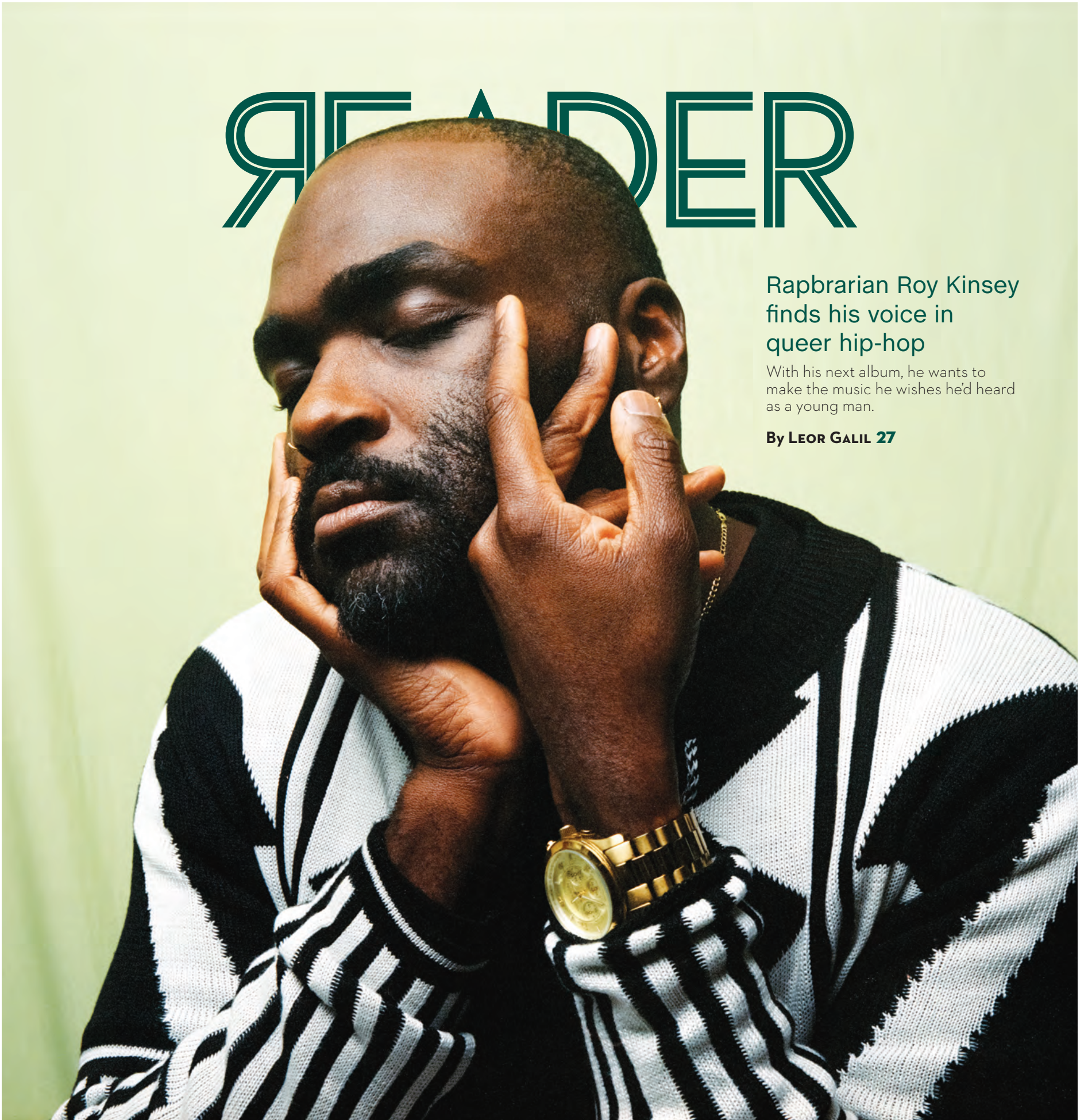


READER

Rapbrarian Roy Kinsey finds his voice in queer hip-hop

With his next album, he wants to make the music he wishes he'd heard as a young man.

By **LEOR GALIL 27**



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READER (ISSN 1096-6919) IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY STM READER, LLC
 2930 S. MICHIGAN, SUITE 102 CHICAGO, IL 60616
 312-392-2934, CHICAGOREADER.COM

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THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



Not for the faint of heart

Tetsuya Ishida's first U.S. retrospective depicts Japan's "missing million."

The Last Hours of William O'Neal

From the archives: He was the informant who gave the FBI the floor plan of Fred Hampton's apartment. In 1990, he ran onto the Eisenhower Expressway and killed himself.

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CITY LIFE



Stefan Ponce and Hannibal Bureess at the East Room circa 2014. COURTESY EAST ROOM

STAFF NOTE

East Room says goodbye

A Chicago staple closes down


By LEOR GALIL

My first long vacation of 2019 coincided with the final week of East Room, Logan Square's infamous speakeasy slash music venue slash 4 AM bar slash place where seemingly every other 20-something Chicagoan went in order to create cherished blurry memories they'd only half remember the next day. I arrived back in town Sunday morning before 2 AM, which I suppose meant that I could've spent that night waiting in line for East Room's final hurrah, hosted by the founders of streetwear shop Fat Tiger Workshop. They said goodbye by dusting off their defunct East Room series, Sundays with the Tigers; I didn't mind staying home, and caught up the following day via Instagram stories that showed a packed-out crowd and an impromptu performance by R&B star BJ the Chicago Kid.

East Room announced its impending closure a little more than a week before that final evening, which prompted a deluge of tweets from Chicago's nightlife denizens. I held back, but not because I'm short on memories. I can still recall playing Jayaire Woods's "Man of the Year" off my iPhone during my DJ set for the Aux Cord series in January 2017 after someone requested I play Lil Yachty (he appears on the

song, so I did fulfill his request; people still left the dance floor in confusion). I just had a little trouble fitting all my complicated feelings about a venue I'd only sporadically spent time in into a few tweets.

Regardless, I think it's important to point out in a little more than half a decade, East Room became a hub for a fascinating crosssection of subcultures. It was hardly the only bar on the tiny stretch of Milwaukee Avenue between California and Fullerton to host live performances or ace DJs, but you can be sure it was the only one that hosted Australian postpunk legends the Scientists, LA beat-scene hero Nosaj Thing, and footwork jester DJ Paypal, among so many others. And that's not to mention the local musicians who spent many a night at the space. East Room hosted garage-rock shows and house DJs, and became a focal point for the local hip-hop scene (it even played a small role in a brief musical back-and-forth between Vic Spencer and Mick Jenkins).

Yes, East Room is gone, but the communities it harbored remain, and will find new places to continue to grow. And I can't wait to see what happens next—and share it with you. 

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NEWS & POLITICS



Hillary "I don't hate anybody" Clinton
COURTESY HOWARD STERN SHOW; ON SIRIUS/XM YOUTUBE



POLITICS

Bernie bashers

Even now, Hillary and other centrists just can't stop hating on Bernie.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

After listening to Hillary Clinton's recent chat with Howard Stern, I've come to the frightening conclusion that members of the centrist wing of my beloved Democratic Party would rather see Trump reelected than cast their lot with Bernie Sanders.

Please say it ain't so, Hillary!

On one level, this shouldn't surprise me—the centrists have a lot to lose in a revolution, even a benign Democratic Socialist one.

Still, I've always played by the rule that you support the nominee, even if he or she is not your favorite—that's how I found myself voting for centrists like Dukakis and Clinton (Bill and Hillary) and Gore and Kerry and Obama...

I think we all agree that the worst Democrat is generally better than the best Republican on issues like judicial nominees, reproductive rights, environmental protections, etc.

A position, by the way, that generally makes

me the laughingstock among my friends of the Green Party persuasion.

But, apparently, party unity is a one-way street when it comes to the centrists and Bernie. And that brings me back to Hillary's comments to Howard about Bernie. Here's how it went...

STERN: Do we hate Bernie Sanders?

CLINTON: No. I don't hate anybody.

STERN: Bernie could have endorsed you quicker.

CLINTON: He could have. He hurt me. There is no doubt about it, he hurt me.

STERN: Have you ever spoken to Bernie about that?

NEWS & POLITICS

CLINTON: No.

STERN: You ever talk to him?

CLINTON: I don't talk to him. We did when he finally endorsed me and all that.

STERN: But you're upset with him?

CLINTON: No, disappointed. Disappointed. And I hope he doesn't do it again to whoever gets the nomination. Once is enough. We have to join forces.

Ouch. That's nasty on two fronts. One, it assumes that Bernie won't get the nomination—though he's a front-runner in many polls. And, two, it devalues the assistance Sanders gave Clinton in 2016. Which is probably a helluva lot more support than she got from Howard Stern. Just saying.

Not to relitigate the Bernie/Hillary fight from four years ago again, but . . .

Yes, Bernie ran a spirited campaign and, yes, there were vast ideological differences between the Bernie and Hillary blocs of the party and, yes, the healing was long in coming, if it came at all.

And the fight was exacerbated by the hacking of Democratic computers and the release of e-mails—thank you, Putin—that showed the party was conspiring to keep Bernie from the nomination. So, at the precise moment the Bernie and Hillary factions were supposed to be coming together to beat Trump, they were at each other's throats. And eventually, some of Bernie's supporters either stayed home or voted for Trump.

But this wasn't Bernie's fault. He didn't hack those computers. He didn't write those nasty e-mails.

He did all the things a defeated candidate is supposed to do after a bitter primary. He endorsed Clinton about a month after the primaries. And he gave a passionate speech for her at the convention. And during the campaign he made many appearances on Clinton's behalf, extolling her, blasting Trump, and urging his supporters to vote Democratic.

To refresh your memory, consider this article written by Amy Davidson Sorkin in *The New Yorker* just a few days before the 2016 election.

"One of the many things that makes Donald Trump angry is that Bernie Sanders does not seem to hold grudges. In recent speeches, Trump has pointed to the information that has come out, through WikiLeaks' disclosures

of John Podesta's e-mails, about the Clinton team's attitude toward Sanders during the primaries: the slights ('doofus'), the schemes ('where would you stick the knife?'), and the eye-rolling ('socialist math'). Perhaps worst of all—at least from Trump's point of view—was Donna Brazile's passing along of debate questions. 'Now, Bernie Sanders should be angry right? Shouldn't he be angry?' Trump asked a crowd in Florida. He sounded a little bit puzzled—he would be *so mad*."

Sorkin notes that Sanders spent weeks stumping for Clinton, and at an event in Raleigh with artist Pharrell Williams, he told the crowd: "We have to do everything that we can to elect Secretary Clinton!"

"Clinton and Pharrell Williams were on their feet, cheering. 'Wow!' Clinton said, when she took to the rostrum. 'Whew! I gotta say, after hearing from these two extraordinary men, I feel all fired up and ready to go for the next five days!' . . . A few hours later, Sanders was off on his own to Iowa [on Hillary's behalf]. Trump is ahead in that state, in the latest average of polls, by about two and a half points. Sanders had three events scheduled for Friday—Cedar Falls, Iowa City, Davenport. On Saturday, there would be more."

Guess Hillary has a short memory.


Bottom line—there are many reasons why Clinton lost the electoral college to Trump. But Bernie's the least of them.

I know it's popular to blame Bernie voters for Trump's victory. But it's not supported by facts. The best analysis I've seen on the subject shows that about one in ten Sanders supporters voted for Trump—which is less than the number of Hillary Clinton supporters who chose John McCain over Barack Obama in 2008.

Speaking of nasty primaries that candidates and their supporters took a long time getting over.

Not sure why there's all the hate for Bernie. At the risk of sounding like an armchair psychologist, I'd say the centrists resent Bernie for reminding them what they're supposed to stand for and why they got into politics in the first place.

In any event, I'll probably vote for Bernie in the 2020 primary. But if Joe Biden or Amy Klobuchar or any of the other moderates win the nomination, I'll definitely vote for them.

Here's hoping that the Obamas and Clintons and Rahms of the party do the same should Bernie win the primary. 

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BORDERLESSMAGAZINE

**Story BY SARAH CONWAY
AND ALEX HERNANDEZ**

Comic BY JON BROWN

No one asks to flee their country, it isn't something someone will do if there's an alternative. But there isn't one for the 59.5 million people who have been displaced from their homes since 2014. That's one out of every 122 people living on the planet seeking a safe home.

It's the largest displacement crisis ever recorded, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency. Imagine leaving home with nothing more than a backpack and not knowing if you'll be able to make it somewhere safe. And even then, if you make it to the United States, you potentially face years of uncertainty as your asylum case inches through immigration courts.

More than 160,000 people applied for asylum in the United States last year, seeking shelter from persecution in their home country due to their race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or political opinion. That number has nearly quadrupled in the last decade.

There is currently a backlog of nearly 1 million deportation cases pending in 2019, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse database. While U.S. immigration courts have always moved slowly, they've practically come to a halt under President Donald Trump's administration.

For many, the wait for the asylum process leaves them in limbo; unable to truly move on with their lives and struggling to heal from the situation they fled. In this comic, you will learn the story of Abu Omar, a young Syrian man who graduated from law school in Damascus and began his mandatory military service in 2010 on the eve of the Arab Spring. Eventually, Abu Omar decides to desert his post and accept that he would rather die with his people than be behind a gun in a conflict where an estimated 400,000 Syrians were killed and thousands disappeared.

Like thousands of asylum seekers nationwide, Abu Omar has been left with no choice but to sit with the heavy uncertainty of whether the U.S. government will accept his asylum application or send him back.

www.borderlessmag.org

Millions of people have suffered or are still suffering from injustice in so many places all over the world.

This story is just one example.

After all that I have been through, I still think I am one of the lucky ones. I had a chance to start again in a very beautiful spot on this planet. Many of my friends didn't have a chance to live one more day.

With all the pain I experienced, I learned something I will never forget until my last day: You cannot change the circumstances that surround you. But, you can always face them.

This book is dedicated to my mother.
—ABU OMAR

The Promise was reported as a part of Borderless Magazine's Asylum City series on immigration and sanctuary in Chicago and made possible thanks to support from the International Women's Media Foundation and our Kickstarter supporters.

Editor's note: Each of the following pages contains an excerpt. Read the full comic at chicagoreader.com and borderlessmag.org



THE COMMANDERS CHOSE 40 MEN AND TOLD THEM TO GO OUT AND FACE THE PROTESTORS.

EACH SOLDIER WAS GIVEN 150 BULLETS.



FROM MY ROOM, I HEARD GUNFIRE AND SCREAMS OUTSIDE FOR HOURS.



OVER 30 PEOPLE DIED. 200 WERE INJURED.

HUNDREDS ARRESTED AND SENT TO PRISONS. ALL AMMUNITION FIRED.



LISTENING TO THOSE INNOCENT PEOPLE DIE, I WISHED I HAD NEVER BEEN BORN.



DURING THESE PROTESTS, MY FATHER MADE ME PROMISE I WOULD STAY OUT OF TROUBLE. HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO ABANDON MY POST. HOW WOULD I BE ABLE TO STAY IN SYRIA WHEN THE SITUATION RESOLVED ITSELF?

STAY INSIDE AND AVOID KILLING YOUR PEOPLE, SON. IF YOU DESERT THE ARMY, WE WILL ALL END UP IN PRISON. ALLAH YAHMINA.

I REMEMBER THERE WERE SOLDIERS WHO WOULD SPY ON EVERYONE JUST TO CATCH ONE WORD ABOUT NOT WANTING TO KILL PROTESTORS, OR TO SEE IF THEY WERE PRAYING. WE COULDN'T PRAY IN THE ARMY.

A LOT OF SOLDIERS IN MY UNIT ENDED UP IN TADMOR PRISON AND SEDNAYA MILITARY PRISON BECAUSE OF THEM.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE MOST FEARED, DARKEST PLACES IN SYRIA.

I HEARD AHMED WAS PRAYING. IS IT TRUE?

OH MY GOD, NO HE WOULD NOT PRAY. HE IS NOT A BAD GUY.

IN MAY 2012, WHILE THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS WERE DEFECTING, THE ARMY TRANSFERRED A FULL TANK UNIT AND CANNONS TO OUR CAMP.

WE ARE GOING TO BURN RAQQA TO THE GROUND.

I BEGAN DREAMING OF A PLAN TO ESCAPE.

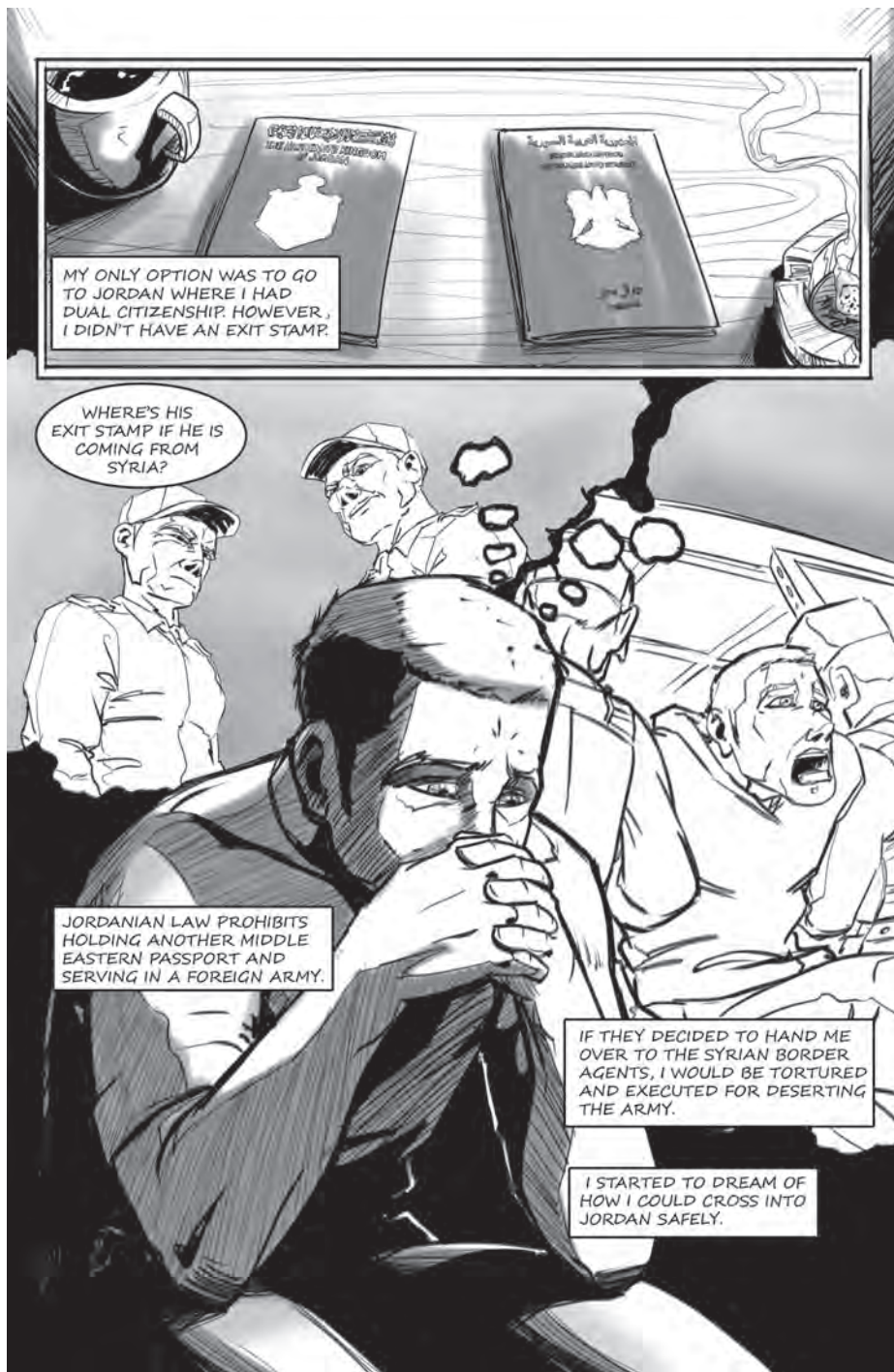
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I FELT LIKE I HAD NOWHERE TO TURN TO UNTIL MY OLD FRIEND SAMER CALLED: "YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE IN CHICAGO. COME VISIT."

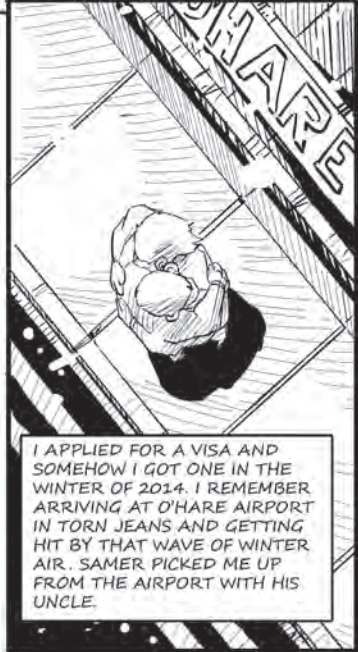


MAYBE ONE DAY WE WILL MEET IN CHICAGO, ABU OMAR.

I NEVER IMAGINED THAT ONE DAY CHICAGO WOULD BE THE ONE PLACE I FELT SAFE.

INSHALLAH.

A FEW YEARS BACK WHILE I WAS HIDING AT MY BROTHER'S HOUSE, SAMER TOLD ME HE WAS LEAVING FOR THE U.S.



I APPLIED FOR A VISA AND SOMEHOW I GOT ONE IN THE WINTER OF 2014. I REMEMBER ARRIVING AT O'HARE AIRPORT IN TORN JEANS AND GETTING HIT BY THAT WAVE OF WINTER AIR. SAMER PICKED ME UP FROM THE AIRPORT WITH HIS UNCLE.



THE FIRST THING WE ATE WAS PIZZA.

I GREETED EVERY PASSERBY ON THE SNOWY CHICAGO STREET.

"HELLO, I AM FROM SYRIA. IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU."



WHEN MY BROTHER AND HIS FAMILY ATTEMPTED TO CROSS INTO JORDAN HE WAS DETAINED.



A GUARD RECOGNIZED THAT HE HAD SEEN THE PASSPORT WITH ANOTHER PERSON BEFORE.

BUT, THEY HAD NO PROOF. EVENTUALLY MY BROTHER'S FAMILY PASSED INTO JORDAN.



IN SYRIA, SOME PEOPLE DIE FOR A REASON. SOME FOR THEIR FREEDOM. OTHERS DIE FOR POWER. THERE ARE THOSE, HOWEVER, WHO DON'T KNOW WHY THEY DIE.



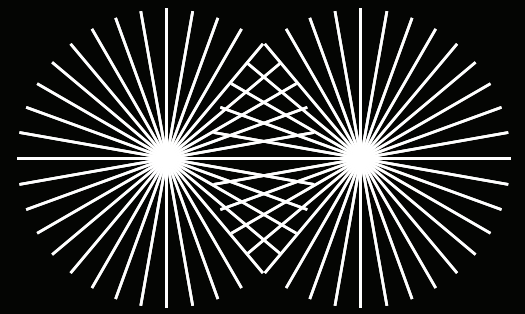
I HAD TO LEAVE.

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ON CULTURE

Nameless *here* for evermore

History's been wiped at Raven Theatre.

By DEANNA ISAACS

Raven Theatre's *Cold Town/Hotline*, the Chicago holiday play it commissioned from writer and director Eli Newell, features one extraordinary kid actor—fifth-grader Jonah Kaufman—and the mostly happy ending requisite for family-friendly Christmas-season shows.

It's about a clutch of volunteers, each with their personal baggage, who man the Yule Connection—a hotline for folks suffering from the anxiety and depression that's become a staple of the holiday. Along the way, the volunteers' own issues get resolved.

I'd like to say it's playing in the Raven's spacious Menendian-Montemurro main-stage theater, but there is no Menendian-Montemurro stage at Raven. And you'll search the theater's spiffed-up lobby in vain for even a plaque or photo of the husband-and-wife team that built this neighborhood institution. No mention of them in its program books or on its website either. In a whitewashing that brings—what? Stalinist Russia?—to mind, Raven has erased the couple who founded, ran, and were synonymous with it for 35 of its 37 years.

Here's how the history reads on the website (note the telltale passive construction): "Raven Theatre was founded in March 1983. It was itinerant until August 1985, when it moved into a storefront in the Rogers Park neighborhood. Raven moved to its permanent home at the corner of Clark & Granville, in Edgewater, in November 2002. A building that was once a grocery store now boasts two stages. . . ."

Ah, yes. The grocery store.

There were still grocery carts on the li-

noleum floor when I interviewed Michael Menendian in this space in January 2001. As anyone who's paid any attention to the local theater scene for more than a couple of years (or just knocked around Edgewater or Rogers Park for that long) is likely to know, it was Menendian—a director who learned his trade by studying with Chicago theater legends Dennis Začek, Del Close, and Paul Sills—and actor JoAnn Montemurro, who, with a small company of colleagues, created Raven, back in '83. They scraped it together—literally with their own hands—and grew it, right along with their daughter, Sophia, who toddled across that first stage (which audience members also had to cross to get to the restroom), and eventually participated as a thespian herself. And it was JoAnn and Mike (still working his day job with the city) who, after the theater lost its first home, moved Raven to this location, taking on a major mortgage and turning it into a two-stage center, a significant link in the city's off-Loop theater scene. They brought professional theater to the neighborhood, mounting

mostly revivals of American classics as well as local premieres, until they were summarily "retired" from their positions as co-artistic directors two years ago.

Raven's lobby walls used to display photographs of their productions, going back decades. No more. When I called the theater to ask what happened, I was directed to Stephen Johnson, who is now both general manager and the treasurer of Raven's board of directors. He's been on the board since 2013, and has been a generous donor to the theater since then.

Johnson told me the erasure was done according to Menendian and Montemurro's wishes. Their departure, he said "was not pleasant, and they asked that they be removed from anything having to do with the theater." He said they weren't ready to leave, but the board was ready to see them go, because "the direction the theater had been moving in was not sustainable. . . The financial results were not what we wanted them to be."

"They indicated that they didn't want to be

associated with the theater any longer after they had departed, so we did that," Johnson explained. When I asked if they said they wanted to be excised from its history, he said, "We interpreted it in that fashion."

But Menendian told me, "That's not really true. They wanted to celebrate us [at a gala, etc.]. And we did not want to be celebrated, given the acrimonious terms under which we left. But it had nothing to do with saying 'please eliminate our names from the history of Raven.' Obviously I wouldn't spend 35 years of my life building it up from scratch, just to be completely forgotten. I did not expect that they would wipe the slate clean. That never was presented to me."

Menendian said he's "not dwelling on it," and has "moved on"; Johnson calls it "old news." But maybe the Yule Connection could facilitate a happier ending. A few sentences in the company history would be a good start. **■**

@Deannalisaacs



Raven Theatre's Edgewater storefront **■** PAUL COMSTOCK/FLICKR



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FEATURE

The city's first Thai supermarket in 12 years is open

Talard Thai Asian Market in Edgewater is the one stop for holy basil, fresh durian, and every flavor of Mama-brand instant noodles.

By **MIKE SULA**

Ka Pow is the accidental way *Ocimum tenuiflorum*, aka holy basil, aka ใบกะเพรา, aka *ka-prao*, announces its presence among the produce at Talard Thai Asian Market. All that's missing on the label is an exclamation point and the clenched fist of a superhero to communicate the seriousness of this intoxicating green herb's arrival in Edgewater, where Supasin "Pete" Ratchadapronvanich and Simon Atapan have opened a dedicated Thai market—let's call it a supermarket—the scale and ambition of which the city hasn't enjoyed since the closing of the beloved Thai Grocery almost 12 years ago.

Ka-prao is an essential ingredient in a simple but iconic Thai dish that appears on restaurant menus all over the city—but usually in name only. That's because holy basil is hard to get in Chicago, and chefs usually sub in readily available purple sweet basil. But if your fried-egg-topped minced ground protein with garlic, chilis, and fish, oyster, and soy sauces has no ka-prao in it, you shouldn't be calling it pad ka-prao. That's according to food writer Leela Punyaratabandhu, who once directed me to a cheap stall at the top of a Bangkok shopping mall so I could taste for myself how exquisite even the humblest versions of *pad ka-prao* can be when they're actually made with the real stuff.

Ka-prao occasionally shows up in one or more of the Asian groceries in the orbit of Argyle Street, but it's too rare to start a course correction for a majority of local restaurants or home cooks. Ratchadapronvanich and Atapan and their partners aim to change all that.

The pair grew up ten minutes away from each other in Bangkok's Silom neighborhood, but didn't meet until after they'd come to Chicago and finished their studies, Ratchadapronvanich in IT and Atapan in business management. Last year the former opened Hom Mali in Old Town (and later West Town) and the latter was hired at Arun's and Taste of Thai Town after New York restaurateur Kit-tigorn Lirtpanaruk bought into the latter two restaurants, bringing Arun Sampanthavivat's iconic fine dining destination back from the dead. The trio also joined forces with former Bangkok Video owner Sutthamas Tetiwat to open Talard in the former Golden Pacific Market, where Ratchadapronvanich's wife once worked and which had been sitting idle since the owner moved to California.

Ratchadapronvanich points out that Chicagoland suffers no shortage of Thai restaurants but has had to make do with only two small Thai markets: PNA in Lincoln Square and Thai Food Corporation in Uptown. Golden Pacific had the city's best selection of Thai products but its broad spectrum of southeast Asian goods meant it wasn't a specialist. Good luck finding a consistent—or even existent—supply of ka-prao, makrut lime leaves, cilantro roots, or any number of ingredients critical to Thai cuisine.

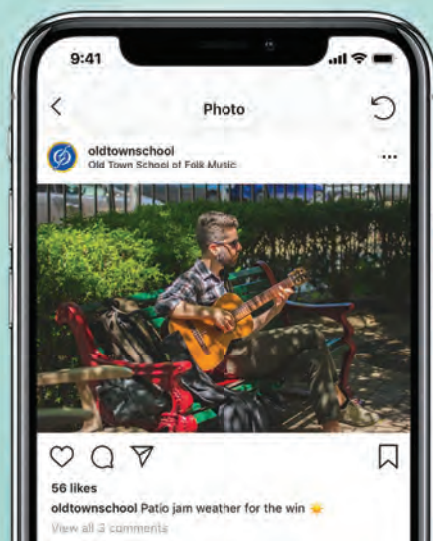
"If they cannot find the right ingredients then they just have to play along with what they have," says Atapan.

"We try to have stuff you cannot buy anywhere," says Ratchadapronvanich. With the help of Sampanthavivat the partners spent last year courting distributors in Bangkok, Los Angeles, and New York, nailing down deals to bring in iconic brands like Mama instant noodles and Kuao Thai Thai, represented by YouTube star Jey Sal E San, which manufactures a number of relishes from the huge family of nam phrik that form the foundation of Thai cuisine.

Talard stocks dips such as *nam phrik pla ra* made from fermented mudfish, the tamarind- and shrimp-paste-based *nam phrik ma kham*, and steamed-mackerel *nam phrik pla thu*, all touchstones in Thai cuisine that are rarely available here—along with the proper vegetables to eat them with, such as green pea ➔

Clockwise from top left: assorted fish balls, frozen anchovy, crate of green Thai eggplant
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FOOD & DRINK

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Left to right: Kris Suphakit Jeensopa, Supasin "Pete" Ratchadapronvanich, Chumpunut Ratchadapronvanich, Sutthamas Tetiwat, Simon Atapan  SYDNEY POLAND FOR CHICAGO READER

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eggplants, winged beans, or *dok khae* flowers. The brand is also responsible for the \$16 jar of pearly white ant eggs for the Isan salad *koi khai mot daeng*, and Isan-style tom yam soup.

Some produce ships directly from Thailand, and has perilously short shelf lives, which is why a few lobes of fresh durian will run you \$32, and the powerful punch of never-frozen sator beans costs \$8 for five ounces. Other hard-to-find produce comes from warm weather states such as California or Texas, and can include whole makrut limes, lotus stems, water mimosa, or ivy gourd leaves.

What can't be found fresh might be found in the long freezer cases that take up nearly the back half of the store. Packets of cilantro root, an essential ingredient for marinades and curry pastes, are stuffed alongside sadao leaves (to eat with the grilled fish) and sweet-and-sour fruits like makok, grill-ready sweet custards jacketed in banana leaves or bamboo stalks, more than 40 varieties of fish balls and a plethora of Champ-brand frozen sausages that I've been greedily working my way through for weeks.


The partners, both in their 30s, stocked the shelves with a fair bit of nostalgia too. "If you go to a Thailand 7-Eleven you see everything here," says Ratchadapronvanich, standing in front of a refrigerator case stacked with soft drinks, everything from Sinha club soda to Ichitan Yen Yen Herbal Drink. "All of this stuff we grew up with," says Atapan, dwarfed by a wall of crunchy snacks.

For all their rigorous sourcing on behalf of

exacting home cooks, they're also targeting a modern embrace of convenience, stacking the shelves with popular brands of instant coffee, curry pastes, and meal kits along with every variety of Mama instant noodles, and a selection from its competitor Wai Wai. On one of my visits Atapan was disappointed that they'd sold out of the salted duck egg flavor Lay's potato chips, but instead insisted I try the two-in-one bag of grilled river prawn and spicy seafood sauce flavor.

Talard, which means simply "market" in Thai, had its grand opening on November 22, hosting luminaries such as Songkran beauty pageant winner Arthy Dao, Sampanthavivat, and the Thai consulate general. Now that they're up and running they're focusing on converting Golden Pacific's former meat counter into a cafeteria-style *khao rad gang* model, the Thai version of meat and three, featuring rice and curry dishes served from steam tables.

Meanwhile, they want to grow their wholesale business so prices come down and more restaurants start cooking regularly with ingredients like ka-prao and ivy gourd leaf, or *pak tam lung*. It's already happening, says Atapan, who points out that Me Dee Cafe in Ravenswood has plans to start serving *tom lueat mu*, or clear pig blood soup, seasoned with the latter.

"We want people to know that when you come here you can get everything from Thailand," says Ratchadapronvanich. 

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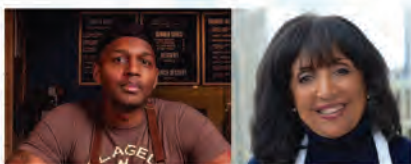
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PERFORMING ARTS

Darling Shear is ready to fly

The artist's piece *Querida* is a personal performance presenting sexuality, sensuality, and healing from trauma.

By **S. NICOLE LANE**

Darling Shear is a mover and shaker—literally. The Chicago-born choreographer produces movement-oriented pieces that are closely tied to healing from trauma. Trained in ballet, modern, jazz, and African dance, Shear ties in styles of burlesque and contemporary movement that includes intense emotion, bare feet, and crossing the barrier between audience and dancer. In the piece *Querida*, first performed at Links Hall in November 2018, the artist opens up about personal experiences and how movement can regenerate, soften, and disrupt our ways of navigating the past. On December 17, Shear will

present excerpts from the piece—which has changed immensely since first performed—at the Museum of Contemporary Art as part of the “In Progress” series.

Things are snowballing for Shear as more residencies and fellowships fill up the artist's calendar. *Tech, no-Jesus* debuts in 2020; *Beatitude*, which is a piece about Beatnikism, premieres in June at Links Hall; and another installment of *Querida* is on the docket. I sat down with Shear to talk about the evolution of *Querida*, processing identity, and the club as a collaborative practice space.

Did you study dance?

I did study dance. I didn't start studying dance until high school. I was 14. I didn't realize I needed it and I didn't realize it was calling me. I still don't realize it's calling me sometimes. It's very fulfilling. It's like flying.

Do you consider yourself a dancer/choreographer, or is “performer” a better word?

I'm shifting my vocabulary around, and I'm starting to say “conversationalist.” I don't really say “dancer” that often, I mostly say “mover” because I try to be accessible. I try and be mindful of my labels that I associate myself with. I am a dancer, but I'm a mover. That way I can access people much more easily.

Yeah, sometimes the word “dancer” can be a bit heavy. I always like to ask artists what they like to be called. I have a fear of incorrectly labeling someone.



Darling Shear

© MATTHEW GREGORY HOLLIS

If it does happen, you aren't going for the throat. You have to allow more leniency. I'm mindful of the words I use because I'm trying to access people. I don't really like saying “performer,” especially being all of the things

that are exoticized, or can be exoticized, that come along with the word “performer.” There is a performance. I do perform. I'm trying to find ways to shift and soften so I can navigate the space without doubting myself.

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ARTS & CULTURE

How has the dance and performance community here in Chicago shaped you?

That's always a weighed down question. The community is lovely. I think the thing is that because of funds it puts people into cliques a little bit. These tiers of dancers only hang out together . . . There is also a lovely close contaminating happening here and there.

I feel like the dance communities are very separated. I don't know the more classical ballet dance community here, but I do know this other community. I was wondering about that crossover.

There is some crossover. There is this group called the Audience Architects which is a good place to go and meet new people. They are also good at bridging the whole city and not just be centered downtown to Andersonville to Avondale. They want more south-side dancers. Again, there are so many disconnects. Chicago is also a conversational city. It is the businessman city. We have such a beautiful, rich, robust culture and so many fabulous people are constantly blooming from here.

Would you say that your practice is collaborative?

Yes, it is. It's collaborative in that way, and it's collaborative in ways you're not thinking of. Right now I'm working with a new DJ duo, Grizzly and Black. We did our first gig together in June at the Darling over on Randolph. These after hours that they host, the sound and the movement become a composition. That's our breeding ground for how we relay the inspiration. I have works that they were not a part of, and I'm starting to incorporate them into being a part of these works because of how we work together so well. Trust is key, and I trust them. I'm not saying I don't trust a lot of people. Mister Wallace, who I've done collaborations with, we are still working together. I've worked with so many people who are a part of Futurehood, Elijah McKinnon, OTV, and Jamila Woods. I'm really appreciative. There have been some really wonderful collaborations.

Do you think of the club and nightlife as your practice space?

Yes. People know, "Oh Darling's here? She needs space." It's arms, and legs, and hair flying.

I'm a very quiet person. I'm quiet until I'm not. *Looney Tunes* is a good way to describe it. A cross between *Tiny Toon Adventures*, *Ani-*

maniacs, some *SpongeBob*, a few dashes of *Bubbles*—I have to be specific—and *Rose* from *Golden Girls*. Mhm, and a few dashes of *Sinclair* from *Living Single*. I'm quiet, and then I'm on.

A lot of your work references trauma and healing. Can you talk about that and how you feel your practice conveys this?

I talk about how in my youth I was molested. I think I was probably four or five. It needs to be out there. My work is out here, and we need to talk about these things. That happened and that informed my life. I held on to that for a long, long, long time. It was also very interesting because it was a female-identifying individual at the time. It was interesting how that individual has possibly shaped the person I've become in so many ways.

[*Querida*] is about healing through sexual trauma and emotional traumas and the vices we used to fill them in. People who look like me are sexualized from a very, very, very early age. How can we have a conversation with these traumas? We live in societies that have been built upon puritan views so then we can't have conversations about sex and gender and sexuality. This is how I deal with it.

There is a lot of soft misdirection in the show. The show is very intimate, very sensual, very deep, and sexy. But also, we understand these goals of hyperfemininity and then being queer, the capitalistic gaze, and the patriarchal gaze. The show has shifted. The show premiered November 2018 at Links Hall. It was a three-day show at the top of November. Very, very lovely. I have two collaborators, Leah Ball, she has some sculptures that I use in the piece and then Chelsea Ross, she created a film that went into HUMP! Fest, so I use that film to desensitize people before. I'm not using it at this show because it is only excerpts and I don't want to give everything away! We use that [film] to soften the audience—here's what you think you're getting but then I come in and flip it around. You think you're coming for tits and ass, but you're actually coming to learn something.

Have you ever taught any workshops with this practice?

No, I usually only do it through my performance. I get nervous. For someone who is trying to facilitate space for people, it's a lot. Within this show too, because it does tap into some of the taboos. I do let people know this is not a safe space because I don't create ➔

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ARTS & CULTURE

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your safety. It's a comfortable space for you to come in so that you can take care of yourself. I can't do that. I don't want that job.

I know a lot of people are rethinking the term “safe space” because you can't promise that. The term came around with good intentions, but now it's just thrown out there without thinking about it.

There's a book that just came out that's called *Do You Remember House?* by Micah Salkind, and it's about Chicago's queer underground and the culture. A big part of that is that it's church. It's a safe space to release and explore and become new. That's club culture for queer culture. It's a simple space, but it is a safe space. I love my nightlife and working the nightlife. I have the freedom. But I do need space. How can I still incorporate that? I grew up in the club. I've been in the club since I was three. Scootchin' the good scootch.

There's an after party that's happening after the performance. Lots of good things have been happening this year. I've been pinching myself a lot, crying a lot. We have a few residencies and fellowships that are coming up. The Portuguese meaning of *querida* is “the wanted one.”


Will *Querida* look differently than how it was performed the first time?

Girl, it looks completely different.

So “In Progress” is the title of the MCA series. It's ongoing.

Yeah, yeah. It's for artists around the city who are developing and want feedback for their work from the community. It's also to get new eyes. It's a black box, for me, because this piece is done, and it's still evolving. But they said it's fine. I still want to be informed with how I move.

Yeah, there's room for improvement always.

We're doing it in the theater and I am trying to pack the house. I am climbing on people during the show. It's very visceral. We do let people know that things are going to be happening tonight, and if you don't feel comfortable please get up and walk away and take care of yourself. Because I have a show that I'm doing. If I brought up something then you go and process that. If you want to talk about it afterwards, then find me. 

 @snicolelane

LIT

Eye 94 opens readers' ears

Lumpen hosts the only terrestrial radio show in the midwest devoted to books and authors.

By SALEM COLLO-JULIN

It's a slightly rainy late November evening and the lights are all on at Pilsen Community Books. I've come here to attend a live recording of *Eye 94*, a weekly program on Lumpen Radio 105.5 FM that dives deep into the culture of publishing, authors, and books. It's the only terrestrial radio show currently airing in the midwest that is completely devoted to books and writers, and possibly the first Chicago radio show to do so since Milt Rosenberg's *Extension 720* on WGN AM ended in 2012.

On this night writer and teacher Jac Jemc is due to be interviewed about *False Bingo*, her most recent collection of short stories. I pass Jamie Trecker and Jeremy Kitchen (two-thirds of *Eye 94*'s weekly on-air hosts) at the front and make my way to the fiction shelves. I'm not as familiar as I'd like to be with Jemc's work, so I pick up a copy of her 2017 novel, *The Grip of It*. I realize that Jemc is standing nearby, waiting for the event to start. She points at her book in my hand, and I tell her I'm looking forward to reading it as we share a chuckle.

Eye 94 doesn't manage to physically deliver writers into your living room each week (man, that could be amazing or terrible depending on the writer), but the program creates a fun and respectful atmosphere where the spotlight is on the author. The show is led by voracious readers: Trecker (a writer and also the station manager at WLPN), Kitchen (the head librarian at the Bridgeport branch of →



A live recording of Eye 94 at the Dial with guest Adam Morgan. © ALYSSA STONE

the Chicago Public Library), and their cohost Mike Sack are all friends who bonded over a love of books. *Eye 94's* fourth member, Shanna van Volt, contributes voice-over for each show in the form of readings from the books being discussed, which allows the author and the audience to hear the work in someone else's voice, leading to deeper conversation. The readings are taped pre-show, and music from the International Anthem's roster of recording artists (the record company's office is a neighbor of Lumpen Radio) provides evocative atmosphere.

The hosts' tag-team interviewing style makes the program feel like a weekly casual discussion between informed and curious readers, rather than three people interrogating a nervous writer trying to sell some books. Jemc's interview covered the horror/thriller aspect of some of her stories, but also touched on writerly issues, like the lack of outlets in the world for short stories to be published and her process for working through character arcs. The conversation between Jemc and the hosts was easygoing and had light moments with

some tangents into the problems of Wikipedia, *The Twilight Zone*, and taxidermy.

In January *Eye 94* will celebrate its third anniversary, and the hosts are committed to continue making their favorite authors accessible to the listening audience. Past shows have featured some luminaries: *Reader* favorite Eve Ewing was featured for a February 2018 show (also taped live before an audience at Pilsen Community Books), and Gary Indiana phoned it in from New York later in 2018 for a fun and long-ranging interview that covered *Three Month Fever*, his move to the east coast, and an unusual look at the killer Andrew Cunanan. Trecker says that the Indiana interview is one of the most popular downloads in the Lumpen archives, and the show itself pulls some of the most listeners of any program on the radio station. This isn't surprising given the care that writers receive on *Eye 94*: a full hour of talk devoted to not only the author's words and ideas but also to examining the world of writing itself. **R**

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SPORTS

Freelance Wrestling goes to the mat for independent talent

The monthly show features local and traveling wrestlers looking for their big break.

By **BRIANNA WELLEN**

During a recent All Elite Wrestling (AEW) Dynamite event at the Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates, broadcast live on TNT, one of the AEW's main talents, Cody Rhodes, stepped into the ring to face off against local wrestler "Marvelous" Matt Knicks. Rhodes is a legacy wrestler—his father Dusty Rhodes was a common adversary of Ric Flair—and is known as one of the good guys in the newly popular AEW promotion. More often than not, if he's about to fight, the audience is cheering for him. But things were a little different when he challenged Knicks. The crowd of thousands started chanting "Freelance Wrestling."

"The crowd is legitimately chanting 'Freelance Wrestling' to the point where [Rhodes] kind of stops in the middle of the ring and looks around and looks at me and gives me a smile," says Knicks who is known by day as Freelance Wrestling founder Nick Almendarez. "Never in my dreams did I think that would happen."

Just five years earlier, Almendarez, now 29, was on the verge of quitting wrestling. Sick of the politics and personal grudges of the community, he made the decision to retire, but not before throwing his own wrestling show with his friends, just for fun. The wrestlers and audience members who attended that first night at the now-shuttered Abbey Pub liked it so much that Almendarez decided to do it again. Soon it became a bimonthly show—first at Abbey Pub, then Bottom Lounge—and since 2017 local and traveling independent wres-

tlers have been able to show off their moves every month at Logan Square Auditorium during Freelance Wrestling.

Almendarez says he kept going partially out of spite and wanted to create a new platform for all the wrestlers he loved to get attention and hopefully land a TV gig. Such was the case with Mustafa Ali, a former Chicago Police officer who became a Freelance Wrestling regular in the show's early years. In 2016 Ali wrestled in his first match with the WWE, and now he can be seen on *SmackDown* every week. "It's really cool to see guys that are super passionate about wrestling and have the talent to back it up getting those opportunities and the recognition they deserve," Almendarez says.

A typical Freelance Wrestling show features a mix of homegrown talent and other independent wrestlers passing through, looking for

an opportunity to get in the ring. Almendarez and a small team plan out long-term storylines with a core group of wrestlers, then adjust month-to-month based on who has been injured, who is in town, and who may have been signed to a contract. It boils down to a battle of good versus evil; before the night of the event wrestlers are told who is the face (good guy) and who is the heel (bad guy), and they do what they can to get cheers and boos respectively. Then, Almendarez says, they just bring their coolest moves into the ring.

"In reality, it is a scripted thing, the moves aren't done with legitimate intent of hurting somebody," Almendarez says, "but every time we fall, every time we tumble off the side or jump from the top rope, that's 100 percent us putting our lives at risk. We're basically just trapeze artists falling without the net."

In an effort to keep the local scene growing, Almendarez started the Freelance Wrestling Academy with fellow wrestlers Bryce Benjamin and Isaias Velazquez. The trio trains around 25 people out of the Pro Wrestling Tees warehouse space. They hope to secure their own facility in 2020, which could eventually serve as the permanent home for the monthly Freelance Wrestling events. Even when the featured independent wrestlers move on to the national stage, Almendarez wants to make sure the community he's built continues to thrive and that Freelance Wrestling is always home.

"It means a lot to me to be able to say, these are our guys and gals," Almendarez says. "Every time they go out there, they kill it." **FI**

TW @BriannaWellen



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The Chicago-based critic, editor, and curator talks about her new book about experimental American architect and designer Ken Isaacs, *Inside the Matrix: The Radical Designs of Ken Isaacs. Mon 12/16, 7 PM, Inga Bookshop, 1740 W. 18th, i-n-g-a.com. FREE*

Wonder & Skepticism presents “Hey! Been Tryin’ to Meet You” panel discussion

A chemist, a human ecologist, and a neurobiologist discuss the challenges of reaching the communities affected by their work. With Jess Rudnick, PhD candidate in Ecology at the University of California at Davis and Sophia Gaynor, PostDoc in Genomic Engineering at Tempus Labs. *Wed 12/18, 6 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, emptybottle.com. FREE*

SHOPPING

CHILL Makers Market

Thursdays in December, head to Morpho gallery for a market featuring handmade pieces by artists. There will be vegan refreshments, gift wrapping, and a free entry to a raffle. *Through 12/19, Thu 7-10 PM, Morpho Gallery, 5216 N. Damen. FREE*

Crampus Holiday Market

Working with the holiday devil, Krampus, and combining the actual devil, CRAMPS, the Crampus Holiday Market offers food, drinks, and one-of-a-kind objects with a free

admission if you donate pads, tampons, or other items to the Chicago Period Project. *Tue 12/17, 6-11 PM, Emporium Arcade Bar, 2363 N. Milwaukee, emporiumchicago.com. FREE*

Hideout Annual Holiday Sale

A family-friendly vendor market featuring Dtox Designs, Belt Publishing, Featherproof Books, ErvinNic, Rock Candy by Helen, Videnovich Farms, Yarnies by Mikey, Screwball Press, Celestial Kitchens, Tim Wood Designs, Rocket Relics, Anastasia Hinchsliff, Marvin’s World, Miss Alison Shop, Shit for Brains Game, Rhymes with Twee, Bloodshot Records, and more. *Mon 12/16, 6-9 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, hideoutchicago.com. FREE*

THEATER

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. *12/14-12/29: Wed-Sat 7 PM, Sun 1:30 PM, Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker, lyricopera.org, \$49-\$219.*

The Santaland Diaries

David Sedaris’s acerbic tale of working as “Crumpet,”

an elf in Macy’s Santaland, originally aired on NPR and adapted as a solo for the stage by Joe Mantello, returns to the Goodman under Steve Scott’s direction, starring Steven Strafford as the dyspeptic elf. *Through 12/29: Tue-Thu 7 PM, Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Sun 12/22 6:30 PM and Mon 12/23 7 PM; no performance Wed 12/25; see website for full holiday schedule, Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn, goodmantheatre.org, \$15-\$50.*

VISUAL ARTS

“12 x 12” ten-year anniversary show

Elephant Room celebrates the anniversary of the annual show with 12x12 pieces from 50 Chicago-based artists. *Opening reception Fri 12/13, 5:30-10 PM, Elephant Room Gallery, 704 S. Wabash, elephantroomgallery.com. FREE*

“Gush”

This exhibit from Stacza Lipinski and Paul Nudd uses collaborative pieces to explore the idea of what is “ugly” and what is “pretty.” *12/15-1/25, Mana Contemporary, 2233 S. Throop, tigerstrikeasteroid.com. FREE*

“Wild Fragility”

Painter Beth Shadur and fiber artist Bonnie Peterson address human’s footprint on Earth in “Wild Fragility.” *Opening reception Fri 12/13, 6-9 PM, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, 2320 W. Chicago, uima-chicago.org. FREE*

Things to do

COMEDY

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+.*

DANCE

The Chississippi Mixtape

Rebuild Foundation presents Ayesha Jaco’s dance piece, composed of choreographed and improvised movement and featuring music and sound by Damon Locks and Move Me Soul, celebrating Jaco’s grandmother and her life from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago. *Sun 12/15, 3 PM, Stony Island Arts Bank, 6760 S. Stony Island, rebuild-foundation.org. FREE*

The Era Footwork: In the Wurkz

This touring dance project features a team of dancers from the west and south sides of the city. The evening

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PREVIEW

Dance Dance Evolution

Clare Barron's *Dance Nation* explores preteen girls in competition and camaraderie.

By OLIVER SAVA



Dance Nation by LOWELL THOMAS

Why did Clare Barron's success bring her so much shame? The performer-turned-playwright received widespread acclaim after the 2015 debut of her play *You Got Older*, but this didn't lift her spirits and she needed to know why.

This is the inner conflict at the core of *Dance Nation*, Barron's drama following a competitive dance team primarily composed of ado-

lescent girls. "I got my first little bit of success and I really struggled with it," says Barron. "I felt bad for taking up too much space. I was very uncomfortable, so this play was an investigation into why success and ambition made me so uncomfortable and whether or not that was a gendered thing."

"[*Dance Nation*] grapples with deciding what kind of artist you are going to be," says Caroline Neff, a Steppenwolf ensemble

member who appeared in the 2018 Chicago premiere of *You Got Older*. "Are you going to be the person that is always jealous of the person who gets something? Are you going to be a person who celebrates your own losses as well as everybody else's gains? Can you celebrate your gains and be empathetic to people who are experiencing a loss in that moment? It's really hard to be proud of yourself in an artistic industry because you don't want to

be braggadocious. That's something else this play deals with: What if I just said I'm living up to my full potential? I'm good at this and I'm really proud of it as opposed to saying it's who you know or being in the right place at the right time."

Inspired by the reality TV show *Dance Moms*, Barron started to look back at her own history as a young ballet dancer to explore these questions. "I became obsessed with these little girls," says Barron. "Unbelievably talented and ambitious and fierce, and they were being pitted against each other but still so kind and sweet to one another. I was a terrible dancer, but I remember that camaraderie between the other girls I danced with and how much I loved them and how they were so much more intense female friendships than I had with the girls at school. They taught me everything I ever needed to know about my body and sex, so I was very interested in this charged space between young women."

The big twist in *Dance Nation* is that the members of the middle-school dance troupe

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THEATER

who are determined to make it to a national competition in Tampa Bay are played by adult actors covering an age range of nearly 50 years—a decision made to illuminate how teenage experiences shape adults. “I was interested in people of all ages who I felt had the soul of a 13-year-old,” says Barron. “I was looking for actors with a certain kind of energy and connection to their past and that moment in their lives.”


“The idea that Clare had from the beginning to cast this with actors who were not 11, 12, and 13 always felt very emotional rather than conceptual,” says Lee Sunday Evans, who returns to *Dance Nation* after directing the

DANCE NATION

Through 2/2: Tue-Thu 7:30 PM, Sat 3 and 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; see website for holiday schedule, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted, 312-335-1650, steppenwolf.org, \$20-\$94.

world premiere last year at Playwrights Horizons in New York. (Barron’s play was a finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in drama.) “It’s an amazing way to both honor the way that those experiences stay with us through our whole adult lives and honor the intelligence, maturity, complexity, and inner life of what it means to be that age. I encourage the actors to not play ‘youth’ and not think about pretending to be young. The beauty of watching them do it is the honesty of where they are in their lives.”

Steppenwolf’s production differs from the premiere in some significant ways, and having audience members on both sides of the stage forces Evans to rethink her design and storytelling decisions. This play about an ensemble is also being staged at a theater defined by its artistic ensemble, and its themes resonate in a new way in the context of Steppenwolf’s storied history.

“I don’t think there is a person in the room who is not full of encouragement for the person standing next to them,” says Neff. “What this play deals with is when do you step out of that mentality? Do you go be a shining star somewhere else or stay with a group? At Steppenwolf, there’s such a grace to do either. Go be big shiny Laurie Metcalf, but also come back and be in this ensemble play where we just want the thing to be good and we want the person next to us to do well. It makes everything better if everybody’s encouraging in that way.” 

 @OliverSava

OPENING

Not so divine

A holiday tribute to Bette Midler has more shtick than substance.

Iconic singer Bette Midler cut her teeth at New York City’s Continental Baths, earning the nickname “Bathhouse Betty” and an adoring legion of LGBTQ fans. In an impersonation honed over the last five years, performer Caitlin Jackson expertly captures the exuberance, confidence, and devil-may-care sex appeal of the Divine Miss M in her formative years. But her talent can’t redeem a poorly constructed and written holiday revue.


This Hell in a Handbag Productions show, adapted by Jackson and artistic director David Cerda and directed by Jackson and Marc Lewallen, is set in the early 1970s with a young Midler joking, “This is my 800th farewell appearance here at the Continental Baths.” She’s accompanied on keys by a famous artist (musical director Tommy Ross) who can’t be named for threat of legal action (hint: he has Fanilows), so he’s called “Tommy” for all intents and purposes. While it’s clear jokes, song choices, and costumes are heavily inspired by YouTube footage of Midler performing at the baths, Jackson makes the performance her own with charisma and authenticity.

Such a practiced interpretation of Midler feels out of place amidst uneven, stop-and-start pacing and grating camp. Either a more straightforward tribute concert—with much tighter between-song banter and more layered instrumentals—or a more in-depth character study would be a stronger vehicle for Jackson’s lead. Kitschy holiday shtick, juxtaposed against stirring emotional ballads (“I Shall Be Released” is a standout), grows tiresome and ultimately falls flat. —**MARISSA OBERLANDER** **BETTE: XMAS AT THE CONTINENTAL BATHS** Through 12/31: Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 6:30 PM; also Tue 12/31, 6 PM (special New Year’s Eve performance in Hamburger Mary’s dining room); no show Sat 12/21 or Sun 12/29, Mary’s Attic, 5400 N. Clark, 800-838-3006, handbagproductions.org, \$25 advance, \$30 at door, \$50 12/31 (includes three-course meal).

Bachelor fathers

Two miners in the Sierras raise an orphan boy.

Neither Tom Selleck nor Steve Guttenberg nor Ted Danson have anything on this crew of 19th-century Sierra gold miners, who are unexpectedly thrust into fatherhood after a vagabond dies in their cabin shortly after giving birth. Isolated from society and unable to track down the boy’s next of kin, romantic partners Old Jake (Michael D. Graham) and Hoke (Fiore Barbini) decide to raise the boy (Henry Lombardo) as their own along with the help of their international, all-male team of laborers.

For *The Christmas Foundling*, playwright Norman Allen sought inspiration from the literary works of Bret Harte, whose essays and short stories provided a living document of California during the Gold Rush and the unconventional family structures that formed within the camps. It’s fertile territory for historical fiction, and another entry into the repertoire of queer theater that decidedly sets its sights outside the expected bastions of gay life 

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THEATER



Q *Brothers Christmas Carol*  LIZ LAUREN

➔ for stories about LGBTQ people throughout American history. Less subtle, though, is the shoehorned-in nativity story (Wise Men et al arriving with gifts) and the conflict introduced when a blood relative (BethAnn Smukowski) tracks down the child after ten years.

Codirectors Danne W. Taylor and David Zak's production is a sometimes-charming but mostly shallow telling, full of wistful monologues about homelands, ham-fisted cultural clashes between miners, and improv night-style broad accents. But a cappella renditions of carols provide some Christmas spirit, and young Lombardo meets the high demands this Pride Films and Plays production places on his small shoulders. —**DAN JAKES** **THE CHRISTMAS FOUNDLING** Through 1/5: Mon 8 PM, Fri-Sat 8 PM; also Thu 1/2, 8 PM; no show Mon 12/16, the Buena, Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway, 773-857-0222, pridefilmsandplays.com, \$40 premium reserved, \$30 general reserved, \$25 students and seniors (not valid Sat).

Out in the cold

Raven's new holiday show defies reality

If there's a workable drama within the rambling, under-rehearsed confines of playwright/director Eli Newell's *Cold Town/Hotline*, it hasn't yet emerged. This is one of those shows where the plot wouldn't exist if any single character behaved in any way remotely resembling human reality. Newell would have us believe that a group of adults volunteering at a counseling hotline would be so frightened by a prepubescent 11-year-old's ridiculously awful "karate" moves that they'd allow themselves to be held hostage by said child. They do this even though they know the kid has run away from home. They do this even though the kid's father has just called the hotline, frantic because his child has run away during a storm so violent the roads are closed and so cold mere minutes outside can give you frostbite.

Do they call the father, who they know is out of his mind with fear? No. Do they call the police to report that the kid has run away? Do they insist the kid call home? No. Instead, they cower and panic—and eventually embark on a *Breakfast Club*-reminiscent montage of dancing/joking/bonding, minus the humor

and the charm of *The Breakfast Club*. The advice these sitcommy attempts at characters give isn't just bad, it's file-a-lawsuit bad. Newell's direction follows the more-is-more school of performance: Characters are defined by exaggerated tics rendered with hemispheric broadness of the *Three's Company* school of comedy. *Cold Town/Hotline* does make one valid point: it's rarely a good idea to direct a show you also wrote. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** **COLD TOWN/HOTLINE** Through 12/22: Wed-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM, Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark, 773-338-2177, raventheatre.com, \$30, \$20 18 and under, active military, and veterans.

Eight crazy nights

A trickster walks into a synagogue . . .

Hanukkah shows are hard to find, relatively speaking, but there are two running locally right now: *Grace and the Hanukkah Miracle* with brand-new Chicago Immersive, and the return of Strawdog's *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, adapted by Michael Dailey from Eric A. Kimmel's 1989 children's book. Whereas *Grace* uses the story of Hanukkah and a missing menorah as an emblem of one family's journey from pre-World War II Germany to America, *Hershel* draws upon traditional Jewish folklore—Hershel of Ostropol being a Jewish trickster who takes down the powerful with his wits.

The story is simple enough. Hershel must light the menorah every night during Hanukkah in an abandoned synagogue while fighting off the goblins who are determined, like a gaggle of Grinches, to keep Hanukkah from coming. In Lauren Katz's staging, there's not a lot of dramatic tension, even as the goblins grow larger every night. Jack Morsovillo's *Hershel* is so self-assured (in an ingratiating way), and the goblins so inept, there's no doubt of his ultimate success. Some bits go on too long (Hershel cheating a greedy goblin out of its gold by using a dreidel that essentially embodies "heads I win, tails you lose"), and the framing device (we're supposedly seeing Hershel's grandson and his traveling band of performers put on the story in return for food and lodging) feels hoary. But the enthusiastic ensemble interacts well with the younger audience members and Jacob Combs's songs add a spritely touch. —**KERRY**

REID HERSHEL AND THE HANUKKAH GOBLINS Through Dec. 29: Sat 1 and 4 PM; also Sun 12/29, 10 AM and 1 PM, Strawdog Theatre, 1802 W. Berenice, 773-644-1380, strawdog.org, \$25, \$20 children and seniors.

A heroine's holiday journey

The songs are disposable, but the story has charm in *The Land of Forgotten Toys*.

This original Christmas show (story by Larry Little, music by Dylan MarcAurele, book and lyrics by Jaclyn Enchin and Jennifer Enchin, with additional lyrics by Mike Ross) is no worse, and no better, than your average holiday children's fare. The story, charming and silly, follows Joseph Campbell's hero's journey: a young woman, unhappy with her dreary life, is transported to another world where she performs a heroic deed (saving Santa Claus), before she returns to the ordinary world, changed by her experiences.

It also contains echoes of other, earlier, stories: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *A Wrinkle in Time*. This colorful and energetic production, directed by Nicholas Reinhart, is packed with strong performances from a cast of young newcomers (most of them bright-eyed adolescents) and veterans. The songs by MarcAurele, Enchin, and Enchin are lively, though forgettable, and the pace of the show never flags. And even when the story gets preposterous (as when Santa must be saved from a candy-cane jail), the show remains amusing to both children (who gave the show their

full attention the day I caught it) and harder-to-please adults. Bre Jacobs is quite winning as the show's protagonist, Grace. And Liz Norton brings a bit of Cruella de Vil-style camp to her renditions of the show's twin antagonists, Grace's sour, Christmas-hating Aunt Charlotte, and the evil Santa kidnapper, Charlotta. —**JACK HELBIG** **THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN TOYS** Through 12/29: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, greenhousecenter.org, \$45.

RR Rapping up a holiday treat

The Q Brothers give us a reason to actually visit Navy Pier.

The "ad-rap-tation" of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, created by the Q Brothers Collective of GQ, JQ, Jax, and Pos (if you insist on formal names—Gregory Qaiyum, Jeffery Qaiyum, Jackson Doran, and Postell Pringle) has played at Chicago Shakespeare for seven years now, but I'd never seen it before last week. (Navy Pier. Holiday season. Enough said.)

For 80 minutes, the Qs, along with DJ Clayton Stamper, take us on a cyclonic journey through Scrooge's transformation from a gray-suited tightwad hissing "Chris-My-Ass-Mas" (played with convincing vitriol by GQ) to a goofy guy happy to join his nephew Fred (Doran) and Fred's husband (Pringle) in holiday charades, while dumping wads of cash on poor Bob Cratchit (Pringle) to make up for his past parsimony. (The grinding poverty of the Cratchit clan takes on

macabre shades of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal"—let's just say it's a miracle unseen son Peter survives the Christmas "feast.")

The show uses a dizzying mix of music, including hip-hop, dancehall, pop, and reggae (the latter for—wait for it—Marley's ghost), literary references, physical humor (JQ's crutch-dancing as Tiny Tim is a highlight) and chameleonlike transitions for the actors (GQ is the only one not playing multiple roles). Though I found myself wondering what it would be like if a woman's voice was added to the mix (especially since the loss of Scrooge's sister is what clearly soured his soul to begin with), this show hits the sweet spot for families grown tired of the traditional takes but still looking for a version true to the spirit(s) of the original. —**KERRY REID** **Q BROTHERS CHRISTMAS CAROL** Through 12/23: Tue-Fri 7:45 PM, Sat 5 and 7:30 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Sun 12/22, 6 PM and Mon 12/23, 5 and 7:30 PM, The Yard, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, 800 E. Grand, 312-595-5600, chicagoshakes.com, \$32-\$56.

Fresh Crumpet, stale show

The Santaland Diaries is showing its age.

In the season opener of Abby McEnany's new Showtime series, *Work in Progress*, McEnany runs into Julia Sweeney in a bar and recalls how Sweeney's gender-ambiguous Pat character on *Saturday Night Live* made her life hell. Watching *The Santaland Diaries*—the stage show created by Joe Mantello out of David Sedaris's autobiographical essay that first aired on NPR in 1992—also

reminds us that not all comedy from that decade ages equally well.

This year at the Goodman, Steven Strafford steps into the oversized curvy shoes of Crumpet, the name Sedaris gave himself as one of the elves at Macy's Santaland in New York. Anyone who has worked retail or retail-adjacent during the holidays will certainly appreciate the dyspepsia seasonal employment brings. It's like getting psychic coal in your stocking, but you know you've done nothing wrong other than try to pay the damn rent. Yet there is also a definite sense of punching down in the show that bugs me more every time I see it. Changing the word "retarded" to "leotarded" to describe some Santaland visitors not only makes no sense—it just makes the offhand offensiveness of the original locution that much clearer. In short, this script could use a complete overhaul. But like so many versions of *A Christmas Carol*, the attitude seems to be, if it packs 'em in, why bother?

Those caveats aside, though, Steve Scott's staging and Strafford's performance at the Goodman have noteworthy moments. Strafford, known for his own solo memoir *Methtacular!*, is particularly fine at nailing the combination of self-loathing and whimsy that makes up his elfin emotional survival kit, and Kevin Depinet's deliberately garish set reminds us that the aggressive demands for ho-ho-happiness this time of year can feel like an assault on the senses. —**KERRY REID** **THE SANTALAND DIARIES** Through 12/29: Tue-Thu 7 PM, Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Sun 12/22, 6:30 PM and Mon 12/23, 7 PM; no perfor- ➔

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RR A garden of delights
Midsommer Flight's *Twelfth Night* is a wintertime treat.

William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is only nominally a holiday show: the first recorded public performance on February 2, 1602, was on Candlemas, formally ending the "Christmastide" season at that time, and the title refers to the eve of the Feast of the Epiphany, marked by servants dressing as masters and other topsy-turvy hijinks—thus setting the stage for the gender-bending antics in the play. But Midsommer Flight brings back their sweet, funny, and thoughtful production to the lush Lincoln Park Conservatory setting for a fifth seasonal outing.

Dylan S. Roberts's staging is minimal in design (who wants to compete with all the greenery around the audience?) but maximalist in spirit. Yet it's rooted in a clear female-centered perspective, from Jackie Seijo's Viola, whose desires take a surprising (unscripted) turn toward the end, to Bailey Savage's clown Feste (whose knowing ironic manner and zestful singing voice provides useful counterpoints to the confused love matches), to Erika B. Caldwell's priggish servant Malvolio, whose come-uppance gets way out of hand. Her situation leaves us to ponder how we treat women who dare to want more than the world seems to have dished out for them.

But the social agenda, such as it is, never overpowers the spirit of misrule and mischief underpinning the whole affair. Zach Tabor and Jason Goff as the carousing Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, along with Stephanie Mattos's servant, Maria, bring strong elements of physical comedy. The supporting ensemble of musician/actors, performing Elizabeth Rentfro and Alex Mauney's original music, add delightful transitions to this well-paced 100-minute show, which makes it feel like springtime in December. —**KERRY REID** *TWELFTH NIGHT* Through 12/22: Thu-Sun 7:30 PM, Lincoln Park Conservatory, 2391 N. Stockton, midsommerflight.com, pay what you can, but advance reservations recommended.

RR The plague of war
Trap Door stages a 1937 parable that feels uncomfortably contemporary.

Nicole Wiesner directs Karel Čapek's 1937 parable (translated by Peter Majer and Cathy Porter) about the clash between fascism and pacifism. In an unnamed country the citizenry is stricken with an illness which manifests in white spots on the skin and fells anyone over 45. As panic takes over, a young doctor appears to have found a cure, but he will only treat the poor; his condition for treating the rich is that they renounce war (which the government is fomenting).

The conflict may be an oversimplified one, but in the capable hands of this ensemble it feels palpable and real. *The White Plague* was written in response to


the rise of Hitler, so extreme statements were the order of the day, as they are today. One can easily imagine governmental and industrialist functionaries acting just like Čapek's desperate characters in order to gain advantage and save their own hides. This bleak view of humanity as a craven, zero-sum-game species wouldn't be out of place in a 2019 newspaper.

By the time the murderous marshal in charge of the war machine sees the white spots on his own skin and realizes he's done for, his deathbed agreement to lay down arms is too late to save him from the epidemic. We're not told if the doctor saves the people or lets them continue perishing. That ambiguity makes what could have been a mere apocalyptic farce into a timely tragedy for this Trap Door production. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** *THE WHITE PLAGUE* Through 1/11: Thu-Sat 8 PM; also Wed 1/8, 8 PM, no show Thu 12/26, Trap Door Theatre, 1655 W. Cortland, 773-384-0494, trapdoortheatre.com, \$20 Thu-Fri, \$25 Sat, also 2-for-1 Thu.

Lost in the shuffle
A Xmas Cuento Remix lacks an emotional payoff.

In retelling Charles Dickens's perennial holiday classic, *A Christmas Carol*, playwright Maya Malan-Gonzalez performs the theatrical equivalent of completely gutting a building, keeping the foundation and outer walls, but changing everything else. Her *A Xmas Cuento Remix*, set in a contemporary urban area, concerns a sour Christmas-hating Scrooge of a woman, Dolores,

successful in business but mean to her employees and estranged from the only family she has left, her niece's family. As you can see, she is ripe for a visitation from four life-changing ghosts on Christmas Eve.

Malan-Gonzalez's story and characters are decidedly contemporary, and her witty dialogue is peppered with 21st century slang, in both English and Spanish. Sadly, the production at 16th Street Theater (directed by Miguel Nuñez) has been hobbled by the abrupt exit during previews last weekend of their lead actress (family issues, according to the program, that will keep her out of the show for the rest of the run). The show's music director, Satya Chavez, stepped in as a last-minute replacement, and though she is credible, if at times a little stiff, the drama of losing a lead so close to opening has clearly taken a toll on the show. And though the show is charming, it lacks the emotional payoff at the end, when Scrooge/Dolores discovers the true spirit of Christmas. Thanks to the National New Play Network the show is more or less simultaneously being premiered at two other U.S. theaters this season (in Cleveland, and Portland, OR), and it's hard not to wonder about how this great material is faring in other, less unlucky, productions. —**JACK HELBIG** *A XMAS CUENTO REMIX* Through 12/29: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM; no show Sun 12/22, 16th Street Theater, 6420 16th St., Berwyn, 708-795-6704, 16thstreettheater.org, \$32 reserved, \$35 general, \$22 Berwyn residents, low-income, members of military or members of Alliance of Latinx Theater Artists of Chicago (ALTA). 



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KNIVES AND SKIN ★★★Directed by Jennifer Reeder. 112 min.
Opens at Music Box Theatre on 12/13**FILM**

Knives and Skin

REVIEW

Knives and Skin gives Riverdale a run for its money

Chicago filmmaker Jennifer Reeder tells twisted truths about being a teenage girl.

By **CODY CORRALL**

It's a daunting task to try and break the mold of the high school coming-of-age film, let alone do it successfully. But every so often, a filmmaker takes the reins on the widely popular formula and dares to disrupt it without compromise, making for an unforgettable and expansive addition to the genre.

Enter *Knives and Skin*, a twisted portrait of teenage suburbia that blurs the line between fact and fever dream from Chicago writer-director Jennifer Reeder.

Set in an undisclosed midwest town (but shot in Lemont, Illinois), *Knives and Skin* follows the aftermath of the disappearance of Carolyn Harper (Raven Whitley), a high school student left battered, lost, and alone by a lake after she changed her mind about hooking up with a boy on the football team.

Carolyn's disappearance is the catalyst for the rest of the town to lose their marbles, starting with her mother (Marika Engelhardt), who dons her daughter's sequin formal dress and leads the school choir in complete emotional disarray. This unsettling feeling seeps into the lives of Carolyn's classmates—namely Joanna (Grace Smith), Laurel (Kayla Carter),

and Charlotte (Ireon Roach)—as well as their families. What ensues is a tactful peeling away of the picture-perfect walls the entire town so meticulously crafted, revealing a bounty of imperfections and secret lives in their place.

Everyone in *Knives and Skin* has something to hide. Joanna sells her mother's underwear to older men, including her male teachers, in order to afford college application fees. Laurel tries to come to terms with her queer identity as a popular cheerleader in a rural town. And that sentiment goes twofold for the adults, who make glittery “missing girl” posters and sympathy casseroles to cover up their affairs, lost jobs, emotional abuse, and predatory behavior towards students.

At times, *Knives and Skin* can be a difficult watch, or at the very least a jarring departure from the rigid expectations of the genre due to its heavy themes, magical realism sensibilities, and experimental editing. But it gets at the heart—and under the skin—of the macabre truths of being an American teenage girl. Namely, that your feelings, experiences, and even your own life are not a priority in the larger social order.

The film also loudly champions feminist

themes, even in its complicated web of scandal. The gruesome case of Carolyn exposes the reality of how quickly rejecting physical advances becomes a life-or-death situation. When discussing their past sexual experiences, Charlotte quips that as a teenage girl, you're either a “slut or a bitchy tease,” to which Laurel responds, “I'm neither. I'm nothing. I'm nobody.”

Knives and Skin's production, costume, and makeup design create a disturbing-yet-familiar universe that is sure to give the CW's stylized teen drama *Riverdale* a run for its money. Costume designer Kate Grube (who previously worked with Reeder on *Signature Move*) accentuates the drab of high school through Joanna's kitschy iron-on tops—from Yoko Ono to Angela Davis—and Charlotte's elaborate and avant-garde ensembles paired with white war-paint makeup. And the film's musical moments are entrancing—throughout, Carolyn's mother leads the school choir in haunting covers of 80s pop hits like the Go-Go's' “Our Lips Are Sealed,” Modern English's “I Melt With You,” and New Order's “Blue Monday.”

While Carolyn is *Knives and Skin's* inciting incident, she is largely left out of the picture, spare a few tantalizing cross-fades that signal the creeping passage of time. But Carolyn is a martyr for Reeder's message—a complex and twisted commentary on the plights of human nature. **F**

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FILM

NOW PLAYING

American Dharma

Documentarian Errol Morris turns his lens on consultant Steve Bannon, the man who arguably forged the blueprint that brought Donald J. Trump into elected office. Sitting in a mock-up of an air force briefing room—invoking one of Bannon's favorite films, *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949)—Bannon muses on his time at Breitbart News, his damage control for the Trump campaign, and his own fatalistic worldview. Morris is combative with Bannon, but fails to tease out the sociopolitical implications of his subject and what he reflects about America. Bannon articulates his ideals with confidence, couching his nihilism within a supposedly pragmatic critique of the neoliberal globalist class. Morris can obviously sense the contradictions and intellectual shortcomings in what Bannon says: He evokes romanticized ideas of American individualism steeped more in classic war and western films than an understanding of how a republic works, and he can never explain away the racism that's inherent within his own critiques. He likewise can't articulate a vision of anything that comes after the sociopolitical disruption he advocates for. Unfortunately, without Morris successfully contextualizing Bannon as a phenomenon, as he's done with so many of his previous film subjects, we're presented with no good reason that we should be listening to Bannon speak for 95 minutes, save for morbid curiosity. —**MATT SIMONETTE** *R*, 95 min. *Gene Siskel Film Center*

RR Gremlins

E.T. with the lid off (1984). At the center of this horror comedy is a tidy family parable of the kind so dear to the heart of producer Steven Spielberg: the cute little whatzits who turn into marauding monsters when they pass through puberty (here gooiily envisioned as "the larval stage") are clearly metaphors for children, and the teenager (Zach Galligan) whose lapse of responsibility unleashes the onslaught is a stand-in for the immature parents of the 80s (*Poltergeist*). But Spielberg's finger wagging is overwhelmed by Joe Dante's roaring, undisciplined direction, which (sometimes through sheer sloppiness) pushes the imagery to unforeseen, untidy, and ultimately disturbing extremes. Dante is perhaps the first filmmaker since Frank Tashlin to base his style on the formal free-for-all of animated



Jumanji: The Next Level

cartoons; he is also utterly heartless. With Phoebe Cates, Hoyt Axton, and more movie-buff in-jokes than Carter has pills. —**DAVE KEHR** *PG*, 106 min. *Fri 12/13-Mon 12/16, 11 PM. Logan Theatre*

RR It's a Wonderful Life

The film Frank Capra was born to make. This 1946 release marked his return to features after four years of turning out propaganda films for the government, and Capra poured his heart and soul into it. James Stewart stars as a small-town nobody, on the brink of suicide, who believes his life is worthless. Guardian angel Henry Travers shows him how wrong he is by letting Stewart see what would have happened had he never been born. Wonderfully drawn and acted by a superb cast (Donna Reed, Beulah Bondi, Thomas Mitchell, Lionel Barrymore, Gloria Grahame) and told with a sense of image and metaphor (the use of water is especially elegant) that appears in no other Capra film. The epiphany of movie sentiment and a transcendent experience. —**DAVE KEHR** *129 min. Music Box Theatre*

RR Jumanji: The Next Level

It's a very rare franchise where the sequels keep improving in quality. But the 2017 *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* was far superior to 1995's *Jumanji*, and *Jumanji: The Next Level* is somehow even better than that. The magical plot has the same group of teens from the last entry in the series returning to the *Jumanji* video game for another set of adventures in the bodies of more or less superpowered avatars. There are the traps and puzzles and narrow escapes you'd expect in a video game, or for that matter in an action movie. But the real joy of the film is watching the excellent ensemble—including Dwayne Johnson, Karen Gillan, Kevin Hart, Jack Black, Danny DeVito, and Awkwafina—as

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every one of them plays each other, DeVito's thick New Jersey accent getting passed around like a contagion of the larynx. Writer-director Jake Kasdan gives each performer a chance to be heroic protagonist and comic relief, and the results are both hilarious and genuinely moving. Most action movies are paralyzed by formula, but *Jumanji: The Next Level* is a giddily preposterous celebration of the power of art to take you out of yourself and put you in someone else's head and heart. —**NOAH BERLATSKY** *PG-13, 123 min. In wide release.*

Scrooge & Marley

Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* gets a queer update in this local production: Scrooge is the self-loathing owner of a popular gay bar, and the three ghosts who visit him on Christmas Eve persuade him to share his wealth with AIDS treatment facilities and social outreach programs. For the most part this plays like a video recording of a spirited family reunion; the filmmaking isn't much but the players (including Chicago stage veterans Tim Kazurinsky, Dick O'Day, Becca Kaufman, and JoJo Baby) seem to be enjoying themselves and each other. Richard Knight Jr. and Peter Neville directed. —**BEN SACHS** *88 min. Wed 12/18, 6 PM. Chicago Cultural Center*

ALSO PLAYING

Day With(out) Art

MCA partners with Visual AIDS for the 13th annual Day With(out) Art, a program of seven commissioned videos responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. After the screening, a discussion with artists, Carl George and Derrick Woods-Morrow will be moderated by Risa Puleo. Tickets are limited to two per person. *Fri 12/13, 7 PM. Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago FREE*



Rapbrarian Roy Kinsey finds his voice in queer hip-hop

With his next album, he wants to make the music he wishes he'd heard as a young man.

By LEOR GALIL

Roy Kinsey released his first album in 2010, but only last year did he feel he'd earned the right to call himself an artist. RYAN EDMUND FOR CHICAGO READER

worthy of what he imagined the title to signify. After dropping *Beautiful Only* that year, he withdrew from the stage and didn't release another album for nearly five years. Five years is a lifetime in hip-hop, and enough to undo any musician's forward momentum—but when Kinsey reemerged in February 2018, he did so with *Blackie: A Story by Roy Kinsey*, one of the most exceptional hip-hop releases to come out of a regional scene that's hardly short on extraordinary rappers. It was then that he felt he'd finally earned the right to the word “artist.”

On *Blackie*, Kinsey tackles the pervasiveness and adaptability of systemic racism, describing how it transformed itself between the post-Reconstruction south and contemporary

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Chicago. His grandmother and mother moved to Chicago from Mississippi in 1965, and throughout the album he uses his family history as a lens, drawing details from interviews and other research to give his ambitious music emotional heft. His maternal grandmother, Helen Thompson, died in 2016, but he talked to her about her life before she passed away. He read Isabel Wilkerson's celebrated 2010 history of the Great Migration, *The Warmth of Other Suns*. He's been a librarian for a decade and a reader for his whole life, so research is second nature to him—but when he'd first taken on these subjects, he had no intention of going public with his work, much less making an album about it. “It was a story, I realized, that I was wanting to come out of me,” Kinsey says of *Blackie*.

Roy Kinsey thinks about rap every day. In middle school in the late 90s, he carried around a notebook to write down rhymes, often trading bars with a friend or two. In high school, he gathered \$50 and five buddies to record a demo at a Lakeview studio—they rapped over the instrumental for the 2002 Birdman single “What Happened to That Boy.” Kinsey started recording as RoyAl, but just before he released his debut album, 2010's *Keep the Receipt*, he switched to his real name. Now 34 years old, he's been performing regularly since the mid-to-late 2000s, when he began gigging at Alive-One and Tonic Room as a student at DePaul.

Kinsey never called himself an artist, though, even though he'd put out three full-lengths by 2013—he didn't think his work was

Blackie attracted positive coverage from *Billboard*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and NPR. In January, Kinsey brought his live *Blackie* show to Steppenwolf as part of the theater's cross-genre series LookOut. “Since *Blackie* has come out, there have been a lot of people that have received it well—it really opened my eyes to a lot of my possibilities,” he says. “It sparked a fire within me again. It gave me an opportunity to be consistently making music, and to understand what is one of the most important things for me, which is writing, making music, and contributing to the arts and humanities of the world—and helping me to find myself.”

One vital aspect of Kinsey's identity has been conspicuously absent as a focal point →

In July, Roy Kinsey dropped the video for “Fetish,” the first single from his in-progress fourth album.  RYAN EDMUND FOR CHICAGO READER

continued from 27

of his work, though, even when his lyrics are at their most vulnerable. “That was a trouble of mine that I had after *Blackie*,” he says. “Like, ‘You’re a queer rapper, but I think that people just kind of know that about you. But what would it sound like, on record?’ That was important for me—that was important for me to define what I would sound like.” His album in progress, currently titled *Kinsey: A Memoir*, uses his well-honed observational skills to explore his experiences as a gay Black man.

On early *Kinsey* single “Fetish,” he raps about the emotional bruises he endured during a night in Boystown as a young Black man. Atop solemn piano and thin, echoing percussion, he describes going home with a stranger who tokenized and objectified him: “Not sure when I left / Felt like I stepped out of the auction / Going once, got twice / Got yanked, got pulled / Got called boss, bear, and then bull / He asleep, he got fooled / I threw out the caution / I threw out the condom / I threw out my guards / I threw up in the washroom.”

Kinsey navigates this emotional minefield with a firm flow and the same warmth he shows in much of his rapping—even when he’s got a racist cop in his crosshairs, he sounds affable and tender. On “Fetish” and many of the other early *Kinsey* demos I’ve heard, he delivers his version of gay rap—but despite this new emphasis, he sounds just like he does on *Blackie*. He sounds like Roy Kinsey.

Kinsey’s grandmother, Helen Thompson, used to come get him at elementary school after class. But in 1991, she fell out a window of the apartment she shared with Kinsey’s family, suffering injuries that would leave her paralyzed in a wheelchair for the rest of her life. She could no longer meet Kinsey at the end of the day, so he enrolled in an afterschool program run by the Marcy-Newberry Association.

He joined the program’s choir, whose repertoire included pop hits of the day. Kinsey remembers a wintertime concert in Orland Park when he rapped Lil’ Zane’s verse in 112’s 1998 song “Anywhere.” “We performed that song—this crowded, packed auditorium at Carl Sandburg High School in the suburbs goes crazy for me,” he says. “I felt so good. I think I’ve been chasing that ever since.”

In middle school, Kinsey shared his original rhymes with friends, who’d sometimes playfully tease him about his work. His seventh-grade teacher saw one of his more salacious lines and confronted Kinsey’s mom—a memory he had a chance to revisit when that same teacher surprised him by attending his Step-

penwolf show in January. “I’m like, ‘Oh, I have a very vivid memory of you calling my mom in the middle of class, reading my inappropriate rap to her’—because I started the rap saying, ‘Dear Mr. President, I want to be just like you,’ talking about Bill Clinton,” Kinsey says. “It was ridiculous—I’m terrible!”

In high school, Kinsey and his younger brother got some gear to record at home, but it wasn’t till Kinsey enrolled at DePaul in 2004 that his career as a rapper starting going anywhere. In school he met Nick Castle, aka DJ Castle, who got Kinsey his first paid rap gig and eventually produced most of *Keep the Receipt*. He also met Jack Hill, aka producer Doc Ill, who became so close with Kinsey that they decided to room together in the dorms—to the surprise of the roommates DePaul had assigned them. During winter break their first year, Kinsey sneaked his stuff into Hill’s room, and they deposited Hill’s roommate’s belongings in Kinsey’s old room. “We had a small courtyard in between our two buildings, so they were about 40 yards away from each other,” Hill says. “I think we did it late at night so no one would see us.”

The arrangement made it easy for Hill and Kinsey to record without bothering anyone else. Hill’s taste began to rub off on Kinsey. “I was really only listening to glossy, flossy hip-hop—pop stuff, Cam, Jay-Z, and Ruff Ryders—and he hated everything commercial,” Kinsey says. “I started listening, with him, to people like Qwel, Immortal Technique, Typical Cats, and a bunch of underground dudes, and realized to try to fit in with them, now I gotta shift my rapping in another way—sharpen my sword in this other way. That’s kind of where I really started paying attention to lyrical prowess and what I said, on top of how I say it.”

Hill says that back then, Kinsey was already a profound writer with a talent for choosing compelling details—a gift that could even reach folks who didn’t care about the underground rap that inspired the two of them. “His lyrics were accessible to people that maybe wouldn’t have been listening to *our* music,” Hill says. “He has really grown with the people that he’s met in the city, and I think that he’s been able to have a lot more lanes to grow with.”

After school, Hill got involved in the arty instrumental hip-hop scene as a member of Push Beats. And though they didn’t stay as close as they’d been at DePaul, they continued working together—Hill provided Kinsey with instrumentals for his second album, 2012’s *Rookie of the Year*. Kinsey, who’d graduated in 2009, landed a job that same year at the Chicago Public Library’s Austin-Irving branch.



Kinsey’s parents met in 1984 at CPL’s main branch, in what’s now the Chicago Cultural Center. His father was working there, and his mother came in to interview for a job. “They went out on a date to go see *Purple Rain*,” Kinsey says. “And now here I am.”

Kinsey’s mom used to bring him to CPL’s storytime sessions, and his family encouraged his early love of reading. “My grandmother, for my seventh birthday, got me an orange book that is a story about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but I’m the protagonist,” Kinsey says. “It’s me doing a presentation—like, writing a paper on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., about his life, and then at the end of the book I get an A on the paper.”

At 16, Kinsey took a summer volunteer position at a library, foreshadowing his career to come. “I spent so much time in libraries, and working in libraries,” he says. But when he took his first paying job, after DePaul, he soon realized he needed more training if he wanted to keep advancing: “I can’t front about the fact that I was working there for a long time and had pretty much hit as far as I would go without my masters in library and information science.” Kinsey went to graduate school at Dominican University, graduating in 2015—and along the way he took a storytelling class from Janice Del Negro, one of the librarians who’d led the storytime sessions he attended

as a child. “My mom was like, ‘I used to take you to her storytellings,’” Kinsey says. “She taught me a lot about the story.”

Today Kinsey is a teen-services librarian at the Richard M. Daley branch in Humboldt Park. Part of his job is to help build programming for young people in the neighborhood, which is where his rap career comes in handy: he hosts open mikes and monthly rap-writing workshops. He can count on support from the larger institution too, because CPL already has a great reputation for its teen hip-hop programming—launched in 2009, Harold Washington Library’s teen open-mike series, Lyricist Loft, quickly became a hub for future stars, including Saba, Noname, Lucki, and Chance the Rapper.

In fall 2017, as Kinsey prepared for the release of *Blackie*, he performed selections from the album at a handful of library branches as part of the citywide reading program One Book, One Chicago. (CPL had chosen Greg Kot’s 2014 book on Mavis Staples, *I’ll Take You There*, and organized music-centric programming to accompany it.) At one of those library shows, he met another teen-services librarian, Ralph Rivera, who runs the hardcore punk label Not Normal Tapes & Records. “He sat in, seen me perform, and asked me some questions,” Kinsey says. “He brought his teens, and was just like, ‘Yo, let me make tapes. This is an

incredible album, this is a beautiful album.”

Kinsey technically self-released *Blackie*, but he didn't exactly spurn Rivera's offer: Not Normal has manufactured *Blackie* cassettes and vinyl, which Kinsey has been selling hand-to-hand and through Not Normal's Bandcamp and Storenvy pages. Queer rap collective and label Futurehood has also supported *Blackie*, though it doesn't sell the album—its website includes a page dedicated to Kinsey that's packed with press clips, embedded videos, and links to his music. “I always looked at my album being a thing that I felt could help position all of us really well,” Kinsey says of Futurehood. “As far as having a really solid album for a label.”

As much as Kinsey loves hip-hop, he acknowledges that he developed rap skills as a kid as a means to protect himself from bullying. “It served as this thing that was like, ‘All right, they may have clocked my feminine qualities, but if I rap well, then I’ll be undeniable,’” he says. “I’ll still be able to maneuver in the world in the way that I wanted.” That was this thing that didn't necessarily make me masculine, but it made the boys that were masculine respect me. And that was important to me.”

As an adult, Kinsey has met lots of other queer hip-hop artists and fans at Boystown cocktail lounge Wang's, though he hasn't visited in years. Wang's manager Anthony Pabey, who produces hip-hop as Aceb00mbap, used the bar as a hub for his queer hip-hop podcast and party, Banjee Report; Erik Wallace, better known as rapper Mister Wallace, met Pabey at Wang's in 2011 and helped build Banjee Report into an event for queer hip-hop fans of color marginalized by Boystown's mainstream culture. They hosted shows at Wang's by in-demand gay rappers such as Mykki Blanco and Cakes da Killa, and in the process fostered a community—one that they still serve with Futurehood, which evolved out of Banjee Report in 2016.

“Roy being a longtime hip-hopper, someone who had been putting out records since they were in college, was just a natural addition to that community,” Wallace says. “As far as I'm concerned, he's one of the most talented storytellers that I've ever met.”

Kinsey says the feedback he got from people he met through Banjee Report went a long way. “Just having someone there that's championing you, and saying that you're good and being like, ‘Yo, you're next, your voice is needed,’ was incredible,” he says. They offered him input on his art too, and helped him learn to embrace his queerness in his music on his

own terms. Pabey directed the video for what Kinsey considers his first gay rap song, the hard-hitting club single “BSAYF” (pronounced “be safe”). Debuted in March 2018, it features Wallace and stars drag queen Saya Naomi.

“It made me feel like this is what I need to be doing,” Kinsey says. “I was just very slow with it, because I don't ever want to come out with a voice that's not mine. I know that queer hip-hop exists. If I wasn't true to myself and didn't have the integrity, it would be easy for me to try to go and sound like something else, and say these things, or take on a persona that wasn't mine, in the name of queer hip-hop, without bringing my true self, my character, along with me.”

In summer 2015, Kinsey was at the Taste of Chicago to see Erykah Badu when he ran into an acquaintance from the hip-hop scene named Mike Jones. Jones used to rap as Mike Schpitz in a duo called Grumpy Old Men, who did one show with Kinsey in the early 2010s. They hadn't hung out since that gig, but when they reconnected at the Taste, they bonded quickly and started collaborating.

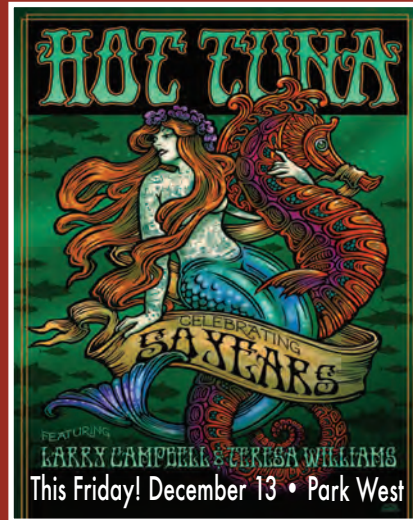
They began working on tracks that ended up on *Blackie*, and Jones produced several of them, including “For Colored Boys” and “Jungle Book.” Jones says it wasn't until after he gave Kinsey some instrumentals he'd bought from rapper, singer, and producer Phoenix (best known for his work with Noname) that he realized what his friend was putting together.

“Roy picked three and then he wrote the songs ‘Red Black and Green’ and ‘Ring Ring.’ I was like, ‘Oh shit, OK, this is really, really gonna be a special record,’” Jones says. Over the next couple years, Jones recorded Kinsey at makeshift studios in both their homes. “We believed in this product we liked a lot—it just kind of became a thing,” Jones says. “We joke it kind of became a marriage pretty quickly during the creation of this project.”

Jones is helping with *Kinsey: A Memoir* too, helping shape Kinsey's current batch of songs into the ambitious, cohesive album of his dreams. Kinsey wants to make the record that he needed but couldn't find as a young man, when he was still seeking refuge in whatever queer stories he could dig up in the library. “We don't have a lot of young, Black gay men telling their stories,” he says. “We are the ones writing that story—figuring ourselves out and then turning it into a story. So it's like saving our lives first, and then hopefully someone can use it.”

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OBITUARY

Chicago rapper Juice Wrld died just as his career was beginning

The MC born Jarad Higgins became a commercial juggernaut in less than two years, and passed away just days after turning 21.

By LEOR GALIL

For kids obsessed with pop, few rappers have loomed as large as Chicagoan Jarad Higgins, better known as Juice Wrld—and he was well on the way to becoming a household name to everyone else. In the brief time since Interscope signed him to a reported \$3 million deal in March 2018, he'd dropped three albums that peaked in the top five on the *Billboard* 200, including March's *Death Race for Love*, which debuted at number one.

Higgins drew on 2000s emo and 2010s underground hip-hop for his bristling bars and honeyed melodies, and his hooks went down so smoothly you could forget he was talking about heartbreak, depression, anxiety, and drug abuse—lyrical content typical of Soundcloud rap, a bustling hip-hop movement that he both typified and transcended. In the past 14 months, he'd also released a collaborative full-length with Atlanta star Future (*Wrld on Drugs*) and toured with Nicki Minaj, and he would've gone even bigger if he hadn't died early Sunday morning, six days after he turned 21. The cause of death is unknown—he suffered a medical emergency at Midway Airport (various sources have reported a seizure or cardiac arrest) and was pronounced dead at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn. An autopsy is pending.

Higgins ascended astonishingly quickly, and because he moved to Los Angeles as soon as that happened—before he'd had time to play more than a couple shows here—it's easy to see him as disconnected from the narrative of Chicago hip-hop, without local bona fides. Born in Chicago on December 2, 1998, Higgins grew up in the south suburbs and honed his skills while attending Homewood-Flossmoor High School. While you can hear his fondness for Paramore and Panic! at the Disco in the

exaggerated and occasionally saccharine half-sung hooks on his biggest songs, his love of Chicago rap is at least as obvious: late in his verse on “2k17 Goosebumps,” a track he made with rappers Teddystax and Freejay for Homewood-Flossmoor's class of 2017, he seems to deliver his words from the back of his throat, sounding like controversial Chicago rapper Famous Dex.

Higgins also spoke fondly of Chief Keef, whose ever-evolving, melodically inventive style had a hard-to-quantify influence on him. On Sunday morning, Chicago hip-hop critic David Drake tweeted a video from producer DJ L that shows Higgins freestyling in the studio, nonchalantly punctuating his lines with “yeah” or “huh” in a way that makes Keef's impact plain.

Higgins started posting tracks to Soundcloud in 2015, but he had little success till the June 2017 EP *9 9 9*—which made a fan of DJ Victoriouz, who'd hosted Chief Keef's 2012 *Back From the Dead* mixtape and spins for G Herbo. Victoriouz brought Higgins to the attention of G Money, brother of drill rapper Lil Bibby—the brothers run the Grade A Productions label, which signed Higgins in February 2018 and has supported his career ever since. Higgins hired Cole Bennett, founder of Chicago-based hip-hop blog Lyrical Lemonade and an in-demand video director, to work on “All Girls Are the Same”; the video dropped at the end of February 2018, and Higgins's career began its rapid climb.

“All Girls Are the Same” has since accumulated more than 389 million Spotify streams, but it's been eclipsed by a song from *9 9 9*, “Lucid Dreams,” which got a video in May 2018. In the streaming era, songs flit in and out of the zeitgeist at an unprecedented speed, and yet “Lucid Dreams” has seemed



Juice Wrld onstage at the Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash in Douglas Park this past June. KATHLEEN HINKEL FOR CHICAGO READER

to hang around forever—it's gone platinum six times and is closing in on a seventh, with nearly a billion Spotify streams. The track's lissome acoustic-guitar melody, which producer Nick Mira lifted from the 1993 Sting hit “Shape of My Heart,” floated in the air throughout summer 2018, and that October, Sting joked that the royalties he'd earn from “Lucid Dreams” would put his kids through college.

In the following months, Higgins racked up more platinum certifications for the singles “Lean Wit Me,” “Wasted,” “Armed & Dangerous,” and “Black and White,” all of which appear on his major-label debut, *Goodbye & Good Riddance*, which also came out in May 2018 and went platinum as an album. His collaborative track with Future, “Fine China,” where Higgins Trojan-horses some of

his most misogynistic lyrics into a strangely euphoric hook, went platinum too, and so did “Robbery,” the lead single from *Death Race for Love*. His list of gold-certified songs is even longer, and includes “Roses,” a Benny Blanco track that also features Panic! at the Disco front man Brendon Urie.

Songs seemed to flow out of Higgins, and lyrics definitely did—he wrote all his verses by freestyling, which lends them an urgent edge. That energy didn't always come across in concert—at this year's Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash, for instance, he made no attempt to match the climbing-the-walls intensity of some of the other young acts. But whenever I saw him perform, he looked like he was always meant to be on that stage. **R**

🐦 @imLeor

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

IN ROTATION



Chicago gothic postpunk duo Wingtips
 © COURTESY THE ARTIST

JAMIE LUDWIG

Reader associate editor

The Wraith, *Gloom Ballet*

I don't remember how this Los Angeles death-rock band first appeared on my radar, but I'd been keeping an eye out for them for a couple of years by the time they landed a deal with Southern Lord in 2019. *Gloom Ballet*, their brand-new full-length, was well worth the wait. Though the Wraith are clearly mired in the classics, their poetic lyrics and expert songwriting serve as a reminder of the power of dreary yet danceable rock 'n' roll.

Fresh Air Archive Terry Gross doesn't interview exclusively musicians on her NPR radio show *Fresh Air*, but even so, she's still one of the most prolific and inspiring music journalists around. In the recently established *Fresh Air Archive*, listeners can explore 40 years of her work, including conversations with some of the most celebrated and groundbreaking artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as unsung heroes and behind-the-scenes talents.

Wingtips, *Exposure Therapy* 'Tis that season when I, like many other music writers, scramble to answer the question: "What great new music did I miss this year?" Well, when it comes to Chicago releases, the debut album from gothic postpunk duo Wingtips (aka Vincent Segretario and Hannah Avalon) certainly makes that list. Mixing dreamy pop and cold darkwave, it can make long winter nights feel a little more magical.

DAVE SPECTER Musician, producer, and Delmark recording artist

Jontavious Willis, Marquise Knox, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram, and Jamiah Rogers The future of the blues is in good hands with these

four young rising stars. They're all in their 20s, and they play the blues with respect for tradition while sounding fresh, contemporary, and inspired. As the blues audience grows older (and whiter) than perhaps ever before, these exciting African American bluesmen could help attract a much-needed younger crowd—and appeal to a more diverse fan base.



Twenty-four-year-old bluesman Jamiah Rogers has been playing guitar since age nine. © KURT FOOR

Ry Cooder, "Everybody Ought to Treat a Stranger Right," from the 2018 album *The Prodigal Son* Hearing Ry Cooder play slide guitar is like hearing Vladimir Horowitz play piano or Sonny Rollins play tenor. His soul-drenched cover of this Blind Willie Johnson gospel-blues classic reminds us of its message, timely again in the dark days of the orange-skinned blowhard demagogue—and Cooder adds words about ICE detentions and children being held in cages and separated from their families.

Kenny Dorham, "Minor's Holiday," from the 1957 Blue Note album *Afro-Cuban* Killer Latin-jazz groove, composition, and arrangement from one of the greatest, most underrated jazz trumpeters, who played on so many classic Blue Note sides. This track is my favorite cut from one of my most-played Blue Note albums. Calling this an all-star band—with the likes of Horace Silver, Hank Mobley, Art Blakey, Cecil Payne, Oscar Pettiford, Percy Heath, and Carlos "Patato" Valdes—would be an understatement.

NICHOLAS TREMULIS

Musician and recording artist

L'Orange and Jeremiah Jae, *Complicate Your Life With Violence* Easily one of my favorite records of the year, *Complicate Your Life With Violence* combines film noir samples from the 50s, great trip-hop grooves, and baritone guitar with excellent rap writing and performing. This is some real stuff here, not the slick bullshit that crowds the pop side of hip-hop. Play it from front to back. It's a real ride. No counterfeit.

The Woody Goss Trio, *A Very Vulfy Christmas* This homage to Vince Guaraldi and his *Peanuts* Christmas music is by Woody Goss, the George Harrison of funk band Vulfpeck. Goss is an extraordinary pianist, more Thelonious than Vince. The vinyl is already sold out, but on December 23, the accompanying cartoon special premieres, presumably on one streaming service or another. Get it just to listen to, though. It's beautiful all by itself.

Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, *Be Known: Ancient/Future/Music* The Ethnic Heritage Ensemble have been together 40 years or so, their varying lineups all led by great AACM impresario and percussionist Kahil El'Zabar. The wild thing is that they just keep getting better. The language of their music is clear and focused on some higher-unity-of-all-things sound. This stuff is astounding, which is my bottom line for everything. Bingo! 🎉



Kahil El'Zabar formed the Ethnic Heritage Ensemble more than 40 years ago. © SHELDON (SHELLY) LEVY

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PICK OF THE WEEK

After 20 years in the game, Lawrence Arms are a full-on Chicago punk institution



COURTESY EPITAPH RECORDS

THE LAWRENCE ARMS' FIFTH ANNUAL WAR ON X-MAS

Thu 12/12 through Sat 12/14. The Flatliners and Storytime Q&A with Mike Park open Thursday; Red City Radio and Arms Aloft open Friday; and Riverboat Gamblers and Heart & Lung open Saturday. All shows 7:30 PM, Chop Shop, 2033 W. North, sold out. 18+

THE LAWRENCE ARMS were born out of the same suburban punk network that gave us Slapstick, Alkaline Trio, and Rise Against, and for the past two decades they've been working to become the quintessential Chicago band. The trio's aesthetic is so specific and well-worn that it can come across as self-parody: three white dudes, including one with a pretty voice and one with a boozy rasp, sing loud, anthemic punk songs that name-drop various Chicago intersections, bars, and venues and glorify the downtrodden working-class misfits of the midwest. The Lawrence Arms have become celebrities in their microcosm of Chicago punk, spawning countless copycats, and this hometown love is well deserved—when it comes down to it, they're a fucking good band. Bassist Brendan Kelly growls through the pop-punk bangers while guitarist Chris McCaughan handles the smooth,

sensitive tunes, and every song is ridiculously fun and catchy. The Lawrence Arms make no-frills, to-the-point punk-rock albums, including their latest record, 2014's *Metropole*, but they've also dabbled in over-the-top conceptual excess, such as the 2003 opus *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. In 2015 they launched their own annual three-day mini festival, the War on X-Mas, and the band's nightly performances there are often the only times they play Chicago all year. Each bill is also full of like-minded acts, offering fans a chance to celebrate and revel in the legacy of Chicago pop punk. Twenty years is a long time to grind it out as a punk trio in this town, but the Lawrence Arms still own—and something tells me they'll keep bringing it for years to come. With a formula this airtight, why stop now? —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**



Thurston Moore © VERA MARMELO

THURSDAY 12

THE LAWRENCE ARMS' FIFTH ANNUAL WAR ON X-MAS See *Pick of the Week* at left. Flatliners and Storytime Q&A with Mike Park open. 7:30 PM, Chop Shop, 2033 W. North, sold out. 18+

ROSCOE MITCHELL & MOOR MOTHER 7:30 PM, Art Institute of Chicago, Fullerton Hall, 111 S. Michigan, \$15-\$25. 18+

Moor Mother and Roscoe Mitchell met in 2017 when they played back-to-back at Skaņu Mežs, an experimental music festival in Riga, Latvia. Mitchell, who plays a vast assortment of woodwind and percussion instruments, got his start in the mid-60s as an early member of visionary Black arts organization the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. By the end of the decade, he'd cofounded the Art Ensemble of Chicago and established himself as a solo artist; he improvises and composes music that encompasses jazz, classical, and experimental approaches. Camae Ayewa first recorded as Moor Mother in 2012, making lo-fi mash-ups of samples, beats, noise, and incantations, but she's been performing music, self-publishing poetry, and participating in multidisciplinary endeavors since the turn of the century. Though Mitchell and Ayewa belong to different generations, they're both expansive thinkers, and they struck up a musical partnership when Ayewa performed on the Art Ensemble of Chicago's 50th-anniversary recording, this year's *We Are on the Edge* (Pi). On that album's title track and "I Greet You With Open Arms," her low voice lurks within a thicket of orchestration, intoning verses that memorialize and anticipate African American cultural accomplishments. The set that she and Mitchell have developed since then is a much more naked affair: Ayewa limits herself to her voice, ➔

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MUSIC

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treated with echo and pitch-shifting effects, while Mitchell plays just three saxophones and a few percussion instruments. As she repeats phrases, wringing new meaning out of them with each iteration, he plays flinty, fragmented pitches that match the severity of her delivery without directly commenting upon it. —**BILL MEYER**

THE 1975 Part of 101WKQX *The Nights We Stole Christmas*. Bob Moses and Allan Rayman open. 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 1106 W. Lawrence, \$63-\$79. 17+

Listening to UK pop-rockers the 1975 can feel a lot like gorging on the Internet. Formed in 2002, the



Rodriguez

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band samples from pop's broad spectrum, incorporating Afrobeat, shoegaze, ambient, and gospel—sometimes all in a single song, like they're concocting a suicide soda using every flavor in a Coke Freestyle machine. Meanwhile, front man Matt Healy addresses issues that inflame modern society, sometimes at a hectic pace that mirrors the experience of scrolling through your Twitter feed: on the soaring 2018 single "Love It If We Made It," he references entropic energy consumption, the international migrant crisis, and idiotic bad-faith arguments about Colin Kaepernick. The 1975's go-for-broke approach has helped make them one of the biggest rock bands of their generation—their most recent album, 2018's *A Brief Inquiry Into Online Relationships*, peaked on the *Billboard* 200 at number four. And they're not squandering their fame, either: on the single "The 1975," from their forthcoming fourth album, currently titled *Notes on a Conditional Form* (out in February on Interscope/Polydor/Dirty Hit), plinking keys accompany environmental activist Greta Thunberg as she urges listeners to curb the pollution that's destroying the globe. On the other singles from *Notes*, the 1975's worries appear to be at an all-time high, but there's still hope burning through their music. Last month, when the band performed the electro burner "Frail State of Mind" on *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*, its uplifting house-style piano melody came to the fore, making a song about social anxiety feel like a first step toward overcoming greater obstacles. —**LEOR GALIL**

THURSTON MOORE GROUP See also Friday. Devin Brahja Waldman opens. 9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$20. 21+

One of the very few celebrity breakups to ever have an emotional effect on me was the 2011 split of Kim Gordon and Thurston Moore, which also resulted in the end of Sonic Youth. There was much speculation on how the band's members would move forward following the dissolution of such a distinctive creative partnership, but they've all since busied

themselves in an array of musical projects. In September, Thurston Moore's current band released *Spirit Counsel*, a massive three-CD set whose three songs comprise two and a half hours of solid, shimmering instrumental music that encompasses meditative and abrasive moods. The sound of the set, which skews more gentle than not, represents a callback to Moore's days in the early 80s playing with avant-garde musician Glenn Branca: it harnesses the power of multiple droning guitars and shifting dynamics to create a sense of narrative progression without words. "Alice Moki Jayne" pays homage to three great women artists (Turiya Alice Coltrane, Moki Cherry, and Jayne Cortez) with a trancelike build more than an hour long. On this tour, Moore and his bandmates—bassist and guitarist Debbie Googe of My Bloody Valentine, guitarist James Sedwards of This Is Not This Heat, and drummer Steve Shelley of Sonic Youth—have been drawing out this lush, unhurried track even further. —**MONICA KENDRICK**

FRIDAY 13

THE LAWRENCE ARMS' FIFTH ANNUAL WAR ON X-MAS See *Pick of the Week*, page 32. Red City Radio and Arms Aloft open. 7:30 PM, Chop Shop, 2033 W. North, sold out. 18+

THURSTON MOORE GROUP See Thursday. Devin Brahja Waldman opens. 9 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$20. 21+

RODRIGUEZ 8 PM, City Winery, 1200 W. Randolph, sold out. 21+

When obscure downer-folk singer Sixto Rodriguez announced his 2009 show at Schubas, I was beyond thrilled—and nearly in shock. Outside record-collector circles, hardly anyone seemed to be aware of the Detroit musician's work. It was

practically impossible to get a copy of the records he'd made in the early 70s (except for bootlegs), and rumors persisted that he'd been shot and killed years before, so hearing that he was alive was a welcome surprise. In concert, backed by a bunch of cool Detroit cats, the man was mesmerizing: he told offhand tales about his life and made radical political statements, and his songs sounded as urgent as ever. The following morning, I had the good fortune to interview Rodriguez for issue nine of my magazine, *Galactic Zoo Dossier* (published by Drag City), and I found him charming, hilarious, and self-effacing. When I asked about the first time he'd heard the final mix of his debut album, 1970's *Cold Fact*, he said, "I sounded better than I thought I did." That record is now acknowledged as a classic of trippy-yet-gritty dystopian folk, with Rodriguez gently singing melodies that describe the urban decay of his hometown, its various characters, and a string of lovers who'd wronged him. Rodriguez's impossibly cynical and critical vibe throughout *Cold Fact* stands in stark contrast to his more conventionally romantic and commercial-sounding second LP, *Coming From Reality*, recorded in England and released in 1971. When I asked about that record's more refined approach, Rodriguez admitted that he wanted it to launch him into the mainstream—but in the end, it took nearly three decades for anything like that to happen for him. Around 1997, after his daughter stumbled on a website dedicated to his music, he became aware that he had a huge following in South Africa and Australia. In 2009, *Light in the Attic* reissued Rodriguez's two early-70s albums, and in 2012, he finally shot to global stardom when the efforts that two South African fans made to discover what had happened to him and bring him to their country to perform were documented in the film *Searching for Sugar Man*. Rodriguez is now 77, and earlier this year, he was forced to cancel tour dates in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada due to health issues. Though he has two more gigs scheduled after his Chicago appearance, he has yet to announce any shows past that. If you skip this one, you just might miss your only chance to catch this legendary survivor and subversive icon onstage.

—STEVE KRAKOW

TWENTY ONE PILOTS Part of 101WKQX *The Nights We Stole Christmas. I Don't Know How but They Found Me* opens. 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 1106 W. Lawrence, \$149. 17+

Beyoncé has her Beyhive and Taylor Swift fans call themselves Swifties, but no current pop fandom rocks ski masks or face paint quite like the Skeleton Clique—the devotees of Twenty One Pilots, the Columbus-based duo famous for obscuring their faces with dramatic skeleton makeup and other disguises onstage. Members of the Clique follow the band from concert to concert and sometimes camp out overnight—even in extreme weather—to snag prime tickets to their shows. Twenty One Pilots formed as a rock trio in 2009, then morphed into a duo in 2011 when two-thirds of the group left, leaving founding vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Tyler Joseph to team up with new drummer Josh Dun. The band—whose name refers to an incident in an Arthur Miller play—released three studio albums and a handful of EPs before releasing 2015's *Blurryface*. TOP work with a framework of pop and alternative rock, with angst lyrics about existential concepts, but they also incorporate elements of hip-hop, electronica, and reggae. Their broad-ranging sound might explain how *Blurryface* became such a breakout success. The album's fourth single, "Stressed Out" (a nostalgic look at the carefree days of childhood), made it to number two on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in 2016, and *Blurryface* eventually became the first album in the digital era to have every track certified either gold or platinum by the RIAA. Twenty One Pilots' most recent full-length, 2018's *Trench* (Fueled by Ramen), is a concept album set in the fictional city of Dema. Like *Blurryface*, it incorporates a variety of genres and instrumentations, but the music leans harder on the bass. The songs explore weighty themes such as friendship and brotherhood ("My Blood") and the ebb and flow of creativity ("Chlorine"), but don't expect their live show to be a downer: not only do they engage in lots of give-and-take with the audience during their lengthy sets, but Joseph might strum a ukulele while singing Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love," and Dun likes to do backflips off a piano. —KIRSTEN LAMBERT →



Twenty One Pilots
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MUSIC

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WICCA PHASE SPRINGS ETERNAL *Glitterer, Anxious, and Creeks* open. 6 PM, *Subterranean*, 2011 W. North, \$18. 

When it comes to depressing music, Adam McIlwee is a jack of all trades. From 2005 to 2013 he was a founding member of influential emo-rock band Tigers Jaw, before moving on to explore equally downbeat rap, trap, and electronica in the loose collective GothBoiClique with collaborators who've included the late Lil Peep. Wicca Phase Springs Eternal, which McIlwee launched in 2010, is his one-man conglomeration of mope—an exercise in eclectic evocations of the same sad affect. “Togeth-

er,” the opening song on his latest album, February’s *Suffer On* (Run for Cover), starts with acoustic strumming under McIlwee’s nasal mumble (“I wish that I could pay someone to buy me a drink”) before a basic trap beat slumps in to make his misery feel even more inescapably rote. The album’s title track is mostly minor ambient keyboard pulses, with trap rhythms sneaking in for the chorus before apologetically backing out again. “Just One Thing” opens with electronic bass and drum programming, and when McIlwee takes the chorus, he blares his bleak laments like a human fire-engine siren. Through it all, the record’s sonic depiction of depression is so elaborate it’s exhilarating. With sly creativity that recalls the spirits of Morrissey and Leonard Cohen, McIlwee makes it fun to be sad. —NOAH BERLATSKY



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SATURDAY 14

FRIENDSHIP *Gia Margaret* headlines; *Advance Base, Friendship, Ruth Garbus, and DJ Golden Wilson* open. 8:30 PM, *Hideout*, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$12, \$10 in advance. 21+

Nearly a decade ago, Chicago singer-songwriter Owen Ashworth launched Orindal Records, partly as an outlet for the intimate, cozy indie-pop recordings he makes under the name Advance Base. He's since transformed the label into a hub for musicians who take a similarly measured, contemplative approach, even when they're exploring entirely different genres. Orindal's latest Hideout showcase skews toward folk and rock, and features several of my label favorites, including Philadelphia band Friendship, whose lithe, unhurried folk-rock songs are sometimes so gentle they border on ambient. On October's *Dreamin'*, the group lean into their country proclivities, with pedal-steel guitarist Pete Gill teasing out bashful notes that feel like they could stretch to infinity. Front man Dan Wriggins often sings in a barely inflected style not far from speech, which does little to prepare you for the powerful resonance he can summon at just the right moments—when he shifts pitch till his voice sounds like it might crack, it's enough to set your spirit trembling. In his lyrics, Wriggins extracts meaning from the mundane details of his everyday life, loading his words with a deeply felt specificity that makes a perfect match for the band's hushed playing. On “Clairvoyant” he sings about a confidant who seems to be able to see into his soul, using his dry delivery and impressionistic lyrics to give his account of their shared experiences the emotional heft of a memoir. —LEOR GALIL

CATHERINE LAMB & REBECCA LANE 8 PM, *Graham Foundation, Madlener House*, 4 W. Burton.  FREE

A secondary rainbow is a faint visual echo that appears outside a rainbow when light bends twice while passing through raindrops. Composer, violist,

and occasional vocalist Catherine Lamb uses careful calculation and subtle dynamics to evoke correspondingly liminal sonic experiences. Born in Olympia, Washington, and based in Berlin, she's developed a musical approach that combines elements drawn from her formal studies with composers such as James Tenney and Michael Pisaro at CalArts and Bard with lessons she's learned through one-on-one engagements with late filmmaker Mani Kaul (also a musician in the Indian classical tradition of *dhrupad*) and French electronic composer Éliane Radigue. Her compositions for solo performance, small ensembles, and orchestras sometimes use the alternate tuning system known as just intonation as well as environmental input to create music that spotlights subtle tonal interactions, such as the “beats” created by the interference between two pure tones close in pitch when they're sounded together. Like Radigue, Lamb often makes extremely quiet music, so that the act of close listening becomes part of the experience of the piece. *Prisma Interius IV*, the piece that Lamb will perform here with Australian flutist and fellow Berliner Rebecca Lane, is one of a nine-part series that uses what she's christened the “secondary rainbow synthesizer,” an instrument she's developing with experimental musician Bryan Eubanks. It consists of a system of live microphones feeding into software that filters certain bandwidths, to draw selected aspects of the sonic environment into the performance. It's possible to hear how this operates on *Prisma Interius VI*, which is on a double album called *Viola Torros* (Another Timbre) that Lamb made with fellow violist Johnny Chang. Outside sounds seep into the music, and slowly shift from unmodified traffic and pedestrian noises into a halo of resonance that casts a fluctuating glow onto the strings' slow-arching melodies. For this performance, Chicagoan Olivia Block will operate the secondary rainbow synthesizer. —BILL MEYER

THE LAWRENCE ARMS' FIFTH ANNUAL WAR ON X-MAS See *Pick of the Week*, page 32. *Riverboat Gamblers and Heart & Lung* open. 7:30 PM, *Chop Shop*, 2033 W. North, sold out. 18+

MUSIC

TUESDAY 17

MT. POCONO Jupiter Styles and Corolla open. 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$5. 21*

Elgin punk band Mt. Pocono aren't reinventing the wheel—they just want to make sure that when their rolls, it does it with a brilliant burst of new energy. The four-piece seem to subsist on a steady diet of emo, power pop, and shoegaze—at least that's the impression I get from the burly tunes on their latest self-released EP, *July's Fear of the Savanna, Terror of the Suburbs*. Bruised but gilded guitars heave the band's gnashing, bellicose melodies through hard-fought climaxes and not-quite-quiet lulls, turning songs about twentysomething romantic despair and socioeconomic insecurity into paradoxically triumphant anthems. And on the dreamy ballad "Rot," Mt. Pocono nail the kind of earnest uplift that helps keep punk rock a vital art form. —LEOR GALIL



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
CHICAGO 1 GRANDSTAND BIG BAND plus Lakes County HS Jazz Band Jazz 8 Community Big Band Holiday Show Bill O'Connell's 15 CHICAGO SKYLINERS SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW <i>1pm-9'a 22 Wonderful Life - SOLD OUT - 6 - SHOUT SECTION BIG BAND</i> BRITISH BUDDY ALUMINI BIG BAND w/ VIOLETTA FRIEDA LEE	COMING SOON Tue, Jan. 7 WDCB Bluesday Tues with the Kinsey Report Fri, Jan. 10 Joel Paterson & The Modern Sounds Sat, Jan. 11 Webb Wilder & The Beatnecks Fri, Jan. 24 The Waco Brothers Fri, Jan. 31 Rico Birthday Bash	3 WDCB PRESENTS BLUESDAY TUESDAY W/ST TOM HARBER 7pm - 9pm - 2 Sets Altered5 OPEN MIC IN THE SIDEBAR 10 OAK PARK VOICEBOX STORYTELLING NIGHT FEAT. CARYL NICHARSON OPEN MIC IN THE SIDEBAR JON DEE 17 GRAHAM AND BONNIE WHITMORE OPEN MIC IN THE SIDEBAR	4 BIG BAND DANCE NIGHT WITH APOL BIG BAND SIDE BAR SESSIONS WITH PLANET FLIPPO TRIO 11 SARAH BORGES & THE BROKEN SINGLES SIDE BAR SESSIONS WITH GREG DUDZIENSKI QUARTET 18 A Swingin' Christmas with the ROB PARTON BIG BAND SIDE BAR SESSIONS WITH HAROD BUEF QUARTET	5 EXPOSURE LOCAL MUSIC SHOWCASE KING CORBACE - JAN LETH SCOTT FORTMAN & THE ARCHITECTS SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 12 Now in its 10th Year! Naomi & Roni's Christmas Special SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 19 COUNTRY NIGHT IN BERWYN SALUTES THE HOLIDAYS! SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 26 BLUES - SOUL - FUNK RONNIE BAKER BROOKS SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW	6 Club Closed For a Private Party SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 13 Now in its 10th Year! Naomi & Roni's Christmas Special SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 20 REDMONDS FAMILY CHRISTMAS SHOW THE REDMONDS PETTY UNION SECOND TO ROME SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 27 Record Release! WORKING MOTHER PLUS JOSEFINA SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW	CHRIS & HEATHER'S COUNTRY CALENDAR SHOW Details on back! ★ BRAVE 14 COMBO HOLIDAY ★ SPECTACULAR! SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 21 THE HEAVY SOUNDS STAX HOLIDAY REVUE SIDE BAR SHOW - SEE BELOW 28 Fin Del Año Fiesta! A Flight Of Latin Jazz featuring ESSO
SIDE BAR SHOWS * No Cover, Donation Asked / ** Cover Charge						
* Thu, Dec. 5 - Bitters		** Sun, Dec. 15 - Teen Artist Open Mic		** Sun, Dec. 22 - Anderson Family Holiday Jamboree		
* Fri, Dec. 6 - Jenny Bienemann & Friends		* Thu, Dec. 19 - Phil Angotti & Friends		* Fri, Dec. 27 - Cannonball		
* Fri, Dec. 13 - Bunkertown		** Fri, Dec. 20 - Christmas with the Beatles		* Thu, Jan. 2 - Bitters		
** Sat, Dec. 14 - Ralph Covert		** Sat, Dec. 21 - Lovehouse Holiday Show		* Fri, Jan. 3 - Jenny Bienemann & Friends		

for complete information on bands, parties and special events, go to www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com

NEW YEAR'S EVE

EXPO'76 CLASSIC ROCK DANCE PARTY!

\$40 Ticket Includes Music plus: Coat Check Hats and Party Favors Champagne Toast at Midnight!

Tickets at ticketweb.com

House Party In The SideBar NO COVER YES DRINKS Raise a toast with us!

Tuesday, Jan. 7
WDCB Bluesday Tuesday w The Kinsey Report

Friday, Jan. 10
Joel Paterson & The Modern Sounds

Saturday, Jan. 11
Webb Wilder and the Beatnecks

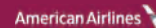
Friday, Jan. 21
RICO Birthday Bash for Ricky!

Friday, Jan. 24
The Waco Brothers

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DON'T MISS...

12.16 **JUMP, LITTLE CHILDREN**
WITH SPECIAL GUEST HULA HI-FI

12.18 **STEPHEN KELLOGG**
WITH TONY LUCCA

12.21 **LEVI KREIS**
HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

12.22 **CHICAGO PHILHARMONIC BRUNCH** MERRY & BRIGHT

12.25 **CHRISTMAS FOR THE JEWS**

12.28

FREDDIE JACKSON

1.3

PETER ASHER

1.4

THE CLAUDETTES
WITH NORA O'CONNOR

1.5

JON B.

1.8

MIKI HOWARD WINTER RESIDENCY FEAT. CHERRELLE

1.9

NICHOLAS TREMULIS AND THE PRODIGAL 9

UPCOMING SHOWS

12.13 **RODRIGUEZ OF SEARCHING**
FOR SUGARMAN

12.15 **JANE LYNCH SWINGIN' LITTLE**
CHRISTMAS

12.19-20 **MUSIQ SOULCHILD**

12.29 **BODEANS**

1.4 **SPAGA - 2 PM SHOW**

1.7 **HOUSE OF BODHI**
WITH LOLA WRIGHT

1.10 **SYLEENA JOHNSON**

1.12

SONS OF THE NEVER WRONG
WITH KATIE DAHL

1.13

THE MEN OF MISTER KELLY'S

1.14

DAVID BROZA & FRIENDS

1.15

MIKI HOWARD WINTER RESIDENCY
FEAT. GLENN JONES

1.16

GLEN PHILLIPS & CHRIS BARRON

1.17-18

YUNA

1.19

SAWYER FREDERICKS

1.20

MELI'SA MORGAN

1.21

JOSEPHINE BEAVERS

1.23-24

ERIC BENÉT

DEC 17



DEC 21 - 23



DEC 26 + 27



DEC 30 - JAN 1



EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE



Cheat Codes COURTESY OF NO BIG DEAL PR

NEW

David Archuleta 4/18/20, 8 PM, City Winery **📍**
Aventura, Romeo Santos 2/28/20, 8 PM, United Center **📍**
Bad Bad Hats, Ester 3/15/20, 7:30 PM, Schubas, 18+
Bag Raiders 2/21/20, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Blood Orange, Tei Shi 3/13/20, 7:30 PM, the Vic, 18+
Blue Stones, JJ Wilde 2/11/20, 7:30 PM, Schubas, 18+
Bottle Brunch featuring DJ Catieo 1/4/20, noon, Empty Bottle **📍**
Brother Brothers, Dead Horses 2/23/20, 7 PM, Schubas, 18+
Candi Pop Dance Party 12/31, 9 PM, Subterranean
Cheat Codes, Ricky Retro 2/22/20, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM, 18+
Dal Niente & Ken Vandermark, Ken Vandermark solo, Katinka Kleijn 3/24/20, 7 PM, Thalia Hall **📍**
DKV Trio (Ken Vandermark/Kent Kessler/Hamid Drake) 12/27-12/28, 9 PM, Elastic **📍**
Renaldo Domino, Heavy Sounds 1/4/20, 9 PM, Hideout
Anderson East, Foy Vance, Aaron Raitiere 3/8/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
EOB 2/8/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM, 18+
Everyone's Hungover party featuring DJ Molly/Shannon, AM Brunch DJs, DJ Brent Heyl 1/1/20, 11 AM, Empty Bottle **📍**
Fck Cnr Fst featuring Rookie, Tongues Unknown, American Grizzly, Jennifer Hall 1/10/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Fennesz, Britton Powell 3/12/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bot-

tle, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM
Get Up With the Get Downs, Awful, Pylons 12/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
GZA & Liquid Swords 1/25/20, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM, 18+
Trevor Hall, Brett Dennen 4/23/20, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM, 18+
Hazy Seas, Knees, Brass Calf 1/6/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **📍**
Hunny, Bay Faction, Mundy's Bay 3/22/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Huron John, Angry Blackmen, Blake Saint David, Slomo Kanofsky 1/2/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
James Hunter Six 4/9/20, 8 PM, City Winery **📍**
Kinobe 12/31, 3 PM, May Chapel at the Rosehill Cemetery **📍**
Love You Madly: an 80th Birthday Celebration for Frieda Lee featuring Cynthia Clarey, Sophie Grimm, Lynne Jordan, Daryl Nitz, Jeannie Tanner, Margaret Murphy-Webb, and more 1/27/20, 7:30 PM, City Winery **📍**
Maliibu Miitch 2/14/20, 10 PM, Schubas, 18+
Maroon 5, Leon Bridges, Meghan Trainor 6/13/20, 6:30 PM, Wrigley Field, on sale Fri 12/13, noon **📍**
Masonic Wave, Den, Salvation 2/3/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **📍**
Masters of Hawaiian Music featuring George Kahumoku Jr., Led Kaapana, Kawika Kahiapo 1/17/20, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 12/13, 9 AM **📍**
MC Hotdog, Keny (MJ16) 4/6/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Christine Melody, Elijah Berlow, Eric Quigley 2/13/20,

8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/13, 11 AM
Mighty Oaks 4/9/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Miku Expo 2020 featuring Hatsune Miku 5/9/20, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom **📍**
Elliot Moss, Derover 2/27/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Mountain Goats, Laura Cortese & the Dance Cards 5/13-5/14/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM **📍**
A New Year's Eve Celebration with Russ Liquid, Marvel Years, Artifakts, Statik, Blue Future 12/31, 8 PM, Chop Shop
No Age 12/28, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Nobunny 12/27, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Gilbert O'Sullivan 4/19/20, 8 PM, City Winery **📍**
Palace 2/11/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Junius Paul 12/27, 9:30 PM, Hideout
Avreeayl Ra & Time Machine 12/19, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Josh Ritter 3/20/20, 8 PM, Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago **📍**
Rookie, Girl K, Tobacco City 3/13/20, 9 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM
Run River North, New Dialogue 2/1/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Russ 6/16/20, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom **📍**
Jill Scott 2/12/20, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre **📍**
Melvin Seals & JGB, Jen Hartswick 3/14/20, 8 PM, Park West, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM, 18+
Silversun Pickups 3/19/20, 7 PM, the Vic **📍**
Slow Crush, Grivo, Aurora

L'Orealis 1/24/20, 9 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Slum Village, Add-2, Jay Illa 12/28, 8 PM, The Promontory Squarepusher 4/17/20, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Stormzy 6/9/20, 9 PM, Metro, 18+
Sunny Sweeney 2/22/20, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/13, 11 AM
Tame Impala, Perfume Genius 5/29/20, 8 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM **📍**
Third Eye Blind, Saves the Day 3/22/20, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM, 18+
Thundercat 3/15/20, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Tindersticks 3/30/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Tvvin, Bentleycoop, Cactus Maz, Treble, Emurse 12/28, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Used, Dragged Under 2/1/20, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM **📍**
Waco Brothers, Tijuana Hercules 12/27, 8 PM, Schubas
Whitney, Chai 1/28/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/13, 10 AM **📍**

UPDATED

Jayhawks 4/18, 8 PM; 4/19, 3:30 and 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, 3:30 show on 4/19 added; 4/18 & 7 PM show on 4/19 sold out **📍**
Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio, Neal Francis 12/31, 9 PM, Park West, canceled; tickets will be automatically refunded, 18+

UPCOMING

All Time Low 12/20-12/21, 8 PM, House of Blues **📍**
Almost, All Get Out, Ghost Atlas, Rowdy 1/19/20, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Anch Magazine's Third Anniversary Showcase featuring Engine Summer, Burr Oak, Jungle Green, Sick Day, Rookie (DJ set) 1/4/20, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Shemekia Copeland, Kevin Burt 12/26-12/27, 8 PM, City Winery **📍**
Cracker, Camper Van Beethoven 1/12/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall
Ethnic Heritage Ensemble 2/7/20, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston **📍**
Miki Howard, Cherrelle, Laroyce Hawkins 1/8/20, 8 PM, City Winery **📍**
I Fight Dragons, Violet Crime, Secret Bad Boy 12/21, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Ile 2/8/20, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **📍**

Never miss a show again. Sign up for the newsletter at chicagoreader.com/early

Illiterate Light 2/5/20, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
Infected, Turbovamps, Blood People, Kreutzer Sonata 12/21, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Ingested, Visceral Disgorge, Cabal, Virulent Excision 2/5/20, 6 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Freddie Jackson 12/28, 8 PM, City Winery **📍**
Hayden James (DJ set) 1/17/20, 10 PM, Spy Bar
Hayley Kiyoko 2/28/20, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom **📍**
Jon Langford & Sally Timms 1/19/20, 3 PM, Hideout
Bettye LaVette 12/20, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **📍**
Madina Lake, Action Blast 12/27, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Maverick Sabre 1/20/20, 7:30 PM, Schubas **📍**
Morgan Wallen, Jon Langston, Ashland Craft 1/4/20, 8 PM, Rosemont Theatre, Rosemont **📍**

Mud Morganfield 12/26, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **📍**
Pan American, Cleared 1/18/20, 7:30 PM, International Museum of Surgical Science
Phora 1/31/20, 8 PM, Thalia Hall **📍**
Pink Frost, Pink Avalanche, Underhand 1/23/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Ron Pope 1/11/20, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall **📍**
Poppy 1/31/20, 8 PM, the Vic **📍**
Willy Porter 2/13/20, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **📍**
Sango, Savon 2/18/20, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Kevin Saunderson, Sagotsky, Pat Bosman 12/28, 10 PM, Smart Bar
Sea and Cake 2/29/20, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Space Jesus, Minnesota, Huxley Anne 12/31, 8:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+
Toasters, Bumsy & the Moochers, Chicago Jamaican Jazz Ensemble, DJ Chuck Wren 2/21/20, 7 PM, Reggie's Music Joint
Treaty of Paris, Mercy Wild, Saraphine 12/28, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Tropidelic 12/27, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Turkuaz 1/31/20, 9 PM, Park West, 18+
Yacht 1/9/20, 9 PM, Sleeping Village
Yam Haus 1/11/20, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+ **📍**



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

LOCAL SINGER-SONGWRITER Christopher Keener has led psychedelic country crew the **Keener Family** since 2015. After posting occasional demos on Bandcamp, in November the band dropped two tracks from their first full-length, **Tender Beast**, which Keener calls a "critique of my past experience with abuse, abandonment, and being 'too sensitive,' and how those experiences can push me to be a stronger man and a more present, accepting father and partner." Lead single "Raised on the Roar" is filled with swirling, shoegazy twang (the band half-jokingly call their music "bootgaze"), and when Keener sings with his wife, **Aubrey Ann Howard**, they sound like Bill Callahan and Emmylou Harris. On Wednesday, December 18, the Keener Family play a release show at the **Empty Bottle**.

This week, Chicago-via-Portland label **Mississippi Records** drops **On the Streets of New York**, a compilation of early recordings by famously eccentric (and famously influential) New York street musician **Moondog**, many previously unreleased. On Thursday, December 12, the label celebrates with a show at the **Co-Prosperity Sphere** by horn-fronted local octet **Snaketime**, led by Twin Talk reedist **Dustin Laurenzi**, which will play Moondog originals. (In March, Laurenzi released *Snaketime: The Music of Moondog*.) Mississippi staff will spin rare Moondog tracks and sell records and cassettes.

In July, the New England Foundation for the Arts awarded Chicago footwork crew **the Era** a \$90,000 grant through the National Dance Project. The money helped fund a national tour of their stage show **In the Wurkz**, which makes its "community debut" at **Links Hall** on Friday, December 13—the show features original music from **DJ Spinn, Jana Rush, DJ Earl**, and the Era. The performance runs again Saturday, December 14, and the Era host an all-ages community workshop at the same venue on Sunday, December 15.

—J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

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

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THU 12/12 CHIRP RADIO WELCOMES
THURSTON MOORE GROUP
DEVIN BRAHJA WALDMAN

SUN 12/15 12PM-FREE CHICAGO HONKY TONK PRESENTS
A BIG OLE HOLIDAY MATINEE
STANDER
DUNGEON MOTHER • JORDAN REYES
PEPPER MILL RONDO

THU 12/12 @ THE ART INSTITUTE (111 S. MICHIGAN AVE.)
ROSCOE MITCHELL & MOOR MOTHER

MON 12/16 FREE
POP. 1280
GOOD F*CK • ITS!

FRI 12/13 5PM-FREE HARD COUNTRY HONKY TONK WITH
THE HOYLE BROTHERS
CHIRP RADIO WELCOMES
THURSTON MOORE GROUP
DEVIN BRAHJA WALDMAN

TUE 12/17 6PM-FREE
CLAUDE
JUNGLE GREEN • BAILEY MINZENBERGER

SAT 12/14 12PM-FREE HANDMADE MARKET
A BENEFIT FOR RAICES
FEAT. **KAINA**
SEN MORIMOTO • DREA THE VIBE DEALER
+ SOUNDS BY KAHEKILI

WED 12/18 6PM-FREE
WONDER & SKEPTICISM
(HEY! BEEN TRYIN TO MEET YOU!)
THE KEENER FAMILY (RECORD RELEASE)
PERMA COUGH • THE FATHER COSTUME

THU 12/19
GET UP WITH THE GET DOWNS
AWEFUL • PYLONS

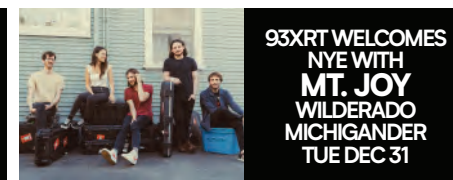
12/20: JAIMIE BRANCH'S FLY OR DIE (RECORD RELEASE), 12/21: WINTER SOLSTICE EUCHRE HANG (12PM-FREE), 12/21: SOUL SUMMIT DANCE PARTY, 12/22: BITE & BOTTLE HOLIDAY MARKET (12PM-FREE), 12/22: CLOAKROOM, 12/23: EVE MARET (FREE), 12/28: THE 15TH ANNUAL ALEX CHILTON BIRTHDAY BASH (12PM-FREE), 12/30: EARTH PROGRAM, 12/31: NYE 2019 WITH SHAME, 12/31 @ LOGAN SQUARE AUDITORIUM: WINDY CITY SOUL CLUB NYE 2019, 1/2: CHINAROSE, 1/3: WILLIAM BASINSKI, 1/4: REPLICANT, 1/6: THE HAZY SEAS (FREE), 1/11: HANDMADE MARKET (12PM-FREE), 1/13: MINIMAL BEAT PRESENTS RYAN HADARAH
NEW ON SALE: 12/27: NOBUNNY, 12/28: NO AGE, 1/23: PINK FROST, 3/15: THE UNDERGROUND YOUTH • LORELIE MEETS THE OBSOLETE, 4/1: MDOU MOCTAR • GUNN - TRUSCINSKI DUO

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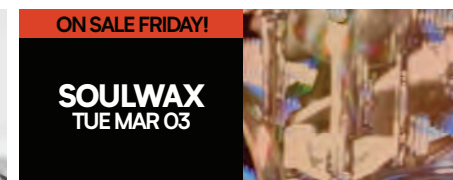
WHITE REAPER
DEHD / WOMBO
SAT DEC 21



93XRT WELCOMES
NYE WITH
MT. JOY
WILDERADO
MICHIGANDER
TUE DEC 31



FLOSSTRADAMUS
SAT JAN 04



ON SALE FRIDAY!
SOULWAX
TUE MAR 03

FRIDAY DEC 13 / 10PM / 18+
EMO NIGHT BROOKLYN
DJ SET BY RYAN KEY
(FORMERLY OF YELLOWCARD)

TUESDAY JAN 14 / 8PM / 18+
The Wherever Tour — North America with
ATMOSPHERE
THE LIONESS / NIKKI JEAN / DJ KEEZY

SATURDAY DEC 14 / 9PM / 21+
@ SLEEPING VILLAGE
Metro presents
PLAID
STEVE HAUSCHILD
ABSTRACT SCIENCE DJS

SATURDAY JAN 18 / 8PM / 18+
Tomorrow Never Knows 2020 with
BLACK MARBLE
HOOPS

SATURDAY DEC 21 / 11:30PM / 18+
American Gothic Productions presents
NOCTURNA
DANCE UNTIL DAWN

FRIDAY JAN 31 / 9PM / 18+
MAGIC CITY HIPPIES
TIM ATLAS

SATURDAY JAN 11 / 7PM / 18+
SONS OF THE SILENT AGE
PERFORMING "ZIGGY STARDUST"
& "STATION TO STATION"
OPENING SET BY THE READY FREDDIES
PLAYING THE MUSIC OF QUEEN

02.14 SOUL ASYLUM
02.15 MACHINE HEAD
02.17 ELECTRIC GUEST
02.22 BEACH BUNNY
02.25 THE GLORIOUS SONS
03.04 WIRE
03.06 DAVE HAUSE & THE MERMAID
@ SLEEPING VILLAGE
03.13 DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

UPCOMING SHOWS



Presented by cricket wireless

- 12/14 Sister Hazel w/The Hoodie Life, Fairview
- 12/15 Sister Hazel (Brunch)
- 12/17 5th Annual Timbuck2 Forever Tribute
- 12/19 Tribute To The Doors & Allman Brothers
- 12/20 All Time Low **SOLD OUT** 12/21 All Time Low **SOLD OUT** 12/22 All Time Low **SOLD OUT**
- 12/23 Grungefest Big Bang Baby (STP Tribute), Superunknown (Soundgarden)
St. Jimmy (Green Day Tribute), TEN (Pearl Jam Tribute)
- 12/27 Salute to 80s Rock Lovedrive (Scorpions Tribute), Photograph (Def Leppard)
Dr. Feelgood (Motley Crue Tribute), Black Angus (AC/DC Tribute)
- 12/28 The Selena Experience
- 12/29 Denim Winter Formal Dance ft Boy Band Review
- 12/31 Motion City Soundtrack w/Treaty of Paris, Ashland **SOLD OUT**
- 1/3 Southern Accents 1/4 Trippin Billies w/Dan Hubbard Band
- 1/10 Led Zeppelin 2 1/11 Led Zeppelin 2
- 1/15 Beartooth & Motionless in White w/Stick To Your Guns, Nothing Left
- 1/17 Super Diamond w/Perty Theft
- 1/18 Ripe w/The New Respects
- 1/25 Black Pumas w/Seratonos
- 1/29 The Adicts

smartbar

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SATURDAY
DECEMBER 28

KEVIN SAUNDERSON
SAGOTSKY
PAT BOSMAN

THURSDAY DEC 12
Research & Development with
GUIRRO (LIVE)
MUDD MANN (LIVE)
JEREMIAH MEECE
CLUB POLITIX

FRIDAY DEC 13
Welcome Home with
MIKE DUNN
GARRETT DAVID / LEESH

SATURDAY DEC 14
Tari's Birthday! with
TERI BRISTOL
& PSYCHO-BITCH
(ALL NIGHT)

SUNDAY DEC 15
Queen! with
MICHAEL SERAFINI
GARRETT DAVID
BRAWTHER

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2MIN 2XDAY



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eat something green.



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OPINION

SAVAGE LOVE

Taming the kink monster

How to get an attentive partner who calls you by your name

By DAN SAVAGE

Q: My husband and I (straight male/bi female couple) have been married 15 years. We are in our early 40s. When we met, he was inexperienced and crippled by shame from having grown up in an extremely sex-negative atmosphere. I have no hang-ups about sex and was happy to get him involved in some more adventurous stuff—but he quickly became obsessed with kink and shows no sign of slowing. I'm happy to play along with fantasies and role-play, bondage, domination, foot play, anal sex/pegging, going to events, having moresomes, etc. But sometimes I'd like to have gentle and slow "unadorned" sex with an attentive partner who calls me by name, compliments me, and does things to my body he knows I enjoy. My husband has been seeing a therapist for some years. We also went to this therapist for couples therapy, and he gave us some "exercises" to try to tone down my husband's desire for perfectly scripted kink "scenes" every time we have sex. But my husband was either not able or not willing to try them, and I gave up. He now basically can't maintain an erection without either (1) a complicated script with roles and props and costumes and toys or (2) going through the motions of romantic sex as long as I keep up a constant stream of "in-character" dirty talk, which makes it impossible for me to be in the moment.

I've urged him to go see a dominatrix or to get more involved in the local kink scene without me—but he's obsessed with this imagined moment where I suddenly "awaken" and fully join him in his obsessions. I find this condescending and stupid. Just because I can enjoy kink play now and then doesn't mean I'll ever be someone who gasps with excitement at a woman on a leash being peed on or someone dangling from the ceiling by the clamps on their nipples. It doesn't shock me or disgust me, it just kind of bores me. It feels like watching someone fill their kitchen with every gaudy, expensive, chrome radish peeler and strawberry diddler when they can't even boil an egg. Is there a trick to reducing your partner's dependence on kink? Or a way to make kink more interesting to yourself? —**BORED BY OBSESSIVE KINKSTER**

A: You must feel like you created a kink monster. But you didn't! I mean, you did meet this inexperienced, sexually repressed guy, BBOK, and you did encourage him to let go of the shame, and you did give him permission to be a little more sexually adventurous . . . and 15 years later, you're stuck with this selfish asshole who's so obsessed and/or dependent on his kinks that you've come to dread having sex with him. But your husband was always the elaborately twisted

kinkster he is now; he just needed someone to give him permission to admit to being who he always was—or to get in touch with who he always was—and that person was you.

And now here you are, BBOK, writing to me in the hopes that I can magically cause your husband to become less dependent on his kinks or can magically "awaken" in you a similarly obsessive interest in the exact same suite of kinks he has. And we both know neither is going to happen, because you're not going to get kinkier (which is what he wants) and you've already tried to get him to rein in his kinks (and that didn't work). That's what the couples counseling was about, right? Him learning to be a little less selfish and a little more GGG and a better partner . . . and the selfish sack of shit couldn't be bothered, could he?

Both of your proposed fixes are basically pipe dreams, as I suspect you know, BBOK, and I further suspect you're not really interested in either one. Because what you really want is right here: "Sometimes I'd like to have gentle and slow 'unadorned' sex with an attentive partner who calls me by name, compliments me, and does things to my body he knows I enjoy." (Emphasis mine.)

I don't think it's an accident that you wrote about wanting "an attentive partner" to call you by your name and do all sorts of vanilla things to your body that he knows you enjoy. I don't think it's an accident that you didn't use "loving husband" in that sentence, BBOK, because deep down you know your husband isn't interested in doing those things. And he won't be any good at doing those things. And even if he could fake an interest in doing those things for 20 minutes—which apparently he can't—you probably

wouldn't be able to enjoy his half-hearted attempts at vanilla sex, because knowing he had to concentrate on BDSM sex the whole time—knowing some script was playing out in his head—would make it impossible for you to be in (and enjoy) the moment.

You want to have loving, tender, connected sex with someone who cares about you. You want to have sex with someone who isn't asking you to be someone you're not each and every time you have sex with him (or her). And the obvious fix here, the easiest work-around, the reasonable accommodation . . . well, it's obvious, isn't it? You need to have sex with someone else, BBOK, with someone who cares about you. Basically, you need to take your own advice, the advice you've been giving your husband, and go find yourself a play partner or two—for vanilla sex, not kinky sex. If you can find someone who can give you the kind of simple, passionate, connected sex you no longer get in your marriage, perhaps you'll come to resent your husband less and your desire for kinky sex with him will rebound.

Q: I started seeing a man four weeks ago who keeps telling me he can't sleep with me, or can't sleep with me yet, because of some all-consuming fetish that he can't (or doesn't want to) do with me. He also has sexual issues due to having survived testicular cancer and no longer having testicles. As a bisexual woman, I don't have an issue with that and am happy to have non-penis sex. But even that is not forthcoming, because he always tells me his fixation on this fetish is

interfering, while remaining totally incoherent about what the fetish is and why he can't do it with me. No one is required to sleep with me, but it's upsetting to go to bed with him and then, after he plays along for a little while, have to listen to him tell me another totally incoherent version of whatever his fucking problem is. I value this person for the other parts of our relationship, but I'm getting fed up. I don't see how we'll ever get along in bed if I'm just trying to have fun while he's being as tormented, confusing, and complicated as possible. Should I just walk away? Is this bullshit or not?
—**DRAMA IS BORING**

A: Unless this ball-less mess is climbing up the fire escape and slipping into your bedroom uninvited—which I'm guessing you would've mentioned—he keeps turning up in your bedroom because you keep inviting him. Stop that, DIB. Tell him you're happy to keep seeing him, if you enjoy his company that much, but you're not "seeing"

him anymore, which means he's not welcome in your bedroom. So there's no need for him to bring up his fetish or any other sexual issues with you.

As a general rule, a person really shouldn't mention the fact that they have a kink or fetish to a new partner unless they're ready to share what it is. You don't have to be ready to act on it—lots of people have fetishes and/or kinks they enjoy as fantasy-only or are ready to share but want to take the doing a little slower. But telling someone you have a kink/fetish that's so all-consuming you can't be sexual unless it's a part of the action and then refusing to name the kink/fetish and then adding that you wouldn't want to do it with the person . . . well, that's not just bullshit, DIB, it's disqualifying asshole and some truly next-level negging. Don't walk away, run. **f**

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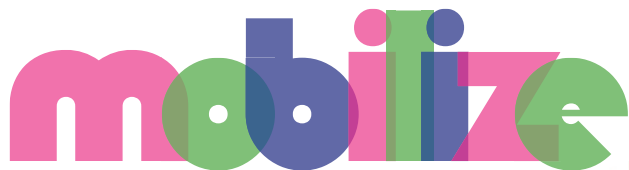
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115 W. Chicago Ave.

Blue Friday: Meet Michigan Candidate Jon Hoadley
December 13
5pm-7pm
Hideout Inn
1354 W. Wabansia Ave.

National Vigil For All Victims of Gun Violence
December 13
6:30pm-8:30pm
Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park
5500 S. Woodlawn Ave.

Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP) Holiday Party
December 13
7pm-11pm
University of Chicago
5655 S. University Ave

Postcard Party
December 14
10:30am-12:30pm
Oak Park Public Library
-Main Library
834 Lake St.

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Doors and Make Wisconsin Blue Again
December 14
9am-5pm
Backlot Coffee
3982 N. Avondale Ave.

MLK Lighting Event in Washington Park
December 14
1pm-4pm
Washington Park
5531 S. Martin Luther King Dr.

January Hub Meeting
December 14
6pm-7:30pm
George C. Hall Library
4801 S. Michigan Ave.

Rally in Front of Sharon Brannigan's Flower Shop
December 14
2pm-3pm
Sherry's Flower Shoppe
14269 S. Wolf Rd.
Orland Park, IL

Canvass with Indivisible Evanston & Wisconsin Democrats
December 14
8:30am-3pm
Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Congressman Casten's Immigration Town Hall
December 15

4pm-5:30pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
393 N. Main St.
Glen Ellyn, IL

7th National Vigil for Victims of Chicago & Illinois Gun Violence
December 15
4pm-5pm
St. Catherine of Siena- St. Lucy Catholic Church
38 N. Austin Blvd.
Oak Park, IL

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.

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Bonnie Jean Umeh (nee Hyland), aged 79 years, our beloved mother and wife, passed away on November 26, 2019 in her home. She is survived by her husband, Fidelis N. Umeh and her three children Adrienne, Gavin-Keith and Kevin Umeh and three grandchildren Olivia, Oskar, and Cyrus Umeh.



The viewing was held on Saturday, December 7th from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at St. Thomas the Apostle Church located at 5472 South Kimbark Avenue, Chicago, IL.

A funeral mass was held immediately following the wake at 11:30 AM at the same location.

Donations in Bonnie's name may be made to Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Service.

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