **ALL**
Teddy & the Rough Riders, Emily Nenni 7/2, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Toto 10/4, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
White Fence 10/8, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Wild Adriatic, Sarah Potenza 7/30, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 5/3, 10 AM **ALL**
Webb Wilder & the Beatnecks 6/29, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Zealyn, Molly Coleman 5/22, 8 PM, Martyrs' **ALL**
Zimmermen, Cathy Richardson 5/24, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

UPDATED

Beth Hart 11/18, 7:30 PM, Park West, Rescheduled; tickets purchased for 4/25 will be honored. 18+
Junoffo 6/1, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, Canceled; refunds available at point of purchase **ALL**
Jennifer Lopez 6/29, 8 PM; 6/30, 8 PM, United Center, 6/30 show added; on sale Fri 5/3, noon **ALL**
Royal Trux 5/12, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, Canceled; refunds available at point of purchase

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UPCOMING

Joshua Abrams's Natural Information Society 6/28, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Accidentals 6/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **ALL**
Acid Dad 5/14, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Fabian Almazan Trio 6/22, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Altin Gun 7/29, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Black Angels 6/16, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Chasms, Devon Church 5/24, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Cher, Nile Rodgers & Chic 11/27, 7:30 PM, United Center **ALL**
Chosen Few Picnic and Festival 7/6, 8 AM, Jackson Park **ALL**
Stef Chura, French Vanilla 7/5, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Higher Brothers 5/10, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Marquis Hill Blacktet 6/16, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Hyde 5/19, 6 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
I Am, Orthodox, Boundaries, Kharma 6/19, 6:30 PM, Subterranean **ALL**
Ìfe 5/9, 8 PM, Sleeping Village
Imagery Converter 8/17, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
In Motion, Buzz, Peter Maunu & Damon D. Green 5/24, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Indian, Immortal Bird, Bloodiest 5/18, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Judas Priest, Uriah Heep 5/25, 8 PM, Rosemont Theater, Rosemont
Juice, Stephen Day 7/12, 7:30 PM, Subterranean **ALL**
Monatik 11/23, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Mono, Emma Ruth Rundle 6/15, 6 PM, Bohemian National Cemetery **ALL**
Moon King 6/28, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Slumberjack 5/25, 8 PM, Chop Shop
Slushii 5/18, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Superchunk, Negative Scanner 6/9, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Sway Wild, Radio Free Honduras 8/3, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **ALL**
This is the Kit 7/10, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
ZRL (Zachary Good, Ryan Packard, and Lia Kohl) 6/1, 8:30 PM, Constellation 18+
Zveri 5/31, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+ **ALL**



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

LIKE ITS NEW YORK predecessor in the late 70s, Chicago's mid- and late-90s no-wave scene scrambled the accepted precepts of rock and jazz to create addictively noisy, thoughtfully bent, and crassly hilarious music. Its bands included the Flying Luttenbachers, the Scissor Girls, Math, Duotron, Lake of Dracula, and Dot Dot Dot, many of whom shared members. They gigged at long-gone venues such as Czar Bar, Milk of Burgundy, and the Magnatroid, but within a few years most had fallen apart. On Saturday, May 4, the **Co-Prosperity Sphere** hosts "Chicago No Wave," with performances by **Bobby Conn, oth, DJ Le Deuce**, former Scissor Girls front woman **Azita**, and the reanimated **Flying Luttenbachers** (who recently released the brutally excellent *Shattered Dimension*), plus a reunion set by **D.O.G.** (anchored by Joaquin de la Puente). An on-site art exhibit will include work by photographer **Jim Newberry**, filmmaker **Shane Bugbee**, **Jodie Mecanic** of Math, **Kelly Kuvo** of the Scissor Girls, and **Rose Meyers** of Zeek Sheck; **Lumpen Magazine** will have new zines of 90s show flyers and other ephemera.

For as long as this wolf can remember, CHIRP's spring record fair has taken place in April. This year, though, it's been pushed back—perhaps to give vinyl fanatics a chance to repair their finances after Record Store Day. The 17th annual **CHIRP Record Fair & Other Delights** comes to **Plumbers Hall** (1340 W. Washington) on Saturday, May 4, with wares from dozens of dealers and a few local labels. The festivities also include performances by **Ovef Ow**, the **Jellies**, **Baby Money**, the **Blue Ribbon Glee Club**, **DPCD**, **Thair**, and **Charming Hokum**, plus DJ sets by **Alex White** of White Mystery, **Chuck Wren** of Jump Up Records, Metro founder **Joe Shanahan**, and City Pop evangelist **Van Paugam**. For \$25 you can get first dibs with 8 AM early-bird admission; regular admission at 10 AM costs \$8. The fair runs till 6 PM. —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

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

SAVAGE LOVE

An itch you can't scratch

Advice on open relationships and deal breakers.

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: I've been with my boyfriend for a few months. Prior to dating, I was clear with him that I would need to open our relationship at some point. He initially hesitated to respond, but then agreed we could do that when the time came. That time has come much quicker than I anticipated, but I feel like he'll renege on his end of things because of many comments he's made recently—comments like not understanding or liking nonmonogamy and how "his woman" sleeping around is a deal breaker. Is this a DTMFA situation? —**SPECIFIED OPEN RELATIONSHIP EARLY**

A: Early on, you let your boyfriend know that openness "at some point" was your price of admission—the price he'd have to pay to be with you—and now he's letting you know that monogamy is his price of admission. What's going on here? Well, sometimes Person A tells Person B what Person A knows Person B wants to hear regarding Topic X in the hopes that Person B will feel differently about Topic X after the passage of time or after Person B has made a large emotional investment in Person A. In many cases, Person A has the best intentions—by which I mean, Person A isn't being consciously manipulative, but rather Person A sincerely hopes Person B will come to feel differently about Topic X or that they, Person A themselves, will. But considering how little time has passed, SORE—it hasn't even been three months, and he's saying shitty/

judgy things to you about nonmonogamy and sexist/controlling things about "his woman"—it seems clear that your boyfriend wasn't being sincere, he was being manipulative. DTMFA.

Q: This is another request for a kinky neologism. How about those of us who like the idea of our significant other having sex with somebody else but who aren't into full-on cuckold-style humiliation? "Cuckold" implies a level of subordination that just isn't my thing, and "hotwifing," besides sounding incredibly sleazy, assumes that it's a couple that is opposite sex and married, and the guy is only interested in watching. Can you or the hive mind solve this problem? —**CUCK IN NAME ONLY**

A: I don't think the term "hotwifing" is inherently heterosexist, as there are gay men and straight women out there into "hothusbanding." (They get off on sharing their hot spouses with others, aren't necessarily interested in getting with anyone else themselves, and don't, à la cuckolds, get off on humiliation.) But if that term doesn't appeal to you, CINO, there's already an alternative: stags (a man who may or may not be dominant who likes to share his partner and may or may not participate) and vixens (a woman who may or may not be submissive who enjoys having sex with others in front of her partner and may or may not share them with others too).

Q: I've experienced anal itching in the past, and

I'm not ashamed to say I enjoyed it. It felt so insanely good to satisfy that itching inside. I can find lots of information about relieving anal itching, but I can't find anything about inducing it for pleasure. —**INTO TORMENTING CLEAN HEINIE**

A: According to the Mayo Clinic, keeping your ass too clean or letting it get too dirty can induce anal itching, as can pinworms, diabetes, and anal tumors. Seeing as you probably don't want diabetes or rectal cancer, and since pinworms aren't for sale at your local bait shop, ITCH, you could try scrubbing your ass with harsh soaps, which is what the Mayo Clinic urges people who don't want itchy anuses to avoid. (I reverse engineered their advice for you. You're welcome.) Good luck, and please don't write back to let us know how you're progressing, OK?

Q: I am a 24-year-old pansexual trans woman and I feel sexually broken. Hormones have made it nearly impossible for me to top a partner. I'm able to do it once in a while, but not as much or as reliably as I would like. Additionally, hormones have messed up my digestive system and made bottoming difficult. I'm also relatively sexually inexperienced, which means I'm enthusiastic about oral but not very good at it. This leaves me feeling like I bring nothing to the table. —**HORNY BUT SEX IS THORNY**

A: Getting good at oral—like getting good at anything—takes a little practice. Let your prospective partners know you're relatively inexperienced, and you'll be far likelier to wind up in bed with patient and supportive people who will let you practice on them. As for bottoming, hopefully your guts will settle down in →

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OPINION

continued from 35
time. As for topping, well, lots of women use strap-on dildos for penetration. Having a strap-on at the ready and actively seeking out partners who don't regard strap-on sex as a consolation prize (or a fail) will allow you to experiment with penetration without the pressure of having to produce or sustain an erection. You can switch back and forth between your dick and the dildo as needed, and being able to make it happen for your lover—using whatever tools you need—will build your confidence. And you're not broken, HBSIT. You are, like all of us, a work in progress. Good luck.

Q: I'm a college prof. Several female students have confided in me they're having trouble finding guys.

(They're not hitting on me—and even if they were, no way am I dating a student.) These girls are smart, nice, interesting, and usually obese. You and I both know that in this imperfect world, many (most?) people place importance on looks. But how do I tell them that? A straight, single, male professor telling a female student, even gently, that dropping 20 pounds might help her dating prospects is extremely risky.

—PROFESSIONALLY RISKY OBSERVATION FLUMMOXES

A: Oh my god. Keep your mouth shut. First, because it's an asshole thing to say—never mind the professional risk—and second, because it's not true. (Welcome to America, PROF, where most people are overweight or

obese and most people are partnered or married.) The likelier culprit here (besides a skewed sample size and confirmation bias) is the scarcity of available male partners. Women now significantly outnumber men on college campuses: "Where men once went to college in proportions far higher than women—58 percent to 42 percent as recently as the 1970s—the ratio has now almost exactly reversed," Jon Marcus wrote in the *Atlantic*. Graduating will probably do more to improve their romantic prospects than dropping 20 pounds.

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

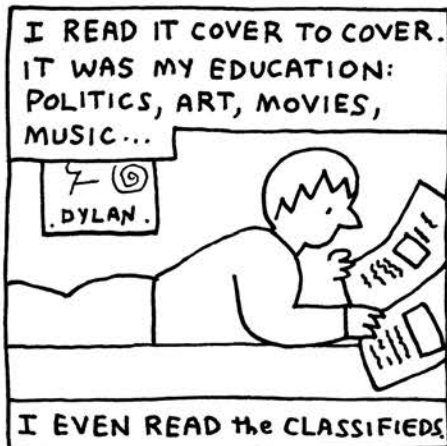
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MAY
11



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MAY
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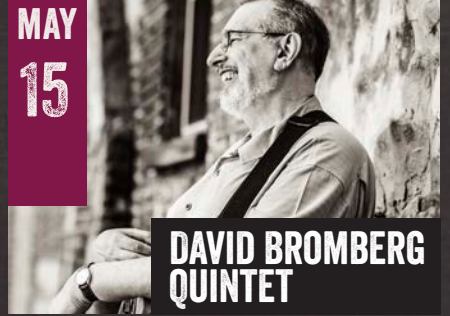
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20



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MAY
22
+
23



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MAY
24



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MAY
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MAY
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MAY
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2



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3



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