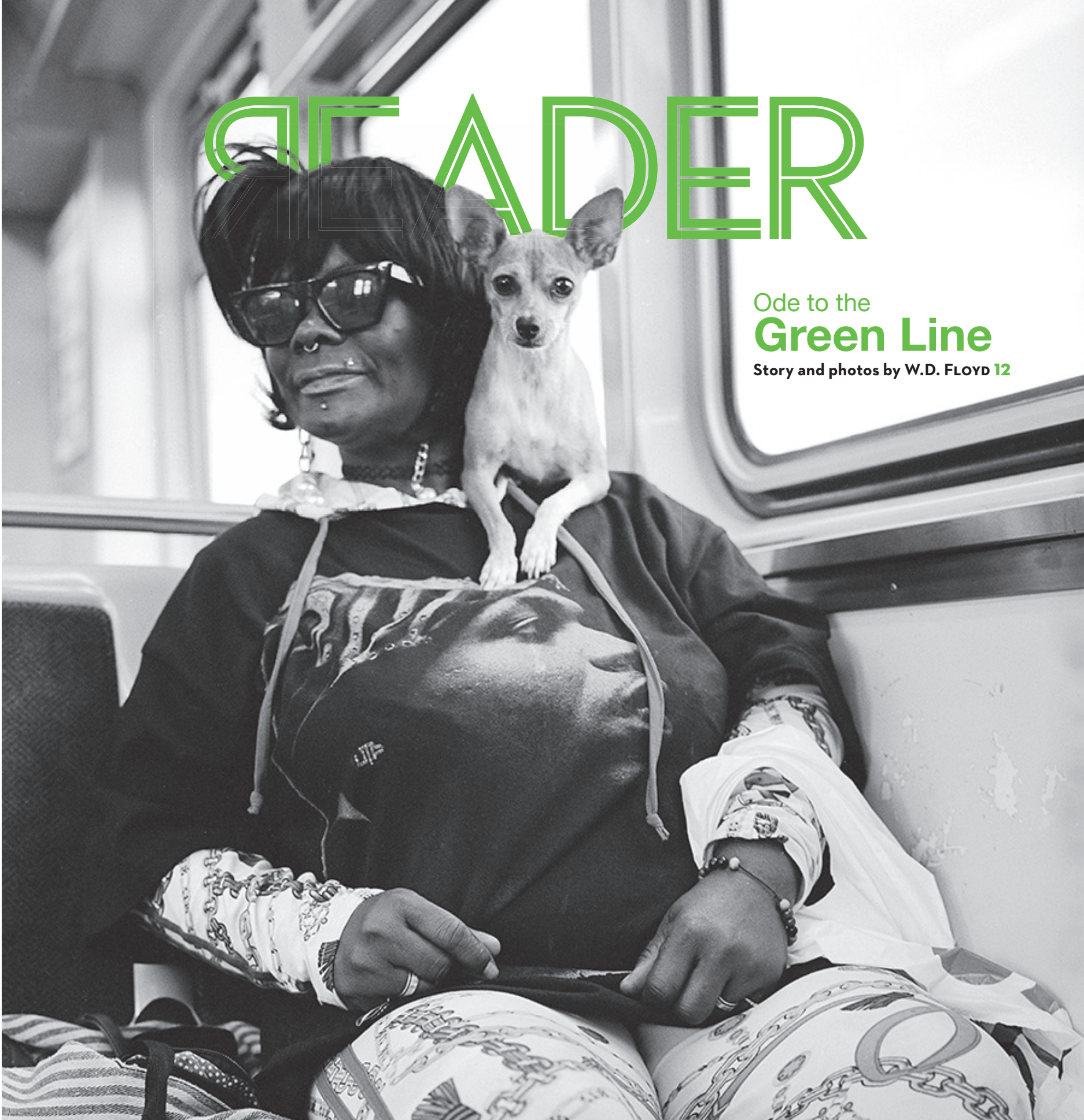


STRADEER

Ode to the **Green Line**

Story and photos by W.D. FLOYD 12

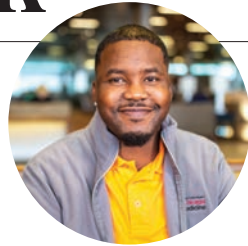


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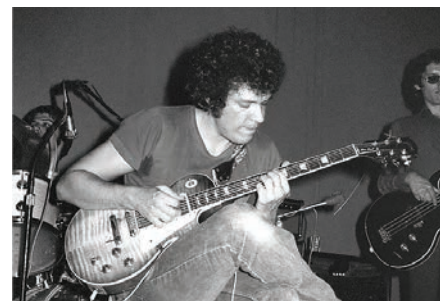
The elusive chorizo verde is a symphonic sausage

Green chorizo is now on the menu at Xocome Antojeria.



Comedy takes center stage at the Chicago Podcast Festival

See those voices in your ears, up close and personal.



David Dann on blues-rock guitarist Michael Bloomfield

From Glencoe to Monterey Pop to oblivion: Bloomfield's huge talent and unique style changed the instrument forever, but while Clapton and Hendrix entered the canon, he faded away.

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CITY LIFE



The winner of the Reader's Pooch Party costume contest was dressed as the Brown Line. LENI MANAA-HOPPENWORTH FOR CHICAGO READER

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Get out of the house and go to these haunts

Things to do this Halloween

By SALEM COLLO-JULIN

ALL HALLOW'S EVE is coming up, and it's a fun time filled with much more than candy-corn martinis and masked children leaning on the doorbell. If you're looking for trick-or-treating times for the kids, traditional haunted houses, or bars with drink specials that will let you show off your sexy ex-cabinet-member costume, please check out our Agenda listings online at chicagoreader.com/chicago/ **Agenda**. For now, read on for some events that capture the spirit of Samhain season but may have escaped your notice.

FRI 10/18

Holy Ghost Bingo, an interactive theater experience from the creator of *Late Nite Catechism* offering "God, goblins, and games."

Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, through 11/17 at Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted, 312-988-9000, theroyalgeorgetheatre.com.

SAT 10/19

Arts in the Dark's family-friendly Halloween parade with participants from 80 Chicago theater organizations starts on State and Lake at dusk and travels south to Van Buren.

Sat 10/19, 6-8 PM, artsinthedark.org, free.

Waxing Gibbous Readings: Emily Hall from Waxing Gibbous Tarot offers both ancestral medium work and tarot readings from noon-6 PM. [Space Oddities bookstore and gallery](http://space-oddities-chicago.webflow.io), 1007 N. California, space-oddities-chicago.webflow.io; readings are \$20-\$25.

TUE 10/22

Haunted History Tours with Mysterious Chicago Tours' Adam Selzer explores Lincoln Park Zoo (Did you know there used to be a cemetery there?). Tue-Wed through 10/30, 7 and 9 PM, Lincoln Park Zoo, 2001 N. Clark, 312-742-2000, 16+. Note: remaining tours are sold out, but there is a waiting list at lpzoo.org/haunted-history.

THU 10/24

The Mummies & Martinis event at the Oriental Institute Museum promises small-group tours of the galleries led by University of Chicago Egyptologist Foy Scalf, including the coffin and mummy of the Egyptian singer-priestess Meresamun, libations, and a DJ. 6:30-9 PM, 1155 E. 58th, oi.uchicago.edu/events, 21+.

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CITY LIFE

FRI 10/25

Halloween Mind Shivers, an interactive show of psychic entertainment, with mind reader Sidney Friedman. [Fri-Sat, Oct 25-26, 8 PM, Sun 10/27 and Thu 10/31, 7:30 PM, Davenport's, 1383 N. Milwaukee, davenportspianobar.com, 21+.](#)

The Campfire Horrors film series at Northernly Island presents an outdoor screening of *Interview With the Vampire* (1994) at 7 PM. There will be a campfire and free popcorn. Bring your layers and lawn chairs. [1521 S. Linn White, free, all-ages](#)

Hyde Park Community Players perform two evenings of suspenseful horror (in live old-time radio-style presentations with music by the Hyde Sisters). [Fri 10/25-Sat 10/26, 7 PM, University Church, 5655 S. University, hydeparkcommunityplayers.org, \\$10-\\$22.](#)

SAT 10/26

The historic (and therefore, probably haunted) Glessner House hosts its 33rd annual Edgar Allen Poe readings and performance night with actors from Lifeline Theatre. [Sat 10/26, 5 and 8 PM, "not recommended for children," 1800 S. Prairie, glessnerhouse.org/programs/poe-readings, \\$25.](#)

SUN 10/27

Mr. Singer & the Sharp Cookies play a kid-friendly all-ages Halloween show at the Beat Kitchen. [Sun 10/27, noon, 2100 W. Belmont, beatkitchen.com. \\$6, \\$7 at the door.](#)

Get Spooky, an all-ages event at the Beverly Arts Center, features an "instrument petting zoo" (kids can try out the center's library of musical instruments), crafts, and dancing. [Two sessions from 2-4 PM at 2407 W. 111th, 773-445-3838, free but reservations required at beverlyartcenter.org/17/?noisa_events=5364.](#)

MON 10/28

Horror of the Humanities VII: *Hereditary*. This year's version of the annual event coordinated by the DePaul Humanities Center features a "humanities seance" performance and a screening of the 2018 film *Hereditary* followed by a Q&A with Ari Aster, the film's writer and director. [Mon 10/28, 5 PM \(film begins at 5:45 PM\),](#)

[DePaul University Student Center, 2250 N. Sheffield, events.depaul.edu, free.](#)

WED 10/30

Derry Queen's Big Slutty Halloween: a Halloween-themed night from the host of the monthly Big Queer Variety Show, featuring drag, comedy, and fashion with Derry Queen, Alex Grelle, Miss Toto, Lily Schulner, Connor Konz, Naomi Spungen, and more. [Wed 10/30, 9 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, hideoutchicago.com, 21+.](#)

What's French for "Holy crap, run?!!" *La Nuit a Dévoré le Monde (The Night Eats the World)*, the 2018 minimalist French zombie film directed by Dominic Rocher, screens (in French, with English subtitles). [Wed 10/30, 8 PM, Alliance Française, 810 N. Dearborn, af-chicago.org/event/VJziCuWG, \\$5-\\$10.](#)

Babes With Blades hosts Halloween HamBingo to benefit the theater company with a special costume contest. [Wed 10/30, 7 PM, Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N. Clark.](#)

THU 10/31

Chicago House hosts iFiesta! Day of the Dead, a celebration of those who have died due to HIV-related illnesses, with Dia de Los Muertos-themed food and drink and music by local Latinx musicians. [6 PM at the National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th, facebook.com/events/377334526483396, free.](#)

The Nightmare Before Christmas screening, accompanied by the Chicago Philharmonic, with a costume contest and activities in the Auditorium Theatre's (some have said haunted) lobby. [Thu 10/31-Fri 11/1, 7:30 PM, Auditorium Theatre, 50 E. Ida B. Wells, auditoriumtheatre.org, \\$30-\\$95, all-ages.](#)

Harry Potter: UMbridged—A Pop-Up Bar & Show features Harry Potter fan fiction retold in sketch comedy form, a straight-from-the-books "Sorting Station" for figuring out which Harry Potter house you belong in, thematic drinks, and more. [Thu 10/31, 7 PM, iO Theater, 1501 N. Kingsbury, ioimprov.com/e/harry-potter-umbridged-halloween-edition-74729954305, all-ages. !\[\]\(4a7b4ce770af8456e11a71f9565c8c2b_img.jpg\)](#)

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Left: the Mistress, battered and griddled glazed doughnut with ham, “burnt cheese,” and raspberry preserves; above: the dunkers  COUSIN DANIEL FOR CHICAGO READER

RESTAURANT REVIEW

If it all goes south, Joe Donut will be here for you

Tricked-out dunkers and savory breakfasts from the North Shore spell comfort on the cheap.

By **MIKE SULA**

Who’s going to notice a breakfast biscuit next to a display case filled with Fruity Pebbles doughnuts, Snickers old-fashioned, and red velvet glazed with cream cheese frosting?

Remember 2011, when people lined up for blocks outside Doughnut Vault? Tricked-out gaskets have been blending into the landscape for nearly a decade ever since amid the rise of chains and minichains such as Stan’s, Do-Rite, and Firecakes. Who can even tell them apart anymore? Does your head even swivel after a side glance at a maple-bacon long john? I’m sure it doesn’t if you’re passing any of the city’s five bygone Glazed & Infused locations that Scott Harris abruptly closed at once in December 2017. It’s hard out there for a dunker.

But maybe not so much on the North Shore, where Nicholas Philippas opened his second Joe Donut early this summer in Niles, a 3,100-square-foot enlargement on his first location, which opened two years earlier in Glenview, a suburb then untouched by the edges of the doughnut bubble.

Prior to 2008 Philippas worked in real estate development “like everyone else,” before he opened Glenview’s North Branch Pizza & Burger Co., an all-purpose barrestaurant, in 2012. When the opportunity arose to occupy, lease free, a postage-stamp-size former post office next to the Metra stop, he hired pastry

chef Elissa Narrow (Blackbird-Vie-Perennial Virant) to consult and brought in a night crew to make the doughnuts in the burger bar.

Doughnut production relocated to the new, larger location earlier this summer, and though they can stand up to any in the city’s doughnut establishment—whether textured old-fashioned encrusted with alien green pistachio, overinflated strawberry glazed, or Valrhona chocolate-iced cake doughnuts—they all do the job they were made for.

But Philippas’s main goal in this expanded location was to operate an affordable family-style breakfast spot. And how to distract kids and cops from the doughnuts? A deep menu of pancakes, scrambles, biscuits, and breakfast plates that in many cases make no attempt to be any more virtuous than a salted caramel old-fashioned. That means, among a half-dozen overloaded biscuits, there’s one that wallows on a plate of maple syrup gaping like Audrey II, its mouth stuffed with sausage, bacon, a fried egg, and singed cheddar and jack cheeses.

There’s a showmanship baked into many of these dishes that’s born out of an established local restaurant tradition. The inspiration for a variant caramelized “secret” three-cheese blend omelet with bacon, ham, or sausage is dubbed “burnt cheese” and originated with Philippas’s aborted attempt to serve a flaming cheeseburger at North Branch, itself inspired



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FOOD & DRINK




Top: Biscuit #1 with bacon and sausage patties; below from left: maple-bacon glazed, red velvet with cream cheese frosting, and pistachio old-fashioned COUSIN DANIEL FOR CHICAGO READER

by the time-honored Chicago-Greek saganaki performance (in the end his insurance agent nixed it).

Breakfast potatoes are irregular deep-fried nuggets of shredded baked spud, crispy but soft inside. Philippas says these are “polarizing,” but they make much more sense described on the focused lunch menu as tater tots and served alongside a cheeseburger, a patty melt, or a fried chicken sandwich.

But the doughnuts’ biggest competition at breakfast is a sandwich that’s a degenerate alliance of everything that screams for your attention at Joe Donut: a yeast doughnut battered and griddled French-toast style,

split and sandwiching strata of ham, burnt cheese, and raspberry preserves. It’s called the Mistress, “like your mistress you’re always sneaking away to see,” says Philippas. “It’s not healthy, and nobody is supposed to know about it.”

The proliferation of fancy-pants doughnuts was a hangover remedy from the Great Recession, and now that we’re staring down another one, maybe we better not give up on them too soon. Philippas is betting we won’t. He has plans to open three more Joe Donuts in 2020, one or more of them possibly in the city. 

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READER

NEWS & POLITICS

POLITICS

The show goes on

One era ends and another begins for our beloved First Tuesdays.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

As the clock ticks closer to a teachers' strike this week, I'd like to interrupt my coverage of the showdown to bring you some news about my own life . . .

Mick Dumke and I are breaking up.

OK, I didn't mean to be so melodramatic. It's not like we were, you know, going steady. And I'm not saying the talk-show partnership of a couple of reporters amounts to a hill of beans in this crazy world.

It's just that it's a little melancholy for me. Mick and I have been cohosting First Tuesdays—our monthly political talk show at the Hideout—for five and a half years. Or since not long after the last big teachers' strike.

Finally, Mick said, "Enough." No particular reason other than an overall feeling of fatigue. Five years is a long time to be booking guests, writing Facebook invitations, and hoping that the guests you book show up and don't blow you off.

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Ben and Mick before the breakup, with alderpeople Scott Waguespack (left) and Maria Hadden (right) at a table in a bar. COURTESY FIRST TUESDAYS

He's been thinking about making a break for it for a while. When he told me his decision, I suggested we send out a press release saying he was retiring to spend more time with his family.

Generally, that's what politicians say when they step down from office—usually just before word breaks that they're under investigation.

But Mick's family said, "Hey, man, don't blame this on us!" So here we are—sticking with the truth.

The idea for First Tuesdays came from Tim Tuten, co-owner of the Hideout. Back in the old days, Mick and I were colleagues at the *Reader*, cranking out investigations into things like parking meter contracts, TIF scandals, marijuana arrests, and an assortment of often tedious budget topics.

It's not as easy as it looks. You try getting people to give a hoot about the hidden water-sewer slush fund.

Tim thought it should be like the old WTTW show where a bunch of sportswriters sat around a table smoking cigars and telling tall tales. Only instead of smoking cigars we'd be drinking beer.

Mick and I took it in a different direction—bringing on various politicians or journalists to talk about what was going on.

Our first panel featured former alderman Richard Mell, who bragged about how he swapped his support for dumb ideas—like selling the parking meters—in exchange for city jobs.

I wasn't so proud of the panel that featured aldermen Danny Solis and Rick Munoz—whose careers have ended in disgrace.

This was in the summer of 2014, around the time Solis started wearing a wire for the feds

to gather dirt on Alderman Ed Burke.

For all I know, Danny was wearing his wire at First Tuesdays. If so—here's hoping the agents back at the base were entertained.

I suppose it's appropriate that one era of the show ends on the verge of a teachers' strike. The show started in the aftermath of several Rahm-related school crises.

In fact, my favorite show is probably the May 2014 one when then-Chicago Teachers Union president Karen Lewis packed the joint.

You could expect two topics to be raised at a First Tuesdays show—legalizing reefer and blowing up TIFs.

When it got to the reefer question, Karen said we should legalize the stuff and use the revenue generated from its sales to pay off our pension obligations.

The crowd went crazy.

It was at least another two years before mainstream Democrats dared to utter a word about legalizing reefer, even though it should never have been illegal in the first place—as most of them knew because they were probably smoking it, maybe even in their cars before they came on our show.

As always, Karen was ahead of her time. It's a damn shame she never got to be our mayor.

In addition to salary, the main issue in the 2012 teachers' strike was respect—as in teachers demanding that Mayor Rahm show them some.

Mayor Rahm was peddling the same old "reform" malarkey that he picked up from watching *Waiting for Superman* one too many times. Like the other reformers, he was dedicated to the notion that the best way to get poor kids to learn at the same pace as rich kids was to treat their teachers like shit.

More than one First Tuesdays featured me

going on a tangent about how there's money in the TIF slush fund for lower class size, and supplies, and nurses, and librarians. And Mick would shake his head and smile as if to say, "I knew it was only a matter of time before Ben mentioned TIFs."

Some things have changed since our first few shows. Mayor Lightfoot treats teachers with more respect than Rahm did—at least for the moment. And her salary offers are more generous—at least she's not asking teachers to work longer for less. Like Mayor Rahm.

But the age-old issues of inequity and warped spending priorities remain. At the risk of having everyone shaking their heads, I'd like to point out that it's especially obscene to dedicate \$2.4 billion in property taxes for Lincoln Yards and the 78 when we say we can't afford to contractually guarantee the hiring of nurses, librarians, social workers, and counselors in our poorest schools.

But back to Mick . . .

We're not really breaking up. We're still good friends. I happen to know he's working on a monster kick-ass investigation for ProPublica. I'd love to tell you all about it, but I'm sworn to secrecy.

Hurry up and finish it, Mick, I can't wait to read it.

Speaking of kickass reporters, *Reader* superstar Maya Dukmasova is my new partner at First Tuesdays. Our first show will be November 5. Same time (6:30 PM). Same place (1354 W. Wabansia).

We'll be talking about—what else? —the teachers' strike. By then we'll know if one has been averted, settled, or, God help us all, is still going on. **[F]**

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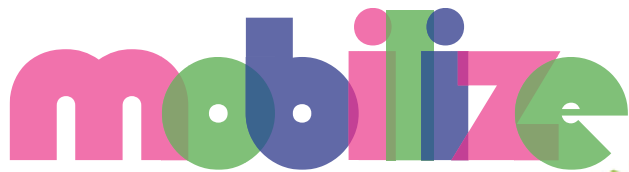
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October 17 | 12pm – 1pm
Democratic Party Office

League of Women Voters of Oak Park & River Forest
Drinks & Dialogue- The Importance of Local Media
October 17 | 6:30pm – 8pm
Shanahan's
7353 Madison St.
Forest Park, IL

Jane Addams Hull-House Museum
Archiving Social Justice in Chicago
October 18 | 1pm – 3:30pm
800 S. Halsted

Chicago Reader
Yes We Cann
October 19 | 12pm – 4pm
Emporium Arcade Bar
2362 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Citizen Workshop- Taller de Ciudadanía
October 19 | 8:30 am – 3 pm
Pritzker College Prep
4131 W. Cortland St.

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October 19 | 12pm – 2pm
Federal Plaza
219 S. Dearborn St.

Chicago Immigrant Transit Assistance (CITA)
Volunteer Training
October 19 | 11am – 12:30pm
American Red Cross
2200 W. Harrison St.

Indivisible IL9 Wisconsin to Win 2020 Train
October 19 | 10:48am – 5:10pm
Ravenswood Union Pacific Metra Train Station
4800 N. Ravenswood Ave.

League of Women Voters of Chicago
Breaking Hate Building Communities to Counter White Nationalism
October 21 | 5:30pm – 7pm
Union League Club of Chicago
65 W Jackson Ave

The Girl Talk
Celina & Delia Edition
October 22 | 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Hideout Inn
1354 W. Wabansia Ave.

Strengthening Chicago's Youth
Violence Prevention & Justice Reform
October 22 | 1pm – 4:30pm
Ann & Robert Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
225 E. Chicago Ave

Illinois Environmental Council Clean Energy Town Hall
October 24 | 7pm – 8:30pm
Zion New Tech High School
1634 23rd St.
Zion, IL

Indivisible IL9

Roundtable: Creating a 2020 Scorecard
October 24 | 12pm – 1pm
Democratic Party Office

Museum of Contemporary Arts
Talk: Surveillance and Black Activism
October 26 | 3pm – 4:15pm
Edlis Neeson Theater
220 E. Chicago Ave.

The People's Lobby
Being Asian in America: Drinks & Discourse
October 28 | 5:30pm – 7pm
Bernice's Tavern
3238 S. Halsted St.

Illinois Environmental Council
2019 Lobby Day: Support the Clean Energy Jobs Act
October 29
Illinois State Capital
310 S. 2nd St.
Springfield, IL

Center on Halsted Youth Program Alumni
Queer Youth Halloween Party
October 31 | 4:30pm – 7:30pm
Center on Halsted
3656 N. Halsted St.

Chicago United for Equity
Lincoln Yards Racial Equity Town Hall
November 2 | 11am – 2pm
Linda & Bill Gatz Boys & Girls Club at Lathrop Homes
2915 N. Leavitt St.

Reproductive Health Act Coalition
Reproductive Health Act Celebration
November 6 | 6pm – 8pm
Savemore Lounge
4060 N. Lincoln Ave.

For more information of listed events please visit persistlist.org

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READER

NEWS & POLITICS

ARCHITECTURE

See the real birthplace of gospel

Bronzeville's Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, one of more than 300 sites open for touring this weekend, is significant both musically and architecturally.

By DEANNA ISAACS

With more than 300 sites to choose from during the Chicago Architecture Center's free Open House Chicago event this weekend, it can be a challenge to decide which to visit. Here's a suggestion: Bronzeville's Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, at 45th Street and Vincennes Avenue. It has a unique place in the architectural and musical history of the city, but the most compelling reason to get there may be the one that stands just under two miles away, on the southeast corner of Indiana Avenue and 33rd Street.

That's where you'll find another great church, Pilgrim Baptist—or, rather, the gaping

hulk that's all that's left of it. The fortresslike limestone structure, with its massive arched entryway, crown of stained glass windows, and peaked-roof clerestory that brought light into a soaring, barrel-vaulted, 1,500-seat sanctuary, was gutted by a fire in 2006.

Pilgrim Baptist was designed by the legendary architectural partnership of Dankmar Adler and Louis Sullivan. Completed in 1891, it was originally a synagogue, K.A.M. Temple, where Adler's father had been the rabbi, and was built at the same time as Adler and Sullivan's even larger and more high-profile project, the massive, mixed-use Auditorium Building (at Michigan and Ida B. Wells). K.A.M. featured the same renowned acoustics that Adler engineered for the Auditorium Theatre.

What remains is a partial shell—facade and side walls, held up by scaffolding and open to the elements. The rear wall and roof are gone. There are plans to rebuild as a gospel music museum, but they haven't yet materialized. It's hard, looking at this wreckage, to imagine what was once there. But it's possible to see something quite similar.

Two years after Pilgrim Baptist was completed, Chicago was hit by a major economic recession. It was 1893, the year famous for the opening of the Columbian Exposition. Visitors were streaming into the city, but no new buildings were getting commissioned. The partnership of Adler and Sullivan, which had enjoyed more than a decade of success that included the design of buildings like the Chicago Stock Exchange and the Garrick Theater, was already under strain. Adler wanted to bring his son into the business; Sullivan—perhaps suffering from the alcoholism that would plague his



Ebenezer Missionary Baptist's stained glass windows are in need of repairs. © DEBBIE MERCER



The sanctuary at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, 4501 S. Vincennes. Originally a synagogue, it was the last building designed by Dankmar Adler, with the same acoustics he engineered for the Auditorium Theatre. DEANNA ISAACS

later life—wasn't enthusiastic about that. By 1895, under the additional stress of the recession, the partnership had broken apart.

Things were so bad that Adler took a job with an elevator company, but he was soon back in business as an architect—minus Sullivan. One of the design commissions he landed was for another synagogue, Temple Isaiah, at 4501 S. Vincennes, completed in 1899. Adler gave this temple the same clear span, barrel-vaulted ceiling, and impeccable sound that K.A.M. (and the Auditorium Theatre) had, along with symmetrical rows of stained glass windows on the north and south sides that cast the 1,200-seat sanctuary in a golden glow. It was his final building; Adler died in 1900, at the age of 56.

In 1921, Temple Isaiah was sold to the Ebenezer congregation, and ten years later those excellent acoustics were put to a groundbreaking use.

Reverend James Howard Lorenzo Smith, the third pastor to lead the Ebenezer congregation, came to Chicago in 1931 from Alabama. Dissatisfied with the classical, European-influenced church music he found at Ebenezer, Smith hired singer Theodore Frye, who in turn recruited pianist and composer Thomas A. Dorsey (among other things, he'd been Ma Rainey's accompanist) to create and run something new: a gospel chorus that quickly grew to 100 members. Frye and Dorsey brought elements of blues and jazz to the sacred music, and choreographed the volunteer singers (who weren't required to have previous

musical training), so that their performance captured the eye as well as the ear.

As recounted by Robert M. Marovich in his book *A City Called Heaven: Chicago and the Birth of Gospel Music*, Reverend Smith was so pleased he immediately took his new gospel chorus with him for a guest appearance at Pilgrim. Two months later, Pilgrim's pastor invited Dorsey to, in effect, jump ship and create a gospel chorus there. He did, with great success. As a result, it's Pilgrim that often gets credited with being the "birthplace of gospel music."

Patricia Butts—whose family has been an active part of Ebenezer for nearly a century—is the current clerk at the church. She says the building has city landmark status and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but is in need of funds for maintenance, including repairs to the precious stained glass windows.

The congregation numbers only a little more than 100 active members now, many of them elderly, Butts says. But a new pastor, Darryl N. Person, is about to be installed, and the plan is to build the membership while raising the money to restore the building. The Open House Chicago viewings are Saturday, October 19, from 10 AM to 5 PM, and Sunday, October 20, from 1 to 5 PM. If you don't make it—or even if you do—a free gospel music concert in honor of the installation is set for 7 PM at the church, 4501 S. Vincennes, on Friday, October 25, and the public is invited.

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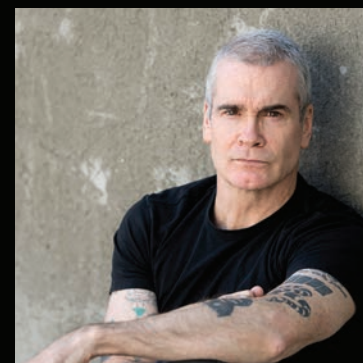
PATTI SMITH
YEAR OF THE MONKEY

OCTOBER 27 | 2:30pm



JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER
WE ARE THE WEATHER

OCTOBER 31 | 8:30pm

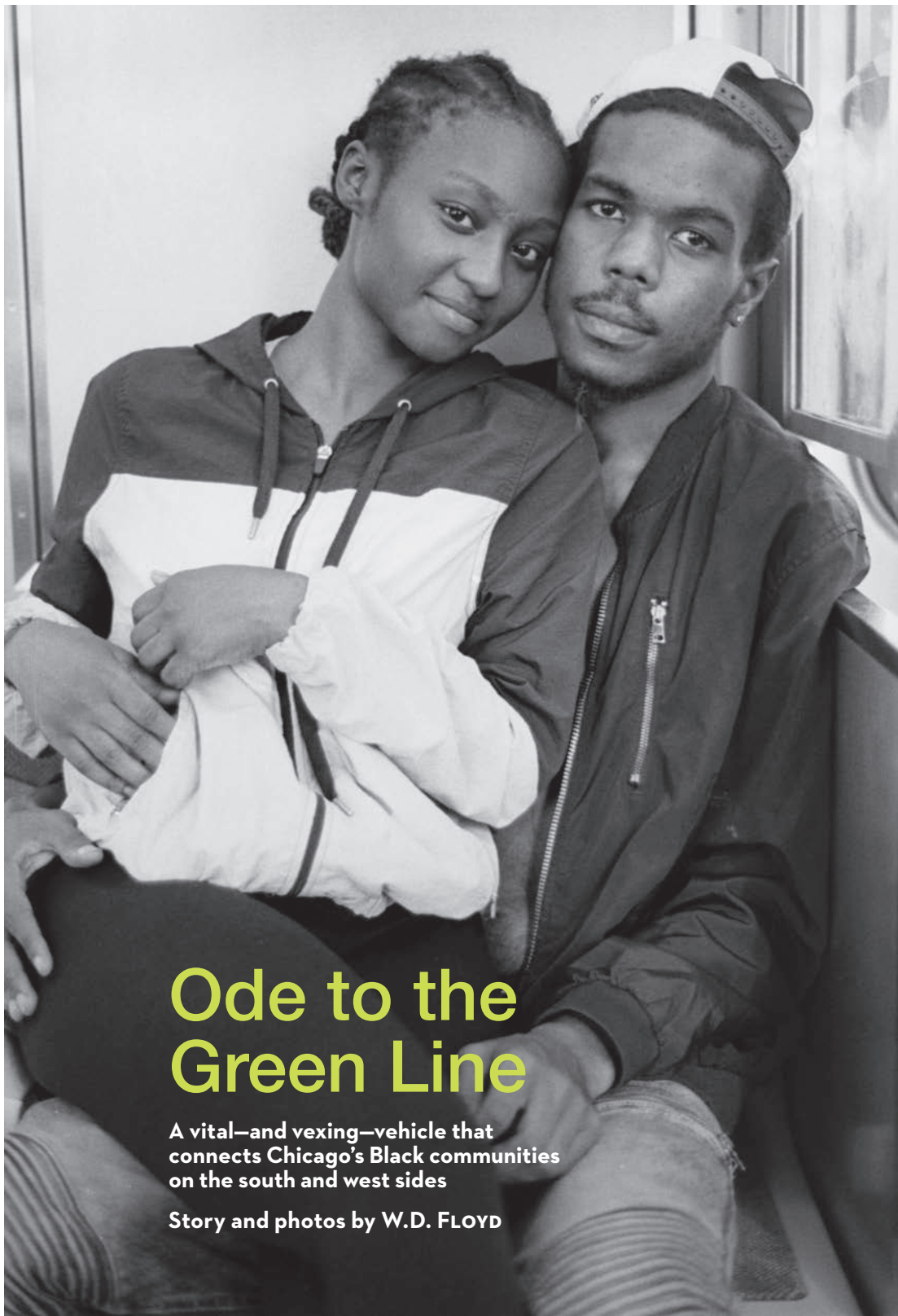


HENRY ROLLINS
WITH JARED YATES SEXTON
ON MASCULINITY

NOVEMBER 8 | 7:30pm



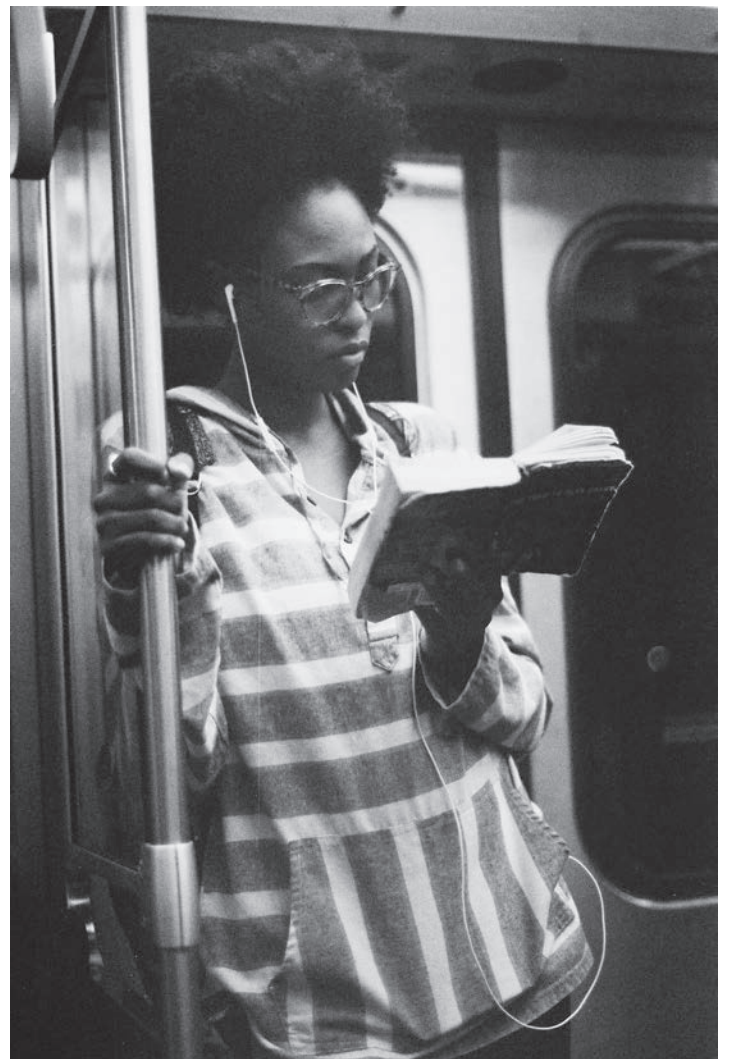
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Ode to the Green Line

A vital—and vexing—vehicle that connects Chicago's Black communities on the south and west sides

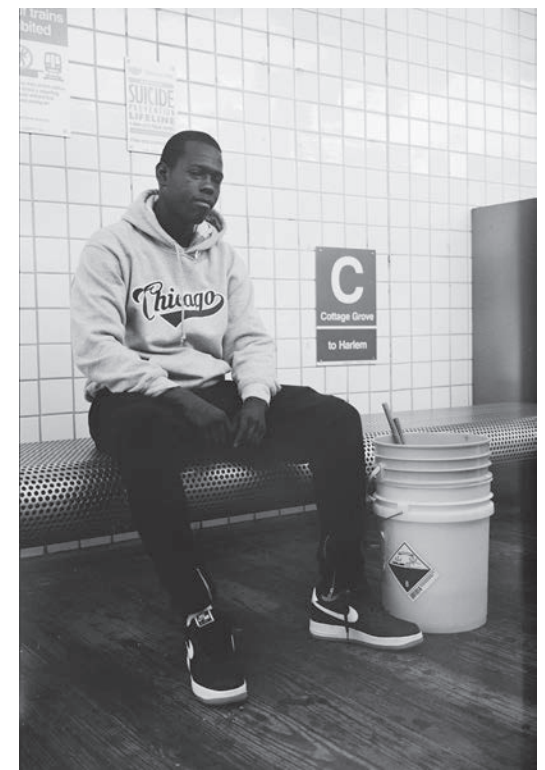
Story and photos by W.D. FLOYD



Clockwise from left: Ashley Smith and Elijah Woods; a woman reads *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*; Maurice Mitchell with son Makai.

After I take a photograph of a young couple on the Green Line, the train comes to an unexpected halt at the 35th-Bronzeville-IIT stop. Over the intercom, the conductor informs passengers that due to rail maintenance, we have to depart the train and take a shuttle to the Roosevelt station. Passen-

gers slowly exit the train in a state of annoyed acceptance, bearing the inconvenience that Green Line riders have grown accustomed to. As we pile onto the shuttle I hear grumbles from individuals and families adjusting to another disrupted commute. As people make room for baby strollers and wheelchairs, we sit in silence and endure the humbling experience



Patrons gaze out the window as the train pulls into King Drive; Marcus Jones waits for the train on his way to Roosevelt.

of a crammed bus ride. When we arrive at our destination and resume our train commute, an elder brother looks at me and says, “You think this be happening on other lines, in other communities? I’ve been riding the Lake Street el for over 30 years. This train has gotten me paid, laid, and dismayed. Gotta love it and hate it. It is what it is.”

The Green Line, formerly known as the Lake Street and South Side Line, is the oldest and only fully elevated line in the CTA el system. The relationship to the Green Line for native Black west- and south-siders is a lot like our

relationship with Chicago—complicated. The Green Line is the only line that connects Black west- and south-side communities. However, that connection has come with its share of frustrations. During the blizzard of 1979, Mayor Michael Bilandic ordered all but four Lake Street stops closed, leaving predominantly Black riders to rely on shuttle buses. Black commuters were forced to bear the vexation of cold bus stops and crowded buses while Oak Park residents rode comfortably in heated train cars. In 1994, the largest transit rehabilitation project permanently closed six stations

(University, Halsted, Homan, 58th, 61st, and Racine), angering Black commuters who had to permanently adjust in order to make it to and from work every day. Once again, the city of Chicago made a decision that directly impacted the mobility of Black Chicagoans. Just another display of disregard enacted by the city, by way of our beloved Green Line.

Because even through all this, there’s still love for the Green Line. It’s difficult to determine if this love derives from pure appreciation of the views, merely convenience, or both. No other el train can grant you the intimacy of

the Black Chicago experience that the Green Line can. For Black folks the Green Line has served not only as a vital means of transportation but of congregation and demonstration. Everything from performances, entrepreneurship, protest, and love affairs can be experienced on the Green Line. Nonetheless, nowhere are the implications of redlining and gentrification more evident. At times, it feels that the very thing many Black Chicagoans have come to depend on for self-sustainability and happiness has been utilized by the city as a tool to further subjugate us. From the ➔

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From left: A man waits for the train to leave Cottage Grove; Monique Braithwaite with her son Lorenzo; two commuters swiftly exit at Central.



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Green Line's elevated view, you can clearly see the ramifications of Chicago's rapid transformation. I have witnessed the demolition of public housing (Harold Ickes and Henry Horner), the erection of communities (the South Loop and West Loop), newly constructed stops (Cermak-McCormick Place and Morgan), and the reconstruction of the Cottage Grove and Garfield stops, and I will be here for the \$60 million development of a Damen/Lake stop scheduled to open in 2021. One must wonder, is all this revitalization for the Chicago of now, or the Chicago to come? If the latter, what


does that mean for the Black folks who have historically patronized the Green Line? Will we be here to enjoy the new amenities the city and the Green Line will have to offer, or will our memories be that of systemic disregard, juxtaposed with our desire to not only survive, but thrive? No matter the mixed emotions, the Green Line is our line, whether you're from Austin or Englewood, West Garfield Park or Woodlawn, East Garfield Park or Bronzeville. Good or bad, we must recognize the Green Line as a convenient yet complicated mechanism of this complex city that has gotten us to and gotten us through. **✎**

Three organs, one life

The heart, liver, kidney triple crown is something of a specialty for UChicago Medicine. For Daru Smith, a triple transplant was his only hope.

By **B. DAVID ZARLEY**



"I got a death sentence," Daru Smith says.  BEN BITTON

Daru Smith is in a hospital bed at the University of Chicago and his organs are failing. Specifically, three of his organs are failing—his heart, his liver, and his kidneys.

He's fading, spiraling, winking in and out. Then he's above his body, looking down at himself, looking down a dark hole. He's back and sees doctors, white coats, hospital lights, and words, coming in like radio signals from the dark side of the men. *Daru, we're doing everything that we can to save you. Daru, you're dying right before our eyes.* Then he's gone again, back into the void. He's above his body, watching it spiral, watching it revolve like a piece of food as the dishwasher drains out, and at the bottom of the drain he is standing tall. His body is up from the bed and he's looking at nothing.

He is cradling something, protecting it against his chest. He's carrying it down an impossible hallway that's round with square edges. He's walking towards the void, which is blindingly white as a wedding dress, a brilliant light waiting at the end. He hears a gentle, calming hum, a chord progression like a hymn. The needles and IV lines in his neck and arms have faded from feeling, the stiffness and pain has been lifted, his soul is soothed and calmer the closer he draws to the end of the hall.

Then he's outside himself again and he's behind himself as he walks down the hall. He has a thought. He knows this because he sees a light bulb, a literal light bulb in a cloud, and he thinks that sometimes horror has a sense of humor.

"Daru—excuse the language," Daru tells me, snapping out of recounting his out-of-body experience. "Daru, this is the shit they say happens when you die! . . . I'm at peace, I'm walking towards the light, I'm gonna fucking die!"

He turns and runs. Scenes flash in his peripheral vision like ads on the el. He sees his three-year-old son, Daru Jr., at first only his son, until in front of him is a screen showing his son's life: cutting his umbilical cord, changing diapers for the first time, holding him for the first time, feeding him for the first time, watching him crawl for the first time, holding his hand as he walked for the first time. Watching him saying *dada* for the first time.

Daru knows now why he will live. He can't leave his son. He will never leave his son. Even as his organs fail him, he will not fail his son.

Five months before talking to me, 29-year-old Daru was open on an operating table, his chest cracked and ribs spread beneath an incision like a bloody Y, the

signature of the triple transplant. You'd never know that by looking at him. He stands more than six feet tall with a medium build. When I meet him at the Starbucks at the corner of Drexel and 57th, on the first floor of the University of Chicago Medicine Center for Care and Discovery, his red Bulls track jacket really makes his mint green surgical mask pop.

Daru was recently the recipient of a triple organ transplant, joining Sarah McPharlin, also 29, in back-to-back triple organ transplant surgeries that began on December 19, 2018. This was the first time a hospital in the United States performed the complicated procedure twice in one year. These transplants happened in the span of only 27 hours.

The heart, liver, kidney triple crown is something of a specialty for UChicago medicine. The two procedures made the institution the most prolific in the world; seeing as how UChicago's record number of these surgeries performed is now six, one understands the rarity of the procedure. Usually incorporating three organs from one donor—it's easier for the body to accept new tissues from one source—the surgery requires balletic timing, steady hands, and mental preparedness for anything that could happen on the table.

Daru is congenial and talks to me as if I were an old friend. He leans in as he tells his story. He stays strikingly upbeat as he describes hardship and hard work, and only wa-

vers when he tells the story of his out-of-body experience. Tears well up in his eyes when he gets to the part about his son.

The first hint that something was deeply wrong came on a staircase in 2014. "I'd try to walk up the stairs, and literally I couldn't walk up the stairs," he says.

A neck biopsy in 2015 led to the revelation that he had sarcoidosis in his liver. Sarcoidosis is a disease in which inflamed tissues build up on the body's organs to form abnormal masses called granulomas. These granulomas can cause complications on the organs they encrust; shortness of breath, from granulomas in the lung, is among the most common symptoms. Often patients like Daru don't know they have the disease until enough granulomas have built up and they have trouble breathing.

After the diagnosis, Daru felt fine for two years. He worked as a truck driver and would travel from the south side to as far as Pennsylvania and Tennessee, and soon resumed hitting the road—and breathing—like normal.

Daru had been diagnosed with diabetes a few years earlier. While shooting the medications into his arm he had an epiphany: he did not want to do this for the rest of his life. He began to eat in moderation and work out, and felt his health improve. So having already faced one chronic disease, he redoubled ➔

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his efforts to change his lifestyle to fight the sarcoidosis. He used his mandatory half-hour breaks while his truck was being loaded or unloaded to walk around, jog, stretch, and do push-ups. He ditched the truck-stop burgers, chicken, and french fries and opted for vegetarian Subway sandwiches at rest stops, sometimes with herb and cheese bread when he wanted to splurge a bit.

“It wouldn’t bother me for a while, and then it would come back,” Daru says, snapping his fingers, “like a thunderstorm out of nowhere.”

On Christmas Eve day 2016, Daru had another coughing fit. “I remember, because my nephew was standing with me, and he had almost freaked out,” Daru says, laughing at the memory. His body racked with a violent cough, he knew a blackout was coming. He told his nephew to call an ambulance, then pounded his chest and slumped against the wall. As he slid down, his nephew tried to keep him calm. Daru laughed and told his nephew that *he* was the one who needed to calm down. As he began to come to, his cousin yelled that he was not breathing and paramedics put an oxygen mask to his face. The mask was like a quick charge to a battery, and his eyes shot back open.

One year later, Daru opened a window in the bathroom and was struck by a coughing attack again. He blacked out. He says the cold breeze probably woke him up. He was stuck between the toilet and vanity on the floor, breathing slowly and deliberately for 20 minutes until he could muster the strength

to get back up. While he had a brief hospital stay, he resumed life as normal after being discharged. “Everything was cool,” he says.

At the University of Chicago, they told him that his heart inflammation, caused by the sarcoidosis, was progressing. “I’m doing everything,” Daru says, “and this shit is *still* killing me.” Before he was fully resigned to death, the birth of his son snapped him out of it. A flight of stairs had beaten him in January; after riding the exercise bike and walking the treadmill in cardiac rehab, by March he was skipping steps on his way up.

“All I could do is leave [my son] some sort of financial stability,” Daru says. He began working as hard as he could again that spring. The driving itself was fairly straightforward, but the manual labor—opening and closing the heavy trailer doors, strapping down his cargo, hopping in and out of the high cab, sliding the tandem axles, refueling in the cold—that worried him. He would tell loved ones that if he did not get in touch with them by a certain point on his route, they needed to call 911.

On one of Daru’s routine trips to UChicago to check on his kidneys, Jay Koyner, his pre-transplant nephrologist, gave him bad news: the sarcoidosis had spread to his liver.

Every piece of bad news cut deep. “It fucked me up,” Daru says. “It hurt me bad. Every time I would go home and break down and scream and holler and punch the wall and ask myself, *Why me?*” Diabetes, a horseshoe kidney (a congenital condition causing his kidneys to be fused together), then sarcoidosis in his lungs, his heart, now his liver. “I got a death sentence.”

When Daru returned to the hospital in November 2018, unable to shake a cold, he figured it would be like his previous visits. As he lay in the bed in his room, he heard the raucous response to someone’s vitals crashing. *Someone’s having a bad time*, he thought. The doctors rushed in and placed him on a stretcher. He began to fade in and out.

The sarcoidosis of his heart was the primary culprit. Incapable of pumping enough blood through his body and getting enough oxygen to his other organs, Daru’s body had initiated a potentially fatal cascade. His heart, his liver, and his kidneys were shutting down.

But what had changed things was pneumonia. Daru had been hospitalized November 8 when an upper respiratory infection had taken a turn for the worse. “You imagine somebody who already has really bad heart failure and is super sick, and you add pneumonia on top of that?” Bryan Smith, one of Daru’s intensive care cardiologists, says. “You’re body doesn’t have much reserve.” He was admitted to the intensive care unit. “When I first met him, he wasn’t really responding much. He was a little delirious.”

Seeing this young patient, soft-spoken and sitting in the room, with his heart and lungs and liver and kidneys failing, Smith knew they would be in for a fight. It was crucial to keep Daru’s spirits up and keep his mind and emotions in a good place while doctors could keep him healthy long enough to receive the transplant. “I remember us having a number of conversations early on,” Smith says of their pep talks. “And I did see a different person emerge after that.”

After his out-of-body experience, Daru woke up in his hospital bed. His condition soon improved. The hospital became his primary residence as he walked around the halls. He needed to show he had the will to live to be put on the list for the heart, liver, and kidney transplant that he now desperately needed. Daru promised himself he would be out of the hospital soon.

“You could see that he took ownership and was more invested in the process” once he knew just how severe his sickness was, says Koyner, who remains active in his post-transplant nephrologist care. “He worked as hard as he could to comply with the instructions that he got.” Between the bad news and Smith’s pep talks, Daru took his treatment to heart. The doctors tell me he was buoyant, insightful with his questions, charismatic, and easy to care for.

“The person he became when he was waiting for transplant—he was such a model patient,” Smith says.

On Sunday, December 16, Daru had another spiritual experience. He told God that he felt he could no longer stand to be in the hospital because his son needed him. Three times, Daru told himself he would have a donor by the end of the week, getting stronger with each repetition. After the third time, he says he felt butterflies in his stomach and a sense that everything would be all right.


Two days later, Bryan Smith came into his room. Daru had a donor. The transplant began at 3:07 PM on Wednesday, December 19.

Daru was under the knife for a total of 17 hours and 11 minutes, according to the university. First came the heart, placed into Daru’s chest by Valluvan Jeevanandam, who has played this role in all six of the triple organ transplants performed at UChicago Medicine so far. Next, Talia Baker transplanted the liver; after that, Yolanda Becker transplanted the kidneys.

Sarah McPharlin’s triple transplant was of a similar order and duration. McPharlin, an occupational therapist from Michigan, had already received a heart transplant earlier in her life for a rare disorder. After that heart failed, a series of setbacks led to fluid accumulating in her abdomen and legs, eventually damaging her kidneys and liver. Daru says he and McPharlin met in physical therapy and bonded.

Daru left the hospital on January 17. He credits surviving his ordeal and his recovery to his mind-set and the medical team uniquely suited to saving his life. “He’s truly just a fighter,” Smith says.

“The post-op can be quite trying,” says John Fung, a transplant surgeon and codirector of the UChicago Medicine Transplantation Institute, who has been involved closely with Daru’s care. Beyond the possible medical complications associated with major surgery—luckily, liver transplantation protects the other new organs from rejection, Fung says—a patient’s muscle mass and endurance have decreased from being bedridden. Just getting back to normal requires a level of perseverance.

Beyond a heart, liver, and kidneys, Daru has emerged from his moment in medical history with a powerful new outlook. “I really think you’ve got to believe in yourself,” he says. “That’s what it’s gonna take. You have to believe in yourself.” 



Sarah McPharlin and Daru Smith a few weeks after their triple transplant surgeries.  BEN BITTON

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COMEDY

Whitney Chitwood has a bun in the oven

Her album, *The Bakery Case*, comes into the world on October 18.

By BRIANNA WELLEN

The first time I saw stand-up comedian Whitney Chitwood perform, she was onstage at the Green Mill digging into the case of *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* during the “live magazine” variety show *The Paper Machete*. It was fall 2017, and the Supreme Court was hearing arguments about whether a baker could refuse to make a cake for a gay wedding.

“[The baker’s] argument presupposes that every gay wedding is just themed ‘gay,’” Chitwood said. “Gay weddings have a bunch of

themes. There’s *Wizard of Oz*. There’s Melissa Etheridge. There’s woodworking—that’s a bisexual theme, by the way.”

One year later, the jokes she wrote for that performance became the backbone of her very first comedy album, *The Bakery Case*, recorded on the very stage she first told the joke. And on October 18, it will be released to the world on Stand Up! Records. “I’ve been a mess,” Chitwood says about waiting for the record to be released. “Being the first one, it’s like being a first-time mom, it’s like, ‘Oh god, I’m gonna kill it! I will murder it.’”

If the album coming out is the equivalent of a baby being born, then consider the release show at the Newport Theater on October 17 its christening, where it will be blessed by comedy godparents Mallory Bradford, Chrissi Rose Hartigan, Raegan Niemela, and Molly Kearney. Since seeing Chitwood that first time in 2017, I’ve seen her working on this hour at shows around the city, and you know it’s going to be good when you hear the same jokes over and over for two years straight and still end up laughing until you can’t catch your breath every single time.

But I’m not the only one who’s been appreciating the material. For the past two years, Chitwood’s been performing the final jokes for everyone from her friends in Chicago to folks in rural America, including jokes about sexuality, gender identity, her relationships, her family, and more.

“That was definitely a fear because it’s about gay shit,” Chitwood says. “But gay shit worked in North Dakota. Because it is just a universally human story. Regardless of who you’re doing, you want to be treated fairly, and you want to be able to feel safe.”

With this album, Chitwood hopes to introduce herself to the world, and once it’s out she’ll be ready to go even deeper—she already has a new half hour of material that leaves behind any timely political hook in favor of jokes about her upbringing and more of her personal experiences. Her family, who she says has been extremely supportive despite being the target of some bits on the first album, already has some notes for the next project.

“My dad mostly complains that I don’t talk about him enough,” Chitwood says. “He gets mad that I have a bunch of jokes about my mom and I don’t have any about him. This next one will be more an ode to my father. Are you happy now, Dad?”

Twitter @BriannaWellen

REVIEW

The Cosby conundrum

MPAACT’s *The Master Comic* considers the lingering damage caused by charming monsters.

By SHERI FLANDERS

MPAACT’s latest world premiere, *The Master Comic*, dives headfirst into controversial waters by following the downfall of a fictional world-famous comedian. Mr. Wolfe, a thinly veiled portrayal of Bill Cosby (played by a boisterous and ribald cigar-munching, sweater-vest-wearing Donn Carl Harper) had everything: an enviable career, an adoring wife, dear friends, and a talented protegee. When a viral video surfaces casting a harsh light onto his sexual exploits—consensual and otherwise—the audience is privy to watching his downfall from the inside.

The premise is compelling—who wouldn’t want to consume a full platter of fully deserved schadenfreude? However, that satisfaction is inert because we know how things will end for Wolfe. Writers Aaron Todd Douglas and Yusef Williams (adapting an earlier script by Terrance T. Brown) attempt to regain this tension by exploring the intersection between authentic friendships and craven opportunism and indicting Wolfe’s circle of friends. (Full disclosure: Williams is also well known locally as Seth Thomas and is a colleague of mine at the Second City Training Center. I was unaware that he wrote under his legal name.)

Undermining the potential power of the story is that the accusations of consen-

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RR THE MASTER COMIC
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 mpact.org, \$32-\$37, \$25-\$30 students and seniors.

THEATER



The Master Comic @ SHEPSU AAKHU

sual infidelity, versus drugging and rape, are flattened, not addressed distinctly, and are treated with the same weight. Actor Venice Averyheart plays Connie, Wolfe's wife, and her arc speaks solely to that of a jilted woman. When she powerfully delivers the big impassioned monologue, it unfortunately lands as a pedestrian lover's spat, and robs us of the existential horror of a woman wrestling with discovering that her husband is a rapist.

Kenneth Johnson plays a multilayered Doc, Wolfe's childhood friend and a writer who pleads with Wolfe to move out of denial and closer to a mea culpa with persuasion and threats. Delysa Richards plays his assistant, Yaz, who brings bombshell revelations along with her professional skills. It is left up to our interpretation whether the eventual conclusions of these stories are betrayals of friendship or just deserts for Wolfe. The play also asks why would we want or expect anyone to be loyal to a monster.

Most interesting in Runako Jahi's staging is the subplot involving Wolfe's protege David, played by a charming Benjamin T. Jenkins. His unrequited desire to receive the blessing of his past-his-prime, morally flawed idol mirrors an anecdote heartbreakingly expressed by Eddie Murphy regarding his recollections of Cosby on a recent episode of *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*. What do elders and others who hold power owe the younger generation? For the young and the powerless, is there a line between seeking mentorship and expecting a handout? *The Master Comic* revisits the poisonous legacy of Cosby's "Pull up your sagging pants" respectability politics, and shows how turning a blind eye toward his blatant abuse still haunts the Black community. Despite its flaws, MMPACT's production is thoroughly compelling, excavating the grimy bits of life that we shouldn't look away from. **R**

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Comfortable Shoes
 JOE MAZZA

REVIEW

Comfort zone

In *Comfortable Shoes*, Ida Cuttler explores the stories women tell in order to stay safe.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

Toward the end of her rambunctious and profound one-woman show, Ida Cuttler spins back to a recurring theme in the 80-minute production: the power of storytelling to keep women safe. As Cuttler notes, stories kept Scheherazade from being murdered by a rapist king who decreed he'd wed a different woman each night, killing each new bride the morning after the nuptials. Scheherazade is hardly the only woman to use stories to justify her existence and as a means to create boundaries where men believe none exist.

Stories are “our tricks,” Cuttler says. “We use them like Scheherazade, in bed, in bars, in Lyft. We don’t know how we know them. We don’t remember a time when we didn’t know them.” Then she presents an idea that sucks the air out of the room. What if women didn’t have to tell stories? What if we knew we could be safe in our silence, sure that people believed us—or believed in us—without an endlessly exhausting stream of verbiage meant to justify our very existence?


It’s a stunning moment, one of many that Cuttler creates in a show (directed by Halena Kays and featuring violinist Katie Klocke) that she instills with the energy of a whirling dervish tornadoing through a shop filled with Russian nesting dolls.

Cuttler’s perpetual motion matches the rap-

id-fire delivery of her script. With the athleticism of a track star, she leaps, climbs, springs, and swings as she draws a line from Scheherazade to the back seat of a ride service to the halls of power where Wendy Davis filibustered for 11 hours in an attempt to prevent the Texas senate from passing draconian restrictions on abortion rights.

Initially, *Comfortable Shoes* seems comfortably wacky, an inspired bit of high-octane silliness. Cuttler leaps and gallops around set designer Dominique Zaragoza’s expansive bedsheet fort, supersized to accommodate adult shenanigans, complete with a reveal that’s like a *Beach Blanket Bingo*-inspired New Year’s Eve balloon drop. As the words ride atop Klocke’s churning melodic current of Rimsky-Korsakov and original compositions, Cuttler pulls the audience in her wake.

She points out the obvious: like countless women before and after her, Scheherazade is remembered the way male historians wrote her. History is bulimic, Cuttler continues. It eats women and spits them out, rendering them as invisible as the bones of a rotisserie chicken gorged in secret and surreptitiously hidden in the neighbor’s trash. It’s an analogy with the clarity of a hard slap. It’s also hilarious, provided you don’t think about it too much.

You could say the same for all of *Comfortable Shoes*. Cuttler’s dizzying pace never slows. By the time she sends 16 dangling nesting dolls spinning like tiny pinatas, your heart and mind will also be spinning. It might sound on the nose to call their revolutions revolutionary. But it’s also accurate. 

 @Catey Sullivan

OPENING

 Let the music play

Back in the Day: An 80s House Music Dancesical fills in the blanks in Chicago’s 80s house scene.

When house music is recounted in books, television shows, and other media, three things are always mentioned: Chicago, the Warehouse club, and Frankie Knuckles. UrbanTheater Company’s *Back in the Day*, written by artistic director Miranda González and based on José “Gringo” Echevarría’s memoir *The Real Dance Fever: Book One*, fills in the blanks of mainstream retellings with an all-encompassing “dancesical” of teens in the underage club scene that laid the foundation for house parties today.

A black-and-white checkered floor and a wall of mirrors with words and slogans like “Trans Lives Matter,” “gringo,” “south side” and “Humboldt Park” set the scene of this 1980s play, directed by Raquel Torre and choreographed by Breon Arzell. Rival crews the All Stars, Culitos, and Imported Taste dance, cry, laugh, and age in a room of shimmering walls as they battle it out for the best dance crew—and years later lay their dancing days to rest. House music served as communal glue for the mostly queer Latinx and Black teens as they navigated racially segregated Chicago in a time where teen clubs like now-closed Janels were the only place they could openly express their queerness.

No matter how hard two of the crews’ leaders, Gringo (Mateo Hernández) and Troy (Jermaine Robinson Jr.), fight on the dance floor (whether that “floor” is in the club or the streets), their friendship prevails. The audience experiences the ups and downs of their relationship firsthand, as Harrison Ornelas’s immersive set allows the attendees to walk, dance, or sit if they choose, putting them as close to being in the actual Janels as they can get.

From Shannon’s “Let the Music Play” opening number to one final, somber performance where the teens grieve the loss of a beloved street dancer and friend, *Back in the Day* relays a compelling part of house music history that shouldn’t continue being left out of mainstream narratives. —JANAYA GREENE
BACK IN THE DAY: AN 80S HOUSE MUSIC DANCESICAL Through 11/2: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Mon 10/21, 8 PM, UrbanTheater at Batey Urbano, 2620 W. Division, 312-767-8821, urbantheaterchicago.org, \$25 (11/2 benefit performance \$40).

Murderous blond ambition

Agency Theater Collective bleaches the life out of the story of a Jewish “catcher” for the Gestapo in *Blonde Poison*.

Nicknamed “blond poison” by the Nazis (her “Aryan” good looks—blond, blue-eyed—belied her Jewish heritage), Stella Kübler-Isaacksohn was a “catcher” for the Gestapo during World War II. Using her cunning, charisma, and connections she ferreted out fellow Jews—people who had gone into hiding in Berlin—and turned them over to the authorities. For this she was promised a bounty of 300 Reichsmark for each person apprehended, and the continued safety of her parents, a promise the Nazis eventually broke (her parents died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp).

It’s a fascinating story. But not the way Cindy Henkin tells it in her often awkward dramatization

of Kübler-Isaacksohn’s life. Oh, the facts are there; Henkin clearly has done her homework. And actor Marie Weigle makes a very convincing Stella. But the tale Henkin and company tell is just not very compelling. Henkin focuses on a series of interviews between Stella and a woman suspected of being a “submerged” Jew, interviews that could, in the hands of a crafty writer, have been the foundation for an intense psychological drama. That is not what happens here. Instead of a riveting high-stakes game of cat and mouse, we are given a series of dreary conversations almost devoid of drama.

It doesn’t help that director Sara Faye Richmond’s cast seem like they are just going through the motions, doing the script without really feeling it. There are moments, to be sure, that we see sparks fly. Some of the encounters between Weigle and Alison Schaufler (who plays the woman being interrogated) threaten to burst into real theater, but those moments are few in a production marred by a weak script and serviceable but not amazing staging. —JACK HELBIG
BLONDE POISON Through 11/3: Wed-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM; also Mon 10/28, 7:30 PM, and Sat 11/2, 2:30 PM; no show Sat 10/19, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, wearetheagency.org, \$23, students, seniors, and industry \$12.

 The whole bloody truth?
 Barrens Theatre plunges us into the dark world of Elizabeth Bathory.

When it comes to infamous female serial killers, Aileen Wuornos has nothing on the 16th century’s Elizabeth Bathory, a Hungarian countess who allegedly drank—and even bathed in—the blood of virgins in order to stay youthful in those pre-Goop days. In *Bloody Bathory*, playwright Millie Rose (who also plays the countess) follows the lead of *Sleep No More* and many other immersive “choose your own adventure” shows by setting the action in several rooms of an Edgewater church.

The framing device is Bathory’s trial; after a brief overview of her alleged crimes, we can pick our way among a series of simultaneous interactions involving doomed servant girls, feckless members of the clergy, and power-mad (but cash-poor) nobles, such as Archduke Matthias (Stephanie Mattos), who owed Bathory lots of money and thus, as some scholars in recent decades have suggested, had his own reasons for spreading rumors of her bloodthirsty ways. By the end, we reconvene to render a verdict.

Not everything in Molly H. Donahue’s staging of Bathory’s story is clear, and that’s very much the point. There’s not a lot of exposition to guide us, so we’re thrown back on our own impressions, depending upon which mysterious tour guide you follow through the church hallways. My experience was more atmospheric than gory (though judging from the conversations around me, I apparently missed some disturbing stuff in the cellar). The cast and the running crew both do a terrific job of steering the audience through the various dimly lit spaces, and Amanda Vander Byl’s costumes give a goth-punk edge to Bathory’s servants (or are they themselves demons?). It’s a dark amuse-bouche for your Halloween season. —KERRY REID
BLOODY BATHORY Through 11/16: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Epworth United Methodist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore, thebarrenstheatreco.com, \$27.



Back in the Day: An 80s House Music Dancesical KENNY CORDERO

A fistful of zombies

Wildclaw's *Hell Followed With Her* mashes up a spaghetti western with the zombie apocalypse.

Open up any horror auteur's toolbox, and you'll likely see some recurring devices: tracking shots, audience immersion, startles, simmering dread—elements that are notably difficult to achieve onstage. So Wildclaw Theatre's mission of bringing the world of horror to the theater is an ambitious one, and one I've seen yield truly creative results from this innovative company. Couple that challenge, though, with the addition of another stage-averse genre—spaghetti westerns—and the outcome is a little more strained.

In a ghost-town saloon patronized mostly by shady bounty hunters, a doctor (Kim Boler) treats the deliriously fevered victims of mysterious animal bites. Loyalties start cracking once it becomes clear that a zombie apocalypse is brewing outside, and an already-tense standoff of gunslingers escalates into claustrophobic mayhem.

Playwright Bill Daniel takes it all more seriously than you'd think, largely skipping over the expected camp humor and irony in favor of a pretty compelling thriller narrative. Despite a large and richly drawn cast of characters, however, Josh Zagoren's production never really quite makes good on its salacious and teasing preshow announcement, which promises "intense blood and gore effects" and hints at a more raucous experience than the mild blood squirts and conventional stage combat choreography that are delivered.

Nevertheless, Nora King's Shelby earns big laughs as a blind and disinterested bystander, and Ardarius Blakely makes one hell of an entrance as a lurking fugitive hunter. —**DAN JAKES** *HELL FOLLOWED WITH HER* Through 11/9: Thu-Sat and Mon 7:30 PM, Den Theatre, 1333 N. Milwaukee, 773-697-3830, wildclawtheatre.com, \$30, \$15 industry.

The handmaid's jail

Keely and Du has relevant themes but narrative holes.

The pseudonymous Jane Martin (long rumored to be director Jon Jory or a collaboration between Jory and his playwright spouse, Marcia Dixey), first birthed Keely and Du in the early years of the first Bill Clinton administration, when the culture wars were at a fever

pitch (unlike every other time in U.S. history, I guess). But much like Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, current grim events conspire to make this play about a pregnant rape victim held captive by Christian extremists to prevent her obtaining an abortion feel relevant all over again. Unfortunately, relevance and believability aren't always the same thing.

Ted Hoerl's staging in Redtwist's tiny black box features compelling performances from Keisha Champagne as Keely, impregnated by her violent ex-husband and now chained to a bed under the watchful eye of Du (Jacqueline Grandt), a foot soldier in the abortion wars who obeys the preening patriarchal Walter (Ben Veatch). Du is a registered nurse, which makes her willingness to risk blood clots by leaving Keely shackled and immobile day after day a little hard to swallow. (Even if she's primarily a vessel, a dead vessel won't be much use for these fetus fetishists.)

This is a play designed to make you angry (though living under patriarchy generally takes care of that for a lot of us on a daily basis). Martin's script is particularly good at nailing how centering the possibility of redemption for men betrays the safety and autonomy of women. But eventually, the claustrophobic walls of Alyssa Mohn's grim basement set echo once too often with talking points that we've all heard many times before and that haven't moved anyone closer to changing their minds on this depressingly evergreen cultural conflict. —**KERRY REID** *KEELY AND DU* Through 11/10: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr, 773-728-7529, redtwisttheatre.org, \$35 Thu (\$30 students and seniors), \$40 Fri-Sun (\$35 students and seniors).

Lost in translation

Stereotypes and portentous dialogue clip the wings of *Language of Angels*.

Think *The Dukes of Hazzard* meets *Night of the Living Dead*, but more reliant on stereotype than the former and minus the gruesome tension or production values of the latter. This is the general gist/aesthetic of Three Crows' pretentiously plodding *Language of Angels*. Naomi Iizuka's 80-minute drama features a group of vowel-drawling, gun-toting, beer-guzzling, speed-shooting, trailer-living, car-wrecking strippers and sheriffs and good ol' boys, fighting and smoking and boozing in a cave, and perhaps a mountain ledge as well. Some of ↪

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THEATER

➔ the characters are sometimes dead, although there's so little difference between the dead and the living, it's tough to determine when someone is a ghost and when they are not. Well, almost.

Celie (Elizabeth Wigley), who vanished (or was murdered? maybe by the guy who became the sheriff? but also maybe not?) one night in the 1980s, shuffles and glowers throughout, stalking the stage in a white dress accessorized by Party City zombie makeup. Under Kristin Davis's direction, the plot veers between decades with the clarity of a stagnant swamp on a moonless night. It's further bogged down by ponderous pauses, usually inserted around dialogue that would have fit right into the bilge masquerading as Confucian wisdom in the 1970s "martial arts" TV series *Kung Fu*. For example, "That's the thing about a ladder." Long, portentous pause: "It works both ways." Mind. Blown. (Not really.) At several points, characters reprimand each other for talking about people who mean nothing to the people they are talking to. The audience could make the same complaint. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** **LANGUAGE OF ANGELS** Through 11/3: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM, Piven Theatre Workshop, Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, 312-469-0274, threecrowstheatre.com, pay what you can.

RR What's it all about, Alfie?
In *A Man of No Importance*, a gay man finds community in amateur theatricals.

Oscar Wilde wrote "most people are other people . . . their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation." Such it is for Alfie Byrne, the self-effacing lead in Terrence McNally's *A Man of No Importance* (based on the 1994 film starring Albert Finney), who lives locked away with his books, quoting Wilde and producing amateur theater at his small Dublin church. Alfie literally and figuratively lives in a closet, his plays providing a sense of control, until he is forced to grow up and face the reality he has avoided so long.

His ensemble are friends, and part of the joy of this delightfully engaging and emotional musical at Pride Films and Plays is the sincere pleasure that his communi-

ty takes in putting on plays—in this case Wilde's *Salome*, which (surprise) does not go over well with the church. Ryan Lanning brings captivating charm as the fraught Alfie, with a melodic voice in songs like "Love Who You Love" that carry a deeper meaning as he struggles with unrequited longing for his colleague and friend Robbie (the boisterous Nick Arceo).

Director Donterrio Johnson has cast actors with stellar voices and real musical and instrumental chops. Ciera Dawn's Adele, who Alfie casts as *Salome*, embodies her princess character with grace and a show-stopping soprano. Tommy Bullington is hilarious as Carney, his sometimes lead, foil, and sister's boyfriend. Christopher Davis wrenches tears with the tender "The Cuddles Mary Gave," remembering his late wife. While many of Stephen Flaherty's songs have a similar melodic structure, the honest lyrics by Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens and powerful performances like those behind "The Streets of Dublin" keep the blood pumping. —**JOSH FLANDERS** **A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE** Through 11/10: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM; also Wed 11/6, 7:30 PM, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway, 773-857-0222, pridefilmsandplays.com, \$40 premium reserved, \$30 reserved, \$25 students, seniors, and military (not valid on Sat).

RR The first wives club
Muslim women confront the subject of polygamy in *Twice, Thrice, Frice*

Three women—one an MBA student in her early 30s, one a painter and real estate agent in her 40s, and the eldest a stay-at-home wife and mother in her 50s—hang out in the kitchen and debate relationships while the men linger offstage. So far, so familiar. But the twist in Fouad Teymour's *Twice, Thrice, Frice*, now in a world premiere with Silk Road Rising and the International Voices Project, is that the sticking point in the relationship debate is whether polygamy (that is, for men) is something devout Muslim wives should accept.

The youngest, Samara (Marielle Issa), argues strenuously for the acceptance of the practice. Atheist Amira (Catherine Dildilian), who finds her spirituality in Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, resents the aspersions Sama-



Twice, Thrice, Frice
AIRAN WRIGHT

ra casts against nonbelievers, while Khadija (Annalise Raziq) seems content with her role as the wife of an academic. But when a plot twist takes the debate beyond the realm of the purely theoretical, Teymour's comedy takes on sharper elbows. However, subsequent developments begin to feel predictable, even as the trio of actors at the center of it find many moments of honesty and wit in Patrizia Acerra's staging.

Issa has the toughest job, as Samara's piousness seems tailor-made to set her up for a fall. Dildilian is excellent as a woman whose childhood in Iraq seems far away, but who can never forget the upheavals and violence there (in part because her husband's work with Doctors Without Borders takes him there). And Raziq is delightful as a woman who finds her loyalties tested in many directions and ends up finding the strength to be loyal to her own heart. —**KERRY REID** **TWICE, THIRCE, FRICE** Through 11/10: Fri 8 PM, Sat-Sun 4 PM, Mon-Tue 7:30 PM; no performance Mon 11/4, Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington, 312-857-1234, silkroadrising.org, \$38, \$28 students.

RR Cabin boys
Who Killed Joan Crawford? brings a different spin to camping in the woods.

"I think the most important thing a woman can have—next to talent, of course—is her hairdresser," once said Joan Crawford, the ultimate diva of old Hollywood. She would have been horrified by the bad wigs on the cast

in this midwest premiere of Michael Leeds's comedic whodunit, directed by John Nasca for Glitterati Productions. She would have been quite proud, though, of the cast of six men, dressed in drag versions of her most famous roles and personifying another Joanism, "I love playing bitches. There's a lot of bitch in every woman—a lot in every man."

Set on a dark and stormy night in a secluded cabin, the fun, campy story begins at the Joan-themed birthday party of soap star Trick Rogers, who is nowhere to be found. The party guests are all frenemies and members of his orbit, and their acerbic banter and well-timed physical comedy set the tone for the wacky and mysterious disappearances that follow. Standout performances include a surprisingly grand and glamorous Michael Jack Hampton as psychiatrist Stewart Fry and a catty and self-absorbed Patrick Rybarczyk as composer Leo Lawrence.

That the year is 1993 is made clear from running commentary on the Tony Awards, playing in the next room, and humor throughout the play is inspired heavily by the musical theater world and quotes from the prolific Crawford's filmography. One memorable scoff, criticizing "a man who thinks that Ethel Merman was the sidekick in *I Love Lucy*," may be a good barometer when considering attending. —**MARISSA OBERLANDER** **WHO KILLED JOAN CRAWFORD?** Through 11/10: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Athenaeum Theatre, 2936 N. Southport, 773-935-6875, athenaeumtheatre.org, \$38, \$31 students and seniors. **R**

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First- and second-time directors shine in these six worthwhile films making their local premieres.

By **BEN SACHS**

The films I'm most excited about at this year's Chicago International Film Festival—Federico Veiroj's *The Moneychanger* and Pedro Costa's *Vitalina Varela*—weren't available for preview, but I'm fairly confident that I can recommend both sight unseen. Veiroj and Costa are two of the most innovative filmmakers working today, and it speaks well of the festival that the programmers would choose to present their work. Many of the other filmmakers showcased in the festival aren't as accomplished; in characteristic fashion, the programmers have emphasized the work of first- or second-time directors. As always, I recommend taking risks on films that sound interesting in the festival program and discovering what new voices have to say.

The six films I've reviewed below only scratch the surface of this year's lineup, though I'm pleased to note that I found all of them worthwhile in some fashion. I didn't have time to look at anything in the "Architecture x Design" spotlight (presented in conjunction with the Chicago Architecture Biennial), the shorts programs, or the documentary sidebar, but if the films I watched were any indication, there are plenty of revelations to be found.

RR Alelí

Leticia Jorge Romero and Ana Guevara Pose, who wrote and directed the delightful Uruguayan comedy *Tanta Agua* (2013), return with another witty chronicle of family dysfunction, this time with a larger cast of characters and morbid undertones. (Both women wrote the script, though Jorge Romero is the only credited director here.) After her husband dies, an octogenarian woman assembles her three grown children (and their children and grandchildren) to settle her finances and manage the family home. The filmmakers deftly juggle nearly a dozen characters before zeroing in on the relationship between the woman's only son and her ne'er-do-well youngest daughter, whom the son supports financially and emotionally. Like many of the best Uruguayan comedies (*Whisky*, *Gigante*, *Rambleras*), this

Song Without a Name



balances a knowing sense of life's disappointments with a winning affection for the people who endure them. In Spanish with subtitles. **88 min. Thu 10/17 at 5:45 PM and Sat 10/19 at noon**

RR By the Grace of God

François Ozon won the Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for this uncharacteristically solemn docudrama about child sexual abuse within the French Catholic Church. Forgoing a single protagonist, the film follows one man who'd been abused by a priest as a child, then gradually switches focus to another of the priest's victims, and then another. This clever narrative strategy reflects the shocking magnitude of the priest's crimes (his victims number in the dozens, if not hundreds); it also allows Ozon to consider how different people deal with the trauma of abuse within a religious institution. The first victim we meet is a happily married father of four who remains a practicing Catholic despite having wrestled with his faith; the other two, an atheist and an agnostic, are more troubled, and some victims who serve as peripheral characters seem completely broken by their experience. This is a thoughtful, engrossing issue film that's nicely free of sanctimoniousness. With Melvil Poupaud, Denis Ménochet, and Swann Arlaud. In French with subtitles. **138 min. Tue 10/22 at 5:45 PM and Wed 10/23 at 8:30 PM**

RR Ghost Tropic

In modest fashion, this poetic Belgian feature manages to say a good deal about life, death, and the state of the globalized world. It centers on a Muslim cleaning woman from an unspecified country who's lived in Brussels for about two decades. One night after work, she falls asleep on the train ride home, misses her stop,

and wakes up after the routes have stopped running. She makes her way home on foot, stopping occasionally to chat with strangers and take in the depopulated cityscape. Writer-director Bas Devos depicts the heroine's trek as a low-key odyssey—indeed the film comes to feel like a compressed epic. The painterly images of lonely urban environments (captured gorgeously on 16-millimeter film) suggest the influence of Belgium's greatest filmmaker, Chantal Akerman, but Devos's work is distinctive in its emotional directness. In subtitled Dutch and French. **84 min. Fri 10/25 at 6:15 PM and Sat 10/26 at 6:30 PM**

I Was at Home, But . . .

The title of Angela Schanelec's arty drama evokes Yasujiro Ozu's silent classic *I Was Born, But . . .*, though the affectless performances, presentational style, and oblique approach to narrative feel closer in spirit to the films of Robert Bresson. It centers on a middle-aged single mother in Berlin, specifically the stress she experiences mourning her late husband and raising two kids; for the most part, Schanelec doesn't confront the character's distress, but rather circles around it. (A large part of the film concerns the heroine's efforts to buy, then return, a used bicycle from an absentminded older man.) The writer-director also departs sometimes from her protagonist to consider random people on the street and rehearsals for a middle-school production of *Hamlet*. I'm not sure what all this adds up to, but it certainly casts a pungent, funereal mood. In German with subtitles. **105 min. Thu 10/17 at 8:15 PM and Sun 10/20 at 4 PM**

Song Without a Name

Set against the backdrop of Peru's political turmoil of

the late 1980s, this beautifully shot black-and-white docudrama centers on a young woman whose baby is abducted after she gives birth at a medical clinic. She appeals to a journalist to investigate the abduction; gradually he uncovers a far-reaching conspiracy to take the babies of poor women and sell them for adoption abroad. The story sometimes departs from the investigation to consider the journalist's lonely personal life; the subplot feels superfluous until the final act, when the filmmakers reveal that the viewers aren't the only ones who have been following him. This evokes a particular time and place with commendable immediacy, giving one a vivid sense of Peru's political history even though it's rarely commented upon directly. Melina León directed a script she wrote with Michael J. White. In Spanish with subtitles. **97 min. Fri 10/18 at 1:30 PM, Fri 10/25 at 6:15 PM, and Fri 10/26 at 12:30 PM**

A Thief's Daughter

This social realist drama from Spain is worth seeing mainly for Greta Fernández's quietly powerful performance as a young working-poor woman taking care of her infant son and seven-year-old brother. The narrative revolves around her efforts to land steady employment so she might win custody of the brother, whom their father, recently released from prison, is trying to reclaim. Director Belén Funes is clearly indebted to the films of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne in her aesthetic choices (the camerawork is all handheld, the only music we hear is diegetic) and detailed portrait of life on the economic margins. The movie generates more suspense from whether the heroine will keep her job in a kitchen after her trial period ends than from whether she'll win her custody battle. In subtitled Catalan and Spanish. **102 min. Mon 10/21 @ 5:45 PM and Tue 10/22 at 8:30 PM** **RR**

NOW PLAYING

RR Certified Copy

The title of this 2010 French release translates more precisely as “true or faithful copy,” which may give you a better idea where Iranian writer-director Abbas Kiarostami (*Taste of Cherry*) is going with it. Much of the film unfolds as a prolonged walk-and-talk between two layered and often contentious characters: an English art critic visiting Tuscany on a book tour (the fascinating William Shimell) and a Frenchwoman living there (Juliette Binoche) who finagles an introduction to the author and takes him on a day trip to the village of Lucignano. Yet Kiarostami sends the narrative spinning about midway through, when the characters’ husband-and-wife role-playing for the benefit of a local cafe owner begins to seem like the movie’s actual reality. The conclusion is abrupt and unsatisfying, but the philosophical dialogue Kiarostami manages to keep aloft for well over an hour touches on intriguing questions of openness, self-honesty, and personal freedom. In English and subtitled French and Italian. —**J.R. JONES** 106 min. 35 mm. *Ahmad Kiarostami, son of the late director, attends the Wednesday screening. Sat 10/19, 3 PM, and Wed 10/23, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

An Elephant Sitting Still

Set over just one day but running almost four hours, Hu Bo’s 2018 hyperrealist epic is the most audacious debut feature from mainland China since Wang Bing’s nine-hour documentary *West of the Tracks* (2002). Like Wang’s film, it derives its power through the accumula-



Fantastic Fungi

tion of time and detail—Hu shoots nearly every scene, no matter how long, in a single take, making you feel weighed down in the characters’ lives. However ambitious, though, the writer-director-editor still had a long way to go in the fine art of characterization; you care about the subjects because they suffer so much, not because they’re particularly distinctive. Hu alternates between four major characters: an old man about to be thrown out of his home by his grown son; the old man’s

grandson, a bullied high school student who accidentally kills his tormentor; the bully’s older brother, who’s involved in the criminal underworld; and a female high school student involved in a sexual relationship with an administrator. This gets more formally impressive as the story grows increasingly despairing, cannily seducing you into its pessimistic worldview. Sadly, we’ll never know how Hu would have matured from here; he committed suicide a few months before the film’s premiere.

In Mandarin with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS** 230 min. *Director of photography Fan Chao attends the screening. Sun 10/20, 1 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films*

RR End of the Century

Lovers reunite and consequently revisit their younger selves in this lyrical debut from writer-director Lucio Castro. The picture begins in modern-day Barcelona, when a couple of artists lock eyes and eventually hook up in an Airbnb. One is a newly single poet from New York (Juan Barberini), and the other is a filmmaker from Berlin (Ramón Pujol). Actually, they’ve met before, but only one of them remembers at first. Cut to 1999, with the same actors playing their characters as closeted twentysomethings, and the details of their initial encounter materialize like flicks of paint from the center of a vast, hazy canvas. The film indulges in a popular double fantasy—looking back and then forward, imagining what might have been—without falling inside of it. Artistic choices anchor the narrative in the present; Barberini sports gray beard hairs throughout the film. Meanwhile, Castro excels in showing how ostensibly small discoveries, like a gutting line in a book or a song that gives perfect shape to a moment, can be bright markers in life, signifying a beginning, a middle, or an end. In Spanish with subtitles. —**LEAH PICKETT** 84 min. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

Fantastic Fungi

If you don’t already find mushrooms fascinating, this documentary might change your mind. Director ↗

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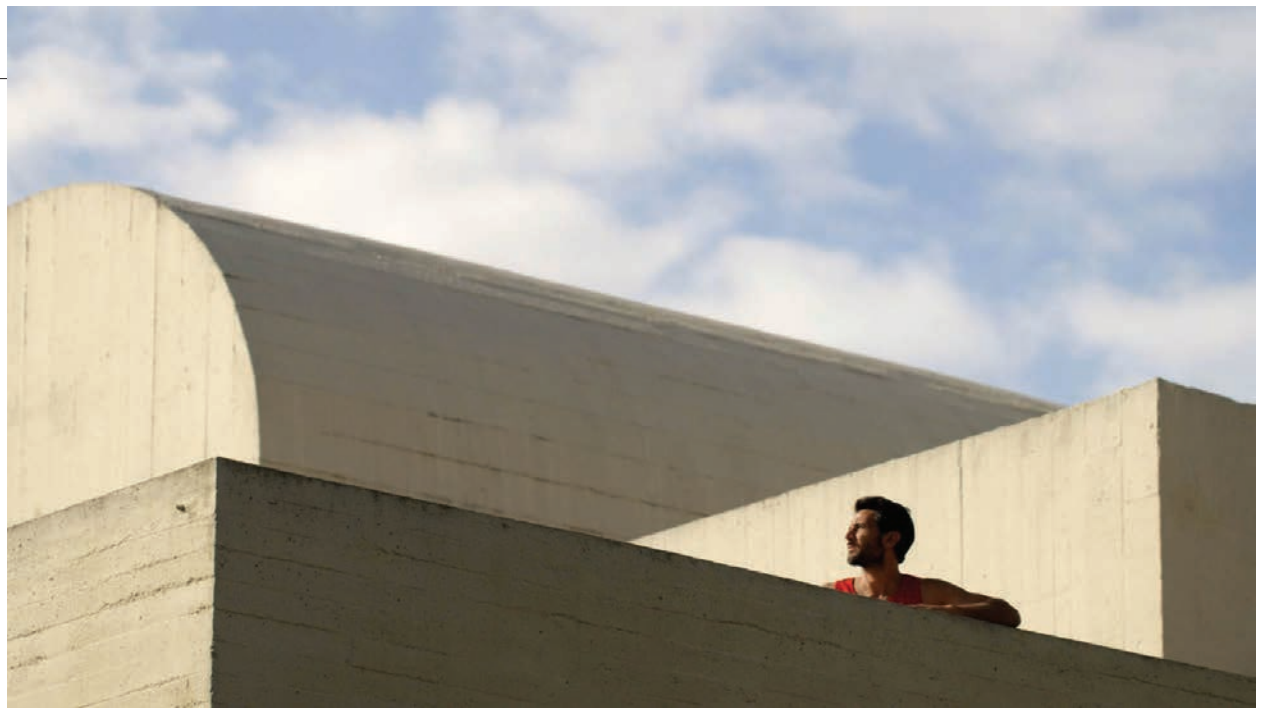
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FILM

➔ Louie Schwartzberg's ode to mycelium, the underground organism that begets toadstools and allows fungi to absorb nutrients from their environment, takes viewers on a whimsical journey across time and space. Mycologist Paul Stamets and other passionate experts shed light on fungi's many extraordinary abilities as a healer, cleaner, and sustainer of the natural world. What's more, certain fungi can bolster human immunity and have powerful, arguably beneficial effects on our brains. Overall, the doc could use more gravitas; syrupy narration from actor Brie Larson sounds like it was pulled from a children's educational program. But the enthusiasm with which Schwartzberg explores his subject, not to mention his crew's gorgeous visual effects and time-lapse photography, prove irresistible. Chances are you'll never look at a mushroom in the same way again. —**LEAH PICKETT** 81 min. *Schwartzberg attends the 8 PM Friday and Saturday screenings. Fri 10/18, 2 and 8*

End of the Century



PM; Sat 10/19, 5 PM; Sun 10/20, 3:30 PM; Mon 10/21, 6 PM; Tue 10/22, 7:45 PM; Wed 10/23, 6 PM; and Thu 10/24, 8:15 PM. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

One Way or Another

This extraordinary film (1977), the first Cuban feature by a woman, has been celebrated as feminist by some critics, partly for its story but also for its narrative style. It follows the relationship between schoolteacher Yolanda (Yolanda Cuellar) and factory worker Mario (Mario Balmaseda), but instead of imposing a patriarchal authorial voice, director Sara Gomez provocatively combines fiction sequences with documentary footage, and her playful use of form is both startling and purposeful. The film begins abruptly, as if in midscene, with a documentarylike record of a workers' meeting; the credits are followed by an actual documentary segment on housing development in the early 60s, complete with didactic voice-over. Sections that seem to be dramatic are later revealed to be documentary, while other apparently dramatic scenes are interrupted by discursive sequences. The film's form questions itself, as do the characters: Mario, torn between machismo and his growing revolutionary commitment, turns a malingerer worker in to the group, but then worries that doing so was "womanly." Most importantly, the editing encourages an active viewing process—when the lovers meet a man named Guillermo, a title asks "Who is Guillermo?" and the film then cuts to a slightly closer shot of the same title—just as the overall film encourages us to seek wider interpretations. Sadly, Gomez died in 1974 while the film was being edited, and it wasn't completed until three years later. —**FRED CAMPER** 78 min. 16-mm archival print. Wed 10/23, 7:30 PM. *Northwestern University Block Museum of Art* **FREE**

RR Stalker

Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 masterpiece, like his earlier *Solaris*, is a free and allegorical adaptation of an SF novel, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky's *Roadside Picnic*. After a meteorite hits the earth, the region where it's fallen is believed to grant the wishes of those who enter and, sealed off by the authorities, can be penetrated only illegally and with special guides. One of them (Aleksandr Kaidanovsky), the stalker of the

title, leads a writer and a professor through the grimmest industrial wasteland you've ever seen. What they find is pretty harsh and has none of the usual satisfactions of SF quests, but Tarkovsky regards their journey as a contemporary spiritual quest. His mise en scene is mesmerizing, and the final scene is breathtaking. Not an easy film, but almost certainly a great one. In Russian with subtitles. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 161 min. 35 mm. Mon 10/21, 2:30 PM, and Tue 10/22, 9 PM. *Music Box*

That Pärt Feeling: The Universe of Arvo Pärt

A conventional documentary would be insufficient for the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, a renowned genius whose reticent nature belies his incandescent compositions. Dutch producer-director Paul Hegeman finds the 84-year-old artist at the height of his craft. Pärt's musical storytelling has been described as minimalist, neoclassical, spiritual, and ethereal, and Hegeman effectively allows it to speak for itself. Rather than ticking the boxes of Pärt's biography or talking to him at length about his process, Hegeman gives his audience plenty of opportunities to experience the feeling referenced in the doc's title, through a wash of stirring communion that's mainly conveyed in the film through Pärt's rehearsals with the Cello Octet Amsterdam and performances in glittering concert halls around the world. Other artists and collaborators, including musicians (Tõnu Kaljuste, Kara-Lis Coverdale), choreographers (Jirí Kylián), and filmmakers (Alain Gomis), muse on the power of Pärt's work; but no words compare to the combination of hearing the notes and watching how they move through their orchestrator. In Dutch, German, and French with subtitles. —**LEAH PICKETT** 75 min. Fri 10/18, 2:15 PM, and Sun 10/20, 2 PM. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

ALSO PLAYING

Home Movie Day

Presented by the Chicago Film Archives and the Chicago Film Society, this annual event gives Chicagoans a chance to have their eight- and 16-millimeter films inspected, repaired, and screened. Sat 10/27, 1:30-5:30 PM. *Chicago History Museum* **FREE**

In My Room

Ulrich Köhler directed this German-Italian sci-fi drama about a man who wakes up one day to find that he and a woman he later meets are the only humans left on the planet. In English and subtitled German. 119 min. *Facets Cinematheque*

In the Mouth of the Wolf

Robert Morgan directed this long-lost made-for-television 1963 documentary about staging of the Verdi opera *Luisa Miller*, in Parma, the composer's birthplace. 55 min. August Ventura, Verdi Documentary Project founder, attends the screening and shares additional Verdi-related material. Sat 10/19, 7:30 PM. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

Little Mexico Film Festival

A one-day festival of short films on the theme of feminism. Sat 10/19, 1-9 PM. *Full schedule at limefilmfest.com. Citlalin Gallery and Theatre*

Music Box of Horrors

The Music Box Theatre's annual 24-hour horror fest features 13 features (all but three in 16- or 35-mm prints) from noon Saturday till noon Sunday. Highlights include Paul Leni's 1928 silent *The Man Who Laughs* with a live score, Cindy Sherman's *Office Killer* (1997), director John Hancock in person with his 1971 film *Let's Scare Jessica to Death*, director Neil Marshall in person with his 2002 film *Dog Soldiers*, and Lewis Teague's *Alligator*. Sat 10/19, noon, to Sun 10/20, noon. *Music Box* **FI**

My Char-Broiled Burger with Brewer

Local filmmaker Jim Sikora directed this 2000 documentary that is composed of conversations between musicians Jack Brewer (Saccharine Trust) and Mike Watt (Minutemen, the Stooges) about the glory years of punk and its decline. 41 min. Also showing are a selection of music videos directed by Sikora. Sikora attends the screening and participates in a discussion with critic Jonathan Rosenbaum. Sun 10/20, 5:30 PM. *Gene Siskel Film Center* **FI**

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Because Count Orlok can't speak for himself

Maxx McGathey of Gramps the Vamp scores silent horror films, including *Nosferatu* and *The Man Who Laughs*, which opens the Music Box of Horrors—and whose disfigured hero inspired the Joker.

By LEOR GALIL

Chicago keyboardist and composer Maxx McGathey loves Halloween. The funk group he's led since 2011 is called Gramps the Vamp, a name that drummer Stevenson Valentor got from a database of *Scooby-Doo* villains—it comes from a 1977 episode where the gang investigates a vampire haunting a hotel on Skull Island. The band's instrumental music is moody, comically brooding, and slightly campy. They call it “doom funk.”

In early 2016 Gramps the Vamp launched a Kickstarter to fund its second album, *The Cave of 10,000 Eyes*, which the band's page said “follows the plot of a faux b-horror movie from 1969, telling the story of an unexplainable incident in a cave many years ago.” If you pledged \$150 or more, you ➔

continued from 29

could pick a perk called Maxx's Monster Movie Marathon—that is, McGathey would set up a projector in the backyard of your choice for a private creature double feature. One person even took him up on it.

Gramps the Vamp always plays on Halloween, and for the past few years all seven members have worn group costumes that McGathey makes on the cheap. A recent favorite look, which McGathey calls “Evil Gramps the Vamp,” is dark brown robes with green black-light makeup painted on their arms, hands, and faces to make them look like radioactive skeletons. He says the best costumes he's designed were retro “space suits” made from white coveralls, electrical cables, army surplus shoulder harnesses, and aluminum foil. If it were more socially acceptable, McGathey would probably celebrate Halloween year-round.

“He wants to build a career centered on this holiday,” Valentor says. “I'd say he's doing damn well.”

Toward that end, McGathey has begun writing music outside the band too. Over the past couple years he's developed a specialty: composing scores to be performed live during screenings of classic horror movies. He started in 2017, when the Chicago Park District commissioned him to write new music for the 1922 German expressionist film *Nosferatu* as part of its free Campfire Horrors film series at Northerly Island (the movie's vampire, Count Orlok, is probably the most famous Dracula rip-off). Gramps the Vamp performed McGathey's score for the last screening of the series's second season. Since then, McGathey and the band have returned to the *Nosferatu* score twice more: at Chicago Filmmakers in June 2018, then again at Campfire Horrors in October 2018. On Thursday, October 17, Gramps the Vamp will bring the *Nosferatu* show to Michigan, performing it at the Bay Theatre in downtown Suttons Bay.

Two days later, McGathey will be back in Chicago with a different group of musicians for the Music Box of Horrors, the Music Box's annual 24-hour spooky movie marathon. The event begins at noon on Saturday, October 19, with a screening of the 1928 silent film *The Man Who Laughs*, the next-to-last feature directed by famed German expressionist Paul Leni. German actor Conrad Veidt (the sleepwalking killer in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*) stars as a carnival freak-show attraction whose ghastly, disfigured grin would later inspire the appearance of Batman nemesis the Joker. This summer, Music Box general man-

ager Ryan Oestreich tapped McGathey to write a new score for the movie.

This is McGathey's second year in a row presenting an original score at the Music Box of Horrors. Last year, McGathey pitched the Gramps the Vamp version of *Nosferatu*, but Oestreich turned him down. “I really liked it, but I was like, ‘I really feel like *Nosferatu*'s been done—a lot,’” he says. “‘What I'd rather do is put you into something that we are already doing and maybe challenge you.’” Instead McGathey wrote new music to complement the 1927 Alfred Hitchcock murder mystery *The Lodger*.

The Music Box routinely screens silent movies with live accompaniment, but Oestreich says the performances are often one-offs—aside from house organist Dennis Scott, McGathey is the only musician he can recall playing twice. “We were just so excited to bring him back,” Oestreich says. “We had wanted to do *The Man Who Laughs* for a very long time, and we were really blown away by his work on *The Lodger*. So we were like, ‘You need to do this film for us—you need to do *The Man Who Laughs*.’”

McGathey, 30, grew up in Chicago's suburbs, mostly the southwestern village of Plainfield. His parents shared their love of scary movies with him, and he ran with it. “*Jaws* is actually my mom's favorite movie,” he says. As a teenager, he'd watch the likes of *Psycho*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist*, and *Alien* with his whole family.

He began playing piano at age five, and took classical lessons as a preteen. As a student at Benet Academy High School in Lisle in the mid-2000s, he played keys in the jazz band, where he met Valentor.

“I always looked up to him,” Valentor says. “He was a shredding keyboardist way back in the day—and still is, absolutely. And just a fantastic improviser.”

By the time McGathey graduated high school in 2008, he'd formed his first extracurricular band, which started out playing classic-rock covers. He also loved jazz and funk, though, and while at Loyola University he cofounded Gramps the Vamp. “I really wanted to form a band that would be fun for house parties,” he says. “I just got the best musicians I could find, and we started playing covers of funk bands I was into at the time, like Lettuce and the Budos Band, or old stuff like Fela Kuti and James Brown.”

McGathey assembled Gramps the Vamp in summer 2011. Its lineup has morphed over the years, topping out as a ten-piece. Several members were at Loyola with him, including



Maxx McGathey © ALEC BASSE

Valentor, and he recruited bassist Kevin Holt through Craigslist. They made their live debut on Halloween, playing a party at the home of alto saxophonist Nick Bush. “That set it off for me—I was like, ‘Well, I want to play funk, ‘cause that's what I'm into, but I want to make it darker. I want to make it more like you could get into it for Halloween,’” McGathey says. “That started off the whole trajectory of eventually finding what we call ‘doom funk.’”

As a bandleader and songwriter, McGathey knew he needed to account for audiences accustomed to groups with singers out front. As Gramps the Vamp developed its instrumental material, he encouraged members to imagine scenes that would help give the music vivid moods and intense character. “I'd be like, ‘This moment, you open a box and ghouls all spring out of the box, and they're swirling around in

the air,’” McGathey says. “All of my bandmates are like, ‘OK, let's play that a little crazier and a little more swirly.’” This approach inadvertently prepared him to work on film scores. “It was easy for me to think visually in terms of movies,” he says. “That's what directly led me to be interested in film and music.”

In August 2017, Andy Rosenstein of genre-blurring Chicago electro band Terrible Spaceship told McGathey that the Park District had put out an open call for local musicians interested in writing and performing a score for *Nosferatu*. McGathey submitted Gramps the Vamp's catalog as well as a short film called *Demonoid 1971* that includes some of his organ pieces. More than a dozen artists applied, but before the end of the month McGathey learned he'd landed the gig.

Movies in the Park scheduled the *Nosferatu* screening for October 27. “I work as a teacher and do some other day jobs and stuff, so I was working around the clock to get this thing done,” McGathey says. “I think working on something really intense like that gives you a lot of confidence in whatever you’re doing—it’s like, ‘You have to finish this thing. You don’t really have enough time, but you have to do a good job.’ Or at least that’s what I’m telling myself.”

McGathey hadn’t seen *Nosferatu* in its entirety before he got the job, and though he promptly addressed that oversight, his viewings of the movie during the project were mostly piecemeal and obsessive. With notebook in hand, he’d watch each scene at least 40 times and sketch out ideas. In total, he says this added up to maybe 100 viewings of *Nosferatu*. He looked into other modern live scores for old films and found a lot of atmospheric material that didn’t jibe with his style. “I’m a melodic composer—I like themes, I like melodies,” he says. “I went back to what I do with *Gramps the Vamp*. ‘How would I approach this scene?’ I really did treat it in a groove-based way.”

He wrote for piano first, then worked in the other instruments *Gramps the Vamp* uses: guitar, bass, drums, glockenspiel, trumpet, and two saxophones. The deadline he’d given himself for arriving at a finished, notated score left the band a few weeks to rehearse, and they ran through it about ten times, with McGathey conducting and playing keys.

Because he wants to keep performing *Nosferatu*, McGathey has been tweaking the score over the past couple years, notably introducing a part for cello. “It’s more work in a small amount of time than any other musical project I’ve ever done,” he says. “But it’s cool because at the end of the day, you have it, and you can take it to different cities and repeat it.”

Oestreich has helped program the Music Box of Horrors since 2015, when he became the theater’s general manager. He has a meticulous approach to booking the marathon: He takes care to include disparate subgenres (slashers, monster movies, trashy exploitation pictures) as well as films that aren’t necessarily horror but share some of its traits (thrillers, murder mysteries), and he combines popular titles (or work by well-known directors) with obscurities that will entice superfans. There’s also usually a silent movie.

Oestreich knows some attendees consider the traditional silent-movie slot an opportunity to take a nap or step out for a bite—but he’s also determined to change their minds. In ➔



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OCT 31  "THE THRILLER" HALLOWEEN EXTRAVAGANZA	NOV 01  BURLESQUE THE SWEET SPOT CHICAGO: RED LIGHT SPECIAL	NOV 02  ANTHONY BROWN & GROUP THERAPY
OCT 26 PREMO PRESENTS DARK SIDE 2019	NOV 03 #FITDAYPARTY: MIKE D'S BIRTHDAY SESSION	NOV 09 PASSPORT VIBES: AFROBEATS VS EVERYONE II
OCT 30 WAYBACK WEDNESDAYS	NOV 04 MECCA MONDAY: "IT'S A REAL MOTHER FOR YAI"	NOV 12 WINDY CITY STORIES FEAT. LGADO
NOV 01 AFRO SOCA LOVE	NOV 05 RICHIE GOODS	NOV 13 CHANTAE CANN X STOUT
NOV 02 AFRO-FUSION LIVING LEGEND SERIES: WANDE C	NOV 06 WAYBACK WEDNESDAYS	NOV 15 ROY AYERS

BODY, EVERY SUNDAY

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continued from 31

2015, when he booked Paul Buscarello to perform an organ score for Tod Browning's *The Unknown* during a prime-time spot, he made at least a few converts. "Audiences came up to me and said, 'I did not believe you, I thought this was a waste of my time, but I tried it and holy shit, it was great,'" he says. He thinks McGathey's efforts will help build interest in keeping silent films part of the Music Box of Horrors.

For *The Lodger*, McGathey performed with Valentor and bassist Luc Parcell (of Chicago Afrobeat Project) under the name False Gods Trio. McGathey had built the score out of fragments of music they generated during improvisational sessions. "It wasn't so much about the specific notes; it was more about the feeling that we were portraying at that moment," he says. "That was a really liberating experience." *The Lodger* screened about six hours into last year's marathon, which all but guaranteed McGathey a committed audience who were already in it for the long haul; based on the reaction, Oestreich hopes that folks who were there will come back early this year to see what McGathey has cooked up for *The Man Who Laughs*.

Oestreich chose *The Man Who Laughs* in part because he knew that Todd Phillips's *Joker* would debut in theaters two weeks before the Music Box of Horrors. In June the film was reissued on Blu-ray in a 4K digital restoration, but the theater is using a 35-millimeter film print. "We don't do things

only because they might be relevant at the time," he says. "But sometimes I find we add a little extra texture to the programming when we lean in and talk a little bit about the current culture."

For his score to *The Man Who Laughs*, McGathey sought to split the difference between the melodic focus he applied to *Nosferatu* and his relatively mood-oriented approach to *The Lodger*. He deliberately avoided listening to any extant scores for the film, including the one on the new Blu-ray. "I was less reliant on melody this time around," he says. "But I think it makes it better, because it allows you to use melody to greater effect." Because the film focuses on a clown, McGathey made sure his music would remind people of old-world carnivals: he wrote for violin, cello, accordion, and piano. His ensemble on Saturday will consist of violinist Annarita Tanzi of the Fox Valley Orchestra, cellist Alex Ellsworth of performance collective Mocrep, and accordionist Hope Arthur of Mucca Pazza.

Because *The Man Who Laughs* kicks off the Music Box of Horrors, McGathey probably won't stick around for the whole thing. "I really have a lot of respect for the people who bring sleeping bags and stay all night," he says. "But I don't think I'll be staying." To be fair, he's already put in his hours, and then some. "Horror is one of those genres that you can go down a deep, deep rabbit hole," he says. "I don't feel every genre is like that." **✎**

 @imLeor



Maxx McGathey performs with Gramps the Vamp at Sleeping Village in 2019. **✎** TINA LOUISE MEAD

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

IN ROTATION



Nihiloxica perform in Paris in 2018.

© VINCENT DUCARD FOR MILGRAM PRODUCTIONS

PHILIP MONTORO

Reader music editor

Malignant Altar On the Bandcamp page of this disgusting Houston death-metal band, a satisfied customer calls the 2019 demo *Retribution of Jealous Gods* “the soundtrack to a movie where an ancient prehistoric god tells a dude to go hog wild and kill cops with a log.” Malignant Altar grind out sticky chunks of down-tuned riffage, smeared with foul, guttural growls and powered by startlingly graceful drumming. Their first full-length is imminent.

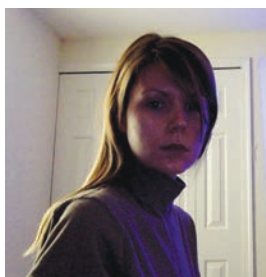
Nihiloxica Ugandan label Nyege Nyege Tapes documents the fertile underground in Kampala, which includes instrumental six-piece Nihiloxica: four percussionists from traditional troupe the Nilotika Cultural Ensemble plus a kit drummer and synth player, both from the UK. The band’s eerie, pulse-quickening “Bugandan techno” combines apocalyptic synths with ancient rhythms—especially the Baksimba groove, which foregrounds simultaneous duple and triple subdivisions of its loping, stampeding beat. Electronics drone, swoop, and sting while itchy, percolating drums thicken the air with irresistible momentum. After two EPs on NNT, Nihiloxica has a full-length coming on Belgian label Crammed Discs, also home to Congolese group Kokoko!

Gamelan Çudamani I owe Carlos Tortolero and David Chavez at DCASE a debt of gratitude for booking this group at the 2019 World Music Festival. Gamelan Çudamani’s concert at the Harris Theater was one of the greatest musical experiences of my life. If you have another chance to see a Balinese gamelan of that caliber, do whatever it takes to get there.

OLIVIA JUNELL Codirector of Experimental Sound Studio

Sara Ludy, *Deeptimesurfacetime* I could listen to this piece forever—in fact the first time

I listened to it, I accidentally kept it on repeat for several hours, tuning in and out as the sounds integrated seamlessly into my day. Though the work weaves together recordings that Sara collected from two artificial environments—Nan Lian Garden in Hong Kong and a VR aviary she built—it evokes a sort of familiarity and “naturalness” that I don’t often experience with more documentary recordings of environments.



Sara Ludy © COURTESY THE ARTIST

Music in South Shore There’s great energy in South Shore right now musically, between weekly shows at the Quarry on 75th, the Universal Alley Jazz Jams off 71st (summer months only, unfortunately), and community-level initiatives—this summer I got to see Dee Alexander at one block party and a fantastic youth band, Urban Aspirations, at another.

Fat Tony, “Hood Party” Transitions between seasons always put me in the mood for old favorites, and Fat Tony’s 2013 album, *Smart Ass Black Boy*, is a regular feature in my car right now. I met Anthony when we both lived in Houston in the early 2010s, and this video feels like a time capsule from back then—everyone was at a perpetual house party, at least according to the music videos (think Chief Keef’s “Love Sosa”), a trope that “Hood Party” plays with. Always smart and often playful, Fat Tony is a Houston classic. Best listened to while in motion.

ADIA SYKES

Independent curator and organizer

Kendrick Lamar, “Alright” Whenever the world feels particularly heavy and every piece of news warrants an infuriated eye roll, this song cuts through it. *To Pimp a Butterfly* dropped in 2015, at such a tumultuous time in America—and since then the anger, the frustration, the call to action, and the unapologetic Blackness of this album hasn’t lost its resonance. This song is a pump-up. It’s a conjuring of hope.

PJ Morton, *Gumbo Unplugged* I really tried to pick just one song off this 2018 live album, but the entire recording is my jam at the moment. PJ Morton has one of those voices that transports you back to the time of phenomenal soul singers, and he really pays homage to them on this record. Guests such as Yebba, BJ the Chicago Kid, and Lecrae are such wonderful presences throughout. There are a lot of groovy tracks on this one, and it’s such an enjoyable listen.

Osvaldo Fresedo and Dizzy Gillespie, “Vida Mía” I dance Argentine tango, so there’s always something tango related in my daily shuffle. This track in particular is a beautiful meeting of two brilliant musical minds. It was recorded in 1956, not long after what’s considered the golden age of tango, and it has a classic Fresedo lullaby or make-you-swoon quality. Then after about a minute Gillespie comes in with the trumpet, which isn’t used in traditional tango orchestras, and lends a really sexy quality to the song. You don’t hear anything off this record played while out social dancing, but it’s just gorgeous. 🎧



PJ Morton © KEITH TAYLOR



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**BIG THIEF, PALEHOUND**

Fri 10/18, 9 PM, Metro, 3730 N. Clark, sold out. 18+

DUSTIN CONDREN

PICK OF THE WEEK**Big Thief close out a banner year with their second album of 2019**

IF BIG THIEF had only given us May's *U.F.O.F.*, they already would've been one of the most compelling indie bands of 2019. Then in August, the folk-leaning Brooklyn four-piece dropped the feverish, slow-boiling rocker "Not" and announced the release of another full-length, the brand-new *Two Hands* (4AD). The albums feel tethered together, as if they're responding to each other. Big Thief recorded *U.F.O.F.* just outside Seattle with engineer Dom Monks and producer Andrew Sarlo, wrestling together stripped-down melodies that alternate between fragile and austere; front woman Adriaenne Lenker balances the two on the otherworldly "From" when her trembling voice breaks into a growl. *U.F.O.F.* is so hushed that it sometimes sounds like a car radio when you're driving along the edge of a station's reach; by contrast, *Two Hands* comes through clearly. Recorded in the Texas border town of Tornillo, also with Monks and Sarlo, the newer album doesn't quite push the volume to 11, but everything is bigger in Texas—Big Thief perform these warm, rangy songs with enough force to let you know they could break eardrums if they wanted. Thankfully they care more about enchanting their listeners than punishing them, and the arpeggiating guitar that courses through the title track of *Two Hands* perfectly demonstrates the band's magnetism. —LEOR GALIL



Blacker Face © SAM CALLAHAN

FRIDAY 18

BIG THIEF See *Pick of the Week* at left. *Palehound* opens. 9 PM, Metro, 3730 N. Clark, sold out. 18+

BLACKER FACE Why? *Footclan* and *Augustine Esterhammer-Fic* open. 9:30 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$12. 21+

Blacker Face are the kind of band I point to when other people claim there's a lack of poetry in contemporary punk rock. Equal parts X-Ray Spex and Mr. Bungle, the Chicago group have been working over the past few years toward making a soundtrack for the builders of tomorrow's movements. "Parade," off the new *Distinctive Juju* (out later this month on Sooper Records), is sure to make the cut for my future mixtapes—but whether I'll include it for its protest message or for its beautiful sound is up in the air. The song has an 80s Lower East Side freedom vibe that's punctuated with blasts of P.T. Bell's insistent saxophone and passionate vocals by singer Jolene Whatever. As she sings "scared about the water," her bandmates reply "and you should be scared too," gently nudging the listener to consider the global water crisis for a moment. As Blacker Face confront the issues and institutions behind society's ills, they remind us that we're part of the solution too. "Badu," from their 2017 release *Mississippi Goddam*, defines the band's modus operandi over a decent R&B beat: "They get to shakin' / We make 'em afraid to leave their homes / This divisive language might lead to awkward conversations / Making folks uncomfortable is how change is generated." This show kicks off Blacker Face's national tour, dubbed Everything Is Sinking, which they characteristically announced via a poetic Facebook post: "Tour 2019. It's gonna be long. Hey. Everything

is sinking. We're leaving, most frequently bound for where it's sinking more quicker." We're lucky to have Blacker Face in Chicago; the city desperately needs more musicians who push their own artistic boundaries while inviting audiences to turn passive listening into direct action. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

BOOK OF WYRMS *Black Road* headlines; *Book of Wyrms*, *Plastic Crimewave Syndicate*, and *Liquid Signal* open. 9 PM, Reggies' Music Joint, 2105 S. State, \$12. 21+

Richmond-based heavy quartet Book of Wyrms released their second full-length, *Remythologizer*, in August, following up their accurately if unimaginatively titled 2017 LP, *Sci-Fi/Fantasy*. The new album immediately establishes a welcome atmosphere: dark, doomy, and highly comforting to anyone raised on a diet of D&D, 70s heavy rock, and ditchweed. Front woman Sarah Moore-Lindsey chants and wails, leading the way through a weird world of hallucinatory images and retrofuturism, while bassist Jay Lindsey (married to Sarah) churns the cauldron and guitarists Kyle Lewis and Ben Coudriet reap the whirlwind. Drummer Chris DeHaven packs a heavy punch, especially with the weird eldritch gallop he employs on "Undead Pegasus" (also the subject of the album's custom-van-a-riffic cover art). Book of Wyrms have a lighter thematic touch than many of their peers, and they're not shy about adding humor to their space-doom universe. For every sinister, serious chug ("Autumnal Snow" and "Dust Toad," which bookend the album), there's a frolicking, mischievous number such as "Blacklight Warpriest" and the aforementioned reanimated-flying-horse tale. At just under 40 minutes, *Remythologizer* doesn't overstay its welcome, but at the same time it leaves you feeling like you've crossed a lot of terrain—sometimes slogging up a mountain with a heavy pack, sometimes floating in space. —MONICA KENDRICK

ROVA 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$20. 18+

Rova, which comprises saxophonists Jon Raskin, Bruce Ackley, Larry Ochs, and Steve Adams (who replaced Andrew Voigt in 1988), is the gold standard against which all other saxophone quartets must be measured. Each of its members has a distinct approach to his instrument and a personal aesthetic, and they've expressed them in settings as disparate as Ochs's pancultural improvisations with guitarist Fred Frith and sound artist Miya Masaoka (who specializes in the koto) and Adams's jittery pop-meets-classical tunes with Birdsongs of the Mesozoic. Together they've forged a unique, recognizable group voice that's steeped in

their common mastery of free improvisation but is also applicable to rigorous compositions. Though the group's members sometimes write their own music, its repertoire also includes pieces composed by esteemed vanguardists such as Alvin Curran, Anthony Braxton, and John Zorn as well as album-length explorations of the structural and expressive potentialities of fellow saxophonists Steve Lacy and John Coltrane. In order to perform Coltrane's large-band blowout *Ascension*, Rova added electronic musicians, electric guitarists, and a rhythm section, but it still managed to sound like itself on one of the most iconic long-form works of free jazz. While Rova often plays with guests these days, its first Chicago date in nine years will feature the quartet on its own, performing two sets of pieces it's never showcased here before. —BILL MEYER →

THOM YORKE

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OCTOBER 25	CRACKPOT RED WIGGLERS
OCTOBER 26	ZESTIVAL
OCTOBER 27	WHOLE SOMERADIO DJ NIGHT
OCTOBER 28	RC BIG BAND 7PM
OCTOBER 30	AMERICAN TROUBADOUR NIGHT
NOVEMBER 1	THE JETSTAR 88S
NOVEMBER 3	TALITY
NOVEMBER 4	PROSPECT FOUR 9:30PM
NOVEMBER 6	MORSE & WAGNER 6PM
NOVEMBER 6	SMILIN' BOBBY AND THE CLEMTONES
NOVEMBER 9	RONNIE AND THE NASTYS
NOVEMBER 10	HEISENBERG UNCERTAINTY PLAYERS 7PM
NOVEMBER 11	RC BIG BAND 7PM PROSPECT FOUR 9:30PM
NOVEMBER 12	FLABBY HOFFMAN SHOW 8PM
NOVEMBER 13	ELIZABETH'S CRAZY LITTLE THING FEATURING MARK JOURDAN 9PM

OPEN MIC ON TUESDAY EVENINGS (EXCEPT 2ND)

MUSIC

continued from 35

SHINTARO SAKAMOTO *Sessa opens. 8 PM,*
Subterranean, 2011 W. North, sold out. 17+

Japanese musicians have a long history of fascination with Western kitsch—perhaps they perceive aggressive artificiality as America's most authentic form of expression. In the 70s, Haruomi Hosono released a number of exotica albums, and two decades later, the Pizzicato Five became famous for their irony-poisoned Bacharach sophisti-twee. Iconic Tokyo singer-songwriter and producer Shintaro Sakamoto advanced that winking tradition for decades as the front man for underground psych-rock legends Yura Yura Teikoku, a three-piece that was very influential in Japan but rarely performed internationally. Sakamoto has had more success in the U.S. since he set out on his own; his 2011 debut, *How to Live With a Phantom* (released on his own Zelone label), was licensed by Other Music Records and distributed in Europe and North America, exposing him to new audiences. Shintaro's most recent album, 2016's *Let's Dance Raw* (Zelone), deliberately refutes its title; there's nothing raw about its meticulously smooth grooves and oh-so-precious melodies, which are drenched in reverb and Hawaiian guitar and clothed in late-night evening wear. "Extremely Bad Man" struts across the dance floor, but not too hard, while chipmunk vocals declare in Japanese "(Insanely bad guy) Invite me / You came to sell strange things." The title track is strobe-light Euro-disco for exhausted cosmopolitans, while "You Can Be a Robot Too" sets its fruity mechanical sound effects marching to a strumming banjo. The hysterically lachrymose "Never Liked You, but Still Nostalgic" may be the album's most pointed statement of purpose—it's a dreamy Pacific Island ballad about the pleasures of alienation and the alienation of pleasures. Sometimes someone else's weird fake emotions are the only things that feel real. —NOAH BERLATSKY

SLEATER-KINNEY See also *Saturday. Shamir opens. 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 4746 N. Racine, sold out.* **AL**

If you were a young American feminist in the late 90s or early 00s with a penchant for punk and indie rock, there's a good chance you grew up listening to Sleater-Kinney. Formed by guitarist-vocalists Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein in 1994 and completed by longtime drummer Janet Weiss in 1996, the group spent their first decade delivering increasingly adventurous albums that merge vibrant guitar interplay and dynamic drumming with smart, sometimes intimate, sometimes biting lyrics. As they developed their sound and their fan base, they brought subjects such as gender expectations, queer romance, and feminist consciousness out of progressive punk circles and into more mainstream realms long before the likes of Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, and Lizzo (who opened Sleater-Kinney's 2015 tour) rode them into the Top 40. After 2005's lush *The Woods*, the trio disbanded, only to come back even stronger a decade later with the glorious *No Cities to Love*. The band's recent ninth record, *The Center Won't Hold* (produced by St. Vincent), tones down Sleater-Kinney's more frenet-



Sleater-Kinney
© NIKKO LAMERE

ic indie-rock tendencies in favor of a pronounced pop slickness that foregrounds a simmering electronic pulse. That change in direction, along with Weiss's departure just weeks before the album's release (the band recruited Angie Boylan of Aye Nako as a replacement), has provoked some skepticism, but Sleater-Kinney have never stagnated from one release to the next—why would they start now, when there's still new ground to explore? But as much as they stretch out into different sounds, their songwriting still captures themes and observations that could resonate with the fans that came of age alongside them. In an interview with Pitchfork's Jenn Pelly, Brownstein describes the band's desire to create music that speaks to the lived experiences of women of their generation: "We want this record to be a story of women who are in their 40s." It seems natural that in 2019 an album based on that vision would take a darker turn than its predecessors—especially from a band who have spent their career fighting the good fight. The #MeToo movement went viral, but it's barely made a dent in gender-based harassment and violence. Same-sex marriage became legal in 2015, but even as I type this the country awaits a Supreme Court ruling that could strip the LGBTQ+ population of many civil rights. Greta Thunberg has become a hero for speaking out about climate change—and in return she's been mercilessly trolled online about her hair, her wardrobe, her youth, and her Asperger's syndrome. As bleak and frustrating as the world might be, there's plenty of fire and resilience on *The Center Won't Hold*, between the quirky seduction-by-insecurities tune "Hurry on Home" and the smooth, dance-floor-ready "Reach Out." The album

isn't without its missteps ("*Ruins*" suggests that Sleater-Kinney just might not be grimy enough to pull off industrial skeez), but it's well worth meandering through all its twists and turns. —JAMIE LUDWIG

SATURDAY 19

RAHIM ALHAJ & SAHBA MOTALLEBI 8 PM,
Old Town School of Folk Music, Szold Music & Dance Hall, 4545 N. Lincoln, \$35. **AL**

During the Iran-Iraq war, Baghdad-born oud master Rahim AlHaj was imprisoned and tortured by Saddam Hussein's government for his political activism. He fled to Jordan and eventually found refuge in the U.S., settling in Albuquerque in 2000, and there he's continued to preserve and develop the music of the *oud*—the pear-shaped, double-coursed string instrument at the heart of the roughly 5,000-year-old Arabic musical tradition. AlHaj became a U.S. citizen in 2008, and in 2015 he was awarded the prestigious NEA National Heritage Fellowship. Around the time AlHaj was acclimating to New Mexico, Iranian musician Sahba Motallebi was putting down roots in the Los Angeles area after traveling as a member of the Iranian National Orchestra. Motallebi is one of the world's finest players of the *tar* and *setar*, the long-necked figure-eight-bodied lutes central to Persian classical music, and she works to uphold its traditions and incorporate them into contemporary folk and world-music contexts. AlHaj and Motallebi met in 2018 through a



Rahim AlHaj and Sahba Motallebi
 © COURTESY THE ARTIST

project by pianist Arturo O’Farrill that brought an international group of musicians to the U.S.-Mexico border near San Diego—including several players from the seven countries targeted by Trump’s 2017 anti-Muslim travel ban—in order to record the album *Fandango at the Wall* (Resilience) in protest of unjust U.S. immigration policies. The two virtuosos became friends, and a few months ago they launched a series of duo performances that draw from the related but distinct musical traditions of their lands. Both are founded on the *maqam*, a com-

plex, intricate system of scales that includes melodic phrases and techniques of ornamentation. AlHaj and Motallebi will play individually before joining forces on traditional tunes from Iran and Iraq as well as each other’s compositions—including one that AlHaj wrote at age 13 to protest the Iran-Iraq war. They’re not interested in developing a fusion but rather seek to explore the kinship of their musical DNA. Most important, their concerts are about “activating the notes,” as AlHaj puts it, with the power to bring people from previously warring

countries together. “How beautiful is that?” he asks. “To show that animosity and separation are not the key to living in harmony on this planet.” —CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

GHOSTLY 20 *Tobacco* headlines *Metro*; *Shigeto*, *Drama*, *Steve Hauschildt*, and *SV4* open. *The Smart Bar* late show features DJ sets by *Ciel*, *Galcher Lustwerk*, *JTC*, and *Shigeto & Charles Trees*. 8 PM at *Metro*, 10 PM at *Smart Bar*, 3730

N. Clark, \$25, \$30 for both shows. *Metro* 18+, *Smart Bar* 21+

This year Michigan-born, New York-raised record label Ghostly International celebrates two decades of releasing cutting-edge electronic sounds. As part of the festivities it’s throwing a party called Ghostly 20 in its own honor at *Metro* this week. The label was founded in Ann Arbor in 1999 by Sam Valenti IV, who was inspired by the sound and culture of the Detroit techno movement. Ghostly’s first release was Matthew Dear’s debut single, “Hands Up for Detroit,” and before long the label had expanded beyond dance music into a wide variety of electronic genres; over the years it’s put out releases by chillwave artist Com Truise, trip-hoppy dream pop duo Phantogram, and minimal gloom band HTRK. The lineup of Ghostly 20 draws from this eclectic roster; Black Moth Super Rainbow front man Thomas Fec headlines with his lo-fi, blown-out techno project Tobacco, and the bill also includes performances by jazzy hip-hop producer Shigeto (performing live) and spacey Chicago duo Drama. Opening the show is local synth artist Steve Hauschildt (a former member of minimal ambient trio Emeralds), whose compositions create warm cinematic soundscapes. Stay for the full show for maximum effect, as each act takes you to a distinctly different but equally lush and hazy headspace. —LUCA CIMARUSTI ➔

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BRUNCH SERIES |
| 11.16 | WATCH WHAT CRAPPENS | 11.24 | ENTER THE HAGGIS |
| 11.17 | JIMMY WEBB
WITH ROBIN SPIELBERG | 11.25 | CHERIE CURRIE & BRIE DARLING |
| 11.18 | COREY SMITH | 11.26-27 | DIGABLE PLANETS |
| 11.19 | CHRISTINE LAVIN, JOHN GORKA,
PATTY LARKIN & CLIFF EBERHARDT | 11.29 | DWELE |
| | | 11.30-12.1 | BODEANS |
| | | 12.3 | WHINE DOWN WITH JANA KRAMER |
| | | 12.4 | JANE MONHEIT |

OCT
21



JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE
WITH THE CERNY BROTHERS

OCT
22
+
23



MADELEINE PEYROUX

OCT
29



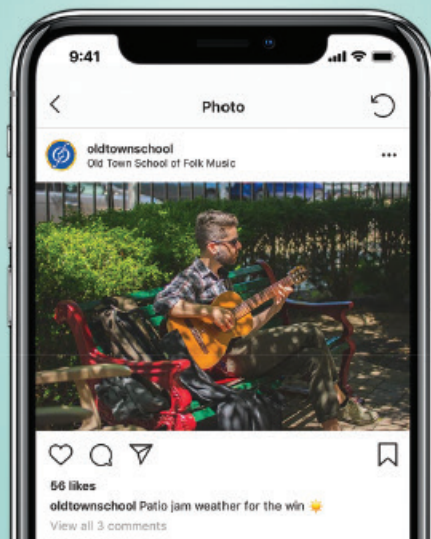
MIKE PHILLIPS
WITH MARQUEAL JORDAN

NOV
3



WILLIAM DUVALL
OF ALICE IN CHAINS

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MUSIC

continued from 37

PEAER *Gentle Heat opens. 7 PM, Subterranean, 2011 W. North, \$8. 17+*

In August, a couple days before Brooklyn indie-rock trio Peaer released their second album, *A Healthy Earth* (Tiny Engines), the *Fader* ran an interview with the band where drummer Jeremy Kinney sketched out their ambitions. “One of my goals in writing all of these songs was to achieve a level of scale,” he said. “To not just talk about interpersonal relationships, but also about the world at large at various levels: the government, the environment, or culture.” The result of all that reaching is a vital listen; each song on *A Healthy Earth* retains its intimacy even as Peaer grapple with problems much bigger than themselves. The lyrics on the loopy “Like You” may sound like simple communications between two people, but they illustrate bigger realities; when front man Peter Katz blithely intones, “I like you because I look like you,” he captures an emotional response that’s helping drive the resurgence of populist nationalism. On “Commercial” he sings about the anxiety wrapped up in something as routine as buying a new hair product—his choice is connected to a web of negative consequences, largely unknown to him, that can affect everything from his health to global climate change. From the tension in his voice, I’m prepared to believe he’s lost sleep over this (in another life, he could’ve written for *The Good Place*). But as much as Peaer struggle with great philosophical questions, they sound like they’re having fun doing it, at least judging from their fancy melodies and whimsical, mathy approach to indie rock. They embrace the idea of parallel realities on “Multiverse,” which on the vinyl version starts at the end of side A and ends at the beginning of side B. That cheeky move—requiring an acrobatically fast LP flip to maintain the flow of a tune—suggests that the band want their listeners to stay on their toes. —LEOR GALIL

SLEATER-KINNEY *See Friday. Shamir opens. 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 4746 N. Racine, \$37. 18*

SUNDAY20

MEG BAIRD & MARY LATTIMORE 8:30 PM, *Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$15. 21+*

When I first heard acid-folk group Espers in the early 2000s, I was stunned by the singing of Meg Baird. Here was a young woman evoking legendary vocalists from the other side of the pond—first lady of British folk Shirley Collins, the cut-glass tones of founding Fairport Convention singer Judy Dyble, the earthy Anne Briggs, even the nostalgia-delving Mary Hopkin—all while maintaining a unique and impressive sound of her own. Espers called it a day after three sublime albums (though they’ve played a few reunions), and since then Baird has made three stark but lovely solo albums for Drag City that showcase the powerful delicacy of her pipes, most recently 2015’s *Don’t Weigh Down the Light*. That same year, Baird surprised fans with her first foray as a singing drummer, propelling an overdriven fusion of acid rock and folk in Heron Oblivion, alongside members of heavy psychsters Comets on Fire and Assemble Head in Sunburst Sound. Their 2016 self-titled LP on Sub Pop is one of the more original albums I heard that year, straddling the line between UK acoustic progressive practitioners (the Pentangle, Sun Also Rises) and underground Japanese blazers (High Rise, White Heaven). In recent years Baird has also collaborated with Kurt Vile, with her sister Laura in the banjo-driven old-timey group the Baird Sisters, and with ace Swedish cellist Helena Espvall under the name Trollslända. Last year she released her first LP with harpist Mary Lattimore, *Ghost Forests* (Three Lobed). Lattimore has had a varied career as well, beginning with the 2012 album *The Withdrawing Room* (Desire Path), where she seamlessly melds beautiful harp textures with experimental sonics. Like Baird, Lattimore has a knack for collaboration: over the past few years she’s put out two records with musical polymath Jeff Ziegler, one with keyboardist Elysse Thebner, and most recently an album with Superchunk and Merge Records head honcho Mac McCaughan. Together, Baird and Lattimore produce a gentle sonic alchemy, with Lattimore’s cascading, trilling strings per-



Peaer
MARCUS
MADDOX

Find more music listings at
chicagoreader.com/soundboard.

MUSIC

fectly complementing Baird's airy annunciations. Seeing the duo live in the midwest is a rare treat, and their set should make a fine accompaniment to any melancholic fall breezes —**STEVE KRAKOW**

FEMDOT *Tobi Lou headlines; Lil Trxptendo and Femdot open. 7 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, sold out.* 🎫

Chicagoan Femi Adigun, aka Femdot, raps like he's spent his entire waking life studying language and figuring out the best way to use words to suit his craft. He cleanly lays down bars with a confidence that makes it seem easy, and the work he's put in to get there is obvious. Femdot treats hip-hop with reverence, as though the art form provides him spiritual fulfillment—at least that's the feeling I get anytime he drops something new. Earlier this month he released *94 Camry Music* (Delacreme), where he exercises his storytelling prowess in brisk narratives loosely related to his old car. Though he's just 24, he spins yarns like an elderly sage doling out wisdom on a mountaintop—you can almost imagine him in the lotus position, stroking a long beard. On the knockout "Snuck to Matty's," Femdot peels back layers of seemingly trivial lies he told his mother so she wouldn't take away his car after he broke curfew for a party thrown by a friend she doesn't like; he uses minute-by-minute updates to detail his youthful revelry and his lucky escape from a fatal fight. Femdot has proved he's one of Chicago's most promising new rappers, and on "Rap City" he shows he can hold his own with Smino—also one of the best in town. With *94 Camry Music*, he's working hard to build the kind of career that makes it impossible to compare him to anyone but himself. —**LEOR GALIL**

KYLE BRUCKMANN *See also Monday. Bruckmann plays in a trio with Pascal Niggenkemper and Tim Daisy. 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$10. 18+*

Kyle Bruckmann teaches oboe and performance at four universities (the University of California campuses in Santa Cruz, Davis, and Berkeley plus the University of the Pacific), plays with five new-music ensembles (Quinteto Latino, sfSound, the Eco Ensemble, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, and Splinter Reeds), and subs with the San Francisco Symphony and several northern California regional orchestras. He also has an edgier side: he plays electroacoustic improvisations and compositions by the likes of Anthony Braxton and Michael Pisaro in the duo EKG, suspends densely layered poetry over twisting prog rock with Degradient, and performs solo concerts that seek to apply his free-jazz chops to nakedly beautiful music. As he explained in the notes of his 2012 CD *On Procedural Grounds* (New World), what ties all these projects together is his determination to "undermine alleged dichotomies." Before he moved to the Bay Area in 2003, Bruckmann spent several years honing his inclusive yet selective approach to music in Chicago, where his associations included structuralist composer and reedist Guillermo Gregorio and aggro-prog band Lozenge (which featured Reader music editor Philip Montoro on scrap-metal percussion), but he hasn't been through town since Splinter Reeds played here in 2016. For this visit he

will reengage with an old collaborator and test the waters with some new ones: first he'll open a show this Sunday in a duo with percussionist Tim Daisy, who played in Bruckmann's late, great jazz combo Wrack. Together they'll adapt scores that Bruckmann developed for a larger electroacoustic combo to a two-piece format. (You'll definitely want to stick around for the headlining solo set by Franco-German bassist Pascal Niggenkemper, who will expand his bracing approach to prepared double bass by applying motorized agitators to his instrument's surface.) Then on Monday, Bruckmann will perform two sets, one solo and another with violinist-vocalist Macie Stewart and electronic musician Ted Moore. —**BILL MEYER**

MONDAY21

KYLE BRUCKMANN *See Sunday. Bruckmann performs solo, then plays a collaborative set with Macie Stewart and Ted Moore. 7:30 PM, Experimental Sound Studio, 5925 N. Ravenswood, \$8-\$10.* 🎫 📱



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MON 10/21 **PENELOPE ISLES**
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FRI 10/18 5PM-FREE
HARD COUNTRY HONKY TONK WITH
THE HOYLE BROTHERS
SUNSET ROLLERCOASTER
PAUL CHERRY

TUE 10/22 **HEARTS & MINDS**
BEN LAMAR GAY/ROB FRYE/DAN BITNEY
MACIE STEWART/ANDREW CLINKMAN

SAT 10/19 12PM-FREE
OPEN TIL DOOMSDAY
A DAY PARTY FUNDRAISER FOR ARTS OF LIFE
GOOD MORNING
THE SLAPS • ESTER

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BRUCE LAMONT + CHE ARTHUR
+ **SKYLER ROWE**
HELEN MONEY • UNDERHAND

SUN 10/20 12PM - FREE
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THE CAROLYN SILLS COMBO
B.B. PALMER
ACTORS
BOOTBLACKS • NEW CANYONS
THE BELLWETHER SYNDICATE DJs

THU 10/24 **LOVING**
SQUIRREL FLOWER • JUDE SHUMA

10/25: OMNI, 10/26: SPOOKY EUCHRE HANG (12PM-FREE), 10/26: THE KVB, 10/27: BLEAK BRUNCH WITH DJ MICHAEL VALLERA (11AM - FREE), 10/27: EMPTY BOTTLE BOOK CLUB (3PM-FREE), 10/27: FEE LION, 10/28: BENEFIT FOR RESILIENCE CHICAGO FEAT. RABBLE RABBLE (FREE), 10/30: WONDER & SKEPTICISM (6PM-FREE), 10/30: WAKING THE WITCH, 10/31: BROASIS, 11/1-11/2: 312JUNES PRESENTS VIVIAN GIRLS, 11/3: SUPERSTAR-A BRUNCH WITH MOLLY / SHANNON (11AM - FREE), 11/3: JOEY NEBULOUS (RECORD RELEASE), 11/4: DJUNAH (RECORD RELEASE - FREE), 11/6: HTRK, 11/7: SPIRIT WAS • SEAN HENRY, 11/8: MINIBEAST, 11/9: HANDMADE MARKET (12PM - FREE), 11/9: BLUE HAWAII
NEW ON SALE: 11/14: THE BRUMMIES, 11/17: NOT LOVELY (RECORD RELEASE) 11/26: JOZEF VAN WISSEM, 11/27: GANSER, 12/20: JAIMIE BRANCH'S 'FLY OR DIE' (LP RELEASE) • BEN LAMAR GAY, 12/31: NYE 2019 W/ SHAME, 2/13: DONNY BENTET

EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE



Hayley Kiyoko © TREVOR FLORES

NEW

American Nightmare 2/21/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Androgynous Mustache 1/22/20, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Georgia Angiuli (live), M. Sylvia, Blu 9 10/24, 10 PM, Spy Bar

Badbadnotgood, Angel Bat Dawid & Tha Brothahood 12/31, 10:30 PM, Lincoln Hall

Badbadnotgood, Junius Paul 12/30, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Bbnos 3/14/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall

Eric Benét 1/23-1/24/20, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 10/18, noon

Donny Benét 2/13/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Billy Joel 6/20/20, 8 PM, Notre Dame Stadium, South Bend, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Brojob, Kill, Deadculture, Portals, Final Rest 11/1, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+

Brother Ali, Nur-D, DJ Last Word 12/20, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge

Brummies, Daydream Review 11/14, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

China Crisis 1/29/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Chris & Heather's Country Calendar Show 12/7, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 10/18

Cracker, Camper Van Beethoven 1/12/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall

Stephen Day 4/16/20, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM, 18+

Derrick Does Halloween with Derrick Carter (DJ sets) 10/31, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Dorian, Kelroy, Resistol 5000 11/15, 9 PM, Martyrs'

Bob Dylan & His Band 10/30, 8 PM, Credit Union 1 Arena at UIC

Echsmith 2/20/20, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Ethnic Heritage Ensemble 2/7/20, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Expo '76 & the Total Pro Horns, Robert Cornelius 12/31, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 10/18

Flosstradamus 1/4/20, 9 PM, Metro, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM, 18+

Fran 11/23, 9:30 PM, Hideout

Friends & Family, Secret Back to Backs, Residents (DJ), and more 11/7, 10 PM, Smart Bar

G. Love, Shamarr Allen 11/11/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Ganser, Salvation, Luggage 11/27, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Gramps the Vamp, Nitehost, Ovef Ow (as the Bee-52s) 10/31, 9 PM, the Owl

Tigran Hamasyan featuring Arthur Hnatek, Evan Marien 5/2/20, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Fareed Haque & the Flat Earth Ensemble, Spare Parts, Radio Free Honduras 10/31, 8 PM, Martyrs'

Heavy 2/6/20, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Illiterate Light 2/5/20, 9 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM, 18+

Intonation Music's Exquisite Corpse Ball with Daytonics, Kid Million, Que Rico, Good, Columbine, Leaders of Men 10/25, 9 PM, Beat Kitchen

Jauz 2/29/20, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+

Joey Nebulous, Twisted Flower, Julia Steiner, Henry Hank 11/3, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Kenny Larkin, Diz, Kid Enigma & Ed Nine, Chris Lara 10/26, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Roy Kinsey, Eli Major, Semira-truth, DJ Cash Era 12/17, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Hayley Kiyoko 2/28/20, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Lana Del Rey 11/8, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom

Lawrence Arms' War on Xmas with Flatliners, Mike Park 12/12, 7:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Lawrence Arms' War on Xmas with Red City Radio, Arms Aloft 12/13, 7:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Lawrence Arms' War on Xmas with Riverboat Gamblers, Heart & Lung 12/14, 7:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Lingua Ignota, Oozing Wound 12/21, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Little People, Frameworks, Yppah 3/20/20, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Lower Dens, 3lon 3/9/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM, 18+

Matoma, Two Friends 2/14/20, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+

Jeremiah Meece, Shazam Bangles (DJ sets) 10/28, 10 PM, Danny's Tavern

Sammy Miller & the Congregation 1/15/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Minibeast 11/8, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

The Music of Cream with Kofi Baker, Malcolm Bruce, & Will Johns 4/26/20, 7:30 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM, 18+

My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult, Chris Connelly, Conformco 11/9, 8 PM, Wire,

Berwyn
Nocturna: All Hallow's Eve Ball with DJ Scary Lady Sarah, Sincy Vicious, and more 11/1, 11:30 PM, Metro, 18+

Not Lovely, Davis, Ben Burden, DJ Frail 11/17, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Ben Ottewell & Ian Ball of Gomez 2/1/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Poliça 3/20/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

The Roots Holiday Tour 12/30, 9 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+

Shame 12/31, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Jaden Smith, Willow Smith 11/30, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre

Standing on the Corner Hope & Grief Ensemble Orchestra 10/25, 8 PM, Unity Temple, Oak Park

Subtronics, Charlesthefirst, Hesh, Bommer, Al Ross, Chee, Digital Ethos, Level Up 2/8/20, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+

Tama Sumo & Lakuti, Harry Cross 12/20, 10 PM, Smart Bar

UFO 10/25-10/26, 8 PM, Arcada Theatre, Saint Charles

Jozef Van Wissem 11/26, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Volvox, Sedef Adasi, Him Hun, Ariel Zetina 11/9, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Waking the Witch benefit for Clinic Vest Project with DJ Claire Lyerla, DJ Ruby Des Jardins 10/30, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Thom Yorke 4/4/20, 8 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM

Zeta, Crowning, Porcupine 11/24, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

UPDATED

Ana Gasteyer 12/13, 7 and 9:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston, 7 PM show sold out; 9:30 PM show added (on sale Fri 10/18, 10 AM)

Benjamin Gibbard, Tara Jane O'Neil 1/24-1/26/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1/26 added; 1/24-1/25 sold out, 17+

Benjamin Gibbard, Tara Jane O'Neil 1/24-1/26/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1/26 added; 1/24-1/25 sold out, 17+

UPCOMING

Marc Almond (Sex Cells), Hercules & Love Affair 10/29, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 18+

Almost, All Get Out, Ghost Atlas, Rowdy 1/19/20, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Alongside Harold 11/7, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Amber Run 11/7, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Chastity Belt 11/21, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Cher, Nile Rodgers & Chic 11/27, 7:30 PM, United Center

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Ghost of Paul Revere, Animal Years 11/23, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Ghostemane, 3Teeth, Harm's Way, Horus the Astroneer, Parvo 11/5, 6:30 PM, Metro

Freddie Gibbs, Cousin Stizz, Benny the Butcher, Conway the Machine 11/13, 7 PM, Metro

Helen Gillet 12/17, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Maitre Gims 11/3, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall

Thurston Moore Group 12/12, 8:30 PM; 12/13, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Ouray 12/19, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Ours 12/1, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Over the Rhine 12/7, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Carl Palmer's ELP Legacy 11/1, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Charlie Parr 11/8, 8:30 PM, Schubas

Party Favor 11/30, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Ellis Paul 11/2, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Tom Paxton & the Don Juans 10/25, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Pigface 11/30, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 18+

Pile 11/16, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Pineapple Thief ft. Gavin Harrison, Randy McStine, Receiver 12/1, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Plaid 12/14, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Plain White T's, Mowgli's, New Politics 11/12, 7:30 PM, Metro, 18+

Satsang 11/9, 9 PM, Martyrs'

Say Sue Me 12/8, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Schoolboy Q, Nav 11/21, 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom

Score, Unlikely Candidates, Orphan the Poet 11/9, 6 PM, Reggie's Rock Club

Seefeel 11/12, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Giovanni Seneca & Andreas Kapsalis 10/30, 8:30 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Sharp/Shock 11/10, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge

Skizzy Mars, Yoshi Flower, Zaia 11/11, 7 PM, Metro

Tender, Xylo 2/18/20, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall

Kelly Willis 11/2, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

BASSIST, SOUND engineer, and devoted White Sox fan **Rob Warmowski** played in kick-ass punk bands for more than 30 years, but sadly he died September 1 at age 52 after a brief illness. Among Gossip Wolf's most cherished albums is the 1987 WNUR compilation *Hog Butcher for the World*, which features Warmowski's powerhouse surf-punk trio the **Defoliants** alongside the likes of Big Black, Urge Overkill, and End Result. He'd go on to play in **Buzzmuscle**, **Sirs**, and most recently **San Andreas Fault**. On Monday, October 21, **Metro** hosts a memorial for Warmowski that benefits the **Chicago Coalition for the Homeless**, and its deep lineup testifies to just how many friends and admirers he had—along with emcee **Steve Albini** and a DJ set by **Scary Lady Sarah**, featured acts include **Pegboy**, **Ono**, **Silver Abuse**, **Cheer-Accident**, and versions of four of Warmowski's bands.

It's been almost a year since producer **Jeremiah Meece** (of experimental R&B duo **The-Drum**) released the *Inspiration* EP, and he's about ready to drop a new album called *Mutant Future*. Meece tells Gossip Wolf it'll be out this month, and with any luck that means before too many Halloween parties come and go—the album's horror-spiked electro splits the difference between unsettling and danceable, so it's perfect for spooky festivities. This wolf suspects Meece will drop some heat from *Mutant Future* at his **Danny's** set on Monday, October 28—and right now you can stream a 2015 Halloween mix he just uploaded to Mixcloud!

If you've been looking for an excuse to visit **Conservatory Vintage & Vinyl** (1042 Sterling Ave. in Flossmoor), which opened this summer, make a beeline on Sunday, October 20: Marc Davis's **Black Pegasus Records** will throw a free release party from 1 till 8 PM for the **Brothers Davis's** soulful boogie 12-inch **Billy Mac Attack**. Marc Davis, Sadar Bahar, Mark Grusane, Darryn Jones, and Tone B. Nimble will DJ.

—J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL
Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.



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KISHI BASHI
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TUE OCT 29



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ON SALE FRIDAY!

SUNDAY OCT 20 / 6PM / ALL AGES
THE WONDER YEARS
HOMESAFE / FUTURE TEENS

SATURDAY OCT 26 / 9PM / 21+
The Freakeasy presents
EVIL EYE: HALLOWEEN CHICAGO 2019
DJ DAN / THREE STAGES
OF FULL-ON FREAKS

SUNDAY OCT 27 / 8PM / 18+
Metro & Half Acre present
On The Floor featuring
LEFTOVER CRACK
DAYS N' DAZE / COP/OUT / SHITIZEN

FRIDAY NOV 01 / 11:30PM / 21+
NOCTURNA
ALL HALLOW'S EVE BALL

SUNDAY NOV 03 / 8PM / ALL AGES
Haus Party Tour with
TODRICK

TUESDAY NOV 05 / 6:30PM / ALL AGES
GHOSTEMANE
HARM'S WAY / 3TEETH
HORUS THE ASTRONEER / PARVO

THURSDAY NOV 07 / 9PM / 18+
DANNY BROWN
ASHNIKKO / ZELOOPERZ

FRIDAY NOV 08 / 7PM / ALL AGES
Sunsets in Outer Space Tour with
BEA MILLER
KAH-LO / KENNEDI

11/09 WHITE DENIM
11/11 SKIZZY MARS
11/12 PLAIN WHITE T'S, THE MOWGLI'S
& NEW POLITICS
11/13 FREDDIE GIBBS
11/15 MISTERWIVES
11/16 MAYDAY PARADE
11/17 GRAMAPHONE 50
11/18 LA DISPUTE
11/19 PETE YORN

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THURSDAY OCT 17
MOTIF WITH
LEJA HAZER
CHICAGODEEP
SPACE DOG JAXX

FRIDAY OCT 18
TERI BRISTOL
& PSYCHO-BITCH
(ALL NIGHT)

SATURDAY OCT 19
GHOSTLY 20 WITH CIEL
GALCHER LUSTWERK
JTC + MORE

SUNDAY OCT 20
DERRICK CARTER'S
BDAY QUEEN! FT
MICHAEL SERAFINI
GARRETT DAVID



23 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE

ABIGAIL & ZOOEY GLASS, ANTHONY ROTHER,
ARIEL ZETINA, DANNY DAZE, GARRETT DAVID,
HARRY CROSS, DJ HEATHER, DJ MINX,
HIJO PRÓDIGO, JAMES MURPHY (EXTENDED DJ SET),
JASON KENDIG (SUNRISE SET), JEFF DERRINGER,
JUSTIN AULIS LONG, LA SPACER (LIVE),
MICHAEL SERAFINI, NISHKOSHEH, OLIN,
OVERLAND, PHILLIP STONE, SASSMOUTH,
SEVRON, SOLD, T. MIXWELL

Installations by Craig Gronowski and Manifest

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November 2nd
7:00AM

Ends
November 3rd
5:00AM

Heineken
21 & Over

GHOSTLY 20 @ METRO

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TOBACCO
SHIGETO
DRAMA
STEVE HAUSCHILDT
SV4 (DJ)



CIEL (DJ)
GALCHER LUSTWERK (DJ)
JTC

SHIGETO x CHARLES TREES (DJ)
SATURDAY OCT 19

GHOSTLY 20 @ SMARTBAR

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Sharmili Majmudar
 COURTESY WOMEN EMPLOYED

ADDRESSING INEQUITIES

The wage gap is not (just) your mama's problem

And a new law in Illinois is part of the solution.

By SHARMILI MAJMUDAR

Sharmili Majmudar is the executive vice president of Policy and Organizational Impact for Women Employed, an organization that pursues equity for women in the workforce by effecting policy change, expanding access to educational opportunities, and advocating for fair and inclusive workplaces so that all women, families, and communities thrive.

If you're on the job market in Illinois, you have a new tool at your disposal to make sure you're being paid fairly. On September 29, the No Salary History law went into effect, and it prohibits employers from asking job applicants for information about their current or past earnings. It also bans companies from seeking that informa-

tion from your current or past employers.

You may wonder why that's such a big deal. If you've applied for jobs before, you probably know it's a common practice. And hey, doesn't it mean you'll probably make more in your new job than you did in your old one?

Maybe. But it might also mean you'll make less than you *should*. That's because if you've been paid too little in one job, questions about your past salary when you're applying for new jobs can allow that unfair wage to follow you to your new job. And your next job after that. And every future job you have.

It happens all the time—and it's a major reason that, even though we've made progress since your mom entered the workforce a generation ago, the gap between what women

and men make, across the board, is definitely not closing fast enough. And while that gap gets wider for women as they age, it is not (just) your mama's problem.

A 2012 study by the American Association of University Women found that just one year out of college, a woman earns about 7 percent less than a man who had the same major and is working the same number of hours, in the same field, with the same occupation. So it matters even for the women who are just starting careers, raised in a time when we've been told the doors are open to us in every career and every type of job.

And though the gap starts small, over a career it widens into a gulf, compounding over time into hundreds of thousands of lost dollars. And because of the dual impacts of gender and racial bias, Black and Brown women experience even wider inequities. Some women can lose more than \$1 million to the wage gap during their careers! That makes it harder for us to pay down our debts, to buy cars and houses, to raise kids, and to save for retirement. It limits the choices we can make. It can even have lifelong impacts on our children. It's not just a gap in terms of what we're paid today, it contributes to the wealth gap that impacts generation after generation.

But we are not powerless. Working togeth-


er, we can change systems. We can advance equity. The new No Salary History law is one example.

My organization—Women Employed—has been opening doors for working women and removing barriers to equity since 1973. We worked hard to make No Salary History the law of the land in Illinois—joining with our partners and lawmakers to draft the bill, mobilizing thousands to educate their networks and influence their elected officials, and rallying bipartisan support in the Illinois General Assembly not once, but THREE times, persisting even when our former governor vetoed the bill twice. We are thrilled that Governor Pritzker signed the bill into law on July 31 of this year, and we were proud to stand alongside him as he did it.

And we want to work just as hard to make sure you know about your new rights. So we've put together a tool kit with all the information you need to know about the new No Salary History law, including what you can do if you still get asked about your past wages when applying for a job. This tool kit has information that's just as important to share as any interview tips you give your friends as they're pursuing that job you're cheering them on for.

This new law is an important step toward gender equity because it will disrupt a common practice that perpetuates the wage gap. No Salary History makes it much more likely that you'll be paid based upon your skills, your experience, and the requirements of the job—and not based on what you made in some past job.

But we know that this law alone won't eliminate the wage gap—and there's still so much more to be done to truly ensure equity in the workplace—and beyond. So we've also written a guide on how you can be an advocate for gender equity in your community, your workplace, and with your elected officials. Because we have to be relentless in demanding what is fair and right—and your voice is what propels change.

One easy step you can take is to get involved with Women Employed. Subscribe to our e-mails. Take action on issues that matter. Volunteer. Join us at an event. Together, we can create the fair, inclusive, just workplaces we deserve and build a better future for ourselves, and for those still dreaming about what they want to do when they grow up. 

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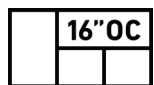
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SAVAGE LOVE

Life lessons

Growing up, giving love a chance, and getting rid of Dad's porn

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: I'm a Seattle local who basically grew up reading your column. I think you've always given really sound advice, so I'm reaching out. My boyfriend and I have been together for two years. We started out poly, but I was clear from the start that when I fall in love with someone, I lose all attraction to anyone other than that one person. I fell in love with him, and we decided to be monogamous. But I know he's still attracted to other people, and it makes me feel like ending the relationship. I love him like I've never loved anyone else, but because he doesn't feel the same way I do on this subject, I don't believe he loves me at all. I don't feel like I can bring it up with him, because it will just make him feel bad for something he probably can't control, and I don't think I can make him love me. But I also feel like I'm wasting my time and living a lie. Help!
—**HEARTBROKEN OVER NOTHING**

A: This thing about you—how being in love with

someone renders you incapable of finding anyone else attractive—that's pretty much a unique-to-you trait. The overwhelming majority of even those blissfully in love out there still find other people attractive. And you should know that if you grew up reading my column. You should also know that a monogamous commitment doesn't mean you don't want to fuck other people, HON, it means you've promised not to fuck other people. We wouldn't have to make monogamous commitments if sincere feelings of love extinguished all desire for others.

Since no one is ever going to love you in precisely the same way you love them—since no one else is ever going to meet the impossible standard you've set—every person you fall in love with will disappoint you. Every potential love arrives pre-qualified. You meet someone, you fall in love with them, they fall in love with you, you are not attracted to others, they still are, you have no choice but to dump that per-

son and start all over again. Lover, rinse, repeat.

Zooming out: People who create impossible standards for romantic partners—standards no one could ever hope to meet—usually don't want to be in committed relationships but can't admit that to themselves. We're told good people want to be in committed relationships, and we all want to think of ourselves as good people. So someone who doesn't want a long-term commitment either has to think of themselves as a bad person, which no one wants to do, or has to redefine for themselves what it means to be a good person, which can be hard work. But there's a third option: set impossible standards for our romantic partners. And then, when all of our romantic partners fail to meet our impossible standards, we can tell ourselves we're the only truly good person as we move through life breaking the hearts of anyone foolish enough to fall in love with us.

So while my hunch is that it's not your partner who is incapable of loving you, HON, but you who are incapable of loving him, you're free to prove me wrong. One way we demonstrate our capacity to truly love someone is by believing them when they say they love us. That's step one. Step two is accepting that someone's love for us is legitimate even if they don't experience or express love in precisely the same way we do.

Q: My father passed away recently. I received a contract to sell his house, and soon I'll have to clean the place out. My question is this: What to do with a dead relative's porn? I don't want to keep it, I don't want to waste it by just putting it in the trash, I can't donate it to the library. There's nothing especially collectible in it, so eBay is out. Maybe someone would buy the lot of it on Craigslist, but I'm not entirely clear what the legalities are for selling secondhand porn out of the back of a car, let alone what the potential market might be. I mean, how many folks are looking to buy a deceased elderly man's former wank bank? I'm certain I'm only the most recent in a long line of folks to find themselves in this situation. Any advice for finding the porn a new home, or is it a bad idea to even try? Added difficulties: smallish town, midwestern state, and I'm his only living family member. —**REHOMING INHERITED PORNOGRAPHY**

A: You would be in the same predicament if you had lots of living family members. I have an enormous family—lots of aunts and uncles, countless cousins—and “Who wants the porn?” isn't a question I've ever heard asked at an elderly relative's wake. And that can't be because none of my elderly relatives had porn stashes; the law of averages dictates that at least one and probably more dead Savages (RIP) had massive porn stashes, which means whoever cleaned out the apartment or house quietly

disposed of the porn. And that's what you should do. If you're concerned about your dad's porn “going to waste,” dispose of it in a conspicuous manner, e.g., drop it off at a recycling center in open boxes or clear bags. Maybe a worker or someone else making a drop-off will spot the porn and decide to rescue it from the pile. And, hey, my condolences on the death of your father.

Q: I went on Grindr just before Xmas last year, this handsome dude messaged me, and we ended up hooking up at his place. It was apparent from the get-go that this was no regular hookup. We didn't even have sex. We just kissed and cuddled for six straight hours. Sounds perfect, right? Well, at about hour five, in the middle of this surprisingly deep conversation, he said something that made my head spin. I asked him how old he was. “Twenty-one,” he replied. Holy shit. He asked how old I was. “Fifty.” Neither of us had our age on Grindr. He looked about 30 to me. He said he thought I was in my late 30s. It was basically love at first sight for us. After nine months of trying to keep a lid on our feelings, he moved away and found a guy close to his own age, which I strongly encouraged. Before they became an official couple, we went on a goodbye walk, which was full of love and tears. We agreed to do the “no contact” thing for one month (he thought three was extreme). But here's my issue: I'm in love with him. I've been incredibly

sad since we last spoke about three weeks ago. It's a week until the agreed-upon day when we can say hi if we want to, and I don't want to. I can't. I have to let him go. I know he's going to want to talk, but I'm afraid if I have any contact with him, it will set me back and I won't want to stop. It's taken all my willpower to not contact him so far. My question: How do I let him know I don't want any further contact without hurting him? —**IMPOSSIBLE LOVE SUCKS**

A: Call the boy, ILS, ask him to meet up, and tell him you made a mistake. Yes, you're a lot older, and the age difference may be so great that you two aren't going to be together forever. But maybe you're perfect for each other right now. A relationship doesn't have to end in a funeral home with one person in a box to have been a success. If you have three or four great years together before the window in which your relationship makes sense closes, ILS, then you had some great years together. People get it into their heads that they can't enter into a relationship unless they can picture it lasting “forever,” when really nothing is forever. To quote the great James Baldwin: “Love him and let him love you. Do you think anything else under heaven really matters?” **IL**

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