

READER



**THE 2019
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GIFT GUIDE 11**

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EDITORS IN CHIEF SUJAY KUMAR, KAREN HAWKINS
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STAFF WRITERS MAYA DUKMASOVA, LEOR GALIL
EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE S. NICOLE LANE
LISTINGS COORDINATOR SALEM COLLO-JULIN
CONTRIBUTORS ED BLAIR, NOAH BERLATSKY, LUCA CIMARUSTI, MARISSA DE LA CERDA, JOSH FLANDERS, SHERI FLANDERS, JACK HELBIG, IRENE HSAIO, CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON, MONICA KENDRICK, STEVE KRAKOW, NOËLLE D. LILLEY, JAMIE LUDWIG, MAX MALLER, ADAM MULLINS-KHATIB, J.R. NELSON, JEFF NICHOLS, MARISSA OBERLANDER, MATTHEW SIGUR, CATEY SULLIVAN

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STREET VIEW

Mix and match

A wine director shows how to harmonize a formal suit with a crop top, gold, silver, and sneakers.

“I’VE BEEN WEARING different variations of this suit for like, three days now. Best buy ever. It was only two bucks,” says Lee Gusman of the ensemble they scored at the Village Discount Outlet in Roscoe Village. Proof that suits don’t have to be confined to staid offices, Gusman paired theirs with a cropped top, a silver chain belt, and a gold clutch bag. “I like mixing silver and gold a lot because people say you shouldn’t do it. So maybe I’m a contrarian,” they say. On their way to work as the wine director of Printer’s Row Wine Shop, Gusman was sporting the same outfit they wore the night before to catch a show at Sleeping Village. “I love sets—I think they’re an easy way to be put together. They’re so versatile; you can break them up or not, whatever you choose. For my job I have to look professional—LOL. So it’s a good way to be fun.” —**ISA GIALLORENZO**



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A series of political engagement events as curated by

ILVOTE-Chicago Voter Registrar Training
November 29
3pm - 4pm

Board of Elections
Commissioners,
City of Chicago
69 W. Washington St.

MLK Kickoff Lighting Event at Cole Park
December 1
1pm - 6pm

Nat King Cole Park
361 E. 85th St. (85th King Dr.)

MPC Roundtable Toward Universal Mobility: Charting a Path to Improve Transportation Accessibility
December 3
12:30pm - 1:30pm

Union League Club of Chicago
65 W Jackson Blvd.

The Virtual Wall: How the Trump Administration Built a Wall with Regulations and Outsourcing
December 3
7pm - 9pm

KAM Isaiah Israel
1100 E. Hyde Park Blvd.

Women in Green Building Leadership Luncheon
December 4

11am - 1:30pm
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 W. Mart Center Dr.

Sunrise Movement Chicago- December Hub Meeting
December 4
6pm - 7:30pm

Chinatown Library
2100 S Wentworth Ave.

Moms Demand Action - Chicago NW - December Social Gathering
December 5
6:30pm - 9:30pm

Old Irving Brewing Co.
4419 W. Montrose Ave.

Chicago Climate Strike
December 6
11am - 1pm

Crown Fountain,
Millennium Park
201 E. Randolph St.
(between Michigan Ave. and Columbus Ave.)

Black Lives Matter & Beauty Bar Constellations not Cops: Astrology & Trivia to benefit BLM
December 9
7pm - 10pm

Beauty Bar Chicago
1444 W. Chicago Ave.

Re-Envisioning Community Safety: A

Public Conversation
December 11

6:30-9pm
Oak Park Library
843 Lake St.
Oak Park, Illinois 60301

Give a Gift Fundraiser and Concert
December 11
6pm -12am

Emporium Wicker Park
1366 N. Milwaukee Ave

Join Us To Knock Doors and Make Wisconsin Blue Again
December 15
10am-5pm

Backlot Coffee
3982 N. Avondale Ave.

A Just Chi General Meeting
December 18
5:30pm-8pm

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago
4753 N. Broadway St.
Ste. 502

December Lakeview Rent Control Action
December 20
4pm-6pm

Whole Foods Market
3201 N. Ashland Ave.

Women's March Chicago- Save the Date
January 18

Time TBD, Venue TBD

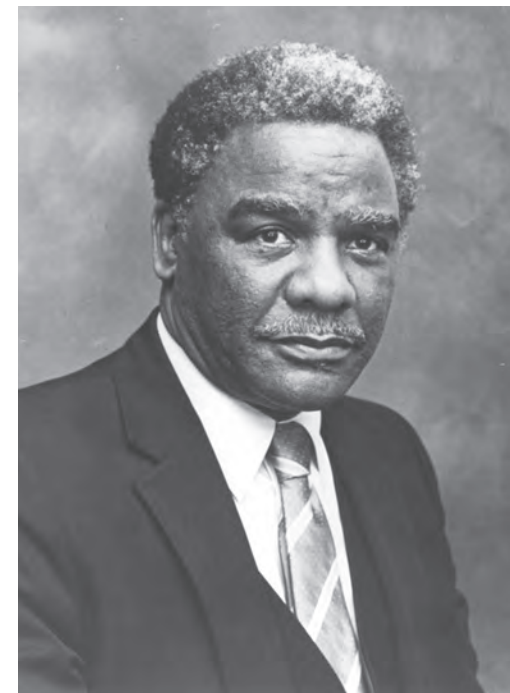
NEWS & POLITICS

POLITICS

Washington's lessons

It's going to take more Harold and less Barack to beat Trump.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**



Mayor Washington had a way with words; those words didn't include "kwid crow pole." COURTESY U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

It's Thanksgiving and, quite naturally, my thoughts have turned to Harold Washington.

I always think of Washington around Thanksgiving. It was roughly on this day 32 years ago that he died of a heart attack, roughly six months into his second term as mayor.

Hard to predict what Harold would have done had he lived longer—though Richard M. Daley, his ultimate successor, clearly took us in a different direction than he would've gone.

In addition to being the city's first Black mayor, Washington was a leftist. Think Bernie Sanders—before Bernie Sanders.

Not too many of his type are running for mayor, much less getting elected. The last thing anyone in Chicago's power elite wants is Black people running around talking like Bernie Sanders. Hell, the powers that be have enough trouble putting up with the white Bernie Sanders.

Among other things, Washington championed cuts in military spending and reallocating the money to schools, public transportation, health care, and job creation.

He fought President Reagan's tax cuts and called for cities in America to band together to press Congress and the president to send

more resources their way.

Instead over the last few decades it's been every city in America for itself, as mayors and governors throw billions at the Amazons of the world, begging them to come to town. At best only a crumb or two of the ensuing development reaches the poor—most of whom will eventually be driven out by higher taxes and housing costs.

Like I said, we've taken things in a different direction.

But I don't want to get too melancholy. There's another, Trump-related reason I've been thinking of Washington these days.

It has to do with Washington's vast vocabulary. The man could talk for hours—most of it on the record—frequently employing words that had reporters scurrying to the dictionary.

I should know, I was literally one of those reporters.

This was back in 1982. I was covering politics for the *Chicago Reporter*, a newsletter specializing in racial issues.

I was writing a story about the allegiance many Black aldermen felt toward the Democratic Machine and then-Mayor Jane Byrne. Even in the face of a coming Washington revolution.

I called Washington, then a congressman,

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NEWS & POLITICS

for comments. He called me back when I least expected and left me scrambling to find a pen and paper to take notes as he launched into a dissertation ripping the Black aldermen as “scurrilous sellouts.”

At one point in the interview, I asked if he could see himself cutting a deal with some of the Black aldermanic incumbents, swapping promises for future City Hall jobs for their endorsements.

Hell, no, he thundered. There will be no “quid pro quo.”

Now, folks, I realize quid pro quo is all the rage these days thanks to Trump. As in his assertion that there was “no quid pro quo” when he demanded that more than \$300 million in military aid, already approved by Congress, be sent to Ukraine only if the Ukrainian president announced his country was investigating Joe Biden.

I agree with Trump. That’s not quid pro quo—it’s flat-out extortion. But back to my interview with Harold.

I must make a confession: I didn’t know what quid pro quo meant.

I’d never studied Latin. Even now the only other Latin phrase I know is *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*—which roughly means: after this, therefore because of this.

As in—the rooster crows at the same time the sun rises; therefore, the sun rises because the rooster crows.

Obviously, that’s a fallacy. As everyone in Chicago knows—the sun rises because of Mayor Daley.

Just kidding, Chicago. Even I don’t think you’re that gullible.

Now, you have two choices when someone uses a word you don’t know. You can ask for a definition. Or you could plow on with the conversation, hoping to figure out the meaning from the context.

I was ashamed to admit that I—a proud graduate of Evanston Township High School—had never heard of quid pro quo.

Plus, Washington was on a roll. I think he was saying something like the Black aldermen were such sellouts they’d vote to rescind the Emancipation Proclamation if Mayor Byrne requested. Who was I to interrupt?

Instead, I wrote an approximation of what I thought Harold had said, something along the lines of “kwid crow pole.”

After the interview, I raced to the big dictionary we kept in the corner of the office. That’s right, youngsters, the office had a dictionary. And rotary phones. And electric typewriters. And I was wearing jeans and a Bulls T-shirt.

You know, I think I still have that Bulls T-shirt. Other than that—a different age!

It took me forever to figure out that “kwid crow pole” was actually quid pro quo—which, as everyone now knows, is Latin for “something for something.”

That phrase was just one of many things Harold Washington taught me in the few years that I knew him—along with: “Alderman Ed Burke’s not worth a pimple on an elephant’s ass.”

Which is as true today as it was back in 1987, when Harold said it to me during an interview. I tell you—the man had a way with words.

Sad to say, many Black politicians in Chicago headed in a different direction after Washington died, signing on with the very Machine he denounced.

Now we’ve got Barack Obama, cautioning Democrats not to be too “woke” or “revolutionary” or to make too many leftist demands—like health care for all. Warning that the way to beat Trump is to think smaller—to go along to get along.

This Thanksgiving I’m going to offer a toast to Harold Washington—the greatest mayor Chicago’s ever known—as a way of thanking him for all the lessons he taught me.

In all due respect to our former president, it’s going to take more Washington and less Obama to defeat Donald Trump. 📺

🐦 @joravben

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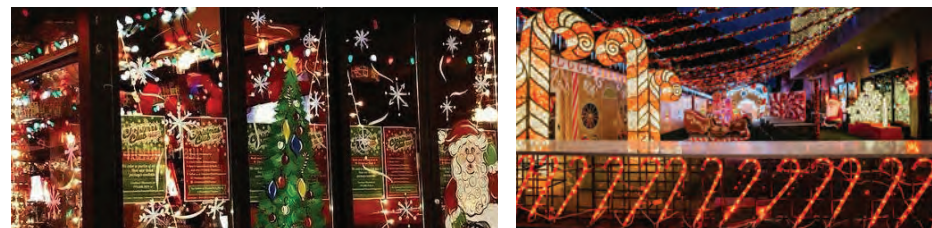
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A protester costumed as National Immigrant Justice Center director Mary Meg McCarthy at a demonstration against Heartland Alliance's annual fundraiser **BY MAYA DUKMASOVA FOR CHICAGO READER**

ANATOMY OF A PROTEST

Strength on the street

Masked activists take on a social services titan over facilities for migrant children.

By **MAYA DUKMASOVA**

A short woman in a plastic Guy Fawkes mask strolled in front of the cherry-red, two-and-a-half-ton truck pulling into the driveway of the Swissôtel on East Wacker. Armed with a megaphone, her head barely above the hood, she chanted at the driver: “Heartland Alliance jails kids for money!” The truck crept forward, making contact with her torso and pushing her back one tiny step at a time. As dozens of protesters in carnival masks, feather boas, and tulle skirts beat empty plastic buckets, and chanted and jeered

from the sidewalk, hotel security guards in suits shuffled her out of the truck’s path.

On Wednesday, November 20, the Little Village Solidarity Network, Rogers Park Solidarity Network, Rising Tide Chicago, and Free Heartland Kids protested outside the hotel, where the annual fund-raising gala of the Chicago-based nonprofit conglomerate Heartland Alliance was being held. The protest was part of a months-long campaign by community organizations to pressure Heartland subsidiary Heartland Human Care Services to shut down facilities contracted

by the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement to house migrant children. Most of them are kids who have crossed the U.S. border alone or, more recently, who have been forcibly separated from adults they were traveling with under the Trump administration’s “zero-tolerance” immigration policy.

Since 2013, Heartland has received more than \$180 million from the federal government for housing children in its Chicago-area facilities. It’s among the five largest operators of child detention centers in the nation. Yet last year, a series of ProPublica Illinois investigations has revealed, the agency failed to provide adequate supervision by qualified staff at its facilities; there have been allegations of sex between kids, unsanitary conditions, and mistreatment by staff. Though Heartland has denied all wrongdoing, the agency shuttered four of its youth facilities in Des Plaines earlier this year, saying it would devote more resources to its five city shelters in Bronzeville, Englewood, Beverly, and Rogers Park. These facilities have capacity for

about 400 kids and, according to Heartland, about 3,000 kids pass through them every year.

After the red truck reached the hotel door, its driver, a trim middle-aged white man with a mustache, ruddy complexion, and jovial demeanor, hopped out and approached the protesters. “Listen: Principals, superintendents, teachers from public schools have a conference in this building and in the Hyatt,” he explained to a protester who’d covered most of her face with a red bandanna, adding that he’s a superintendent. “Public schools are with you. So don’t be jumping their cars.”

“The dude said there’s also like a teachers’ conference here tonight?” she said after he walked away, her voice rising.

“They shouldn’t be at the fucking hotel then,” a fellow protester responded decisively.

Protesting—especially when you’re undocumented, low-income, a member of a marginalized group, or otherwise disadvantaged and your opponent is not a person but a massive and well-respected social service agency founded by Jane Addams in the 1880s and selling \$300 fund-raiser tickets—requires careful strategy. It’s easy to dismiss a gaggle of radical activists hiding their faces, brandishing hyperbolic signs, and blowing rusty tubas as nothing more than bored rabble-rousers fighting the latest in a series of windmills. But there were fewer such dismissals of the hundreds of thousands of people who shut down the Loop to protest the Trump administration during the Women’s March in January 2017. Some of those now picketing Heartland were there for all the big protests, too, when moral indignation was reserved more for those who’d chosen to sit it out. Some had protested unjust immigration policies and policing practices long before Trump’s inauguration. And now they were continuing to make noise about things they found repugnant and unacceptable.

About a week earlier, the protesters had issued an open letter to Angela Glover Blackwell, founder of PolicyLink, a national racial justice nonprofit. Blackwell had been slated to be the keynote speaker at the gala. The letter, cosigned by nearly 30 political and community organizations, stated that the groups were “fighting for nothing less than

the abolition of all detention centers, including the clandestine ones jailing children that are run by Heartland Alliance.” The letter leaned on Blackwell’s own history of boosting prison and police abolitionist ideas and decarceration to make a moral argument: if she were really about it, she’d withdraw and publicly denounce Heartland.

“As soon as the issue was brought to Angela’s attention,” she did withdraw, her spokesperson said in a November 17 e-mail to Free Heartland Kids, though she didn’t issue any statements.

The organizers also mounted a campaign against the other headliner, Eileen Mitchell, president of AT&T Illinois and former chief of staff for Mayor Rahm Emanuel. She also didn’t ultimately speak at the event, though a spokesman for AT&T did, Heartland confirmed.

As Rozalinda Borcilă prepared for the protest on Wednesday evening, gathering with fellow demonstrators pulling on frilly dresses over black streetwear to mock the gala, she spoke with handily quotable rhetor-

ical flourish about their goals, periodically citing statistics and reports to drive home her arguments.

“The process by which children are kept [at Heartland’s facilities] is obfuscated and couched in all kinds of euphemisms, and it’s rebranded as care,” Borcilă said. “It’s important to us that we hit Heartland and we hit them hard, because they’re seen as a legitimate social service agency that’s very prestigious, they have a lot of social and political capital,” she continued, “pushing them to where what they’re doing is no longer socially acceptable, so you cannot show your face in public and be a do-goody liberal social service agency if you are actually benefiting from incarcerating children.”

Among the points the protesters tried to convey to their audience through chants and signs was Heartland’s connection with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. As an Office of Refugee Resettlement contractor, Heartland has no choice but to be a conduit for information that can be used to deport people. ICE—usually the federal law enforce-

ment agency that conducts sweeps to detain undocumented immigrants—has access to databases into which children’s U.S.-based sponsors must submit fingerprints and other information in order to get custody of a child housed in a government-contracted shelter like those operated by Heartland. It’s been reported that since the Trump administration’s immigration crackdowns, more sponsors are reluctant to claim custody of kids for fear of being detained themselves or leading authorities to undocumented relatives.

“This is a much longer, much deeper campaign that has to do with starting a movement for the total decarceration of migrant children,” Borcilă said. She pointed out that, according to Heartland itself, the vast majority of children in its facilities are released to family members. “Read that backwards: The vast majority of them have family members to begin with, and to be detained for five months, seven months, ten months when you have a mother in this county, when you have an uncle in this country, is outrageous.”

About an hour before the Heartland gala

began at 5:30 PM, the sidewalk in front of the Swissôtel was teeming with protesters. Two people in frilly pink prom dresses were disguised as effigies of Evelyn Diaz, Heartland Alliance’s president, and Mary Meg McCarthy, executive director of the National Immigrant Justice Center, a prominent legal aid organization also under the Heartland umbrella (McCarthy was in fact one of the headliners of the 2017 Women’s March). The protesters’ heads were covered in garish cardboard replicas of the women’s faces and they waved massive clawlike hands smeared with red paint. Chants of “Free the kids, close the camps!” “These are concentration camps, they’re not shelters!,” and “Free them all!” filled the air to incessant drumbeats. Swissôtel guards hovered nearby, staving off people who stepped ever more boldly in front of cars trying to pull into the driveway.

By 4:50 PM the protesters had unfurled a giant green banner that read “Heartland and ICE imprisoning children for profit” and formed a line to block off rush hour traffic building along Wacker. Protesters ➔

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along the sidewalk handed out fliers densely packed with text excoriating Heartland and the Trump administration and outlining demands. A man breached the hotel lobby and furtively handed out trifold pamphlets with quotes from children about conditions at Heartland's shelters first reported in the media.

Some hotel guests and passersby stopped to chat with the protesters. Others didn't hide their disdain. "I can't believe people aren't just running them over," a pudgy white man wearing a conference lanyard said as he marched into the hotel lobby. "I'd just run them over."

It took about 20 minutes for the police to arrive and begin to clear traffic; the protesters complied with their orders. Officers used their bikes to confine the demonstrators to the sidewalk where people took turns making proclamations from atop a flower bed parapet. The demonstration continued past the end of the gala at 8:30 PM. Before it was all over a Swissôtel guard allegedly broke one protester's megaphone and an altercation was reported between a person filming the scene and a gala attendee who allegedly trash-talked the protesters (the person filming was briefly detained but then released).

Heartland president Evelyn Diaz wrote to the *Reader* two days after the event, expressing her organization's support of free speech and their belief that the protesters care about the well-being of migrant children and their relatives. But she chastised them for "conflating the help we offer to these children with the policies that put them at our borders" and accused them of "spreading disinformation and lies about our programs. Their actions are not only unfair; they are dangerous. They are demonstrating outside of our shelters, creating fear among the very children they claim to want to protect. We are also concerned that their escalating rhetoric may provoke violent acts that endanger our staff, our volunteers, and the children themselves."

Although the protesters have been demanding community-created alternatives to the existing detention centers, Diaz said that closing more Heartland shelters wouldn't improve any kids' lives or set children free. "Instead, they would enter into for-profit prison systems across the country."

Asked what Heartland would say to people who might be reticent to support or donate to the agency after witnessing the gala protest, Diaz cited Heartland's long history

Protesters formed a line to block rush hour traffic building along Wacker
 MAYA DUKMASOVA FOR CHICAGO READER



of providing legal aid and social services to immigrants and refugees. Contracting with the Office of Refugee Resettlement to house migrant children is in line with Heartland's mission, she argued, adding that its facilities offer "a nurturing, caring environment . . . they are the only legal and humanitarian option for children who arrive at our borders without their parents."

Diaz wrote that her agency wouldn't be closing any more facilities or changing operations in response to the protests and noted that Heartland "faced similar backlash when we chose to serve people living with HIV and AIDS in the 1980s and 90s. We did not bow to the pressure of ill-informed and misguided attempts to shut down our programs then, and we will not do so now."

Diaz and the protesters are essentially accusing one another of the same thing: caring more about their own interests than the welfare of migrant children. The arguments, however, are built from radically different premises: Heartland assumes a pragmatic stance, taking it as a given that some contractor *must* house the migrant children because of the constraints of government policies, however unjust. The people demonstrating against Heartland's gala are making broader political and philosophical arguments about freedom, justice, and open borders and push-

ing their audience to consider that children could be both protected and in the care of people they know.

Ultimately, it's all rhetoric until one side caves. As the protesters see it, Heartland already blinked once when it closed four of its suburban shelters in the wake of damning reports. That Maryville Academy, a smaller, Catholic social services provider moved to open two new Chicago area facilities at the same time isn't a sign of defeat to the people demonstrating. "We don't actually know that Maryville opened to detain the children that used to be at Heartland, Maryville maybe would have opened them anyway," Borcilă said, rejecting the idea that the only options are Heartland's facilities or something worse and noting that protests against detention centers around the country have yielded positive results for migrants. Indeed, as a former Heartland staffer has written, external pressure on the agency has led to speedier reunification between kids and their families.

In the heat of the traffic-jamming demonstration on Wednesday, a man with a British accent behind the wheel of an SUV caught by the blockade poked his head out of his window. "You're putting my kids at risk," he exclaimed, asking to be let through so he could pick them up from school.

"Don't you want to abolish ICE?" one of the

protesters shouted back.

"Sure I do but I can't do that right now, let us through for God's sake!"

The line didn't budge. Exasperated, the man first reversed his car, then suddenly accelerated at the demonstrators, stopping short of a woman's feet and eliciting shouts of outrage from her comrades. He pulled back again and maneuvered west out of the traffic jam. Meanwhile, conversations were also percolating on Twitter and Facebook. Several people posted complaints about not being able to get home on time; some of the protesters responded and even appeared to gain traction with their arguments.

During last year's protest of Heartland's gala, Little Village Solidarity Network managed to get someone inside the event to briefly cause a scene. They decided this year that it wouldn't be worth it to give the agency \$300 and risk arrest to make moral appeals to a room full of people already on Heartland's side. Instead, they solicited the attention of people who might otherwise have gone through the day without a passing thought of the detention of migrant children in the city. This way, the disruption can gain momentum and put Heartland on the defensive, Borcilă says. "Our strength is on the street."

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Ken Nordine's Edgewater mansion, 1902

PHOTO: POND AND POND COLLECTION; RYERSON AND BURNHAM ARCHIVES; THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

ON CULTURE

When preservation gets prickly

Neighbors want to save Ken Nordine's Edgewater mansion; if he could still talk to us, he might not agree.

By DEANNA ISAACS

Architectural preservation? Admireable! Especially in Chicago now, with the built environment giving Al Capone some competition as the city's global identity. It's a feel-good thing. And it's environmentally correct.

But it can also get dicey.

Like when the aims of preservationists run headlong into the opposing aims of property owners. One side might be looking to save a significant structure (and also, neighborhood ambience); the other trying to cash in promptly and at top dollar on a building they've invested in, perhaps lived in, and counted on as an asset.

The Chicago City Council has the power to protect buildings by giving them landmark status. In practice, this protection isn't given without the local alderman's support. So, if preservationists come up against an unwilling owner, an alderman can find himself in a prickly situation.

A case in point is playing out in Edgewater.

The property is an imposing old mansion at 6106 N. Kenmore, a six-bedroom, Arts and Crafts-style brick residence with a spacious side yard, built in 1902. It was designed by the Chicago firm of Pond and Pond—brothers Irving and Allen—important architects whose other local work included Jane Addams's Hull House complex (though not the house itself). According to architectural historian Terry Tatum, the Pond brothers designed the house on Kenmore for Herbert Perkins, an International Harvester executive, and his wife, Margaret, whose father, banker Franklin Head, a director of the 1893 World's Fair, had his own Pond and Pond mansion in the Gold Coast.

In 1951, the Perkins mansion became the home of radio star Ken Nordine—aka, the sonorous “voice of God.” Nordine had a successful commercial voice-over career, including some memorable Blackhawks spots and a trippy Levi's ad, that paid for the mansion. But he's best known as the master of Word Jazz—a witty, poetic, and allusive art form he invented in the 1950s, in which he talked in concert with music and sound effects. Carefully constructed to sound like it wasn't, Word Jazz played like a psychedelic stream of consciousness, or like verbal scat—but with meaning, however bent. Working from an attic studio in the mansion (where he hosted the likes of David Bowie and Laurie Anderson), Nordine recorded, broadcast (mostly on WBEZ and NPR), and syndicated this idiosyncratic genre for decades; you can find his CDs through wordjazz.com, and catch some of his video versions (like *Blinko* or *Fibonacci Numbers*) on YouTube and Vimeo.

Nordine and his wife, actress and vocal coach Beryl Vaughn, raised their three sons in the mansion, and lived there until they died: Beryl in 2016; Ken on February 16 of this year, at the age of 98. Now their heirs are selling the house, which stands on a third of an acre, is zoned RM-5, and, according to Landmarks Illinois, could be the site of much denser development. It's been given an orange rating by the city, which means that it's a potential landmark, and that a demolition permit application for it would trigger a delay of up to 90

days to allow the city to consider whether it should be saved.

Which is where 48th Ward alderman Harry Osterman comes in.

At least one developer would like to save the Nordine house. Andrew Ahitow, of City Pads, has a plan that would repurpose the mansion while expanding it into an apartment complex. Ahitow told me his company put in a “competitive” but unsuccessful purchase offer contingent on getting landmark status (which could allow for possible government financial incentives). When the offer was rejected, Ahitow said, he was told that the seller didn't want to take the risk of going down the path of landmarking. The Nordine family attorney, Randall Romei, had no comment.


Earlier this month, the Edgewater Historical Society sent a letter to Alderman Osterman, asking him to “do the right thing” by preserving the “ultra-significant Nordine mansion.”

But in a phone conversation last week, Society president Robert Remer told me that Osterman had introduced an ordinance to downzone the property last spring—only to withdraw it. Why? “We heard the family didn't like it,” Remer said. He also recalled that, years ago, when previous Alderman Mary Ann Smith was considering a proposed historic district that would have included the mansion, Nordine was one of those who opposed it.

Osterman has said he'd hate to lose the building, but “hasn't said yes or no to preservation,” Remer told me: “He said, ‘I don't think I should tell people what to do with their property.’ But there aren't many of these historic mansions left in this part of Edgewater, and it's an alderman's job to vote for or against preservation.”

The mansion is apparently now off the market; word is that it's under contract to a buyer who's likely to demolish. “We're asking people to contact Alderman Osterman and tell him to support the landmarking process,” Remer said. “Without his help, it's going down. It's completely in his hands.”

Osterman's office said he has no comment. But the alderman's dilemma is clear: Preservationists have said that saving the house would, among other reasons to preserve it, honor Nordine. But it might not honor Nordine's intentions.

This week Remer was holding out hope that a preservation solution could still be found. 

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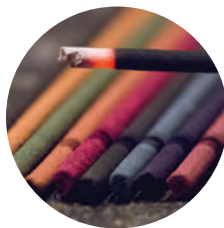
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SALEM COLLO-JULIN, listings coordinator

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- "Notes" T-shirt designed by Arts of Life artist Jean Wilson (\$25) artsoflife.org/shop/
- Private tour for three in a Tesla sedan (\$250+) chicagodetours.com/small-group-private-tours/
- Whole salami from Romanian Kosher Sausage Co. 7200 N. Clark (\$25-\$35) romaniankoshersausage.com/products
- "Koko Cat Skateboarding" enamel pin from Kokorokoko 1323 N. Milwaukee (\$10) etsy.com/listing/639287484/koko-cat-skateboarding-enamel-lapel-pin?ref=shop_home_active_1&frs=1

- Chicken Chews dog treats from the Chicago Bone Company 2704 N. California (\$12) chicago-bonecompany.com/merch
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- Nutritional counseling sessions at Blue Island Traditional Medicine 1843 N. Racine (\$60-\$75, some insurance accepted) blueislandtraditional-medicine.com/therapies



MAYA DUKMASOVA, staff writer

- Kinnersa long-sleeved cotton silk crop top from Vihanga (\$160) vihanga.co/collections/s-s-2019/products/sheer-blue-hibiscus-long-sleeve?variant=30938577469504
- "Chance and Bey" T-shirt by Sheila Rashid (\$45) sheilarashid.com/collections/all/products/chance-and-bey-touched-my-overalls-t-shirt

- Line pattern bowl (\$49) or Japanese incense (\$12-\$35) from Five Elements Home 5239 N. Clark fiveelementshome.com/
- Gourmet gelato from Angelo's Gelato Italiano (\$3-\$4 per pint at local grocers including Devon Market, 1440 W. Devon) angelogelato.com/home.html



LEOR GALIL, music writer

- Steve Bravo's "Harold's Over East" Harold's Chicken Shack sweatshirt from Pop Toy Pop (\$50) poptoypop.bigcartel.com/product/harold-s-over-east-black
- *Visible and Invisible Persons: Distributed in Space* from the Numero Group (LP \$22, MP3 \$10) numero-group.com/products/visible-and-invisible-persons-distributed-in-space
- Sergej Vutuc's photo zine *Western Avenue* from Half Letter Press (\$7) halfletterpress.com/western-ave

- Ezra Clayton Daniels and Ben Passmore's graphic novel *Bttm Fdrs* from Fantagraphics (\$29) fantagraphics.com/bttm-fdrs
- Avery R. Young's *Neckbone: Visual Verses* from Northwestern University Press (\$25, nupress.northwestern.edu/content/neckbone) and *Tubman* LP (\$8, fperecs.bandcamp.com/album/tubman)
- Noname's Book Club bookmark bundle (\$10) nonamebooks.com/shop
- "No System: Affirmation" T-shirt from Trap House Chicago (\$30) traphousechicago.us/product-page/no-system-affirmation
- *Observations: Year One* chapbook by Spencer Tweedy (\$12) observations.website
- "Vote Leor for best pizza" T-shirt by Ryan Duggan at Redbubble (\$17.36, proceeds go to *Chicago Reader*) redbubble.com/people/chicagoreader/works/41539559-vote-leor-for-best-pizza-best-of-chicago-2019?p=t-shirt
- Lauren Michele Jackson's *White Negroes: When Cornrows Were in Vogue and Other Thoughts on Cultural Appropriation* from Beacon Press (\$25.95) beacon.org/White-Negroes-P1521.aspx



JANAYA GREENE, social media coordinator

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- Maxine Waters or Bayard Rustin enamel pin from Reformed School (\$12) etsy.com/shop/ReformedSchool
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- Fiyah Fit Afro-Caribbean Dance Fitness classes at Haji Healing Salon 746 E. 79th (\$15 drop-in classes, \$125 for ten) ladysolpresents.com
- AKG K240 professional studio headphones (\$45) akg.com

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READER

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DEANNA ISAACS, senior staff writer

- Two-session course on Dinosaurs and Other Fossils of Egypt at the Oriental Institute 1155 E. 58th (\$98) oi.uchicago.edu
- Original art from South Side Community Art Center's Holiday Sale, December 6 and 7 at South Side Community Art Center 3831 S. Michigan, sscartcenter.org
- Verdi: Otello, Riccardo Muti conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, two-CD set from CSO Resound (\$34.99) symphonystore@csso.org
- Andrew Patner's *A Portrait in Four Movements: The Chicago Symphony Under Barenboim, Boulez, Haitink, and Muti* from University of Chicago Press (\$27.50) press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/b036844914.html
- Original art from Woman-Made Gallery's Small Works Show, December 6-15 at Lacuna Lofts 2150 S. Canalport (\$50-\$300) womanmade.org/small-works-members-show-2019/



JAMIE LUDWIG, associate editor

- Come Go With Me: The Stax Years* by the Staples Singers, deluxe seven-LP box set from Craft Recordings (\$159.99) found.ee/staplesingers-pivot-g
- Ministry: Prescripture*, limited-edition visual history book about Ministry (LOL, this could be a "careful what you wish for" situation) (\$75 preorder) melodic-virtue.com/products/ministry-prescripture
- Ipsento: Coffee 101 class at Ipsento Coffee 2035 N. Western (\$80, with Groupon offers as low as \$55) eventbrite.com/o/ipsento-coffee-729620843
- Haymarket Books Book Club membership (packages at \$20, \$25, and \$30 per month for a total of up to 40 titles a year) haymarketbooks.org/blogs/51-join-the-haymarket-book-club
- Yasou Vegan Skin Care Set (\$135 includes day and night creams) yasouskincare.com/shop/day-and-night/
- Blade & Bloom's Rich Lip Balm in Crush (\$12) bladeandbloom.com/collections/all/rich-lip-balm
- Badass reclaimed leather purse by Ransack Leather (as low as \$70 or \$290 for the studded Rock & Roll large shoulder duffel) etsy.com/shop/ransack-leather/?fbclid=IwAR-3w0FIEdm7h4WMI6X-ruHQ_Bk-VYytGI
- Guitar setup and maintenance class at Specimen Chicago School of Guitar Making 1240 N. Homan (\$275-\$365) specimenproducts.com/product/setup-maintenance-guitar-bass/

- Dark Matter coffee subscription to limited-edition monthly blends (three-, six-, and 12-month options at \$20 per bag) darkmattercoffee.com/products/subscription



KAREN HAWKINS, coeditor in chief

- Online or in-store gift card for Women & Children First 5233 N. Clark, womenandchildren-first.com/gift-cards
- "Bad Girls Throughout History 2020" wall calendar from Feminist Speak-easy (\$15) feministspeak-easy.com/collections/frontpage/products/bad-girls-throughout-history-wall-2020-calendar
- Mnemosyne Spiral Notebook B5 at Martha Mae 5407 N. Clark (\$12) marthamae.info/collections/notebooks-and-stationery/products/mnemosyne-lined-notebook-b5?variant=23734462742586
- "Black Girl Magic" crop top from the Silver Room 1506 E. 53rd (\$25) thesilverroom.com/collections/featured/products/black-girl-magic-crop-top



SUE KWONG, creative lead

- Kitchen towels by Rhymes With Twee (\$10) etsy.com/shop/rhymeswithtwee/

- Organic hair products from Ultimate Fresher (\$10-\$25) ultimatefresher.com
- Winged Scarf by Sophia Reyes (\$68) sophiar-eyes.com/wingedscarf
- Ethically sourced Monna Llama coat by Dene Apparel (\$299) denebapparel.com
- Cochineal & Eco Dyeing Workshop in Oaxaca, Mexico, conducted by Amy Taylor (\$230) msamytaylor.com/products/cochineal-eco-dyeing-workshop-in-oaxaca-mexico
- People- and planet-friendly laundry powders and stain removers from Meliora Cleaning Products (\$12.99-\$44.49) meliorameansbetter.com/collections/laundry
- Sampler sets from Spirit Tea (\$21) spirittea.co/collections
- Tickets to the Signature Show at Chicago Magic Lounge 5050 N. Clark (\$45-\$60 per seat) chicagomagiclounge.com/purchase-tickets



S. NICOLE LANE, editorial associate

- "Sling" Shadowsex T-shirt featuring SM artist Joseph W. Bean (\$20 plus \$8.50 per order shipping or available at the Leather Archives and Museum, 6550 N. Clark) squareup.com/store/leatherarchives/item/t-shirt-leather-sex-shadows-sling

- Morton Arboretum yearlong membership (\$60-\$1,500) mortonarb.org/join-today
- Crave Vesper stainless-steel mini vibrator necklace at Early to Bed 5044 N. Clark or online (\$72) early2bed.com/crave-vesper.html
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- Custom-made chain harness by Plz Be Careful (starting at \$70) instagram.com/plzbecareful/
- Sun, Moon, and Rising Slap Pack zodiac stickers from Attitude Seven (\$10) attitudeseven.com/bodega/zodiac-slap



PHILIP MONTORO, music editor

- Discount card for West African dance classes from Ayodele Drum & Dance (\$45 for five classes or \$85 for ten, regular price \$10 per class) ayodeledrumanddance.com/itinerary.php
- Galactic Zoo Dossier mixtape club 2020 subscription (\$40 for six 90-minute cassettes of rare psych, hard rock, glam, punk, prog, and more, compiled by Steve Krakow) plasticcrime-wave.com/merchandise-1
- Custom mounted polymer-clay sculpture of a real or imaginary animal by Phineas X. Jones

(contact artist for quote) octophant.us/sculpt

- The Chicago Neighborhood Guidebook*, edited by Martha Bayne, from Belt Publishing (\$16 online) beltpublishing.com/products/chicago-neighborhood-guidebook
- Gift card for Off Color Brewing's Mousetrap taproom 1460 N. Kingsbury, offcolorbrewing.com/store/gc
- Gift subscription to Elastic Arts 3429 W. Diversey #208 (from \$100; premiums include an Elastic T-shirt and a 20 percent discount to most events) elasticarts.org/donate
- Next Chapter membership at the Newberry Library 60 W. Walton (donation of \$50 or more includes admission for two to the Book Fair Preview Night; Next Chapter restricted to ages 21 through 45) go.newberry.org/next-chapter-gift



JAMIE RAMSAY, director of photography

- Macrame plant hanger workshop at Urban Macrame Fibers (\$45) airbnb.com/experiences/15726
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- Vegan prix fixe dinner at Fancy Plants Cafe 613 W. Briar (\$45) experiences.

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chefsfeed.com/account/profile/kevin.schuder.9/

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- Gift certificate for custom framing at April 7s [766 N. Milwaukee, instagram.com/april7s/?hl=en](https://766.N.Milwaukee.instagram.com/april7s/?hl=en)
- Sugo! Sweets Bonbon Box of 12 (\$37) sugoi-sweets.com/collections/holiday-reserve



KERRY REID, theater and dance editor

- “El: The Chicago Transit Adventure” board game from Transit Tees [5226 N. Clark \(\\$40\) transittees.com/el-the-chicago-transit-adventure-board-game](https://5226.N.Clark.com/el-the-chicago-transit-adventure-board-game)
- Cash or in-kind donation to no-kill shelter Felines & Canines [6379 N. Paulina, felinescanines.org](https://6379.N.Paulina.felinescanines.org)

- Dance classes at Old Town School of Folk Music [4544 N. Lincoln \(\\$132-\\$156 for eight-week session\) oldtownschool.org/classes/adults/](https://4544.N.Lincoln.org/classes/adults/)
- Imani Perry’s *Looking for Lorraine: The Radical and Radiant Life of Lorraine Hansberry* from Penguin Random House at Women and Children First [5233 N. Clark \(\\$17.95\) wome-nandchildrenfirst.com/book/9780807039830](https://5233.N.Clark.com/book/9780807039830)
- Dark chocolate assortment from Belgian Chocolatier Piron [509-A Main St., Evanston \(\\$24.50 per half-pound box\) belgchocpiron.com/signature-assortment/dark-chocolate-assortment](https://509-A.Main.St.,Evanston.com/signature-assortment/dark-chocolate-assortment)



KATE SCHMIDT, deputy editor

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- Drinking chocolate or truffle sets from Katherine Anne Confections [2745 W. Armitage \(\\$21-\\$24\) katherine-anne.com/truffles](https://2745.W.Armitage.com/truffles)



Clockwise from left: chicken sandwich; *prahok ktiss*; cheesesteak; Korean spicy pork **BY JACK X. LI FOR CHICAGO READER**

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Cambodia on a bun

Hermosa’s Ethan Lim looks around the globe and asks “will it sandwich?”

By **MIKE SULA**

Ethan Lim’s family members were apprehensive about the Cambodian fried chicken sandwich. Among Lim’s parents and nine siblings the family owns and oper-

ates eight restaurants and doughnut shops. For the past four and a half years he’s run his own—an eight-stool counter service sandwich shop around the corner from Goo-goo’s Table, a Chinese restaurant owned by a brother and two sisters.

All during that time Lim has barely called attention to himself, focusing on executing affordable, chef-level fast food to the neighborhood—dogs, burgers, chicken parm, and pepper and egg sandwiches. But he’s also quietly introduced a succession of next-level specialties born from the simple question: Will it sandwich?

Over the years he’s rotated experiments in and out based on dishes that don’t typically take sandwich form: the char siu-egg-fried rice “554” at Chinatown’s Seven Treasures; deep-fried salt cod and potato brandade croquette topped with brussels sprout slaw ➔

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on a Spanish batard inspired by a memorable meal at Avec; and the herbaceous Persian frittata kuku sabzi topped with braised mushrooms on a buttery bun.

But the Cambodian fried chicken sandwich is among a trio of newer sandwiches for which Lim drew upon his family's own home cooking. It made its debut in early August just as the hysteria surrounding Popeye's spicy fried chicken sandwich set off, and featured a skin-on chicken thigh marinated in the foundational herbal spice paste known as *kroeung*—in this case lemongrass, garlic, galangal, turmeric, and makrut lime leaf—along with fish sauce, soy sauce, and sugar. It's dusted in rice flour and deep fried, topped with a sweet and spicy papaya salad with chopped long beans and a bouquets of herbs: Thai basil, cilantro, culantro, mint, and once in awhile—when he can find it (or has grown it himself)—fish mint, or *diep cá*, as it's known in Vietnamese, a plant that somehow marries terrestrial herbal freshness with briny aquatic funk.

Lim's siblings were worried that this sand-

wich—which stimulates every pleasure point in the human nervous system—would nevertheless somehow be too out there for palates not raised on its particularly funky Cambodian flavor profile.

"We had a long chat about it," says Lim. "I was like, 'This is something we like to eat. Why don't we trust our palates?'"

Lim was right. Right now it's his bestselling sandwich, and though there are no lines for it (yet), it does take him 20 minutes to assemble.

It's worth the wait, but the other two recent additions can't be overlooked. The "moo ping" is a mash-up of Thai grilled pork shoulder, and the minced pork salad laab, its chopped cabbage garnish dressed with Isan-style *nam jim jaew* dipping sauce, and the whole package dusted with an extra-level textural counterpoint of toasted ground rice. He took his mother's recipe for Chinese-style beef brisket noodle *ngau nam*, typically eaten with French style baguette, and created its logical sandwich extension, a French dip served with a side of the five-spice-redolent braising jus.

Nothing irritates Lim like when he sees

a dish on a menu described as "flavors of" a particular cuisine only to find it tosses in a few representative ingredients and barely approaches the depth of the original. "I want to make it so someone that's Cambodian can come out and recognize a dish even if it's in sandwich form."

Lim, whose family fled the war in Cambodia, was born in a Thai refugee camp. In 1984, when he was 4, the family came to Chicago, where his grandfather had already settled in Albany Park, and where he'd soon open the family's first restaurant where Hermosa and Googoo's is now located. Lim grew up working in the kitchen, wrapping wontons, taking orders, and expediting in the family's growing number of restaurants. He sold shoes and then cars for eight years after high school, but still stayed in the game, attending Kendall College for a time and working in the kitchen at the late Spring. After getting laid off from a sales job, he went all in and took a succession of front of the house positions at Aviary, Next, and Balena.

That's where he was working when his father offered him the chance to do his own

thing. Hermosa's address is listed on Armitage, the same as Googoo's, but its entrance is just around the corner on Kostner. You can't tell anything about it from the outside—apart from the cartoon donut and knife and fork on the sign (a sister operates Somethin' Sweet donuts in Cragin and Albany Park), but over the years Lim's built up neighborhood loyalty. The \$7.95 Vienna beef hot dog combo (two franks, fries, and a soda), along with a \$3.50 corn dog, and a \$1 junior ice cream cone—have established it as a reliable after-school hang-out.

Initially Lim just concentrated on the classics, with some cheffy enhancements, such as red onion jam on the burger, bacon fat cooked kraut on the reuben, and Bolognese and real parm in the supersized pizza puffs (since 86'd). But he also displayed a prescient sense for oncoming sandwich trends. His first specialty was a crispy tonkotsu cutlet sandwich with spicy mustard that he introduced just before the panko-breaded sandwich became an Instagram celebrity.

He's since rotated that off the menu but

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Ethan Lim with a signature chicken sandwich JACK X. LI FOR CHICAGO READER



some introductions have become permanent, such as the cheesesteak: Chinese-style black pepper marinated ribeye, cross-pollinated with poblanos and a fetching blanket of melted chihuahua cheese. A spicy pork sandwich is topped with pickled daikon and cucumber—typical side dishes one would be served at a Korean BBQ—in the same way a bulgogi steak sandwich is bound to its bread with gochujang mayo.

Scratch toppings such as the latter are im-

portant to Lim, serving as binders between the protein and rolls Lim gets from Highland Bakery. This is his standard sandwich vehicle, with a crackly exterior but enough tensility to contain unruly fillings normally allowed to spread out on plates or in bowls.

Lim's focus on the food he grew up on has been recently discovered and boosted by various food media personalities, notably Best food writer (of "your mama" jokes) Dennis Lee, who lives nearby. There doesn't seem to

be any confusion or apprehension in the face of the flavor profiles, which don't hold anything back.

Last week Lim introduced his most Cambodian sandwich yet, and it's another triumph: pork belly with an understory of the dipping paste *prahok ktiss*, made with ground pork belly, kroeung, and fermented mudfish paste, topped with grilled shishito peppers, and green Thai eggplants. It is one of Cambodia's signature dishes, sandwiched, and it is glorious: spicy, fatty, a little bit sweet, and yeah, sure, it's funky, but not too out there by any stretch of the imagination.

"If you like bleu cheese on steak it has that draw to it," says Lim. These sandwich successes have inspired him to start planning a Cambodian food pop-up after the new year at Hermosa, featuring noodles, street snacks, and of course, sandwiches. "My parents are significantly older, along with my siblings," he says. "It's me trying to archive the recipes and what they do before they're gone."

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SMALL SCREEN

Be thankful for these Chicago webseries

A mockumentary about gardening, scenes from a hospital waiting room, and more streaming shows to binge this holiday season.

By **BRIANNA WELLEN**

It's easy enough to argue that there are more well-known television shows being filmed in Chicago—sets for Dick Wolf's multiple shows on the city's ins and outs alone are always popping up. But increasingly some of the most entertaining

and creative series coming out of Chicago exist solely on the Internet. Just in time for bingeing when you need an escape from the Thanksgiving dinner table, here are some local webseries from the past year worth checking out.



Damaged Goods

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November 29, Dec. 6, 13, 20

Damaged Goods

The visual impact of the colorful, gorgeously framed shots in this VAM Studio production is in itself enough to enjoy. But the compelling, relatably flawed characters who fill out the stunning scenes are what make *Damaged Goods* required viewing. The series follows Marlo (Abena Boamah), an off-balanced yogi looking to Instagram for validation; Ezra (Nosakhere Cash O'Bannon), an aspiring artist who turns to dealing drugs to make ends meet; Sanavi (Aashvi Patel), a young professional dealing with blatant sexism and racism in the corporate world; and Caleb (Chufue Yang), a club kid trying to find his place in that world and maintain his mental health. Each episode shows the characters navigating their own very different careers, creative impulses, financial struggles, sex lives, and challenges as people of color in Chicago. Director-writer Vincent Martell and writers K.B. Woodson and Zak Payne create an authentic, nuanced world that feels like a very specific, familiar slice of the city. damagedgoodswebseries.com

Garden Doc

Tending to a garden is not as easy as it seems. This mockumentary created by Laura Nelson and Evelyn Landow follows the pair as they try their very best to tend to the flora and fauna of a suburban garden, with plenty of lawn-goose outfit changes and crafting in between. The entire series clocks in at only 17 minutes—it's a short, sweet, simple, and utterly charming look at friendship and a reminder that we should always find joy in overcoming even the smallest obstacles. [Streaming on YouTube](#)

Pre-Existing

We all have a waiting room story to tell—the anthology webseries *Pre-Existing* gives a group of local comedians the chance to share theirs. A different Chicago performer writes and directs each of the 17 episodes in the series, providing a welcome range of styles, talents, and waiting-room perspectives. "Lipstick" (written and directed by Dana Quercioli) depicts the painfully awkward experience of making small (or sometimes not-so-small) talk in the waiting room with your partner's mother. "That McDonald's Money" (written and directed by Robel Arega) shows a night in a hospital waiting room through the eyes of a fed-up nurse. "Best Bitches" (written and directed by Catharine Savage) is a dark fantasy of all the worst-case scenarios that can run through someone's head while they're waiting to get examined. The collection of writers and cast is a real who's who of some of the best comics working in Chicago today. facebook.com/preexistingws

Uneverything

Tracie Roberson is the epitome of a she-should-have-her-own-show personality, so thank goodness she does. There are only two episodes currently streaming (and let's hope more on the way!), but it takes only two seconds into the series to see her star power. In *Uneverything*, Roberson plays a version of herself dealing with dating, responsibility, and the uncertainty of the future. While her impressive confidence and hilarious quips make it seem like she's got everything under control, she's just trying to figure out the balance between being yourself and being a "real adult" like everyone else. weareo.tv/originals/uneverything

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VISUAL ARTS

Camille Norment's (*red flame*) brings the heat

The Oslo-based multimedia artist's installation uses sound to speak volumes about Chicago's social and political history.

By **S. NICOLE LANE**

Walking into the space of *Untitled (red flame)* at the Logan Center Exhibitions takes a bit of courage. Ahead of me is a dark sea with a glimmer of red and an echoing sound. The projection of sound and the gallery space taunt me as I brace myself

and slowly tiptoe into the gallery. Every movement is followed by a pause before I take another step. I inch closer and closer toward the red glowing light. I wait for my eyes to adjust. A piercing sound fills the space.

A red spotlight from the floor shoots upward, illuminating three megaphones are attached to microphone stands at varying levels; another spotlight from the ceiling shines down toward the floor. Here in the center of the gallery is a hot flame, a red source of noise. It's the heartbeat of the room. ➔

Untitled (red flame)
 ROBERT CHASE HEISHMAN/
 LOGAN CENTER EXHIBITIONS,
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continued from 17

Untitled (red flame) was created through a collection of voices Norment recorded during workshops with Chicago residents that focused on the performative voices, vocal expressions, and how these recordings can be manipulated. Norment artist works with sound, installation, sculpture, drawing, performance, and video. She is part of the Camille Norment Trio with Vegar Vårdal and Håvard Skaset where she sings and plays the glass harmonica, electric guitar, and the Hardanger fiddle, a traditional Norwegian instrument. Norment started experimenting with sound in the 90s at Interval Research, a Palo Alto tech laboratory founded by Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen and developer David Liddle that created consumer product applications and technology for the future (eventually going defunct in 2000).

Though she's currently based in Oslo, she was born in Maryland, and investigates political and social histories while using sound as a vehicle to expand on her themes.

For example, in *Untitled (red flame)* the sound of the voices, amplified throughout the gallery, are a reflection of fire, linked to the Great Chicago Fire and Chicago's 1960s race riots. The sound is angry as the swath of noise fills the gallery. The artist sonically experiments with the individual voices that she recorded from the workshops, combining them to start a conversation of something much larger and out of control, like the social and political history located here in Chicago itself.

Working with breaths, huffs, coughs, breaks in conversation, and your average human *ums* and *ughs*, Norment abstracted the sound of several individuals voices for the completed composition. The installation elicits a physical response: Throughout my experience, I raised my hands to shield my ears. There are several moments that resemble the sound of feedback. Long moments of high-pitched frequencies fill the gallery.

Although I know that the red flame represents Chicago's dark history—the explosions of riots, violence, and segregation that



Untitled (red flame) © ROBERT CHASE HEISHMAN/LOGAN CENTER EXHIBITIONS, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

still resonate within our city—I can't help but hear the trickle of water. Each sound comes in a wave. The echo permeates my entire body as the subwoofers work their magic. I focus on the moment and try to meditate in the darkness. I attempt to break through the manipulation of sound and find the voices that Norment recorded, but she's good at her craft and all I can make out are more crackles,

waves, and hums. This battle I'm having with the overwhelming noise as the only one in the gallery resonates throughout the installation. The heat and the power of the red flame represent a wildfire, or a flood, as the heat and sound sweep away the gallery and all of those inside of it. [\[1\]](#)

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READER



Black (Power) Friday & Saturday
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LIT

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Lucy Stoolie and Kat Sass host a family-friendly story time at the restaurant and bar inside of the MCA. Reservation is required. [Sun 12/1, 10 AM-2:30 PM, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 220 E. Chicago, mcachicago.org, free with reservation at Marisol Restaurant and Bar.](#)

Lauren Michele Jackson

The writer and Northwestern University professor discusses her book *White Negroes: When Cornrows Were in Vogue and Other Thoughts on Cultural Appropriation*. [Thu 12/3, 7 PM, Volumes Bookcafe, 1474 N. Milwaukee, volumesbooks.com. FREE](#)

McSweeney's 58 release party

Celebrate the release of a McSweeney's issue all about climate change during the literary journal's first Chicago event. The night includes a reading by poet Luis Alberto Urrea, and panel discussion featuring Urrea, the NRDC's Rob Moore, and WBEZ's Shannon Heffernan. Registration required. [Mon 12/2, 6 PM, Chicago Athletic Association, 12 S. Michigan, facebook.com/mcsweeneys.publishing. FREE](#)

Tuesday Funk #134

The monthly reading series closes out 2019 with readings from Ruth Kaufman, Katey Schulz, Anne-Marie Oomen, Norman Doucet, and Rachel Cromidas. [Tue 12/3, 7:30 PM, Hopleaf, 5148 N. Clark, tuesdayfunk.org. FREE](#)

SHOPPING

Black Friday Night Market

Join local artists for an evening of shopping for jewelry, knitwear, candles, soaps, handmade leather goods, and more. [Fri 11/29, 5-9:30 PM, Mrs. Murphy & Sons Irish Bistro, 3905 N. Lincoln, irishbistro.com. FREE](#)

Black (Power) Friday & Saturday

This free holiday shopping experience at the Arts Bank includes south side artists, creatives, and vendors curated by Stash Marketplace, plus a chance to see the exhibition "In the Absence of Light." DJs will be spinning tunes all day long. [Fri 11/29, noon-7 PM and Sat 11/30, noon-6 PM, Stony Island Arts Bank, 6760 S. Stony Island, rebuild-foundation.org. FREE](#)

Krampus Mart

The self-proclaimed "alternative holiday handmade market" features goods from IMW Ceramics, Do Bats Eat Cats?, Girl Fawkes Pins, and more, plus music by DJ Scary Lady Sarah. [Sun 12/1, 4-8 PM, GMan Tavern, 3740 N. Clark, facebook.com/krampusmart. FREE](#)

Sustainable Holiday Craft Fair

Around a dozen local makers sell everything from tea towels to robots to mittens and more, and all items consist of 50 percent or more repurposed and/or upcycled materials. [Sun 12/1, 11 AM-4 PM, the WasteShed, 2842 W. Chicago, thewasteshed.com. FREE](#)

VISUAL ARTS

"For the Time Being"

The Chicago Advanced Fibers Collective presents a one-day exhibition at ACRE Projects with works from Chicago-based artists creating pieces in 2D, 3D, and 4D. Expect refreshments. [Sun 12/1, noon-8 PM, ACRE Projects, 1345 W. 19th, acreresidency.org. FREE](#)

"Vaulted Breath/Winded Spirit" artist talk

Jacqueline Surdell's exhibition focuses on storytelling, personal histories, and the self. Join Surdell as she gives a walk-through talk of her show with coffee donated by La Colombe and pastries by Artemios. [Sat 11/30, 1-2 PM, Heaven Gallery, 1550 N. Milwaukee, heavengallery.com. FREE](#)

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PREVIEW

Tandy Cronyn returns to Chicago—and Germany—in *The Tall Boy*

The solo drama about refugee children in postwar Bavaria is newly relevant.

By ALBERT WILLIAMS

Actor Tandy Cronyn, whose one-woman show *The Tall Boy* plays at Stage 773 for a limited engagement December 5 through 15, came across the source material for the project by chance. “It was a long and winding road,” recalls the 74-year-old Cronyn, whose distinguished career has ranged from Broadway musicals to classical drama at the Stratford Festival.

Having had success as poet Emily Dickinson in William Luce’s one-woman play *The Belle of Amherst*, she considered creating solo performance pieces about Victorian explorer Mary Kingsley and imagist poet H.D. “I explored several possibilities over years of work that came to naught,” Cronyn says. “Then Jeff Sweet recommended I look into doing something about one of the extraordinary women war correspondents of World War I and World War II—people who broke the mold for their time.”

Cronyn has known Sweet—the Chicago-bred author of such plays as *Porch, Flyers*, and *The Value of Names*, all successes at Chicago’s Victory Gardens Theater in the 1970s and ’80s—since 1970, when she was a member of the resident acting company at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center’s playwrights’ conference. In 1998 she starred at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival in *The Falcon’s Pitch*, Sweet’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s three

Henry VI dramas, in which Cronyn portrayed Margaret of Anjou, one of the Bard’s greatest female roles.

Among the possible subjects Sweet recommended that Cronyn consider for a solo show was Kay Boyle, a well-known American writer of fiction, poetry, and journalism in the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s, until she was blacklisted during the McCarthy-era red scare. Boyle was ahead of her time in warning about the rising threat posed by Hitler; her 1936 novel *Death of a Man* depicted the rise of Nazism in Austria. Boyle lived in Germany after World War II, covering the Nuremberg trials for the *New Yorker*.

Browsing through Boyle’s work, Cronyn encountered a tragic tale titled “The Lost” in the 1951 short-story collection *The Smoking Mountain: Stories of Postwar Germany*. It struck a chord. Rather than portray Boyle onstage, she decided, she would bring Boyle’s art to life instead.

Adapted from Boyle’s story by British playwright Simon Bent, *The Tall Boy* is a monologue by an American relief worker in rural Bavaria after the liberation of Germany by Allied troops. The woman—matron of a displaced persons camp—recounts her experience with three war orphans, all boys: a 12-year-old Italian, a 14-year-old Pole, and a 15-year-old Czech. During the war, each of them had attached himself to an American army unit

as a company “mascot.” Now the youngsters are desperate to leave war-ravaged Europe, hoping to be reunited with their army buddies in America. It is up to Cronyn’s character, the matron, to help the kids find American sponsors—or to break the bad news that there are none.

THE TALL BOY
12/5-12/15: Thu 7:30 PM,
Fri 8 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM,
Sun 3 PM, Stage 773, 1225
W. Belmont, 773-327-5252,
stage773.com, \$39.

Only the Czech teen—the “tall boy” of the title—actually has a man who’s willing to bring him to the U.S. The GI, an auto mechanic in Tennessee, had promised to adopt him, but there’s a problem: the American government is unwilling to sponsor an interracial adoption, and the soldier is Black.

The Tall Boy is an actor’s showpiece that requires Cronyn to play multiple roles. In addition to the Matron, the story’s narrator, she also portrays the three children, who speak English in the accents they have absorbed from their American pals. The Italian kid speaks in a “dese dem dose” Jersey Shores patois, while the Czech boy’s drawl reflects his “imprinting”



Tandy Cronyn © TRIX ROSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

by a southerner. Other characters Cronyn portrays include a Nazi concentration camp capo.

Cronyn believes the character of the storyteller is modeled on Kathryn Hulme, a friend of Kay Boyle’s who was part of the United Nations team sent into postwar Europe to try to take care of millions of displaced persons. In preparing for *The Tall Boy*, Cronyn also researched Hulme’s account of her often heart-rending experiences in her 1953 book *The Wild Place*. The title refers to the English name for Wildflecken, originally built in 1937 by Hitler as a training camp for Nazi SS ski troops and later turned into a refugee camp.

Cronyn, who attended boarding school in Bavaria as a teenager in the 1960s, has previous experience with shows set in Germany. In 1968, she took over the role of Sally Bowles, an English expat carving out a singing career in 1931 Berlin, in the original Broadway production of *Cabaret*. And in 2005 she starred at Victory Gardens Theater in Jeffrey Sweet’s drama *Berlin ’45*, playing a German survivor fearfully awaiting her city’s occupation by Soviet troops. *The Tall Boy* marks her first appearance in Chicago since then.

As her name suggests, Cronyn is the daughter of one of the American theater’s most famed and formidable acting couples. Her British-born mother, Jessica Tandy, created the role of Blanche DuBois in Tennessee Williams’s *A Streetcar Named Desire* and won an Oscar for her lead performance in the movie *Driving Miss Daisy*. Cronyn’s father, Canadian actor Hume Cronyn, frequently costarred with Tandy on stage (*The Fourposter*, *The Gin Game*, *Foxfire*) and screen (*The World According to Garp*, *Cocoon*, *To Dance With the White Dog*, *Camilla*).

Cronyn began working on *The Tall Boy* in 2010 and premiered the show two years later. In 2014, she performed it at the United Solo Festival in New York City (the world’s largest solo theater festival), where it won the award for best adaptation.

Now, in light of the Trump administration’s policies of breaking up migrant families at the southern border, the material’s description of the plight of traumatized unaccompanied children carries an especially timely resonance.

“Oh, yes,” says Cronyn, who reprised the piece last September as part of the tenth annual United Solo’s “best of the festival” programming. “Current events have caught up with the play.” 📺

RR THE FIRST DEEP BREATH

Through 12/22: Wed-Fri 7 PM, Sat 2 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Tue 12/10, 7 PM; Wed 12/4, 2 PM only; Sat 12/14, 7:30 PM only; no performance Thu 11/28, Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln, 773-871-3000, victorygardens.org, \$31-\$65.

REVIEW

A tableful of secrets

The *First Deep Breath* provides a family feast of revelations and recriminations.

By **KERRY REID**

“Go back to where you started, or as far back as you can, examine all of it, travel your road again and tell the truth about it. Sing or shout or testify or keep it to yourself: but know whence you came.”—James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket*

There’s a scene in Lee Edward Colston II’s *The First Deep Breath*, now in a bone-shaking world premiere at Victory Gardens, where the aunt and primary caretaker of a Black family in Philadelphia recites everything she’s making for their Thanksgiving feast. It’s an exhaustive but tantalizing menu, much like the play itself, which puts all the family secrets on the table in a heap of plot

twists before they finally (literally) crash on the floor.

Like Baldwin’s great bildungsroman *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, Colston’s play traces the psychological effects the children of a fearsome patriarch, Pastor Albert Melvin Jones III (David Alan Anderson), suffer in the shadow of his wrath and righteousness. Youngest son AJ (Patrick Agada) is supposed to follow his father into the religious life but would secretly rather be a dancer. Daughter Dee-Dee (Melanie Loren), whose twin died in a drunk-driving accident, struggles to be seen on her own



terms, not as a ghost of her dead sister, whose urn occupies a morbid place of honor in the dining room. And Abdul-Malik, formerly Albert Melvin Jones IV (Clinton Lowe), has just returned from prison after serving time for a rape he claims he didn’t commit. Add in mother Ruth (Celeste Williams), who’s fading deeper into the fog of Alzheimer’s, and her sister, Pearl (Deanna Reed-Foster), whose caregiving crosses boundaries from time to time, and it’s an entire stew of revelations about sexuality, grief, race, and shame. And that’s just for starters.

The First Deep
Breath LIZ LAUREN

THEATER

The play carries echoes of Tracy Letts’s *August: Osage County*—not least in the unexpected yet regular flashes of acidic and earthy wit Colston seeds throughout the script. Like *August*, Colston’s play also takes three and a half hours (with two intermissions) to reach its explosive conclusion. Steve H. Broadnax III’s staging lets the story be as big as it wants to be while also pulling it back for moments of tender connection.

But unlike the sexually arid world of Letts’s troubled Weston clan, Colston’s play draws the same connections between spiritual and sexual freedom that Baldwin embodied in his work. The performances are virtuosic across the board, from Reed-Foster’s take-no-prisoners demands for respect to Anderson’s terrifying rage as a man whose hard-as-nails demeanor can only partially hide that he is wounded to the soul. The tragedy is that he cannot find a way out of the darkness without damaging those around him. The revelation is that his children find the courage to sing, shout, and testify as they seek their own light.

@kerryreid

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OPENING

RR Honky-tonk angels Firebrand's *Always . . . Patsy Cline* doubles up on female bonding.

Since Firebrand's production of *Always . . . Patsy Cline* features its stars, Harmony France and Christina Hall, trading the roles of Cline and her Texas superfan, Louise Seger (whose correspondence sparked this 1988 bio musical by Ted Swindley), from show to show, you might consider this half a review. The night I attended, France played Patsy and Hall was Louise. But the chemistry between these two women (both have played Patsy in previous productions) is so strong and palpable that I imagine it's equally enjoyable when they flip. Add in musical director Andra Velis Simon's tight four-piece onstage band and Lauren Nichols's set, which transforms the Den's space into an intimate honky-tonk setting, and Firebrand's concept doesn't seem so "Crazy."

There are no earth-shattering revelations here, but the story of a small-town Virginia girl who achieved crossover fame from country to pop and the brassy Houston woman who took her home for a late-night breakfast after a 1961 show (and then became her pen pal until Cline's death in 1963) shines because Patsy and Louise truly do see themselves mirrored in the woman across that kitchen table. Failed marriages, worries about their young children, and a desire to hold their own in a male-dominated world (Louise works as an electronics technician, "because we can't all be hairdressers") creates empathy between them.

France's singing doesn't mimic Cline's warm style so much as make it her own in hits such as "Walkin' After Midnight" and "Faded Love." The arrangements felt a little slower, but no less stirring, from what I've heard on jukeboxes for decades, and Brigitte Dittmars's staging also gives us welcome breathing space to enjoy these two women finding solace in each other's company. —**KERRY REID** *ALWAYS . . . PATSY CLINE* Through 12/15: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; no performance Thu 11/28, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, 773-697-3830, firebrandtheatre.org, \$40 general, \$50 VIP cabaret table, \$20 students/industry rush available at the door.



Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish © MATT FERGUSON; EXECPIX

RR Eleanor, the other rag doll A North Pole misfit toy yearns for a forever friend in this new family musical.

Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer's Dolly isn't the only rag doll hoping for a forever home. In *Eleanor's Very Merry Christmas Wish*, a new musical by Denise McGowan Tracy (based on her 2015 book) and composer Kathleen Butler-Duplessis and produced by Tracy, the title doll spends her days at the North Pole helping out by wrapping presents and making cookies but yearns for a friend who isn't an elf.

In just over an hour, Tracy and Butler-Duplessis's sweet, surefooted show celebrates family, hope, and the importance of knowing when it's time to move on. "Wishing isn't a plan," Mrs. Claus, or "Cookie" (Erin Parker) tells Eleanor (Samantha Bonzi) while reminding her that she was named for Eleanor Roosevelt and thus

should have plenty of "the stuff that we're made of, the tough that we're made of," as she sings in one number. Eleanor may be an old-fashioned doll, but holding out for someone who will appreciate her for who she is ultimately means she finds a connection with Noelle (Sydney Swanson), a six-year-old girl who isn't looking for fancy electronics.

Directed and choreographed by Zachary L. Gray, with music direction by David Fiorello, the show moves swiftly, with only a few smarty-pants interpolations for the grown-ups. Bonzi is thoroughly endearing, but the supporting cast of elves (including Emily Rohm's glammed-out Clara, keeper of the list) provide comic relief and keep the young audience engaged. Special kudos to Cara Chumbley and Claire Latourette's Glimmer and Shimmer, who take us through a series of pre-show exercises and games to get the holiday spirit and audience engagement revved up. —**KERRY REID** *ELEANOR'S VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS WISH* Through 12/29: Wed 10 AM, Sat 10 AM and 2 PM, Sun 1 and 5 PM; also Fri 11/29, 2 PM; Mon 12/23, 10 AM and 2 PM, and Fri 12/27, 10 AM and 2 PM; Sun 12/29, 1 PM only; no performance Wed 12/24, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, greenhouse-theater.org, \$29.50, \$100 family pack of four tickets; recommended for kids ages three and up.

Exit, pursued by a trope Joy Productions' inaugural show finds likability in Lauren Gunderson's stereotypes.

Joy Productions' inaugural show, *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*, begins with a compelling image: Kyle Carter (Aaron Wertheim) sits in a recliner, tied down with a comically epic amount of duct tape, in a rural southern shack. He's inert, passed out before the play begins, and doesn't stir until slapped awake by his wife, Nan Carter (Dani Mohrbach). Nan has had enough of his drunkenness and abuse and aims to leave him for bear food. But before parting, Nan wants to reenact the low points of

their sorry union. She enlists a stripper with thespian ambitions named Sweetheart (Amy Maniscalco) and her gay best friend, Simon (Alex Rocha), for the production.

Lauren Gunderson's 2012 revenge comedy traffics in broad stereotypes rather than specificity. The abused wife, clueless redneck husband, wisecracking stripper, and sassy gay sidekick are tropes rather than full-fledged people. Yet this talented cast, under Sarah Hensley's able direction, raises this utterly predictable material to a likability it probably doesn't deserve. The southern accents slip in and out, but otherwise the acting is uniformly excellent.

The idea of a woman getting fed up and leaving a no-good man while exacting some payback might be compelling if there were any doubt as to the outcome. But Nan's triumph is never in question, and Kyle's awfulness is unquestionable, so there are no stakes or tension to this tale. Aside from the man tied down to a chair, there's not much to remember here. Still, I'd be very interested to see what this new company can do with more interesting material. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** *EXIT, PURSUED BY A BEAR* Through 12/21: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 4 PM; no performance Thu 11/28, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division, chopintheatre.com, \$25, \$15 students and seniors.

RR Sorrow and jubilation The Simon & Garfunkel Story works best where it counts—the songs.

Even when it's as jubilant as the pots-and-pans percussion backing "Cecilia," the music of Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel is razored with sorrow. Their multiplatinum folk-rock albums capture the sound of (to quote the magnificent "America") "feeling empty and aching and I don't know why."

"The Sounds of Silence," "Bookends," "The Boxer"—this is music that evokes those fleeting, interstitial moments when a lifetime of adventure is all ahead of you, luminous with possibility. Yet embedded in every chord of shimmering, youthful promise is the inevitable B side: "Preserve your memories. They're all that's left you."

The Simon & Garfunkel Story is essentially a concert of S&G hits interspersed with prosaic biological bullet points, backed by largely uninspired projections. Never mind all that. Taylor Bloom (Simon) and Benjamin Cooley (Garfunkel) nail the brilliant darkness and exquisite harmonies that made the duo integral to the score of the 1960s and '70s. The opening notes of "The Sounds of Silence" tell you all you need to know. Musically, Simon & Garfunkel is worthy of its subjects.

Director Dean Elliott's show is basically a license to print money, courtesy of boomers increasingly aware that 70 doesn't look as "terribly strange" as it did during the Summer of Love. The script has the performers pitching their own CDs, for chrissakes. Still, even that's forgivable when the music starts. There's glory in Cooley's soaring "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and reverence in Bloom's renditions of S&G's intricate acoustic guitar licks. And keep an eye on Marc Encabo (bass) and Joshua Vasquez (guitar)—their high-powered jubilation will leave you joy struck. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** *THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY* Through 12/8: Tue-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 and 6 PM; also Fri 11/29, 2 PM; no performance Thu 11/28, Broadway Playhouse, 175 E. Chestnut, 800-775-2000, broadwayinchicago.com, \$35-\$100. R

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Deeply Rooted Dance Theater KEN CARL

Beyond the tinsel

December performing arts aren't just about the holly jolly.

By IRENE HSIAO, KERRY REID, BRIANNA WELLEN

THEATER PICKS (KERRY REID)

Good Grief

Free Street Theater kicks off its 51st season with Afro Latina solo artist Melissa DuPrey's show about a road trip she took with her mother, several years before her mom was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The show looks at the inequities people of color face in seeking mental health treatment. [Free Street Theater, 12/4-12/21, freestreet.org](#)

The White Plague

Czech writer Karel Čapek is probably best known for his dystopian drama about robots taking over the world, 1920's R.U.R. Trap Door Theatre mounts a rare production of this 1937 play, which was written as Germany's threats against Čapek's homeland were increasing. As a nation faces looming warfare, a strange disease begins killing people over the age of 45. Nicole Wiesner directs. [Trap Door Theatre, 12/5-1/11, trapdoortheatre.com](#)

The Light in the Piazza

Renée Fleming returns to the Lyric in Adam Guettel's musical about a 1950s wealthy American mother, Margaret Johnson, who visits Florence with her daughter, Clara, who suffered a brain injury some years earlier that has left her in a childlike state. When a young Italian man falls in love with the younger woman, Margaret wrestles with what's really best for her child and herself. [Lyric Opera, 12/14-12/29, lyricopera.org](#)

Dance Nation

The existential terrors of preteen girlhood come into rare focus in Clare Barron's play (a 2019 Pulitzer Prize

finalist) about a dance troupe fighting their way into the finals in Tampa. Lee Sunday Evans, who staged the world premiere in New York, directs and choreographs for Steppenwolf, with a multigenerational cast of women portraying the young dancers. [Steppenwolf Theatre, 12/12-2/2, steppenwolf.org](#)

Mean Girls

More teenage drama, this time courtesy of the musical adaptation of Tina Fey's 2004 film (inspired in part by Rosalind Wiseman's book *Queen Bees and Wannabes*), in which Cady, who was raised in Africa by her scientist parents, must deal with the cliques and backstabbing of a suburban high school. Fey adapted her own screenplay for the book, with a score by her husband, Jeff Richmond, and lyrics by Nell Benjamin of *Legally Blonde: The Musical*. [James M. Nederlander Theatre, 12/25-1/26, broadwayinchicago.com](#)

DANCE PICKS (IRENE HSIAO)

Echo Mine

Founding Hubbard Street Dance Chicago member Claire Bataille left an unforgettable mark on Chicago contemporary dance. A role model, teacher, and mentor to many, she defined concert dance for a generation of artists. A year after Bataille succumbed to pancreatic cancer, choreographer and former Hubbard Street dancer Robyn Mineko Williams unites with Meredith Dincolo and Jacqueline Burnett to present *Echo Mine*, an evening-length work initially created with and inspired by Bataille. Each an HSDC icon in her own right, the three celebrate lineage, legacy, and new beginnings, accompanied by an original score by Califone, projections by CandyStations, and costumes by Hogan McLaughlin. [Sat 12/7, 7:30 PM, Harris Theater, harristheaterchicago.org](#)

Next 50.1

Venerable modern dance company Mordine & Company Dance Theater continues its 50th anniversary year with a program of company repertoire and new works by artistic director Shirley Mordine, as well as pieces created under Mordine's mentorship by company dancers and Ayako Kato. Intermittently associated with Mordine as a choreographer since 2010 and a teacher since 2012, Kato describes her new work, "Always the Beginning," as

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an exploration of a Buddhist state of emptiness. "Dance is equivalent to the action of meditation," she says. "I created this work to pursue how humans can be empty to be fully themselves." [Thu 12/12-Fri 12/13, 7:30 PM, Hamlin Park Fieldhouse, mordine.org](#)

Reaffirmed/Reimagined

Deeply Rooted Dance Theater presents a mixed bill of classic and contemporary works showcasing its vivid blend of ballet, modern, and African dance to launch its first season under new artistic director Nicole Clarke-Springer. Along with works by Clarke-Springer, DRDT cofounder and associate director Gary Abbott, and artistic director emeritus Kevin Iega Jeff, the program features the revival of Martial Romain's 1972 *Essence—A Portrait of Four Women*, which depicts the struggle and sisterhood of four women of color to music by Nina Simone, Zulema, Roberta Flack, and Nikki Giovanni. Shows on December 14 and 15 offer a sneak peek of DRDT's newest collaboration with gospel singer Donald Lawrence and his Tri-City Singers, set to premiere in 2020. [Fri 12/13-Sat 12/14, 7:30 PM, Sun 12/15, 6 PM, Logan Center for the Arts, deeplyrooteddancetheater.org](#)

COMEDY PICKS

(BRIANNA WELLEN)

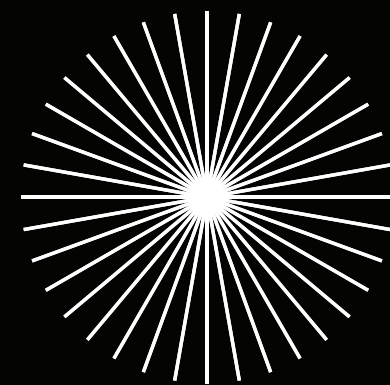
Late Late Breakfast

Meredith Kachel and Audrey Jonas host this game show/stand-up show hybrid featuring some of the city's best comics, who perform their sets with a twist. That can mean telling jokes while being pied in the face, booed by the entire audience, or whatever fresh new challenge Kachel and Jonas can think of. And it all comes with a side of free pancakes. [Sat 12/14, 3 PM, the Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, latelatebreakfast.com, \\$5 suggested donation.](#)

So Tacky: Tack the Halls

This month the comedy variety show features a lineup of naughty and nice stand-ups, sketch comics, musicians, and more. Performers include Yaz Bat, Sharup Karim, BAPS comedy, Devin Middleton, Kayla Pulley, and Angel Garcia. [Wed 12/18, 7-10 PM, Tack Room, 1807 S. Allport, tackroomchicago.com, \\$5, 21+](#)

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REVIEW

Waves is a meandering testament to forgiveness

The performances shine in Trey Edward Shults's middling feature.

By **CODY CORRALL**

In 2011, a Reddit user came to the site asking for advice on how to deal with his best friend's passing. In a response that quickly went viral, a user by the name of GSn0w wrote, "As for grief, you'll find it comes in waves."

Eight years later, that sentiment has manifested itself in *Waves*, a sometimes meandering and idealistic testament to forgiveness and how it can so often be at odds with the ripple effects of grief.

Tyler Williams (Kelvin Harrison Jr.) is your average all-American high school senior. He's

a star on the school's wrestling team, with dreams of going to college; he has a *The Life of Pablo* poster in the corner of his moody blue bedroom; he has a beautiful girlfriend (Alexa Demie in her first major role since *Euphoria*). But it's revealed early on that he is grappling with personal demons.

Those demons come in the form of intense aggression and compartmentalized emotions instilled in him by his commanding father Ronald (Sterling K. Brown). Their relationship is built on competition exemplified by their daily routine of lifting weights and comparing

their strengths, trying to physically assert dominance within the household.

This prioritization of assertion over emotions comes with a cost when, after Tyler's shoulder is severely injured early in the wrestling season, he bottles up his pain and continues to push himself until he is physically and emotionally broken beyond repair—taking his father's painkillers instead of getting surgery and partying with his friends without acknowledging his drug use and injury.

Waves is most insightful when it gets at the heart of Tyler's psyche—one that has been irreparably damaged by the confines of compulsory masculinity that encourages young men to put on a facade of bravery and strength instead of confronting real vulnerability.

This bottled-up turmoil frames how Tyler interacts with everyone in his life, but it's the women who get the brunt of it. He punches a hole in his wall to Tyler the Creator's "IFHY" after getting in a fight with his girlfriend; his aggression towards his father is often pointed more at his stepmother (Renée Elise Goldsberry); and when he comes home drunk and broken after nights out partying, it's his younger sister, Emily (Taylor Russell), who picks up the pieces.

The individual and interpersonal tensions are raised at a breakneck pace, as are the stakes, which are amplified through jarring camerawork and a restless original score from Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross (*Nine Inch Nails*, *The Social Network*). All of these elements work in tandem to make it feel like a ticking time bomb just waiting to go off. And when the bomb finally does explode, the family is forced to deal with the rubble.

It's at this moment that one wonders what the ramifications are for this depiction of Black masculinity, especially coming from a white

filmmaker. When for so long young Black men have been represented in media as "aggressive Black males"—and those representations have had real world impact—at what point does narrative become exploitation?

Shults is less concerned with investigating the role race can have and instead hones in on the proposed universality of the film's larger thesis—the importance of letting oneself emotionally heal in the aftermath of trauma.

This is executed in a wandering and sometimes tonally confused back half, switching haphazardly from its own challenging intensity to mostly shallow vignettes that feel straight out of a teen rom-com. But the film grounds itself in the character of Emily as she reconciles with her own pent-up anger and tries her best to find a way to forgive her brother. The performances in *Waves* are some of the film's most reliable strengths—but it's Russell who is a clear standout.

Despite some flaws in the narrative, elements of the film are masterfully crafted. The cinematography is mesmerizing and the emphatic sound design is the beating heart, soul, and guts of this film.

At its best, *Waves* makes its audience think complexly about the ways our own behaviors have been shaped, for better or for worse, by the people in our lives and how we, in the same way, can shape the people around us. At its worst, it gets in its own way and muddles that message by presenting itself as a long-winded and directionless music video.

"And when [the waves] wash over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side," GSn0w wrote. "Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out." **✎**

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Wadjda

NOW PLAYING

Die Hard

Bruce Willis plays a New York cop visiting Los Angeles to see his estranged wife (Bonnie Bedelia), an ambitious executive working for a Japanese company; he arrives at her company's Christmas Eve party in Century City just as a band of a dozen terrorists, headed by Alan Rickman, are taking over the building. A serviceable if rather overextended and overblown adventure thriller (1988), with Willis stripped for action like Rambo and doing his best as the only hope of the hostages held captive, this features a spectacular Cecil B. De Mille-like conclusion and makes good use of its skyscraper set (portions of which exhibit a Frank Lloyd Wright influence), but the script by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, adapted from Roderick Thorp's novel *Nothing Lasts Forever*, is fairly routine, and most of the wit consists of showing the naivete of police and FBI officials outside and characters calling one another "dickhead." John McTiernan, who directed, manages to keep this monolith moving. With Reginald Veljohnson, Paul Gleason, and Hart Bochner. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM R, 131 min. Wed 12/4, 7:30 PM. Beverly Arts Center**

RR Give Me Liberty

Kirill Mikhanovsky's autobiographical black comedy deals with a very specific place and experience, yet it always feels thoroughly expansive, thanks to a panoramic cast of characters and an exhilarating filmmaking style. Set in working-class Milwaukee, the film spends a day with Vic, a 25-year-old Russian emigre who earns a living by driving a van for individuals with physical and/or intellectual disabilities. (All of the clients are played by nonprofessional actors with actual disabilities, which gives this an air of documentary realism.) He also commandeers the van for personal use; much of the film's conflict derives from Vic trying to do his job while transporting a dozen Russian seniors to a relative's funeral. Mikhanovsky, who cowrote the script with producer Alice Austen, also edited the film, and he maintains an unpredictable, arrhythmic progression that heightens the sense of ever-mounting stress. One minor crisis gives rise to another, making the protagonist seem like a magnet for chaos. Wittily and dynamically, the film makes palpable the struggle to do well by people in need. In English and subtitled Russian. —**BEN SACHS 110 min. Gene Siskel Film Center**

RR The Lighthouse

Legend has it that it's bad luck to kill a seabird, as they are thought to carry the souls of dead sailors. Robert Eggers's second feature, *The Lighthouse*, uses this and other bits of maritime lore as inspiration for an enchanting and grueling tale of men, companionship, and the mighty sea. An old lighthouse keeper (Willam Dafoe) and his new apprentice (Robert Pattinson) work a daily routine off a New England shore—that is, until secrets, isolation, and mythical visions begin to fester, eventually leaving their minds undone. Dafoe and Pattinson each give the performance of a lifetime, singing sea shanties piss-drunk until their lungs give out and making mumbles feel like Shakespeare, all while covered in shit, mud, and anything vile you can conjure. The visceral, disgusting, and irrefutably maddening theatrics of *The Lighthouse* are entrancing enough to have viewers happily giving themselves over to a beckoning siren by film's end. —**CODY CORRALL R, 108 min. Music Box Theatre**

A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas

I'm pretty sure this is the first movie whose primary 3-D motif is people blowing pot smoke at the camera. After the disappointing *Harold & Kumar Escape From Guantanamo Bay*, screenwriters Jon Hurwitz and Hayden Schlossberg bounce back with this third installment of their stoner-comedy franchise. This time the quest narrative involves Asian-American pals Harold (John Cho) and Kumar (Kal Penn) chasing after a Christmas tree to replace one they accidentally burned down, but that's only an excuse for the relentless barrage of tasteless gags, most of them damned funny. Among the highlights are an adorable toddler developing a taste for cocaine, Santa Claus getting shot in the face, raucous parodies of *A Christmas Story* and the Rankin-Bass holiday TV specials, and the usual hedonistic interlude with Neil Patrick Harris. Todd Strauss-Schulson directed; with Danny Trejo and Thomas Lennon. —**J.R. JONES R, 90 min. Tue 12/3-Thu 12/5: 10:30 PM. Logan Theatre**

RR Wadjda

The first female-directed Saudi Arabian film would be culturally significant even if it weren't very good; and though writer-director Haifaa Al-Mansour doesn't break new ground aesthetically (the film's style is one of unforced, albeit unremarkable, naturalism), she

relates the experience of a Saudi Arabian girl's coming of age clearly and un sentimentally, which alone makes this a must-see. In Arabic with subtitles. —**BEN SACHS PG, 98 min. Mon 12/2, 7 PM. Doc Films FREE**

RR What We Do in the Shadows

I'm so sick of vampires I'd have pounded a stake into my own heart not to have to watch this mockumentary from New Zealand comedians Jemaine Clement (HBO's *Flight of the Conchords*) and Taika Waititi (writer-director of *Boy and Eagle vs Shark*). But it turns out to be a pitch-perfect spoof of MTV's *The Real World* and a sly satire on millennial slackerdom, following four vampires who share a flat in a college town. Clement and Waititi have got the reality-show format just right: the direct-address interviews, the confessional voice-overs, the zoom-in reaction shots. They've also nailed the reflexive self-absorption of reality-show casts; show-

ing the documentary makers around his old dungeon, Clement's character—a ringer for Gary Oldman in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, confesses, "I tended to torture when I was in a bad place." —**J.R. JONES R, 86 min. Thu 12/5, 9:30 PM. Doc Films FREE**

ALSO PLAYING

When the Earth Trembled, or The Strength of Love

A collection of films from the early 1900s including Barry O'Neil's *When the Earth Trembled, or The Strength of Love* (1913) and various shorts with live accompaniment by David Drazin. 82 min min. **Fri 12/6, 7 PM. Block Museum of Art FI**

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GIFTS TO TEACH HIP-HOP HEADS THEIR HISTORY

Each of these reissues helps unfold a different chapter in the rich narrative of the Chicago scene.

By LEOR GALIL

On Wednesday, November 13, DaWreck of west-side hip-hop group Triple Darkness posted a mini documentary to YouTube about E.C. Illa's 1994 EP, *Live From the Ill*. The video *E.C. Illa Dissecting Live From the Ill* shows E.C. sitting in front of a camera and talking for almost 28 minutes about the creation and history of his EP. When he dropped *Live From the Ill*, E.C. was one of Chicago hip-hop's brightest stars, and his recollections of the music, people, and places that filtered into the EP make the video a must-watch for any hip-hop head. The release of the documentary was timed to promote a 25th-anniversary CD reissue of *Live From the Ill* by Big Herc Collections that came out the same day, but it stands on its own as a crash course in local rap history.

Prior to *Live From the Ill*, E.C. had largely recorded in the secondary studio at Chicago Trax, where he learned the craft by watching artists in the main studio, including Ministry front man Al Jourgensen. While E.C. was at Chicago Trax making the *Live From the Ill* cut "Funky Like This 94," Common was hanging out in the studio—and E.C. says he dug the song so much he wrote a verse for it on the spot, only deciding at the last minute not to record it. E.C. took a recommendation from his friend the Legendary Traxster and made much of the EP with house engineer Dane Roewade, who'd worked on the single "Doomsday" for D 2 tha S, Traxster's duo with rapper Kay-Tone. E.C. also recruited Kay-Tone (uncle of future Chicago hip-hop star G Herbo) to deliver the hook on the nimble, funky "It Don't Stop." "Kay-Tone makes this classic chorus," E.C. says in the documentary, "that went on to be an important part of Chicago hip-hop history."

Of course, no consensus exists about what counts as an important part of Chicago hip-

hop history. That history has never been compiled, and most attempts to recount it have either been self-consciously niche or depressingly shallow and misinformed. The new podcast *Place in Sound*, from streaming service TuneIn, unfortunately belongs in the latter category. The same day E.C.'s documentary arrived, TuneIn dropped the first season of *Place in Sound*, devoted to the music of Chicago (each subsequent season will focus on a different city). TuneIn isn't new to audio storytelling, and since its launch in 2002 has built an audience of more than 70 million listeners per month. Backed by several venture capital firms, including favorite Silicon Valley funder Sequoia Capital, TuneIn was valued at \$500 million at the time of a 2017 deal reported by Bloomberg. But despite all the money it has sloshing around, the company couldn't be bothered to make *Place in Sound* more than a collection of regurgitated half-truths and clichés about Chicago music.

The *Place in Sound* team wanted to spotlight Chicago's reborn hip-hop scene and demonstrate its connections to the city's musical history—an admirably ambitious goal, and one I can't imagine any podcast achieving in a four-episode season totaling 131 minutes. In the final episode, host Anthony Valadez acknowledges that time constraints limited the program's scope, but what he doesn't say is that they apparently also prevented its creators from addressing their preconceptions and blind spots.

TuneIn is hardly the first outlet to parachute into town hoping to tell the world about the exciting developments in Chicago hip-hop. But while so many others indulge in an exploitive fascination with drill, Valadez barely mentions it, and then only in terms of its relationship to systemic violence. I'd thought it'd be impossible to talk about Chicago hip-hop in the 2010s and completely leave out

Chief Keef, whose astronomical rise in 2012 put the national spotlight on the local scene. But unless I missed a passing reference, Keef is never named. Valadez and Consequence of Sound critic Wren Graves suggest that Chance the Rapper's 2016 mixtape *Coloring Book* was "the coming-out party for the Chicago hip-hop movement," which I suppose could be true if by "movement" you mean "people who appear on *Coloring Book*." By my reckoning, they're four years late: the floodgates really opened for a new wave of Chicago hip-hop in May 2012, when Kanye West shouted out LEP Bogus Boys, King Louie, and Chief Keef on the GOOD Music remix of Keef's breakout hit, "I Don't Like."

Earlier chapters of Chicago's hip-hop history don't fare much better in *Place in Sound*: it trots out clichés about the scene's supposedly fallow period in the early 90s, ignores the mid- to late-90s popularity of west-side chopper rapping, and suggests that ghetto house is a subgenre of rap, not of house music. The podcast's version of house's history is equally suspect, but if I keep going, I'll start to feel like I'm piling on.

Despite its faults, *Place in Sound* makes a serious effort to enhance its audience's appreciation of current Chicago hip-hop by digging into the past. But there are more rewarding ways to do that digging—especially since it's been getting a little easier to hear old and unjustly obscure local hip-hop that's fallen out of print or never got properly released in the first place.

Reissues have never gone out of style, but since vinyl reemerged as a popular format, the proportion of reissues designed to appeal to serious collectors has jumped. This growing market has made it possible for a clutch of smaller labels to surface some remarkable 80s and 90s Chicago hip-hop, almost all of which I think is crucial to understanding our history.

Some of these reissues have come out in absurdly small editions, either in an attempt to create the appearance of exclusivity or in an acknowledgment that their potential audience is tiny. Big Herc pressed just 94 copies of E.C.'s *Live From the Ill*, and local micro-label Icy Palms made 54 cassette copies of an unreleased 1989 album called *Cause 4 a Riot!* by Chicagoland trio Wildstyle. The tapes sold out even before their mid-November release, but the music is streaming on Bandcamp, and Wildstyle rapper Kevin Beacham (who's also a hip-hop historian) recently published a 30-part series about the group on Medium.

Possibly even rarer is a T-shirt featuring the menacing artwork for M.C Def Ski's obscure 1993 cassette EP *Rap Tyrant*. Its cover is a flash photo of an impassive Def Ski standing in a graveyard (though no headstones are visible), wearing sunglasses at night and holding a pickax in one hand and an ax in the other. The shirt came out this summer, and it's impossible to say how many were printed before the small clothing company responsible apparently vanished from the Internet earlier this month.

In the spirit of the *Reader's* gift guide, I've chosen to focus on recent Chicago hip-hop reissues that you can buy on physical media without spending serious cash on the resale market. Even in 2019, it's still a little anticlimactic to unwrap a download card!



RUBBERROOM
Gothic Architecture
\$20.34 plus shipping for double LP
(subject to exchange rate), \$8 for
download via Bandcamp

When Rubberroom entered United Technique Studio to record their 1995 debut EP, *Gothic Architecture*, the six-member crew had earned a following by appearing at a weekly freestyle series at



Berlin-based label HHV has reissued Rubberroom's 1995 debut EP, *Gothic Architecture*, as a double LP.

Lower Links, but they hadn't spent much time in a professional studio together. They didn't have much money to spend either: Kevin "Fanum" Johnson, one of Rubberroom's three producers, says they'd scraped together enough to cover a single song. But United Technique owner and engineer Rae Nimeh offered to let them record more material for the same price, working quick and dirty with a Sansu six-track tape machine. Johnson describes the quality of the results as "releasable," and Rubberroom eventually included all ten tracks from the sessions on *Gothic Architecture*, which they put out on cassette through their own Elastic Recordings.

Some fans weren't happy about the production quality of *Gothic Architecture*, but it captures Rubberroom's hard-hitting, grimy sound and their three MCs' limber rapping and raw energy. "I didn't really care about standards," Johnson says. "We felt so confident in it. We just cared about putting it out and getting it to the people so they can hear it—that's how confident we felt about our music back then." The group's intuition served them well: on the strength of the EP, the Notes From the Underground column in *Vibe* magazine put the spotlight on Rubberroom in November 1996.

Rubberroom lost their momentum after New York indie 3-2-1 Records folded shortly after releasing the group's 1999 debut album, *Architechnology*, and they broke up in 2000. In the years since, Johnson has gotten requests to reissue Rubberroom's material—in fact, a *Gothic Architecture* vinyl release would've happened already if the person interested had been able to work with the masters Nimeh had given Johnson.

The reissue is happening now because Berlin-based HHV could make do with the ma-

terial Johnson provided. Spread out over two LPs, it adds three instrumentals to the original track list. HHV designer Boggie Cramb even re-created the original artwork, proportioned for a cassette J-card, to fit a vinyl release. In the course of getting this old material released again, Johnson spent a lot of time with it. "I listened to it as a producer—I'm like, 'Ooh, I wish I would've did that differently,'" he says. "But then at the same time, I'm like, 'Wow, I felt what I felt in that recording—I felt our passion. I felt our drive to have no fear.'"

□ NACROBATS

A in the Square and companion book A Love Supreme
\$25.99 plus shipping for vinyl (with book while they last), \$20 for download via Bandcamp (no book)



Vinyl copies of the Nacrobats compilation *A in the Square* come with this book, *A Love Supreme*, until supplies run out.

When Sterling Price, aka Pugs Atomz, started attending Kenwood Academy in the early 90s, he was a graffiti artist and a budding rapper. He'd hoped to ➔

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DEC 01 MUSIC OF THE GRATEFUL DEAD FOR KIDS	DEC 20 WASHED OUT (DJ SET) THE HOOD INTERNET	JAN 11 G LOVE SHAMARR ALLEN
DEC 09 MOUNT EERIE JULIE DOIRON	DEC 22 MOTOWN FOR KIDS HOLIDAY CELEBRATION	JAN 11 YOLA
DEC 14-15 THE MARCUS KING BAND	DEC 23 A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS CONCERT MARIACHI HERENCIA DE MEXICO	JAN 16 NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS
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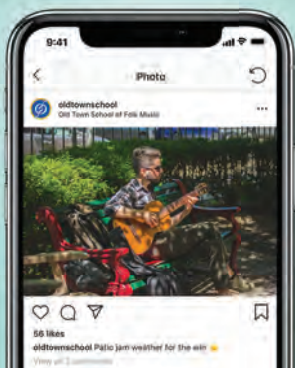
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NOV 30 HYDE PARK HANDMADE	DEC 02 MECCA MONDAY SOULFUL SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS	DEC 08 INTONATION WINTER SHOWCASE
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Dave Drazin - The Northside Southpaws - Lawrence Peters Outfit
The Amazing Heebie Jeebies - The Hat Stretchers

Wed, Dec. 11 - Sarah Borges & the Broken Singles
Thu/Fri, Dec. 12&13 - Naomi & Ron's Christmas Special
Sat, Dec. 14 - Brave Combo Holiday Spectacular
Tue, Dec. 17 - Jon Dee Graham & Bonnie Whitmore
Thu, Dec. 19 - Country Night Salutes The Holidays
Fri, Dec. 20 - The Redmonds Holiday Show
Sat, Dec. 21 - The Heavy Sounds Stax Holiday Tribute
Fri, Dec. 27 - Ronnie Baker Brooks
Sat, Dec. 28 - Fin Del Ano Fiesta Latin Dance Night
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DECEMBER 2 PROSPECT FOUR 9:30PM
DECEMBER 4 MORSE & WAGNER 6PM
DECEMBER 5 SMILIN' BOBBY AND THE CLEMTONES
DECEMBER 6 BK READ AND THE UNDERACHIEVERS
DECEMBER 7 UNIBROW
DECEMBER 8 HEISENBERG UNCERTAINTY PLAYERS 7PM
DECEMBER 9 RC BIG BAND 7PM
PROSPECT FOUR 9:30PM
DECEMBER 10 FLABBY HOFFMAN SHOW 8PM
DECEMBER 11 ELIZABETH'S CRAZY LITTLE THING
FEATURING JAKE DEWAR 9PM
DECEMBER 12 FLABBY HOFFMAN SHOW 8PM
DECEMBER 13 STRAY BOLTS
DECEMBER 14 JOE LANASA & SOMEBODY'S SINS
SKIPPIN' ROCKS
FOSTER & HIGGINS
THE FORTUNATO'S
TONY DO ROSARIO GROUP
DECEMBER 15

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continued from 27

find some teenage hip-hop crews at the school, but as far as he could tell, there was only one. “I felt like a lot of people my age really didn’t have a support system in the sense of getting into hip-hop,” Pugs says. “Everyone was way older, but also they’re off chasing their dreams.” So in 1993, he launched the Nacro-bats crew.

“We just all were learning together,” he says. “One person will figure out how to do wholesale, and then they passed that on. One person will figure out how to do websites, and they passed that on. One person figured out how to book shows out of state, and they will pass it on. It’s definitely a network—I really didn’t know how big it would get.”

The crew peaked at around 200 members, many with overlapping affiliations—Alley Katz Crew, for instance, topped out at 50 people (one of whom was famed artist Hebru Brantley), and most of them were also in Nacro-bats. Their ranks ran so deep that even today you can find former members every-



The LP *A in the Square* compiles Nacro-bats material from the late 1990s and early 2000s.

where you look. Future rap heroes Offwhyte, Psalm One, and Open Mike Eagle were all involved with the crew in their youth. Brian Nevado, part owner of crucial Loop streetwear shop Jugernaut, rapped in a group called Lyric District that formed after a Nacro-bats meeting at a Burger King near Congress and State. Andre Vasquez, sworn in as 40th Ward alderman in May, used to be a battle rapper who called himself Optimus Prime, and he joined the Nacro-bats after entering one of their free-style cyphers outside that same Burger King.

Pugs started recording in 1996, and other Nacro-bats followed suit, releasing a torrent of

homemade mixtapes, professionally dubbed cassettes, CD-Rs, and CDs. Pugs retired the Nacro-bats name in 2003, but he’s kept in touch with people in the network he developed. Earlier this year, hyperprolific rapper and former crew member Infinito 2017 reached out to Pugs about releasing a vinyl compilation of old Nacro-bats material on his Culture Power45 label. The resulting LP, *A in the Square*, is accompanied by a 50-page book called *A Love Supreme*, which collects flyers, photos, and essays from former Nacro-bats; the package started shipping in mid-November, and Pugs is also using Threadless to sell a new Nacro-bats T-shirt he designed.

As part of compiling *A in the Square*, Pugs reached out to crew members to make sure they wouldn’t be embarrassed by their old material coming back to light. “Some people’s rap styles have changed,” he says. “Oftentimes artists look back and are like, ‘Ooh.’” The process has given Pugs a greater appreciation for what he and his friends accomplished with Nacro-bats. “In the 90s, there was a movement happening—it was definitely a movement in art, a movement in culture, a movement in music,” he says. “It was all happening ‘cause we were all feeding off this thing. None of us really could even see it.”

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Closed Sessions Vol. 1

\$20 plus shipping for vinyl, \$7 for
download via Bandcamp

Chicago hip-hop label Closed Sessions emerged in 2009, arising from crucial Chicago hip-hop blog Ruby Hornet, and its creation illustrated one of the best things about the blog era: the blurring of boundaries between covering an artist and releasing their music allowed publishers to make dazzling creative leaps. Closed Sessions cofounder Alex Fruchter (aka DJ RTC) was also editing Ruby Hornet, which brought together fans and creators of underground hip-hop. “That was almost like the wild, wild west,” Fruchter says. “Blogs were filled with passionate kids figuring out the Internet, making their own connections with artists. Operating an alternative, curated distribution network for—mainly, definitely at the start— independent artists. What happened, not just in Chicago but in other cities, the blogs, a lot of the good ones, transformed.”

Ruby Hornet threw parties at Lava Lounge with local and touring rappers, and Closed Sessions evolved from the Ruby Hornet crew’s habit of taking visiting artists to Soundscape,



The 2010 compilation *Closed Sessions Vol. 1* existed only as a download till this vinyl version arrived in April.

a Humboldt Park recording studio owned by future *Closed Sessions* cofounder Michael Kolar. Fruchter and company would invite the MCs to record, and Fruchter, always given to documenting, filmed the sessions. After inviting cult rapper Curren\$y to rap over a Tony Baines beat in July 2009, Fruchter and his team gathered a mess of MCs to record one-offs and collaborations with almost as many different local producers. In March 2010, Fruchter announced the resulting compilation, *Closed Sessions Vol. 1*, on the Ruby Hornet site and posted a link to download it for free.

Nationally famous out-of-towners such as Bun B and Skyzoo raised the profile of *Closed Sessions Vol. 1* when it came out, but the Chicagoans define it and the era it represents. The songs combined artists from different cliques, from far-flung neighborhoods, and from distinct waves of Chicago hip-hop that barely overlapped. “Fresh Academy,” for example, features blog-era upstarts Kidz in the Hall alongside Mikkey Halsted, who by then was a long-grinding veteran. It’s hard to imagine such a collaboration existing without blogs putting up tents big enough for so many different parts of the local scene.

“You had two distribution centers run by two people with different music tastes, different connections within the scene. And artists

could now see what each other were doing, and you could all be online in the same place,” Fruchter says. “If you’re from Hyde Park and that hip-hop scene, you could see what the people on the north side were doing, and you could appreciate it without leaving your house, without feeling threatened, and could start to collaborate.”

Closed Sessions Vol. 1 wasn’t available in a physical format till this April. “Having it on vinyl was something that we toyed with, and maybe desired, since the inception,” Fruchter says. “But when we started the project, that was just an unattainable thing.” The remastered LP version is on mustard-yellow vinyl, and 2012’s *Closed Sessions Vol. 2*, re-issued digitally on November 12, will eventually have a relish-green vinyl edition. *Closed Sessions* also partnered with Dark Matter this month on a tenth-anniversary coffee blend packaged with two white-label seven-inches of *Closed Sessions* material, but it’s sold out.

The arrival of the *Vol. 1* vinyl prompted Fruchter to consider his history. “I remember getting the vinyl for the first time and just thinking, like, ‘Wow, this started as an idea, a hope, a SendSpace file,’” he says. “Ten years later, we have a label, we have a history, we’re part of the stories and lives of so many different people and great music.”

🐦 @imLeor

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<p>SATURDAY DEC 14 / 9PM / 21+ @ SLEEPING VILLAGE / Metro presents PLAID STEVE HAUSCHILD ABSTRACT SCIENCE DJS</p>	<p>TUESDAY JAN 14 / 8PM / 18+ The Wherever Tour — North America with ATMOSPHERE THE LIONESS / NIKKI JEAN / DJ KEEZY</p>
<p>SATURDAY DEC 21 / 8PM / ALL AGES WHITE REAPER DEHD / WOMBO</p>	<p>MONDAY DEC 30 / 8PM / 18+ TUESDAY DEC 31 (NYE) / 10PM / 21+ 93XRT welcomes MT. JOY MON: THE GREETING COMMITTEE POOL HOLOGRAPH TUE: WILDERADO / MICHIGANDER</p>
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PICK OF THE WEEK

Footwork innovator Jlin continues to expand her sound



© EBRU YILDIZ

JLIN, CQQCHIFRUIT, SOLD

Sat 11/30, 10:30 PM, Smart Bar, 3730 N. Clark, \$20, \$15 in advance. 21+

INDIANA-BASED FOOTWORK PRODUCER JLIN is laser-focused in her vision and in her dedication to expanding her sound. Her debut album, *Dark Energy*, arrived in 2015, when footwork was gaining sizable popularity outside Chicago. The record stood out for its severity, with confrontational tracks that elegantly pair brooding tones with footwork's precise rhythms. Jlin's follow-up, 2017's *Black Origami*, is even stronger; its jagged sound recalls contemporary *batida*, an Angolan style of electronic dance music that's become popular in Portugal, and its rhythms echo the martial assertiveness of a drum corps. The album also features collaborations with ambient composer William Basinski and avant-garde musician Holly Herndon, the latter of whom she worked with again on last year's "Godmoth-

er," created using an AI program called Spawn that Herndon helped develop—trained in part on both women's music, Spawn attempted to reimagine Jlin's style in Herndon's voice. Also in 2018, Jlin released *Autobiography*, a score for a stage show by award-winning choreographer Wayne McGregor. The album incorporates field recordings and classical instrumentation on some tracks, showing a softer side of Jlin's aesthetic. She's already made footwork into a style of her own, and it's anyone's guess where she'll take her music from here. If the past half-decade is any indication, though, she'll continue to progress in new and challenging ways. Jlin said it herself, speaking to the *Reader* earlier this year: "I can hear my growth, and that's a beautiful thing." —JOSHUA MINSOO KIM

FRIDAY29

SAMANTHA FISH *Nicholas David opens. 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$25. 17+*

Over the past decade, Missouri singer-songwriter and guitarist Samantha Fish has become one of the country's leading young electric blues performers. Her 2017 album, *Belle of the West* (Ruf), produced by Luther Dickinson of the North Mississippi Allstars, leavens her blues sound with country and roots rock—an exciting departure from her usual mix of urban blues styles, and one of the best albums of her career. This year's *Kill or Be Kind* (Rounder) is a bit of a retrenchment, sticking to Fish's bread and butter: hard electric blues and bluesy retro soul. That's disappointing for those of us who were hoping for further exploration, but on the upside, the album's opening track and first single, "Bulletproof," is an absolute monster of blues rock, all slide swagger and filthy feedback. Fish sweetens and softens her singing on the verses to build tension before letting it rip with big, distorted hooky choruses and guitar solos that could sear the shaggy hair off Billy Gibbons's face. Other highlights are the rockabilly-tinged "Love Your Lies" and the Stax-soul-flavored title track, where Fish makes the lines "Back before I was a homewrecker / I was a goody-good-good girl" smolder with regret and bitterness. Fish hasn't quite made an album worthy of her best moments, but those moments are pretty wonderful—and she's a powerhouse live.

—NOAH BERLATSKY



Samantha Fish © COURTESY THE ARTIST



Pivot Gang members Joseph Chilliams, Dae Dae, Frsh Waters, Squeak, MFn Melo, and Saba
© BLAIR BROWN

ED MAVERICK 8 PM, Schubas, 3159 N. Southport, sold out. 🎧

At 18 years old, Eduardo Hernández Saucedo, aka Ed Maverick, has already become a viral phenomenon for his sweet, romantic bedroom-folk tunes; his 2018 hit “Fuentes de Ortiz” has topped 100 million streams. His pleasingly deep voice easily conveys yearning in straightforward songs that he builds around simple, colloquial phrases and strummed acoustic guitar—and each of his melodies is an earworm that’ll stay in your head for days. Raised in the small town of Delicias, Chihuahua, about five hours south of the Mexico-U.S. border, Maverick played drums in a church group before teaching himself guitar. His career exploded last year, when he distilled the torrid, pent-up adolescent longing of the breakup songs he’d written at age 16 into a lo-fi EP titled *Mix pa Llorar en Tu Cuarto* (“Mix for Crying in Your Bedroom”). After the EP took off on social media, he signed with Universal, which reissued it (it’s subsequently been certified gold in Mexico). Part of the charm of Maverick’s songs is norteño magic: the deserts and expanses of northern Mexico and its border lore have also inspired many songwriters Maverick cites as influences, including alt-norteño artists Juan Cirelol and Dromedarios Mágicos and classic stars such as El Tigrillo Palma and Juan Gabriel. Maverick’s ballads also evoke the region’s tradition of *corridos*, epic ballads that tell of heroes and battles. In this case, the battles are mostly lost, leaving the hero with a irrevocably damaged heart, but he’s never defeated. Above all, Maverick tells stories of unrequited young love so sincerely and directly that it feels he’s singing pages out of a teenager’s diary. As easy as it is to bask in this norteño troubadour’s dreamy crooning, it’s just as enjoyable to imagine what sort of musical adventures he’ll pursue in the future. —CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

SABA AND PIVOT GANG PRESENT JOHN WALT DAY See also Saturday. Featuring Saba, Joseph Chilliams, MFn Melo, and Frsh Waters. 7 PM, Metro, 3730 N. Clark, \$23, \$20 in advance. 🎧

The members of west-side collective Pivot Gang have been calling themselves a boy band since long before Brockhampton was a twinkle in Kevin Abstract’s eye. Because Joseph Chilliams, Frsh Waters, MFn Melo, and Saba all rap, this self-description has caused some confusion, but as Pivot Gang see it, there’s not much to differentiate them from, say, the Backstreet Boys. “The only difference is that a label didn’t put us together,” Chilliams told Chicagoist in 2013. “We met each other individually, and we just happened to be so pretty.” On their self-released debut album, April’s *You Can’t Sit With Us*, Pivot Gang make their case immediately with

silky-smooth vocal harmonies on the hook of opener “Death Row.” The bulk of the album was produced by Pivot members Dae Dae and Squeak (*Care for Me* beat maker Daoud also pitched in), and their lean, luxurious tracks are just what these MCs need to excel on the mike. All over *You Can’t Sit With Us*, the rappers sound like they’re having unimaginable fun vibing off one another—and every time they do, it’s one of the album’s high points. On the lackadaisical “Colbert” and the chilly “Jason Statham, Pt. 2” especially, Pivot are generous MCs, casually tossing out great lyrics that lesser rappers would hoard for punch lines. “Bible” features a verse from Dinner With John, the Pivot rapper-singer best known as John Walt, who was stabbed to death in February 2017. Walt recorded vocals prolifically—he’d even lay down verses on his phone in his family’s garage if he couldn’t get into a studio—and the unreleased vocal track that Pivot Gang use here fits the teeth-baring beat on “Bible” so well that it feels like Walt made it for the song. Months after Walt’s death, Saba and Walt’s mother, Nachele Pugh, founded a nonprofit called the John Walt Foundation, and in fall 2017 Pivot Gang launched an annual fund-raiser show to benefit the organization and honor their comrade’s memory. It’s always been scheduled close to Walt’s November 25 birthday, and for the third John Walt Day, Pivot rappers will perform at Metro two nights in a row. Previous years’ shows sold out, and these likely will too. —LEOR GALIL

WATERPARKS DeWayne Jackson opens. 7:30 PM, the Vic, 3145 N. Sheffield, \$26. 🎧

If the members of infamous UK pop-rock band the 1975 had grown up in the U.S. and listened to more pop punk than emo, they’d probably sound a lot like Waterparks. The Houston three-piece have become poster boys for the sleek, sugary suburban pop-punk sound that will forever say “Warped Tour.” That style faded out of the zeitgeist a year or two before Fall Out Boy went on hiatus in 2010, which is perhaps why few outlets aside from *Alternative Press* (the magazine of record for the Warped tour set) have paid much attention to Waterparks. That’s too bad, because among the scores of newer bands staking out identities in pop punk, few have been as promising (or as uniquely irritating) as ➔



Ed Maverick
© COURTESY THE ARTIST

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The Nut Tapper Christmas Show

Family show

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6 7PM

The Bad Plus

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8 7PM

Funkadesi

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20 8PM

Betty LaVette

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21 8PM

Mariachi Herencia de Mexico

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continued from 31

Waterparks. On their recent third album, *October's Fandom* (Hopeless), they transform clean pop punk into massive, genre-blurring pop that couldn't more nakedly broadcast their ambition to become stars. Chisel-cheeked front man Awsten Knight deploys his earnest enthusiasm and polished vocals—both a fit for a Pete Buttigieg walk-out song—in an attempt to sell platitudes about his lifestyle as a twenty-something minor celebrity as profound truths. He somehow makes it work, though his opening lines in “Watch What Happens Next” still aren't as clever as he wants them to be: “I wanna be a millionaire before I'm 30 / But saying that out loud is probably gonna hurt me.” Thankfully, Knight and company sometimes focus on creating simple, straightforward singles, such as the triumphant postheartbreak/pre-breakup anthem “Easy to Hate”—more of that effort, and the top spot on the *Billboard* 200 could soon be theirs. —LEOR GALIL

SATURDAY 30

BJ THE CHICAGO KID Rayana Jay and Kamauu open. 8 PM, *House of Blues*, 329 N. Dearborn, \$25-\$65. 17+

R&B singer Bryan James Sledge, aka BJ the Chicago Kid, has the kind of commanding voice most rappers seek out when they're looking for a guest artist to make a good song great—and to loosen their inhibitions in the process. On Sledge's second album for Motown, July's *1123*, he turns the tables, showcasing guest verses from several big names in the rap game, including Offset and Rick Ross—but on nearly every track, his own performance is the most memorable. On “Feel the Vibe,” Anderson .Paak riffs on the warmth of sharing great food with family and friends in one of his unmistakably cool, leisurely verses—but then Sledge enters on the heavenly hook, welcoming listeners into his home for a feast, and you can almost smell the macaroni and cheese. Though Sledge is a little less surefooted when he's flying solo, when his ideas jell the way they do on the sultry “Champagne,” he's the brightest star around. —LEOR GALIL



Town Criers ©TIM NAGLE

JLIN See *Pick of the Week*, page 30. *Cqchifruit and Sold open*. 10 PM, *Smart Bar*, 3730 N. Clark, \$20, \$15 in advance. 21+

PIGFACE 4:30 PM and 8:30 PM, *Thalia Hall*, 1807 S. Allport, \$30-\$55. 18+

Pigface was born in 1990 as the supergroup brainchild of Ministry members Martin Atkins, also of Public Image Limited and Killing Joke, and William Rieflin, who has led a miraculously eclectic career—anyone who's been a member of R.E.M., Swans, and King Crimson can probably play just about anything. By design, the group has had a revolving-door lineup, and the list of people who've been involved over the decades reads like a who's who of industrial music, with a strong emphasis on artists who've recorded for the Wax Trax! label. Pigface's sporadic recordings are raw, high-energy delights where every player indulges in forms of gritty silliness that might not fly in their main gigs—what might be ordinary shenanigans for Gwar (whose Beefcake the Mighty and Slymenstra Hymen have played in Pigface) might not fit the scope of more “serious” groups such as Godflesh (Justin Broadrick) or Tool (Danny Carey). When applied to a live show, this approach produces a wild, anything-is-possible energy. The many-headed beast woke up from a seven-year sleep in 2016, and it's culminating its first U.S. tour in 14 years with a pair of shows at Thalia Hall (and in a public Facebook thread, Atkins reassured a disappointed fan who lives off this particu-

lar tour path that Pigface will be on the road again before long). The full cast of players for these shows is too long to include here, but along with Atkins, the lineup includes Mary Byker of PWEI and Gaye Bykers on Acid, En Esch of KMFDM, and members of Silverfish, Evil Mothers, My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult, and 77 Luscious Babes. On top of that, Lamb of God front man Randy Blythe has extended his stint from a handful of dates to the entire tour. This being a hometown gig, there will also be plenty of familiar faces, including locals Chris Connelly, Bruce Lamont (who has also collaborated with Atkins in Brain Tentacles), Leyla Royale, Add-2, and Orville Kline—and with any luck the stage might get even more crowded with surprise guests. Pigface has been recording throughout the tour, and the band is compiling tracks for a deluxe live album package that will be released in early 2020. —MONICA KENDRICK

SABA AND PIVOT GANG PRESENT JOHN WALT DAY See *Friday*. Featuring Saba, Joseph Chilliams, MFN Melo, and Frsh Waters. 7 PM, *Metro*, 3730 N. Clark, \$23, \$20 in advance. 18+

TUESDAY 3

TOWN CRIERS *Los Gold Fires and Hawley open*. 9:30 PM, *Sleeping Village*, 3734 W. Belmont, \$5. 21+

The guitar-driven power pop on Town Criers' recent self-released EP, *Town Criers II*, feels like it could live comfortably in any era of garage music from the 60s through the 80s; the singing of guitarist Andre Baptista often sounds like post-Big Star Chris Bell tinged with a bit of fresh-faced Jeff Murphy (from 70s Illinois outfit Shoes). The Chicago band formed a few years ago, and though their first record focused on combining the psych freak-out of the 13th Floor Elevators with the pop fun of the Kinks, they've refined and tightened their style over time—a change most apparent when they play live. The core of the band—Baptista, guitarist Scott Truesdale, and drummer Kevin Allen—were joined by bassist Jimmy Russell on *Town Criers II* and on the band's 2018 *Daytrotter* video session, where they play a rousing version of their 2017 single “Rip It Up” as well as *Town Criers II* track “Tamales Kisses.” The summery backbeat and lust-driven lyrics of the latter (“You're the reason I can't sleep at night”) make me think of the sort of singles Dick Clark popularized among screaming teenage girls in the late 60s via *American Bandstand*. The openers at this show, Los Gold Fires, are celebrating the release of their new album, *Renegade*, and if you want to dance to spacey surf rock, you shouldn't miss them. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

WEDNESDAY 4

CAT CLYDE *Jeremie Albino opens*. 8 PM, *Schubas*, 3159 N. Southport, \$15, \$12 in advance. 18+

Stratford, Ontario, is famous for its long-running annual theater festival, which leans heavily on productions of Shakespeare. Singer-songwriter Cat Clyde has spent most of her life in and around Stratford, but you'd be hard-pressed to call her rootsy music theatrical, despite her poet's knack for enveloping listeners in her stories—her primary influences belong on the stages at the Cotton Club and the Grand Ole Opry, not at the Globe Theatre. Clyde's debut album, 2017's *Ivory Castanets*, mixes vintage country, blues, jazz, and rockabilly, all shaped by her commercial-grade indie-pop sensibility and given a smoky aura informed by her travels to New

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12/30-31 - BADBADNOTGOOD	03/13 - GASHI
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SCHUBAS TAVERN



BJ the Chicago Kid @ALEX HARPER

Orleans and its rural surroundings. On her new second album, *Hunter's Trance*, she steps outside the sum of her influences into a sharpened artistic identity of her own. Like its predecessor, *Hunter's Trance* showcases an array of moods: on the grooving "So Heavy," she questions her optimism about a relationship, and on the folksy ballad "Rock & Stone," which swells with acoustic guitars and minimalist drums, she confronts a former lover whose indifference has caused her heartache. But Clyde is at her best when she revels in her strength; on "Not Like You," she vocally dances between flitting melodies and triumphant croons while embracing her independence and celebrating her misfit tendencies. —**JAMIE LUDWIG**

BRETT NAUCKE Civic Center and Tim Kinsella open; Heather Gabel DJs. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+

One of the first times I saw Brett Naucke onstage was in 2007, when he and his noisy power trio, Druids of Huge, played a Cleveland punk bar. During the first minutes of the set someone dumped an entire pint of beer on Naucke's synthesizer, rendering it unusable. In response, Naucke cranked the dials on his amp to kick up feedback, then hoisted said amp above his head and menacingly waved it toward the crowd. That gig was entertaining and punk as hell, but Naucke has come a long way since then, refining his electronics-aided path. He began releasing solo recordings in 2010, starting with cassettes on Brooklyn label Arbor and his own Catholic Tapes imprint. He laid down his template with his first 12-inch vinyl release, 2013's *The Visitor* (on the Nihilist label run by Panicville's Andy Ortman): spacey drones, machine-malfunction blips and tones, field-recording samples, and an ominous vibe of technological doom that owes as much to the darkness of Throbbing Gristle and Coil as it does to the heady sounds of Tangerine Dream and Cluster. In 2014 he released his debut full-length, *Seed*, on which he goes deeper into the void to create

MUSIC

soundscapes too involved and abstract to be called ambient; as a shortwave radio blinks in and out and percussive patches give way to rippling electronics, the listener is caught in a sonic black hole of Naucke's making. A flurry of excellent cassette and single releases followed, peaking with the 2018 full-length *The Mansion* (Spectrum Spools), which contains Naucke's most detailed compositions to date. Featuring contributions from fellow Chicago experimentalists Whitney Johnson (Matchess) and Natalie Chami (TALSounds), the album sometimes takes on glitchy 20th-century classical and sometimes unfolds with a melodious, dreamlike flow. Naucke celebrates the release of a new EP at this gig, a 45 RPM 12-inch called *Electronic Hypnosis Program* that's coming out on the Make Noise label (mostly known for the synthesizer-manufacturing side of its business). Lead single "Pulse Reader" features trance-inducing beats among an organized chaos of synth blurps, treated vocals, and bits of 80s-ish keyboard melodies, but the song that best emulates a hypnotized state is "Stolen Dreamtime," which recalls the more machine-like, blissed-out side of Krautrock groups such as Kraftwerk, Harmonia, and Roedelius. Naucke's live performances often mix this nuanced, spacey aesthetic with synapse-frying electronic squalls, so be prepared for a possibly turbulent but definitely rewarding blast off into the cosmos. —**STEVE KRAKOW**

WHITNEY Through Sun 12/8. Each of these five shows has one opening act: in chronological order, they are Akenya, the Hecks, Jeff Parker, Slow Pulp, and Hoops 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$30-\$40 (all shows Thu 12/5 and later are sold out). Fri 12/6 and Sat 12/7 all ages, other shows 17+

My peers and I spent our formative years seeking out the hardest, heaviest, fastest music we could find. We considered it a rite of passage, a way to rebel against the bloated arena rock and pillowy AM gold of our parents' generation, much like they rebelled against their own folks' Pat Boone with the Beatles and Stones. It's because of this tradition, seemingly ingrained within American culture, that the phenomenon of Whitney confounds me. The Chicago-based band rose from the ashes of garage-rock wunderkinds the Smith Westerns, and they represent the forefront of an indie-rock explosion that the kids can't seem to get enough of. For lack of a better term, let's call the type of music they play "soft as hell." Perhaps the parents of Whitney's fans raised their kids on Black Flag and Dead Kennedys, and running to warm 'n' fuzzy sounds is their own way to flip the same middle finger I once did with Nirvana and Metallica CDs. Or maybe in a world where our president is one of the nastiest people in the public eye, Gen Z-ers flock toward sounds that are the equivalent of a hug from mom. But whatever the explanation may be, "soft" is by no means synonymous with "bad"—on August's *Forever Turned Around*, Whitney play lush, warm, jangly tunes fleshed out with horn arrangements and the fragile croon of drummer Julien Ehrlich. And Whitney are giving the kids even more soft stuff to eat up: since their inception, they've made an end-of-the-year run at Thalia Hall an annual tradition, and this time they're playing a longer stretch than ever, with five shows in a row. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI** 📺

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Abjo 12/5, 8 PM, Subterranean
AJJ, Xiu Xiu, Emperor X 5/21/20, 7 PM, Metro
Amanda Shires, L.A. Edwards 4/22/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Antibalas 4/4/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Arms Aloft (DJ set) 12/13, 10:30 PM, GMan Tavern
Marcia Ball, Sonny Landreth 2/16/20, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
Beach Slang 4/10/20, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Berhana, Pomo 12/5, 6 PM, Reggie's Rock Club
Black Marble, Hoops 1/18/20, 8 PM, Metro, part of the Tomorrow Never Knows Festival, 18+
Bossa IV, Bret Koontz & Truancy Club 12/9, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Billy Branch & the Sons of Blues 1/10/20, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Teri Bristol, Psycho-Bitch 12/14, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Case, An Abstract Tribe 12/20, 7 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Chinarose, Dead Lucid, Bur 1/2/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Com Truise (DJ set) 2/13/20, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Nicola Cruz 5/17/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Delta Spirit 4/30/20, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Destructo 2/7/20, 10 PM, Sound-Bar
Dip 4/24/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall
Dir En Grey, Bysts 12/10, 7:30 PM, House of Blues
Drive-By Truckers 3/13/20, 7:30 PM, Metro, 18+
Mike Dunn, Garrett David, Leesh 12/13, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Earth Program, Doleful Lions, Camp Edwards 12/30, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Eclectique dance party with Party Line, Parlant Parlant, Color Swim 12/5, 10 PM, Hungry Brain
Ryan Elliott, Zoey Glass, Abigail 12/21, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Drew Emmitt & Vince Herman of Leftover Salmon 2/29/20, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery
The Exile Follies featuring John Doe, Kristin Hersh, and Grant-Lee Phillips 2/14/20, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
Fin Del Año Fiesta: A Night Of Latin Dance featuring Éso 12/28, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn
From Beyond These Walls, Ghost Forest, Or 12/20, 9 PM, GMan Tavern
From Robeson to Brown: A Modern Cabaret of Protest Song with Freedom Song Leaders, Maggie Brown, Africa Brown, and more 12/8, 4 PM, Univ. of Chicago Logan Center for the Arts
Front Left Speaker featuring Michael Serafini, DJ Dominic, Ilana Ariella, Jay Jay, Osira Obscura 12/14, noon, GMan Tavern
Robbie Fulks 4/18/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Guirro 12/12, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Joe Henry 2/22/20, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
Hippie Sabotage, Sebastian Paul 3/27/20, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+
Freddie Jackson 12/28, 8 PM, City Winery
José James 5/7/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Jams The Flava Child 12/10, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Jolie, De'Sean Jones 12/6, 9 PM, Hungry Brain
Jordy 1/21/20, 7:30 PM, Schubas, 18+
Keener Family, Perma Cough, Father Costume 12/18, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Krampusnacht featuring Arriver, Vietrahn, Andrew L'Animal 12/5, 8:30 PM, Hideout
Catherine Lamb & Rebecca Lane 12/14, 8 PM, Graham Foundation F
Lords of Acid, Aesthetic Perfection, Praga Khan, Mxms 4/6/20, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Mon 12/2, noon, 17+
Lotus 1/17-1/18/20, 9 PM, Park West
Kitt Lyles' Real Talk Collective 12/6, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Manhattan Transfer 2/9/20, 5 and 8 PM, City Winery
John Mead's True Believers 1/8/20, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Merry and Bright featuring Chicago Philharmonic Brass 12/22, noon, City Winery
Motor City Drum Ensemble 12/5, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Mt. Pocono, Jupiter Styles, Corolla 12/17, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village
Nada Surf 6/5/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Nadie Es Ilegal: A Bail Bond Party to Benefit RAICES with DJ Grief Richards 12/18, 7 PM, Constellation, 18+
New Year's Eve featuring Ariel Zetina, DJ Heather, Michael Serafini, Olin, Phillip Stone, Sevron, Sold 12/31, 9 PM, Smart Bar
Origami Angel, Short Fictions, Lettering, Mt. Pocono 1/16/20, 7:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Orindal Records Showcase

with Gia Margaret, Advance Base, Friendship, Ruth Garbus, DJ Golden Wilson 12/14, 8:30 PM, Hideout
Anthony Parasole, Hiroko Yamamura, Lowki 12/7, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Penny & Sparrow 4/28/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Pkew Pkew Pkew, Ramona, Jacob Horn Trio 12/6, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge
Post Malone, Swae Lee, Tyla Yaweh 2/11/20, 8 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont
Katie Pruitt 4/10/20, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Nathaniel Rateliff, Damien Jurado 3/6/20, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Kim Richey 4/14/20, 7:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Kevin Saunderson 12/28, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Secret Sisters, Logan Ledger 4/2/20, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music
Shpongole, Android Jones, David Phipps, Goopsteppa, Spacegeisha 12/7, 8 PM, Patio Theater, 18+
Jacob Sigman, Holly, Inbetween Days, Capital Soiree 12/12, 7:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Siren Song Cabaret with Brooklyn Britches & the Whispers 1/25/20, 10 PM, SPACE, Evanston, 18+
Sister Hazel, Fairview, Hoodie Life 12/14, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Cameron Snow, Ilana Ariella, Jaggy, Shmoo 12/26, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Snuzfest 2020 featuring Baggage, Guardrail, Zombie Schoolboy, Bad Planning, Late Nights, Glory Days, Magnifiers, Parker 1/12/20, 4:30 PM, Schubas, 18+
So Many Singing Vol. 2 release show featuring Liam Kazar, Minor Moon, Adeline Hotel 1/8/20, 7:30 PM, Hideout
Soccer Mommy, Tomberlin 4/11/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall
Steel Panther, Stitched Up Heart 12/8, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Steeldrivers 4/2/20, 8 PM, City Winery
Curtis Stigers 2/28/20, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston
Swans with Anna Von Hausswolff 6/17/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Thriftworks, Jonst & Shield 12/14, 8:45 PM, Bottom Lounge, 18+
Toastamania X featuring Ghoul, Nunslaughter, Cross Examination, Sanguisuga-bogg, Texas Toast Chainsaw Massacre, Coffin Rot, Molder, Toxic Ruin, Slutbomb, and more 6/20/20, 1 PM, Reggie's Rock Club
Tourist, Matthew Dear, Swim Mountain, Flower Food 12/6,

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GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

WHEN GOSSIP WOLF covered Uptown experimental tape label **Reserve Matinee** last spring, it led to another discovery: **Forest Management**, the serene drone project of label cofounder **John Daniel**. Forest Management's sprawling discography draws on a wide range of inspirations: one release manipulates recordings of church bells in the French Alps, while another uses glistening swells of synthesizer to recapture the feel of the Cleveland apartment house where Daniel grew up. On Friday, November 29, Forest Management drops a brand-new double LP, **After Dark**, on Jordan Reyes's **American Dreams** imprint, and it's easily the project's most exquisite work yet—Reyes calls it a "turntable-sourced ambient record," and it consists completely of sounds from a crackling vinyl copy of Claude Debussy's *La Mer*. A limited edition of the double LP comes with custom-made lavender soap for an even more immersive experience!

Most of Chicago shuts down on Thanksgiving to eat turkey, watch football, and nap, but in 2017 the members of legendary house-music collective the Chosen Few launched a new tradition: a night of classic house and disco. Every year since, they've taken over the **Promontory** on Thanksgiving night to throw a reunion party for regulars from **Sauer's**, a defunct south-side club where promising house DJs (including some of the Chosen Few) spun records in the 80s. If you can't wait till July to see **Wayne Williams, Jesse Saunders, Tony Hatchett, Alan King, Andre Hatchett, Terry Hunter, and Mike Dunn** spin the Chosen Few Picnic, head to the Promontory on Thursday, November 28.

Gossip Wolf hasn't had a chance to catch rambunctious Chicago rockers **Twin Peaks** since they dropped their sweetly bucolic fourth album, **Lookout Low**, in September. Fortunately, they headline the **Riviera** on Friday, November 29, joined by a crew of auxiliary musicians to help them bring the album's delightful songs to the stage. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

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

WOLF BY KETH HERZIK

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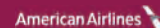
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12.12 KEVIN ROSS
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12.15 JANE LYNCH
SWINGIN' LITTLE CHRISTMAS
12.18 STEPHEN KELLOGG
WITH TONY LUCCA
12.19-20 MUSIQ SOULCHILLD
12.21-23 MICHAEL MCDERMOTT
MISCHIEF & MISTLETOE
12.26-27 SHEMEKIA COPELAND
WITH KEVIN BURT
12.30-1.1 AVERY *SUNSHINE

UPCOMING SHOWS

12.3 WHINE DOWN WITH JANA KRAMER
12.13 RODRIGUEZ OF SEARCHING
FOR SUGARMAN
12.21 LEVI KREIS - HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
12.22 CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC BRUNCH SERIES: MERRY & BRIGHT
12.25 CHRISTMAS FOR THE JEWS FEAT. JOEL CHASNOFF, JASON SURAN, SOHRAB FOROUZESH
12.28 FREDDIE JACKSON

12.29 BODEANS
1.3 PETER ASHER
1.4 SPAGA - 2 PM SHOW
1.4 THE CLAUDETTES
WITH NORA O'CONNOR
1.5 JON B.
1.8 MIKI HOWARD FEAT. CHERRELLE
1.9 NICHOLAS TREMULIS
1.10 SYLEENA JOHNSON
1.12 SONS OF THE NEVER WRONG
WITH KATIE DAHL
1.13 THE MEN OF MISTER KELLY'S

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OPINION

SAVAGE LOVE

My husband's too anxious to be a freak

And what to do when your ex casually texts

By DAN SAVAGE

Q: I'm a heterosexual cis woman in a monogamous marriage. My husband and I have always struggled to connect sexually, mostly because he has extreme anxiety that makes doing anything new or different difficult. He's been in therapy since before I met him, but it doesn't seem to be helping much. His anxiety has caused him to shut down every sexual ask I've ever made because he's afraid he won't "do it right." He's a PIV-and-nothing-more kind of guy, but I'm not asking for varsity-level stuff, just boring things like talking about fantasies, a little role-play, staying in bed on a Sunday just to have sex, etc. All of it is off the table. I understand he has a right to veto sex acts, but isn't this all pretty basic, run-of-the-mill stuff? He'll still get his PIV; I just want there to be other elements before the PIV starts. It's still a no. Talking to him about this sends him into a depressive episode where I then have to spend hours telling him he's not a bad person, so I've stopped bringing it up. I've tried to talk to therapists about navigating this issue, but most change the subject. One actually told me that it was good that we don't have good sex, because if we did, we wouldn't have good communication in other areas. (I never went back to that one.) This has gone on for so long that I've lost all interest in sex. My libido, which used to be very high, has vanished. Whenever he wants sex, I do it—but I dread

it. Do you have any ideas on how I can navigate this topic with my husband so he doesn't shut down? How can I make him understand that it's okay to experiment sexually and it will be okay if it's not perfect? —**LOST AND SO SAD**

A: You're going to have to call your husband's bluff, LASS, and power through the predictable meltdown. That means raising—again—your unhappiness with your sex life, explaining your need for some pre-PIV intimacy and play, informing him this is no longer a desperate request but a non-negotiable demand, and then refusing to shift into caregiver mode when his depressive episode starts.

I'm not suggesting your husband's anxiety and depression are an act, LASS, or that being made aware of your unhappiness isn't a trigger. But if depressive episodes get your husband out of conversations he'd rather avoid—and if they allow him to dictate the terms of your sex life and treat your pussy like a Fleshlight—then his subconscious could be weaponizing those depressive episodes. And if you shift to caregiver mode every single time—so long as you're willing to spend hours reassuring him that he's not a bad person—then your grievances will never be addressed, much less resolved. So even if it means spending an extremely unpleasant evening, weekend, or few weeks with him, you're going

to have to raise the issue and refuse to reassure your husband. Line up whatever support you think he might need before you make your stand—you could also make your stand during a couples counseling session—and give him maybe one "You're not a bad person, really!" and then refuse to back down.

And when he shuts down, LASS, it will be his therapist's job to pry him back open, not yours.

And the sex you're currently having? The sex you dread and don't enjoy? The sooner you stop having it, LASS, the sooner your husband will come to understand that he's going to have to give a little (so very little!) if he wants to have sex at all. If and when he does, then you can borrow a page from the varsity-level kinkster handbook: *Take baby steps*. In the same way people who are turned on by, say, more intense bondage scenes (suspension, immobilization, etc.) start with lighter bondage scenes (hands behind the back, spread-eagled on the bed, etc.), you can start with something small and easy for him to get right, like 20 minutes of cuddling in bed together on a Sunday morning before progressing to PIV sex.

Q: I'm a bisexual trans woman living in Europe. A couple of months ago, I began an amazing relationship with a woman who works as an escort. For a while, everything was as good as it gets, until I said something inconsiderate

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