

Aug 19 – Sept 19, 2021



Cracking the lid on a bottomless music festival

By **READER STAFF**

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) originally planned to celebrate the Year of Chicago Music in 2020. Then the pandemic diminished those festivities to the point that the city declared 2021 the Year of Chicago Music too.

The ongoing surge of the Delta variant means the U.S. won't be rid of the pandemic this year. The *New York Times* COVID-19 tracker says at least 620,000 Americans have died of the virus, and that number will keep growing as the unvaccinated remain on the fence about a “personal choice” that affects everyone. In Cook County, 60 percent of residents ages 12 and up are fully vaccinated, which mitigates but doesn't eliminate the danger to public health.

Chicago officially reopened June 11, and with it live music began a gingerly return. The city's music venues—where artists, fans, and live production professionals convene for a few magical, impossible-to-replicate hours—have largely begun hosting shows again. In response to the Delta variant, most are

requiring proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID test for entry. If you're going to a concert, check with the venue first to learn its current policy.

Celebrating the Year of Chicago Music in 2021 is certainly safer than it would've been in 2020, and DCASE has declared a citywide monthlong festival called Chicago in Tune that runs from Thursday, August 19, till Sunday, September 19. None of the city's usual downtown festivals is happening this year, but DCASE will honor Chicago's rich musical heritage with plenty of programming at Pritzker Pavilion and in other parks. Chicago in Tune also includes for-profit festivals such as Ruido Fest, the Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash, the Pitchfork Music Festival, and Riot Fest.

In fact, Chicago in Tune includes every concert in every venue in the city for a month. It's more a name than an event, and it's an exhaustively inclusive name—which means this *Reader* guide couldn't possibly be complete. Instead it provides an entryway to the thrilling depth and diversity of the city's music

communities.

Music brings people together unlike any other art form, but COVID-19 continues to make it complicated to gather. Breakthrough infections in vaccinated people are a minuscule fraction of new cases, but seeing live music necessarily carries at least a small risk. It's up to you to decide what you can tolerate: Packed into a club, or standing on your own in a park? In any case, please bear in mind the danger you could pose to everyone else, especially kids and others who can't be vaccinated—get your shots, wear a mask, and encourage people in your life to follow suit.

The *Reader's* guide to Chicago in Tune includes interviews with people in different parts of the local scene, essays on genres with deep roots in the city, and a dozen curated lists of concerts. For information on shows not included here, visit Do312's Chicago in Tune concert calendar. And however you decide to celebrate, make safe choices so that everybody who can bask in the glory of live music will still have the chance to do it tomorrow. **RI**



MillenniumPark

Four special evenings at
Jay Pritzker Pavilion honoring music
born and innovated in Chicago

Free, 5:30–8:30pm

Gospel music
Fri, Sept 3

Jazz
Sat, Sept 4

House
Sat, Sept 11

Blues
Sat, Sept 18

MillenniumPark.org



Millennium Park Summer Music Series is presented by the Millennium Park Foundation with support from co-presenting partners BMO Harris Bank, Chicago Free for All Fund, Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Northern Trust and In Honor of the Massey Scholars. DCASE programming is supported by the Chicago Transit Authority.

MUSIC LIVES HERE

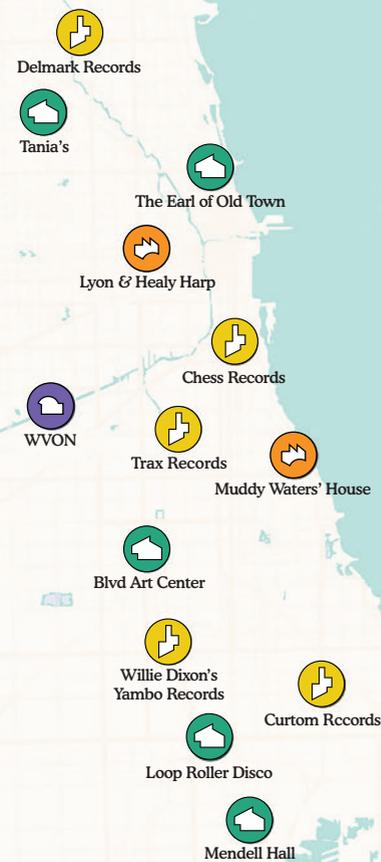
a multi-media project by Chicago graphic art studio Sonnenzimmer and Maya Bird-Murphy of Chicago Mobile Makers, will pay tribute to the spaces, places, and people that have shaped Chicago's music landscape, past and present. Graphic markers, website, performances and more launch August 29.

#YEAROFCHICAGOMUSIC

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www.MusicLivesHere.site



PICTURED: Just a few of the 50 sites selected for the project.



How DCASE helped Chicago music survive the pandemic shutdown

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events couldn't present many events, but it found lots of other ways to support artists and venues.

By **READER STAFF**

When COVID-19 swept the country, music venues were among the first to shutter, throwing tens of thousands of live entertainment professionals out of work and sidelining artists who depend on touring income. The National Independent Venue Association formed in April 2020 and currently represents more than 3,000 performance halls, promoters, and festivals; it's done much of the heavy lifting during the push for government financial support of these crucial community hubs. NIVA's call to arms laid out the stakes bluntly: independent venues were the first to be closed and would be the last businesses to reopen at the end of the pandemic. A June 2020 NIVA survey of roughly 2,000 music-industry professionals revealed that 90 percent of independent venue owners and promoters expected they'd be forced to close up shop permanently without aid.

COVID-19 of course threatened not just venues but also the fan and artist ecosystems they foster and the people who form those communities. Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) did its part to help the local arts community through this era-defining turbulence—which fell during what was intended to be the Year of Chicago Music. “The first thing we wanted to do—and it surely wasn't just for musicians, but with a special emphasis in the Year of Chicago Music—is to do everything we could to help support arts relief for the Chicago arts landscape,” says outgoing DCASE commissioner Mark Kelly.

That included launching the Performing Arts Venue Relief Grants Program with support from the only slightly less new Arts for Illinois Relief Fund as well as the Walder Foundation. In October 2020, DCASE invited

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local for-profit and nonprofit venues to apply for \$10,000 slices of a \$1.2 million pie. “We were able to make awards to over 100 organizations,” Kelly says. “Was it enough? No, but it helped keep everyone afloat.”

That initiative went public two months after DCASE announced the recipients of its 2020 CityArts Program grants, which distributed \$2 million among 191 nonprofit arts organizations. The National Endowment for the Arts chipped in too, providing DCASE with \$250,000 as part of the CARES Act. The CityArts grants were split into two categories: general operating grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$30,000 (35 of which went to music organizations), and special project grants aligned with the Year of Chicago Music, which ranged from \$2,500 to \$56,200. (Full disclosure: the *Reader* received a special project grant.) Among the recipients are classical music school Access Contemporary Music, urban-arts youth-development program Kuumba Lynx, and the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic.

DCASE also helped artists one at a time, and last year's Individual Artists Program grants came through right when they needed to; the city announced the grantees at the beginning of April, just weeks into the pandemic. DCASE bestowed grants on more than 160 artists to help them complete a specific piece of work. “In a typical year, about 20 musicians would receive awards,” Kelly says. “But in the Year of Chicago Music, we got a lot more music applications.” Nearly 60 musicians received grants ranging from \$850 to \$5,000, including trans pop singer-songwriter Ellie “SuperKnova” Kim, euphoric rapper Clinton “ShowYouSuck” Sandifer, jazz saxophonist Dustin Laurenzi, and multidisciplinary composer and performer Ayanna Woods.

“We also for the first time had our Esteemed Artist Awards,” Kelly says. “These are \$10,000 awards, and seven musicians in 2020 received that award.” Only 13 people received this highly prized DCASE grant, and the seven musicians among them were more than worthy: jazz vocalist Dee Alexander, Radio Free Honduras founder and guitarist Charlie Baran (aka Carlos Barahona), blues veteran Katherine Davis, Dolly Varden bandleader Steve Dawson, contemporary classical pianist Mabel Kwan, jazz-scene linchpin Mike Reed, and blues singer and drummer Larry Taylor.

DCASE also helped organize and fund virtual performances that gave local musicians much-needed paydays, sometimes replacing its beloved summertime series with Web-only events. SummerDance in Place, for example, moved SummerDance's usual dance lessons

and concerts into the online space, helping folks learn salsa, swing, and line dancing wherever they were. Millennium Park at Home replaced Pritzker Pavilion's eclectic in-person shows with online sets from the likes of alt-country veteran Jon Langford and South Asian soul-fusion artist Zeshan B.

“In all this, we were just trying to hire local, get some money to musicians, put musicians in front of an audience,” Kelly says. “I think our viewership was over a half a million, which is not a small number when there was a hell of a lot of competition for eyeballs.” In the fall, DCASE also partnered with the Chicago Independent Venue League on CIVLization, a virtual concert series that benefited local concert halls, their staff, and the artists who played in them.

Supporting local musicians during the pandemic also meant helping them plan for what might come after the crisis. In April 2021, DCASE opened applications for Chicago Presents through the Arts77: Arts Recovery Plan. Two rounds of recipients have been announced, and the department has so far supported 52 cultural events taking place between early July and the end of October with grants of anywhere from \$5,000 to \$30,000.

“We realized that in order to do this safely, these might have to be micro-outdoor live in-person events,” says DCASE performing arts program director Mariam Thiam. “That involves permitting, either with the city or the parks, depending on the location, and so we have to structure it so that people understood they have to have a COVID plan in place—all these things that are really new for presenters.”

DCASE and its volunteers on the Year of Chicago Music steering committees have been scrambling to confront the pandemic for almost a year and a half now, and all their tinkering and retooling began to bear fruit when local clubs started inviting local musicians back onto their stages a few months ago. If you've been going to shows at all, you've probably seen one organized by a DCASE grant recipient or featuring a musician who's recorded with the department's help. And if by chance you haven't, you'll have plenty of chances to change that during the month of Chicago in Tune.

“I think Chicago in Tune will be the great cultural coming-out party for the city,” Kelly says. “It's going to be everywhere, and music is going to be in every neighborhood—I think we excite Chicago and excite the world, and set a new expectation for how we support music in Chicago.”

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SHOW CALENDAR

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE

Chicago in Tune includes every concert in and around Chicago from August 19 till September 19. This calendar presents a relatively manageable selection of those concerts, including most of those mentioned elsewhere in the Reader's guide to the festival. A more complete list is available via Do312, whose calendar is linked to the QR code below.



THU 8/19

Afro Fusion DJs 9 PM, Le Nocturne Chicago, 21+
Jon Anderson with the Paul Green Rock Academy 7:30 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+
Chicha Roots 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn FREE ♫
Cloud Nothings, Manas 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Hypnotic Brass Ensemble 8 PM, the Promontory ♫
Jaroichicanos 6 PM, Hermosa Park FREE ♫
Little Bird, Dried Spider 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Vino Louden, Joanna Connor 8 PM, Kingston Mines, 21+
Motherfolk, Hacky Turtles 7:15 PM, Cobra Lounge ♫
Sonny Falls, Cold Beaches 8 PM, Golden Dagger, 21+
Trio Nexus 7:30 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts, 21+
Zoé 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

FRI 8/20

Between the Buried & Me 8:30 PM, House of Blues, 17+
Bloom, Troigo 9 PM, Hideout, 21+
Blue Dream, Daisychain, Little Church 8 PM, Reggies Music Joint, 21+
Chicago Gospel Fire Concert featuring Gods Posse, Adrian B. King & Reverence, New Direction, and more 7 PM, Christ Unity Evangelistic Church FREE ♫
Cloud Nothings, Manas 10 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Brent Cobb, Nikki Lane 7:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Julian Daniell, Soul Honey Records 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Electric Feels DJs 9:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Kurt Elling Quartet 8 PM, Green Mill, 21+
Foons, Million Reasons, Blondesnamedbritney 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus 6:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park FREE ♫
Inner Wave, La Doña 10:30 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Renegade Circus Cheetah Evolution featuring Mac Diesel, Juju, Freakos Wavy 8:30 PM, the Point
Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band, Secret Lives, Jeff Massey 7:30 PM, Pritzker Rock Club
Ruido Fest day one featuring Caifanes, Silverio, Los Amigos Invisibles, and more 3 PM, Union Park ♫
Matthew Skoller & Chicago Wind 7:30 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts
Summer Smash day one featuring ASAP Rocky, Lil Skies, Lil Tecca, Lil Yachty, and more 3 PM, Douglass Park ♫
Louie Vega 10 PM, Smart Bar, 21+

SAT 8/21

Alex Midi (DJ set), Kombi DJs, and more 9 PM, Simone's, 21+
Black Is the New Black featuring Jefe 312, Heartbreak Homie, Kiraly Payne, and more 7 PM, Bourbon on Division, 21+
Cook Thugless, LAN Party, Stranded Civilians 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+
Matthew Dear, Juan MacLean 10 PM, Smart Bar, 21+
Dwele 7 and 10 PM, City Winery ♫
Kurt Elling Quartet 8 PM, Green Mill, 21+
Erabella, Sora Kai, Speaking With Ghosts, and more 6 PM, Bottom Lounge ♫
Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus 6:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park FREE ♫
Nocturna featuring DJ Scary Lady Sarah 10 PM, Metro, 18+
Power Praise 2021 featuring Bishop Hezekiah Walker & Love Fellowship Tabernacle, Donald Lawrence & Company, Mark Hubbard, and more 7 PM, Cross Pointe Park, Hazel Crest ♫
Ruido Fest day two featuring Panteón Rococó, Mœnia, Ivy Queen, and more 1 PM, Union Park ♫
Silverio, Barragoon 10 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+
Summer Smash day two featuring Lil Baby, Baby Keem, City Girls, and more 1 PM, Douglass Park ♫
Victory Travelers, Pastor Roosevelt Dixon Sr., Trina Robinson 5 PM, New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Gary ♫

SUN 8/22

Deicide, Kataklysm, Internal Bleeding, Begat the Nephilim 6 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+
Final Frontier Land featuring Prairie School DJs 5 and 8 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+
Frequency Series presents Patti Cudd 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
Interplay featuring Sam Trump, Dee Alexander, Maggie Brown, and more 3 PM, Harris Theater FREE ♫
Queen! featuring Derrick Carter, Michael Serafini, and Garrett David 10 PM, Smart Bar, 21+
Ruido Fest day three featuring Café Tacvba, Little Jesus, Ambar Lucid, and more 1 PM, Union Park ♫
El Shirota, Las Nubes 10:30 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+
Source One Band 7 PM, Odyssey East, 21+ FREE ♫
\$not, Cochise, Hatesonny 10:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+
Summer Smash day three featuring Lil Uzi Vert, 24KGoldn, Benny the Butcher, and more 1 PM, Douglass Park ♫
Molly Tuttle 3 and 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music ♫

MON 8/23

Extraordinary Popular Delusions 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 21+ FREE ♫
Joel Paterson and friends 8 PM, Green Mill, 21+
Preservation of Fire featuring Natural Information Society, Drum Divas 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park FREE ♫

TUE 8/24

Future Crib 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Kara Jackson 9 PM, Hideout, 21+
Thelma & the Sleaze, Beastii 7 PM, Liar's Club, 21+

WED 8/25

Boundary Waters, Splits, OK Cool 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 21+
A Deeply Rooted Evening for Chicago's Healing: A preview of Goshen featuring Le'Andria Johnson, members of the Tri-City Singers, and Zeke Locke & the NuXperience 7:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park FREE ♫
81355, Juice Mazelee 6 PM, Tack Room FREE ♫
Ida y Vuelta 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+
Zoé 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

THU 8/26

Barry & the Fountains, Khaliyah X, Ausar 8 PM, the Promontory, 21+

DJ Bvax 9 PM, Punch House, 21+ FREE ♫
Charlie Reed, Living Thing 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+
Griffin Essin, DJ Skoli, and more 8 PM, the Point, 21+
Freedom Hawk, High Reeper, Black Road, Uncouth 7 PM, Reggies Music Joint, 21+
Jaroichicanos, Joel Castellanos 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn FREE ♫
Matute 8:20 PM, Copernicus Center ♫
Ohmme, Ganser 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Yatra, Into the Silo 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+

FRI 8/27

Bongzilla 7:30 PM, Beat Kitchen ♫
Bully 10 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Flee Lord, Lord Mobb, and more 6:30 PM, the Promontory, 18+
Chris Foreman 5 PM, Green Mill, 21+ FREE ♫
Guardrail, Wolf Rd, Weekend Run Club, and more 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Sterling Hayes, Reeseynem, HXLT, theMIND, MfN Melo, Qari, and more 7 PM, Chop Shop, 18+
Rich Jones & Justice Hill, Lester Rey, Radio Free Honduras featuring Charlie Baran 6 PM, Kosciuszko Park ♫ FREE ♫
Kali Masi, Hi Ho, Telethon 9 PM, GMan Tavern, 21+
Alexander McLean Project 8 PM, Green Mill, 21+

Motoblot day one featuring Black Sabbitch, Vaudettes, Boybrain, Amazing Heeby Jeebies, and more 4 PM, Cobra Lounge ♫
Niika, Reno Cruz 9 PM, Hideout, 21+
Oveja Negra, MuTaTe, Mr. Funko, DJ Gildelgar Sanchez 10 PM, Wings Fire House Pilsen, 21+ FREE ♫
12th Planet, Phaseone, Guppi, OG Nixin 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Vicious Attack, From Those Ashes 8 PM, Bourbon on Division, 21+
Yung Bleu, Ann Marie, Seddy Hendrix, Nley 8 PM, Park West ♫

SAT 8/28

AfriClassical presents Ayanna Woods and friends performing music from *FORCE! An Opera*, Julian Otis & Olivia Harris 8 PM, Elastic Arts ♫
Elton Aura, Chris Banks 9 PM, Hideout, 21+
Bully 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Jhay Cortez, Mora 9 PM, Radius Chicago, 18+
Emily Blue, SuperKnova, Carlile, Thair 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Freestyle Forever presents Mixtape Edition III featuring Stevie B, DJ Funk, Samantha,

and more 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 21+
Impulsive Hearts, Present Company, Cloud Horses, Pete Cautious 8 PM, Reggies Music Joint, 21+
Motoblot day two featuring Nekkromantix, Slutter, Screamin' Rebel Angels, Aweful, and more noon, Cobra Lounge ♫
R&B Only Live featuring DJ Tiara Monique 8:15 PM, House of Blues, 21+
Rise Against, Descendents, Menzingers 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion ♫
Matthew Shipp 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+
V Is for Villains, Bellhead, Code Name: Phoenix 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Wilco, Sleater-Kinney 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park ♫

SUN 8/29

Bronzeville Blues: Checkerboard Lounge featuring the Mojo Jam Session with Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith, John Primer & the Real Deal Blues Band, Melody Angel, Big James & the Chicago Playboys, Nick Alexander noon, outside near 423 E. 43rd FREE ♫
Bronzeville Blues: The Forum featuring Joe Filisko & Eric Noden, Greasy Gravy, Harmonica Hinds noon, outside near the Forum FREE ♫
Bronzeville Blues: Park 43 featuring Bob Stroger, Mississippi Gabe Carter, Gerry Hundt's Legendary One-Man Band noon, outside near Park 43 FREE ♫
Bully, Tweens 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Colin Hay 7:30 PM, Park West, 18+
Immortal Guardian, Paladin, Knight of the Round, Acracy 7 PM, WC Social Club, West Chicago ♫
King Crimson, Zappa Band 7:30 PM, Ravinia Pavilion, Highland Park ♫
Motoblot day three featuring Delta Bombers, Black Sabbitch, Crombies, and more noon, Cobra Lounge ♫
PorchFest Roscoe Village 1 PM, various outdoor locations throughout Roscoe Village FREE ♫
Joe Pratt & Source One Band 6 PM, Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation FREE ♫
Research & Development featuring Sassmouth, Miss Twink USA, Grey People, and more 6 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+ FREE ♫

MON 8/30

Afrodjia Social Club featuring DJ Sadie Woods and friends, Proximity with Micah Collier &

Electec 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park ♫ FREE ♫
Eric Chial and friends 7 PM, Montrose Saloon, 21+ FREE ♫
Extraordinary Popular Delusions 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 21+ FREE ♫
Maroon 5, Blackbear 6:30 PM, Wrigley Field ♫
Joel Paterson and friends 8 PM, Green Mill, 21+
Swām, Bonita Appleblunt 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+ FREE ♫

TUE 8/31

Future Bartenderz 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Garden of Souls 8 PM, Fulton Street Collective ♫
Honey Cellar 7 PM, Montrose Saloon, 21+ FREE ♫
Adam Ness, Ami, Mamii 7 PM, the Promontory, 21+
Orisun 9 PM, Hideout, 21+
Spiral Galaxy, Sip 6 PM, Hideout, 21+

WED 9/1

Modern English, Ganser 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston ♫
Kent Rose & the Remedies 7 PM, Montrose Saloon, 21+ FREE ♫

THU 9/2

Gary Bartz 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase ♫
Bnny, Squirrel Flower, Divino Niño 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Knocked Loose, Incendiary, and more 6:30 PM, Metro ♫
Out of Space featuring Big Boi, Twista 7 PM, Temperance Beer Co., Evanston, 18+
Zulema, Sonos de México Ensemble 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park FREE ♫

FRI 9/3

American Aquarium, Adeem the Artist 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+
Gary Bartz 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase ♫
Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, 21+
Black Dahlia Murder, After the Burial 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Blockhead, Shrimnose 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
Chicago in Tune: Gospel Music featuring Lashon Brown Jr.; the Carson Sisters, Nicole Harris, and Illiana Torres; the Tommies Reunion Choir 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph FREE ♫
Greta Van Fleet 6:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion ♫
Knocked Loose, Gatecreeper 6:30 PM, Metro ♫
North Coast Music Festival day one featuring Kaskade, Louis the Child, San Holo, and more 2 PM,

SHOW CALENDAR

SeatGeek Stadium, Bridgeview, 17+

Out of Space featuring Drive-By Truckers, JD McPherson 7 PM, Temperance Beer Co., Evanston, 18+

Plack Blague, Ozzuario, Him Hun (DJ set) 10 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Telekinetic Yeti, Blake 8 PM, Bourbon on Division, 21+

Tierra Roja, Los Sudakas 10 PM, Wings Fire House Pilsen, 21+ **FREE**

SAT 9/4

ARC Music Festival day one featuring Luttrell, DJ Pierre, and more 2 PM, Union Park, 18+

Gary Bartz 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase **4U**

Chicago in Tune: Jazz featuring Ari Brown, Marquis Hill, Lizz Wright 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **4U FREE**

Drumcode featuring Adam Beyer, Layton Giordani 10 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

In the Company of Serpents, Hive, Roman Ring 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+

Jodi, Tenci 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+

MC Magic, Lil Rob, Jay Roxxx 7 PM, the Vic **4U**

North Coast Music Festival day two featuring GRiZ, Ganja White Night, Diesel, Lane 8, and more 2 PM, SeatGeek Stadium, Bridgeview, 17+

NRBQ 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, 21+

Rockwell Blues & Jazz Street Stroll featuring Delmark All Stars Band with Jimmy Johnson, Jimmy Burns, Linsey Alexander, and more 1 PM, on Rockwell between Irving Park and Berteau **FREE 4U**

Strawberry Girls, Andres 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

iSúbelo! featuring Molotov and more 1 PM, Harrison Park, 18+ **FREE**

Blacklitz, Eli & Fur 10 PM, Radius Chicago, 18+

SUN 9/5

ARC Music Festival day two featuring Camelphat, DJ Heather, and more 2 PM, Union Park, 18+

Gary Bartz 4 and 8 PM, Jazz Showcase **4U**

Geof Bradfield, Russ Johnson, Matt Ulery, and Quin Kirchner 9 PM, Hungry Brain, 21+

North Coast Music Festival day three featuring Zeds Dead, Rezz, Bonobo, Chris Lake, and more 2 PM, SeatGeek Stadium, Bridgeview, 17+

NRBQ 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, 21+

Sheryl Youngblood 6 PM, Willie

Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation **FREE 4U**

Sylmar, Avantist, Faux Furrs 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

MON 9/6

Contemporary Indigenous Voices featuring Leonard Sumner, Lyla June, Tall Paul 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE 4U**

Eli Winter, Jordan Reyes, Rebecca Valeriano-Flores 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **FREE**

TUE 9/7

Microcosms, Serjeoooh 8 PM, Golden Dagger, 21+

Natewantstobattle, CG5, Vespera 7 PM, Lincoln Hall **4U**

Meshell Ndegeocello 7 and 9:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston **4U**

Tame Impala 8 PM, United Center **4U**

WED 9/8

Bomba con Buya, Mancha 'E Plátano 8:30 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **FREE 4U**

Chicago SummerDance in the Parks presents Quinto Imperio and more 5:30 PM, Davis Square Park **FREE 4U**

Kathleen Edwards, Mick Flannery 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Sam Fischer 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall **4U**

Homeboy Sandman, Nolan 8 PM, Subterranean, 21+

THU 9/9

A-Trak 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
CalenRaps, Price 7:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Blu DeTiger, Unusual Demont 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Aaron Dorfman 5:30 PM, Martyrs, 21+ **FREE**

Flux Pavilion 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

CIVL presents Neal Francis and more 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, **FREE 4U**

International Connections: 50 Years of the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center featuring Bomba con Buya, Mancha 'E Plátano 7 PM, Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center **4U**

Mabel Kwan & Tim Daisy, Trio Red Space 8:30 PM, Elastic Arts **4U**
Megadeth, Lamb of God, Trivium, Hatebreed 6 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park **4U**

Phora 7:30 PM, House of Blues **4U**
Threads featuring Gabriela Lena Frank, Jonathan Russell, Nadia Sirota & Liam Byrne performing the work of Donnacha Dennehy 7:30 PM, Davis Theater **4U**
Turnstile 7:30 PM, Metro **4U**

Corey Wilkes 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase **4U**

FRI 9/10

Armor for Sleep, Never Loved, Silence of You, Cold Seas 7 PM, Metro **4U**

Bámbula: Afro-Díaspóra en Chicago with Mancha 'E Plátano, Las Bompleneras Unplugged 3:30 PM, Kelvyn (William) Park **FREE 4U**

Las Cruces, Kelroy, Rai 10 PM, Wings Fire House Pilsen, 21+ **FREE**

French 79 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+

Kim Gordon 10 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Il Divo 8 PM, Arie Crown Theater **4U**

Lydia Lunch Retrovirus, No Men 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Pitchfork Music Festival day one featuring Phoebe Bridgers, Big Thief, Animal Collective, and more noon, Union Park **4U**

Rod Tuffcurls & the Bench Press 9 PM, Riviera Theatre, 18+

RP Boo, DJ Teye, Jana Rush, DJ Manny 10 PM, Smart Bar, 21+

Sincere Engineer, Canadian Rifle, Annabel, Foresight 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+

Spencer Brown 11 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

311, Iration, Iya Terra 6:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion **4U**

Toad the Wet Sprocket, Althea Grace 8 PM, Park West, 18+

Corey Wilkes 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase **4U**

SAT 9/11

Bámbula: Afro-Díaspóra en Chicago with Mancha 'E Plátano, Las Bompleneras Unplugged 3:30 PM, Julia de Burgos Park **FREE 4U**

Black Violin, Blind Boys of Alabama 7:30 PM, Ravinia Pavilion, Highland Park **4U**

Chicago in Tune: House featuring Roy Davis Jr., Sanitize Your Soul with Mark Hubbard & DJ Terry Hunter, DJ Lady D 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE 4U**

Devourment, Ringworm 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+

Carol Genetti 2 PM, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest **FREE 4U**

Level Up, Ace Aura, Space Wizard, Syzy 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Pitchfork Music Festival day two featuring St. Vincent, Angel Olsen, Kim Gordon, and more noon, Union Park **4U**

Quinn XCII, Chelsea Cutler, Tai Verdes 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion **4U**

Real Friends, Action/Adventure

7 PM, Bottom Lounge **4U**
Special Interest, HIDE, Ariel Zetina, Miss Twink USA 10 PM, Smart Bar, 21+

Starless, Anatomy of Habit, Lavisher, Sanford Parker 8 PM, Reggies Music Joint, 21+

Tenci, Katy Kirby 10:30 PM, Hide-out, 21+

Corey Wilkes 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase **4U**

SUN 9/12

Austin: West Side Blues featuring Lurrie Bell, Vance Kelly, Mzz Reese, Jimmy Burns, Mary Lane, Larry Taylor noon, Chicago Avenue and Mayfield **FREE**

Bámbula: Afro-Díaspóra en Chicago with Mancha 'E Plátano, Las Bompleneras Unplugged 3:30 PM, Senka Park **FREE 4U**

Loose Ends 5 and 8 PM, City Winery **4U**

Vino Loudon 6 PM, Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation **FREE 4U**

Pitchfork Music Festival day three featuring Erykah Badu, Flying Lotus, Thundercat, and more noon, Union Park **4U**

Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **4U**

Skillet 6 PM, House of Blues **4U**

Joe Troop, Jake Blount 5 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **4U**

Corey Wilkes 4 and 8 PM, Jazz Showcase **4U**

MON 9/13

Durand Jones & the Indications, 79.5 7:30 PM, the Vic, 18+
Angel Meléndez & the 911 Mambo Orchestra, ESSO 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE 4U**

TUE 9/14

Duckwrth 7 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 18+

Flogging Molly, Violent Femmes, Me First & the Gimme Gimmes, Thick 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+
Thurston Moore, Macie Stewart & Lia Kohl 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+

Struts 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre **4U**

WED 9/15

Avatar, Magic Sword, Tallah 7:30 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Chicago SummerDance in the Parks presents Chicago Latin Groove and more 5:30 PM, Portage Park **FREE 4U**

Ghost-Note, Sungazer 7 PM, City Winery **4U**

Japanese Breakfast, Luna Li 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Oux, Orisun, Bonita Appleblunt 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 21+

Thurston Moore, Matchess 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+
Waltzer, Solar Poon 8 PM, Golden Dagger, 21+

THU 9/16

Ear Taxi Festival presents Rhythm Is Image 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Eighth Blackbird with Karim Sulayaman, J. Ivy, and Tarrey Torae 6 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE 4U**

Guns N' Roses, Mammoth WVH 6 PM, Wrigley Field **4U**

Instigation Festival presents An Evening of Duos & Trios featuring Doug Garrison, Jeff Albert, Paul Thibodeaux, Mikel Patrick Avery, and more 8:30 PM, Elastic Arts **4U**

Japanese Breakfast, Luna Li 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Psychedellic Furs, Josh Caterer 8 PM, the Vic, 18+

Torres, Ariana & the Rose 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+

FRIDAY 17

Blue October 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Conway the Machine, Stove God Cooks 7 PM, Avondale Music Hall, 18+

Duke Dumont, Claptone 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+

Instigation Festival presents the Instigation Orchestra, Aurora Nealand 9 PM, Hungry Brain, 21+ **FREE**

Mdou Moctar, Pure Adult 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Mod Sun, Girlfriends, Tyler Posey 7:30 PM, Park West **4U**

Mr. Bungle, Fishbone 10 PM, Radius Chicago, 17+

Nouvelle Vague 10 PM, Empty Bottle, 21+

Osees, Mr. Elevator 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Riot Fest day one featuring Smashing Pumpkins, Coheed and Cambria, Lupe Fiasco, and more 11 AM, Douglass Park **4U**

Spirits Having Fun 8 PM, Golden Dagger, 21+

Third Eye Theatre Ensemble performs The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace and Petticoats & Siderules 7:30 PM, the Edge Theater **4U**

SAT 9/18

Above & Beyond, Andrew Bayer, Gardenstate 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion **4U**

Kioto Aoki 2 PM, Lake Forest College, Lake Forest **FREE 4U**

Chicago in Tune: Blues featuring Cash Box Kings with Shemekia Copeland, Lil' Ed & the Blues

Imperials with Billy Branch, and more 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE 4U**

Dinosaur Jr., Ryley Walker 11 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Ear Taxi Festival presents Kosmologia Project 7:30 PM, PianoForte Studios **4U**

Ferris & Sylvester 7:30 PM, Martyrs, 21+

Future Islands, Hinds 8 PM, Chicago Theatre **4U**

Instigation Festival presents Kim Alpert, Jim Baker, Charles Rumback, James Singleton, Greg Ward, and Ed Wilkerson 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

New Found Glory, Simple Plan, Lolo 9 PM, Radius Chicago, 17+

Osees, Mr. Elevator 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Riot Fest day two featuring Run the Jewels, Faith No More, Dropkick Murphys, and more 11 AM, Douglass Park **4U**

Riot Ten, Must Die!, YDG 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

The Sounds, Starbenders 10 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+

Thursday 11 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+

Too Many Zoot & Big Freedia 11 PM, the Vic, 18+

Tropical Night featuring DJ Bruce, DJ Marz 9 PM, Simone's, 21+

Wizkid 8 PM, Riviera Theatre **4U**

SUN 9/19

Asleep at the Wheel 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **4U**

Bayside, Senses Fail, Hawthorne Heights, Bombpops 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+

Candlebox 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Ear Taxi Festival presents Kosmologia Project 7:30 PM, PianoForte Studios **4U**

Eddie From Ohio 8 PM, City Winery **4U**

Fifth House Ensemble 2 PM, Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, Riverwoods **4U**

Fourth Coast Ensemble 4 PM, Newberry Library **4U**

Frequency Series presents Shi-An Costello 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Instigation Festival presents Ben LaMar Gay & Aurora Nealand; Jeff Albert, Katinka Kleijn, Steve Marquette, and Ken Vandermark 9 PM, Hungry Brain, 21+ **FREE**

John Primer 6 PM, Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation **FREE 4U**

Riot Fest day three featuring Nine Inch Nails, Pixies, Machine Gun Kelly, and more 11 AM, Douglass Park **4U**

Taking Back Sunday 11 PM, Metro, 18+ **4U**



Jonn Wallen, aka Oui Ennuï  OSVALDO CUEVAS

Jonn Wallen of Oui Ennuï has released 18 records since contracting COVID

Spurred by a brush with death, he's sharpened his skills and become part of a larger music scene.

As told to JAMIE LUDWIG

Chicago multi-instrumentalist and producer Jonn Wallen, who records and performs as Oui Ennuï, has been writing music since he was five. Working mostly with synths and computers, he makes maximalist compositions he describes as “paintings.” In September 2019, he gave his first public performance in more than a decade as part of the Plantasia event at the Garfield Park Conservatory, and he was looking forward to more. Instead the pandemic hit. In April 2020 Wallen became gravely ill with COVID-19. While recovering from his initial symptoms, he set himself the task of releasing one album per month—a challenge that got even bigger once he realized he was battling long COVID. The most recent, at the time of this writing, is the August 6 album *Eros Largesse*.

I knew something was very wrong when the COVID symptoms started. As someone who has had chronic illness and had been sick quite a bit, this was next level. It was so bad I called 911. They said, “Shelter in place, or we can send an ambulance. That’s all our guidance.” So I sheltered in place.

It was horrifying. There were two or three

times that I can recall feeling so bad I thought, “This is the beginning of when I’m dying.” I was alone in my apartment, sweating through sheets—I couldn’t eat a bite of food for the first seven days. I lost 20 pounds. I was shaking. I was awake 22 hours a day with ridiculous fatigue. I couldn’t even move to writhe in pain. I couldn’t do anything but lay there. I didn’t even listen to music. There was just silence in my house. My friend Scott brought me some rice when I began to have an appetite again, and my manager dropped off a thermometer and Tylenol, but I don’t have any family in Chicago so I was very much alone.

It started on April 15. It was probably nine or ten days before I could get out of bed. The whole time when I thought I was going to die, I was thinking, “All of this music that I’ve been making for the last 30-plus years—no one’s going to know about it.” The first thing I did when I could think about anything other than how terrible I felt was to go to my synths and my computer. I started making my album *Sirius Bismuth*. That was probably the 22nd or 23rd of April, and the album came out May 1, Bandcamp Friday.

I just wanted to leave something. I had

long-haul COVID, and there were several times throughout my process of releasing an album every month where I thought that I wasn’t going to make it for the next one. I felt like shit for 13 or 14 months in a row. It was as bad as when my first COVID symptoms started, and I didn’t know if it was going to happen again. My mental state was on the edge of a knife.

Releasing that much music is kind of ridiculous, but it kept me sane in some respects. As soon as I released an album, I’d take a couple days off, and then I’d start making the next one. I had my nose to the grindstone, which kept me from wallowing in fear about what was happening to my body. I was on medical leave for a long time. For the first several albums, I was sick all day and doing it when I could. In September 2020, I went back to work full-time, but my symptoms got worse and I wound up going on medical leave again in January 2021. In April I finally went back to work for real.

The experience hasn’t changed my approach to music as a whole—I’ve been in a codependent symbiotic relationship with music for most of my life. I’ve been trying to change, but for most of my life I’ve been a loner and kind

of a hermit. I just stay in my house and obsess about records and music, which was probably exacerbated by quarantine. Other than being really sick, I think I was able to handle the isolation better than people that are more social than I was or am.

But it definitely sharpened my skill set. I’m able to be a lot more efficient now because I was practicing my craft. If I practiced the guitar the amount I produced songs, I’d be a much better guitarist—this made me a much better producer, songwriter, and arranger.

After somebody wrote me a note about the liner notes for *Sirius Bismuth*, I started intentionally making music about something. I began to write music with intention, knowing that I’d need to have liner notes describing my process and support what it was about. It began to be an ouroboros effect. I don’t assume that everyone will read them. It’s instrumental music, so it’s going to create its own meaning for the listener. My approach is like, “This is what I’m going through. This is what I’m thinking about.” However the listener interprets it is out of my hands.

It’s counterintuitive for someone who’s an artist to not particularly like attention. But for most of my musical career—if you want to call it that—my musical life has been 99 percent private. It’s only been in the last year where people are reaching out to me and wanting to hear more, or wanting to know what I think about things. It’s definitely a strange experience, but feedback has been amazing. When you sell stuff on Bandcamp, you get an e-mail, and just seeing some of the e-mail addresses from Cape Town or London, I’m like, “Wow, Where are these people finding it?” It’s been humbling.

It doesn’t really do anything to assuage the imposter syndrome, but it feels great that people are reacting to the music. I’ve always thought that if my music helps a single person, then I can die knowing that I did something, even if I don’t ever “make it” in music. A number of people have literally said, “Your album helped me get through quarantine or COVID.”

People have been so incredibly kind and generous. I’m very happy to now be part of a scene; I’ve been in Chicago for 11 years, but I’ve been here alone. The friendships that are now in their infancy, who knows what those could turn into? That’s probably been my favorite thing about releasing all this music—being able to connect with people, new friendships, and community. 

 @unlistenmusic



Mallory McClaire and Chantala Kommanivanh  DANIELLE SIMONE CHARLES

Beverly Phono Mart works to boost record-store culture on the far south side

Mallory McClaire and Chantala Kommanivanh came out of lockdown with a brick-and-mortar space on 103rd Street.

As told to LEOR GALIL

Mallory McClaire and Chantala Kommanivanh work as an artist and educator and as an arts administrator, respectively—but the couple also run Web-based record shop Beverly Phono Mart. In August they plan to open a brick-and-mortar location at 1808 W. 103rd in Beverly. This interview was conducted July 26.

CHANTALA I'm the youngest of four brothers—my brothers were into hip-hop, and into music a lot, so having music in the house was an everyday thing. My older brother Sid dabbled in DJing. As a young kid, I was really mesmerized by the records—taking them out of the jackets, putting them on the record player, and rubbing them back and forth was intriguing. So for me, dabbling in DJing and

also collecting records since I was maybe 12 or 13 gave me the knowledge. Owning a record shop in my late 30s is sort of the icing on the cake.

MALLORY I grew up with a lot of music in the home. My parents, they took us to all the big city festivals growing up; I grew up on Jazz Fest and Blues Fest, and it's just always been around. My dad in particular—he's from Harlem—listens to a lot of soul, a lot of jazz, a lot of Afro-Latin jazz, and thankfully was really mindful to expose me and my sisters to that. I've always been going to live shows and exploring music my whole life. Like Chantala, it just feels like the shop is a pretty natural course.

CHANTALA I grew up in the northwest side, in Albany Park, and I lived there from 1983 till last year.

MALLORY I grew up in Beverly. We moved down here in fall 2019—we knew when we were buying a house we'd either end up close to Chantala's family or close to mine. We ended up down here, right around the corner from my childhood home and a block away from where I went to elementary school.

We met on Tinder. I maintain that we probably crossed paths and didn't know it—we would go to the same shows and hang out in the same places.

CHANTALA I have an art studio on the south side, and I'm from the north side, so if I didn't swipe when I was in my studio, we wouldn't have matched.

MALLORY It was a very long, long first date, and the second half of it was probably all just talking about what we listen to and what we like to do. We also like to travel and started doing that pretty early on; when we travel, we eat and we buy records.

We'd always had an interest in building a business of our own centered around community and our own personal interest in some way, and I think it took us a while to figure out what that angle was. Part of it was also just looking at what we wanted in our own community. Coming down to Beverly—when you're a kid growing up here . . . I can't speak for everyone, but for me it was like, you feel like it's so far from all the action, and it's so quiet. You get older and you want different things. I never imagined that I would actually be back here.

Now that we are here, it's like, "Well, why do we have to go to the north side to have a really cool record shop?" There is a neighborhood shop, Beverly Records, they've been here for a long time. Beyond their presence here, you'd have to hit Hyde Park Records and then Pilsen. We felt like there was space for a store that could bring in elements of art and food and things that we love, and also just be a place for people with similar interests to gather.

CHANTALA Getting a loan, that's the hard part. Putting our personal collection in the shop is a great help, and also a great start, and having e-commerce prior to the shop opening—it's also helpful to get a jump start into the business.

MALLORY It's really scrappy. I think our first

start was getting our LLC and our tax ID in February. We would do one little thing a week until we hit the point where we were like, "Well, all there is left to do now is find the spot, to sign the lease." I've done work in operations before, so that part felt familiar to me, except for the fact that I was now doing it for myself.

CHANTALA We found a location on 1808 W. 103rd Street, and we got keys last week. We are in the midst of building out the shelves and the bins, and a little painting and things like that. We should be open come mid- to late August.

I always tell my students—there's 24 hours in a day. You just have to prioritize how much of those hours you want to use on your own interests.

MALLORY Yeah, work after work—and weekends. I think we'll eventually find ways to balance that, cause we'll also be the presence in the shop too. It's great to have examples of people who have done it in our lives, and just see that it's doable.

CHANTALA Miyagi Records has been a huge catapult for us, helping us get our recognition out there—they've always reached out, invited us to collaborate with them in these pop-ups that they've been doing.

MALLORY The Beverly Area Arts Alliance, they're really good supporters of all types of creatives in the neighborhood—they're all folks who actually run the Arts Alliance outside their own full-time jobs. We're doing a pop-up with the Beverly Area Arts Alliance this upcoming weekend. And then there are folks like Shady Rest Vintage & Vinyl.

CHANTALA Who also have full-time jobs.

MALLORY We talk a lot about that community element; we want the shop to be approachable. We're hoping to have performances and DJ sets and things like that in the space too, so just other elements of culture. We'll have art up as well; we're hoping to open with a group art show in the space. We hope that it's like a starting point for people to explore all types of cultural interests, but with music as an anchor.

CHANTALA And also explore the south side, the far south side. The south side has been going up north for so long. Maybe it's time for the north to come down. 

 @imLeor



Reba Cafarelli in the Third Coast Percussion studio  KRISTAN LIEB FOR CHICAGO READER

Third Coast Percussion evolves along with the pandemic

Managing director Reba Cafarelli describes how the ensemble and its staff adapted to the suspension of live music.

As told to PHILIP MONTORO

Reba Cafarelli is managing director for Third Coast Percussion, working primarily in booking, marketing, and day-to-day operations. The ensemble is incorporated as a nonprofit, and it has a board of directors and three full-time employees in addition to its four members. In May 2022 Third Coast Percussion plans to release its next album, which will include Perspective, a seven-movement piece created in 2020 by footwork innovator Jlin.

The primary role that I play with Third Coast Percussion is booking. So I represent Third Coast Percussion to potential presenters, partners at universities, performing arts centers.

Performance is one major activity. Another one is commissioning new music for percussion. The third would be education, from preschool to adults. Because we're a nonprofit, there's grants that we can apply for to help support commissioning. We release an average of one major commercial recording per year, mostly on Cedille Records.

With the pandemic, many things changed. I started my job in October 2019, so I was just getting into the groove of booking the ensemble. Of course, the rug got ripped out from under us very swiftly. We have a mission statement that we looked at, and we said, how can we stay on mission? Which is to bring exciting and unexpected musical performances to au-

diences, and to educate. So we all just realized that digital was gonna be the way to go.

We already had high-quality HD video equipment in our studio, because when the ensemble goes on tour, they tour with cameras, so that the audience can see projections of what they're doing with their hands. We used that same strategy with digital. Our studio manager, Colin Campbell, took it upon himself to learn how to be a livestream producer overnight, basically. We upgraded our Internet in the studio, and one week after our last live performance, we had our first public livestream.

We wanted it to be as close to a concert experience as possible. Like, the "doors" opened a few minutes before the concert so people could start chatting. My colleague Rebecca McDaniel and I would monitor the chat and answer people's questions, and then we would collect questions for the ensemble to answer at the end.

One of the coolest things is that percussion music is such a new thing that almost every composer and music creator we work with is alive, and we could get video messages from the composers to speak directly to the audience about their piece.

We really thought it through, like, we have to make this livestream world as engaging and interesting as possible. We knew at some point people would get tired of looking at their screens. But at the time, we were like, here's an opportunity, let's make the most of it. We solicited donations from our audiences, but we decided early on that we would not go behind any paywalls.

Two times we did have fundraisers online, where we did have a ticket. We used to have in-person fundraisers that would be about \$100 a ticket, and a small group of people who could afford a \$100 ticket would come. But now our ticket structure for the fundraiser is pay-what-you-can, starting at \$5.

We beat our goal by going online and doing it that way. It made more than an in-person fundraiser! Another reason for that is the expenses—for in-person events, sometimes we have to rent the venue and rent a truck to move percussion instruments around.

We had booked our 2020-2021 season prior to everything shutting down, and we were able to convert several canceled engagements. And then new ones came about—one of the great things about the livestreams that we did was they were public, so people were able to see for themselves that they were high quality.

Again, no expense on our side other than

our own staff time. It wasn't anywhere near the amount we would bring in for a typical touring season, but every dollar was able to stay with us. And we did a lot of education work compared to what we would normally do. There are some organizations that hire Third Coast Percussion specifically to do K-12 classroom visits. This way we don't have to be already flying to California to work with students in California.

Everything that we do with our education program is very specifically built so that it's 100 percent participation—the ensemble will do a clapping game with the kids, get them up out of their seats doing something, even when it's remote.

One day early on in the pandemic, DCASE gave us a call, and they were working really hard to draw attention to the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund—it was clear that a free fall was happening. And they asked if Third Coast would do a live performance on the mayor's Instagram story.

We had a couple of presenters who paid us to do a livestream, and it wasn't necessarily appropriate for us to ask for donations since we were being compensated. So we asked for donations for New Music USA's relief fund for people who are hurting in the contemporary classical music world.

Prior to the pandemic, everyone who worked with Third Coast Percussion on a new piece of music would visit the studio, come in and kind of do a sandbox session. It's hard for anyone to wrap their brain around what Third Coast Percussion has in their arsenal of instruments—there's just so many different ways to create sound on the wildest objects you can imagine. Using this great technology that we've built, composers can work with the ensemble remotely instead of coming all the way over to Chicago to get their hands dirty, so to speak.

We will definitely continue to embrace digital. The education programming that we do—we can prerecord something really high quality and then license it to schools and presenters. We've started releasing a new video every Thursday. To have a high-quality video to accompany all the new music that we're developing, it reaches so many more people.

This ensemble, they built it really slowly and they built it right. Careful financial planning was important—the board of directors has been very hands-on in helping us build a reserve and making sure we have an emergency backup plan for any scenario. Without their support and guidance, it could've been a very different story. 

 @pmontoro

Chicago celebrates a century of Black gospel

A free Chicago in Tune showcase in Millennium Park links the music's history to its future.

By **ROBERT MAROVICH**

Chicago has earned bragging rights as the birthplace of Black gospel music. It was here that gospel was first composed, sung, played, published, promoted, recorded, broadcast, and formalized—the last via a national convention with regional chapters. Migrants to Chicago from the south in particular found comfort in it, because it articulated their shared experiences as strangers in a strange land and reminded them of their southern roots.

The seeds of gospel took root in Chicago with the planting of Pentecostal and Holiness churches on the south and west sides in the 1910s and 1920s. These “sanctified” churches amplified their spirited, communal music with the beat (and sometimes by the instrumentation) of the city’s blues and jazz scenes. The first commercial recording of this hybrid religious music was made in Chicago in 1926 by Pentecostal pianist Arizona Dranes. Her barrelhouse style and extroverted singing foretold the coming of gospel’s polyrhythms, improvisations, and call-and-response structure.

At that time, very early in the Great Migration, the Black community in Chicago was majority middle class, and the music in Black middle-class churches—mostly Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal—was decidedly different. Congregants used hymnbooks compiled by their white denominational counterparts. There was no improvisation, no barrelhouse piano, no handclaps or hallelujahs. Choirs sang formal hymns and anthems, the congregation listened and didn’t sing along, and unspoken norms discouraged spontaneous emotionality. Bewildered migrants accustomed to less formal worship stole away to the extroverted services at churches such as Elder Lucy Smith’s All Nations Pentecostal or Bishop William Roberts’s Church of God in Christ, both in Bronzeville.

This gap began to narrow in the late 1920s, when Thomas A. Dorsey, a blues and jazz pianist who’d come here from Georgia, began writing gospel songs that blended Baptist and Pentecostal elements. At first, he was shown the door—sometimes not so politely—by Protestant pastors who declared his music too worldly for sacred spaces. At the 1930 National Baptist Convention, held in Chicago, Dorsey was surprised by an upwelling of enthusiasm for one of his songs, which gave him a glimmer of hope. But it still took two more years—and

specifically the successful debut of a gospel chorus that Dorsey and Mississippi-born singing evangelist Theodore Frye had established at Ebenezer Baptist Church—for the new music to breach the imposing stone walls of local Protestant churches. Pastors surely realized that it would help build membership, increase donations, and ultimately help them burn the church mortgage faster.

Soon hundreds of gospel choruses were popping up all over the south and west sides and around the midwest, and to train them Dorsey, Frye, and Magnolia Lewis Butts (director of the W.D. Cook Gospel Chorus at Metropolitan Community Church in Bronzeville) formed the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. The first convention, in 1933, was held at Pilgrim Baptist Church, where Dorsey served as music minister. Under the leadership of Georgia-born gospel singer Sallie Martin, the convention established a nationwide network of gospel choruses and local chapters. By the end of the 1940s, gospel choirs coast to coast were emulating their Chicago counterparts and singing Dorsey songs such as “Take My Hand, Precious Lord,” “Peace in the Valley,” and “Highway to Heaven.”

Chicago radio stations further expanded the gospel audience through live broadcasts of local Sunday church services. One of the first and most popular broadcasts emanated from Chicago’s First Church of Deliverance, beginning in 1935. The massive listenership of the Spiritual church’s midnight service prompted songwriters to pitch gospel songs to its choir in hopes of an overnight hit—the 1940s equivalent of YouTube virality. In the 1950s and 1960s, the constellation of Sunday service broadcasts in Chicago supported the practice of “broadcast hopping.” Groups of congregants traveled from one church to the next, visiting successive on-air services from morning till midnight, just to experience the spiritual electricity.

Many other gospel artists also did foundational work in Chicago. The ensemble that Arkansas-born singer and pianist Roberta Martin founded in 1933 would set the standard for piano-led gospel groups. Sallie Martin (no relation) and Kenneth Morris operated the Martin & Morris Music Studio, which for decades was the most successful Black-owned music publishing company in the world. Chicago-based quartet the Soul Stirrers

launched the careers of superstar vocalists Sam Cooke and Johnnie Taylor. Gospel’s royalty—Mahalia Jackson, James Cleveland, and Albertina Walker—called Chicago home.

Chicago television and record companies brought gospel music into living rooms and onto turntables. From 1963 to 1984, Sid Ordower’s *Jubilee Showcase* on WLS-TV soundtracked Sunday-morning church preparation rituals. Labels on Chicago’s Record Row—Vee-Jay, Halo, Chess and its Checker subsidiary, United and its States subsidiary—released the latest gospel hits. A gospelized version of “Hello Sunshine” by Chicago’s own Reverend Maceo Woods & the Christian Tabernacle Concert Choir hit the pop charts in 1969, rivaling Edwin Hawkins’s contemporaneous smash “Oh Happy Day” as the harbinger of contemporary gospel—a sound that introduced elements of rock, jazz, R&B, and folk into the traditional organ- and piano-led style.

On the evening of Friday, September 3, Millennium Park will showcase the city’s pioneering and contemporary contributions to gospel in a three-hour program emceed by Chicagoan Jonathan McReynolds, one of the genre’s current leading lights. Radio personalities Sonya Blakey and DeAndre Patterson from Inspiration 1390 will join him to present three musical segments.

Lashon Brown Jr. is a young south-side vocalist who, like McReynolds, plays acoustic guitar and delivers fresh songs of praise and worship in an intimate tenor voice. His thoughtful, melodic religious music resonates especially with younger churchgoers who, like the first generation of gospel fans, want a sound of their own.

The Tommies Reunion Choir will honor its roots as America’s first community gospel choir (unlike conventional church choirs, community choirs welcome singers from different churches and denominations). Formed in 1948 by the Reverend Milton Brunson, the Thompson Community Singers lent new songs and distinctive arrangements to generations of grateful church choirs. Members of the Reunion Choir include stalwarts Leanne Faine, Kim McFarland, and Kevin Brunson as well as songwriters Percy Bady and Darius Brooks.

A tribute to the Reverend Dr. Clay Evans, Pastor Maceo Woods, and Archbishop Lucius Hall will memorialize the golden years of church radio broadcasts. The south-side sanc-

CHICAGO IN TUNE: GOSPEL MUSIC

Hosted by Jonathan McReynolds, Sonya Blakey, and DeAndre Patterson. Featuring Lashon Brown Jr.; a musical tribute to the Reverend Dr. Clay Evans, Pastor Maceo Woods, and Archbishop Lucius Hall with the Carson Sisters, Nicole Harris, and Illiana Torres; and the Tommies Reunion Choir. *Fri 9/3, 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph, free, all ages*

NOTABLE GOSPEL EVENTS DURING CHICAGO IN TUNE

Gospel Industry Network Summit Featuring Adrian B. King, Gods Posse, New Direction, and others. *Fri 8/20, 7 PM, Christ Unity Church, 208 E. 61st, free, all ages*

Power Praise 2021 Featuring Bishop Hezekiah Walker, Donald Lawrence, Mark Hubbard, Krystal Sykes, and LeNasia Tyson. *Sat 8/21, 7 PM, Cross Pointe Park, 2801 W. 167th, Hazel Crest, \$40, \$30 group rate for ten or more, \$65 VIP, all ages*

ChicaGO REACH Gospel Workshop With Felicia Coleman-Evans, Dr. Lou Della Evans-Reid, Lonnie Norwood, and others. Via Zoom at lonnieorwood.com/chigoreachpopshops. *Sat 8/21 and Sun 8/22, noon till 7 PM both days, \$75 (\$50 for students), all ages*

A Deeply Rooted Evening for Chicago’s Healing: Goshen A preview of a Deeply Rooted Dance Theater performance based on *Goshen* by Donald Lawrence, featuring LeAndria Johnson, members of the Tri-City Singers, and Zeke Locke & the NuXperience. *Wed 8/25, 7:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph, free, all ages*

Calvin Bridges Live recording with guests Dr. Walt Whitman, Dr. Yvonne Ruff, Ann Bridges, Pastor DeAndre Patterson, and others. *Sat 9/7, 6 PM, Apostolic Faith Church Chapel, 3823 S. Indiana, free, all ages*

Black Violin, Blind Boys of Alabama *Sat 9/11, 7:30 PM, Pavilion, Ravinia Festival, 200 Ravinia Park Rd., Highland Park, \$33-\$80, all ages*

tuaries of these three towering religious and civic leaders were veritable conservatories for emerging gospel artists. Musical guests will include the Carson Sisters, siblings of the late Billy Carson, who know their subject well (as did their brother—Billy made frequent appearances at Evans’s Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church and played drums on Woods’s “Hello Sunshine”). They’ll be joined by contemporary gospel singers Illiana Torres and Nicole Harris, who’ll put their own spin on the traditional music of Evans, Woods, and Hall. Gospel enthusiasts will remember Harris from her vocal contribution to the 2018 hit single “You’re Doing It All Again” by Maywood native Todd Dulaney. 

 @journalofgospel

Chicago has nurtured jazz since its infancy

The Chicago in Tune jazz showcase in Millennium Park reaches from 1940s bebop to present-day avant-garde experiments and pop hybrids.

By **BILL MEYER**

There's been jazz in Chicago for nearly as long as there's been jazz. While jazz is commonly said to have ridden the rails to Chicago around 1916, when the Great Migration of African Americans from the south to the north kicked into gear, Dixieland bandleader Wilbur Sweatman had played gigs on the city's south side as early as 1908, and Jelly Roll Morton first landed here in 1914.

So while it's undeniably a shame that the citywide festivities called Chicago in Tune, originally scheduled for spring 2020, have been diminished and delayed, the resilience and longevity of Chicago jazz ensure that the music will swing right out of the pandemic.

Chicago has incubated a series of transformative developments in jazz. Louis Armstrong moved here in 1922 and devised a new approach that transformed the music into a virtuoso soloist's art. Around the same time, the Austin High School Gang, a group of high schoolers smitten with the King Oliver Creole Jazz Band and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, formalized an up-tempo variant of hot jazz into something known as the Chicago Style. After World War II, the city's name was applied to a muscular, bebop-steeped mode of tenor saxophone playing identified with Gene Ammons, Johnny Griffin, Von Freeman, and Clifford Jordan.

In the 1950s, keyboardist and arranger Sun Ra used Chicago as the launchpad for his Arkestra, a big band-cum-commune whose mind-blowing music incorporated swinging rhythms, atonal compositions, free improvisation, early electronics, and science fiction-inspired themes. Its all-inclusive approach suggested a world freed from the racial and social strictures of mid-20th-century America.

Ra's example of self-determination and insistence on artistic freedom wasn't lost on the musicians who convened on the south side in 1965 to organize the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. Formed in reaction to the diminished opportunities resulting from a generation of youth picking rock and soul over jazz, the AACM evolved into a cadre of mutually supportive artists who helped one another perform new work and

provided schooling to aspiring musicians on the south side. The group has been a beacon for generations of musicians who refuse to be confined by genre or business barriers. Many early participants, such as Roscoe Mitchell and Muhal Richard Abrams, left Chicago to pursue opportunities elsewhere, but other former and current members, including Fred Anderson and Ernest Dawkins, stayed and became invaluable mentors.

During the 1970s, Grant Park hosted summer festivals honoring Duke Ellington and John Coltrane. In 1979, the city combined those events with a new one proposed by the Jazz Institute of Chicago to create the first Chicago Jazz Festival. Held annually until COVID-19 put a lethal stick in the spokes, the fest has remained free to the public and committed to programming actual jazz, unlike so many similar festivals in other cities that have drifted so far that they're jazz in name only. And even in the leanest times, clubs such as the Jazz Showcase and the Green Mill have continued to book jazz and nothing else, as they've done for decades.

Since the 1990s, a succession of musician organizers, including Ken Vandermark, Dave Rempis, Mike Reed, and Josh Berman, have forged alliances with the city's rock and experimental-music communities, pooling creative and material resources. The venues where they operate are a big part of the ecosystem where jazz lives, breathes, and evolves; do yourself a favor and look into them as you tune in to Chicago in Tune.

Chicago in Tune also includes four Pritzker Pavilion concerts devoted to genres with deep roots in the city. The jazz concert, on September 4, features ensembles led by saxophonist Ari Brown, trumpeter Marquis Hill, and vocalist Lizz Wright (performing in that order).

Brown's robust tone, self-assured command of bebop fundamentals, and patient lyricism place him squarely in Chicago's rich tenor saxophone tradition. He's just as proficient on the soprano saxophone, which he sometimes plays at the same time as his tenor to become a one-man horn section, and on the piano, which was his first professional instrument when he

played in soul and blues combos in the early 1960s.

Born in 1944, Brown is a lifelong resident of the city, and since the mid-70s he's worked as an educator as well as a musician. He shifts between straight-ahead and avant-garde vernaculars with an easy fluency that comes from understanding their commonalities. Brown gigged mostly as a sideman for decades, playing with the likes of Elvin Jones, Kahil El'Zabar, and McCoy Tyner. He didn't make his first album as a leader, the Delmark release *Ultimate Frontier*, until 1995. Since then, he's recorded three more, each time leading the same sympathetic combo: his brother Kirk Brown on piano, Yosef Ben Israel on bass, and Avreeayl Ra on drums.

Like Brown, Hill was born and raised in Chicago. He went to school at Kenwood Academy and learned on the bandstand at jam sessions conducted by Fred Anderson, Ernest Dawkins, and Von Freeman. Hill moved to New York in 2014, the same year he won the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz prize for trumpet, but he's continued to work with Chicago musicians—most notably bassist Junius Paul and drummer-bandleader Makaya McCraven. On Hill's recent recordings for Concord Jazz, his fleet melodies weave through slinky rhythms derived from contemporary soul. Judging by a YouTube preview of his next album, *New Gospel Revisited*, due via Edition Records in 2022, next he'll achieve that mix with an entirely acoustic band.

Singer Lizz Wright grew up in Georgia, the daughter of a minister and the church's music director. Her albums for the Verve and Concord labels have included jazz, blues, and American folk songs, and she's recorded with Joe Sample, Meshell Ndegeocello, and the band Calexico. But no matter where she gets her material, she gives it a spiritual vibe with the low swoop and broad vibrato in her voice. In her offstage guise as a chef, she's developed the menu for Carver 47 Food & Wellness Market, part of the Little Black Pearl learning center on 47th Street. **FI**

CHICAGO IN TUNE: JAZZ

Featuring ensembles led by Ari Brown, Marquis Hill, and Lizz Wright. Sat 9/4, 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph, free, all ages

NOTABLE JAZZ EVENTS DURING CHICAGO IN TUNE

Hypnotic Brass Ensemble Thu 8/19, 8 PM, Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park Ave. West, \$20-\$32, all ages

Extraordinary Popular Delusions Mondays (8/23, 8/30, 9/6, 9/13), 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, free, 21+

Matthew Shipp Sat 8/28, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$25, \$20 in advance, 18+

Garden of Souls Geof Bradfield, Nick Mazzarella, Joshua Abrams, and Dana Hall perform the 1980 live recording *Playing by Old and New Dreams*. Tue 8/31, 8 PM, Fulton Street Collective, 1821 W. Hubbard, \$15 donation requested, all ages

Gary Bartz Quartet Thu 9/2-Sat 9/4, 8 and 10 PM; Sun 9/5, 4 and 8 PM, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth Ct., \$20-\$40 (matinee free for 12 and under), all ages

Geof Bradfield, Russ Johnson, Matt Ulery, and Quin Kirchner Sun 9/5, 9 PM, Hungry Brain, 2319 W. Belmont, donation suggested, 21+

Mabel Kwan/Tim Daisy Duo, Trio Red Space Thu 9/9, 8:30 PM, Elastic Arts, 3429 W. Diversey, \$15, all ages

Corey Wilkes Thu 9/9-Sat 9/11, 8 and 10 PM; Sun 9/12, 4 and 8 PM, Jazz Showcase, 806 S. Plymouth Ct., \$20-\$40 (matinee free for 12 and under), all ages

Instigation Festival New Orleans musicians Jeff Albert, Mikel Patrick Avery, Doug Garrison, Aurora Nealand, James Singleton, and Paul Thibodeaux collaborate in mixed groups with Chicagoans. Thu 9/16-Sun 9/19, various times and venues (Elastic Arts, Hungry Brain, May Chapel, Constellation), prices and age restrictions vary. See instigation-festival.com.

Chicago house reshaped pop around the globe

Chicago in Tune showcases decades of house-music history in a three-hour concert.

By **READER STAFF**

House-music culture developed in Chicago's Black gay clubs in the 1970s, and it owes as much of its soul to the people who gathered to dance as it does to the DJs whose innovative mixes of disco, funk, R&B, and pop kept late-night parties moving till long after sunrise. In the seven years or so between the emergence of key artists such as Frankie Knuckles, Michael Ezebukwu, and Ron Hardy and the arrival of what's usually recognized as the first house record, Jesse Saunders's 1984 cut "On and On," thousands of house heads dedicated themselves to the culture. Since then, the vast influence of house has circled the globe several times over—techno, garage, deep house, juke, gabber, IDM, footwork, dub-step, and EDM have all sprung from the soulful seed of classic, four-on-the-floor house music, and it's irrevocably transformed the landscape of pop.

House is as much a part of Chicago's cultural DNA as gospel, blues, and jazz. The city's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events debuted the Chicago House Music Festival in 2018, after dabbling in large-scale house parties over Memorial Day weekend, and though it's the youngest of DCASE's big annual fests, it's already established itself as one of the best showcases for dance music in the city. In the Chicago House Music Festival's first two years, it became a friendly counterpart to the Chosen Few Picnic ("the Woodstock of House Music"), with lineups demonstrating house's reach across generations. The second festival—the last one before the pandemic—booked juke pioneer Gant-Man, footwork dance collective the Era, and house veteran Gene Hunt, who issued his first 12-inch in 1989.

The Chicago in Tune house-music showcase in Millennium Park this September is just a few hours long, but even within those constraints, DCASE has built a lineup that speaks to the genre's history and its creators' ability to continue shaping the culture decades later. Darlene Jackson, better known as DJ Lady D, emerged as part of Chicago house's second

wave in the 1990s. She took up DJing in 1995, and in 1997 she teamed up with Colette, DJ Heather, and Dayhota to form Superjane, a collective that championed women in a scene that frequently marginalized them; they threw their first party at the defunct Funky Buddha Lounge.

In her recorded output, Lady D favors sharp, direct percussion that drives insistent grooves. On the 2015 single "All Night Long," she lends her sparse vocals a velvety touch that teases out the thumping track's tantalizing feel, which the late Paul Johnson further played up in his disco-fueled remix. Lady D's influence in dance music extends beyond DJing and producing: after working in A&R for northwest suburban label Afterhours (where she brought on one of Chicago's most successful dance producers of the past 20 years, Kaskade), she cofounded D'lectable Music in 2004.

This concert also doubles as the debut of Sanitize Your Soul, a collaboration between gospel veteran Mark Hubbard and long-grinding DJ Terry Hunter. Hubbard formed the United Voices of Christ choir in 1985, and seven years later he released his debut album with the Voices, *Trust in Jesus*. Their fifth album together, 2004's *Blessin' Waitin' on Me*, won a Stellar Award for Traditional Choir of the Year in 2006, and in 2017 he was elected president of the Chicago chapter of the Recording Academy, the organization behind the Grammys.

Hunter's history in music is just as long. He picked up DJing in the early 1980s and broke out later in the decade spinning parties for promoter Marvin Terry. In 1990, he released his first 12-inch, *Madness*, a collection of slyly funky tracks for respected Chicago label Muzique Records. Hunter's skills are so highly regarded in the house community that in 2006 he became the first DJ in nearly 30 years invited to join the Chosen Few collective. As a producer, he's also a favorite of stars across the pop spectrum who want to put a new spin on their work, and he's made remixes for the

likes of Aretha Franklin and Jennifer Hudson. In 2018 his T's Box label issued "Move of the Spirit," a smooth gospel-house collaboration between Hunter and vocalists Jocelyn Brown and Inaya Day—a demonstration that he understands the spiritual and emotional energies that house and gospel have in common.

Closing out the evening is veteran producer Roy Davis Jr., who took his first steps in the world of house music as a teenager living in the south suburbs in the late 1980s. He befriended DJ Pierre of pioneering acid-house group Phuture and helped write "20 Below," an R&B-inflected jam released under the name Pierre's Phantasy Club on the sixth volume of the *Jack Trax* series. In the 1990s Davis replaced Pierre in Phuture for a spell, while simultaneously releasing his own records as part of a blossoming solo career. New York dance label Strictly Rhythm put out Davis's debut 12-inch in 1992, *Learn to Live* (credited to the Roy Davis Project), and later recruited him to work in A&R. Davis has released plenty of music in the decades since, but he remains best known for a gospel-inflected 1996 collaboration with Peven Everett called "Gabriel" (a remix of his tune "Gabrielle"), which buoys its gently rippling groove with light hand drums and sparse, sultry horns. The following year XL Recordings reissued the 12-inch in Britain, where it became a chart hit and a touchstone for the budding UK garage movement.

Chicago in Tune's house programming extends beyond this Pritzker Pavilion concert. In July DCASE launched "House City," a series of ten dance-music events in neighborhoods around the city's south, west, and north sides. Four of the events fall within the span of Chicago in Tune, and the series closes in Bronzeville on September 19 with an afternoon show featuring DJs Mike Dunn of the Chosen Few, Daryll Mellowman, and JStar. Two of the ten events have been postponed as of publication time, and the exact location of the Bronzeville show has yet to be announced—so it's best to check the DCASE House City page for updates. **FI**

CHICAGO IN TUNE: HOUSE

Roy Davis Jr. headlines; DJ Lady D opens, and the Sanitize Your Soul gospel house choir with Mark Hubbard and DJ Terry Hunter performs second. *Sat 9/11, 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph, free, all ages*

NOTABLE HOUSE-RELATED EVENTS DURING CHICAGO IN TUNE

Louie Vega *Fri 8/20, 10 PM, Smart Bar, 3730 N.*

Clark, \$25, \$20 in advance. 21+

Freestyle Forever: Mixtape Edition 3 *Featuring*

Stevie B, DJ Funk, Samantha, D'zyre, Mark Milan, Lucy Love, Amazin' Records, Pain. Sat 8/28, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 2047 N. Milwaukee, \$20-\$60. 21+

Research & Development: Sassmouth, Miss

Twink USA, Grey People, Patrixia, JS Alvarez, Makeen *Sun 8/29, 6 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, free. 21+*

Blacklitz, Eli & Fur *Sat 9/4, 10 PM, Radius, 640 W.*

Cermak, \$50. 18+

RP Boo, DJ Taye, Jana Rush, DJ Manny *Fri 9/10,*

10 PM, Smart Bar, 3730 N. Clark, \$20, \$15 in advance. 21+

The blues has become part of Chicago's DNA

The pandemic couldn't sever the music's deep roots, and Chicago in Tune's Millennium Park concert showcases its thriving variety.

By **JAMES PORTER**

Blues music thrives on live interaction between performer and audience, but for nearly a year and a half, that's been in short supply. Clubs are caught between "waiting to reopen" and "slowly coming back," and Millennium Park has been largely quiet—for two Junes running, the city has canceled the Chicago Blues Festival. Our blues artists haven't shown any serious signs of decline, though, even in these grim circumstances, and we'll get a sampling of what they have to offer when the city's Chicago in Tune festival presents a free Pritzker Pavilion concert on September 18 to mark the 50th anniversary of Alligator Records.

Many important Chicago blues labels pre-date Alligator, founded in 1971 by Bruce Iglauer, but few can match its long track record of releasing what it calls "Genuine Houserockin' Music." In its first decade alone, it released music by the likes of Hound Dog Taylor, Son Seals, Koko Taylor, Albert Collins, and Lonnie Brooks. Alligator continues to prove to the world that Chicago blues is no museum piece—it's as alive as any ten rock bands put together.

The city's distinctive blues tradition extends at least as far back as the 1930s, with important pioneers such as Big Bill Broonzy, Washboard Sam, and Tampa Red. An uncountable number of blues musicians came to Chicago from the south during the Great Migration, which began in the 1910s: they included Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Jimmy Reed, Little Walter, Koko Taylor, J.B. Hutto, and Willie Dixon, and later Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Magic Sam, Junior Wells, and James Cotton.

The addition of drums and amplification helped create what we now know as Chicago blues—one of the most significant developments in the genre's history. It's a big sound, and from its origins it made plenty of room for variety. Jazz-influenced pianists such as Eddie Boyd and Willie Mabon helped shape the scene as well, and they'd been preceded by the likes of Little Brother Montgomery, who first moved to the city in 1928 and settled here for good in 1941. The success of soul music in the early 60s added a new flavor to the Chicago sound (and a new way for gospel to influence the blues) via the stylings of vocalists such as

Ricky Allen and Little Milton.

The 1950s can be considered the golden age of Chicago blues, but that doesn't mean the music hasn't kept thriving. The six artists showcased at September's Pritzker Pavilion concert continue to extend and expand blues traditions. And they all have releases on Alligator Records, except for Wayne Baker Brooks—and he's the son of Alligator artist Lonnie Brooks.

Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials have been with Alligator the longest (their first album for the label came out in 1986), and they've had the same lineup for most of that time. Guitarist and front man Ed Williams is the nephew of slide-guitar wizard J.B. Hutto, who taught him the basics in the late 60s, and his high-energy playing reflects his uncle's sound as well as his own identity. The Imperials were recording a track for the 1987 Alligator compilation *The New Bluebloods*, and Iglauer was so impressed he offered them a contract on the spot. By now Williams, guitarist Mike Garrett, drummer Kelly Littleton, and bassist James "Pookie" Young are one of the longest-running traditional blues acts in the city, alongside Lurrie Bell, John Primer, Jimmy Johnson, and Jimmy Burns.

Nick Moss worked his way up as a bassist with Jimmy Dawkins before joining Willie "Big Eyes" Smith's band, where he switched to guitar. He began leading his own group in 1997 and released a long string of albums on his own Blue Bella label before debuting on Alligator in 2018. For the past four years or so, he's been working with harmonica player Dennis Gruenling, who has one of the driest, most full-bodied tones I've ever heard. Moss's own sound spices up traditional Chicago blues with a streak of urbane Los Angeles jump blues.

The Cash Box Kings also have a small-combo jump-blues feel, albeit a little rowdier and with a touch of Memphis rockabilly. Founded in 2001 in Madison, Wisconsin, by singer and harmonica player Joe Nosek, the Kings added south-side Chicago vocalist Oscar Wilson as coleader in 2007. Much like labelmates Rick Estrin & the Nightcats, they use plenty of humor—on the 2019 Alligator album *Hail to the Kings!*, you can hear it loud and clear on

"Joe, You Ain't From Chicago."

Shemekia Copeland (who makes a guest appearance on *Hail to the Kings!*) became a contender for Queen of the Blues at age 19, when her 1998 debut, *Turn the Heat Up*, hit the streets. And at the 2011 Chicago Blues Festival, the city and state formally granted the New York-born singer that title—and none other than Cookie Taylor (daughter of the late Queen of the Blues, Koko Taylor) bestowed the crown onstage. Over the course of nine albums, Copeland has incorporated soul, classic rock, and Americana into her blues, along with a generous dose of social commentary.

Harmonica master Billy Branch first started making the rounds in the 70s, and by the end of that decade he'd founded the long-running band Sons of Blues as well as the Blues in the Schools program, which teaches this uniquely American art form to schoolkids across the country. Building a decades-long legacy in a scene where artists come and go seemingly overnight is an accomplishment in itself, and Branch has also shared his gifts with collaborators in and out of the blues—they include Lou Rawls, Mexican rock band El Tri, and jazz guitarist George Freeman.

Chicago loves its blues rock, judging from the audiences that line up to see the likes of Toronzo Cannon, Melvin Taylor, and Joanna Connor. Wayne Baker Brooks falls solidly in that bag. Playing with his father, Lonnie Brooks, gave him invaluable experience—he joined Lonnie's band in 1990, the year he turned 20—and over the past couple decades he's made his own mark.

As wide-ranging as this lineup is, it only hints at the diversity of Chicago blues. And whatever form the music takes—the jazzy strides of guitarist Dave Specter, the soulful strokes of singer Gerald McClendon, the gospel inflections of guitarist Mississippi Gabe Carter—not even a pandemic can shut it down. Across the decades, through all its comings and goings, hosted by countless record labels, club stages, outdoor festivals, street corners, and subways, the blues has become part of the city's DNA. It's just too indigenous to die. 

 @JamesPorterCHI

CHICAGO IN TUNE: BLUES

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Alligator Records. The Cash Box Kings headline, with guest Shemekia Copeland; Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials play second, with guest Billy Branch; the Nick Moss Band and Dennis Gruenling open, with guest Wayne Baker Brooks. *Sat 9/18, 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph, free, all ages*

NOTABLE BLUES EVENTS DURING CHICAGO IN TUNE

Bronzeville Blues: The Forum With Joe Filisko & Eric Noden, Greasy Gravy (Matt Hendricks and Rick Sherry), and Harmonica Hinds. *Sun 8/29, noon-6:30 PM, near the Forum, 318-324 E. 43rd, free, all ages*

Bronzeville Blues: Checkerboard Lounge With the Mojo Jam Session (featuring Kenny "Beedy Eyes" Smith), John Primer & the Real Deal Blues Band, Melody Angel, Big James & the Chicago Playboys, and Nick Alexander. *Sun 8/29, noon-6:30 PM, near the original location of the Checkerboard Lounge, 423 E. 43rd, free, all ages*

Bronzeville Blues: Park 43 With Bob Stroger, Mississippi Gabe Carter, and Gerry Hundt's Legendary One-Man Band. *Sun 8/29, noon-6:30 PM, Park 43, 540 E. 43rd, free, all ages*

Record Row Series At the former Chess Records building that now houses Willie Dixon's Blues Heaven Foundation. *Sundays (8/29: Joe Pratt & the Source One Band, 9/5: Sheryl Youngblood, 9/12: Vino Loudon, 9/19: John Primer duo), 6 PM, 2120 S. Michigan, free, all ages*

Chicago Blues Club City Tour Twenty shows at ten clubs, including appearances by Jimmy Johnson, Joanna Connor, Erwin Helfer, Billy Branch, Mud Morganfield, the Kinsey Report, Tail Dragger, and Jamiah Rogers. *Wed 9/1 through Mon 9/6, various times and venues (B.L.U.E.S. on Halsted, GMan Tavern, Golden Dagger, the Hideout, Martyrs', the Promontory, the Quarry, Reggies, Rosa's Lounge, Taylor Street Tap), all shows free, 21+*

Austin: West Side Blues Featuring Lurrie Bell, Vance Kelly, Mzz Reese, Jimmy Burns, Mary Lane, and Larry Taylor. *Sun 9/12, noon-8 PM, Chicago Avenue and Mayfield, free, all ages*

ROUNDUPS



Ohmme © ASH DYE



DJ Manny © COURTESY THE ARTIST

Chicago in Tune is a difficult festival to describe, since it includes basically all live music happening in the city from August 19 till September 19. How that looks to you depends heavily on which shows are on your radar. The Reader has provided you with a number of assists: a show calendar spanning the entire month; lists of gospel, jazz, house, and blues concerts; and these roundups by genre, compiled by Reader staff and freelancers with special expertise in each area. We've definitely left some genres out, in the interest of avoiding hairsplitting, and the festival roundup is of course not about a genre at all. Plenty of events could've ended up filed in several categories, so we just had to pick one: the Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash is under hip-hop, not festivals, and Ruido Fest leads off the Latinx roundup. The best way to be sure you're hearing about everything that might interest you is to read all of these, I reckon. But of course I was going to say that anyway. —PHILIP MONTORO

ROCK, POP, ET CETERA

Chicago musicians keep the city *in tune* year round, and they've even done it through a pandemic—so the month of programming that DCASE has designated Chicago in Tune was bound to feature stellar talents. It includes loads of can't-miss pop, rock, and punk shows where you might just discover your new favorite artists.

On the opening night of Chicago in Tune (Thu 8/19), lo-fi rockers Sonny Falls and Cold Beaches hit the stage at coffeehouse and music venue Golden Dagger, formerly known as Tonic Room. The venue also hosts alternative trio Microcosms and pop-rock vocalist Serjeeoh (Tue 9/7),

the fearless Sophie Sputnik's moody garage group, Waltzer (Wed 9/15), and quirky indie heads Spirits Having Fun (Fri 9/17).

For the second night of the festival, the Hideout presents the punched-up indie pop of Bloom and Troigo (Fri 8/20) on its patio stage. The beloved small venue has great outdoor shows booked throughout, of course, including poet and songwriter Kara Jackson (Tue 8/24), Niika & Reno Cruz (Fri 8/27), grungy funk punks Orisun (Tue 8/31), and pop singer Katy Kirby with the hypnotic alt-country stylings of Tenci (Sat 9/11).

Ohmme, the experimental duo of Macie Stewart and Sima Cunningham, will perform material from their stunning 2020 album, *Fantasize Your Ghost* (in addition to some older fan favorites), at a CHIRP Radio-sponsored Thalia Hall show with goth punks Ganser opening (Thu 8/26).

In a near re-creation of the extravagant showcase dubbed Iconic that they presented at Schubas in 2019, the powerhouse pop lineup of Emily Blue, Thair, SuperKnova, and Carlile reunite at Lincoln Hall (Sat 8/28)—with any luck, Blue and Thair will surprise fans with a live rendition of their take on Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande's "Rain on Me."

That same night, surfy pop-rock oddballs Impulsive Hearts headline a show at Reggie's Music Joint with Minneapolis alt-rockers Present Company, emo six-piece Cloud Houses, and the shimmering songs of Pete Cautious (Sat 8/28).

Closing out August, folk band Honey Cellar bring their delightfully buzzing harmonies to Montrose Saloon (Tue 8/31).

Singer-songwriter Jess Viscius and her new outfit, Bnny, play a record-release show at the Empty Bottle to celebrate their debut LP, *Everything*, which comes out August 20 on Fire Talk Records (Thu 9/2). And the latest signee to Sooper Records, multi-instrumentalist Jodi, brings the convention-defying music and queer country tales of their intimate new album, *Blue Heron*, to Sleeping Village (Sat 9/4).

Also at Sleeping Village, Indigo Hope Finamore

and Manae Hammond, who make music as Oux, will deliver a set of their soulful, synth-dipped, electro R&B (Wed 9/15)—when their songs "Rise," "Queer Like Me," and "Mood" wash over you, vibe like no one's watching.

Given the depth of Chicago's pool of musical talent, you should never sleep on opening acts here—you never know who might blow you away. Avantist, the grossly underrated rock band of brothers Erick, David, Luis, and Fernando Arias, and dream-pop five-piece Faux Furrs will both get the crowd moving ahead of Cincinnati rockers Sylmar (Subterranean, Sun 9/5). Full of noise, rage, and bass, No Men will get all up in your face supporting no-wave legend Lydia Lunch and her band Retrovirus (Beat Kitchen, Fri 9/10), who are sure to do the same. You'll probably need earplugs for this one, and be sure to help your fellow showgoer if the mosh pit gets too chaotic—safety first!

—JESSI ROTI

HIP-HOP

So far this summer, three albums by Chicago rappers have hit the top five of the *Billboard* 200. G Herbo's *25* landed at number five on July 17, a few weeks after Polo G's *Hall of Fame* took the top spot on June 26, displacing *The Voice of the Heroes*, a collaboration between Atlanta's Lil Baby and Chicago's Lil Durk. But as entertaining as chart watching can be, it can't tell you much about what's made the local scene so vital and unique over the past decade. Keeping an eye on the city's concert listings will get you a lot closer.

The Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash returns to Douglass Park this year (Fri 8/20–Sun 8/22). A big part of the festival's draw comes from its marquee names—ASAP Rocky, Lil Baby, Lil Uzi Vert—but much of the rest comes from Chicago acts. Among the highlights are up-and-comer OG Stevo, the masterful Saba, nonchalant flexer Queen Key,

spitfire storyteller Femdot, the dryly cool Nina Tech, and Hurt Everybody MCs Qari and Supa Bwe performing solo sets. The Summer Smash lineup also showcases artists who've worked with Lyrical Lemonade founder-turned-videographer Cole Bennett, among them Lil Skies, Ski Mask the Slump God, and Lil Tecca. The fest also nods at hip-hop's breadth, finding a through line that connects Atlanta screamer Waka Flocka Flame, Los Angeles philosopher Earl Sweatshirt, and Buffalo underground veteran Benny the Butcher.

Watching what's happening in Chicago's clubs will also teach you how far hip-hop's cultural imprint extends beyond what's traditionally considered hip-hop. Chicago footwork producer DJ Taye, who began adding verses to his hyperactive, zigzagging dance music on 2018's *Still Trippin*, will perform at Smart Bar alongside footwork pros DJ Manny, Jana Rush, and RP Boo (Fri 9/10). Chicago producer and singer Elton Aura creates supple, graceful songs from a soothing blend of R&B, funk, hip-hop, and pop; he plays a patio show at the Hideout with DJ Chris Banks (Sat 8/28). And Sterling Hayes, a hard-grinding member of Chicago hip-hop collective Save Money, celebrates his new album, *Beam Scale*, at Chop Shop (Fri 8/27).

Touring hasn't resumed at anything like pre-COVID levels, but quite a few out-of-town hip-hop acts will come through in the next month, including New Jersey hip-hop fusion crew Cook Thugless (Beat Kitchen, Fri 8/20) and New York producer Blockhead, who's playing a release show for *Space Werewolves Will Be the End of Us All* (Schubas, Fri 9/3). Subterranean hosts two great hip-hop acts back-to-back: underground champion Homeboy Sandman (Wed 9/8) and rising artist CalenRaps (Thu 9/9). Los Angeles MC Duckwrth brings his smooth, lighter-than-air tunes to Reggie's Rock Club (Tue 9/14), and dyed-in-the-wool underground rapper Conway the Machine—a member of prolific Buffalo crew Griselda, alongside Benny the Butcher—headlines Avondale Music Hall (Fri 9/17). Hip-hop moves quickly, and even the biggest

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Starless © COURTESY THE ARTIST

stars sometimes drop albums just days after revealing their existence, or announce shows just a couple weeks in advance. So it's always a good idea to keep checking concert calendars. —READER STAFF

METAL

Pandemic shutdowns seemed destined to sideline metal and hardcore bands for longer than their peers in other genres. After all, where would you feel more likely to contract a respiratory virus: at a coffeehouse show by an acoustic singer-songwriter, at a seated concert by a chamber quintet, or in a circle pit watching a band of thunderously loud hell-raisers screaming their faces off? As in-person shows have come back, though, metal has been well represented, and the local circuit is stacked throughout Chicago in Tune.

There are a few stadium shows and festivals, of course: Megadeth and Lamb of God at Hollywood Casino Amphitheater (Thu 9/9), Guns N' Roses at Wrigley Field (Thu 9/16), Faith No More and Coheed and Cambria at Riot Fest (Douglass Park, Fri 9/17-Sun 9/19). But if you like it heavy, the club shows are every bit as exciting.

Florida death-metal pioneers Deicide play Reggies Rock Club with Canadian death-metal legends Kataklysm and reunited slam unit Internal Bleeding (Sun 8/22), and Nashville scuzz rockers Thelma & the Sleaze play Liar's Club with Chicago-based intergalactic occult weirdos Beastii (Tue 8/24). The end of the week provides a hesh's bounty of doom and stoner-rock bands: Freedom Hawk, High Reeper, Black Road, and Uncouth at Reggies Music Joint (Thu 8/26) and midwestern stoner-metal veterans Bongzilla at Beat Kitchen (Fri 8/27). If power metal and laser light shows are your thing, you can rev up for the week ahead with Immortal Guardian and Paladin at WC Social Club (Sun 8/29).

The onslaught continues over Labor Day weekend. Noisy hardcore group Knocked Loose head-

line two stacked bills at Metro (Thu 9/2-Fri 9/3), with Gatecreeper opening the latter. Chicago/Göteborg mini fest Scorched Tundra returns to the Empty Bottle with a single-night showcase (Sat 9/4) featuring western-infused doom outfit In the Company of Serpents, Minneapolis D-beat/crust punks Hive, and local death metallers Roman Ring. Iowa doom merchants Telekinetic Yeti and local Lovecraftian instrumental duo Plague of Carcosa share a four-band bill at Bourbon on Division (Fri 9/3).

The following week, Reggies Music Joint hosts a lineup of boundary-breaking local artists, headlined by doomy slowcore band Starless, who are celebrating the release of the album *Hope Is Leaving You*; opening are dark experimental group Anatomy of Habit, heavy rockers Lavisher, and musician and audio engineer Sanford Parker (9/11). On the same night, Cobra Lounge gets brutal with Dallas death metallers Devourment and Cleveland hardcore titans Ringworm.

The past year and a half has proved that Chicago's metal scene can't be stopped by a submicroscopic infectious agent. (To quote *3rd Rock From the Sun* on viruses: "They are stealthy, but they are stupid.") With vaccinations on the rise and clubs instituting stricter COVID-19 safety policies, we can afford to hope the city will never know a time without live metal again. —READER STAFF

LATINX

Ruido Fest falls on the first weekend of Chicago in Tune, featuring smooth Mexico City dance-pop band Little Jesus, local retro-pop trio the Mini Projects, Miami-based Venezuelan singer Maye, and many more. Old-school Latin-alternative icons Café Tacvba, Panteón Rococó, and Caifanes headline, along with Puerto Rican reggaeton star Ivy Queen. Don't miss producer Camilo Lara and his group Mexican Institute of Sound, Afro-Colombian



Lido Pimienta © DANIELLA MURILLO

synth-pop artist Lido Pimienta, and tropical disco-funk band Los Amigos Invisibles (Union Park, Fri 8/20-Sun 8/22).

The Ruido afterparties are equally great: highlights at Cobra Lounge include Las Nubes, who conquered Iggy Pop's heart in Miami (Sun 8/22), and the radical reggaeton of La Doña paired with the chill jams of Inner Wave (Fri 8/20). Silverio will pounce on synths to create dark electronic music at Reggies Rock Club (Sat 8/21), while Alex Midi of Moenia will spin at Simone's (Sat 8/21).

Two free shows at FitzGerald's present relatively traditional Latinx music: Chicha Roots honor the golden age of Andean cumbia (Thu 8/19), and Jarochicanos and Joel Castellanos present a night of son jarocho (Thu 8/26). Jarochicanos also teach the zapateado that accompanies son jarocho at a fandango in Hermosa Park (Thu 8/19). The following week, *Ida y Vuelta* explore folk sounds from Veracruz at Sleeping Village (Fri 8/25).

In Pilsen, Tierra Roja and Los Sudakas perform Andean folk, boleros, son cubano, and son jarocho at Wings Fire House on Western at 25th, a second-floor restaurant that hosts live music (Fri 9/3).

Other upcoming lineups at Wings Fire House include Latinx funk, ska, and soul with Oveja Negra, MuTaTe, Mr. Funko, and DJ Gildelgar (Fri 8/27); Latinx rock with Las Cruxes, Kelroy, and Rai (Fri 9/10); and an homage to Mexican pop group RBD called *Tributo Celestial* that's sure to please lovers of cheesy 90s Latinx pop (Sat 9/11).

The city's *iSúbelo!* showcase (Harrison Park, Sat 9/4) will feature Mexican rap-rock band Molotov and other Latinx performers. SummerDance in the Parks includes cumbia by Quinto Imperio (Davis Square Park, Wed 9/8) and salsa by Chicago Latin Groove (Portage Park, Wed 9/15).

Kombi hosts Kumbiaholics at Simone's (Sat 8/28), but if you're looking for a different flavor, DJ Flores Negras (vocalist for doom-metal band Rosaries) and DJ MaddJazz host a goth cumbia night at Subterranean (Fri 8/27).

Celebrating 50 years of promoting and preserv-

ing Afro-Puerto Rican culture, Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center presents an all-bomba gathering (Thu 9/9) with Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre, Barcelona-based group Mancha 'E Plátano, and Bomba con Buya (the two bands also play Wed 9/8 at the Old Town School). The festivities continue with *Bámbula: Afro-Diáspora en Chicago*, a series of outdoor bomba dance parties (Kelvyn Park, Fri 9/10; Julia de Burgos Park, Sat 9/11; Senka Park, Sun 9/12). —SANDRA TREVIÑO

CLASSICAL

Chicago in Tune overlaps the Grant Park Music Festival on one end and the Ear Taxi Festival on the other. Grant Park closes its season just as Chicago in Tune begins, with a program that includes Handel's choral-orchestral whammy *Dettingen Te Deum* (Pritzker Pavilion, Fri 8/20-Sat 8/21). Pritzker Pavilion also hosts a Grammy Legacies concert (Thu 9/16) featuring Eighth Blackbird, tenor Karim Sulayman, performance poet J. Ivy, singer-songwriter and actress Tarrey Torae, and a world premiere by Pamela Z.

That same day, Ear Taxi kicks off its Spotlight series with the debut of *Rhythm Is Image*, focusing on works that treat sound as a tactile phenomenon (Constellation, Thu 9/16). Later that weekend Chicago-based Kosmologia, the brainchild of composer Carmen-Helena Téllez, brings Téllez's own piano works into dialogue with Bach's (*PianoForte*, Sat 9/18-Sun 9/19).

Fifth House Ensemble mounts an outdoor concert in collaboration with the American Indian Center's Big Drum Ensemble, featuring commissions by Shawn Okpebholo and Patrick O'Malley; the water-cycle-themed program also includes "In Wisconsin Woods" by composer and Lenape Center co-director Brent Michael Davids (Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods, Sun 9/19). The same afternoon, vocal quartet Fourth Coast Ensemble premieres

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Sterling Hayes © COURTESY THE ARTIST

A *Brush With Our Time*, based on the poetry of Zen artist Kazuaki Tanahashi; Tanahashi will paint large-scale enso calligraphy around the space (Ruggles Hall at Newberry Library, Sun 9/19).

Access Contemporary Music's season starter includes guests Nadia Sirota (the violist and podcaster of *Meet the Composer* fame) and Liam Byrne (bass viol) playing Donnacha Dennehy's *Tessellatum* (Davis Theater, Thu 9/9). The Frequency Series at Constellation remains reliably intrepid: percussionist Patti Cudd delivers a live rendition of her decadent *still motion*, released by new local label Sideband Records (Sun 8/22), and pianist Shi-An Costello transforms famous collectively improvised pieces (Terry Riley's *In C*, Julius Eastman's *Stay on It*, and Louis Andriessen's *Workers Union*) into solo arrangements (Sun 9/19).

If you have to be choosy this summer, though, choose opera. Elastic Arts' AfriClassical series passes the baton to Ayanna Woods, whose ensemble performs music from *FORCE!*, Anna Martine Whitehead's collaborative "punk opera" about women and femmes of color sharing a prison waiting room (Sat 8/28). And Third Eye Theatre Ensemble phoenixes itself from pandemic ash with a bewitching double bill: the midwest premiere of Kamala Sankaram's *The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace* and a commission by Elizabeth Rudolph called *Petticoats & Sliderules* (Edge Theater, Fri 9/17-Sun 10/3). —HANNAH EDGAR

EXPERIMENTAL

"Experimental" is more a how than a what, and most of the shows here could've fit in at least one other category. The Pitchfork Music Festival (Union Park, Fri 9/10-Sun 9/12), one of the best such events in Chicago, features a slew of great experimentalists on Friday's lineup—including sound-collaged dance-music project the Soft Pink Truth, frenetic postpunk mavericks Black Midi, art-

pop troubadours the Fiery Furnaces, and beloved psychedelic act Animal Collective. Former Sonic Youth bassist Kim Gordon plays on Saturday (with a solo date Fri 9/10 at Thalia Hall), and prismatic glam-rock star Yves Tumor plays on Sunday (with an aftershow that night at the Empty Bottle). Thurston Moore, also a former member of Sonic Youth, has two shows at the Bottle later that week (Tue 9/14-Wed 9/15).

At Millennium Park's Pritzker Pavilion, Experimental Sound Studio presents a series of widely varied 30-channel sound installations that take full advantage of the gridlike trellis of overhead speakers spanning the lawn. The installations will be active roughly one day per week throughout Chicago in Tune, for two hours each day; the six 20-minute works are by Whitney Johnson (aka Matchess), I Gusti Ngurah Kertayuda & Bill Parod, Stephan Moore, Kitundu, Kioto Aoki, and Natalie Chami (aka TALsounds). ESS also hosts a concert series at Lake Forest College that celebrates ephemeral but powerful experiences. Artists include avant-garde vocalist Carol Genetti (Sat 9/11) and taiko drummer Kioto Aoki (Sat 9/18).

Elastic Arts reliably books experimental music in many genres, and the month of Chicago in Tune is no exception. JG Thirlwell of Foetus will deliver an electroacoustic audiovisual performance called "Silver Mantis" (Sat 9/11), and the underrated Ohio trio of Jayson Gerycz, Jen Powers, and Matthew Rolin will improvise a set of folk-jazz (Fri 9/3).

The Empty Bottle will present Nebraska's favorite queer electro-industrial leather maniac, Plack Blague, sharing the bill with local no-wave punk-metal duo Ozzuario and a DJ set from Him Hun (Fri 9/3). A few days later (Mon 9/6) it hosts a night of performances from three Chicago natives: young guitarist extraordinaire Eli Winter, synthesist Jordan Reyes, and Rebecca Valeriano-Flores, guitarist and vocalist for postpunk band Negative Scanner.

The Museum of Contemporary Art presents its Tuesdays on the Terrace jazz series at 5:30 PM,



Negative Scanner © VITA PHOTO

when its exhibits are still open. The first show to fall within Chicago in Tune features reedist Mwata Bowden (Tue 8/24), a second-generation member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a Chicago institution founded in 1965 to support the autonomy of experimental Black artists. The following week's concert (Tue 8/31) is by the Alexander McLean Project, a group led by vocalist Dee Alexander and guitarist John McLean. —JOSHUA MINSOO KIM

FESTIVALS

Last summer's festival season was canceled before it began, but as vaccines tamped down new infections this spring, it felt like we might be heading out of the woods. Then the Delta variant took over and undid what we thought we knew about COVID. Mixed signals from politicians and public health officials fueled the confusion: Masks or no masks? Are outdoor events still safer than indoors? How likely is a vaccinated concertgoer to get a breakthrough infection standing in line for a portapotty—or to pass that infection along?

Every photo of a sea of fans at Lollapalooza fueled fears that the fest would be a superspreader. As of this writing, its impact remains unclear, but new COVID cases are rising steeply. That said, there are still reasons to be optimistic about music festivals during Chicago in Tune. Vaccination, in combination with precautions such as masking, social distancing, testing, and self-quarantining, alleviate a huge amount of risk.

The eclectic Millennium Park Summer Music Series continues through mid-September at Pritzker Pavilion. It includes Contemporary Indigenous Voices, cocurated by Sicangu Lakota rapper Frank Waln and featuring Leonard Sumner, Lyla June, and Tall Paul (Mon 9/6). Afrodija Social Club (Mon 8/30) is a multidisciplinary performance by DJ Sadie Woods that explores diasporic music and culture.

Fans of motorcycles and hot rods unite at Moto-blot (outside Cobra Lounge, Fri 8/27-Sun 8/29), whose musical component includes psychobilly legends Nekromantix, Las Vegas rockers the Delta Bombers, and Chicago punk and ska acts such as Mystery Actions, the Crombies, and Aweful.

PorchFest Roscoe Village (Sun 8/29) presents live music on 15 porches around the north-side neighborhood, with a full lineup and porch map provided to those who register online.

Labor Day weekend is stacked with big music events. Delmark Records, Earwig Records, and the Rockwell Business & Residents Association present the Rockwell Blues & Jazz Street Stroll (Sat 9/4), a daylong fest on Rockwell between Irving Park and Berteau; the headlining set by the Delmark All Stars Band includes appearances by Jimmy Johnson, Jimmy Burns, Sharon Lewis, and others. The new ARC Music Festival hosts two days of electronic music (Union Park, Sat 9/4-Sun 9/5), with sets from house and techno luminaries such as Derrick Carter, DJ Heather, and Hiroko Yamamura. In case that's not enough dancing, the North Coast Music Festival features the likes of Kaskadee, Louis the Child, Zeds Dead, and GRiZ (SeatGeek Stadium, Fri 9/3-Sun 9/5).

The Pitchfork Music Festival descends on Union Park (Fri 9/10-Sun 9/12) with an impressive mix of indie rock, rap, soul, and experimental music, featuring headliners Phoebe Bridgers, St. Vincent, and Erykah Badu. During the final weekend of Chicago in Tune, Riot Fest returns to Douglass Park (Fri 9/17-Sun 9/19), bringing a roster of cult favorites (including a reunited Mr. Bungle) and a slate of headliners that mixes hip-hop and rock: Run the Jewels, Lupe Fiasco, Smashing Pumpkins, Coheed and Cambria.

In 2021, every music festival is subject to change. But with a little luck—and a lot of community effort—Chicago's festival season will give us a chance to create once-in-a-lifetime memories that can help us get through whatever comes next.

—READER STAFF

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