

# READER



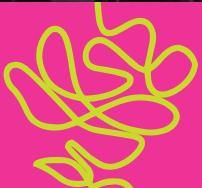
## MAKING COMEDIANS LOOK FUNNY

Photographers Sarah Larson, Ashley NiCole, and Chris Santiago put Chicago's thriving comedy scene into focus.

By RIMA PARIKH 12

16-PAGE  
INSERT INSIDE

20/20 FOCUS  
ON FLOWERS



CHICAGO FLOWER  
& GARDEN SHOW®  
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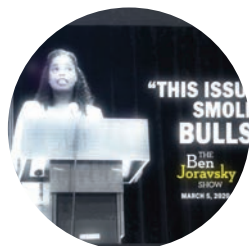
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## NOTE FROM AN EDITOR

**MY PARENTS LOVE** reminding me of the first joke I ever told: "What happened to the pig when it fell in the mud? It got dirty." I was four years old and thought this was the funniest thing anyone had ever said—I still stand by it as my own early recognition of the setup-punchline structure and the old adage "truth in comedy." It was the beginning of my lifelong quest to find the funny. Sure, there have been times since then that I've stepped on stage and told a joke or two (new material, don't worry), but the true holy grail

is experiencing every inch of the comedy scene in Chicago, a city with a uniquely supportive community that prioritizes creating space to experiment, have fun, and make each other laugh over getting that big break. That being said, every single comedian in Chicago deserves their own movie/TV show/stand-up special, OK, Netflix?

What does it take to maintain this perfect comedy bubble? I'm so glad you asked, dear reader! In this issue, Lisa Beasley tells us how she forged her own career path outside of the

Second City track; Meggie Gates visits the brand new Lincoln Lodge comedy theater, 20 years in the making; Rima Parikh introduces us to the photographers giving comics images for show promos; and I put together a by-no-means-comprehensive-sorry-if-I-left-your-show-off-there's-only-so-much-ink-and-an-endless-number-of-comedy-shows list to start you on your own chuckle crusade.

So, please, enjoy the comedy issue, no two-drink minimum required (though it never hurts). —**BRIANNA WELLEN, CULTURE EDITOR**



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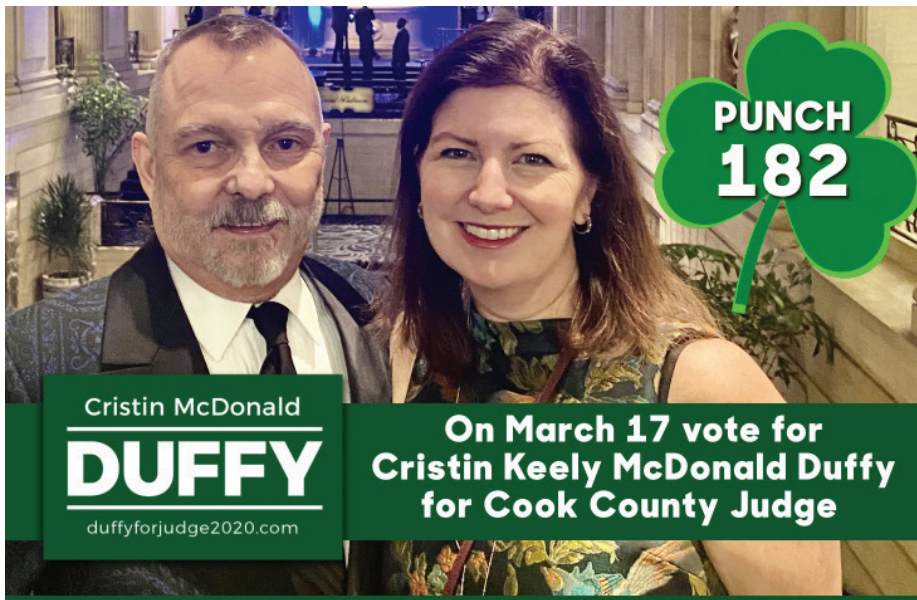
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**LAGBAC**  
 "Highly Recommended"

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 - The Chicago Tribune Editorial Board

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COURTESY THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Park district arts and crafts classes are the best deal in town**

Unleash your inner artist/poet/actor/ceramist with low-cost courses at your local park.

**By SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

Looking to reignite your creative spark? If you've always wanted to try your hand at acting, learn a new instrument, or make some ceramics with a kiln, you should check out the Chicago Park District's adult education classes. They're truly one of the best bargains in the city, as many of the instructors are working musicians, artists, and members of Chicago's theater community with years of training that they're eager to pass on to new students. The pricing is appropriate for a city organization that serves all people: residents usually pay from \$50-\$70 for a ten-week class, and most of the time that includes all materials. And if you're 60 years or older, the price is cut in half.

Most spring classes start during the week of Monday, March 30 and run through the first week of June. Class registration is now open online at [chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://chicagoparkdistrict.com). Note that courses have reserved spots for in-person registration at the parks themselves to entice their neighbors to come in (so if something looks closed online, it pays to go to the park in person to register because you might still be able to snag a seat). The classes listed here are designated for those 18 years and older, but the park district also offers courses that are teen-specific and classes for seniors. Go in person to your local park to find out more.

**Taiko Drumming at Mozart Park**, 2036 N. Avers

Learn traditional and contemporary Japa-

nese drumming (*wadaiko*) in this Beginning Taiko class, Tuesdays at 7 PM starting April 7.

**Poetry at Austin Town Hall Park**, 5610 W. Lake

The park district says poets can learn to write with "symbolism, strength, and style" at this totally free course, Thursdays at 6 PM starting April 2.

**Woodcraft at Calumet Park**, 9801 S. Avenue G

Class includes instruction in using band and scroll saws plus projects like birdhouses, bookshelves, and more, tailored to students' experience. Studio is open Tuesdays at 5 PM and Fridays from 9:30 AM-4:30 PM, starting April 7.

**Ceramics at South Shore Cultural Center**, 7059 S. South Shore

Learn how to throw clay around and make beautiful objects in the process (bonus: the cultural center just installed a new kiln this year) at this beginner's class on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM, starting April 1.

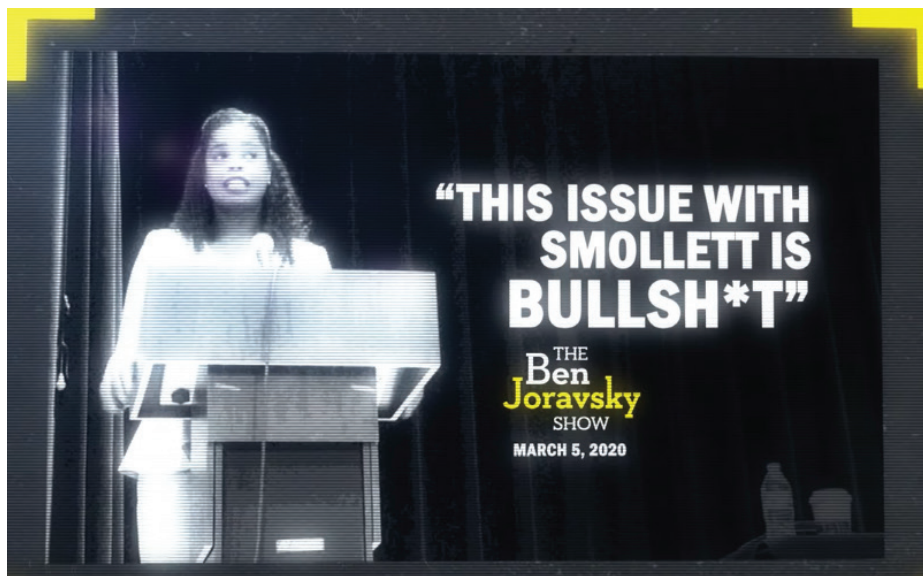
**Acting at South Shore Cultural Center**, 7059 S. South Shore

Actors can work on their craft on Wednesdays at 5:30 PM, starting April 1.

**Guitar Group Lessons at Holstein Park**, 2200 N. Oakley

Grab a friend and learn the basics of becoming a rock star in this group setting on Wednesdays at 6:15 PM starting April 1. [Facebook icon](https://www.facebook.com/hollo)

[Twitter icon](https://twitter.com/hollo) @hollo



## POLITICS

# Kim Foxx was right

Smollettgate is bullsh\*t!

By BEN JORAVSKY

I woke up bright and early Monday morning to discover I'd made the prime time, featured in an attack ad released by Bill Conway's campaign for Cook County state's attorney.

OK, technically, *I* wasn't featured in that commercial. Instead, it replayed comments that incumbent state's attorney Kim Foxx made on my podcast last week when she stated that the never-ending political soap opera known as Smollettgate is "bullshit."

Having been dragged into this race, let me make a few observations.

Conway is the boyish-looking son of the fabulously wealthy William Conway Jr., who helped create the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm that's made a fortune, in part, by building bombs, guns, and other weapons of destruction.

Daddy Conway has contributed about \$10.5 million to Bill's campaign—hence the money

for the 30-second commercial.

Speaking of which—the commercial is kind of funny, in a lame and hokey way. Especially the ending, which features Foxx saying bullsh\*t over and over again like the reverb in a bad '70s rock song.

But as much as I get a kick out of the commercial, it doesn't mean I'm voting for Conway.

Oh, god—please don't conclude that I am voting for Conway. If I had to rank my favorites in this race, Conway would be at the bottom of a list that includes the other three candidates—Foxx, Donna More, and Bob Fiorretti, who will always have a place in my heart because he once connected me to the great Bobby Hull. Long story.

In his commercial, Conway is clearly trying to make hay out of the fact that Kim Foxx used a "barnyard epithet," as journalist J. Anthony Lukas would say, on my show.

That's right, folks, I made the prime time.

NEW DAY CONWAY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

As though Conway is shocked to hear a grown woman swear. In fact, he's so shocked, the caption on the commercial reads "bullsh\*t," just to protect us.

In Foxx's defense, lots of people curse when they come on my show. Guess there's just something about our humble little studio in the *Sun-Times* office—just down the hall from the bathrooms—that turns my guests into potty mouths.

The larger question is whether Foxx is correct in her observation.

Short answer—duh!

Longer answer—well, let's start with a confession.

I'm hopelessly, shamelessly obsessed with Smollettgate. I talk about it all the time, having taken several deep dives with *Sun-Times* criminal court reporter Andy Grimm, who probably knows more about the matter than any local not named Dan Webb.

It's got everything you'd want in a celebrity scandal, including . . . a celebrity! Albeit, a B-list one in Jussie Smollett. Let's run through a few details of what he said went down . . .

It was the wee hours of a brutally cold January morning in 2019. Smollett left his near north side apartment to get a sandwich at Subway. A couple of thugs jumped him, threw liquid on him, tied a rope around his neck like they were going to hang him, all while making homophobic slurs and saying this is MAGA country. And so forth.

It took about a month for police to pull this tale apart, eventually alleging that Smollett had paid two Nigerian-born brothers to stage the attack to help advance his career.

Foxx's office charged him with disorderly conduct. Then prosecutors quietly dropped the charges. And Smollett pissed off everybody by proclaiming his innocence.

Soon everyone was investigating the investigators. It turns out that Foxx had taken a call from Tina Tchen, a well-connected lawyer acting on behalf of the Smollett family, asking her to ask police chief Eddie Johnson to move the case to the FBI. Foxx made the call, though the case stayed with the police.

The fallout prompted Judge Michael Toomin to appoint a special prosecutor—the aforementioned Dan Webb—who reindicted

Smollett on charges of filing false police reports. The city's suing Smollett to make him pay the \$130,000 or so it spent investigating his allegations. He countersued the city.

There may be other lawsuits I'm forgetting. The point is—this story isn't going anywhere. Looks like Andy Grimm and I will be talking about it for many more months.

But as gloriously trashy as this all may be, our continuing fixation with Smollettgate says as much about our obsession with celebrity as it says about Kim Foxx.

Should Foxx have taken that call from Tchen? In retrospect, no. But at the time Smollett was viewed as the victim, so it's not surprising she would. OK, Foxx might not have taken a call from a cloutless person. But Tchen's a major player in the Obama political orbit. It's naïve to think any state's attorney dealing with a high-profile case would not take a call from a power player like Tchen.

I'd understand if this case involved a violent crime. As when Mayor Daley's nephew killed David Koschman with a punch. Oh, where was the outrage with how the police and state's attorney—long before Foxx—bungled that case? It took years of *Sun-Times* investigative stories before a judge assigned Dan Webb (again) to investigate.

In contrast, getting worked up over Smollettgate is like getting worked up over, oh, the on-again-off-again relationship between Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner—it doesn't warrant the attention we give it.

That said, I really hope Ben and Jen work things out—they seem like such a nice couple.

As for how Foxx has run the office, you could argue that she's the finest state's attorney since, like, ever. I mean, the competition's not that great. At least Foxx is the first to pull back on the insanely cruel war on drugs that's devastated so many Black lives, families, and neighborhoods.

As the *Sun-Times* put it in an editorial they wrote endorsing her: "For the first time in decades, the state's attorney's office was employing an overarching and data-tested crime fighting strategy, rather than just racking up convictions. And it was a strategy built on principles of social justice—making our streets safer without mindlessly filling up jails. It was exactly what Foxx had promised."

It's not as juicy as "bullsh\*t," but it's much closer to the truth. 📌

🐦 @joravben

# Cook County State's Attorney

## What is a State's Attorney?

The State's Attorney is the lawyer that represents the interests of the state in legal proceedings. They are the head law enforcement in Cook County that holds police accountable for their actions. The Cook County State's Attorney also has the power to determine independent prosecutors and commends sentencing lengths.

This voter guide was populated with responses to the 2020 Chicago Votes Cook County State's Attorney Questionnaire. Candidate's full responses can be viewed at [www.chicagovotes.com](http://www.chicagovotes.com). *Please note that candidates Donna More and Bob Fioretti did not respond to the questionnaire.*



### Kim Foxx

Kim Foxx is the current Cook County State's Attorney. Before becoming Cook County's first Black woman to hold the office of State's Attorney, she was the Chief of Staff to the Cook County Board President. Kim received both her Bachelor's and Law Degree from Southern Illinois University.



### Bill Conway

Bill Conway is a US Navy veteran. He attended The Wharton School for undergrad, received his MBA from the University of Chicago, and his law degree from Georgetown. He is currently an adjunct professor at DePaul University and previously worked as an assistant Cook County state's attorney.

#### INCUMBENT



KIM FOXX

#### CANDIDATE



BILL CONWAY

## Do you support:

Stopping the prosecution of low level, non-violent drug offenses?



"We prioritize violent crime and keeping our communities safe, rather than using resources to prosecute non-violent, low-level offenders."



"If elected State's Attorney, I plan to significantly increase the use of drug courts and diversion programs so that we are putting our resources towards rehabilitating these individuals and strengthening our communities."

Closing Homan Square Detention Center?



"I don't believe that having facilities that deny the accused access to counsel, or engage in unconstitutional police practices should exist."



"Homan Square absolutely should be shut down for its practices, but that isn't enough- we need to make sure we never let another "black site" fester in our community."

Bringing criminal charges against police officers who falsify or file misleading official reports?



"Yes, police officers should be investigated and prosecuted in the same way that all defendants are prosecuted."



"Why wouldn't we hold our own police to the laws they enforce? As Assistant State's Attorney, I prosecuted corrupt police officers who broke the public trust and i will continue to live that value as State's Attorney."

Reinstating a parole system for Illinois residents?



"I support reinstating parole time to allow an opportunity to assess inmates ability to re-enter the community and be released."



"I support the state's move last year to reinstate discretionary parole options for young offenders, and I am open to expanding that further."

Ending the incarceration of youth (25 and under)?



"Incarceration should be used as a measure of last resort for "youthful offenders" (under 25)."



"There are some case where incarceration of young criminals may be a necessary outcome, but it should never be the default."

## HOW TO READ THE GUIDE:

1. A vacancy has to be filled, your options are listed in the order you will see them on the ballot
2. Listed is the % of bar associations finding the candidate to be at least **qualified** or recommended
3. Listed is names of bar associations finding the candidate to be **not qualified** or not recommended

## THE VOTER GUIDE IS BASED ON EVALUATIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

The Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening is comprised of the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Chicago Area (AABA), Black Women Lawyers Association of Greater Chicago (BWLA), Chicago Council of Lawyers (CCL), Cook County Bar Association (CCBA), Decalogue Society of Lawyers (DSL), Hellenic Bar Association (HBA), Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois (HLAI), Illinois State Bar Association (ISBA), Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago (LAGBAC), Puerto Rican Bar Association of Illinois (PRBA), and Women's Bar Association of Illinois (WBAI). Chicago Bar Association is denoted by CBA.

SCAN ME 

## ILLINOIS APPELLATE COURT – NEVILLE VACANCY

(D) Maureen Patricia O'Leary 12% All but HLA  
 (D) Carolyn J. Gallagher 75% DSL, HBA, ISBA  
 (D) Sandra Gisela Ramos 60% DSL, LAGBAC, WBAI, ISBA  
 (D) Michael B. Hyman 100%

## ILLINOIS APPELLATE COURT – SIMON VACANCY

John Griffin 100%  
 Sharon O. Johnson 100%

## Cook County Circuit Court Countywide Candidates

## BELLOWS VACANCY

Tiesha L. Smith 0% Recommend

## COGHLAN VACANCY

Kelly Marie McCarthy 100%  
 Aileen Bhandari 100%  
 Elizabeth "Beth" Ryan 100%  
 James T. Derico, Jr. 100%

## FORD VACANCY

U. O'Neal 0% Recommend  
 Laura Ayala-Gonzalez 100%  
 John O'Meara 100%

## FUNDERBURK VACANCY

Jacqueline M. Griffin 80% DSL, LAGBAC  
 Daniel L. Collins 100%  
 Marie Therese Quinn 100%  
 Celestia L. Mays 100%

## LARSEN VACANCY

Levander "Van" Smith, Jr. 100%  
 Suzanne Therese McEneely 100%  
 Megan Kathleen Mulay 100%

## McCARTHY VACANCY

Teresa Molina 100%  
 Michael O'Malley 100%

## MASON VACANCY

Arthur D. Sutton 100%  
 Bonnie Carol McGrath 0% Recommend  
 Jennifer Patricia Callahan 100%  
 Chris Stacey 100%  
 Joy E. Tolbert Nelson 100%  
 Joseph Chico 63% WBAI, CCL, ISBA  
 Sheree Desiree Henry 100%  
 Dan Walsh 0% Recommend  
 Amanda Pillsbury 55% BWLA, CCBA, HLA, CCL, ISBA  
 Keely Patricia Hillison 82% CCBA, ISBA

## O'BRIEN VACANCY

Elizabeth Anne Walsh 100%  
 Lloyd James Brooks 100%  
 Heather Anne Kent 100%

## PATTI VACANCY

Lynn Weaver Boyle 100%

## ROTI VACANCY

Lorraine Mary Murphy 100%  
 James Patrick Crawley 100%  
 Araceli Reyes De La Cruz 92% ISBA

## C. SHEEHAN VACANCY

Deidre Baumann 100%  
 Maura McMahon Zeller 92% ISBA  
 Russell Hartigan 100%

## K. SHEEHAN VACANCY

Jill Rose Quinn 100%  
 James Samuel Worley 75% CCBA, ISBA  
 Wendelin "Wendy" DeLoach 0% Recommend

## Cook County Subcircuit Candidates

## FIRST SUBCIRCUIT – BROOKS VACANCY

Krista D. Butler 0%

## FIRST SUBCIRCUIT – CRAWFORD VACANCY

Tyria B. Walton 100%

## SECOND SUBCIRCUIT – "A" VACANCY

Sondra Nicole Denmark 100%  
 Felicia H. Simmons-Stovall 89% ISBA  
 Chelsey R. Robinson 91% ISBA

## THIRD SUBCIRCUIT – FILAN VACANCY

Daniel Edward Maloney 100%

## THIRD SUBCIRCUIT – FLYNN VACANCY

Lauren Brougham Glennon 78% WBAI, ISBA  
 David A. Bonoma 82% WBAI, ISBA  
 Regina Ann Mescall 90% CCBA  
 James John Knibbs 100%  
 Thomas J. Condon, Jr. 100%  
 Brad S. Telander 100%  
 Scott Edward Lipinski 50% DSL, HBA, WBAI, CCL

## THIRD SUBCIRCUIT – MURPHY VACANCY

Erin Haggerty Antonietti 100%  
 Thomas G. O'Brien 0%

## SIXTH SUBCIRCUIT – NEGA VACANCY

Jamie Guerra Dickler 100%  
 Anne Shaw 58% HLA, PRBA, WBAI, CCL, ISBA

## SIXTH SUBCIRCUIT – PANTLE VACANCY

Eileen Marie O'Connor 100%  
 Cory Eli Oshita 56% BWLA, WBAI, CCL, ISBA  
 Anthony Lucafo 100%

## SEVENTH SUBCIRCUIT – JACKSON VACANCY

Owen "Joe" Shelby 100%  
 Marcia O'Brien Conway 100%  
 Pamela Reaves-Harris 100%  
 Mable Taylor 0%  
 Kristen Marie Lyons 0%

## EIGHTH SUBCIRCUIT – FLEMING VACANCY

Jonathan Clark Green 100%  
 Bradley R. Trowbridge 100%  
 Michael A. Forti 100%

## NINTH SUBCIRCUIT – AXELROOD VACANCY

Pamela "Pam" Stratigakis 100%  
 Thomas M. Cushing 100%  
 Ira I. Silverstein 25% CCBA, HLA, PRBA, WBAI, CCL, ISBA  
 Timothy Patrick Carter 100%

## NINTH SUBCIRCUIT – LUCKMAN VACANCY

Thomas Peter Kougias 36% CCBA, DSL, HLA, LAGBAC, CCL, ISBA  
 Julie Bess Aimen 100%  
 Michael Alan Strom 100%  
 Basileios "Bill" Foutris 100%

## TENTH SUBCIRCUIT – ALLEN VACANCY

John G. Mulroe 100%

## TENTH SUBCIRCUIT – MCGING VACANCY

John Garrido 0%  
 Jon Stromsta 100%  
 Maire Aileen Dempsey 100%

## TENTH SUBCIRCUIT – O'BRIEN VACANCY

Daniel Alexander Trevino 100%  
 John Hourihane 100%  
 Audrey Victoria Cosgrove 100%  
 Mary Catherine Marubio 100%  
 Liam Kelly 0%

## TWELFTH SUBCIRCUIT – HANLON VACANCY

Patricia M. Fallon 100%  
 Howard J. Wise 89% PRBA  
 Carmine Trombetta 91% PRBA  
 Frank R. DiFranco 100%

## THIRTEENTH SUBCIRCUIT – KULYS HOFFMAN VACANCY

Joe Gump 100%  
 Matt Flamm 100%  
 Michael Harry Minton 33% CCBA, DSL, WBAI, ISBA  
 Susanne Michelle Groebner 91% CCBA  
 Michael P. Gerber 100%  
 Angel Garcia 0%  
 Gary William Seyring 100%

## FOURTEENTH SUBCIRCUIT – BETUCCI VACANCY

Gerardo Triston, Jr. 100%  
 Steve Demitro 0%

## FOURTEENTH SUBCIRCUIT – LACY VACANCY

Daniel O. Tiernan 100%  
 Perla Tirado 70% DSL, WBAI, ISBA

## FIFTEENTH SUBCIRCUIT – GRIFFIN VACANCY

Heather Mulligan Begley 100%  
 Nichole C. Patton 100%

\*Information provided by [VoteForJudges.org](http://VoteForJudges.org)

and [ChicagoAppleseed.org](http://ChicagoAppleseed.org).

Evaluations based on the Alliance of Bar Associations for Judicial Screening & the Chicago Bar Association.



Graphic By: Tessa Gillett

# SEEN



but not  
**counted**

Amid fears about immigration policies, electoral canvassing pressures, and a turn to digital, how “hard-to-count” South Asians are filling out the census.

By **KIRAN MISRA**

**W**hen asked about the census, Babu Patel, manager of the grocery chain Patel Brothers, initially thought we were talking about India’s national anthem. Patel had confused the Hindi term for population count, *jansankhya*, for the anthem’s title, “Jana Gana Mana.” “Republic Day *wala gaana*,” he said, guessing that I wanted to discuss the song regularly blasted at parades on India’s Independence Day.

Patel, who wears glasses with his standard forest-green Patel Brothers vest, has lived in America for 35 years and speaks some English, though he is more comfortable in Hindi. In those three and a half decades, no one has come to his Devon Avenue store, a staple for stocking the cupboards of South Asian Americans across the country with imported spices and snacks, or to his home in neighboring Lincolnwood to share information about the count. “*Abhi koi aya nahi*,” Patel said in Hindi, explaining that no outreach worker, census bureau representative, or any type of communication has arrived about the count. He has never heard of the census in America before or filled it out.

Geeta Jyoshi, who works at Roopkala Salon on Devon, had also never heard of the census. Only after I switched our conversation to Hindi and clarified what the census was did

Jyoshi explain that she would “definitely need someone’s help” to fill out the survey and to understand the English questions. She added that no one has even come to the business, which occupies a storefront on one of the busiest stretches of Devon, or her home to explain that the census would be happening.

Patel and Jyoshi are just two Chicagoans who are deemed “hard to count.” This category makes up 48 percent of Chicago, just shy of half of the city’s population. These are Americans with disabilities, renters, people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, immigrants, those lacking Internet access, college students, children under five, individuals with low English literacy—all people commonly missed in census outreach efforts.

For each person who doesn’t fill out the census, community organizations and public service providers lose \$1,400 in federal funding from the state. The hardest hit programs—like Medicaid, SNAP, and Head Start—tend to be used by lower-income Chicagoans who are less likely to fill out the census, as well as community-based organizations that do work with immigrant communities whose funding is contingent on census numbers. This can be hard to communicate to South Asians in advance of the count.

“Just the idea of immigrants even access-

ing benefits is very taboo,” said Nida Hasan, coordinator of civic engagement programming at the Indo-American Center, a nonprofit on the north side that provides services to Chicago’s immigrants from South Asia. So arguing that immigrants should participate in the census in order to continue to receive benefits is not necessarily the best strategy.

Instead, she and other civic engagement professionals like Shobhana Verma of the South Asian American Policy and Research Institute often explain that in ethnically segregated or concentrated cities like Chicago, underrepresentation through the census can lead to entire communities or ethnicities having access only to crumbling infrastructure.

“South Asians care about schools, senior services, parks, roads, public transit, health-care funding,” Verma explained. “We had an event recently, where we touched on the census and we were literally talking to people about their day-to-day lives. People were leaving their chairs and standing by us to ask questions.”

For the South Asian community, one of the most consequential impacts of the census is language access in voting. If a constituency crosses a population threshold, language access has to be provided to that community under the Voting Rights Act. This is the

rule under which Hindi ballots are provided today.

The census, through its influence on the configuration of voting districts, also determines, to an extent, the political power a community will have over the next ten years. Through this redistricting process, Asian-opportunity districts (where at least 50 percent of voters are Asian Americans), Asian-influence districts (where Asian Americans constitute 20-30 percent of the district’s population), and multiracial districts (where Asian Americans may be less than a majority, but minority groups together constitute a majority) are created to ensure that Asian Americans have a say in choosing their elected officials. For Asian Chicagoans, this isn’t an abstraction: The 2010 census resulted in Illinois’s second House district being redrawn to give Chinatown a stronger voice in the district’s representation. In 2016, Theresa Mah was the first Asian American elected to the Illinois House or Senate, as a Chinese American woman from the second district representing Chinatown. “Our entire ability to have representation hinges on this,” said Mansi Kathuria of the organization Asian Americans Advancing Justice Chicago.

The U.S. Census Bureau is not including outreach to speakers of South Asian languages in its 2020 paid media campaign.

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# NEWS & POLITICS

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And while the census is offered online in 13 languages and on paper in two, not a single South Asian language makes the list. Last year, Illinois appropriated \$29 million in the state budget for census work, less funding than was allocated in 2010 even though costs for administering the census have nearly tripled. The census bureau has also downsized across the country, from 12 regional offices and 500 local offices in 2010 to six regional offices and about 250 local offices. Because of this change in capacity, it has reached out to more partner organizations to work with the hard-to-count community.

Organizations like the South Asian American Policy and Research Institute, the Indo-American Center, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice Chicago convened an Asian American census summit in February with over a dozen community groups in attendance to strategize and share best practices before launching outreach efforts.

Leading up to the count, these organizations are holding census workshops and playing census bingo to teach the vocabulary of the survey to ESL classes, and bringing conversations about the count to community forums to discuss the importance of the census. “We’re also going to be knocking on 4,000 doors over the next three months and doing about 3,500 phone calls,” Kathuria added.

Mounting an operation to tackle a census requires new tools and new databases, as organizations build their operation from the ground up. “Normally we use the voter activation network, but that is only a database of registered voters and we’re trying to target literally every single person in the state,” Kathuria said. “So we’ve been able to acquire household data and we send people out to that region and tell them to knock on every single door.”

But once the door is knocked, the challenge to start a real conversation often

begins. “Hindi isn’t the end-all, be-all South Asian language,” said Hasan of the Indo-American Center. “We have, of course, South Asians who are Indians and Pakistani, but we also have a Rohingya population here in Chicago. The Nepali population is also a significant South Asian population in Illinois specifically. In addition to Nepalis, there are a lot of Bengalis here. Outreach workers may even know multiple languages but they’ll know Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati. But there are certain South Asian populations that might just speak Nepali or Bengali.”

This diversity of nationalities fits into two ethnicity categories on the census: “Asian Indian” and “other Asian”; the latter category groups communities like Pakistanis and Bangladeshis with Laotian and Thai Americans. “All South Asian folks might not know that, yeah, like that’s supposed to be you,” said Kathuria, laughing.

With county, state, and national elections coming up in the next few months, civic en-

agement organizations are overwhelmed with the breadth of conversations they need to have with South Asian Americans while also staying on top of census outreach. “More than half of the folks we’re reaching out to, they’re not registered voters or might not be eligible to vote, so this is a much bigger operation,” said Kathuria. “But my hope is that by talking to a bigger group of people, we are able to register new voters and get new people drawn into the civic process.”

Jyoshi came to Chicago from Gujarat five years ago and initially stated that she wouldn’t even qualify to fill out the census because she isn’t a citizen, a common misconception among South Asians living and working in Chicago who believe the survey is only for those who have already gained citizenship.

Of the dozens of people I met on the streets near Devon or spoke with over the phone while calling businesses on the South Asian avenue on the city’s far north side, Sneha

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## NEWS & POLITICS

Sukhadia, a manager at Sukhadia's Sweets and Snacks who graduated from DePaul three years ago, was the only one who had a working knowledge of the impending count. Sukhadia is 24 years old and filled orders for sweets and salty snacks stacked behind the glass cases that surround the register as he explained his family's knowledge of the census. "Well that's probably because I'm younger, right?" he said. "My parents didn't even know that we got an e-mail [about the census being digitized]. They don't really have an idea about it."

"Every household will get a digital code," Hasan told me. "But the barcode, I've seen it, it's a little bit challenging, even for me. And I'm here as a millennial who thinks this procedure is confusing."

With the census going digital, the large portion of Chicago's South Asian population that isn't computer literate is getting shut out of the process. Jyoshi and Patel don't regularly use the Internet or check an e-mail inbox, a common experience for many of the 35 percent of adults in the United States who do not have Internet access at home. But in households like Sukhadia's, in which young people take the lead on managing communications and filling out the survey, going digital might net a few more respondents than the 2010 effort.

Within the South Asian American population, university students are often comparatively overrepresented in the census, bolstering the myth that the South Asian American community is largely well-educated, wealthy, young, and professional, and hiding the realities of life for South Asian seniors, undocumented South Asian Americans (the second largest undocumented population in the state), those who are housing insecure, and workers patching together three or four jobs to make ends meet.


Sukhadia's family of U.S. citizens is far less suspicious about the census than many of their neighbors. "I know a lot of store owners and people in the South Asian community more generally are on H-1 visas. They hear anything about the government, they'll run," he said.

"There's no question about citizenship," my mom, who was there with me, interjected as Sukhadia rang us up for *jalebis* and *aloo tikki chaat* by the pound. "There used to be one, though," Sukhadia said, a fact that South Asians in America haven't forgotten

in the several decades since the question was removed from the survey. In light of the Trump administration's well-publicized efforts to have a citizenship question reinstated in the census after 70 years and the Supreme Court's relatively quieter decision to prevent it from happening, for now, Sukhadia explained that the actual content of the survey factors less into his neighbors' decision than the rumors they've heard about it.

"Well it's Devon, so, yeah. People just get a little freaked out because they don't understand this stuff about the government," Sukhadia said of documented community members' feelings that filling out the census could put their undocumented relatives at risk.

It's not just fears about documentation that keep many low-income South Asians from participating in the census. "The first two questions in the census ask about how many people are staying in a place of residence and the third question asks about the ownership of the unit. "Often South Asian immigrant families on the north side are on these month-to-month leases," explained Hasan. "They're dealing with these tense landlord and tenant situations because the lack of affordable housing has families occupying every room in every unit. Their concern is if you submit X amount of people live in your house, somehow it'll loop back to their landlord."

"Broadly in immigrant communities right now trust in the government is so low," said Kathuria. "Trust that they have your best interest in mind and the idea that you should be giving your information to this entity through which you might have experienced the Muslim ban, the government separating families at the border, making it harder for you and your family to immigrate from the country you came from, eliminating spousal visas for H-1B holders. It also kind of tracks with what we see with Asian Americans and voting, which is that we're not. We don't vote at very high rates. The kind of structural racism that comes up in the political process makes folks feel like we don't have a place in public life necessarily or civic life. You get the idea just to kind of stay in your lane or do your own thing and just focus on yourself and your family." 

 @kiranamisra

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# STEPPEWOLF



# ARTS & CULTURE



Sarah Larson, Ashley NiCole, and Chris Santiago at the Lincoln Lodge bar  ALEXANDER GOULETAS

## COMEDY

# The unsung heroes of comedy

These photographers make Chicago's scene shine.

By RIMA PARIKH

If you've ever been to a comedy show—or, if you've ever been minding your own business at a bar before being ambushed by a comedy show—you know that Chicago's known for being a robust comedy city. Part of what makes it formidable is the strength of

Chicago's comedy photographers. You know the ancient adage: if a comedy show happens and no one sees it on Instagram, did it really even happen?

Comedy photographers work late hours, on weeknights and weekends, for not a lot of

money (if any), to make fancy photos readily available to comics. (Full disclosure: I myself am a comedian who has worked with the photographers mentioned below.) Comedians use photos for bigger opportunities, for their personal social media, and sometimes to convince their grandparents that yes, they are real comedians, even if they're not getting "paid" in "money."

Here are three major players in Chicago's comedy photography scene.

### Sarah Larson

[sarahelizabethlarson.com](http://sarahelizabethlarson.com)

[@selfoto](https://www.instagram.com/selfoto)

When Sarah Larson photographed her first comedy show in 2015, she had no idea that it would propel her into becoming one of Chicago's most prominent indie comedy photographers.

"I thought I wanted to own a flower shop," she says, laughing.

You can tell that Larson's spent most of her adult life working with gentle plants—she's the type of person who would offer a venomous spider a cup of coffee on its way to murdering people. It's that same perfectionist's touch of arranging a bouquet that also lends itself to darting around a room to snag a profile-pic-worthy photo, while being impercepti-



Billie Bullock at Parlour Car © SARAH ELIZABETH LARSON



Kenan Thompson at the Laugh Factory © ASHLEY NICOLE

ble to the audience.

Larson mostly photographs indie shows, which can range from the long-running Paper Machete in Uptown to shows at the Hideout to random bar shows run by 23-year-old men with no bed frames (my words, not hers).

It started after a childhood friend and comedian asked her to photograph his show. She was a hobbyist back then, using her point-and-shoot to document nature and friends. Soon after his show, she was asked to photograph Rat Pack Comedy, a now-defunct weekly show in Uptown. She almost turned it down. “I was just starting to do photography stuff, and I was like, ‘Oh, I don’t have any experience,’” she says. “I didn’t know anybody. I was really nervous.” But she accepted. As she got more serious, she enrolled in photography classes.

Soon she was turning down headshots and other sessions because they conflicted with her day job. She finally went full-time as a photographer in 2018. Now, she splits her time between photographing events and comedy shows.

Larson is all about candid moments, often shooting in the slivers of space between a setup and a punchline. “I like to capture moments in between jokes, like if a comic looks down and smiles, because they’re thinking about something,” she says. “Or interactions between the audience and comics. I’ve seen so many people’s sets where I know them and

I know when people are about to laugh.” She was influenced by album covers in high school, and considers that while editing. The more bombastic visuals and the stronger a venue’s lighting is, the better. You wouldn’t think an image of a PowerPoint detailing feces in horrific detail could look like a work of art until Larson photographs it.

She still gets nervous going to new shows. But one thing that’s delighted her about the scene is how tight-knit it is. “They’ve accepted me, I feel like, and support me and put my name out there,” she says. “And there’s so much talent in Chicago. To see how much comics have changed and grown over the years is pretty cool to watch. And I’m growing, too.”

As for the flower shop? “I worked there last week. For a few hours, just to help out,” she laughs.

#### Ashley NiCole’

[anfchicago.blogspot.com](http://anfchicago.blogspot.com)

[@anfchicago](https://www.instagram.com/anfchicago)

When you see photos of a performer on the Laugh Factory stage, for a second—if you’re foolish—you believe that the pink-yellow glow of the Laugh Factory’s stained glass backdrop is naturally washing the performer in sunset jewel tones. That’s how easy Ashley NiCole’ makes it look. She’s got a special spot at the Laugh Factory where she’ll shoot from multiple angles with the intention of grabbing a

shot that pops. Photos are living, breathing entities; when you’re looking at one of NiCole’s, she wants you to feel like you were at the party.

She’s been a photographer for 15 years, professionally for eight, and a comedy photographer for nearly four. In addition to Laugh Factory photos, NiCole’ freelance shoots indie shows, headshots, and even some food. NiCole’ is ambitious in an aspirational way. She works hard because she wants her work to be personally meaningful, not to be impressive to other people. Hearing her talk about photography makes you want to start writing your novel, or at the very least reorganize your sock drawer.

“No matter where you’re at, no matter what show you’re doing, there’s always a perfect spot,” she says. “No matter how crappy a location may look, there’s always a spot somewhere in the room where you can make that person look like the most important person in the whole world.”

NiCole’ was homeschooled and started photography and graphic design at 15 in suburban Indiana. As a creative kid, she struggled to focus so she started taking art classes, photography included. Her teacher noticed she had a good eye, and NiCole’ kept at it. She soon moved to Chicago to cut her teeth as a photographer.

“I wasn’t even trying to be in comedy. It just kind of happened,” she laughs. After an unexpected period of unemployment, NiCole’ in-

terviewed with Curtis Shaw Flagg, operations manager at the Laugh Factory, for a position as a graphic designer. He hired her on the spot. She credits him for providing a space to house her talents. Soon after, she began shooting shows and established a headshot studio within the club.

NiCole’s ascent didn’t happen overnight. Being a Black woman in a field that’s 79 percent white and predominantly male could be likened to jumping out of an airplane without a parachute. “A lot of people don’t realize how few people of color are actual professional photographers,” she says. “It’s really, really hard to be taken seriously, which is why I’ve been doing photography for so long, and now just finally getting my foot somewhere.”

With that in mind, NiCole’ has POC performers’ backs. She’s an expert in color-correcting photos for darker skin tones to ensure that photo subjects don’t look too dark, washed-out, or orange-skinned. “A lot of times people don’t consider the lighting hits different on Black and Brown tones than how they might hit on a white person,” she says.

Being a comedy photographer has embedded NiCole’ into the scene. “When something really cool happens, you get to cheer them on, you get to raise them up, you get to celebrate with them. When something bad happens, you get to cry,” she says. “I don’t have to be a comedian to share the love with the scene. I’m

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## ARTS & CULTURE



Clockwise from top: Carly Kane, Meg Indurti, and Molly Kearney in their home  CHRIS SANTIAGO

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very much part of the community and I really, really, really love that.”

**Chris Santiago**

[christophersantiago.com](http://christophersantiago.com)

[@chrisobscura](https://www.instagram.com/chrisobscura)

Chris Santiago loves to hang. In fact, he loves to hang so much that he'll drive around the city with his camera and lighting equipment just to photograph comedians in their homes. Well, that, and he's addicted to collecting things. And on a galaxy brain level, he needs a concrete reminder of his own existence. It all coalesces into why he's embarked on a project to document the Chicago comedy scene, which he calls a “visual, historical record of people that were doing this one specific thing during a span of time.” So far he's done more than 100 shoots of comedians in their homes. It's exhausting, but doable for someone who is the human equivalent of a bouncy ball, vibrating with frenetic energy.

First a photojournalist and then an art teacher for 13 years, Santiago started doing stand-up in 2016 as a way to be less isolated after going freelance to write a book. He soon found that the scene turned over periodically,

and his instinct to document kicked in. He embarked on the project in March 2018. “People come here, stay for five years or less, build up their material, and leave. And I wanted to capture that changing face of the scene,” he says. “And also to see people's stuff. I'm very curious about that.”

When choosing who to photograph, Santiago and the FBI have one thing in common: both of them got lists. He lists open mikers, seasoned veterans, representatives of cliques, unique voices in the scene, and neighborhood eccentrics. “If I go to an open mic and I see someone that is so weird, I'll be like, ‘I have to capture this person,’” he says.

It's also his way of historicizing how he wants to remember the scene—he tends to reach out to more comedians of color. “Being an Asian man, being a POC, I want to represent that part of the scene,” he says. “I think the collection will look more diverse than the scene actually is, which would be intentional.”

There's the intimacy of being in a private space that allows for more open and vulnerable conversation that's more substantial than, say, having a drunk conversation at 2 AM after a show. Santiago has BDE (Big Dad Energy), which means he respects bedtime. Plus, hang-


# ARTS & CULTURE

ing out during the day opens the opportunity for conversations about people's lives outside comedy.

"Some people are very, very concerned about me coming over, or embarrassed. But it doesn't matter. I won't make you look totally broke," he says, incredulous. "It's meant to honor the performer and the space they live in. We'll find something cool to do."

The portrait sessions indulge goofy surrealism. Santiago doesn't go into the sessions with a plan; he and the performer figure it out as they go. Sit on a stack of books. Wrap yourself in a blanket like a burrito. Hold your potted plant like it's a child. Call your mom. The more texture, the better.

The most interesting part of the process has been seeing how comics live, especially compared to his assumptions. "Some people are very settled down," he says. They're here for the long haul. And other people are like, 'I have a table. I have a laptop and this is where I write.' The most common item across apartments? A Nintendo Switch.

His dream is to house the photos in an archive at the Chicago Public Library, or even turn them into a coffee-table book. "Thirty years from now, some kid wants to know a little bit about what comedy looked like in Chicago whenever, and it's like, oh, there's this little document of it, of people that were around." 

 @rimaparikh12

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## POETRY CORNER

### Mother Poems

By *Beatriz Badikian*

1.  
The last time I saw her  
she was lying in a casket.  
With hardly any wrinkles – her skin  
smooth and pale, she always  
looked younger than her age:  
hair, still black and shiny at 92,  
lips full, cheeks rosy. If her eyes  
had been open, their large black pupils  
would've astonished you. Always  
a beautiful woman, she delighted to say  
that she looked exactly  
like her mother.
2.  
When I look in the mirror  
I see her.
3.  
In the old days – she used to say –  
parents were not like today. They  
didn't hug  
and kiss  
and cheer their children on. In  
this way she explained the absence  
of affection, the presence of distance.  
She would say  
*don't cry.*  
*You make me cry.*  
She would say  
*don't complain.*  
She would say  
*why are you unhappy? You have*  
*everything.*  
We didn't. We were  
like ostriches digging our heads  
in the sand, avoiding any unpleasantness.

4.  
I am 6 years old.  
The middle of the afternoon on a week day  
in Buenos Aires. After school, after lunch, to bed, to nap.  
I can see her sitting by the window,  
looking at the sidewalk across the street;  
the winter air filled with cold and wind,  
the sky grey. I imagine  
she wonders why she's there,  
what she's doing so far from home.  
But it's too late now.  
Home is many thousands of miles away.  
And she has a husband and a child.  
I imagine she gazes at the house across the street,  
its gleaming white walls and iron wrought entrance.  
Perhaps one of the neighbors is walking home  
from the day's errands saddled with shopping bags.  
The light in the room  
pale and weak  
and all I can see  
is her silhouette,  
sitting by the window,  
framed by the white drapes,  
a glimpse of trees outside,  
the light blue walls.  
I imagine she can see the afternoon get dark.  
Days are shortening,  
light failing too soon,  
and all that is left is darkness. And sadness.  
Unimaginable sadness.
5.  
A few flower wreaths surround the casket,  
a framed photo, six or seven chairs against  
the walls, and a curtain that separates  
our tiny room from the one next door.  
We saunter to the chapel for the blessing,  
to the graveyard for the burial. We must  
be finished in thirty minutes; other dead are waiting.  
Little time for speeches or songs, much less  
for prolonged sorrow. Friends and relatives hug me,  
kiss me, offer me bottles of water.  
This is a simple funeral on a scorching afternoon  
in Athens. I don't cry. I can't cry. I am not allowed.

*Beatriz Badikian-Gartler has been writing for over fifty years and has published numerous poetry collections, a novel, and essays. She also teaches writing and literature.*

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"That's my thing: pretending to be ready while learning on the spot, and executing a favorable rendition good enough to put up in front of a paying audience."  ELIAS RIOS

COMEDY

## Lisa Beasley cooks up her own opportunities

How she went from cracking jokes at church to touring with one of the world's comedy giants to writing her own recipe for success.

By LISA BEASLEY

**M**y house smells like slow-cooked pot roast and marijuana. Why?

Well, I'm slow cooking a pot roast and simmering marijuana, water, and margarine (though the recipe called for *real* butter) to make weed butter. The cartoons my four-year-old daughter just left play noisily in the background. Every time she leaves to stay with her dad for a few days, by the time they are down the street I'm rolling my first blunt to the theme song of *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*.

I cook real good comfort food for myself on the three days a week that my daughter, Madison, is away with her dad. Wow, I have a four-year-old child.

Around this time five years ago, in 2015, I gave up my studio apartment to travel in a musty 12-passenger van with the Second City National Touring Company as the newest member of BlueCo. I was listening to five adults make a bit out of every sentence, drinking my weight in Jameson from a flask I once used as a prop, and figuring out what my road to comedy success could look like. With BlueCo boasting alumni like Amy Poehler, Jordan Klepper, Tina Fey, and Stephen Colbert, I couldn't help but tune out the bits, stare out into the middle-of-nowhere fields of America, and fantasize about where this part of the journey could take me. Would I eventually write my own show that would get picked up by a major network and last for years? Would I write a show that would tank and get cancelled before the first season was over? Would putting up with earning \$110 a week, scraping together my out-of-town per diem to finance my life in Chicago, and rewriting the end of this Angela Shelton monologue to update the now-outdated-yet-still-applicable

references get me to my dream? Would the person I wanted to be when I grew up, the person I'd been fantasizing about since I was my daughter's age, suddenly appear now that I am at *the Second City*?

I became the first Black woman at Second City to perform on a resident stage throughout her entire pregnancy. I was the first Black woman to be a part of a show that cast two Black women at the same time. I was not the first Black woman to voice grievances about not having proper working conditions.

In September 2016, with a one-year-old and daily mounting frustrations, it was time to go. Not only would I not be returning for another revue, but I broke my contract and left the show early. Performing onstage, what I thought to be my safest space in the world, had become tainted and disrespected. In 2019 I went to a therapist who acknowledged my PTSD and the dark cloud of creative discouragement that hung over me.

Quitting Second City turned into an unexpected four-year break away from the thing that I loved to do and have done all my life.

How did I get here, still in Chicago, designing my own flyer for my own show and another for a friend's show that I produce? Meal prepping for a kid-free three days, mentally preparing to get my hustle on as I navigate the vastly unfamiliar territory that is my comedy career? I'm too tired to check e-mails, finish that script, get those edits in, update my website, sift through the 500 new photos of me to find one to post Tuesday around noon, ya know, the same time I plan to announce that my 420 comedy show tickets are on sale (STRATEGY!). I'll wear sweatpants on stage, the audience will roar, and I will have fun. Oh, of this I am sure.

In 2008, after graduating from college, where I majored in jazz and spent most of my time in student government, the royal court, and singing in small bands throughout the city of Memphis, I followed my best friend Justin Key to Los Angeles to attend the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. I did the dual musical theater/acting track for two full years. I had access to large practice rooms with mirrors and pianos. I performed full-out everyday. For some reason, I knew that this would be my last opportunity to do nothing but that. I knew that adulthood loomed in the foreground and soon I would have to chase practical opportunities (like graphic design) that allowed me to afford to chase my dream of performing.

When I moved to Chicago from LA, my journey started at a Black-owned theater, eta Creative Arts Foundation. I was cast in my first show after singing a song from a fake show during my audition. Runako Jahi was my first director, and I still acknowledge him as my theater dad. I was cast as the comedic relief in that dramatic play set in the 60s. I was supposed to learn “*C’est Si Bon*” by Eartha Kitt. I didn’t. One day I was asked to sing it. I thought, “Nobody here knows French.” I sang the song with made-up French-sounding words, and when I was done, my castmates and Runako were impressed. I went home and learned it for real in case I had inspired anybody to start learning French only for me to be discovered as a fraud.

That’s my thing: pretending to be ready while learning on the spot, and executing a favorable rendition good enough to put up in front of a paying audience.

I met Rueben Echols while performing my second play at eta, and he recruited me

to work at Black Ensemble Theater. I performed in kids theater during the day and on the mainstage at night. At the kids show, we were given the freedom to “make the character your own.” It came naturally. I had been making things my own since my days at Gary Christian Center, a nondenominational church that really became my first audience. You need somebody to do announcements? Perfect time to joke in front of an entire congregation. Drama club? Sign me up, please. Praise dance? Youth choir? My church experience was really a Christian version of *Fame*. It’s where I started paying my performing and rehearsal dues. At Black Ensemble Theater, I got a chance to do it all again—sing in beautiful ensembles, dance intricate choreography, and perform shows for a live crowd.

Soon I was encouraged to reach out to the Second City. I had never heard of the place and at the time, I was looking for the next paying show I could be cast in. At my intro to the comedy theater, people were talking about paths, buckets, and the training center. But my eyes floated to the casting wall that displayed all of the current paid working talent. The question “What do you want?” was asked, and I said, “I want to be on that wall.”

Classes at Second City? No, thank you. I had just racked up massive student loan debt training in LA and was already getting paid to do shows as an actor in Chicago. Instead, I booked a role at Court Theatre’s *The Mountaintop*. What did I want? A job.

I returned to Second City after closing *The Mountaintop* just as they were launching the Bob Curry Fellowship, a program dedicated to training underrepresented voices. There, I met my closest friends, friends who shared a lot of my thoughts, concerns, and questions

about our career paths.


The more tumultuous my Second City life became, the more I craved to just simply play on stage with people I trusted. I’ve been fortunate, then, that I’ve gotten to play with my friends in 3Peat, a group formed a few years ago by Black improvisers who were tired of being the only Black person in an improv group. They held down Monday nights at iO and would often ask me to join. I valued my Monday nights, and the last thing I wanted to do was leave my kid and the south side to go to another improv theater. But the players at 3Peat were becoming a much-needed community outside of the white improv world.

Those Monday night shows at iO and our road trips were like my Second City National TourCo BlueCo days reimagined, but with faces that looked like mine. Nobody was concerned about “getting a stage,” everybody was hungry for what was next, and nary a cultural reference of mine hit the stage floor because it was held tenderly by a Black playmate of mine. “Yes AND, Vanessa went to have BIG FUN!” The audience would laugh so hard whether they knew the reference or not, because we set it up sweet and we would be laughing enough anyway.

We’ve done some really cool things together, like creating sketches for Comedy Central. In our first round of pitches, *The Blackening*, written by Dewayne Perkins, was selected for us to shoot. By this time, some of 3Peat’s members lived in Los Angeles and New York. After multiple calls, notes from Comedy Central, and a few video chats, we headed to New York to shoot overnight in a big, creepy house in the woods. The sketch premiered on

April 13, 2018, and within the first few hours we got two million views. The views and shares kept going up, and we eventually got up to 15 million, which led to us working with Comedy Central more. We were performing all over and enjoyed being on set with each other. It further opened my mind to the world of my possibilities. Not only can I do this, but I can do this and get paid and be around people I like and have fun. What do I want? This is what I want. I want to work in a healthy environment where I get to make art that I think is funny and cool with people who I love. And those environments, sometimes, have to be self-created.

I’m transitioning from my dream of performing live onstage to the dream of being in film and TV. Sometimes the transition is weird, unrecognizable, and lonely. The transition feels less like a decision and more like a deliberate set of longterm choices, strategies, teams, connections, appointments, and meetings. I’ve grown accustomed to not performing nightly, but I really do miss the instant gratification. Ultimately, being in the right environment is more important to me.

Now, between producing one-off comedy shows, I develop my own story ideas and form writing partnerships with people I admire. I write webseries that I want to make. I design title-card art. I’m going back to finding my love for performing, period. And if I want to perform at this level, I have to create some of those opportunities myself because they don’t come fast enough on their own. I create those opportunities wherever I am. And today, it’s in my kitchen slow cooking a pot roast and simmering weed butter. 

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The 2020 Lincoln Lodge cast

BY SARAH ELIZABETH LARSON

## COMEDY

# Long live the Lincoln Lodge

The long-running DIY institution settles into a permanent home.

By MEGGIE GATES

It's a Sunday and the theater is packed, an abnormality for any comedy spot in Chicago. Around 40 people situate themselves in chairs and chat with friends, patiently waiting for the mayhem about to ensue. The space used to be an old clothing store but is now home to the new Lincoln Lodge venue, complete with three theaters, two classrooms, and a bar. The show is *Sautéed Stand Up: A Cooking Comedy Competition* hosted by Nathan Hall and Tad Walters. Judged by a panel of chefs, two teams of stand-ups face each other head on with their best material, all while cooking a dish of their choice to present the judges.

Lifted from typical cooking show setups,

the comics not only run through the motions of their set, but also play within a spoof version of rhythms you might see on *Top Chef* or *Cutthroat Kitchen*. Chef Maija Barnes nods her head before choosing a winner. "This one," she says about the rice pilaf Eggo waffle treat created by Sohrab Forouzesh and Meg Indurti. "This is the plate for me."

This is one of many shows currently featured at the Lincoln Lodge, an independent comedy theater at 2040 N. Milwaukee, right where Logan Square meets Bucktown. Like many DIY theaters, the space is run by comedians in the scene, artists who have taken it upon themselves to create environments that let "far-from-the-norm" comedy thrive. Tight

Five Productions oversees all shows, classes, special events, and building issues that come with the venue but as for actually running and producing the shows, that's up to a curated group of local cast members familiar with running comedy shows around town, the ones in touch with people from the community.

"The owner, Mark Geary, really wanted independent comedy to still have a space in Chicago," says lead cast member Deanna Ortiz. "As opposed to other cities that will maybe have one big club that books a couple comics, he wanted to make sure there's room for everybody to do whatever weird idea they want, like a cooking show where you might start a fire or *FreakFest* with Megan Stalter."

Enthusiastic performers have come together in recent years to open independent comedy spots of their own, like Logan Square Improv, Bughouse Theater, and the Juice Box, to name a few. Though all share the same humble beginnings, the Lincoln Lodge has a history that far surpasses its predecessors, producing a long line of steady talent, such as Hannibal Bures, Pete Holmes, and Cameron Esposito. It wasn't easy, however. The show only recently found a home of its own after 21 long years.

"A big struggle was when the Lincoln Restaurant, our host venue of 15 years, closed, leaving us homeless," says Geary. "We spent three years at Subterranean in Wicker Park and two years at the Newport Theater in Wrigleyville before opening our new space and 'forever home.'"

Tom Lawler had approached Geary about starting a showcase room in the back of the Lincoln Restaurant in 2000. Geary's production skills from his DIY mike at the Red Lion on Lincoln and Lawler's innovative marketing savvy were a perfect match for the endeavor. Back then there was barely a stand-up scene, with only a few open mikes and Zanies compared to the much more robust community of today. Many of the showcases were on the south side, thanks to the notoriety of the Compass Players at 55th and College Avenue and clubs like All Jokes Aside in the South Loop and Jokes and Notes at 47th and King Drive—all have since shuttered.

Seeing an opportunity for a weekly show, the two put a spotlight on the up-and-coming comedians hitting mikes every night. The process helped kick-start the careers of many of the major players performing comedy today, half the reason comedians are eager to get involved with the theater.

"We had a lot of comedians before they were famous, people passing through like Nicole Byer," says Stephanie Weber, a cast member who's been involved with Lincoln Lodge for six years now. "The people who have performed here is a long, impressive list that would make anyone proud to be a part of this."

The road to becoming a well-established pioneer, however, was long and filled with lots of trial and error. Between disputes with contractors and City Hall postponing sign-off on projects and plans over the last 18 months, it's a miracle the doors finally opened in January. Despite years of looking for a venue, Geary

## ARTS & CULTURE

never gave up.

“The last two years have been hell,” Geary says. “Luckily we have a benefactor, Ed Toolis, who stuck with us and provided the funding we needed to wade through the nightmare of dealing with the whole process with the city.”

It took the support of many in the community eager to see the Lincoln Lodge thrive to keep the show financially afloat before finding its own home. Through fundraising and donation-based shows, the owners have managed to pool resources to keep the Lincoln Lodge’s name alive.

The show and the venue are not one and the same—the addition of the latter requires a lot more hands on deck. The long-running show has been kept together by its cast members, a rotating group of people tasked with handling what goes into making the Lincoln Lodge perfect. What started off as a showcase at the back of a pancake house has now grown into three theaters, with capacity of 130 people, 80 people, and 30 people. The venue demands more of its cast performers now that simply running lights on a Saturday isn’t enough. They gladly give up their time to the Lodge knowing the opportunities that may come with it.

“We do menial tasks like setting up chairs, take tickets, bus tables, and we have divided tasks every week that include writing newsletters, social posts, and e-mailing press contacts,” Weber says. “On top of that, the cast rotates performing on the shows every week. We work together to make the show what it is every week.”

Keeping things inclusive is incredibly important to the people at the Lincoln Lodge. In 2016, Lincoln Lodge members emphasized how excited they were to finally have an even ratio of male-to-female cast members. The 20th season features Olivia Perry, Stephanie Weber, Alex Dragicevich, Chris Higgins, Gena Gephart, Britt Ferguson, Kyle Scanlan, Deanna Ortiz, Jarrell Scott Barnes, Jessica Hong, Dan Drees, and Molly Kearney. When deciding who to bring in, the 12 have a strict democratic system where each decides on comics who are doing well or haven’t had enough opportunities to perform.

“Adding producers who are WOC or queer has helped highlight those performers on the show. Having a diverse cast lends to diverse booking,” Weber says. “That’s true for any show or institution. Diversify the people making the decisions, and the decisions will be diverse. Duh!”

“I remember we were at Subterranean, and

this woman came up to me after the show and said she was so glad there was a girl on stage because sometimes when she had seen shows there wasn’t many girls,” Ortiz says. “There’s always going to be a person of color in the audience who wants to hear their point of view, and I think that’s something in our bookings that we are so aware of. There are so many great comedians to choose from, we can’t just keep picking the same six people who do well at the Lodge.”

On its first Sunday, *Sauteéed Stand Up* runs into a few issues at the new Lincoln Lodge. There’s worry of a fire breaking out—two extension cords are destroyed in the process of running two electric griddles, a mini oven, and an induction burner, and a fuse goes out, shutting down the power equipment immediately. The hosts handle it with ease. Then, a heckler gets on stage and challenges comedian Beckett Kenny for his queer material, potentially the worst decision one could make at a show where performers are given knives. The crowd boos the heckler as his friend leads him off stage. Lodge castmates reach out to Kenny after his set to apologize, and the audience applauds once the heckler’s gone. The bartender memorizes his face before he leaves, making sure he will not be let in if he comes back. Things fall apart, but everything is OK in the end. Setbacks can’t stop the energy of the people who have worked so hard to see this through, not when they finally have their own theater.

“We’re good at handling hecklers who get out of control because I know the cast members behind the scenes will help me and have my back in terms of asking people to be quiet,” Ortiz says. “I would hate for people to think the Lincoln Lodge space is somewhere that is not a welcoming space for audience and performers.”

This has always been the way of the Lincoln Lodge, handling situations thrown at them with stride. Finding a venue took almost two decades and yet the dream burned brighter than the letdown. Now the group finally has a physical space to maintain the practice of putting up shows they love in a supportive space for everyone. Life can be hard for a comic testing material, especially if they’re a part of a marginalized community. Even with no security and a tight budget, the Lodge manages to handle concerned patrons, clients, and class members with utmost concern. Here, their home is everyone’s home. **✎**

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### MARCH

#### Drugstore Makeup

Suz Ballout hosts the debut of this monthly showcase featuring the best women, nonbinary, and POC comics in the city. The inaugural lineup includes Sharron Palm, Sunny Grissom, Mo Good, Maddie Wiener, and more. *Fri 3/20, 8 PM, Half Sour, 755 S. Clark, halvesourchicago.com. FREE*

#### FreakFest

The spiritual sister to the dearly departed (from Chicago) *Helltrap Nightmare*, anything goes at this monthly variety show that bills itself as a "wonderful night of (barely) controlled chaos." Devin Middleton hosts Tina Arfaee, Emma Grace, Aaron Klopfer, Bailey Inman, and more. *Mon 3/23, 9 PM, the Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, facebook.com/FreakFestChicago, \$8.*

#### Brendan Gay

The Chicago expat returns home from New York City to record his debut album. *Fri 3/20, 8 and 10 PM, the Lincoln Lodge, 2040 N. Milwaukee, thelincolnlodge.com, \$15.*

#### History Shmistory

If you've ever wondered what Nikola Tesla's stand-up was like, then this is the show for you. This show features comedians performing jokes as a historical figure. This time around includes Stephanie Weber as Johnny Appleseed, Analicia Kocher as Jimmy Hoffa, and Alex Collyard as Tesla. *Thu 3/19, 8 PM, the Lincoln Lodge, 2040 N. Milwaukee, thelincolnlodge.com, \$5.*

#### Las Locas Comedy: ¡The Chingona History Month Show!

Every month at Dstrkt Bar and Grill the show features a lineup of primarily Latinx stand-ups—and a few lovingly called "honorary locas." This month check out Ines Bellina, Jillian Ebanks, Anna Lucero, Mo Good, and headliner Deanna Ortiz. *Sat 3/21, 8 PM, Dstrkt, 1540 N. Milwaukee, laslocascomedy.com, \$5.*

#### So Tacky: Next Tack Model

Every month this variety show tackles a new theme, and in March that theme is *America's Next Top Model*. Stand-up Kal Jazeera and drag queen K'hole Kardashian host the night, which includes *ANTM* trivia. *Wed 3/18, 8 PM, Tack Room, 1807 S. Allport, tackroomchicago.com, \$5.*

#### Strip Joker: Kiss Me I'm Queer

Scott Duff hosts this edition of everyone's favorite body-positive stand-up show. This month's lineup includes Adam Gilbert, Deanna Ortiz, Annie Russell, and Spencer D. Blair. A dance party with a photo booth follows the performance. *Sat 3/14, 10 PM, Mary's Attic, 5400 N. Clark, facebook.com/stripjoker, \$13, \$25 for VIP, which includes a front-row seat and a complimentary drink.*

### APRIL

#### Maria Bamford

Fresh off the release of her latest special, *Weakness Is the Brand* (watch it on Amazon Prime!), Bamford hits the road to spread the joy of her unique brand of comedy that combines storytelling, characterwork, and heart-wrenching honesty. *4/30-5/3, Thu 8 PM, Fri-Sat 7 and 9 PM, Sun 7 PM, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, thedentheatre.com, \$35-\$55.*

#### Diamond Comedy Hour

On the first Friday of every month producers and hosts Alex Kumin, Elise Fernandez, Carly Kane, and Ali Drapos

Maria Bamford ROBYN VON SWANK

put together a luxurious night featuring some of the best local comics in the biz complete with a glamour shot photo booth and plenty of bubbly. *Fri 4/3, 10 PM, the Laugh Factory, 3175 N. Broadway, facebook.com/DiamondComedyHour, \$20.*

#### Femmes the Rules

Sarah Mowrey brings their LA showcase to Chicago. The rules are simple: male comedians are paired with female and nonbinary comedians. The men can be regularly interrupted and given strikes based on arbitrary rules, then the women/nonbinary comics perform interruption-free! The local pairings include Deanna Ortiz and Chris Higgins; Elise Fernandez and Sohrab Forouzes; and Casey Larwood and Tucker Brookshire. *Mon 4/6, 7 PM, the Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, hideoutchicago.com, \$8.*

#### Freshman: A Show About Your Terrible Early Art

Every second Thursday of the month performers share their early writing, songs, paintings, short stories, videos, and more art originally created in earnest for a cringe-worthy night of nostalgia and comedy. *Thu 4/9, 8 PM, the Lincoln Lodge, 2040 N. Milwaukee, thelincolnlodge.com, \$5.*

#### Late Late Breakfast's Tournament of Champions

A special edition of this stand-up/game show hybrid forces 32 comedians to duke it out over the course of five rounds, all hoping to be crowned 2020's King of Breakfast. Tickets include a free breakfast buffet. *Sat 4/4, 2 PM, the Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, latelatebreakfast.com, \$10.*

#### Peace Camp

This stand-up showcase features Jewish and Muslim comics to "prove that [they] can live and laugh with each other in peace." The lineup includes Suz Ballout, Lia Berman, Kal Jazeera, Eunji Kim, Sabeen Sadiq, and Jeremy Drazner. *Sat 4/18, 10 PM, the Second City, de Maat Studio Theatre, 230 W. North, secondcity.com, \$13.*

#### Sex Positive

Ashley Victoria and Elias Rios host this sex-centric variety show featuring storytelling, burlesque, comedy, and music, all while answering anonymous sex questions you might be too afraid to ask. The April edition features Carming Tatum, Emerald Catron, Evelyn Troutman, Courtney Crary, and Jake Cannon. *Sun 4/5, 8 PM, the Newport Theater, 956 W. Newport, sexpositivecomedy.bpt.me, \$15.*

### MAY

#### Doug Loves Movies

Comedian Doug Benson pits his comic friends and entertainment professionals against each other in a weekly movie-trivia competition. He brings it to town for a live taping. *Tue 5/4, 8 PM, Zanies, 5437 Park Place, Rosemont, rosemont.zanies.com, \$20.*

#### Roast: The Musical

Character assassination celebrates its fourth anniversary of famous figureheads, real and imagined, with a take-

down of some of musical theater's most beloved and maligned characters. *Sun 5/3, 7 PM, Laugh Factory, 3175 N. Broadway, laughfactory.com/clubs/chicago, \$10.*

#### Summer Show

Spencer D. Blair hosts this DIY, BYOB outdoor variety show featuring improvisors, actors, musicians, sketch comedians, and more soaking up the sun. *Sun 5/3, 7 PM, RSVP for details, facebook.com/TheSummerShow.*

#### Whitmer Thomas

The comedian and musician performs stand-up and songs from his recent HBO special, *The Golden One*, and tries out some new stuff with a special guest. *Thu 5/28, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, lh-st.com, \$15.*

### JUNE

#### Mike Birbiglia

The comedian and storyteller's last special (and Broadway show), *The New One*, was about life—on this tour he'll be working on new material all about death. *Fri 6/19, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$39.50-\$60.*

#### Camp: A Comedy Show

Tessa Orzech and Samantha Berkman celebrate four years of their weekly, summer camp-inspired stand-up showcase. Expect come of the city's funniest comics, friendship bracelets, and plenty of bug juice. *Mon 6/8, 8 PM, Village Tap, 2055 W. Roscoe, facebook.com/camp-comedyshow. FREE*

#### Ronny Chieng

After the recent release of his Netflix special, *Asian Comedian Destroys America!*, the stand-up and *Daily Show* correspondent hits the road on his "Hope You Get Rich" tour. *Fri 6/26, 10 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, thaliahallchicago.com, \$25-\$40.*

#### Doughboys

Hosts Mike Mitchell and Nick Wiger return to Chicago for a live taping of their podcast that covers all things chain restaurants with a special guest. Stop by or tune in to see which local chain they cover—last time they were in town they visited Portillo's and Lou Malnati's. *Tue 6/16, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, thaliahallchicago.com, \$35-\$70.*

### JULY

#### Buffering the Vampire Slayer

Jenny Owens Young and Kristin Russo bring their *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* musical recap podcast to Chicago for the very first time. Start thinking about your nominees for the sexual tension awards now. *Sun 7/12, 8:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, sleeping-village.com, \$30, \$25 in advance.*

#### Tuxedo Cat Comedy

The weekly stand-up stalwart, produced by Rebecca Fass and Jerry Tran, celebrates seven years of showcasing rising local comedians and dance parties. *Thu 7/16, 8 PM, Beauty Bar, 1444 W. Chicago, facebook.com/TuxedoCatComedy, \$5 suggested donation.*

#### Melissa Villaseñor

See the criminally underused *Saturday Night Live* cast member show off her solo comedy and music talents. *7/9-7/11: Thu 8 PM, Fri-Sat 7:30 and 9:30 PM, Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee, thedentheatre.com, \$25-\$40. FI*

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## REVIEW

# Nothing plain about this *Jane*

J. Nicole Brooks's *Her Honor Jane Byrne* delves into the complexities of public housing and more.

By **KERRY REID**

**T**his ain't Walter Lee Younger's Chicago no more," declares Black Che (Robert Cornelius), a sort of griot of the housing projects in J. Nicole Brooks's *Her Honor Jane Byrne*, now receiving a rich, riotous, and soul-searching world premiere at Lookingglass Theatre. The play focuses specifically on the three weeks in 1981 when Jane Byrne—the first woman elected mayor of a major city in the U.S.—moved to an apartment in Cabrini-Green to highlight the poor living conditions in the projects. But the play's emotional and moral timeline encompasses so many other elements that, while certainly very different in tone and narrative structure from

Glenview in 1959, leaving her a young widow with a toddler daughter. His ghostly presence, played by Josh Odor, shows up in times of trouble for her in the play, and also serves as a noble counterpart to Jay McMullen (Frank Nall), her somewhat-clownish second spouse.

Dunford's Byrne functions a bit like Tommy Carcetti, the ambitious and putatively reform-minded Baltimore mayor in HBO's *The Wire*. And just as that show was slapped with the label "Dickensian," one is tempted to do the same with *Her Honor Jane Byrne*, which is stuffed to the gills with powerbrokers, hustlers, and everyday people, trying to figure out how to live together. But Byrne ultimately comes across as more naive than Carcetti-calculating. Was the move to Cabrini a publicity stunt? Sure, but publicity stunts can reap public benefits. The problem, as Brooks anatomizes it here, is that even her mentorship with Richard J. Daley left Byrne unprepared for just how deeply enmeshed the roots of the problems facing her city were.

It's not just the establishment figures, represented here by glad-handing Charlie Swibel, head of the Chicago Housing Authority, and crooked First Ward alderman Fred Roti (both played with brio by Thomas J. Cox) who get in Byrne's way. They want things to continue pretty much as they always have. (At one point Cox's Swibel laments, "I could make this city beautiful if people got out of my way!") It's also the residents of Cabrini, who have tons of reasons to distrust the woman who is just the



# THEATER

*Her Honor Jane Byrne* **by** LIZ LAUREN

latest politico to seek their votes on thin vows of “this time things will be different.” Marion Stamps (TaRon Patton), a tenants’ rights activist mentored by both Medgar Evers and Black Panther Fred Hampton and deeply scarred by their assassinations, tosses verbal firecrackers at the mayor at a community meeting, reminding her of all the promises unkept and the role that police violence has played in her community—making the increased police presence that accompanies Byrne to Cabrini less than welcome.

Yet as Cornelius’s Che, the most gloriously Dickens-by-way-of-Chicago character onstage, points out to Tracy Walsh’s nameless Reporter, the story in the projects is also “Cain Killed Abel.” Gang violence ruled this turf from its 19th-century days as “Little Hell,” when Irish and Italian immigrants fought for a toehold. (Walsh’s character feels underutilized, though her presence allows Che to go off on some splendid rhetorical flights.) Yet Che also reminds Walsh’s character (who shows up the first time in Cabrini wearing a bulletproof vest under her sweater) that the project is a community—and one that functioned pretty well until white flight kicked in. “Funny how the city works,” he muses. “We all run from each other. Well, they run from us.”

Yu Shibagaki’s set combines the concrete-and-graffiti world of Cabrini with a wall of video monitors on which we see both archival documentary footage and close-ups of the actors. In one particularly moving segment, Tiger (Nicole Michelle Haskins), Che’s niece, is

stuck in a broken project elevator, which leads to her losing her job. (Dunford’s Byrne steps in to help her get rehired.) We see only her back to the metal gate facing the stage, but her face, suffused with frustration and rage, fills the monitors. There’s a distinct Brechtian element here as well, with supertitles functioning like chapter headings, such as “Street Tribes, Christians, Liquor Stores, and Lakefront Liberals.”

The entire ensemble, directed by Brooks, makes these characters all larger than life, and yet entirely relatable and human. (Well, other than Nall’s mobster Tony Spilotro, whom Dunford’s Byrne calls in Palm Springs late one night to warn about getting his drugs out of the projects, and who is suitably cold-blooded.) Almost nobody in this story created the conditions they’re dealing with, and though Byrne’s miscalculations around what it takes to fix the problems feel painful, Brooks doesn’t demand that we view her as a cynical woman. Rather, she allows Byrne and everyone else who crosses paths here to be full of life, flawed, and unapologetic.

And though it’s easy to despair at seeing the civic problems in *Her Honor Jane Byrne* repeat through time, it’s also worth noting that Stamps, 11 years after Byrne’s brief residence, did help negotiate the only citywide (if short-lived) gang truce in Chicago history. Cabrini is gone. Segregation and housing crises remain. But Brooks’s play reminds us that there are still people in this city looking to get into good trouble as they defy history and the odds. **R**

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# THEATER

## REVIEW

### A strong *Constitution* for our troubled times

Heidi Schreck builds a compelling dramatic coalition out of civics, feminism, and personal history lessons.

By **KELLY KLEIMAN**

At the very start of *What the Constitution Means to Me*, author Heidi Schreck (charmingly played here by Maria Dizzia) emphasizes that contrary to the assertions of her debate competitor, the Constitution is not a patchwork quilt. Neither is the play: instead, it's a tightly woven narrative masquerading as a casual patchwork of personal reminiscences, civics lessons, and feminist observations.

In this it resembles Anton Chekhov's comic

**RR** **WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME** Through 4/12: Tue 7:30 PM, Wed 2 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 and 7:30 PM; Wed 3/18 and 4/1, 7:30 PM only; Sun 3/15, 3/29, and 4/12, 2 PM only, Broadway Playhouse, 835 N. Michigan, 800-775-2000, [broadwayinchicago.com](http://broadwayinchicago.com), \$30-\$85.

monologue "Smoking is Bad for You," which purports to be a lecture on the title topic but is in fact the tale of the speaker's unhappy marriage, frustrated ambitions, and bullying wife. This is relevant because there's a mention in *Constitution* of some critics who seem to believe that Schreck's play isn't constructed at all, but random, like found poetry or readings from an old diary. That in turn feels like an allusion to the long-held belief that what women do (including quilting!) couldn't possibly be thoughtful or intentional. But when Schreck takes the arrangement of her work from the master of playwriting structure, it's beyond dispute that she knows exactly what she's doing, and why.

So I don't just love *Constitution* because it activates my long-dormant lawyer self, nor because it strokes my prejudices, though it certainly does both of those. I love it because it showcases the skill of revealing everything while seeming to talk about nothing in particular. The show, a whole world contained in a drop of water, is ostensibly a recreation of the author's experiences as a 15-year-old earning college tuition by participating in American Legion speech tournaments on the title topic.

Along the way, we learn about Heidi's mother and grandmother and great-great-grandmother, about the 19th-century American west practice of purchasing brides from Europe, about domestic violence and sexual abuse and rape, and about Amendments Nine and Fourteen. And at the end, the still-energetic Dizzia engages in a debate with a 15-year-old competitive debater (the earnest Jocelyn Shek at the performance I saw, alternating with Rosdely Ciprian) about whether it's worth trying to save the document at all. It is the platonic ideal performance for this administration, this year, this week, in which the last serious woman presidential candidate had to drop out because none of the misogyny described here has disappeared.

The two women are ably complemented by Mike Iveson, playing the chief of the American Legion Post and, for much of the show, seated silently on the stage as a representative of all men, and all male power, in the world. It's a tribute to the actor's likability (that word!) that he manages to do this without making every woman in the audience want to kill him.

*Constitution* (presented in a touring production with Broadway in Chicago, directed by Oliver Butler) is funny as well as sobering, and includes the best-handled audience participation segment ever. The finest moment came when, asked about her vision for herself in 30 years, Jocelyn said, "I'll be president," and a man shouted from the audience, "I hope not the first one!" though he might have meant woman, Asian, or both. You could feel the whole audience smile.

Somehow, the COVID-19 epidemic seems much too spot-on a metaphor for where we are as a society right now. Avoid other people, fear them, make sure you don't touch them; isolate yourself. That's been the message coming from the White House for three years and 53 days (but who's counting?). Going to see *What the Constitution Means to Me*—in fact, going to any theater, or concert, or art exhibit, or postcard party, or rally, or polling place—is the best answer to that atomizing message. That's what the Constitution means to me. **R**



In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play) **R**

## OPENING

### Foreplay

Sarah Ruhl's story of Victorian repression falls just short with Idle Muse.

Imagine Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" crossed with a sex-positivity workshop and you've got the outlines for Sarah Ruhl's 2009 *In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play)*, now in a revival with Idle Muse Theatre Company under Morgan Manasa's direction. Catherine Givings (Kristen Alesia), a young doctor's wife in a New York "spa town" circa the 1880s, wonders what her husband (Joel Thompson) is doing with all those neurasthenic female patients who make interesting noises behind the door. Turns out, he's using an early version of a vibrator on them to release the "excess fluid" in their wombs and thus reduce their "hysteria." (SCIENCE!) But Catherine has her own anxieties as a young mother, exacerbated by having to hire a wet nurse, Elizabeth (Michelle R. Bester), to help feed her daughter.

Now toss in a nascent lesbian attraction between Sabrina (Christina Renee Jones), one of Dr. Givings's patients, and his assistant, Annie (Erin Gallagher)—a woman as skilled with ancient Greek as gynecology—and Catherine's growing fascination with Leo (Chad Bay), her husband's lone male hysteric patient (an artist, naturally). You've got the makings for a Victorian sex romp.

But Ruhl takes the story in surprising directions that go against the grain of the surface narrative about sexual repression and desire. Opening night, the actors struggled at times to make those connections. Alesia has bright-eyed vivacity, but starts at a high pitch and doesn't leave herself a lot of room to grow emotionally as the story demands. However, Bester's Elizabeth—a Black woman mourning the loss of her own child while nursing an idle white woman's baby—brings in a steadying sobriety that grounds us in class-based reality. Overall, it's an amusing production that

doesn't quite reach a satisfying climax. —**KERRY REID** **IN THE NEXT ROOM (OR THE VIBRATOR PLAY)** Through 4/5: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3 PM; also Wed 3/25, 8 PM, Edge Theater Off-Broadway, 1133 W. Catalpa, 773-340-9438, [idlemuse.org](http://idlemuse.org), \$20, \$15 seniors over 65 and students any age; all Thu performances \$10 industry.

**RR** **Mother and child reunion** *Judy and Liza—Once in a Lifetime* shows the bond between two divas.

This cabaret by singer-actors Nancy Hays and Alexa Castelveccchi pays homage to two of the greatest performers of the 20th century: Judy Garland and her daughter Liza Minnelli, who teamed up in November 1964 for a pair of concerts at the historic London Palladium, one of which was televised. At the time, Judy was a 42-year-old veteran of movies, TV, and vaudeville, while Minnelli was an 18-year-old fledgling on the brink of a promising career. Accompanied by a trio led by pianist Robert Ollis, Hays and Castelveccchi don't try to imitate Garland and Minnelli; instead, through song and storytelling, they share their own perspectives on the stars' enduring influence on them as artists in their own right.

Hays is a fine singer who shines in more reflective moments—her introspective rendition of "Over the Rainbow" is genuinely touching. And Castelveccchi is a dynamic belter and comic whose knockout rendition of the standard "Who's Sorry Now?" is a first-act highlight; even more gripping is her second-act rendition of "Quiet Please, There's a Lady Onstage," the song that Minnelli's onetime husband Peter Allen wrote in Garland's memory following her 1969 death from an accidental overdose of barbiturates. The show's best moments are the duet medleys, in which Hays and Castelveccchi evoke the deep and honest affection that bonded mother and daughter in both triumphant and trying times. —**ALBERT WILLIAMS** **JUDY AND LIZA—ONCE IN A LIFETIME** Through 4/5: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 2 PM; Thu 3/19 and 3/26, 2 PM only, Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln, 773-404-7336, [greenhousetheater.org](http://greenhousetheater.org), \$25, \$20 students and seniors.

SHOW GUIDE

20/20

# FOCUS ON FLOWERS

CHICAGO FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW®

presented  
by



Chicago\*

PEOPLES GAS®

MARCH 18-22, 2020 NAVY PIER

CHICAGOFLOWER.COM



# Spring is blooming in Chicago and so is the 2020 Chicago Flower & Garden Show®

**A** new decade brings a new focus to the Chicago Flower & Garden Show®, and as a matter of fact, a 20/20 Focus on Flowers is our theme. Presented by 811 Chicago and Peoples Gas, this year's Flower & Garden Show is chocked full of inspiration and education that will motivate you to impact your own green space.

**FOCUS ON FLOWERS:** 20 life-sized garden exhibits will showcase more than 800 varieties of flowers, trees, shrubs and houseplants. From a Zen garden filled with Azaleas and a vegetable garden in the 1848 Canal garden, to a spring outdoor living space filled with 85 varieties of tulips, you'll know it's springtime.

**FOCUS ON EDUCATION:** With more than 75 educational programs, you'll learn how to care for your plants, get tips for small space designs, container gardening, houseplants and more!

**FOCUS ON ART:** Nature is a work of art on its own. However, we have combined projects from the Chicago Sculptures Exhibit, Women's Journeys in Fiber, and the American Quilter's Society to satisfy the art-lover in all of us.

**FOCUS ON URBAN LIVING:** Don't have a big yard? Or maybe even a patio? Our focus on urban living will help you create the perfect parkway, window box containers or interior scape. And, you'll want to check out our rooftop garden, too!

**FOCUS ON THE NEXT GENERATION:** Chicago has the only Flower Show in the world to feature a Kids Activity Garden. With upwards of 10 activities a day, a trip to the Show is perfect for families! And, did we mention, kid's tickets are only \$5 and all of the activities in the garden are free - including a live butterfly encounter?

## Table of Contents



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## GARDEN

# 1

## Entrance

“2020 FOCUS ON FLOWERS” begins with the Gateway Garden created by Kehoe Designs and BlackOak Technical Productions. Experience the intricate beauty of a single flower in the entrance, flanked with 16’ boxwood walls—giant floral blossoms morphing from bud to bloom.

A dramatic living wall spans the width of the Gateway Garden and becomes the portal into the magical world of the Chicago Flower & Garden Show® presented by 811 Chicago and Peoples Gas.

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## GARDEN

# 2

## A Focus on Your Zen

Through a collaborations between the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association and Topiarius, a landscape design, build, and maintenance firm, a focus on Zen is brought to the Show. This exhibit showcases the trends of re-purposing wood into outdoor living spaces, while creating a Zen feeling to showcase how gardens are being created to reduce stress, improve focus, and develop a sense of well-being.

Collaborators

Sponsor

**TEXAS de BRAZIL**  
CHURRASCARIA STEAKHOUSE

Design/Build

**TOPIARIUS**  
URBAN GARDEN AND FLORAL DESIGN

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Established 1982

**ILCA**  
ILLINOIS LANDSCAPE  
CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

**Southwest**  
Cargo

## GARDEN

# 3

## Trail Marker Trees Garden

Trail Marker Trees were an ancient form of land and water navigational aids, as well as a marking system to denote areas of significant importance, such as ceremonial sites. These trees were used by many, if not all, of the Native American tribes and later by fur traders and early pioneers. The Trail Marker Trees differed in their appearance and formation from tribe-to-tribe and from region-to-region.

Through Dennis Downes’ sculptures and his book, it is his goal that this ingenious form of land and water navigation never be forgotten. His latest Bronze Trail Marker Tree sculpture debuts at the 2020 Chicago Flower & Garden Show. The sculpture is inspired by and based on trees that were found and documented in Lake and Cook Counties, dating as far back as the 1800s.

Sponsor

**Jacobs/Ryan Associates**

Build

**Downes Studio**

Collaborator

**FloriSculpture**

## GARDEN

# 4

## A Focus on Spring

This garden is where the flower shop meets the backyard. It features over one hundred different varieties of incredibly colorful tulips and spring flowers are featured throughout. Visitors are encouraged to focus on spring and relax in this beautiful backyard setting. The garden extends the interior space of a home to the outdoors and includes an outdoor kitchen, dining area, and fire pit. One of the unique features is a green wall made of recycled palettes that serves as a backdrop to the kitchen area. The team at Clarence Davids & Company encourages you to visit the garden and imagine yourself relaxing on a beautiful spring afternoon in a lovely backyard!

Sponsors

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**CARPENTERS**

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW**  
DECORATORS LOCAL 17

Design/Build

**CLARENCE DAVIDS & COMPANY**

GARDEN

5

## Sculpture in the Garden

Sponsor



A presentation of sculpture art by the non-profit, Chicago Sculpture Exhibit (CSE), features inspiring art set amongst a prairie of plants in a naturalist-style setting.

The CSE's mission is to bring art to neighborhoods. The hope is that you will encounter art while going about your daily life. For more information and a map of art locations, visit [www.chicagosculptureexhibit.org](http://www.chicagosculptureexhibit.org)

Collaborator



### Participating Artists

Ruth Aizuss Migdal	Bruce Niemi
Bill McGrath	Jason Verbeek
Andrew Arvanetes	Shencheng Xu

GARDEN

6

CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL  
FOR AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

## A Goddess's Gaze

Sponsor



Medusa was indescribably beautiful and attracted men with ease, but to her misfortune, she also captivated a god. Poseidon, the god of the sea, wanted to make Medusa his wife and took her to Athena's temple. Athena became enraged by Medusa's presence so she turned Medusa into a monster, and anyone who dared look into her eyes would be forever turned into stone.

As you walk through the garden, read the stories about Medusa's unfortunate victims, but make sure to watch out for her gaze. Will you be the next one caught and turned into stone? We welcome the daring to enter...at their own risk.

Design/Build

**Students and Teachers from the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences**

GARDEN

7

## A Focus on Safety

2020 marks the support of 811 Chicago and Peoples Gas as the presenting sponsors of the Chicago Flower & Garden Show®.

The 811 Chicago and Peoples Gas Consumer Safety and Awareness Garden features several construction industry and

consumer safety and awareness activities, including damage prevention, interactive careers in construction, exposed utilities safety messaging, and "Call Before You Dig," a national safe digging program. The garden is color-coded to focus on safety and the utilities that support our everyday lives.

Design/Build



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Premier Sponsor



GARDEN

8

PATHWAYS

## Dream, Explore, Discover

Local women artists are challenged each year to create a new fiber art project that shares their personal journey. The 2020 Challenge asked artists to create a two- or three-dimensional work inspired by Pathways taken through dreams, discoveries or exploration, and using any textile technique or techniques.

In & Out Design and R. Montoya, Inc. have created a stunning "ART IN THE PARK" garden featuring the unique exhibit of Women's Journeys in Fiber Art. Stroll through the paver paths and become immersed in color from the abundance of flowering plants and artistry. The peaceful sounds of flowing water from the fountain will lure you further into the garden.

Design



Build



Collaborator



GARDEN

9

## Hort Couture Fashion Exhibit

An experience like no other... attendees will behold the Midwest's iconic Chicago Flower & Garden Show® in all its grandeur. Attendees will be treated to the unveiling of an extraordinary new exhibit of floral fashions, which will be on display for the entire five days of the Show.

It is no surprise that Hort Couture is presented by Wintrust Bank, Chicago's Bank™. Hort Couture spotlights the unique talents of Chicago's leading fashion and floral designers, as they create breathtaking floral fashions made from plants, flowers and other natural materials.

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Taylor and Co. Events  
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Shernett Swaby  
Keralynn Little

Collaborator



GARDEN

10

## A Focus on What's New

Proven Winners searches the world to bring you vibrant flowering annuals, perennials and shrubs that deliver the most beautiful garden performance. When you grow Proven Winners, you'll surely fall in love. Proven Winners will present a selection of their new varieties for 2020.

Sponsor



GARDEN

11

PLANT TRUCK CHICAGO

## A Mobile Garden Boutique

The Get Growing Foundation (GGF), a nonprofit 501c3 organization, launched PLANT TRUCK Chicago (PTC) in 2019, a mobile garden boutique dedicated to providing access to much needed plant material in under-served communities.

PTC also generates programming and funding opportunities by selling plants, terrariums, succulents and other small garden-related items at community events and "food truck-style" stops.

The 1974 GMC truck was retrofitted by artist Jason Verbeek as a means to showcase his metal sculpture art, as well as share positive messaging about the environment and plants. Jason generously donated his truck to the Foundation.

Sponsor



Design/Build



GARDEN

12

## Garden Lounge

Design/Build

Lifestyles by  
Joe Salerno



During your visit to the show, be sure to enjoy some time in the Garden Lounge where you'll be able to relax and find inspiration served up hot and fresh!

GARDEN

13

## A Focus on Rooftops

Design/Build



Reveal Design Chicago believes the exterior is just as important as the interior of a home. Established in 2011, their work focuses on creating thoughtfully designed outdoor living spaces that combine style, purpose and functionality. From intimate garden balconies and full-scale residential landscapes, to multi-unit urban complexes looking for outdoor solutions, each project is customized to meet the client's individual needs and tastes.

GARDEN

14

## Window Box Competition

Collaborators



The Garden Clubs of Illinois currently has over 7,500 members in 166 clubs, an additional 12 affiliate plant societies, arboretums and similar organizations, and three Junior Clubs. Founded in 1925, they are a charter member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., an international organization that is the largest volunteer gardening organization in the world.

National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources and additional networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design and civic and environmental responsibility.

Text your favorite entrant's number to help them win!

GARDEN

15

AMERICAN QUILTER'S SOCIETY

## Quilt in Bloom

Sponsors



Design



The American Quilter's Society (AQS) has partnered with the Chicago Flower & Garden Show® to present a stunning display of 39 floral quilts.

"Quilt in Bloom" is a quilt-themed garden inspired by the award-winning floral quilts featured in the "AQS 2020 Focus on Flowers" Quilt Exhibit. Presented by Janome, this spectacular quilt exhibit comes to life in the form of a garden, where vibrant splashes of osteospermums, cyclamen, pansies, and lobelia flowers converge into a gorgeous quilt pattern.

GARDEN

16

## Horticulture Photography Competition

Sponsor

**RICKENS  
KANE**

Collaborator

**Timothy J. Hawley**

Every garden has a story to tell, so why not capture them for timeless memories? Be sure to visit the Photo Competition Lounge to see the stories of countless gardens unfold right before your eyes! The Chicago Flower & Garden Show strives to showcase a comprehensive representation of beauty, art and creativity through horticulture, and we are excited to incorporate the photography of our visitors in that effort. See the spectacular results and decide if your opinion of their artistry match those of our judges.

GARDEN

17

## Planning Your Perfect Parkway

Design/Build

**City  
Grange.**

For many city dwellers, the public parkway feels like a neglected area that doesn't do justice to their property. For some, it's the only green space available to landscape or the last remaining project on their to-do list. Let us help.

Tell us your space, light, and water requirements. We'll do the rest! Want pollinators? You got it! Crazy for wild foliage and textures? Easy! This demo garden represents a sampling of opportunities for your parkway upgrade. With just a few details, City Grange can help cross one project off your list.

GARDEN

18

## Tablescapes Competition

Designers\*

**Joe's Inc.**  
**Relics Rentals**  
**Taylor & Co. Event Design**  
**A Perfect Event**  
**CPS (Chicago Public Schools)**  
**Ashland Addison**  
**Michelle Durpetti Events**  
**Tablescapes Event Rentals**

\*As of publication date

The word tablescape is often used interchangeably with terms like tabletop arrangement, tableaux or centerpiece. However, a true tablescape is actually a bit more complex. Although tablescapes often adorn the center of the table, they are more than centerpieces. A tablescape is an overall look that addresses the entire table or surface and complements its surroundings. There are no limits to the creativity on display in these high-style settings for dining. See just what a little imagination brings to the table with some of Chicago's top florists, designers, retailers, event planners, and even students!

Every year, a group of AIFD members judges the Tablescapes Competition onsite based on the following criteria: Tangible Standards, Elements and Principles, and Aesthetic Standards.



GARDEN

19

## 1848 Canal Garden

Explore a recreation of an I & M Canal locktender's wife's garden in 1848, the year of the opening of the Illinois & Michigan Canal, which linked Chicago to New York and New Orleans. The plant beds and orchard reflect what would have been planted to feed the family and keep them healthy, as well as bring in a little extra money.

The backdrop depicts a typical canal scene with a boat pulled by mules along the towpath. Plants include a healthy matrix of red fescue, crimson clover and apples, with groundcover that reflects the agricultural history. Reclaimed materials include Lexington Oak fencing, rusticated limestone, and timber pines.

A Canal Corridor Association project.

Sponsors



Design

DIVISION 32

Build



Collaborators



GARDEN

20

## Flowers for Dreams Floral Market

Presented by



Flowers. Plants. Gifts. Flowers for Dreams brings their flower truck and talented designers, along with a wonderful variety of fresh cut floral stems, to the 2020 Chicago Flower & Garden Show®. Create your very own arrangement or ask one of their professionals to create something for you.

Flowers for Dreams started as an unassuming college project. The Founders set out to sell a few hundred roses to parents outside a high school graduation ceremony.

Today, Flowers for Dreams sells locally crafted flowers online for just \$35, with free delivery to Chicago and service to Milwaukee. Every single bouquet sold benefits an amazing local charity.

ACTIVITIES

A

## Garden Gourmet

SCHEDULE	11:30 AM	1:30 PM	3:30 PM	5:30 PM
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18	Best in Bloom Competition	Riva Crab House on Navy Pier <i>Octavio Reynoso</i>	Piccolo Sogno <i>Tony Priolo</i>	<i>Spring Fling</i>
THURSDAY, MARCH 19	TBA	<i>Todd Alexander</i>	Texas De Brazil <i>Jorge Russomano</i>	<i>Spring Fling</i>
FRIDAY, MARCH 20	<i>Mario Rizzotti</i>	Peoples Gas "Cooking with Gas" Demonstration <i>Kristen Brogan</i>	Offshore Rooftop & Bar <i>Michael Shrader</i>	<i>Spring Fling</i>
SATURDAY, MARCH 21	The Chopping Block <i>Max Hull</i>	Hewn Bakery <i>Ellen King</i>	Club 210 of Highwood <i>Ron Onesti</i>	The Lobby The Peninsula Chicago <i>Brandon Veitch</i>
SUNDAY, MARCH 22	Guildhall <i>Fernando Angelina</i>	Purple Sprout Cafe and Juice Bar <i>Irina Kuznetsova</i>	TBA	

## ACTIVITIES

# B

Sponsor



Design/Build



Collaborator



## Kids Activity Garden

Cultivating the next generation of gardeners, and providing insights into healthy and active lifestyle choices for kids and their families, are priorities of the Chicago Flower & Garden Show®.

### Bugs, Worms and More! Oh My!

*Presented by The University of Illinois Master Gardeners*

**11:00 AM - 2:00 PM - Wednesday - Friday**  
**12:00 PM - 5:00 PM - Saturday and Sunday**

#### Activity Description:

The Master Gardeners present an amazing Insect Petting Zoo

### Craft Your Own Flower Suncatcher!\*

*Presented by Linda Laake Designs*

**10:00 AM - 12:00 PM - Everyday**

#### Activity Description:

Create your own flower suncatcher! Select a flower, pull it apart to explore and see how it's all connected, and then press the pieces into your very own suncatcher!

### Children's Butterfly Encounter

*Presented by The Get Growing Foundation*

#### Activity Description:

Step into the magical world of butterflies, learn about their life cycle, see them flutter around, and have fun feeding them—all part of our live butterfly experience!



### Kids Potting Party

**10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

#### Activity Description:

Plant a veggie or herb and take it home!

### Paint Your Own Bird House\*

**10:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

(Supplies are limited, 50 available per day)

#### Activity Description:

Paint your own bird house to take home!

### Community Canvas

*Presented by Erika Vazzana*

**10:00 AM - 5:00 PM - Wednesday - Friday**  
(Project unveiled on Saturday morning)

#### Activity Description:

Join in the creation of a mural inside the Flower & Garden Show! Erika Vazzana will lead guests in a special art project Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The finished piece will be unveiled on Saturday morning and will stay on display through the weekend!



### Do You Know What's Below?

**12:00 PM - 3:00 PM - Saturday and Sunday**

#### Activity Description:

Begin your experience as a Junior Excavator by dressing up in a hard hat and vest—just like Nicor Gas employees! Learn how natural gas pipelines deliver this energy source to homes and schools and how we mark pipelines to protect your safety.

### Nature Play

*Presented by CARDNO*

#### Activity Description:

The Nature Play space is designed for play with elements of nature that can be manipulated and moved. The space is a collaborative community effort and fun for kids of all ages.

\*While Supplies last

Presented by



## Make 'n' Take

### Terrarium/Succulent Garden Workshops

**Daily**

**11:00 AM, 1:00 PM, 3:00 PM**

Roll up your sleeves and get gardening! The beloved make & take workshops at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show® combine color and creativity into a fun activity that everyone can enjoy.

This year, Flowers for Dreams is leading "Build Your Own Succulent Terrarium" classes. Attendees will work directly with their

horticulture and design experts to create custom terrariums and learn about proper care for succulents year-round!

Be sure to register in advance for the Make-'n'-Take Workshops! And, don't forget, the workshop registration does not include admission to the 2020 Chicago Flower & Garden Show®; you must also purchase an admission ticket for the Show.







## Education Stage 1

Sponsored by **xfinity**

	WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18	THURSDAY, MARCH 19	FRIDAY, MARCH 20	SATURDAY, MARCH 21	SUNDAY, MARCH 22
10:30 AM	<i>Diane Blazek</i> National Garden Bureau	<i>Julie Sajtar-Hoerr</i> Hoerr Schaudt Landscape Architects	<i>Flora Caputo</i> Urban Domestic Diva	<i>Allison Zeeb</i> No Farm Needed	<i>Chris Van Cleave</i> Redneck Rosarian
12:00 PM	<i>Diane Blazek</i> National Garden Bureau	<i>Kim Hartmann</i> Countryside	<i>Eric Garton</i> AQS	<i>Chris Van Cleave</i> Redneck Rosarian	<i>Kasey Eaves</i> Vivant Gardens
1:30 PM	<i>Amy Wertheim</i> Wertheim's Gardens	<i>Jason Toth</i> Garfield Park Conservatory	<i>Tim Harris</i> Vegepod	<i>Gemini Bhalsod &amp; Nancy Kreith</i> University of Illinois Extension	<i>Dennis Downes</i> Downes Studio
3:00 PM	Proven Winners <i>Jack Barnwell</i>	<i>Joseph Wheeler, Anna Braun &amp; Ellen Starr</i> I&M Canal	<i>Derek Woodruff</i> Floral Underground	<i>Ed Caplan</i> Keeler Gardens	<i>Heather Prince</i> Fearless Gardening
4:30 PM	Spring Fling	Spring Fling	Spring Fling	<i>Ed Caplan</i> Keeler Gardens	<i>Heather Prince</i> Fearless Gardening



## Education Stage 2

Sponsored by **xfinity**

	WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18	THURSDAY, MARCH 19	FRIDAY, MARCH 20	SATURDAY, MARCH 21	SUNDAY, MARCH 22
11:00AM	<i>Ann Hazelwood</i> AQS	<i>Amy Wertheim</i> Wertheim's Gardens	<i>Amy Wertheim</i> Wertheim's Gardens	<i>Amy Wertheim</i> Wertheim's Gardens	<i>Amy Wertheim</i> Wertheim's Gardens
12:30PM	<i>Melinda Myers</i> Melinda Myers	<i>Ann Hazelwood</i> AQS	<i>Peggy Hill</i>	<i>Peggy Hill</i>	<i>Lydia Scott</i> Morton Arboretum
2:00PM	<i>Melinda Myers</i> Melinda Myers	<i>Brittany Buckles</i> Bike-a-Bee	<i>Susan Betz</i> Fresh Start Herbs	<i>Ryan McEnaney</i> Bailey Nursery	<i>Ryan McEnaney</i> Bailey Nursery
3:30PM	<i>Eliza Fouriner</i> Windy City Harvest	<i>Amanda Christensen</i> Gardens of Ataraxia	<i>Kasey Eaves</i> Vivant Gardens	<i>Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh</i> Backyard Patch Herbs	<i>Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh</i> Backyard Patch Herbs
5:00PM	Spring Fling	Spring Fling	Spring Fling	<i>Heather Prince</i> Fearless Gardening	



## Education Stage 3

Sponsored by **xfinity**

	WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18	THURSDAY, MARCH 19	FRIDAY, MARCH 20	SATURDAY, MARCH 21	SUNDAY, MARCH 22
11:30AM	<i>Brekke Bounds</i> City Grange	<i>Brekke Bounds</i> City Grange	<i>BJ Miller</i> City Grange	<i>BJ Miller</i> City Grange	<i>BJ Miller</i> City Grange
1:00PM	<i>Frieda Anderson</i> AQS	<i>Jack Barnwell</i> Proven Winners	<i>Daniel Suarez</i> Audubon Society	<i>Gina Iliopoulos</i> Keeler Gardens	<i>Kat Willret</i> Willrett Flower Co.
2:30 PM	<i>Meredith Schroeder</i> AQS	<i>Kasey Eaves</i> Vivant Gardens	<i>Matthew Ryan</i> The Talking Farm	<i>Derek Woodruff</i> Floral Underground	<i>Ana B. Koval</i> I&M Canal
4:00PM	<i>Dennis Downes</i> Downes Studio	<i>Manon (Nonnie) Lyketsos</i> Radiant Glass Studio	<i>Leann Dameron</i> Leelee's Garden	<i>Tim Harris</i> Vegepod	<i>Ken Williams &amp; Annamaria Leon</i>
5:30PM	Spring Fling	Spring Fling	Spring Fling	TBA	

## Schedule of Education Classes

### March 18

#### 10:30AM - Garden Stage 1 *Diane Blazek*

##### **AAS Winners for Small Spaces**

All AAS Winners have been tested and trialed for great garden performance. But there are many now that are bred specifically for containers, window boxes and areas where space is a concern. Come learn about some of the newest AAS Winners that are "just right" for your small spaces!

#### 11:00AM - Garden Stage 2 *Ann Hazelwood*

##### **The Joy of Quilts, Books and Flowers**

Join the beloved AQS Quilt Fiction Author, Ann Hazelwood, as she takes you on the journey of her best-selling novels, The Colebridge Series with tales of her passion for quilting, books and flowers.

#### 11:30AM - Garden Stage 3 *Brekke Bounds*

##### **Starting Seeds at Home**

Start your own seeds at home. The class will include information on choosing seeds, making or buying biodegradable pots, and how to care for your seedlings.

#### 12:00PM - Garden Stage 1 *Diane Blazek*

##### **Five Cool Plant Classes that "Wow"**

National Garden Bureau is a 100 year old non-profit organization that was founded here in Chicago in 1920. So when this organization picks some plant classes that have a lot of Wow factor, they know what they are talking about! Presenter Diane Blazek will share their five picks for the 2020 Year of program.



#### 12:30PM - Garden Stage 2 *Melinda Myers*

##### **Strategies for Adding Natives to Any Size Landscape**

Whether gardening on a small city lot or larger space, Melinda Myers will help

you select the right native plants for your landscape and gardening goals. Native plants are deeply rooted, helping to capture, clean, and channel rainfall to groundwater. This helps reduce overflow of storm sewers, basement backups and pollutants entering our waterways. Natives also support our pollinators, other beneficial insects and birds that add enjoyment and essential functions in our gardens and communities.

#### 1:00PM - Garden Stage 3 *Frieda Anderson*

##### **Unfurling a New Tradition**

Discover how famous quilter Frieda Anderson's passion for cloth, stitching, making, together with a love of the rural landscape, the natural world and the spirituality of a special place have influenced her textile artwork.

### 1:30PM - Garden Stage 1

*Amy Wertheim*

#### **The Healing Power of Herbs**

Through lecture and demonstration, learn how to make your own herbal salves for sore muscles, arthritis and anti-Itch, using some of the more common herbs grown in your own backyard.

### 2:00PM - Garden Stage 2

*Melinda Myers*

#### **Create a Garden Filled with Flowers from Spring through Frost**

You don't need a huge yard to enjoy flowers from early spring through the end of fall. Just pick a few key flowers that peak at different times, design for maximum impact, and enjoy the many benefits, including the birds, butterflies and bees they attract. Be sure to incorporate perennials, including some natives, with multiple seasons of interest, even in fall and winter.

### 2:30PM - Garden Stage 3

*Meredith Schroeder*

#### **35 Years of Quilts, Family & Fun**

Join Meredith Schroeder, founder of the American Quilter's Society, the World's Largest Quilting Membership Organization, as she shares her journey of how she turned her passion into a lifelong family business that has spread the art of quilting throughout the world.

### 3:00PM - Garden Stage 1

*Jack Barnwell*

#### **Overcoming Unique Challenges in Landscape and Garden Design from Mackinac to Marco Island**

Jack will discuss his work on Mackinac Island, MI and Marco Island, FL and the unique challenges he has faced in both locations. Join him to talk about his daily grind on the islands and discover how Aquapots can make for a successful container garden no matter the climate.

### 3:30PM - Garden Stage 2

*Eliza Fouriner*

#### **Windy City Harvest: Connecting People to Plants Through Food, Jobs and Health**

The Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Harvest Department connects urban residents to plants through food,



jobs and health. Operating on 15 sites throughout Cook and Lake Counties, WCH grows over 160,000 pounds of produce every year, most of which ends up in the kitchens of community members where the farms are located. Come learn more about the work the Chicago Botanic Garden is doing off of the grounds of the Glencoe campus!

### 4:00PM - Garden Stage 3

*Dennis Downes*

#### **A Brief History of Native American Trail Marker Trees of the Great Lakes Region**

40 - 50 minute talk with power point slides cover what a Trail Marker Tree is, who used them and how, and actual photos of real life examples dating back to the 1800s, with an emphasis on Lake and Cook County / the Great Lakes.

## MARCH 19

### 10:30AM - Garden Stage 1

*Julie Sajtar-Hoerr*

#### **Native Landscapes - Between Nature, Desire & Design**

Recent trends have encouraged a use of native plants and a natural aesthetic, expanding the traditional palette deployed by the landscape architect or designer. Through the exploration of case studies, we will show how design elements become the organizing

framework through which to view and appreciate native plants. This newfound appreciation among our clients reinforces the relationship between people and nature, essential to the longevity of our natural environment.

### 11:00AM - Garden Stage 2

*Amy Wertheim*

#### **Smoothing Your Cares Away**

Watch how the combination of Herbal Oils and a few additional ingredients create an emulsion right before your very eyes to make the perfect lotion for smoothing and toning your all-over body. Baby lotions and facial lotions will also be covered.

### 11:30AM - Garden Stage 3

*Brekke Bounds*

#### **Starting Seeds at Home**

Start your own seeds at home. The class will include information on choosing seeds, making or buying biodegradable pots, and how to care for your seedlings.

### 12:00PM - Garden Stage 1

*Kim Hartmann*

#### **Best New Plants for 2020**

We will highlight the best new annuals, perennials, roses, vegetables, shrubs and trees for 2020. Only those plants with unique new features that are successful in our region make the list. Come see what's new!

### 12:30PM - Garden Stage 2

*Ann Hazelwood*

#### **The Joys of Quilts, Books and Flowers**

Join the beloved AQS Quilt Fiction Author, Ann Hazelwood, as she takes you on the journey of her best-selling novels, The Colebridge Series, with tales of her passion for quilting, books and flowers

### 1:00PM - Garden Stage 3

*Jack Barnwell*

#### **Overcoming Unique Challenges in Landscape and Garden Design from Mackinac to Marco Island**

Jack will discuss his work on Mackinac Island, MI and Marco Island, FL and the unique challenges he has faced in both locations. Join him to talk about his daily grind on the islands and discover how Aquapots can make for a successful container garden no matter the climate.

### 1:30PM - Garden Stage 1

*Jason Toth*

#### **Watering - Explained!**

How could something as simple as watering a plant be complicated? This presentation will break down the different considerations one must make when it comes to watering plants; directly planted or containerized, indoor or outdoor, real or plastic. Plant physiology, soil composition and texture, environmental factors, and the dynamic qualities of water will all be discussed.

### 2:00PM - Garden Stage 2

*Brittany Buckles*

#### **Chicago's Native Bumble Bees Including the Endangered Rusty Patch Bumble Bee**

This seminar will teach you how to identify the local bumble bee species that live in the Chicagoland region, including the endangered, federally-protected rusty patched bumble bee. You will learn how to take photos for identification and data collection, along with where to upload your photos for professional identification and endangered species reporting.

### 2:30PM - Garden Stage 3

*Kasey Eaves - Vivant Gardens*

#### Perennial Edibles for Low Maintenance Gardens

Wanting homegrown flavor within a low maintenance landscape? Kasey will take you through her favorite edibles that, with little work, can bring you years of harvest - including a few you will not find at the market.

### 3:00PM - Garden Stage 1

*Joseph Wheeler, Anna Braum & Ellen Starr*

#### Planting a Prairie at Home: Best Practices from Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

In 1848 with the opening of the I&M Canal, the Chicago area moved from prairie to farmland, now there is an effort to restore the prairie at the USDA Forest Service's Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie just southwest of Chicago. There, volunteers, partners and staff are working with over 275 different species of native Illinois prairie plants. Learn how to create your own prairie garden from the experts at the 18,500-acre Midewin prairie.

### 3:30PM - Garden Stage 2

*Amanda Christensen*

#### The Daily Joy of Daylilies

This presentation will cover the main plant features as it pertains to making design decisions in the garden. Growing conditions and care in order to maximize flower potential will be addressed. Participants will leave with inspirational ideas on how to choose cultivars and incorporate the daily joy of daylilies into their gardens.

### 4:00PM - Garden Stage 3

*Manon (Nonnie) Lyketsos*

#### Radiant Glass Studio Art Glass in the Home and Garden

In this talk, Manon will give a broad overview of art glass over the past 150 years. Beginning with Louis Comfort Tiffany and John LaFarge's revival of stained glass in the 19th century, to the medley of glass varieties and styles being produced today, glass is a medium that is beloved across generations. Far from being a dying discipline, art glass today is a vibrant and accessible art that is bursting with innovation. In this talk, Manon will cover

traditional stained glass, fused glass, torchwork, enameling, cut glass, blown glass, and more. She will also show a few samples of her own work and share with you where to find workshops and classes to learn to make it yourself.

## MARCH 20

### 10:30AM - Garden Stage 1

*Flora Caputo*

#### You can "BEE NATIVE!" in Urban Settings to Help Your Local Pollinators

I plan to address the native plant stigma, especially in urban areas (e.g. milkweed being illegal in Chicago until 2017; the perception of "weeds" versus flowers and overuse of the word "invasive") and how native plants can be brought into small spaces easily. I'll also show how container planting can include native plants -- a perfect solution for condo owners and those concerned about aggressive growers... and some proof that it really does make a difference.

### 11:00AM - Garden Stage 2

*Amy Wertheim*

#### The Healing Power of Herbs

Through lecture and demonstration, learn how to make your own Herbal Salves for Sore Muscles, Arthritis and Anti-Itch using some of the more

common herbs grown in your own backyard.

### 11:30AM - Garden Stage 3

*BJ Miller*

#### The Year Round Culinary Herb Garden

Have a wide variety of fresh herbs at your fingertips in every season. You will learn a foolproof, zero-waste way to grow healthy and flavorful herbs that will thrive for months, even in winter. Have them fresh and ready to use when you need them, for a fraction of the cost of buying them at a store.

### 12:00PM - Garden Stage 1

*Eric Garton*

#### Public Gardens - Growing Community

The role of public gardens is expanding. Beyond their amazing display and research plant collections, public gardens are poised to engage their communities with high quality, experiential education, volunteer service opportunities, and special events of all shapes and sizes. Public gardens are growing community!

### 12:30PM - Garden Stage 2

*Peggy Hill*

#### Sanctuary Gardens

What is a sanctuary garden, and how can you create your own garden retreat? Peggy will give you a list of

five things every sanctuary garden needs, followed by examples of different sanctuary gardens. Enjoy pictures from the glorious gardens that Peggy has visited. See photos of the Maine Botanical Garden, gardens from the Buffalo Garden Walk, and many more.

### 1:00PM - Garden Stage 3

*Daniel Suarez*

#### Plants for Birds

Your garden is your outdoor sanctuary. With some careful plant choices, it can be a haven for native birds, as well. Learn from Daniel Suarez, Audubon Great Lakes' Stewardship Manager and native plant expert, about how landscaping with native species in your yard, patio, or balcony, can transform your home into a vital recharge station for birds passing through, as well as a sanctuary for nesting and overwintering birds. Each patch of restored native habitat is just that—a patch in the frayed fabric of the ecosystem in which it lies. By landscaping with native plants, we can turn a patchwork of green spaces into a quilt of restored habitat.

### 1:30PM - Garden Stage 1

*Tim Harris*

#### Container Gardening

MISSING INFO

### 2:00PM - Garden Stage 2

*Susan Betz*

#### A Green Revival: Cultivating Gardens for People, Place and Plants

A positive shift and a new way of thinking about our gardens neighborhoods and community green spaces has taken shape and is now a reality. Shrinking property boundaries, life in the digital age, and tightly packed schedules are provoking a yearning for a deeper relationship with the natural world. People are taking charge of their home environments by consciously choosing to create gardens and outdoor spaces inspired with a focus on homemaking, placemaking and regional ecology. The best outdoor spaces are created in harmony with nature, demonstrate respect for the web-of life, and honor three essential relationships: plants to place, plants to people and plants to other plants.



### 2:30PM - Garden Stage 3

*Matthew Ryan*

#### **Urban Farming: Combining Agriculture, Sustainability, Education and Community Engagement**

Matthew will discuss how The Talking Farm, an urban farm, produces sustainably grown vegetables in an urban environment, while fulfilling its mission to educate the community on urban farm methods and sustainable agriculture. The presentation will also focus on The Talking Farm's community engagement efforts through education programming, membership and small business partnerships.

### 3:00PM - Garden Stage 1

*Derek Woodruff*

#### **New Age Hacks for the Recreational Floral Designer**

In this engaging program, Derek Woodruff, owner of Floral Underground, will guide you through the latest and greatest design hacks using some of the newest professional floral design mechanics available now!

### 3:30PM - Garden Stage 2

*Kasey Eaves*

#### **Pollinator Planning: How Companion Flowers Can Boost Your Harvest**

Need more harvest without sacrificing space? Learn how to bring the bees and bugs to your garden early with simple seed combinations, creating bumper crops and healthier ecosystems along the way.

### 4:00PM - Garden Stage 3

*Leann Dameron*

#### **Title**

MISSING INFORMATION

## MARCH 21

### 10:30AM - Garden Stage 1

*Allison Zeeb*

#### **Not the Way Your Grandma Pressed Flowers**

Pressing flowers is an art form no longer stuck in the 1800's. Learn how to press, preserve and create pressed and dried flower art to show others your passion through plants!



### 11:00AM Garden Stage 2

*Amy Wertheim*

#### **Smoothing Your Cares Away**

Watch how the combination of herbal oils and a few additional ingredients create an emulsion right before your very eyes to make the perfect lotion for smoothing and toning your all-over body. Baby lotions and facial lotions will also be covered.

### 11:30AM Garden Stage 3

*BJ Miller*

#### **Everything You Need to Know About Horticultural Lighting**

Learn the important ways in which lighting affects plants based on the most current research. We will have a discussion about the different types of grow lights and the pros and cons of each, as well as dispel some common misconceptions associated with grow lights.

### 12:00PM Garden Stage 1

*Chris Van Cleave*

#### **Roses for the Real World**

This fun and interactive presentation will break down common myths about growing roses and will demonstrate hands on, how to select the best varieties and companion plants to

achieve maximum results in your garden. Chris will also share with you his best tips for planting and caring for the roses in your garden.

### 12:30PM Garden Stage 2

*Peggy Hill*

#### **Eco-Friendly Gardening**

How you manage your lawn and garden directly impacts the health of our planet. This lively, fast-paced program covers important topics such as the soil web, pest control, and more.

### 1:00PM Garden Stage 3

*Gina Iliopoulos*

#### **Building a Pollinator Habitat**

Building a haven for pollinators takes a plan for healthy soil, a sound design with native plants, and attention to important details, like mulching and proper watering. This interactive seminar will take you through the steps on how to create your perfect habitat, with plenty of suggestions and guidance to create your own special space, of any size, in any region.

### 1:30PM Garden Stage 1

*Gemini Bhalsod & Nancy Kreith*

#### **Introduction to Native Landscape Design**

Cook County Conservation @Home Program Native plants are beautiful, adapted to our local region and beneficial to wildlife, but how do you make them look their best in your home landscape? Learn simple design principles, as well as about some friendly native plants for your home garden in this University of Illinois Extension Cook County-led program. We will also discuss how you can get involved in conservation efforts through the Conservation@Home program with Illinois Extension and Forest Preserves of Cook County.

### 2:00PM Garden Stage 2

*Ryan McEnaney*

#### **Hydrangeas, What the Heck?**

So, you've picked a new hydrangea or already have a few in your garden... now what the heck do you do with them? Learn some of the basics to get the biggest bloom for your buck and be inspired on how to use them in your garden and landscape. With stunning and sometimes funny photos and

videos, you'll walk away with creative combinations, container garden ideas, and real-life examples of creating a beautiful garden using hydrangeas without a lot of work.

### 2:30PM Garden Stage 3

*Derek Woodruff*

#### **Life of the "Terrarium Bar" Party**

In this dynamic program, Derek Woodruff, owner of Floral Underground, will demonstrate how to build terrariums for success, as well as go over all of the fundamentals of hosting an engaging terrarium bar party or event.

### 3:00PM - Garden Stage 1

*Ed Caplan*

#### **Focus on Flowers with Your Mobile Device: Digital Photography in the Garden**

Do you have a smartphone? Do you want to share what you see in your own and others' gardens? Come learn how to take pictures of flowers and gardens with your mobile device, tricks professionals use, and how to share those photos with the larger garden community.

### 3:30PM Garden Stage 2

*Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh*

#### **Infusion: Infusing the Flavors of Herbs**

Herbs can infuse their scent and flavor in many different ways for cooking, bath and tea. Explore how to create herbal salts, sugars and vinegars, pastes and pesto, simple syrups for cocktails, and anything else that can be used to infuse the scent and flavor of herbs. Real-time demonstrations give participants a feel for how easy it is to create items with herbs for everyday use. Recipes and instructions will be provided.

### 4:00PM Garden Stage 3

*Tim Harris*

#### **Urban Gardening**

NEED INFORMATION

### 4:30PM Garden Stage 1

*Ed Caplan*

#### **Connect with Nature: Exploring Nature Play and its Benefits**

Did you play outside as a child? Do your children play outside? Come learn why playing in nature settings is crucial to

our physical, emotional, and cognitive development. We will also share nature play spaces in the Chicago area and the key components of nature play.

### 5:00PM Garden Stage 2 *Heather Prince*

#### **Hydrangeas 101**

One of our favorite long-blooming shrubs for the home landscape, we love hydrangeas for their big, beautiful blossoms, ease of planting, and decorative dried flowerheads. Explore heirloom favorites and the hottest new cultivars. We'll discuss the siting, care, and pruning requirements of each of the five shrub species and the two vines commonly planted in the Chicago area.

## MARCH 22

### 10:30AM - Garden Stage 1 *Chris Van Cleave*

#### **Which Rose is Right for You?**

Confused about which roses will perform best in your garden? In this seminar, Chris will share his extensive knowledge with you about all types of roses that can be grown for maximum color impact without chemical intervention. He'll reveal the various types of roses, their growth habits and the level of care for each variety to help you decide which rose is perfect for your garden space. It's a fun and interactive Q&A style seminar that will have you ready for spring planting!

### 11:00AM - Garden Stage 2 *Amy Wertheim*

#### **The Healing Power of Herbs**

Through lecture and demonstration, learn how to make your own herbal salves for sore muscles, arthritis and anti-itch using some of the more common herbs grown in your own backyard.

### 11:30 AM - Garden Stage 3 *BJ Miller*

#### **Growing Successful Leafy Greens & Herbs Indoors**

Never buy greens or herbs from the store again! We will introduce you to a method of growing that is so easy and so fun you may never grow them outside again.

### 12:00PM - Garden Stage 1 *Kasey Eaves*

#### **Perennial Edibles for Low Maintenance Gardens**

Want homegrown flavor within a low maintenance landscape? Kasey will take you through her favorite edibles that, with little work, can bring you years of harvest - including a few you will not find at the market.

### 12:30PM - Garden Stage 2 *Lydia Scott*

#### **Chicago's Woody Plants - The Wonderful and the Wicked**

A 2010 study found that 28% of all trees in the seven-county Chicago region are invasive buckthorn- and that most of them exist on private property! Attendees will learn why buckthorn and other invasives are such a problem, steps for removing them or hiring a trustworthy contractor, and replacement options that are way more fun, including beautiful natives and delicious edibles. Reap the rewards of #HealthyHedges and help us solve a regional problem at the same time.



### 1:00PM - Garden Stage 3 *Kat Willrett*

#### **The Slow Flowers Movement**

Kat Willrett of Willrett Flower Co. will be discussing the slow flower movement and why she focuses on designing with locally grown blooms. She will demonstrate a seasonal arrangement and share her favorite sources for Chicago-land grown flowers!

### 1:30PM - Garden Stage 1 *Dennis Downes*

#### **A Brief History of Native American Trail Marker Trees of the Great Lakes Region**

This 40 - 50 minute talk with power point slides covers what a Trail Marker Tree is, who used them and how, and actual photos of real life examples dating back to the 1800s, with an emphasis on Lake and Cook County / the Great Lakes.

### 2:00PM - Garden Stage 2 *Ryan McEnaney*

#### **New Plants and from Where They Come**

Ever wonder how new plants come to be? Want to learn what's new this year? Speaker Ryan McEnaney gives a behind-the-scenes peak at this process, whether it be through targeted breeding efforts or discovery in nature. Don't worry...it's not a heady science lecture, rather a fun look at how new varieties make it from seed to the garden center. Highlighted throughout this conversation are new plants for 2020 that do especially well in the Chicagoland area and will inspire your garden center shopping this spring.

### 2:30PM - Garden Stage 3 *Ana B. Koval*

#### **The 1848 I&M Canal Garden: Telling the Story of a Frontier Garden**

In 1848 when the I&M Canal opened, each lock was tended by a locktender who lived in a house near the lock and each locktender's wife would have had a garden. Find out what this woman's garden would have included as she fed her family and kept them healthy as well as brought in a little extra money through her efforts.

### 3:00PM - Garden Stage 1 *Heather Prince*

#### **Well-Behaved Natives for Small Gardens**

Explore a curated list of native plants that can enliven the home garden without growing out of bounds. We will examine plants for all types of sites from shady to sunny, wet to dry. Discover how to layer in natives to attract pollinators and birds, plus give you seasons of color and pleasure.

### 3:30PM - Garden Stage 2 *Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh*

#### **Craft Your Own Herb Blends**

A master class in blending herb flavors teaches you how to identify the specific essences of herbs and their flavors. It will consist of a discussion of the flavors and scents of the herbs, followed by the steps to create your own herb seasoning mixes and herb teas, including knowing the best pairings of herbs with meats and vegetables. We will work with fresh and dried herbs and you'll go home with techniques.

### 4:00PM - Garden Stage 3 *Ken Williams & Annamaria Leon*

#### **A New Vision for Residential Permacaping: Building Neighborhood Ecosystems**

Land is precious and can provide limitless bounty. Today, residential land is used primarily for ornamentation. There is a pressing need to change this and for beautiful residential properties to feed all neighbors; the soil microbes, birds, butterflies, and every homeowner. Community Gardening is a model for doing this affordably. Join a conversation about again making both our landscapes and our neighborhoods, part of the webwork of life.

### 4:30PM - Garden Stage 1 *Heather Prince*

#### **Woody Plants for Butterflies (and Moths)**

Did you know an oak tree is the host for more than 500 species of butterflies and moths? Discover the many trees and shrubs that are home to a wide array of Lepidoptera. We'll explore the host plants and life cycles of common favorites and rare beauties in this information-packed session.



# Supporting our community

Peoples Gas is proud to support this year's Chicago Flower & Garden Show and the Get Growing Foundation, inspiring thousands to get outside and plant this spring. Be sure to do it safely — call 811 to know what's below before you dig. Together, we are empowering the communities we serve and keeping them safe.

PEOPLES GAS®  
*Community Fund*



To Avoid  
Underground Utilities  
Call 811  
Before You Dig





*Legends the Musical: A Civil Rights Movement, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* **ALAN DAVIS**

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## *Legends* in progress

Black Ensemble's newest needs work, but has moments of greatness.

Entering the Black Ensemble Theater, home to a company with the mission of eradicating racism, theatergoers are offered refrains of "Welcome to the Healing." That's the title of the opening number of Jackie Taylor's *Legends the Musical: A Civil Rights Movement, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. It's an invitation to confront racism; the cast of ten warns of uncomfortable content, urging viewers to get angry and to cry, but to eventually complete the journey in a place of love. It's a noble goal, but the trouble is, they never provide space for all that to happen.

*Legends* does two things: it provides a history lesson in Black oppression and triumph, and it showcases some incredible singers. Both are great, but a lack of smooth transition means that the latter always overshadows the former, making for abrupt tonal switches and highlighting the lack of a unifying thread throughout the show. It needs to narrow its focus, too, since the blunt inclusion of the Holocaust, Indigenous genocide, border conflicts, and more only serve to muddy the sharpness of Black Ensemble Theater's argument. It's the gospel-style music that defines the show, highlighting Guides Dwight Neal and Dawn Bless—his easy belting and her jaw-dropping scatting and riffing. Well-known songs are such crowd-pleasers that watching the audience sing and dance along was as enjoyable as watching the musical itself.

Ensemble member MJ Rawls deserves a mention, too, for her narrative monologue. I was willing to forgive the awkward departure from the structure of the musical in exchange for the privilege of seeing an entire audience applaud a trans woman of color for telling her story on stage.

Perhaps I wouldn't call this show a musical, but instead a combination history lecture, racial justice workshop, personal essay, and musical revue with lackluster choreography, using storytelling elements strangely reminiscent of *John Mulaney & the Sack Lunch Bunch*, although the tones could not be further apart. As a whole, *Legends* feels like it's in the early stages of being something great. If you're a fan of joining a lively audience to enjoy some exceptional

vocalists—and you don't mind a work in progress—it's worth seeing. —**TARYN ALLEN** *LEGENDS THE MUSICAL: A CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW* Through 4/12: Fri 8 PM, Sat 3 and 8 PM, Sun 3 PM, Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center, 4450 N. Clark, 773-769-4451, [blackensembletheater.org](http://blackensembletheater.org), \$55 Sat matinee, \$65 Fri and Sat evening and Sun matinees.

## The Middle

*Middletown* settles for middling.

Dan Clancy's four-person play, about two couples living a middling life in a middle-class suburb, *Middletown* is the kind of middlebrow play you go to when you don't want your emotions stirred up or your assumptions about life challenged, and you don't want to work very hard to figure out what it all means. It is 90 minutes worth of Kodak moments from the lives of Clancy's characters—from first dates, first meetings, and first days of school, through sudden departures, final partings, last moments—all presented in series of reminiscences that skim along the surface of life, inspiring sweet smiles, lighthearted chuckles, and occasional glances at the watch to see how soon this all ends.

This production features three faded older-adult "name" TV stars—Sandy Duncan, Adrian Zmed, and Donny Most—and our own off-Loop-to-Broadway star, Kate Buddeke. None of them do badly. They can't forget their lines; they read from notebooks, a la A.R. Gurney's *Love Letters*. And they put just enough acting into their performances to keep this from feeling like we are being read to before bedtime. Seth Greenleaf's direction is subtle to the point of invisibility. If you want to be nice, you could call it seamless.

The play provides few moments of intense drama. The moments after one couple discovers their first-born was killed on 9/11 comes close. And even that sorrow is muted by the fact that the actors stand behind a protective podium. And by the fact that we don't ever really get to know these characters very well. When they pass on, as they must, as we all must, it is hard not to wonder: death, where is thy sting? —**JACK HELBIG** *MIDDLETOWN* Through 3/22: Wed 2 and 7:30 PM, Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 5 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, Apollo Theater Chicago, 2540 N. Lincoln, 773-935-1600, [apollochicago.com](http://apollochicago.com), \$65. **A**

## FIRST COW ★★★

Dir. Kelly Reichardt, PG-13, 125 min. Landmark Century Cinema

# FILM



*First Cow*

## REVIEW

# *First Cow* shows the evolution of Kelly Reichardt

The writer-director transcends while still treading familiar ground.

By **KATHLEEN SACHS**

Some filmmakers—be they full-fledged auteurs or studio journeymen—seem to reinvent themselves regularly, whether consciously or out of necessity, each new film different from the last. On the other hand, there are filmmakers whose oeuvres are remarkably consistent, exploring the same formal, thematic, and emotional terrain over and over again, to varied effect. A recent example of this kind

of filmmaker is the American independent writer-director Kelly Reichardt. Reichardt's seven features contain numerous throughlines and comprise an astoundingly lucid body of work. Her latest, *First Cow*, represents a marked refinement of an already exquisite viewpoint, and it shows the filmmaker evolving even as she treads familiar ground.

Though it opens in the present (with

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## FILM

continued from 41

a brief, wondrous interlude featuring Alia Shawkat), the film largely takes place in the Oregon Territory in the 1820s. It loosely adapts one of the two narrative threads from *The Half-Life* (the first novel by Reichardt's frequent screenwriting partner Jonathan Raymond) about the friendship between two men, Otis "Cookie" Figowitz (John Magaro) and King-Lu (Orion Lee). They come together under fortuitous circumstances: Cookie, so-called because he's the cook for a group of trappers, meets King-Lu, naked and hungry, in the sprawling Oregon rainforest. Cookie helps the man, who's running away from some Russians whose friend he killed. King-Lu soon moves on, but the two meet again, in a nearby frontier town, and become friends and housemates. In its central friendship, the film feels most explicitly analogous to Reichardt's second feature, *Old Joy* (which explored a more tentative relationship between two men), but the larger theme of relationships formed against natural and man-made worlds is in keeping with most of the director's films.

Its pithy title refers to the first dairy cow that's been brought into the fledgling territory. The animal is owned by the British nobleman Chief Factor (Toby Jones), but Cookie and King-Lu begin stealing milk from it after Cookie discloses to his friend that he has a propensity for baking. The two start producing donut-like items they call oily cakes, selling them to the local population in hopes that they may save enough to open a hotel in San Francisco. Among their customers is the Chief Factor himself, who takes a shine to Cookie. That the film's tension (related to the men's fear and eventual reality of being discovered for stealing milk) stems from Cookie's desire to make sweet things is representative of Reichardt's characteristic tenderness. It also speaks to the richness of her vision that the film's portrait of early capitalism can be read as an allegory for our current late-capitalist hellscape, even though Reichardt has asserted that she doesn't intend to make expressly political films.

*First Cow* could be considered a Western—as was the case with her 2010 film *Meek's Cutoff*, which contains more obvious genre trappings—though, in interviews, Reichardt has either gently rejected the label (she prefers to call it a caper) or has said that she considers it to be one with a different perspective. One such indicator of that is how

the film examines the dynamic between the town's colonialist population and the Native Americans who presided there long before. This is most apparent in the scenes set at Chief Factor's house, where he lives with his Native American wife (played by the incomparable Lily Gladstone, from Reichardt's 2016 film *Certain Women*). Such scenes reflect Reichardt's fully formed viewpoint of the world and its myriad of complexities, a perspective that doesn't draw attention to itself but is discernible nonetheless. Hers isn't a political mindset, but a humanist one. This applies also to her characterization of King-Lu, a Chinese immigrant who is viewed derisively by Chief Factor and his crew, but whom Cookie considers a true friend and partner.

*First Cow* is especially accomplished in its aesthetic. It was shot on 35-millimeter film by Christopher Blauvelt, who's been the cinematographer on all of Reichardt's films since *Meek's Cutoff*. Like that film, it was shot in 1.37:1, otherwise known as the Academy ratio; in both films, the frame's square shape actually heightens a sense of visual inclusion. In *First Cow*, Reichardt contemplates the towering forests of Oregon as well as the full-bodied intricacies of Cookie and King-Lu's day-to-day laborings. At times I was reminded of the films of Apichatpong Weerasethakul, whose meditations on natural and human environments evoke a calm that's at once peaceful and precarious. The film opens with a line from William Blake's *Proverbs of Hell*—"The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship"—which epitomizes that dichotomy.

With directors whose work is often similar, one wonders if we keep returning to it because the films are familiar, or, rather, if we're discovering a subtle breaking of ground in each new work. With Reichardt it's the latter, though there's comfort to be had in the more obvious through-lines, from her love affair with the Oregon landscape to her thoughtful examination of the ties that bind us to other humans, to the natural world, and even to animals—Cookie finds solace in talking to the cow whilst milking her, apologizing for man's interference into her peaceful life. There's wisdom here, a sort of tranquility that lingers even amidst its tension. The film's opening scene, which I won't spoil, is perhaps representative of this; Reichardt may be excavating history, her artistic past, but she's also looking forward, up, to terrain yet to be pioneered. **F**

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## FILM

### NOW PLAYING

#### RR *Extra Ordinary*

*Extra Ordinary* has a little bit of everything: demonic possession, vomitous ectoplasm, human sacrifice, haunted castles, a Stevie Nicks wannabe warlock, and a pothole that's really a portal to hell. There's plenty to applaud in this weirdo rom-com-horror-fantasy-adventure tale. Directors Mike Ahern and Enda Loughman have helmed a feel-good ghost story wherein evil (sauntering about in the worst Sonny Bono wig this side of the grave) is vanquished, love triumphs, and women call the shots both here and in the hereafter. It's hilarious and gruesome, frivolous escapism at its finest. Set and filmed in Ireland, it also boasts one of the most relatable heroes on screen right now: Maeve Higgins, who plays a driving instructor with a talent for communing with the dead. The screenplay—by Ahern, Loughman, and Demian Fox—is a delight whether it's nattering on about spells and such ("Who would eat a baby? That's just desperate") or discussing the human condition (maybe "stuck, lonely" people are the real ghosts). At its heart is Higgins's Rose Dooley, who accidentally killed her father in a supernatural traffic accident years previous. She's called out of ghost-busting retirement by Martin Martin (Barry Ward), a widower whose late wife is still dictating everything from his eating habits to his wardrobe choices. Complications ensue when new age one-hit-wonder ("Cosmic Woman" is worthy of an Anti-Grammy) Christian Winter (Will Forte) and his Linda Blair-resembling wife (Claudia O'Doherty) attempt to gain favor with the Anti-Christ by offering up Martin's daughter in exchange for a return to fame. What follows is a hoot full of exploding souls, blood moons, and exorcism adventures. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** *R*, 94 min. Screening 3/13-3/19 at Gene Siskel Film Center

#### *The Hunt*

Imagine if Sam Raimi made *The Hunger Games* movies, and you can start to envision Craig Zobel's *The Hunt*. A matchup between "elites" and "deplorables" that's loosely based on Richard Connell's "The Most Dangerous Game," the film's release date was pushed back six months due to its gore, which borders on slapstick. Further strife surrounded *The Hunt* when it got caught in Donald Trump's crosshairs because he found its premise anti-conservative. Rising from the cloud of controversy, however, is Betty Gilpin. As Crystal, she carries the film by embodying a major ass-kicker from the accuracy of her shot to the set of her jaw, a choice that rivals the acting ability of Hilary Swank, who plays Crystal's main foible, Athena. That brings us to the highpoint—an action sequence between the women underscored by *The Hunt*'s satire, which purposely pokes at our idea of both sides and leaves viewers thinking about the ramifications of believing the worst in each other. —**BECCA JAMES** *R*, 89 min. Now playing in wide release

#### RR *Lost Girls*

Amy Ryan gives the performance of her career as a mother on a mission in Netflix's *Lost Girls*. Based on Robert Kolker's 2013 nonfiction bestseller of the same name, *Lost Girls* is the true story of the Long Island serial killer, who was thought to have murdered ten to 16 people, mostly women associated with sex work. One of those women was believed to have been Shannan Gilbert. When Shannan goes missing, her mother, Mari Gilbert (Ryan), will stop at nothing to

find out what happened to her, and what ensues is a story of police neglect in Suffolk County where four of the bodies were found. *Lost Girls* isn't a mystery; we're told from the beginning that the murders remain unsolved. The challenge is to make the viewer care despite knowing how it will end. Director Liz Garbus—in her narrative feature debut—rises to this challenge by taking the viewer deep into the complicated life of the Gilbert family, both fiercely loving and dysfunctional, and showing the flaws in a law enforcement system where some victims are deemed worthy and others are not. —**NOËLLE D. LILLEY** *R*, 95 min. Now streaming on Netflix

#### RR *Sibyl*

*Sibyl* (Virginie Efira) is a psychotherapist who is drawn back to her passion for writing and decides to leave her practice. Taking on one last patient—Margot (Adele Exarchopoulos), a newcomer actress who's caught in a torrid affair with her costar Igor (Gaspard Ulliel) and her director Mika (Sandra Huller)—Sibyl sees an opportunity to find inspiration for her latest book, but becomes dangerously overinvolved in the life of her patient, blurring the line between fiction and reality. The angsty romantic drama of the film-within-a-film conceit that occurs in the second act is where *Sibyl* shines, as the intertwined destructive romantic lives of the characters are forced to be replayed on camera, take after take. Director Justine Triet's film deftly shifts between past and present, as we plunge into the depths of Sibyl's mind, and the film's interrogation of the creative process as a combination of personal history and the intimate sessions of her patients is a fascinating, if not quite fully actualized concept—the final act in particular leaving us to question what lessons to take away. Despite this, strong performances and the well-edited structure of *Sibyl* make it worthwhile exploration of how we form the narratives we create in our lives and the fictions we tell others. —**ADAM MULLINS-KHATIB** *101* min. Screening as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Fri 3/13, 6 PM and Sun 3/15, 3 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

#### RR *Stories from the Chestnut Woods*

A commendable first feature, Slovenian writer-director Gregor Bozic's deceptively modest magic-realist endeavor follows the platonist travails of a miserly, old carpenter and a beautiful, young chestnut seller on the border of the newly re-established Yugoslavia and Italy in the years immediately following World War II. The carpenter's wife falls ill and passes away, while the chestnut seller is abandoned by her husband; the old man wants to stay, while the young woman yearns to go. Bozic cowrote the script with Marina Guzmi, and no one involved seems overly concerned with narrative coherence, which is the best thing about it—especially when charming fantasy sequences and even the Three Kings (complete with song) enter into the mix. This was shot on Super 16-millimeter and 35-millimeter film, and its aesthetic befits the filmmakers' ambitions; on the other hand, cutesy title cards spelled out in Wes Anderson-style font displaying the characters' names and descriptors feel unnecessary. It's still one of the more impressive debuts I've seen as of late, exuding a melancholic whimsy that's affecting on the whole. In Slovenian and Italian with English subtitles. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** *81* min. Screening as part of the Chicago European Union Film Festival. Sat 3/14, 5 PM and Wed 3/18, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center

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## RESTAURANT REVIEW

# Yelitza Rivera is building a 'little hillbilly' empire

No one understands a *jibarito* like a Venezuelan.

By MIKE SULA

**Y**elitza Rivera made at least one easy adjustment after she left Maracaibo, Venezuela, almost 20 years ago. It was the *jibarito*, the mojo-slicked pressed plantain sandwich invented in Humboldt Park by Juan C. Figueroa at the late great Borinquen

Restaurant. See, her hometown in northwest Venezuela is the birthplace of the *patacón Maracucho*, a sandwich of strikingly similar construction, best eaten when the starchy green bananas are still hot and crispy from the fryer, and you're in the right frame of mind

and physical circumstances to negotiate the unstable strata within.

When she found work at a food stall in the now-erased Mega Mall in Logan Square, *jibaritos* were on the menu, as they were in nearly every Puerto Rican restaurant in town

by that time (though they hadn't proliferated anywhere else—not even on the island).

The fillings were foreign: shaved *bistec*, shredded iceberg, tomato, mayo, and American cheese. But Rivera understood this sandwich.



Left, center: A jibarito y arroz con gandules at Jibaritos y Mas (above) JEFF MARINI FOR CHICAGO READER

Like all the other native-born icons in Chicago's sandwich canon—the Italian beef, the pork chop sandwich, the gym shoe—the jibarito or “little hillbilly,” is an ungainly mess, and there's only one way to eat it to fully appreciate its potential.

“You have to get dirty,” says Jesus Arrieta, Rivera's son, who enlisted with his mother four years ago when she opened Jibaritos y Mas at the corner of Fullerton and Kimball, the footprint of a nascent jibarito empire. “You gotta hold it with your two hands and don't be scared of it. You have to attack it.”

Arrieta, who runs the family's second spot, Jibaritos on Harlem in Dunning on the very western edge of the city, says a lot of people don't get this—or don't care. Like the mothership, the place does a thrumming takeout business, but “the real experience is when you eat it at the moment,” he says, just after the plantain has been bisected to order, deep fried, smashed flat, and fried again. It nearly doesn't matter what you choose to fill it with—roast pork, chicken, ham and cheese, octopus, blood sausage; a plate, with a side of *arroz con gandules*, and a half-inch stack of paper napkins is the only civilized delivery system for the jibarito.

Nevertheless, there aren't too many tables at the original location, and the frenetic takeout business they do there abides. Don't bother trying to phone in an order at noon. They're

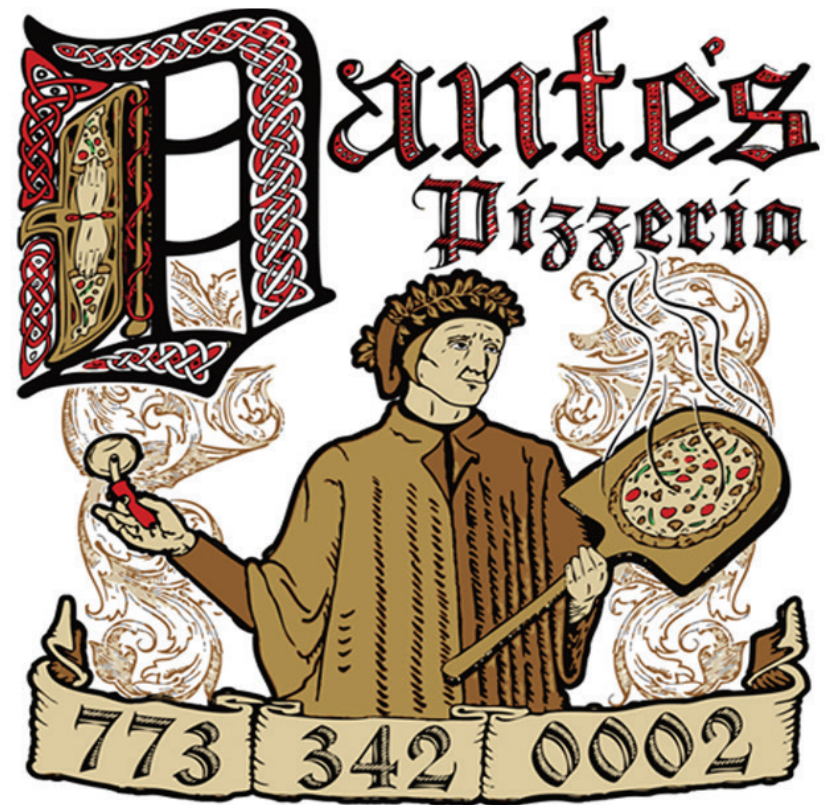
slammed. They can't pick up the phone.

Not just jibaritos, but all of the classic Puerto Rican *comida criolla* funded a third expansion in January when they opened a dining room next door to HQ. There's no longer a legitimate reason to snuff out a perfectly executed jibarito in a Styrofoam coffin. The *cuchifrito* game in general at both locations is extraordinary. Often overlooked dishes like the *pollo frito*, an unbattered, shatteringly crispy leg-thigh combo, or the *mofongo*, dense orbs of garlicky *chicharrón*-larded mashed plantain, reveal their true textural dimensions when eaten on the spot. Other, nonfried dishes made-to-order, such as the annatto-tinged chicken soup bobbing with silky pieces of leg and thigh, are also at odds with a takeout model.

It's almost as if Rivera somehow absorbed the life force of a Boricua granny in the 14 years she worked down the street at Ponce, saving up to strike out on her own.

Now she's striking out on new turf. Old turf in fact. This spring the family is opening its fourth door at 2616 N. Clark in Lincoln Park, Chicago's original Puerto Rican neighborhood. This one will have a bar, which can accommodate the next level of jibarito connoisseurship: paired with a *piña colada* or passion fruit *mojito*.

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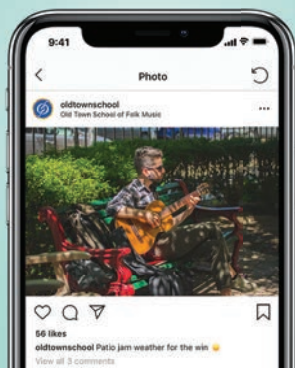
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# MUSIC



## D-Composed redefines classical music

This Chicago string quartet takes chamber music outside the institutions that have long excluded Black musicians and audiences.

By **JANAYA GREENE**

**I**magine an intimate room full of young children playing decorated DIY shakers and other instruments they'd just learned to make from beans, beads, macaroni, water bottles, and rice; or an audience at a senior citizens' center cheering on an all-Black string quartet; or a crowd that ranges across the ages in between that's danc-

ing, mingling, and bonding over the pulsing introduction of Juvenile's "Back That Azz Up," played by the same all-Black string quartet. This is the kind of classical music experience that D-Composed is creating for Black people in Chicago.

D-Composed founder and executive director Kori Coleman, 28, grew up in the Lake County

area, often visiting Chicago with her musically inclined family for productions at the Chicago Theatre and exhibits at the Field Museum and the Shedd Aquarium. Her mother, a teacher at a local community college, also took her to her school's productions, introducing her to dance and music for free. Coleman's mom played the French horn, her dad sang in choirs, and her

D-Composed artistic director and violist Danielle Taylor plays with the quartet at a D-Compressed yoga concert.  ALLY ALMORE

older sister was a violinist in an orchestra. Coleman gravitated to the violin at age five, mostly playing Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and the like—dead white composers were the only composers she'd been taught. Though she gave up the violin by around age 16, her love for the arts remained.

In 2017, Coleman attended a Black History Month program called “The Black Composer Speaks,” presented by Fulcrum Point New Music Project (she'd previewed it for her lifestyle blog, the Chicagolite). “A light-bulb moment went off for me, where I realized I didn't know Black composers,” she says. “It's crazy, because as a Black person, you know Black people are in everything—but as a Black musician, I'd never thought about Black composers.”

To foreground Black composers, Coleman initially wanted to organize a series of concerts. D-Composed arose out of that effort. The quartet plays a wide range of material, including classical and trap music, and it prefers small rooms—cafes, galleries, private ballrooms, Chicago Park District facilities—rather than conventional concert halls. Its programming includes Family Edition shows (so far they've all been at the Stony Island Arts Bank) and D-Compressed yoga shows (at the Museum of Contemporary Art, though the group hopes to branch out to various yoga studios). But every D-Composed concert, no matter where or for whom, follows one rule: the music must be written by Black people.

Because Coleman hadn't played classical music since her teens, when she started working toward D-Composed in spring 2017, she did what most millennials do—she started googling to find someone who shared her passion. She researched musicians from the Chicago Sinfonietta, a group that already had a track record of promoting diverse voices. One of those musicians was Danielle Taylor, who would soon become D-Composed's artistic director and violist.

“I knew I wanted Black musicians, so I started literally googling ‘Black violinists in Chicago,’ and I came across another orchestra that I saw Danielle was a part of,” Coleman says. “I was like, ‘OK, let me do more digging on this individual.’ Then I did and I found her website, and I was like, ‘I'm going to reach out to her and tell her about this series idea. I told her I wanted to do this, and what was really

interesting was, we met up, just talked on the phone in April, and then we had our first event September 28, 2017, at Currency Exchange Cafe.”

Taylor, 32, grew up in Oakland, California, in the 1990s and started playing string instruments when she was seven. As she passed through a series of youth orchestras, specialized music programs, and other institutions, she learned that classical music was not a hobby that Black kids stayed with for long. That pattern persisted into her adulthood, when she earned bachelor's degrees in violin performance and African American studies at Oberlin College & Conservatory.

“I've been in pretty intensive classical music training since I was a kid. Usually I'm one of just a couple of Black folks, if there are any at all,” Taylor says. “Usually, it'd be my younger sister. I didn't realize until my adulthood that she was really the reason why I stayed in orchestras, because there was somebody that I could look at and be like ‘I got you!’ I think that if I didn't have her there, I would've not really felt like the way I was experiencing the music was valid. That was the case from my early years through D-Composed. When I was at Oberlin College as a student, I planned a Black classical music conference, just because I didn't see a lot of Black players and I wasn't learning the music of Black composers.”

After graduating from Oberlin, Taylor returned to Oakland and taught classical music in public schools for a few years. At that job, she swiftly learned why Black and Brown kids don't remain in the field like their white peers. While Taylor's students of color shared crowded classes at underfunded public schools, her white students were given more expensive private lessons. “Oakland is very segregated. I could see firsthand the disparities in classical music education, because all the kids I taught in my public school job were all Black and Brown, all ready to play, ready to learn, and then I had a private studio that was primarily white folks,” Taylor says. “To leave the public school to go to my studio, it was just really destroying me, to the point where I felt like I couldn't do them both spiritually—because it was so hard to see some folks not having access at all and other folks having more access than they even realized what a privilege it is. Then I decided I wanted to be a performer again.”

Taylor moved to Chicago in 2015 to study violin performance at Northwestern University, and she's still working on a master's. Her meeting with Coleman was anything

but happenstance, and their intentionality manifests itself in the seamlessness of their planning for D-Composed. Their similarly disappointing experiences with classical institutions not seeking out the work of Black people made it easy to settle on a mission: uplifting Black composers and performers and bringing a more intimate classical music experience to Black communities throughout Chicago all year long, not just during Black History Month.

During their planning stage in spring and summer 2017, Coleman and Taylor didn't yet have a concrete idea of what kind of ensemble D-Composed would be. Taylor, who's well connected with other Black musicians in the city, e-mailed “all the Black people I knew in Chicago—and that's a lot.” Several of the musicians who expressed interest had moved out of state since Taylor had last been in touch, though, and those who were left all happened to play string instruments—so D-Composed became a string quartet. In addition to Taylor, the group's roster currently consists of Caitlin Edwards and Kyle Dickson on violin and Tahira Whittington on cello.

Everyone in the group plays in other ensembles—D-Composed isn't a full-time operation yet—and some have day jobs too. All four members are part of the Matt Jones Orchestra; Taylor runs the Chicago Sinfonietta's Project Inclusion fellowship program and plays in the associated ensemble; and Dickson is studying for a master's in orchestral conducting at Northwestern. Whittington cofounded and still plays in another Black classical group called the Ritz Chamber Players, and she was also the cellist for the three-year run of *Hamilton* in Chicago. Coleman, a creative strategist for ad agency Momentum Worldwide by day, handles the administrative side of D-Composed: conceptual planning, overseeing partnerships, and tracking the pulse of the city's arts to look for potential collaborators.

According to a 2016 report by the League of American Orchestras, African Americans make up 1.8 percent of American orchestra musicians (they're at least 13.4 percent of the country's population). D-Composed helps expose Black people to the beauty of classical music and reimagine what it can be. The group operates as a limited liability company (LLC), enlisting brand partners and collaborators such as alcoholic beverage conglomerate Diageo, the Rebuild Foundation, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Arts + Public Life initiative from the University of Chicago to pay them for events, which allows the musicians to be compensated for their time.



- THU** MAR. 12 @ North Bar  
**Amy Miller**
- FRI** MAR. 13 @ BottlesUp  
**St Pattys Cupcake Class w/ Intoxicakes**
- SAT** MAR. 14 @ Chamba Life  
**Blarney Stoned - Infused Cuisine**
- SUN** MAR. 15 @ Mozzarella Store Pizza & Caffe  
**Pizza Making Class** (Weekly on Sundays!)
- FRI** MAR. 20 @ North Bar  
**Celestial Music**
- FRI** MAR. 20 @ The Lincoln Lodge  
**Late Night 5**
- SAT** MAR. 21 @ Rebuilding Exchange  
**Make It Take It: Hanging Bike Rack**
- THU** MAR. 26 @ North Bar  
**We See You Comedy**
- FRI** MAR. 27 @ Chicago Marriott Naperville  
**Naperville Bluegrass Festival**
- SAT** MAR. 28 @ Aleman Brewery  
**All About Nutrients w/ Chicago Grow Club**
- MON** MAR. 30 @ Rebuilding Exchange  
**Creative Open Shop: Art Making**
- THU** APR. 2 @ North Bar  
**Dave Stone**
- SAT** APR. 11 @ Journeymen Plumbers Union Hall  
**Tropic of Chicago**
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## MUSIC



So far D-Composed has only held D-Compressed events at the MCA, but the group hopes to branch out to yoga studios around the city. **ALLY ALMORE**

**continued from 47**

Meanwhile the nonprofit arm of D-Composed, called D-Composed Gives, focuses on bringing its chamber music experiences to places that will maximize accessibility and reach: homeless shelters, senior citizens' centers, museums, charities, and more. It's played for underserved youth at Lurie Children's Hospital, and it has another concert coming up at the Midland Center for the Arts in Michigan. In April, D-Composed will collaborate with Mosaic Vocal Ensemble for a performance in Englewood. Shows presented by D-Composed Gives tend to be free, while many booked by the LLC are ticketed.

"When orchestras aren't diverse, it sends a very loud message: 'Hey kids, your career might end before you get here, because no one that looks like you was on that stage,'" says Coleman. As a kid, she remembers, "I felt classical was kind of boring. My favorite thing to play was the songs I'd hear in movies—like, I did *Titanic's* 'My Heart Will Go On' a lot. I just wanted to hear music I liked, and I felt the classical world would sometimes get too rigid, stuffy—and it's not really open to exploring the artistic beauty of Juvenile, because it is there! A lot of the way the classical world is structured isn't fully embracing Black culture. It looks at things as very separate, like you can't be classical and Black."

The culture of classical music certainly presents a barrier to entry for people of color,

but an arguably even bigger hurdle for young players learning the ropes is cost: the price of lessons, instruments and their upkeep, and summer festivals can really add up.

Money is always an obstacle, but Taylor argues that it doesn't necessarily have to be an insurmountable one. "It's expensive over the years," she says. "But I also feel like so are sports. Sports are expensive, but the Black community will put dollars where they see value and investment. I feel like, the return on investment in string—people aren't as sure as they are perhaps with sports, where they can see a line of success."

One of Taylor's most memorable experiences with D-Composed was when a father who'd come to a Family Edition performance told her afterward that he was considering putting his son in music lessons. "The kids inspired me," she says. "Seeing the look in their eyes when they see a cello up close. To see the look in their parents' eyes, to just see that light bulb go off, is probably one of the best things I could hear. Seeing someone see a new door open that they literally did not know was there. I know that, because I was that kid that didn't know it was there and has now had a whole life of creating music. That's what makes it all worthwhile—seeing people's minds change, thoughts change, and their universe grow just from one hour."

The participatory nature of most forms of Black music—gospel, blues, hip-hop, soul,

## UPCOMING SHOWS

- 3/15 **DragonForce** w/Unleash The Archers, Visions of Atlantis
- 3/17 **Mago de Oz / Liran Roll**
- 3/18 **Leslie Odom Jr.**
- 3/19 **Olivia O'Brien & Hey Violet**
- 3/20 **Chippendales**
- 3/21 **Rod Tuffcurls & The Bench Press**
- 3/22 **Lil Mosey** w/ Bankrol Hayden
- 3/26 **Black Pumas** w/ Seratones **SOLD OUT**
- 3/27 **Fleshgod Apocalypse** w/The Agonist
- 3/28 **Sepultura, Sacred Reich, Crowbar, Art Of Shock**
- 3/29 **Ivy Queen**
- 3/31 **Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real**
- 4/3 **Dennis DeYoung of STYX**
- 4/4 **DaVido** w/Mick Jenkins, The Composers
- 4/10 **Ludo** 4/11 **Ludo**
- 4/16 **Kaitlyn Bristowe**
- 4/18 **Citizen Cope**



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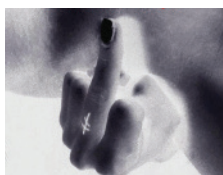
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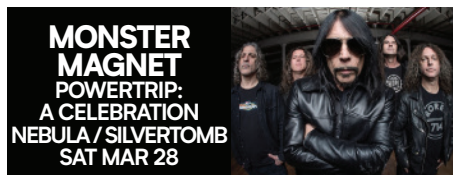




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## MUSIC



An audience member reads a poem written during D-Composed's inaugural D-Composition event, held last month at the Michigan Avenue Apple Store. Pictured on the big screen are violinists Kyle Dickson and Caitlin Edwards, violist Danielle Taylor, and cellist Tahirah Whittington. **BY ALLY ALMORE**

**continued from 48**  
rock—speaks to the expressiveness of Black people. It's no wonder that the traditional environment in an orchestral concert hall, which enforces a norm of stoic silence during performances, doesn't feel immediately welcoming to many Black people. It's antithetical to how Black communities tend to engage with music. This is why D-Composed makes it a point to encourage the audience to clap, dance, and talk—they want to demonstrate that classical music can also be a reciprocal experience.

Taylor and Coleman were guided to this practice in part by their experiences with gospel. “Both of us were raised in church—the church aesthetic of not having what’s happening in front of the church be some separate thing you’re observing. You don’t observe church happen—you participate, even if you’re not the minister or a musician,” says Taylor. “That is something that’s very, very different aesthetically than how concert music has evolved. That’s very intentional, and that’s the way I feel the most natural in playing music—when I know that people are comfortable enough to give me feedback and participate.”

D-Composed prioritizes this kind of comfort in its own routines as well. It’s more than a professional ensemble; its members feel like a family. At their rehearsals, in Taylor’s

Evanston home, there are always snacks, and she calls rehearsals “reunions.” The musicians can be their true selves when playing together, and that brings their sound to another level—affection and compatibility are hard to fake. “Sometimes somebody might start playing ‘Tootsee Roll’ in the middle of rehearsal, and somebody will go up and literally dance and we’ll laugh about it,” Taylor says. “I don’t think we’d ever had a space like D-Composed where that’s even something you would consider doing, let alone doing, and have other people dancing with you. That’s huge.”

Yet even with support from the tight-knit community its members have created, D-Composed faces serious challenges, like any innovative project does. To play Black composers, you have to have their sheet music. But the sheet music that’s been deemed important enough to copy, record, share, and learn has been by dead white composers, and it’s been that way for years. For Taylor to fulfill D-Composed’s mission of prioritizing the music of Black composers, she often has to do deep dives in books and in the archives of places such as Columbia College’s Center for Black Music Research—especially if the composer has passed away. One obvious way for D-Composed to sidestep that difficulty is to give Black composers their flowers while they’re

still alive.

Fortunately, a wide network of Black composers is more than available to lift one another's boats and share their work: they include Tomeka Reid, a cellist and former Chicagoan who's now a professor at Mills College in Oakland; Carlos Simon, an assistant professor at Georgetown University; Joel Thompson, a composer based in Atlanta; and Courtney Bryan, an assistant professor at Tulane University whose work the Chicago Sinfonietta played at its Sight + Sound concerts earlier this month. For Taylor, sometimes commissioning music for a D-Composed performance is as simple as e-mailing a composer to find out what they're working on.

Coleman hopes to bring D-Composed to markets outside Chicago, to increase awareness of its work and broaden its range of funding opportunities. But the group recently had to cancel its first trip—it had planned to bring D-Compressed to the SXSW Wellness Expo in Austin, Texas, with Trap Yoga creator Asia Nichole Jones, but backed out due to corona-

virus concerns even before the entire festival was called off last week. (D-Composed has already been invited back next year.) Travel and networking will be necessary for the ensemble, because there's always the chance that brands and institutions won't want to align with it because its mission doesn't include non-Black people of color. And D-Composed sets pretty high standards for collaborators itself.

"D-Compressed is very popular, because it's yoga and white people love yoga, but I'm not going to allow a studio to approach me if they don't have a Black instructor and if they haven't previously engaged the Black community," says Coleman. "It's about having those tough conversations to make sure if you want D-Composed, you cannot tokenize us, you cannot only reach out to us for Black History Month and not really support the Black community. We're ready to have those conversations, but that's been the challenging part—because when you take a stance like that, you have to be OK not getting as much support and as much money. And we're OK with that."

In addition to the Family Edition shows and D-Compressed, the quartet recently launched D-Composition, an event combining spoken word and music: Taylor arranges music to accompany a poet's writing, and members of the audience write and perform their own poems. It debuted in February 2020 at the Michigan Avenue Apple Store, as part of the company's Black History Month celebration.

The crowd was about three dozen strong, on the lower level of the store. D-Composed gave equal care to traditional classical music, hip-hop, soul, R&B, and other genres—its program included "Prospective Dwellers" by Tomeka Reid, "Strum: Music for Strings" by Catalyst Quartet violinist Jessie Montgomery, and "Montego Bae" by rapper Noname.

During the workshop portion, led by poet Raych Jackson, the ensemble played an arrangement of Solange's "Don't Touch My Hair" while the audience wrote poems on iPads. Jackson supplied several writing prompts: What actions are disrespectful only in your household? What words or phrases do you

hesitate to say in front of your elders? Inevitably, Black women took center stage. Excited audience members, having told D-Composed the general feel of the poems they'd just written, read them aloud to the accompaniment of simpatico pieces that the quartet chose from its repertoire. The audience became a part of the ensemble, and it elevated everyone's art.

"A lot of what D-Composed is trying to combat is how segregated Chicago is, and knowing how Chicago has treated the Black community and the arts," says Coleman. "Our focus is making sure we're in these communities and we have a presence and we show that we see you. We'll have performances and give you a great experience, even if no one else is doing it."

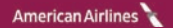
To serve that end, D-Composed defies the aesthetic hierarchy that dominates classical music. "We're not trying to get validation or a stamp of approval from the classical world," says Coleman. "Our work comes from asking, 'Are we serving our community well?'" **A**

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- 4.22 KEVIN ROSS THE AUDACITY TOUR
- 4.23 ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY & URBAN KNIGHTS
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- 4.29 JOSH KELLEY WITH HARPER GRAE
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MAR 17



MAR 18 + 19



MAR 25



MAR 26



## MUSIC

ALL AGES FREE

## PICK OF THE WEEK

## Chicago bluesman Toronzo Cannon is among the city's finest string-bending storytellers



MIKE WHITE

## TORONZO CANNON

Fri 3/13, 8:30 PM, Fitzgerald's, 6615 Roosevelt, Berwyn, \$15. 21+

**TORONZO CANNON'S 2016 BREAKOUT** debut album for Alligator is titled *The Chicago Way*, but it doesn't include a song of the same name. Since that release, the homegrown bluesman has become so enamored with the phrase that he wrote a song around it in time for his next album, *The Preacher, the Politician or the Pimp* (2019). "The Chicago Way" is a fast-paced boogie in the John Lee Hooker tradition, but it only hints at the depths of Cannon's vast repertoire. He's a highly emotive singer and a fantastic guitarist, but what makes him stand out in the contemporary blues scene is his talent for songwriting. Though he dishes out plenty of hot licks, he never rushes through the story that

he's telling in order to get to the guitar solo. Much of Cannon's music stays within the realm of blues rock, but he varies his grooves and approaches. He drives the cryptic "First 24" with a slide guitar; the soul feel of "The Silence of My Friends" complements its social commentary about people who look the other way in the face of discrimination or injustice; "Insurance" is a nice little acoustic shuffle, helped along by Billy Branch's harmonica; and the title track recalls Curtis Mayfield's 1970s epics. Cannon packs so much substance into every song that it's not hard to hear why he's doing so well in the blues-rock scene.

—JAMES PORTER

## THURSDAY12

**PLAGUE OF CARCOSA** *Bongzilla headlines; Something Is Waiting, Plague of Carcosa, and Psychic Nurse open. 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, 2105 S. State, \$15, \$12 in advance. 21+*

Carcosa is a mysterious fictional city first named by author Ambrose Bierce in 1886 and later alluded to in Robert W. Chambers's influential and evocative *King in Yellow* stories. As the ancient and possibly cursed capital of an alien place that's impossible to pinpoint on earthly maps, it's been incorporated into the works of H.P. Lovecraft, August Derleth, and other writers of weird fiction—the name even appeared in season one of *True Detective*. This cosmic-horror tradition is a rich vein to mine, and Chicago band Plague of Carcosa cling to it loyally. Currently an instrumental duo of drummer Alexander Adams and guitarist and bassist Eric Zann (a pseudonym from a Lovecraft story), the band debuted in 2016 with *The Color Out of Space*, two long tracks of harrowingly dense drone-doom plus (because why not?) a gnarly "bonus track" that disembowels "The Rains of Castamere" from *Game of Thrones*. They followed it up later that year with *Ritual I*, consisting of one live-recorded track nearly an hour long, and then with two singles, 2017's "Hastur" and 2018's "Rats in the Walls." Plague of Carcosa's latest release, *Ocean Is More Ancient Than the Mountains* (Sludgelord), is divided into two long cuts, "The Crawling Chaos" and "Madness at Sea," that recall the overboiling heaviness of Sunn O))), Khanate, and Chicago's Bongripper (whose guitarist Dennis Pleckham mastered the two latest Plague outings). It has to be acknowledged that Lovecraft's racism was a horror in its own right, but thankfully Plague of Carcosa don't share his views on that front. In October the band were added to an up-and-coming website of "Hatred-Free Music Lists" called FashFree—and they posted to Facebook that they're pleased to be included.

—MONICA KENDRICK

**SANCTION** *See You Space Cowboy, Vamachara, Typecaste, and Crow Killer open. 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 235 N. Ashland, \$17, \$15 in advance. 18*

In physics, the term "refraction" refers to the deflection of a wave, such as light or sound, as it passes through a medium. It's a phenomenon Sanction aim to replicate with their ear-shattering metalcore. In 2017, these Long Island natives—vocalist David Blom, guitarists Mike Marino and Andrew "Lumpy" Wojcik, bassist Ryan Stephenson, and drummer Dillon "Lil D" Perino—released an EP called *The Infringement of God's Plan*, a boisterous amalgamation of breakdowns that speak of apocalyptic disorder. In an interview with *Exclaim!*, Marino, who writes the bulk of the band's material, said he typically starts out with a song name and lets his creativity flow from there, and that he designed *The Infringement* around five "fractions" or connected fragments. The following year Sanction signed with Pure Noise, becoming part of its

## MUSIC



Sanction © GABE BECERRA

roster of up-and-coming hardcore bands (including Knocked Loose and Sanction's current tour companions, SeeYouSpaceCowboy); the label reissued the EP and then released their debut full-length, 2019's *Broken in Refraction*. The album builds on the concepts of disintegration they explored on *The Infringement*, even borrowing the EP's title for a line in "The Final Fraction" ("The infringement of god's plan," Blom screams, "Staring back through broken glass"). Throughout the EP, Sanction paint vivid pictures of atrophy, disease, and mental illness. In "Answers From a Syringe," which Marino told *Revolver* last fall had been inspired by the heroin epidemic sweeping the band's hometown, an addiction becomes increasingly debilitating, even as a single dose offers temporary respite from life's problems. Blom matches the rage and terror provoked by such a sharp decline with cracks in his voice as he screams over staccato guitar squeals that mimic the thumping rhythm of a heartbeat. The world that Sanction have built with *Broken in Refraction* is in chaos, and it gives you the feeling that their heavy, send-you-to-the-hospital violence isn't just a sound—it's a warning —**MADLINE HAPPOLD**

**NATE WOOLEY, KEN VANDERMARK, AND PAUL LYTTON** *Kuzu* headline; the trio of Nate Wooley, Ken Vandermark, and Paul Lytton opens. 9 PM, *Elastic*, 3429 W. Diversey, second floor, \$15, \$12 in advance. 🍷

Local clarinet and saxophone player Ken Vandermark, Brooklyn-based trumpeter Nate Wooley, and English percussionist Paul Lytton played their only handful of gigs as a trio in 2011, but their collective history stretches back more than 20 years. In 1999 Vandermark and Pytton initiated a partnership through which they've explored musical extremes—density and silence, propulsion and stasis—in intimate, totally improvised duos as well as in the larger, more mapped-out environment of Vandermark's nine-piece Territory Band. Wooley and Lytton first recorded as a duo in 2007, and have purposefully kept their collaboration on unsteady ground: they add guest musicians in concert, and on disc they've shifted between whipping up dust devils of purely acoustic sound on *The Nows* (Clean Feed, 2012) and

exploring alien electroacoustic atmospheres on the splendid studio recording *Known/Unknown* (Fundacja Słuchaj, 2020). And while Vandermark and Wooley are fearless free improvisers, they've used compositions (their own and those of underappreciated jazz duo Bobby Bradford and John Carter) to develop a duo language that stands well apart from what either man does in other contexts. The three duos are reconvening as a trio for a short tour of the midwest; whatever they do together, you can be sure that they'll try their best not to repeat what they've already done. Also on the bill are Kuzu, the splendid trio of saxophonist Dave Rempis, guitarist Tashi Dorji, and drummer Tyler Damon, who are in the middle of a tour of their own to celebrate the release of *Purple Dark Opal* (Aerophonix, 2020). —**BILL MEYER**

### FRIDAY 13

**STEVE AOKI** *Timmy Trumpet, Gammer, Godlands, and Global Dan* open. 9 PM, *Aragon Ballroom*, 1106 W. Lawrence, \$36. 18+

Is there any pop star with a career like Steve Aoki's? How many other sons of business magnates got into hardcore in the 90s, wrote for radical punk zine *Heartattack*, led a screamo band that released a split with Japanese posthardcore legends Envy, and ran a DIY space that hosted the likes of Jimmy Eat World, Planes Mistaken for Stars, and Atom & His Package? How many launched a punk label in the 2000s that went on to release music by some of indie rock's finest (the Dim Mak catalog includes Bloc Party and the Gossip) while carving out a niche as one of the most beloved DJs in the Los Angeles nightlife scene? How many crowd surfed on inflatable rafts during DJ sets and threw sheet cakes at eager fans—and still managed to transcend electroclash to become one of the dominant faces of EDM? How many then outlived EDM's bust to become one of the ten wealthiest DJs in the world, or in 2019 collaborated with the Backstreet Boys and released a dance cover of the Dave Matthews Band's *None but Steve Aoki*. The arc of his life story so far (he's 42) makes his September memoir, *Blue: The Color of Noise* (St. Martin's Press), an enthrall-

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## MUSIC

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ing read, despite his unimaginative prose and odd writing tics. He infuses his book with the same unremitting optimism that comes through in his every sparkling synth note and quavering bass drop. In his recordings, Aoki massages mainstream electronic music for sensitive pop ears, which often means his presence fades into the background when he teams up with better-known personalities. On that Backstreet Boys collaboration, “Let It Be Me” (which should also appear on Aoki’s forthcoming album, *Neon Future IV*), he seems as superfluous as DJ Khaled. —LEOR GALIL

**BLOOD ORANGE** *Tei Shi opens. 7:30 PM, Vic Theatre, 3145 N. Sheffield, sold out. 18+*

Dev Hynes, who makes pop and R&B as Blood Orange, has a gift for synthesis that’s made him a favorite collaborator of many cross-genre stars in the past decade, including Mac Miller, Solange, and FKA Twigs. The London-born, New York-based auteur has visited Chicago multiple times in recent years, notably appearing at the Pitchfork festival in 2018 and opening for Florence & the Machine at Northerly Island the following summer, but while Hynes and his ensemble sound great in sunlit venues, a theater might suit the intimacy of his music better. Blood Orange unites decades of Black pop styles with airy vocals and lyrics about longing and identity, with both the house-adjacent dance beat of “Baby Florence (Figure)” and the dark, Three 6 Mafia-indebted thump of “Gold Teeth.” If the most recent Blood Orange release, 2019’s *Angel’s Pulse* (Domino), feels slight compared to its predecessors, it’s by design: Hynes described it as a “mixtape” composed as an epilogue to 2018’s lushly arranged *Negro Swan*, named one of the best albums of that year by Pitchfork, *Spin*, *Complex*, and others. The songs on *Angel’s Pulse* sometimes stop abruptly or build around a single instrumental loop—they’re closer to sketches, unlike previous fully realized opuses, but the image is still clear and ready to be colored in by the live band. On “Dark & Handsome” Hynes sings over warm keys and snapping drums: “Nothing lasts forever and I told you / Everything you need to know that’s not true.” Even when he’s trying to end a relationship, Hynes can’t hide his yearning for more connection. It’s music for dancing in the dark, in a loved one’s bedroom, or in the timeless space of a century-old theater. —JACK RIEDY

**TORONZO CANNON** *See Pick of the Week, page 52. 8:30 PM, Fitzgerald’s, 6615 Roosevelt, Berwyn, \$15. 21+*

**GIZZELLE** *Part of the Sor Juana Festival. Monica Rocha & Cota open. 7 PM, National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th, \$20. 18+*

Rockabilly probably isn’t the first thing that comes to mind when somebody says “Latin roots music,” but several generations of artists on both sides of the southern U.S. border have taken doo-wop, boogie-woogie, and early rock ‘n’ roll to heart. The music—and its associated hot-rod imagery—has long connections to the Mexican American community

(particularly on the west coast), with artists blending influences such as 60s girl groups, soul, early punk rock, and a “take no prisoners” style of mariachi vocals. The National Museum of Mexican Art’s multidisciplinary Sor Juana Festival, whose 26th annual edition began March 7 and runs through April 25, includes this night of music, which features taco trucks and lowriders and starts where “La Bamba” singer Ritchie Valens (aka Ricardo Valenzuela) left off. Opening this program, titled “Vintage Vibes,” are Monica Rocha & Cota; bandleader and soulful R&B vocalist Joey Cota will sing lead on three songs but otherwise cede the spotlight to the Motown-inspired Rocha. Headliner Gizzelle will perform with guitarist Kevin O’Leary, bassist Alejandro Vargas, drummer Mario Perea, and pianist-bassist Victor Mendez. The Los Angeles-based singer wraps her huge voice around the band’s sparse rock licks, adding just the right amount of soulful growls. She counts Patsy Cline, Aretha Franklin, Barbra Streisand, and Etta James among her influences, and echoes of all these greats resonate in her swinging phrasing. But her tunes aren’t just museum pieces preserved in musical amber: as she belts out her rebellious lyrics, deploying the raw, seductive power of the rock, soul, pop, and country divas who came before her, her brassy punk swagger makes it all sound perfectly relevant for today. —CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

**HABIBI** *Cam’s Jams open. 9:30 PM, Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, \$15, \$12 in advance. 21+*

New York-based rock band Habibi can make any show, even one in the last weeks of winter, feel like a humid summer day spent lounging around and eating good food with friends—the good shit. Their music draws from surf rock and chipper 60s girl groups, and though it’s sweet, it never feels saccharine. This is largely a result of their exacting playing: all four members seem to move in lockstep, which allows for every lyric to be directly and clearly communicated. On their latest album, *Anywhere but Here* (Muddguts), Habibi convey a longing to do something—anything—whether it’s physically going somewhere or falling in love. Sometimes it’s both: on the love song “Hate Everyone but You,” singer Rahil Jamalifard fantasizes about ditching society and moving to the desert with her special someone. Her voice is crucial: it drips with effortless cool, every word and coo charmingly disaffected. It pairs nicely with Habibi’s melodies, which incorporate Middle Eastern influences—most prominently on psychedelic album closer “Come My Habibi,” which sounds just as assured and unfettered as everything they do. Habibi go their own way, but luckily we’re invited along for the ride. —JOSHUA MINSOO KIM

**OM, WOVENHAND, HUNTSMEN** *8 PM, Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park, sold out. 18+*

It’s only March, but this lineup will be hard for any other heavy rock show in 2020 to beat. Sleep bassist-vocalist Al Cisneros and drummer Chris Hakius founded deep stoner trance outfit **Om** in 2003, and in 2008 Emil Amos took over for Hakius (who retired from music entirely the following



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## MUSIC



Lucki © COURTESY THE ARTIST

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year). A decade later, having already invited several guest musicians into the fold (former Chicagoan Robert A.A. Lowe toured with the band and played on two of their albums), Om formally expanded into a trio with the addition of multi-instrumentalist Tyler Trotter. Though they've yet to make a full album as a three-piece, last year Drag City released a live performance recorded at BBC 1's Maida Vale studio, which provides a solid four-song snapshot of Om's current sound—it's as sinuous and twisty as a gigantic winding snake, with dreamy, driven atmospheres influenced by ragas and Middle Eastern music. Denver-based **Wovenhand** are one of the best live bands the U.S. has to offer right now. The brainchild of David Eugene Edwards (also the force behind 16 Horsepower), Wovenhand bring his surrealist gospel aesthetic to life with their tranced-out, ferocious, Western-gothic metallic rock 'n' roll—and he dishes out backwoods prophecy like Ronnie Van Zant with William Blake's soul trapped in his body. Chicago Americana-metal band **Huntsmen** are the only group on the bill with a new record; their second full-length, *Mandala of Fear* (Prosthetic), comes out the day of this show. The follow-up to 2018's spectacular *American Scrap*, it's a cinematic concept album about a scarred and shell-shocked soldier journeying through a war-torn landscape. Singer Aimee Bueno, who turned in a haunting performance on *Scrap*'s "The Last President," has joined the band full-time, and her vocals are especially mesmerizing on "God Will Stop Trying." With its prog and folk influences, *Mandala* is a richly rewarding trip from start to finish, with highlights including the dense, slow pummelling of "The Swallow" and the drumbeats that open and anchor the monster-riffing instrumental "Pirates of the Waste." Playing back-to-back in the beautiful surroundings of the Garfield Park Conservatory, these three bands all but guarantee a transcendent experience.

—MONICA KENDRICK

## SATURDAY 14

**JACQUES GREENE** *Martyn Bootyspoon opens. 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$18, \$15 in advance. 21+*

Canadian dance producer Jacques Greene (born Philippe Aubin-Dionne) broke out in the early 2010s by twisting R&B vocals into stuttering, waterlogged samples that brought complex shades of sadness to energetic club tracks. He's since relied less on a sample-based approach, which has opened him up stylistically and helped him arrive at the free-flowing aesthetic of his recent second album, October's *Dawn Chorus* (LuckyMe). Greene parlays his grasp of dance's history into a mishmash of sounds, sometimes within a single song; on "Do It Without You" he blends the spacey affectations of early-2000s UK dubstep with ersatz drum 'n' bass percussion. Greene's nuanced touch on *Dawn Chorus* foregrounds his tender feelings toward dance music, which he translates into cozy melodies that can be mesmerizing, bittersweet, or thrilling—when a muffled, robotic vocal hook croaks above a twinkling synth melody on "Whenever," the combination provokes all those responses at once. —LEOR GALIL

## SUNDAY 15

**LUCKI** 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, 1375 W. Lake, only \$80 VIP tickets remain at press time. 18

It might seem bizarre to call Lucki the best conscious rapper in Chicago, given that the city is also represented nationally by the likes of Chance the Rapper, Saba, and Common. But hear me out. Conscious rap, which is loosely defined by the social commentary at its core, comes in two clearly iden-

tifiable forms: preaching and storytelling. Preaching is more common, and conscious rappers who deliver their commentary in this style typically state their topic, explain all the reasons it's a problem, and (if we're lucky) tell us how it can be fixed. Storytellers, on the other hand, present their message by spinning rhythmic yarns about people struggling with the issue at hand, whether truth or fiction. On last year's mixtape *Days B4 III*, the 23-year-old Lucki establishes himself as a force to be reckoned with, as he grapples with relationship troubles, loss, and reckless spending. He's unflinchingly honest in his self-critiques, and aligns himself with a youth culture that perpetuates the same sort of lifestyle he describes in his lyrics. Lucki gained notoriety in the post-Keef era of Chicago hip-hop for combining the rawness of drill with sedated trap beats and a groggy style of delivery, and his brand of aloof consciousness seems to especially resonate with young Chicagoans who lean on unauthorized prescription drugs, weed, and music to numb themselves against the pain of economic struggles and the deaths of loved ones and friends. On *Days B4 III* Lucki refines this style, not only recognizing his problems but also facing them in real time: over the ticking, xylophone-driven instrumental of "Hollywood Dreamer" he raps in a measured groan, "Back on them Xans, you can see it in my face / I need a molly to go on dates / Loud-ass Charger make me race." He's quite aware of his flaws, and of the toll these drugs take on him. At the end of the bar, he adds, "You know how that be"—it's like a shrug of the shoulders. He's just telling the truth, after all.

—MATT HARVEY


**POOL KIDS** *The Wonder Years headline; Free Throw, Spanish Love Songs, and Pool Kids open. 5 PM, Concord Music Hall, 2047 N. Milwaukee, \$25. 18*

In April 2019, Paramore front woman Hayley Williams posted an Instagram story about Pool Kids, a largely unknown emo band from Tallahassee, Florida: "This is what Pmore WISHED we sounded like in the early 2000's." About two hours earlier, Bandcamp editor Zoe Camp had tweeted a link to Pool Kids' 2018 self-released debut, *Music to Practice Safe Sex To*, writing that the album "sounds kinda like Hayley Williams fronting Cap'n Jazz." All of which is to say that, in the case of Williams and Pool Kids, real recognizes real. Guitarist and vocalist Christine Goodwyne guides the band through contemplative, quiet melodies and athletic, mathy passages whose guitar patterns race in dizzying hyperdrive; her strong-willed singing can cut through the loudest moments with forceful clarity. After Pool Kids caught on last year, Goodwyne and bassist Nicolette Alvarez moved away from their native Florida, as they'd long wanted to do, and in November they relocated to Chicago. (Drummer Caden Clinton and guitarist Andy Anaya stayed behind.) "We have a large group of friends already based in Chicago, so why not," Alvarez says. "The idea of living in a centrally located large city with various different thriving music scenes within it also appealed to us!" With any luck, they'll maintain the energy that enlivens *Music to Practice Safe Sex To* and bring it to Chicago's independent punk, emo, and indie-rock scenes—and to this show at Concord. —LEOR GALIL

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# THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT GOTTEN THEIR JUST PUES BY PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE



**WINTER BLUES!**

## BIG MACEO MERRIWEATHER

AS A MAJOR ARCHITECT OF CHICAGO BLUES, ROLLICKING PIANIST BIG MACEO MERRIWEATHER DESERVES A LOT MORE APPRECIATION. BORN MAJOR MERRIWEATHER ON MARCH 31, 1905, IN NEWNAN, GEORGIA, HE MOVED TO ATLANTA IN 1920, WHERE HE TAUGHT HIMSELF PIANO. MERRIWEATHER HIT DETROIT IN 1924, PLAYING THE HOUSE-PARTY CIRCUIT & AT NIGHT CLUBS, AND SETTLED IN CHICAGO IN 1941. HERE HE MET LEGENDARY GUITARISTS BIG BILL BROONZY AND TAMPA RED, BOTH OF WHOM BECAME GIGGING PARTNERS, AND THE LATTER ALSO HOOKED MERRIWEATHER UP WITH LESTER MELROSE OF RCA VICTOR. HIS FIRST SESSION FOR THE LABEL'S LOW-COST BLUEBIRD IMPRINT (WITH RED ON GUITAR) PRODUCED 1941'S 'WORRIED LIFE BLUES,' A BLUES HIT THAT BECAME HIS LIFELONG SIGNATURE NUMBER. IN 1983 IT WAS AMONG THE FIRST TUNES INDUCTED INTO THE BLUES HALL OF FAME (ALONGSIDE 'SWEET HOME CHICAGO' AND 'HELLHOUND ON MY TRAIL'), AND IT'S ONE OF THE MOST RECORDED BLUES SONGS OF ALL TIME.

THROUGHOUT THE 40S MERRIWEATHER ALSO PLAYED ON TAMPA RED'S SIDES, AND HE CONTINUED TO ENJOY SOLO SUCCESS WITH 'THINGS HAVE CHANGED,' THE ICONIC 'COUNTY JAIL BLUES,' AND THE INSTRUMENTAL 'CHICAGO BREAKDOWN,' WIDELY CONSIDERED HIS TOUR DE FORCE. INFLUENCED BY THE BOOGIE-WOOGIE STYLE OF MEADE 'LUX' LEWIS AND ALBERT AMMONS, MERRIWEATHER IN TURN INSPIRED THE LIKES OF HENRY GRAY, OTIS SPANN, & LITTLE JOHNNY JONES. JONES WAS IN FACT A PROTEGE OF MERRIWEATHER'S, OFTEN PLAYING ALONGSIDE HIM AFTER MERRIWEATHER SUFFERED A STROKE IN 1946 AND LOST THE USE OF HIS RIGHT HAND. MERRIWEATHER'S LAST RECORDINGS WERE FOR SPECIALTY IN 1949 & FORTUNE IN '50 (A '52 SESSION WENT UNRELEASED), AND HE DIED OF A HEART ATTACK ON FEB. 23, 1953, IN CHICAGO. BUT HIS LEGACY ENDURES: HIS COMPLETE RCA VICTOR/BLUEBIRD RECORDINGS WERE ISSUED AS A DOUBLE LP IN 1975, AND HE WAS INDUCTED INTO THE BLUES HALL OF FAME IN 2002. IN 2008, MERRIWEATHER'S GRAVE IN WARREN, MICHIGAN, FINALLY GOT A HEADSTONE, THANKS TO MONEY RAISED THAT YEAR AT THE WHITE LAKE BLUES FESTIVAL.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF 'THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC' ON 'OUTSIDE THE LOOP' ON WGN RADIO 720 AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN. [COMMENTS, IDEAS TO ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDE THE LOOP RADIO.COM](mailto:Comments, Ideas To Archived @ Outside The Loop Radio.com) [pl3sticcw@hotmail.com](mailto:pl3sticcw@hotmail.com)

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**Adjacent Cruise, Trickett-shooter, Social Club, Aaron Williams Band** 3/28, 8 PM, GMan Tavern  
**Rami Atassi & Tatsu Aoki, Will Hulsemann (solo)** 3/19, 9 PM, Hungry Brain  
**August Hotel, Shi La Rosa, Sir Mango** 4/14, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village  
**Bakar** 5/9, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 3/13  
**Batu, Hijo Prodigio, Club Politix, JS Alvarez** 4/10, 10 PM, Smart Bar  
**Bike Cops, No Swoon, Star Tropics** 4/7, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Blacks' Myths, Amirtha Kidambi's Elder Ones** 3/30, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Bloodsoaked Necrovoid, Astriferous, Mindloss** 5/14, 7 PM, Reggie's Music Joint  
**Sarah Brightman** 10/15, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre  
**Buscabulla** 7/22, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Buttertones, Iguana Death Cult** 4/25, 7 PM, Subterranean  
**Ann Hampton Callaway & the Urban Knights** 4/23, 8 PM, City Winery  
**Cimafunk** 5/12, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+  
**Cinco De Mayo Fiesta** 5/3, 3 PM, Thalia Hall  
**Clipping, Cartel Madras** 5/22, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 3/13, 17+  
**D-Composed & Mosaic Vocal Ensemble** 4/5, 3 PM, Saint Benedict the African Catholic Church  
**Daphne 2020: Mind Shivers featuring T Mixwell, Chachi Guerrero, Chrissy Tee, Ilana Ariella, Vitigril** 3/26, 10 PM, Smart Bar

**Daphne 2020: Queen! featuring Juliana Huxtable, Mindy Sherman, and more** 3/22, 10 PM, Smart Bar  
**Das Ich, Satanic Hispanic, Project 44, DJ Sean Pain, DJ Sin Fox** 3/27, 10 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+  
**Cole DeGenova, Ed Balloon, Kai Black** 4/7, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village  
**Raheem DeVaughn** 4/10-4/11, 7 and 10 PM, City Winery  
**8Ball & MJG** 4/19, 8 PM, Patio Theater  
**Fetid, Disinter, Molder, Cryptual** 6/6, 7 PM, Reggie's Music Joint  
**Frames** 9/24, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 3/13, 11 AM, 18+  
**Friday Pilots Club, Marina City** 4/9, 7 PM, House of Blues, 17+  
**Friendship, Izzy True, Half Gringa (solo)** 3/25, 9:30 PM, Hideout  
**Ariel Glassman Big Band,** 3/26, 7 PM, Chop Shop, 18+  
**Jonathan Hannau & Liza Sobel, Deaf Rabbit** 3/22, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**Harriet Tubman** 3/21, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**Sterling Hayes, Sir Michael rocks, Adam Kill, The-mind, Reeseynem, Gianni Blu** 4/2, 7 PM, Chop Shop, 18+  
**Charlie Hunter & Lucy Woodward** 5/16, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston  
**Enrique Iglesias, Ricky Martin, Sebastián Yatra** 10/1, 7:30 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont  
**Illl** 3/20, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+  
**Kennyhoopla, Scruffpuppie** 6/23, 7:30 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**Lady Gaga** 8/14, 7:30 PM, Wrigley Field, on sale Mon 3/16, 10 AM

**Hamilton Leithauser, Anna St. Louis** 5/10, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+  
**Becky Levi & the Nightjars, She Speaks in Tongues** 3/20, 9 PM, Hungry Brain  
**Ludo** 4/11, 6:30 PM, House of Blues  
**Modern English** 6/26, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**Mute Duo, Akosuen** 3/19, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**Mystic Braves** 8/7, 10 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**Naked and Famous, Circa Waves, Luna Shadows** 6/23, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM, 18+  
**Neck Deep** 11/25, 6 PM, Radius Chicago, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**New Nostalgia, Fenwick High School Jazz Band** 4/29, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 3/13, 11 AM  
**NRBQ** 5/2, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston  
**Off Broadway** 6/26, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 3/13, 11 AM  
**101WKQX Piquiq featuring Foster the People, Neon Trees, Phantogram, Love-lytheband, Yelowolf, Meg Myers, and more** 6/13, 1 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park  
**Oozing Wound, No Men, Dim** 5/16, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Orla, Julio Victoria, Sevron** 4/24, 10 PM, Smart Bar  
**Parsonsfield, Oshima Brothers** 4/26, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston  
**Platinum Boys, New Primals, Absolutely Not** 4/16, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Pottery** 7/28, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Lady Gaga** 8/14, 7:30 PM, Wrigley Field, on sale Mon 3/16, 10 AM  
**Rah Digga, Lyric Jones** 4/1, 8 PM, the Promontory

**Reckless Kelly** 6/27, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 3/13, 11 AM  
**Reginald Robinson** 3/25, 8 PM, the Promontory  
**Ruby the Hatchet** 5/27, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle  
**San Fermin** 5/28, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music  
**Saplings, Mary Vaughn Band, Van Isaacson** 3/27, 8 PM, GMan Tavern  
**Scary Kids Scaring Kids, Classic Crime, Picturesque, Eidola** 6/27, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+  
**Shiner, Sweet Cobra** 5/21, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+  
**Sick/Tired, No/Mas, Needle, Minimum Wage Assassins** 3/21, 6:30 PM, Subterranean  
**Snow Patrol** 10/16, 8 PM, Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**Astrid Sonne** 3/31, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Soup & Bread featuring DJ Tara Betts** 3/25, 5:30 PM, Hideout  
**Strfkr, Undercover Dream Lovers** 5/15, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+  
**Sunshine Boys, Bobbleheads** 4/30, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston  
**Surfer Blood** 7/23, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**TALsounds, Sam Prekop** 5/22, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**Paul Thorn, Pete Muller** 5/13, 8 PM, City Winery  
**Tony Trischka** 3/29, 3 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music  
**Uncle Jon's Band, Mr. Blotto** 4/18, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+  
**Velvet Caravan** 5/15, 7:30 PM, Tack Room  
**Visionary Voices: Behind the American Songbook with Natalie Douglas** 4/19, 6:30 PM, Venue Six10, on sale Tue 3/24, 10 AM  
**WDCB's Blues & Brass Party featuring Marty Sammon Blues Band, Four Star Brass Band, Gerry Hundt** 4/16, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 3/13, 11 AM  
**We Were Promised Jetpacks** 5/28, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**Weathers, Moby Rich, Kenzo Cregan** 5/30, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 3/13, 9 AM  
**Wilco, Sleater-Kinney, Nnamdi** 8/29, 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM  
**Dar Williams** 7/21, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music  
**Wingtips, Panic Priest, None of Your Concern, DJ Greg Corner** 5/1, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village

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**Xoe Wise, Tim Fite** 7/9, 8 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 3/13, 10 AM, 18+  
**Youth Code** 4/2, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

## UPDATED

**Dirty Knobs with Mike Campbell** 10/9, 8 PM, Park West, rescheduled to 10/9; all tickets purchased for original 3/11 show will be honored, 18+  
**Mayo Thompson** 3/25, 8:30 PM, Constellation, canceled; contact point of purchase for refund information

## UPCOMING

**Micah Collier** 3/22, 7:30 PM, the Promontory  
**Cosmic Country Showcase featuring Lavender Country** 4/11, 9:30 PM, Hideout  
**James Supercave** 3/20, 9 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Al Jardine** 3/31, 8 PM, City Winery  
**Avi Kaplan, Paper Wings** 3/26, Thalia Hall  
**Caribou, Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith** 3/20, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+  
**Kind Country, Julian Davis & the Situation** 3/19, 8 PM, GMan Tavern  
**Olivia O'Brien, Hey Violet** 3/19, 7 PM, House of Blues  
**One Love for Teri Bristol fund-raiser featuring Blu 9, Boy Alberto, Czboogie, Georgie Porgie, DJ Greg Haus, DJ Heather, Jeff Pazen, Jevon Jackson, Michael Serafini, Paul Johnson, Sandy Alvarado, and more** 3/28, 10 PM, Smart Bar  
**Bobby Oroza** 3/29, 9:15 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Oso Oso, Prince Daddy & the Hyena, Just Friends** 3/29, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+  
**Palehound, Adult Mom** 3/21, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+  
**Smiley Tillmon Band featuring Kate Moss** 3/25, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn  
**Tindersticks** 3/30, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+  
**Tisoki, Minesweeper** 3/20, 8:30 PM, Chop Shop, 18+  
**Trout Steak Revival** 3/19, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston  
**Tweens** 4/19, 8:30 PM, Hideout  
**Unlikely Candidates, Zero 9:36, Federal Empire** 4/1, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+



## GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

SINCE THE RELEASE of their self-titled debut in 2017, Chicago's **Mute Duo**—aka pedal steel guitarist **Sam Wagster** and drummer **Skylar Rowe**—have become one of the most versatile live acts in the city, performing and improvising in an array of configurations, including a quintet at the Empty Bottle's Mirrored Series (curated by Rowe and devoted to improvised jazz and experimental music) and a thunderous quasi-orchestral octet that opened for Grouper at Bohemian National Cemetery. The painterly, panoramic songs on their new **Lapse in Passage** (which drops on Friday, March 20, via **American Dreams Records**) could soundtrack a walk through a beautiful but foreboding desert. On Thursday, March 19, they play a double release party at **Constellation** with **Akosuen**, aka multi-instrumentalist Billie Howard, who has a new EP called *In Flux*.

Chicago has no shortage of young bands cribbing from classic-rock albums more than twice their age, but the standouts in this crowded field are emerging six-piece **Rookie**. They mold earthy 60s roots rock, smoldering 70s power pop, and timeless psych into lean, focused pop-rock songs that impress even their elders—in fact, last month they opened a string of east-coast dates for Cheap Trick! On Friday, March 13, **Bloodshot** releases **Rookie's** self-titled debut album, which they celebrate that night by headlining a sold-out **Empty Bottle** show.

Gossip Wolf has had a soft spot for Chicago DIY rap label and collective **Why? Records** ever since covering ebullient duo **Free Snacks**, aka MCs **Joshua Virtue** and **Ruby Watson**, in January 2019. Last week, Watson released his second solo album for the label, **Carry Me**, which includes appearances from the other rappers in the Why? Records crew (Virtue, Davis, and Malci) as well as Musa Reems of Watson's other collective, **Dumb Intelligence**. Watson marks the arrival of *Carry Me* with a headlining set at **Subterranean** on Friday, March 13! —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip\_Wolf or e-mail [gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com](mailto:gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com).

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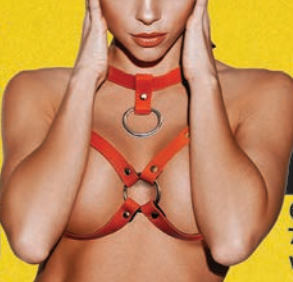

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## OPINION



### SAVAGE LOVE

## 'Sometimes I poop accidentally'

When an orgasm has unintended consequences

By DAN SAVAGE

**Q:** I'm a cis bi woman, and I mainly have sex with people with penises. I have a really gross problem, sorry. It's been an issue for as long as I've been sexually active—but in the past few years, it seems to have gotten worse. If I am being penetrated vaginally, especially if it's vigorous (which I prefer), and I orgasm, sometimes I poop accidentally. If I try to clench up to keep this from happening, it doesn't work and I can't orgasm. This used to happen once in a blue moon, only with particularly intense orgasms, but now it happens more frequently. One person I've been seeing really likes anal, and that makes the problem even worse. To be clear: I have no desire for poop in my sex life. It's gross, it's embarrassing, and my partners do not enjoy it. Nor do I. I've tried going to the bathroom before sex, but I can never seem to fully empty out. I even went to a doctor to talk about it, but all I got was a big shrug and no useful

suggestions. I've looked online and found discussions of this happening to other people and them being understandably horrified, but nobody mentions it being a regular occurrence. This really sucks! Do you have any suggestions? Other than "give up sex completely," which I would prefer not to do. —**NECESSARY OBJECTIVE: SOOTHE HER INTESTINAL TRACT**

**A:** "I've absolutely heard of this before, and as NOSHI already knows from Internet searches, she's not alone and needs help," said Dr. Debby Herbenick. "And a 'big shrug' doesn't sound like a helpful response from a physician who you're asking for help in figuring out a complicated and extremely under-researched and therefore tricky sexual issue."

Dr. Herbenick is a professor at the Indiana University School of Public Health and author of *Because It Feels Good: A Woman's Guide to Sexual Pleasure and Satis-*

*faction* and numerous other books. And what you're going to need, according to Dr. Herbenick, is a doctor who's actually prepared to help you. So that awkward conversation you had with your last doctor? A conversation you no doubt dreaded having? You're going to have to have that conversation again, NOSHI, maybe more than once, with other doctors. I know, I know: Talking with your doctor about a sexual issue—particularly a messy one—is difficult. And when we finally work up the nerve to speak with a doctor about something like this and that doctor isn't helpful, our understandable desire to avoid having *that* conversation ever again can lead us to conclude that talking to doctors is a waste of time. But it isn't, so long as you're talking to the right doctor.

"The letter writer should ask her health-care provider for a referral to an urogynecologist," said Dr. Herbenick, "especially one who likes to get to the bottom (no pun

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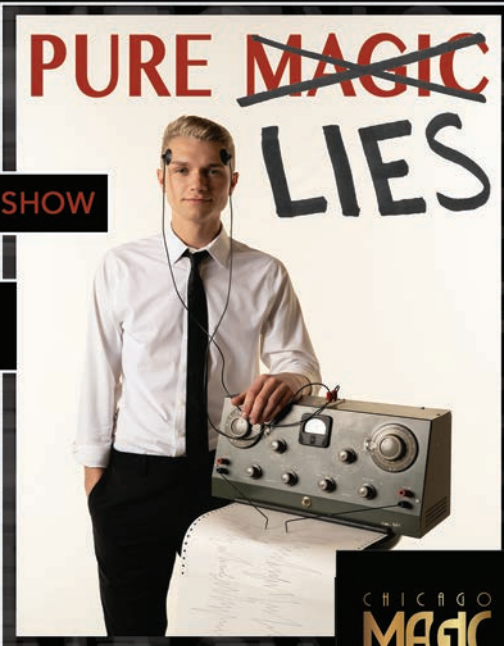
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## OPINION

✉ MICHELLE TRESEMER / UNSPLASH

intended) of challenging cases.”

If this happens to you at other times—if you poop yourself when you fart or sneeze—be sure to share that information with the specialist.

“There are lots of tests that health-care providers can use to examine her rectal function,” said Dr. Herbenick. “These tests can include a digital rectal exam, a sigmoidoscopy (insertion of a tiny tube with a camera to look for issues such as inflammation), an X-ray, an anal ultrasound, a colonoscopy, or other tests. In other words, there are things other than a big and completely useless shrug that can be done. And depending on what they find, they may suggest biofeedback, surgery, physical therapy/pelvic-floor exercises, supplements, and so on.”

But with all that said, NOSHIT, doctors aren’t all-powerful, and some problems can only be managed and not solved.

“The fact is, our bodies don’t last forever in the ways we want them to,” said Dr. Herbenick. “And some research does point toward more frequent anal intercourse being associated with fecal incontinence.” (Aging, childbirth, and hormone-replacement therapy are very strongly associated with fecal incontinence.) Only a small percentage of women who regularly engaged in anal intercourse reported higher levels of fecal incontinence, NOSHIT, so if this isn’t a problem for you generally—if this is only a problem during sex due to some tragically star-crossed neural wiring—you might want to steal a move from the squeaky clean gay bottoms out there. Instead of just “going to the bathroom” before sex and hoping you’re empty, treat yourself to an anal douche to make sure you’re empty. (Alexander

Cheves wrote a great guide for receptive anal intercourse, “17 Tips for Happier, Healthier Bottoming,” for the *Advocate*. Google it.)

“But finding a health-care provider who’s willing to listen to what’s important to her in her sex life is the first step,” said Dr. Herbenick. “A sex-positive health-care provider—probably a urogynecologist or a proctologist—who’s willing to hear her out can help her figure out some good ways forward. It’s about listening to what quality of life means to her. That seems to include an active, pleasurable sex life involving vaginal and/or anal sex with orgasm, and without pooping, or at least not nearly so often.”

**Q:** I’m a 32-year-old woman married to a 45-year-old man. We’ve been together for ten years. At the beginning of our relationship, I told him smoking was a deal breaker for me because he was a former smoker. Well, the asshole started smoking again this year. I’m pissed about this, and it has affected my desire for him. This is complicated further by the fact that for most of our relationship, we’ve had very mismatched libidos, with mine being much higher. He has always said that I could get my needs met elsewhere, as sex just wasn’t that important to him. Well, last year I started exploring extramarital relationships, and now I have a boyfriend that I’m eager to fuck. Can you guess who is now interested in fucking me? My husband, Mr. Sex Isn’t Important. Turns out, he’s very into fucking me after I’ve fucked another dude. But I only want so much sex, and I don’t want to fuck a smoker. I feel obligated to have sex with my husband, though. My question is, am I? He didn’t feel obligated to have sex with me more than once a month for nine years, which

made me feel shitty and undesirable. (Also, we have kids. Hence the marriage and why I’m not going to leave.) —SERIOUSLY HATE ASH MOUTH

**A:** You aren’t obligated to have sex with your husband—you aren’t obligated to have sex with anyone, ever. But I assume you don’t want to be left any more than you want to leave, SHAM. And if you refuse to fuck your husband because he broke the deal you made a decade ago—and because you’re pissed about nine years of sexual neglect (legit grounds)—he might decide to leave you. So while you don’t have to fuck this ash-hole, you might want to fuck this ash-hole. But until he quits smoking, you could reasonably refuse to kiss him or sleep in the same room with him. (Smokers don’t realize how bad it smells—how bad they smell—and just how thoroughly they can stink up a room, even one they never light up in.)

One follow-up question: Did your husband always know this about himself—did he know he was turned on by the thought of you being with other dudes—or did he realize it only after you started fucking this other dude? If he knew it all along, and his encouragement to get your “needs met elsewhere” was a dishonest and manipulative attempt to force his kink on you, SHAM, you have even more right to be pissed. But if he realized this turned him on only after you started fucking other dudes—if he was as surprised by how you getting a boyfriend uncorked his libido as you were both surprised and annoyed by it—you might want to forgive him. **✉**

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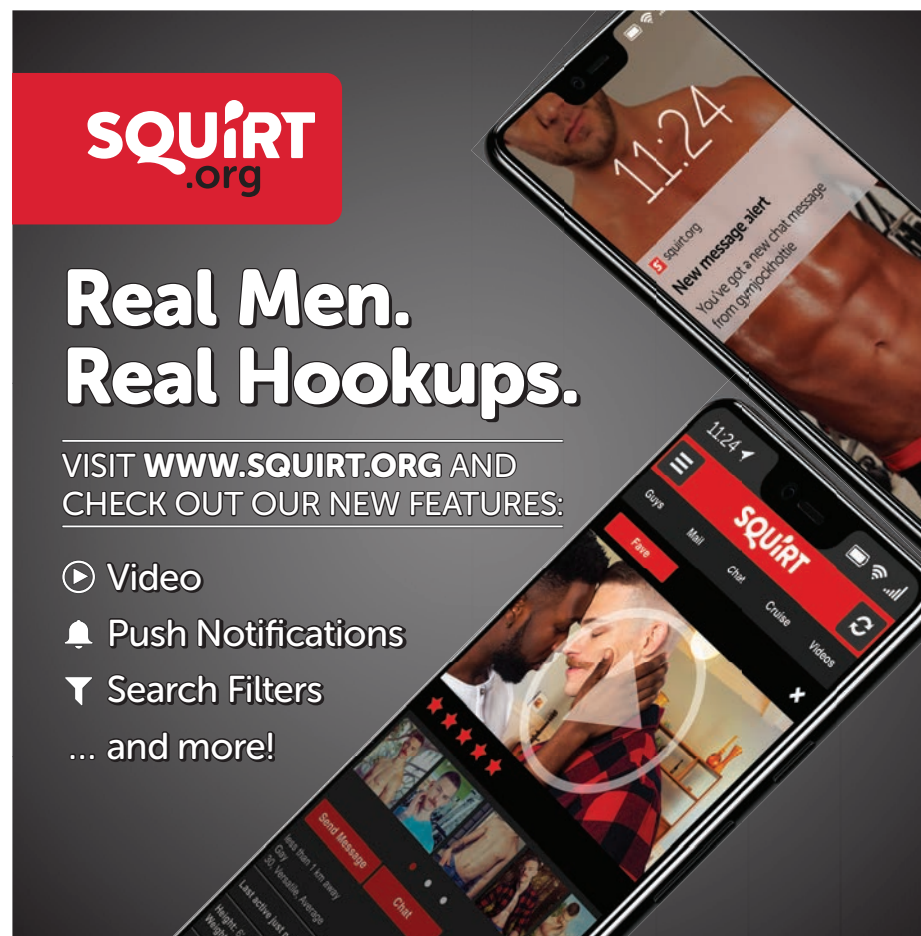
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## LEGAL NOTICES

**STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE.** Location Cook County - County Division - Case Type:

Name Change from Alberto Alonso Blazquez to Alberto Alonso. Court Date April 13, 2020, 9:30 AM in Courtroom #1706 Case # 2020CONC000200

This letter is to notify that on March 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at 83rd & Halsted Self Storage, Inc., located at 8316 S. Birkhoff Ave, Chicago, IL 60620, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

465 Charles Preyer  
337 Cheryl Lewis

This letter is to notify that on March 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at Hyde Park Self Storage, Inc., located at 5155 S. Cottage Grove Ave, Chicago, IL 60615, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

416A Alan Johnson  
225 Rasan E. Durham  
518 Gordon H. Burkhalter, Jr.  
362 Stuart Tave

This letter is to notify that on March 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at South Shore Self Storage, Inc., located at 7843 S. Exchange Ave, Chicago, IL 60649, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

413 Anthony Thomas  
611 LaMont Davis  
612 Hope Keys  
501 Anthony Killion  
121 Victor Fenner  
245 Michelle Turner  
312 Jerome Miller  
200 Lolitta Armour  
566 Caprishna Norfleet

This letter is to notify that on March 25, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. an auction will be held at Aaron Bros. Self-Storage, Inc., located at 4034 S. Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60653, to sell the following articles held within said storage units to enforce a lien existing under the laws of the state of Illinois.

405 Mark A. Gray  
343 Anthony Joryman

**NOTICE**  
Cottage Grove & 93rd Currency Exchange, Inc., pursuant to Section

15.2 of the Illinois Currency Exchange Act, notice is hereby given by the Secretary, State of Illinois, Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, Division of Financial Institutions, Currency Exchange Section, that as of February 15, 2020, all debts, liabilities and lawful demands against the Cottage Grove & 93rd Currency Exchange, Inc. will be redeemed by the Secretary on demand, in writing, by the owner thereof, at any time within one year from the date of first publication.

**STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE.** Location Cook County-County Division-Case Type: Name Change from Jiaheir Marquise Taylor to Jiaheir Marquise Bean Court Date April 27, 2020, 9:30 am in Courtroom # 1706 Case # 2020CONC120.

**Notice is hereby given,** pursuant to "An Act in relation the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County, Registration Number: Y20003316 on March 3, 2020. Under the Assumed Business Name of BRYCE & CO. with the business located ay: 3525 N Racine Ave Apt 2W, Chicago, IL, 60657.

**STATE OF ILLINOIS, PUBLICATION NOTICE OF COURT DATE FOR REQUEST FOR NAME CHANGE.** Location Cook County-County Division-Case Type: Name Change from Jiaheir Marquise Taylor to Jiaheir Marquise Bean Court Date April 27, 2020, 9:30 am in Courtroom # 1706 Case # 2020CONC120.

**Notice is hereby given,** pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State" as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County, Registration Number: Y20003262 on February 24, 2020. Under the Assumed Business Name of BRIFIO. With the business located at: 4105 N Sheridan RD APT 1s, Chicago, IL 60613.

**Notice is hereby given,** pursuant to "An Act in relation the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County, Registration Number: Y20003315 on March 3, 2020. Under the Assumed Business Name of B.E.A.R.D.E.D. PLAYGROUND with the business located ay: 3525 N Racine Ave Apt 2W, Chicago, IL, 60657.

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## ATTENTION

**If you are a former 10/1/99 CHA leaseholder who has an interest in exercising your right to return, please read the information listed below.**



The Draft Tenant Selection Plan (TSP), Lease, and other documents that will apply to resident occupancy at Edith Spurlock Sampson Apartments are available for review and comment.

The North Sheffield Development is an innovative mixed-income project that in addition to rehabbing the two senior buildings at Edith Spurlock Sampson Apartments provides 80 new non age-restricted units at 2700 N. Sheffield. The new project is located between the two senior buildings at Edith Spurlock Sampson (ESS) Apartments and in the Lincoln Park community area of Chicago, IL.

Fifty CHA Project Based Voucher ("PBV") units at 2700 N. Sheffield will be available for leasing by eligible applicants on CHA's waitlist. To bring more housing opportunities to the North Side of Chicago, The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), has worked with our joint-venture developer partner PIRHL to draft a Tenant Selection Plan ("TSP") and Lease for use at the 2700 N. Sheffield.

The 30-day public comment period will be held for CHA to receive oral and written comments on March 12 and ends April 10, 2020. While CHA encourages and welcomes all residents and the community-at-large to review the proposed updates to the TSP and attend the hearing, you are not required to attend the public comment hearing to submit comments.

The date, time, and location of the public comment hearing is as follows:

**March 24, 3:00pm: Edith Spurlock Sampson Apts, 2720 N Sheffield**

Public housing residents and the public may submit comments on the North Sheffield Development Draft TSP, Lease, and other documents during the public comment period. All comments must be received by April 10, 2020.

Copies of the North Sheffield Development TSP, Lease, & other documents will be available beginning March 12 through April 10, 2020 at the following locations:

- CHA and HCV Administrative Offices
- Family Investment Center (FIC)
- Central Advisory Council Office
- HCV Regional Office - South
- HCV Regional Office - West
- LUCHA:
- **Spanish Coalition for Housing:** North Office  
South Office  
SE Office
- www.thecha.org

- 60 E Van Buren St
- 4859 S Wabash St
- 243 E 32nd St
- 10 W 35th St
- 2750 W Roosevelt Rd
- 3541 W North Ave
- 1152 N Christiana Ave
- 1922 N Pulaski Rd
- 1915 S Blue Island
- 9010 S Commercial

**Mail, E-mail or Fax comments to:**

Chicago Housing Authority  
Attention: North Sheffield Development Draft TSP & Lease  
60 E. Van Buren Street, 12th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60605  
commentonthepan@thecha.org  
Fax 312. 913.7837

If you have a question about this notice, please call the CHA at 312.913-7300.  
To request a reasonable accommodation, please call 312.913.7690.  
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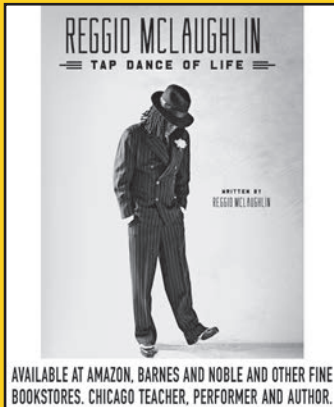


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