

CHICAGO QUEER MURAL
BRINGS A CONVERSATION ABOUT
INTERSECTIONALITY TO BOYSTOWN

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Mural of Kiam Marcelo Junio.
Photo by Jake Wittich

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WINDY CITY TIMES

VOL. 34, No. 01, Sept. 26, 2018
 The combined forces of Windy City Times,
 founded Sept. 1985, and Outlines newspaper,
 founded May 1987.

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 5315 N. Clark St. #192, Chicago, IL, 60640 U.S.A.
 (MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

Windy City Times Deadline every Wednesday
 OUT! Chicago's LGBTQ Visitor's Guide Online annual
 Windy City Times Wedding and Events Guide Annual
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 www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



THEATER REVIEW

Frankenstein

Playwright: adapted by Robert Kazulric, from the novel by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley
At: Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave.
Tickets: Lifelinetheatre.com; 773-761-4477; \$40
Runs through: Oct. 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Two hundred years ago, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, struggling with grief over a series of untimely deaths in her immediate family, told the story of a man's audacious attempt to overcome mortality by creating a human being in his own image. His hubristic proposal does not end well.

More than a century and a half later, playwright Robert Kazulric, struggling with grief over the death of his own father, found in Shelley's par-

able a voice for the confusion accompanying upheaval in his immediate universe and the frustration arising from outsiders' inability to recognize the extent of damage engendered thereby. Now, in 2018, he recounts the story of a woman whose grief over the death of her beloved father compels her to create an imperfect replica of her late sire, assembled from her memories and her refusal to "move on" as her friends and family have.

Kazulric's entry in the season's unplanned Franken-fest (Lookingglass, Court, and Remy Bumpo also have Frankenstein productions planned) honoring the 200th anniversary of the horror classic's publication is less an adaptation of Shelley's neogothic fable than a wholly reimagined narrative based in an earlier concept. Our heroine is Victoria, a young woman whose emancipated mien and scholarly pursuits were championed by the parent whose loss she feels deeply. The monster conjured by her crippling bereavement is a grotesque mannequin beseeching



Ann Sonnevile and Chris Hainsworth in Frankenstein.

Photo by Suzanne Plunkett

his surviving kin to endure the sorrow of separation and to embrace its inevitability.

The abstract construct of a single individual's spiritual journey is not easy to depict visually, but the collective agility exhibited by the ensemble convened for this Lifeline Theatre production weaves its many elements into an unbroken thread leading our heroine (and us) on the turbulent path through depression threatening to engulf both the living and the dead and ultimately, to recovery and acceptance.

Embodying this metaphor is Cynthia Von Orthal's towering rod-puppet Lazarus whose countenance reflects a myriad of expressions and whose multiple-operated limbs facilitate a dexterity allowing him, at one point, to physically overpower his distraught reanimator, portrayed with steely resolve by Ann Sonnevile. Oh, and since an uneasy mind often resembles a mad scientist's laboratory, a virtuoso tech team supplies a kaleidoscope of hissing lights, eerie music and evocative shadows.

THEATER REVIEW

Second Skin

Playwright: Kristin Idaszak
At: The Den, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Tickets: WildclawTheatre.com;
 \$15-\$30
Runs through: Oct. 13

BY KERRY REID

If you were going to give the elevator pitch version of Kristin Idaszak's *Second Skin*, now in a world premiere with WildClaw Theatre, you might well go with "It's The Secret of Roan Inish meets

Conor McPherson." This despite the fact that Idaszak's atmospheric tale takes place nowhere near the Irish settings of either John Sayles' 1994 movie or playwright McPherson's dramas.

But in subject matter and structure, the parallels are irresistible. Yet Idaszak's play, by focusing on the parallel yet alienated lives of women who are related to each other—but cannot relate to each other—adds a welcome twist of realism to the mysterious.

Sayles' magic realist film was about a young girl in an Irish fishing village who is convinced her baby brother was stolen away by a mythical half-human, half-seal creature called a "selkie." McPherson has long been lauded for his use of interlocking monologues and use of supernatural

tales as a way of exploring grief and loss. That's the way Idaszak tells her ghostly and poignant story about the fragile but persistent bonds of sisters, mothers and daughters.

Quinn (Stephanie Shum) fled her small seaside home as soon as she was able. She's run away from the mother whose nameless fears kept both of them shut away inside their home. But now her mom, Sigrid (Paula Ramirez)—whose name conveniently rhymes with "secret"—is suffering from ALS and needs her daughter's help. A chance meeting with a woman in a bar sets off a series of revelations about Sigrid's long-lost sister, Aislinn (Hilary Williams).

The stranger reminds Quinn of a chance encounter on a beach when she was quite young—

an encounter that started her mother on the path of overprotectiveness that Quinn resists. In the second monologue, Sigrid fills us in on who that stranger is (spoiler alert: it's Aislinn) and the guilt she still feels for what happened to her. In the third part, Aislinn emerges from behind the large round window at the center of Lizzie Bracken's set (which looks like a ghostly pier) and tells her side of the story. (Sarah D. Espinoza's sound design provides otherworldly mournful notes, while Kaili Story's lights add a sense of being underwater.)

The main details of the intertwined narratives don't really conflict—but the emotions do. Jess Hutchinson's staging gives each actor breathing room to grow their tale, trusting that we'll follow them through the mists of the past and let us empathize with all three women. It's not, perhaps, as dark or gory a tale as some past WildClaw efforts. But it slowly exudes a clammy sense of dread and sorrow as the women confront interior ghosts of guilt, regret and retribution that are harder to shake than any spirits in the night.

practical Man (or Person) of Action found in all Shaw plays, who challenges others to look beyond artificial barriers of social class, wealth, gender, false romanticism and moral or intellectual cant, if you're to get anything done in the world. Practical individuals also can be self-serving, but Shaw always ignores that!

Arms and the Man is half comedy of ideas and half farce, an unusual blend for Shaw, who spends the play's second half untangling fairly standard late-19th century plot complications. This gives directors two general approaches: emphasize comedy and let ideas fend for themselves (which they can), or just the opposite. For City Lit's first Shaw play, director Brian Pastor has taken the comedy approach, guiding his actors to very broad characterizations with large reactions to things. The style works, but it will be a matter of taste for audience members with fixed notions of Shaw's dry wit and serious discussions. After all, Shaw's characters—mostly talking points—rarely are completely convincing, which led the great Laurence Olivier in the 1940s to revolt when playing Sergius.

Completing the generally competent cast are Eleanor Katz (Mrs. Petkoff), Adam Bitterman (Major Petkoff) and Linsey Falls (Nicola). Ray Toler (set) and Tom Kieffer (costumes) contribute suitable, colorful designs and a good wig for Ms. Caldwell.



Martin Diaz-Valdes and Chelsee Carter in Arms and the Man.
 Photo by Steve Graue

ranoff (Martin Diaz-Valdes), the Serbian officer who led the cavalry charge. Bluntschli shocks Raina by pointing Sergius's stupidity and the unromantic realities of battle which, he says, military professionals avoid at all costs.

Shaw quickly has introduced his life-long anti-war ideas, and goes on to downsize romantic love, material aspirations, social pretensions and the idea that ability has anything to do with wealth or position. Bluntschli and Raina end up together, once he leaves military service to take command of his family's luxury hotels), while Sergius—in what might have shocked Shaw's 1890s audiences—proposes to the servant girl, Louka (Chelsee Carter).

Bluntschli is the catalyst for change, the

THEATER REVIEW

Arms and the Man

Playwright: George Bernard Shaw
At: City Lit Theatre, 1055 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.
Tickets: CityLit.org; \$32
Runs through: Oct. 21

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This 1894 comedy is one of George Bernard Shaw's most frequently-produced works, part of a group of early dramas published as "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant." It's one of the pleasant plays owing to its happy ending, fast pace and light tone, none of which means it isn't filled with Shavian satire, sarcasm and ideas.

It's set during a 1880s war between Bulgaria (backed by Russia) and Serbia (backed by Austria). As the play opens, the wealthy Petkoff family is celebrating a final Bulgarian victory, brought about when a suicidal old-fashioned cavalry charge succeeded because the enemy's machine gun jammed. Capt. Bluntschli (Adam Benjamin), a mercenary Swiss soldier for Serbia, escapes slaughter by taking refuge in the bedroom of the Petkoff's daughter, Raina (Scottie Caldwell), the fiancée of dashing Sergius Sa-

CRITICS' PICKS

Radio Golf, Court Theatre, through Sept. 30. A gifted cast and director bring power to August Wilson's final play, concerning African-American upward mobility in Pittsburgh's gentrifying Hill District ghetto ... a slippery slope! JA

Late Nite Catechism, The Royal George Theatre, open run. When you can't trust your own parish priest any more, remember that Vicki Quade and Maripat Donovan's teaching nun has been ministering to her multicultural flock since her class first convened in 1993. MSB

The Little Foxes, Citadel Theatre, through Oct. 28. Lillian Hellman's exploration of greed and family in post-Civil War Alabama has a plot that hits like (spoiler alert, sort of) a heart attack while playing bare (yes, I do mean playing) the racism and misogyny of the Deep South both then and now. CES

—by Abarbanel, Barnidge and Sullivan



Ambrose Cappuccio and Tiffany Bedwell in *Naked*.

Photo by Chris Popio

THEATER REVIEW

Naked

Playwright: Luigi Pirandello,
translated by Nina daVinci Nichols
At: Trap Door Theatre, 1655 W. Cortland Ave.
Tickets: \$20-25; 773-384-0494 or
TrapdoorTheatre.com
Runs through: Oct. 27

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

"Tell the truth, but tell it slant," poet Emily Dickinson urged. The saying has become a universal

literary device, and a good starting point for Luigi Pirandello's *Naked*, a play that explores one woman's various versions of the truth. Like the secretive governess Ersilia Drei, and like *Naked* itself, Trap Door Theatre's production bears a lot of truth. Unfortunately, the production possesses so much slant that it's extraordinarily uneven.

Pirandello's anti-heroine (played by a luminous Tiffany Bedwell) is a survivor. Forever at the mercy of men, she's committed an act of egregious proportions—or has she, really? A protagonist like Ersilia, young and desperate but certainly not naïve, was certainly unusual for 1922, but both Pirandello and translator Nina daVinci Nichols give her the intelligence and nuance she deserves. A couple of moments are especially relevant in the "me too" era, though playwright and translator don't condone predatory behavior but merely illustrate it as a sad truth of both then and now. In turn, director Kay Martinovich has clearly put in the time with the script and actress Bedwell to ensure no facet of Ersilia goes unseen, whether she's meekly contending with an ambitious older writer (Bob Wilson) or fighting off the advances of her former lover (Ambrose Cappuccio).

The problem is, Ersilia's not the only character in the play. Far from it: She's offstage for long portions, during which the other characters analyze her motives and gossip about her effect on the men around her. Martinovich seems to have conveniently forgotten about the rest of her cast—a shame since, typical of Trap Door Theatre, they're a talented bunch. If Martinovich had spent more time vocal coaching, actors like Cappuccio wouldn't spend the entire 100 minutes

shouting in a very small space and taking the audience completely out of the moment. For example.

Martinovich handles *Naked*'s quiet, dramatic moments much better: Ersilia's final monologue, revealing her true vulnerability in the face of horrible tragedy, is especially haunting. The issue is, Pirandello infuses his drama with a healthy dose of dark, absurdist comedy. Martinovich can't handle these oddly funny moments, choosing to direct them like a 1980s sitcom. At times, I felt like I was watching two different plays, and both the truth—and its many slants—were completely lost.

Set designer Nick Schwartz has a better grasp on Pirandello's oddities. The back wall of the

boardinghouse room is noticeably crooked, and the bright turquoise windows open, shut and flap according to each character's moods and whims. Combined with David Goodman-Eddberg's lighting and Rachel Sypniewski's costumes, *Naked* has the look of a sepia-toned *What's Wrong With this Picture?* Everything is pretty but something is always slightly off. With a little bit of imagination, even the floor seems tilted.

Naked's production values and Bedwell's dynamic lead performance reflect what might have been. A more coherent directorial vision would have cast a harsh light on the truth—whether Ersilia's or the other characters'—and the slant.

SPOTLIGHT

Alexis J. Roston channels Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, Lanie Robertson's gorgeous evocation of the late, great, ground-breaking singer's life. Set over the course of Day's final concert at the titular locale, the show is packed with music forever associated with Holiday ("Strange Fruit," "God Bless the Child" and others) as well as insight into her struggles with addiction. Directed by Shanesia Davis, this marks Roston's fourth time bringing Holiday to life on stage. In terms of voice and persona, Roston's delivers a mov-



ing, powerful performance. The Congo Square production runs through Oct. 7 at eta Creative Arts Foundation, 7558 S. South Chicago Ave. \$25-\$35; CongoSquareTheatre.org

Caption: Photo of Alexis J. Roston courtesy of Porchlight Theatre

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THEATER

indecency. Vogel, 66, first became familiar with the play roughly 40 years ago.

"It just floored me that [Asch], a newlywed man, a heterosexual man, could write such a beautiful love scene between two women," she said. "Up to that point, I was a little depressed and concerned that the Lillian Hellman Children's Hour was going to be the model of theatre and film in which a lesbian commits suicide or a lesbian is eternally alone and unhappy and her lover marries a man and lives happily ever after—that was kind of the model of the 1950s.

"There were not a lot of plays about lesbians," Vogel said, and what plays there were tended to be about lesbians in primarily unhappy relationships. "I wouldn't call *God of Vengeance* particularly a happy play, but it basically says that the love between two women is a pure, passionate love," Vogel said.

Variations on a theme

God of Vengeance haunted Vogel for decades. In 2009, she received a phone call from director Rebecca Taichman. "She called and said, 'Do you know of this play, *God of Vengeance*?' and I said, 'Oh my God, do I!' As we talked on the phone it started to take shape."

Like all of Vogel's work, *Indecent* plays with structure and form. "I think the thing that made me start to want to write plays is that it wasn't just paint by numbers and that every person has a story and that story demands a new structure for it, one original to it," she said.

The unique structure of *Indecent* involves a play-within-a-play and lots of music. Vogel and Taichman came up with the notion of a dead troupe of actors rising from the dust to tell the story of *God of Vengeance*. From there, they took off, trying variations over multiple drafts and workshops.

The process was a departure for Vogel: For previous plays, she had written in a fury, often finishing them in as little as two weeks.

"I became adept at writing quickly in intense bouts; that's basically how I've written my plays," she said.

Seven years to premieres

Indecent proved more elusive: "It took me seven years to do the research, and then after every four or five drafts, Rebecca would do a reading or put on a workshop; I worked on it a long time. This is a large-scope piece."

Indecent premiered in 2015 in simultaneous productions at Yale Repertory Theatre and La Jolla Playhouse. It opened on Broadway in 2017 to positive reviews. (The Tribune's Chris Jones called it a "deftly structured.") It won two Tony Awards, and was nominated for three.

"At age 67, this represents the first time that I can actually travel to Chicago and work a little bit with the director and simultaneously work at the Goodman on a new play, so that's pretty exciting for me," Vogel said. "I no longer have an 80-hour-a-week day job that precludes me

from traveling." (In addition to playwriting, Vogel served for years as a department chair at the Yale School of Drama and oversaw the playwriting department at Brown University.)

Letting go, leaning in

Now, Vogel says she's excited to see how director Gary Griffin will interpret *Indecent* at the Victory Gardens.

"Gary and I had a wonderful 24 hours together on Cape Cod exploring his ideas, talking about the play," Vogel said. "He showed me the costume design, the set design. It's never been done this way before. Every production is radically different; it's really a director's vision. When you're doing a premiere it's a conversation and I'm in the room making adjustments."

Letting go of her creation doesn't bother Vogel. "It's an honor, it's a thrill to see other people's visions. If one is a control freak one, writes novels. But if one enjoys the party and the conversation, you basically become a playwright.

"As of opening night, the playwright starts to say goodbye. We're the first ones to leave the party, and there's always a kind of mourning, but it's very rewarding to know that [the play] has future lives," she said.

Many of Vogel's plays have dealt with LGBTQ+ issues. *Indecent* does as well, but also brings in issues of censorship, immigration, and anti-Semitism.

Human sexuality, human rights

For Vogel, LGBTQ+ issues can't be written about in a vacuum.

"If there is anything I am ardent about concerning my sexuality, it is to not see our issues as separate from issues concerning people of color (or) economic issues, inequality, drinking water in Flint, suppression of the press, separation of families at the border," she said.

"There is a divide-by-fear mentality and we have to be united; we have to embrace a coalition. So the only thing I worry about at times is if younger people say 'I can get married now and okay I'm done.' Like that's the end of the conversation. That's the beginning of the conversation.

"It's not about our rights as gay, lesbian, trans, bi, queers; it's about our rights as Americans; it's about human rights."

At its core, like its author, *Indecent* is political. "I wrote *Indecent* aware of the rise in hate speech, aware of the bashing of immigration, deeply deeply concerned, and I thought there is an important reason to write this because this happened in our history. In a moment of fear there is no history; there's just fear about the future and the present moment and history becomes completely erased."

Indecent runs through Nov. 4 at the Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Tickets are \$29—\$74. For more info, go to <https://victorygardens.org/event/indecent/>

Note: This is the first of a two-part look at Paula Vogel and the production *Indecent*. Next week, Topham and Vogel talk LGBTQ issues, theatrical form and the need for theater in today's political environment.

Paula Vogel.
Photo by
Todd Rosenberg

'Indecent' in Chicago: Paula Vogel talks art, policies and haunting play

BY KAREN TOPHAM

Talking with Paula Vogel is the easiest thing in the world. Her friendly, open demeanor makes it feel like a long, warm conversation with your grandmother—if your grandmother happened to be a prolific Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and a social radical, unabashed feminist, and proud lesbian.

Vogel has written 16 plays in the last 40 years. Her work has been produced in more than 30 countries and received more awards than can be listed here. Following the brilliant Artistic Home production last spring of her Pulitzer-winning *How I Learned to Drive*, this fall brings two new Vogel plays to Chicago.

The Chicago premiere of Vogel's *Indecent* is running through Nov. 3 at the Lincoln Park's Victory Gardens Theater. At the same time, the Goodman Theatre is workshoping Vogel's newest creation, *Cressida On Top*. Despite a packed schedule, Vogel took the time to speak with Windy City Times in a wide-ranging interview.

Beyond The Children's Hour

Indecent is the story of a 1906 play written by a young Polish Jew named Sholem Asch. *God of Vengeance* proved very successful all over Europe, but when it came to America and was translated into English, authorities didn't take well to its unfettered lesbian content. *God of Vengeance* was shut down. Its entire cast was found guilty of

THEATER REVIEW

Curve of Departure

Playwright: Rachel Bonds
At: Northlight Theatre,
9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie
Tickets: 847-673-6300;
Northlight.org; \$30-\$88
Runs through: Oct. 21

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

This new play, in its regional premiere, puts a lot on the table—probably too much for an 80-minute work—but author Rachel Bonds manipulates it with such warmth, humor and humanity that you don't notice. Perhaps wisely, she doesn't attempt to fully-resolve the issues of family, relationship and choice she raises, but she reveals her four characters to us with skillful directness with which we can empathize.

Rudy, an old man with Alzheimer's, has come from New York to Santa Fe to bury his long-estranged son. He's accompanied by his former daughter-in-law, Linda, now his companion and caregiver. They are joined by grandson/son, Felix, and his affable, tattooed boyfriend, Jackson, who live in Bakersfield, California. The boys are negotiating Jackson's wish to adopt his neglected and abused two-year old niece, and it threatens their relationship. As the child of a broken marriage himself, Felix creates barriers—legal difficulties, cost, gay parenting within the implied conserva-



tism of Bakersfield—to hide his deeper insecurities. Rudy, preparing to end his own life in a few months over Linda's objections, smooths troubled waters with words of wisdom as the sun rises over

the desert on the morning of the funeral.

The roles are evenly distributed among the four characters in this small-scale true ensemble piece, and the Northlight production benefits from four richly heart-felt performances under the astute but relaxed direction of BJ Jones. Playing

Penelope Walker and Mike Nussbaum in *Curve of Departure*.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

Rudy, master actor Mike Nussbaum is first among equals, as always. Approaching his 95th birthday, Nussbaum is a force-of-nature who retains all his chops, instincts and remarkable physical vitality. The characters he now plays permit Nussbaum to indulge in some audience-delighting old geezer shtick—sometimes puckish, sometimes cranky—but he knows when to pull it back and give focus to others, both hallmarks of a consummate pro.

His younger companions also are impressive. Penelope Walker (Linda), Sean Parris (Felix) and Danny Martinez (Jackson) create truthful, caring but unsure human beings (as we all are or should be). At the end, they cotton to Rudy's almost-elegiac advice to embrace compassion and the future, whatever it may be, even though it requires a leap of faith. We mustn't use the failures of our fathers and grandfathers to create our own limitations, he tells us, and his words resonate with Felix and, particularly, Linda who has the greatest amount to lose in the future.

Walker and Parris are African-American actors, although the script makes no reference to race or biracial relationships. Does the script specify the casting, or is it a choice made for this production? You can't tell, and that's as it should be because it shouldn't matter.

Curve of Departure is played on Lauren Nigri's handsome, roomy hotel room set, redolent of Santa Fe adobe.

THEATER REVIEW

Odessa

Playwright: Michaela Heidemann
At: Otherworld Theatre, 3914 N. Clark St.
Tickets: theRBP.org; \$10-\$20
Runs through: Oct. 6

BY KERRY REID

The Ukrainian city of Odessa may be best known in popular culture for the famous "Odessa Steps" sequence in the film *The Battleship Potemkin*. But what lies underneath the port city provides the setting for Michaela Heidemann's haunting, funny—and occasionally too impenetrable—chamber piece, now in a production with *The Right Brain* Project under Colin David's direction.

Fittingly, *Right Brain* is using the smaller stage at Otherworld Theatre for this dark twisty production. Set in the labyrinthine series of catacombs underneath Odessa—remnants of the city's stone-mining past, and so vast that they've never been fully mapped—the main source of stage lighting comes from two flashlights. One is held by Andrew (Logan Hulick), an American journalist who was lured to the catacombs, beaten and left for dead. The other belongs to Dariya (Hannah Williams), the Ukrainian woman who helped lure him there and feels guilty enough to try and get him back out.

The problem is that they keep getting lost. This enrages Andrew, naturally. While he certainly has reasons to complain, we also get more than a whiff of Entitled American Dudebro from him, which Williams' Dariya delights in pointing

out. She also twits him about being a terrible journalist. Apparently before his current misadventure, his greatest claim to media fame was a piece he wrote about trying to survive on nothing but peanut butter for a week. And as he himself admits, a quick Google search (if not native common sense) might have told him that going into the catacombs with people he barely knows wasn't a great idea.

Are they alone in this underworld? That's a good question. Before we enter the theater, Masha (Alison Schaufler), a bubbly teenager, leads us to our seats and tells us how excited she is about the party about to happen in the catacombs.

Is Masha still wandering the space, too? Is what we're seeing real, or something Andrew is imagining after a head injury? (Schaufler appearing as his mother in an interlude suggests the latter.) At one point, Andrew exclaims "This doesn't end until I do"—as concise an encapsulation of the existential viewpoint as you'll find. But it's unclear what we're supposed to take literally here.

As Dariya and Andrew wander and argue, the story starts to spin its wheels a bit. However, both Williams and Hulick excel at negotiating not only the physical landscape of ramps and platforms in the small dark space, but also the shifts in tone from mundane joking to deeper rage.

Ultimately, the show feels more successful as an exploration of atmosphere and uncertainty than as a fully realized portrait of what an American journeying to the heart of darkness might encounter. But if you enjoy theatrical conundrums that don't offer up easy answers, the intimate clamminess of *Odessa* may suit you just fine.

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No small 'Change': Firebrand, TimeLine partner for 'Caroline'

BY SARAH BOWDEN

Caroline, or Change is set in 1963 Louisiana, in the midst of the Civil Rights movement, as citizens grapple with the assassination of John F. Kennedy. But don't mistake it for a period piece. This is not musical-as-history, easily folded neatly in the pages of some forgotten book.

"This is one of my favorite musicals of all time because of Caroline," said director Lili-Anne Brown. "To some extent, I am Caroline, and my mother is Caroline, and I know many Carolines."

Brown's staging of Caroline, or Change—penned by Tony Kushner (Angels in America) and composer Jeanine Tesori (Fun Home)—runs through Oct. 28 at the Den Theatre in a co-production with TimeLine and Firebrand theaters.

The 2004 musical follows the title character (Rashada Dawan), an African-American woman who works in the Gellman household, doing laundry and looking after the Jewish family's only child, Noah (Alejandro Medina). Noah is grieving the recent death of his mother. As his stepmother Rose (Blair Robertson) struggles to integrate herself into the household, Caroline struggles with making ends meet in her own household. Caroline is a mother as well, and is often at odds with her

THEATER

daughter Emmie (Bre Jacobs) over how much she should demand from her employers.

When Rose tells Caroline that any change left in Noah's pockets at the end of the day is hers to keep, it sets off a battle of wills that shakes Caroline's sense of self and her relationships with Emmie and Noah. The extra money is helpful in Caroline's home, but it comes with a price of its own.

Kushner based the script on experiences from his own childhood, but Noah is noticeably not the protagonist of the play. "He chose to center the story on Caroline's internal struggles," Brown said. "She is surrounded by events, but the musical is not about those events. It's about how it feels to grow old, and have an ability or inability to change, and be a mother to girls."

Caroline's fight for survival from paycheck to paycheck allows her little time for politeness, kindness, or optimism. This makes her a "four-dimensional" character, according to Brown. "We don't get to see Black women rage out, and deal with the consequences in a spiritual way," she said. Such expression is a gift, the director as-



Caroline, or Change's Bre Jacobs, Rashada Dawan and Blair Robertson.

Photo by Rob Riddle/GhostLight

serts.

Dawan agreed. "You don't get to be too authentic onstage as a Black woman. Usually, you play characters full of hope and joy and kindness, and Caroline doesn't choose those things. But none of us live inside of hope every day of our lives.

"My people may not like see all the dirty laundry onstage, but if we don't deal with it, then we can't have a conversation," Dawan said.

Authenticity breeds understanding for the audience, according to the artists working on Caroline. "It's important to consider historical moments that are not mainstream," said dramaturg Fatima Sowe.

"Domestic technicians"—the preferred terminology for women who work in household or hotel service industries—were left out of the U.S. labor movement that started in factories, primarily due to racism.

"But domestic technicians laid the groundwork for people who are freelancers now, as well as those who work in the service industry now," Sowe said.

Dawan added that dramaturgy materials helped her understand Caroline's exhaustion and the fact that if "domestic technicians" such as Caroline were less than consistently gracious and giving, their inhumane treatment gave them good reason to be so.

"If people wanted maids back in the time of the play, they would drive to certain corners, and pick women up off the street," she said. "They would pick these women by looking at their knees, looking at how scarred their knees were to prove they spent all their time working on hands and knees," Dawan said.

Sowe said there is a rich context to be shared with the audience surrounding Caroline's narrative. The realities of her life parallel figures in the domestic technician labor movement, whose stories will be featured in the lobby at the Den. "Even when we center on domestic things, they reflect their political time, but change is happening always," she said.

Dawan said she believes now is a perfect time to produce this musical, referencing the ongoing Chicago hotel workers' strike, which she has seen firsthand on her commute. "We're witnessing people in power who have money, and how they act," she said. "The hint of wealth is impactful. To not have it is impactful."

Brown said she hopes to demonstrate the wide gap that exists between Caroline and the other characters visually. The Den space allows for an expansive design, and she "wanted to explore the relationship of Caroline being low." There are multiple references to Caroline living underground, or being underwater. To give the audience a similar impression, Brown has the audience on risers, with everyone in the upstairs part of the house on a higher level, while Caroline stays in the basement, on the deck of the stage floor. The audience is physically anchored to Caroline's place in the world.

Tesori's music adds another layer to the narrative. The score contains klezmer, MoTown, work songs, classical music, and musical theatre ballads. While wide-ranging, the musical themes highlight the relationships examined in the show.

"I like the last 'Underwater' song because it's a soft lullaby," Dawan said. "It's a heart-to-heart because [Caroline is] surrendered. She's telling Noah that he will learn to lose things. You can sense the love felt between her and Noah, despite all her heaviness, and that's amazing to me. The characters are seeing each other in each direction, and paying attention."

Guiding the next generation into a better future allows Caroline hope at key moments with her daughter Emmie, as well. "The more that you are aware you are different, you are then able to see the contrast in society and the potential for change," Sowe pointed out. "The past and what you do with it always determines the present."

Caroline, or Change runs through Oct. 28 at the Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. Tickets are \$25-\$45; visit Firebrandtheatre.org.



Lili-Anne Brown.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

Author Dan Kois talks 'Angels in America' in new book

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

As a college theater student, Dan Kois became obsessed with Tony Kushner's epic drama *Angels in America*. That obsession continued for years, fueling Kois' just-released book, *The World Only Spins Forward*, an Oral History of *Angels in America* (co-authored by Isaac Butler).

"I engaged with those characters and their struggles," Kois said of Kushner's saga of love and survival at the height of the AIDS crisis in the '80s. "After reading the first part of the two-part epic, [I] was waiting to see what would happen in Part Two, which I know now Tony was also trying to figure out," he said.

On Oct. 1, Kois joins with Chicago actors who brought *Angels in America* to life for a discussion of the book, the play and its impact on the world. The 7 p.m. event takes place at Victor Gardens Theater.

Angels in America Part I, *Millennium Approaches* debuted in San Francisco in 1991. In 1993, both parts of the roughly seven-hour play—*Millennium Approaches* and *Perestroika*—debuted on Broadway. In 1994, Chicago opened the first national tour of *Angels in America* at the Royal George Theatre. Chicago's second production of the piece was David Cromer's 1998 revival for the Journeyman theater. Cromer's reimagining, Kois said, is the only regional production that receives its own chapter in the book.

"Cromer's production made other theater companies feel like it's possible to do this play without breaking your theater company in half," Kois said of the Journeyman's vastly scaled-down black-box rendering.

"It can be a series of chamber pieces where the effects are used sparingly and are even more effective as a result," Kois said. Interviews with artists involved with Cromer's production made an impression on Kois. The Journeyman's intimate staging, he said, resulted in "an amazing community experience in which the entire theater community came together to rehearse, create and grab this play for themselves."

Angels in America has played throughout the world and launched many a career. The original Broadway production won the 1993 and 1994 Tony Awards for Best Play, and *Millennium Approaches* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1993. Mike Nichols' 2003 HBO adaptation featured Meryl Streep, Mary-Louise Parker and Emma Thompson. The recent Broadway revival, a transplant from London's National Theatre, boasted Nathan Lane and Andrew Garfield among its star-studded cast. The 250 interviews in *The World Only Spins Forward* include conversations with Streep, Lane and Parker, among others.

The Oct. 1 event will feature Chicago's early

BOOKS

Angels, including actors Jeff Christian, K. Todd Freeman, Philip E. Johnson, Elizabeth Laidlaw, Natasha Lowe, Ian Owens, Keith Phipps and Barbara Robertson.

The book began as a cover story for *Slate*, where Kois is an editor. "I pitched it as an oral history," he said. "Not only was the history of the play full of the great talkers of the last 25 years...but also the play itself is a real act of conversation. It's a series of dialectics designed to be oppositional voices put in the same room as each other, arguing about the things that matter most."

When the first draft of the story was 40,000 words (roughly 160 pages) Kois and co-author Butler knew they had a book. "We did a good job telling the story of the play's birth and Broadway, but what we hadn't told was the way the play reached the rest of America."

Was it difficult to get prominent actors, directors and writers, including Kushner himself, to talk? According to Kois, not a bit.

"The stories we got were great and the memories were vivid and the opinions were strongly worded. People wanted to go to the mat for something they did 20, 25 years ago," he said.

How, according to Kois, has *Angels* endured over two decades?

"We started the interviews in the summer of 2016," Kois said. With the presidential election, "the tenor of all those interviews really changed," he said.

People involved with *Angels in America* productions that happened at the peak of the AIDS crisis spoke of "creating art at a time of emergency," Kois said. That feeling is prevalent today, he said.

"For many people, it feels like we are once again at a time when activism is desperately necessary, and when our art can address the underlying energies that require us all to fight back against the forces that want to stop the world from turning," Kois said. "The lesson of [*Angels in America*] is that there's always going to be a crisis and an emergency, and art is the way we can navigate and negotiate."

The reading and discussion of *The World Only Spins Forward: The Ascent of Angels in America* is at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 1, at Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Ave. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, and a book signing will follow. The event is free but reservations are required as space is limited. To reserve tickets, call 773-871-3000 or email tickets@victorygardens.org.

Writer Dan Kois.

Photo by Todd Hale

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'Queer, Brown femme power' radiates at new Boystown mural

BY JAKE WITTICH

A new mural honoring non-binary people located in the heart of Boystown aims to open a dialogue about intersectionality within the LGBTQ community.

The 750-square-foot mural on the side of the Howard Brown Health Center in Boystown, 3245 N. Halsted St., features Kiam Marcelo Junio, a non-binary interdisciplinary artist and holistic healer. The artists—Sam Kirk, Andy Bellomo and Sandra Antongiorgi—hope it's the first in a series of murals celebrating queer people throughout Chicago.

"We wanted to open a dialogue about non-binary and gender nonconforming folks within the [LGBTQ] community," Bellomo said. "We're creating more conversation around and visibility for non-binary and gender-nonconforming folks through public art."

At the center of the mural is a portrait of Marcelo Junio, painted by Antongiorgi. The background, a collaboration between Kirk and Bellomo, features abstract line work and other designs that aim to capture the essence of Marcelo Junio as a person.

"There's a beauty to how centered [Marcelo Junio] is and their confidence, peacefulness and healing qualities," Antongiorgi said. "They are such a presence and have a power within that you can see in the mural."

The artists applied a 22-carat gold leafing to create Marcelo Junio's lips, eye makeup and some of the line work in the background.

"Kiam is big, majestic, royal and regal, and the gold captures that," Bellomo said. "The gold leafing is innovative and makes the mural more special and celebratory."

Planning for the mural started about two years ago, according to Kirk. After securing funding and finding a location for mural, the artists start-

ART

ed painting the wall Aug. 13.

Bellomo said painting the mural was heartwarming because they were interrupted almost every few minutes by people commenting on its beauty.

"Lots of people were stopping by and saying, 'I see so much queer, brown, femme power here,'" Bellomo said. "And that's the idea—from this one person, you see this higher community of people they represent."

Bellomo said it was important to create a mural that creates dialogue about how groups of people can be marginalized within the larger LGBTQ community so people can learn to better support one another.

"It's a necessary conversation at this moment, and you can see this mural from four blocks away, so you can't ignore it," Bellomo said.

Marcelo Junio said they were honored to be chosen as mural's subject, and that their inclusion represents intersectionality within the LGBTQ community.

"Being an orphan, a transnational adoptee, Filipino and queer, I know from the outside it can look very conflicting and complicated," Marcelo Junio said. "I'm gay, but I'm different from the gay people I see on magazines and TV. I'm Filipino, but not like all the other Filipino boys I know. So every group I belong to, I've always felt like an outsider at some point. Intersectionality ties all that together, and this mural is a statement that people like me belong here too."

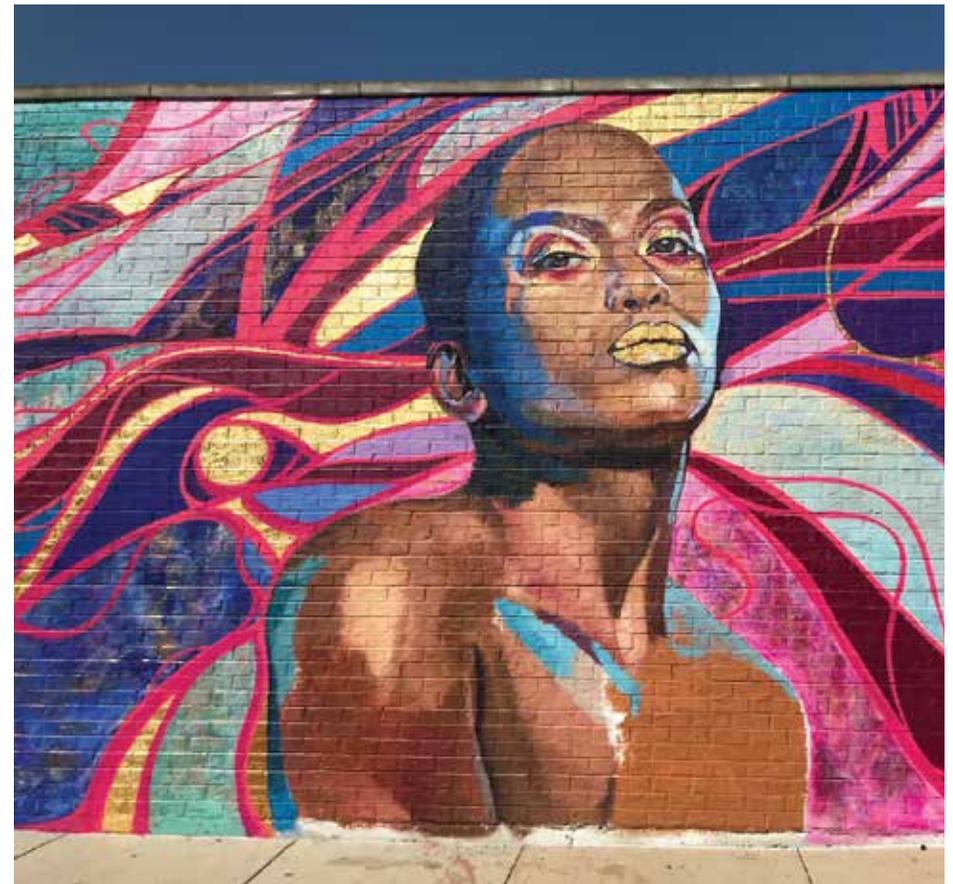
Before starting work on the mural, Antongiorgi met with Marcelo Junio to learn more about their character, practices, politics and beliefs so they could be accurately represented in their portrait.

"We are all mirrors to one another," Marcelo Junio said. "I understand my own complexity, beauty, place in space and time, and that I'm worthy of love. I hope that people can feel that from the mural and see themselves just as big and just as worthy of being celebrated."

Bellomo said they are working on a proposal to start a series of queer murals throughout Chicago, but they need funders to make future projects possible. The first mural was funded by Howard Brown Health, Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Ald. Tom Tunney (44th Ward) and the Northalsted Business Alliance.

"We hope future murals would be not just in Boystown and spread throughout Chicago, especially its South and West sides, where there's a need for more LGBTQ visibility," Kirk said. "I hope to get the city out of its segregated mindset."

Antongiorgi, Bellomo, Kirk and Marcelo Junio will officially unveil the mural at a celebration starting 2:30 p.m. Sept. 29 outside Howard Brown Health Halsted, 3245 N. Halsted St., in Lake View.



Mural of Kiam Marcelo Junio.

Photo by Jake Wittich

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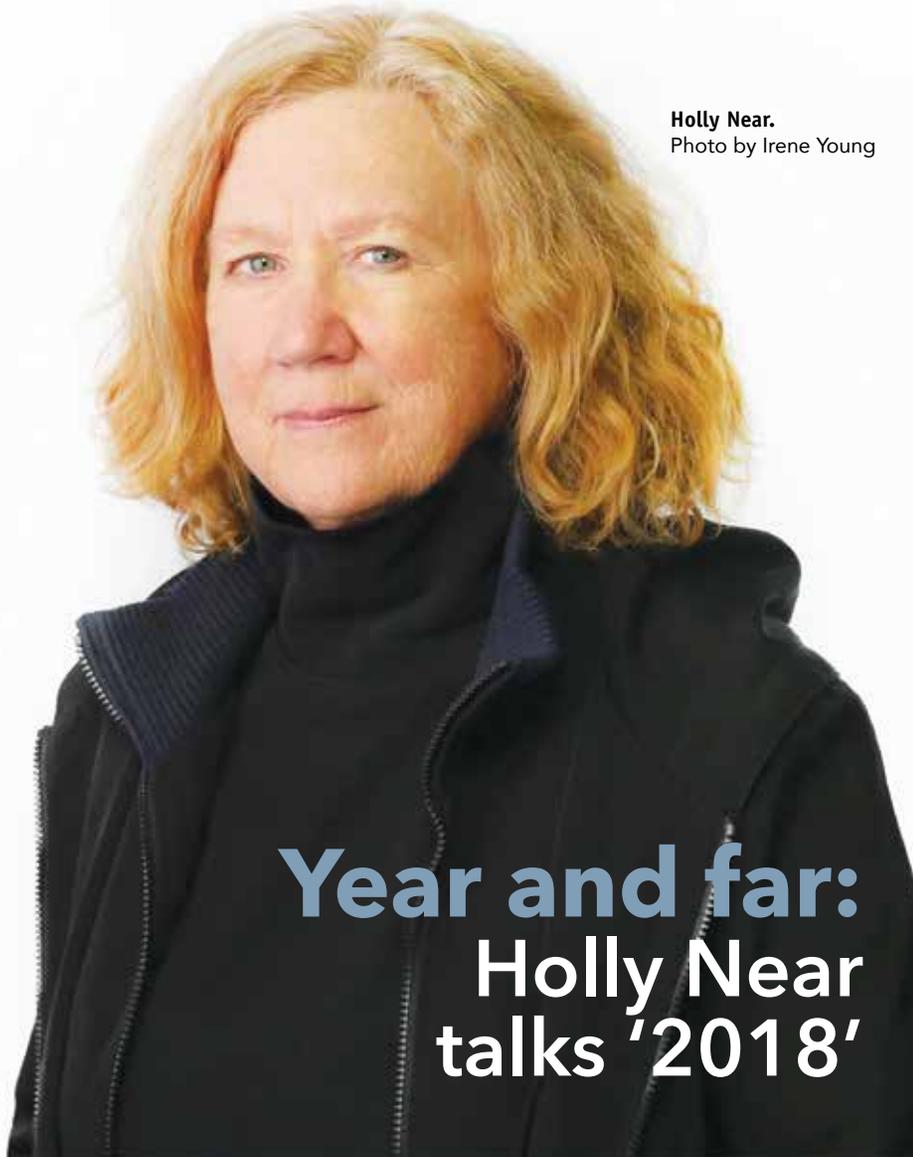
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Danai Gurira play to debut

Steppenwolf Theatre Company is presenting the Chicago premiere production of *Familiar*, written by Danai Gurira (actress from TV's *The Walking Dead*; the films *Black Panther* and *Avengers: Infinity War*; and Broadway's *Eclipsed*) and directed by Danya Taylor.

Familiar begins previews on Nov. 15, with the opening being Nov. 26 at 7 p.m. and the production running through Jan. 13, 2019, in the Downstairs Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted St.

Single tickets (\$20-\$109) are now on sale through Audience Services at 312-335-1650 or Steppenwolf.org.



Holly Near.
Photo by Irene Young

Year and far: Holly Near talks '2018'

BY JOHN STADELMAN

Singer-songwriter/longtime feminist/anti-war activist Holly Near's new album, *2018*, is a thoughtful mirror on the craziness, worry and fear that defines the year of its namesake.

Windy City Times: The album is titled *2018*, which is an interesting choice. What was the driving force behind this?

Holly Near: We went through the lyrics and song titles and everything felt a little shallow. I was sitting with my co-producer of the record ... and I said, "What about *2018*?" And she said, "That's it." It was as if with *2018* everybody knows what's going on this year and what kind of catastrophes we're living with. It just felt like it landed the CD in time, and hopefully the music will live on beyond *2018*.

WCT: You have a background in acting and I'm curious how that affected your songwriting, especially lyrically.

HN: From early on, my songwriting has been defined by my ability to tell a story in about three minutes. ... That was strong in my early development as a songwriter, and with the whole idea of a camera lens, where you can start way back and see the big picture and focus in on the

MUSIC

detail, or you can start with the detail and pull back to see the big picture.

In my songs, I try to have that motion of lens and in doing so what I have discovered is that the listener can find themselves somewhere in that moving ... of the lens, even if it's a subject they're not familiar with.

WCT: We see that in [the song] "Casualty in My Own House," starting from talking about violence in a relationship, to a child, then broadening that out to America's violence—that lens movement.

HN: I think that's a good example, and in some songs it's not like that. "*Coup d'état*" doesn't have a going in and out as much, but it has little surprises in order to keep it lighthearted, and at the same time it's actually extraordinarily serious. I have written some songs that were hammers over the head [laughs], but I didn't really like them that much.

My interest in the song came when I figured out how to go in through the back door: Stay away from rhetoric ... and get down to talking with people about what we want. ... It's an in-

teresting thing as a songwriter to keep thinking about because on the other hand I don't want to abandon truth-telling or radicalism.

WCT: "*Coup d'état*" has a coy sound, but then when you listen to the lyrics it's the opposite. Something that's recurrent throughout the song is that a *coup d'état* is described by what it's not, as in, "It's not a dance, a Mardi Gras." What, in the terms of the song, would you say is a *coup d'état*?

HN: By definition, a *coup d'état* is an overthrow of government. For example, after Trump was elected I was in Chile and they had a military coup there for many years, and artists who I met in Europe and the United States had not been able to go back to their countries for 11 or 12 years for fear of being murdered. I met them when they were in Europe or the United States and did some collaboration work with [them].

So I was familiar with *coup d'état* from the coup in the early '70s. I started watching what was going on in this country. I was in Chile when it happened and people were coming up to me saying, "What just happened in your country [was] a coup." There was messing with the elections, there's underbelly reports of who was going to get in, there was a lack of truth-telling. So it was observing that through the eyes of the Chileans.

WCT: In the liner notes of "Someone Was Brave Before Me," you mention a "brave exercise" that led to the creation of the song. Could you talk a little bit about what that exercise entails?

HN: It started with an acoustic show that I did in New York and I asked some of the performers, if I sang this kind of riff would they be willing to step forward and tell a story of someone who had influenced their life. ... That was the beginning of it, and when I would do songwriting workshops or I would give talks

I would use it as a way to get people to participate and remember that they were part of a long history of people who had stepped forward, not because they were trained organizers or because they knew what they were doing, [just that] the moment happened and they stepped forward—and so it's worked. It's been a structure to get people to come forward and tell stories.

I decided that I could put [the song] on the recording. At the end it's a little tag that says after all these songs and these ideas we didn't start here. And it didn't end here. And there's that last rhyme that talks about the rising of the new movement, so it tries to say in that short period of time: "That which came before us and that which is now and that which is carrying on."

WCT: Part of a legacy.

HN: It's that lens again. If you're put close, you're looking at Black Lives Matter. And if you pull back you see the whole Civil Rights Movement. Or if you're back even farther you look at the whole movement in this country toward humanitarianism ... and then come in close to whatever's going on in your personal life at the moment, then I hope it can be used and it will be sung at rallies and marches.

See Holly Near in Chicago at the Old Town School of Folk Music on Friday, Sept. 28 at 8 p.m.; visit <https://www.oldtownschool.org/concerts/2018/09-28-2018-holly-near/>.

Black Ensemble to add 'Women of Soul'

Black Ensemble Theater continues its 2018 season ("*Movers and Shakers*") with *Women of Soul* (With a Tribute to the Queen), written and directed by Black Ensemble Theater Associate Director Daryl D. Brooks, whose hits with the company include *Men of Soul*.

Women of Soul will be performed at the Black Ensemble Theater Cultural Center, 4450 N. Clark St., beginning Oct 20, with an unlimited run.

The previously announced production of *A Revolution in Rhyme* has been postponed and will be produced at a later date this season.

Women of Soul guides us through the life of some of the most powerful women in soul music, including Chaka Khan, Diana Ross and Teena Marie—with a special tribute to Aretha Franklin.

Tickets are \$45 each for previews (Oct. 20-21, 26-27), \$55 (Saturday matinees) and \$65 (Fridays, Saturday evenings and Sunday matinees); visit BlackEnsemble.org.

Christina Aguilera in Chicago Oct. 16-17

As part of her first tour in more than a decade (*The Liberation Tour*), Grammy winner Christina Aguilera will stop at The Chicago Theater, 175 N. State St., on Oct. 16-17.

Christina released new song "Accelerate," featuring Ty Dolla \$ign and 2 Chainz, earlier in May; it is the first song from her forthcoming album, *Liberation* (which will be out June 15).

Live Nation is producing the tour, which started Sept. 24 in Hollywood, Florida, and will take place in 22 cities, ending Nov. 13 in St. Petersburg, Florida.

See LiveNationEntertainment.com and <https://www.christinaaguilera.com/>.

'Homos' ends Sept. 30 at Pride Arts

Homos, or *Everyone in America* will run through Sunday, Sept. 30, at Pride Arts Center-The Broadway, 4139 N. Broadway.

Jordan Seavey's play follows the relationship of two thirtysomething gay male residents in Brooklyn over five years. Pride Films and Play Associate Artistic Director Derek Van Barham is helming the production.

Seats are \$20-\$30 each; tickets are available by phone at 866-811-4111 or 773-857-0222, or online at PrideFilmsAndPlays.com.

BENT NIGHTS

Riot Fest

BY HESTER

The number 13 turned out to be lucky for the 2018 edition of Riot Fest.

The future for this festival started looking dim after the death of founder Sean McKeough in 2016—just before the glut of Chicago-area summer festivals started choking itself. (The Open Air Festival, Common's AAHH! Fest, and The Warped Tour have since ended in that time.) The 2018 Riot Fest got hit with a wave of expected (Fest headliner Elvis Costello's cancer treatments and surgeries) and unexpected hurdles and misfortunes (Headliner Blink 182's abrupt cancelation, a snafu in ticket availability and the alleged poisoning of festival signee Pussy Riot's drummer Peter Verzilov) and rumors swirled that the show would not go on at all.

The show did certainly go on, and this 13th version of the punk-rock/metal/hard-rock festival and traditional close of summer went on without a hitch. For three days, under a forgiving sun and not one drop of rain (or the ocean of mud and swarms of bees that have followed in their wake), an eclectic mix of 88 bands and performers entertained a generally happy and joyful overflow audience on five stages, with nary an incident or arrest.

On the musical front there was plenty of hard rock (Weezer, Taking Back Sunday, Alkaline Trio, Killing Joke, GWAR, The Jesus Lizard, Bad Religion and Dropkick Murphys), rap/hip-hop (Cypress Hill, Digable Planets, Run the Jewels), straight up pop (Matt and Kim, Incubus, Speedy Ortiz),

MUSIC

alternative rock (Costello, Beck, Young the Giant, Health) and straight-up punk/metal (Sum 41, Suicidal Tendencies, Dillinger Four, Clutch, Direct Hit, The Wonder Years and Interpol) to satisfy the most finicky of tastes.

Although there were no out performers on the bill, there were plenty of queer favorites (Blondie, Johnny Marr, Gary Numan, Cat Power) and friends of the community (Andrew W.K., Jack Antonoff of the band fun, fronting his side band Bleachers) to make things frolicsome. The Chicago scene was represented by Liz Phair, DIY upstarts Twin Peaks and good-natured goofball Archie Powell who snagged honors from the Chicago Tribune as one of the 'best dressed' at the festival (for his fetching pink jacket and shorts ensemble with floral embroidery).

And then there were the must-see sets, which included Pussy Riot (who mixed activism with funk in a dance-performance piece in front of a banner swearing vengeance for that poisoning), Father John Misty (whose subversive funk was enlivened by his vaudevillian dance moves) and '50s legend and sole survivor of the Million Dollar Quartet Jerry Lee Lewis (who, along with Little Richard, started the outrage and scandal which became punk rock).

With overall attendance estimated to hit the festival average of 40,000 a day despite no big-name reunions (The Misfits in 2016 and Jawbreaker in 2017) and an absence of zombies and circus performers (the later were contained in a circus tent and performed every three hours), the 2018 Riot Fest looks like one for the books and a fitting close to one of the most memorable musical summers in Chicago.

See more photos from Riot Fest at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Blondie's Debbie Harry at Riot Fest.
Photo by Vern Hester

CSO performing with 'Bride of Frankenstein' screening Oct. 26

Chicago Symphony Orchestra will perform Academy Award-winning composer Franz Waxman's score to *Bride of Frankenstein* at an Oct. 26 screening of the film at 7:30 p.m. at Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

The 1935 film, directed by gay filmmaker James Whale, follows Dr. Frankenstein (Colin Clive) as he is goaded by the wicked scientist Dr. Pretorius (Ernest Thesiger) into creating a mate (Elsa Lanchester) for the monster (Boris Karloff) that he created in the original film.

Conductor Emil de Cou, music director of the Pacific Northwest Ballet, will lead CSO in the performance. The audience is invited to dress in Halloween attire.

Bride of Frankenstein runs 75 minutes, and will be followed by a screening of Mel Brooks' 1974 parody *Young Frankenstein*, starring Gene Wilder, Madeline Kahn, Peter Boyle and Cloris Leachman.

Tickets are available at Symphony Center, by phone at 800-223-7114 or 312-294-3000, or online at CSO.org.

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THEATRE

Open House Chicago: Exploring historical sites—for free

BY ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Ever wondered what it looks like inside the Ukrainian National Museum or downtown architecture gems like the Railway Exchange Building or the Civic Opera Building?

On Oct. 13-14, people can take a peek inside these historical buildings for free and stop the wondering. The eighth annual Open House Chicago, sponsored by the Chicago Architecture Center, will provide access to more than 250 sites in 30 neighborhoods and suburbs. Beverly, Morgan Park and Austin join the 2018 neighborhoods of architectural gems, as well as a few new sites in other neighborhoods.

The event offers views of buildings rarely open to the public and will show behind-the-scenes access to repurposed mansions, stunning skyscrapers, lavish theaters, industrial facilities, new apartments and breathtaking sacred spaces—many that have contributed to Chicago's rich architectural history and stature.

"[Open House Chicago] gives Chicagoans the rare opportunity to discover hidden gems in architecturally significant buildings all across the city," said Lynn Osmond, President and CEO of the CAC. "But OHC attendees are discovering not only what is near their homes, they are exploring new neighborhoods across town and in the process changing preconceived notions about their neighbors."

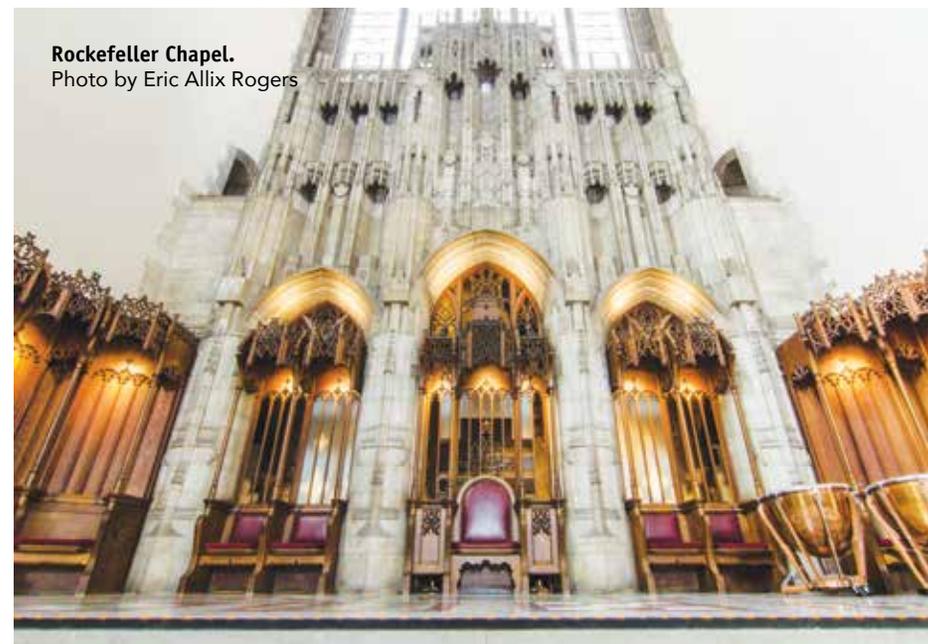
She said that, last year, 60 percent of attendees ventured out to see new neighborhoods and hopes this year will be an even larger turnout and that people will discover new city establishments and learn architectural history.

New sites to see

Beverly is known for its residential, tiny-town feel and relies on 95th Street as its commercial

and residential backbone.

There are five sites to see there, such as Chicago's most famous castle, The Givens Castle; the Ridge Historical Society; and the Wild Blossom Meadery and Winery. An eye-catching visit will surely be at Optimo, the city's only custom men's hatmaker business, known for its classic fedoras,



Rockefeller Chapel.
Photo by Eric Allix Rogers

straw Panama hats and even a limited-edition hat modeled after Frank Lloyd Wright's signature headwear. The building, at 1700 W. 95th St., is a century-old firehouse and was repurposed this year by architect firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The design used blackened steel, walnut and cork to show the unique craftsmanship of the business

ARCHITECTURE

that brings back hats from earlier decades of style. This site is only open Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Ingersoll-Blackwelder House at 10910 S. Prospect Ave. is one of three neighborhood sites in Morgan Park. The Victorian mansion was built in 1874 for real estate magnate John Ingersoll by Morgan Park's developer, the Blue Island Land and Building Company. A Queen Anne style expansion was added the next decade for new owner Isaac Blackwelder, president of the then-independent Village of Morgan Park. His wife, Gertrude Blackwelder, was a founder of the Morgan Park Women's Club and the first woman to cast a vote in

tin Community Family Center, the Catalyst Circle Rock restored auditorium and school and four historical churches. One that stands rich with history is the Fraternité Notre Dame, 502 N. Central Ave., which was once home to Chicago's largest Methodist congregation. Designed by Sidney R. Badgley in 1909, the church is an ode to Our Lady of Fréhou. The Fraternité Notre Dame—a religious order that started in France in 1877—hosts daily mass, a soup kitchen and a food pantry in the space, which it acquired in 2001 after the church was empty for almost 30 years. It also is home to after-school programs for children to keep them off the street and offer them nutritious meals they don't often get at home, according to the church's website. Its open house hours are Oct. 13 at 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 at 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

It's close to impossible to say which sites are the best worth your time, but some more that caught our eye are the Logan Square Auditorium, the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel in Hyde Park and the Colvin House in Edgewater.

The Logan Square Auditorium was built in 1915 and has a terra cotta eagle on its front facing the signature area monument. The space hosts all kinds of events, from weddings, concerts, benefits and movie screenings. The inside is virtually unchanged albeit the enhanced sound system, bookings and professional light shows that can be seen from the square or boulevard. This site is only open Oct. 13 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Rockefeller Chapel on the University of Chicago's campus was designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue in 1928 and is all about the details in Gothic style. It has one of the world's largest carillons (an instrument of musical bells) and a sizable Skinner organ. Its open house hours are Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Designed by architect George Maher in 1909, the Colvin House Prairie-Style mansion at 5940 N. Sheridan Road has gothic ceilings, carved pillars and excessive plaster ornamentation. It's now home to Creative Coworking, which has modernized some of the house for offices and events. Its open hours are Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 at 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

See the full list of the 2018 Open House Chicago sites at <https://openhousechicago.org/sites>.

Cook County, according to the house's site. It is now an entertainment venue and a museum on the second floor that houses antiques collected by recently deceased owner Jack Simmerling. The house's open house hours are Oct. 13 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Oct. 14 at 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Austin has 13 sites to visit, such as the Aus-



Left: Interior of the Ingersoll Mansion.

Photo by Eric Allix Rogers

Right: Ukrainian National Museum.

Photo by Maksym Prokopyv



THE SPORTING LIFE: Linda Bache

BY ROSS FORMAN

The one-year anniversary of the last game in Chicago Force history on July 8 brought mixed emotions—and certainly a tear or two.

After 15 seasons, the highly successful women's football team ended its run with a playoff loss. Tears of sadness from 2017 have grown into tears of pride for what the Force accomplished, highlighted by its 2013 national championship.

"I really miss it; I miss spending time with my Force family," said Linda Bache, the team owner who also was a standout defensive player for six seasons. "I've been acutely aware of how different things are in my life since football ended. This has been a weird spring and summer. Normally I'd be working on Force stuff daily and attending three or four practices a week. I'm not accustomed to having flexibility of schedule or time on my hands, so it's been a little strange. My wife Yvette and I have been traveling quite a bit, which we love and will continue to do."

Bache, who lives in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, is a senior account manager for Ferrellgas. She is originally from Farmington Hill, Michigan, and has called Chicago home for 24 years.

"My Force memories are divided into two parts: my six years on the field as a player, and the nine years on the sidelines [after] I stopped playing," Bache said. "My last three years as a player, I also was an owner and general manager, so that was incredibly difficult and all-consuming. [Since] I was so busy, it kind of flew by, [and] we had so much fun. There were so many wonderful people [who] were a part of the team over those 15 years. I'm sure I could have done a lot of different things with my life during that time, but I doubt anything would have been as enjoyable or would have fed my soul as much as the time I spent with the Force."

Nothing was more memorable than the summer of 2013, when the Force dominated opponents and ultimately captured the team's lone national championship. That season was, without question, "the pinnacle of our success," Bache said.

"We were head and shoulders better than every other team during the time when the women's game was at its most competitive. Everyone was completely committed and totally dialed in, and we were unstoppable. I think our 2013 squad was the best women's football team ever. When you look at our roster that year, the stats, the point differential, the complete domination. ... I think it's indisputable that we were the best women's team ever assembled."

The Force was dominant in 2013—and many other seasons. It was never uncommon for the Force to win games by 40, 50, 60 or even 70 points.

SPORTS

"We were a dominant team throughout our 15-year existence and that was accomplished through a complete commitment and sheer force of will from the top of the organization on down," Bache said. "It's tough to do because you essentially go through some kind of roster rebuild every three to five years, [but], we kept reinventing ourselves based on each season's roster and our [longtime] head coach John Konecki was always looking for another way to elevate the program, stay a step ahead of the competition, and push the sport forward."

The final Force event was last September—the final team banquet, which Bache tagged as both memorable and emotional, and definitely filled with laughter.

The 2017 banquet also featured the induction of quarterback Sami Grisafe and coach John Konecki into the Chicago Force Hall of Fame, which naturally was met with thunderous applause. After the banquet, they took a group photo, and Becky Thuestad then announced she was pregnant. "It felt like a wonderful way for us all to bid farewell to the past and embrace the future," Bache said.

After the banquet, Bache and Holt went on a two-week vacation and met up with former Force players and owners Amanda Malsch and Tricia Charbonneau. "The four of us have talked many times about what a life-changing experience it was to be a part of the Force," Bache said. "I hear that sentiment expressed repeatedly by former players, coaches and staff. When a team becomes a family, it creates lasting bonds, and the memories and relationships live on. I'm really proud to share in that."

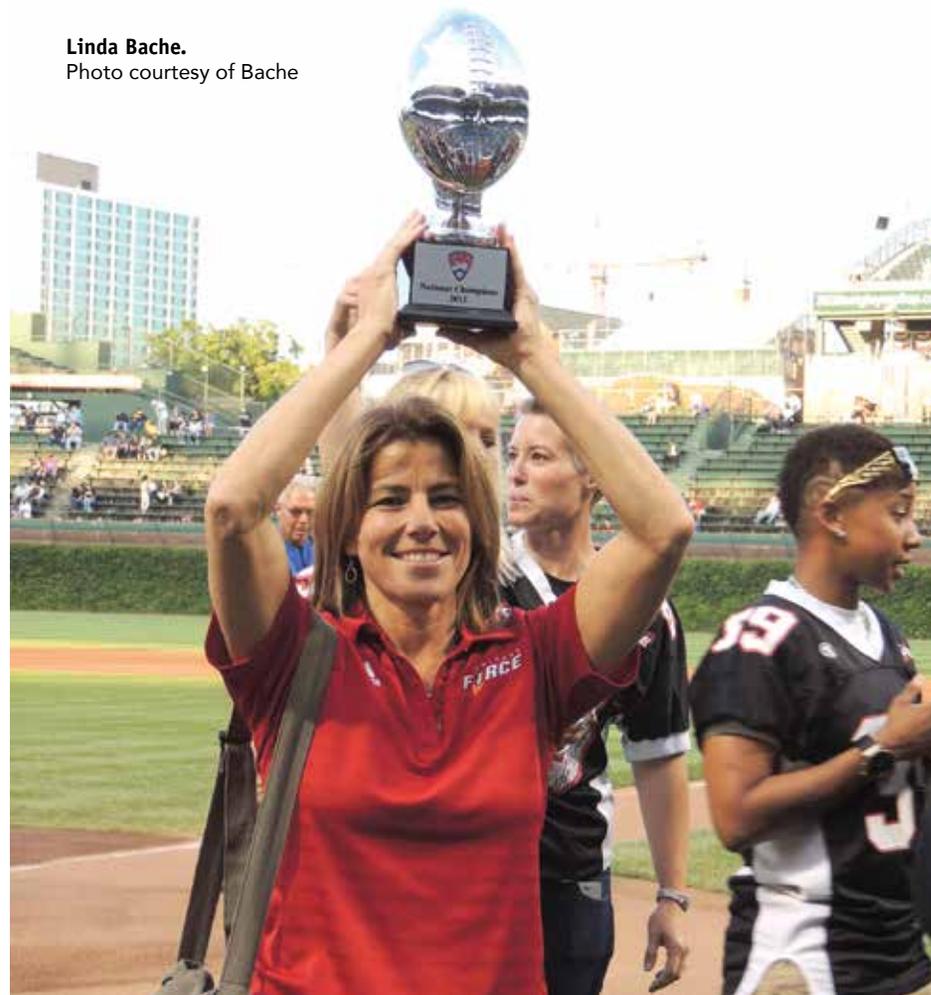
Bache said she still sees many of the former Force players. For instance, Bache and Holt visited Grisafe in California as she worked on a new album and a documentary film. They also attended Cassey Brick's graduation from the Chicago Police Academy this past spring, and Bache recently had dinner with Darcy Leslie who has a summer internship with the New York Jets.

"I still get lots of calls from coaches, players, sponsors and fans," Bache said. "I was especially happy to receive an invite recently to the wedding of a favorite former player (Emilie Belanger) that will be held in Canada this October. She was one of our first international players and I'm thrilled for her and honored to attend her wedding."

Many former Force players have had babies and several more are pregnant, so there's another generation of potential female football players in the pipeline, Bache said.

"I'm extremely proud of the legacy we created

Linda Bache.
Photo courtesy of Bache



Extra Point with ... Linda Bache

Favorite pro sport:

Football

Favorite pro team:

Chicago Cubs

Favorite pro athlete:

Serena Williams

One pro athlete you'd like to meet:

Billie Jean King

One pro sports event/game you'd like to Attend:

"A Cubs' World Series [championship]."

Still in sports:

Bache is a member of the Women's Football Alliance (WFA) Advisory Council, along with former Force player Liz Okey.

as a powerhouse team and an organization that was always evolving," Bache said. "We became a hub for international players as our reputation for excellence spread throughout the women's worldwide football community. We had players travel here from Finland, Canada, Norway, the Czech Republic, Poland, France, Germany, New Zealand and

Australia to play for the Force."

So, will we see another women's football team in Chicago?

"I have not heard of a new women's tackle football team starting here, but I hope one does. I'd like the women of Chicago to have the opportunity to play tackle football," Bache said.

And, yes, the Force will be back, eventually—with a reunion of some sorts.

"I could see myself putting something together in the next year or so," Bache said.

"Our 2017 season ended one game too soon when we lost in the conference championship, but it's not a huge regret for me. We were worthy of being a championship team, but we didn't play well enough for four quarters to win the qualifying game. I've been able to appreciate that last season fully and the Force in its entirety. Having that final season was a gift, really—I appreciated each moment and was very cognizant that the clock was ticking. By stating from the outset [of the 2017 season] that it was the team's final year, it allowed all of us to approach the season with an understanding of its finite commitment. It gave everyone a chance to author their own final chapter of Force football, so I'm glad we did it that way."



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Reviewing the movies of Reeling

BY STEVE WARREN

Reeling—Chicago's film festival dedicated to illuminating the diverse facets of the LGBT community—kicked off its 2018 edition on Thursday, Sept. 20, and festival organizers are promising a wide range of entries this year.



1985.
Photo courtesy of Reeling

The following are reviews of a couple of the movies that will run at this conclusion of this year's festival:

—1985 (***) (Sept. 26, 7:15 p.m.): What a difference 33 years makes!

This movie is shot in black-and-white to emphasize the time-machine quality (even though B/W movies had already been virtually obsolete for a couple of decades), and it will be seen differently by viewers of different ages. For those who were there, it will be wistful, bitter nostalgia; for the younger set, a synopsis should probably come with spoiler alerts, though hopefully not for readers of this paper.

It's Christmastime 1985, and Adrian (Cory Michael Smith) has flown from New York to pay his first visit in three years to his conservative Texas family. Though he can't find a way to tell them, it's probably also his last visit.

Learning that his acne-aged brother Andrew (Aidan Langford) has switched his after-school

activities from sports to theater, and is also a Madonna fan, tells Adrian his difficult footsteps are being followed in.

His parents haven't changed. Dad (Michael Chiklis) wants his sons doing manly, godly things and Mom (Chicago native Virginia Madsen) wants Adrian to hook up with his old girlfriend Carly (Jamie Chung). He does see her, but not for the reason his mother intended.

Adrian's farewell tour may keep you on the verge of tears throughout, or leave oblivious viewers (though why would they be seeing this?) wondering what those Kaposi's Sarcoma lesions are on Adrian's chest.

FILM

Everything unfolds slowly and subtly in Yen Tan's expansion of his 2016 short. The Malaysia-born, Texas-based gay filmmaker has been turning out excellent product for nearly two decades, and it's time the industry at large took notice.

One minor quibble: Except for the reformed high school bully who appears in one scene, no one sounds like they've lived their lives 45 minutes from Dallas. Perhaps this was to avoid over-stereotyping or to make the story more universal. It lessens the regional authenticity but nothing can take away from the film's emotional authenticity, which packs a real wallop.

—Studio 54 (***) (Sept. 27, 5 p.m.): When a time machine is invented, this documentary will make Studio 54 (1977-80) a top destination. The creators of the Manhattan disco tell the tale. Steve Rubell, who died of AIDS in 1989 and is seen in old interviews, was the face of the club—a gay man who loved the celebrities and the celebrity. Ian Schrager, with whom Rubell became friends in college, was the brains, the man behind the curtain; in recent interviews he says he's discussing those days for the first time. Be warned: this is largely a sad story of those happy times and their aftermath.

For complete festival information including locations, and to buy tickets, visit reelingfilmfestival.org.



Cast of *Freelancers Anonymous*.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

'Freelancers' screens at Reeling's opening

BY JERRY NUNN

Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival kicked off its 36th year at The Davis Theater on Sept. 20. The movie *Freelancers Anonymous* screened after a red carpet with several members of the cast and crew.

The 2018 comedy combines an office worker, a wedding and a start up app with a strong female perspective.

Freelancers Anonymous star Natasha Negovanlis mentioned she was sent the script after being seen in her web series *Carmilla*. She said, "What impressed me about it was it's a very broad American style comedy, but instead of a straight white male lead, it's a queer woman. It is completely normalized. I think it has broad appeal outside of the LGBT community. We have to show the straight world that we are just people."

Lisa Cordileone who stars and also co-wrote the film, explained that they made *Freelancers Anonymous* a year ago in Chicago, adding, "We shot in Bethany Church for two weeks, Angelina's and the West Loop."

She also said "This is about a group of women that help each other and make something

better."

Cordileone said that Alexandra Billings, who plays her boss in the film, "is the real deal. I was intimidated by her at first, then I relaxed and we went to work."

After the screening, a question and answer portion was moderated by Chicago Reader's Amy Matheny and Windy City Times' Scott Duff.

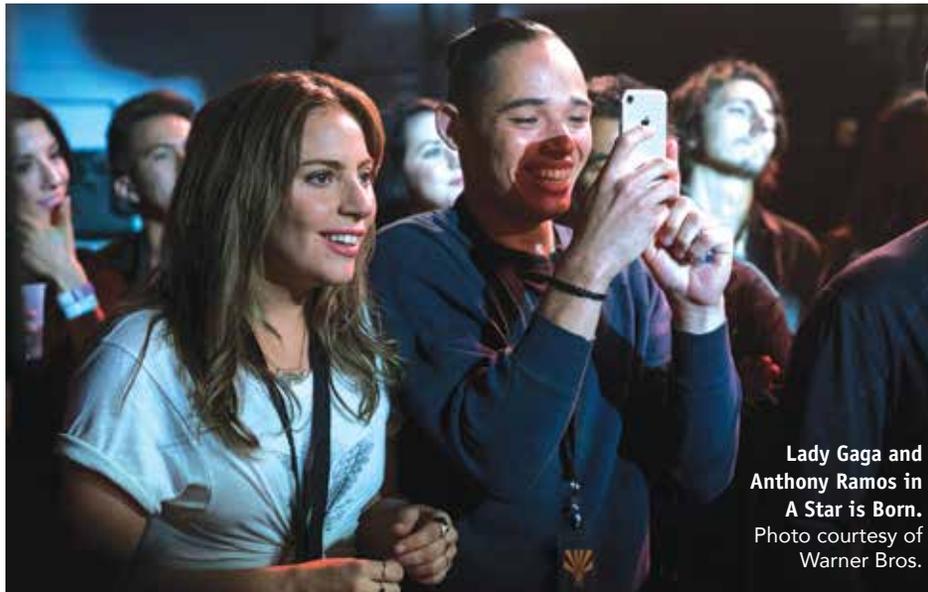
Director Sonia Sebastian recalled that movie was made in 19 days. When an audience member asked for advice on how to be a filmmaker, she replied, "Go out and shoot with a phone or camera. Work with actors that will tell your story. Practice and just do it."

A reception followed at Carbon Arc Bar & Board attached to the theater, complete with food and drinks to celebrate the debut of *Freelancers Anonymous*.

Other significant screenings throughout the festival are planned with cast and crew in attendance, such as Rupert Everett on Sept. 27 at Landmark Century Centre Cinema at 7 p.m. for his film *The Happy Prince*, and Jason T. Gaffney with Kevin Held for *Analysis Paralysis*, also at Landmark on Sept. 27 but at 9:30 p.m.

Closing night on Sept. 30 features the documentary *Studio 54* at 5 p.m., screened at Chicago Filmmakers, 5720 N. Ridge Ave. A wrap party in the new space will follow the movie, with this year's award winners announced.

Visit ReelingFilmFestival.org for tickets and information.



Lady Gaga and Anthony Ramos in *A Star Is Born*. Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

Fall movie preview

BY JERRY NUNN

Movies fall into award season with Oscar-pleasing true stories from around the world and a lineup that will captivate many cinephiles in the upcoming months.

Among them are Ryan Gosling walking the moon in *First Man* and Robin Hood taking another shot at the bullseye with Taron Egerton. More comic-book movies are on the way before the end of 2018, with *Venom*, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* and *Aquaman*. The popular Autobot *Bumblebee* spins off from the Transformers' world and *Mary Poppins Returns* with Emily Blunt in the starring role. Who is ready for a car chase or a singalong?

There are holiday happenings with Pharrell Williams narrating Dr. Seuss' *The Grinch* and the star-studded *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*. Kiera Knightley and Richard E. Grant are both in *The Nutcracker* and portray LGBT characters in films based on true-life people from our history books.

There are several fall opportunities to see movies early in film festivals around Chicago with *Reeling: The Chicago LGBT International Film Festival* Sept. 20-30 and the 52nd *Chicago International Film Festival* Oct. 10-21.

Here are a few films with upcoming release dates that have special interest for our rainbow community:

September

—*A Simple Favor*: (Sept. 14) This is a murder mystery thriller starring Anna Kendrick and Blake Lively in some of the best fashion seen on the screen recently. Girl-on-girl kisses and past lesbian relationships are all part of the fun in a movie that will keep you guessing until the very end. No spoilers, please!

—*Colette*: (Sept. 28) This is a biographical drama about the life of French novelist Gabrielle Sidonie Colette who had lesbian affairs during her marriage. Keira Knightley stars in the movie along with several trans actors spotlighting gender-de-

fying costumes and casting.

October

—*A Star Is Born*: (Oct. 5) Watch Lady Gaga become a movie star in her first cinematic leading role as a waitress named Ally. She meets established musician Jackson Maine, played by Bradley Cooper, at where else? A gay bar!

—*Halloween*: (Oct. 19) Who else besides Cher doesn't know how to say farewell? Michael Myers returns 40 years later to battle it out once again with Jamie Lee Curtis as Laurie Strode for the last time. This is a direct sequel to the 1978 film which murders the previous continuity.

—*Can you Ever Forgive Me?*: (Oct. 19) Melissa McCarthy stars as Lee Israel, a best-selling celebrity biographer and actor Richard E. Grant plays her gay best friend. Many of the scenes were shot at the gay bar Julius in the West Village that still exists today.

—*The Happy Prince*: (Oct. 19) Out actor Rupert Everett multitasks as a writer, director and star of this biopic about Irish poet Oscar Wilde. A couple of Colins are along for the ride with Firth and Morgan as standout stars. The title refers to a children's story that Wilde wrote.

—*Suspiria*: (Oct. 26) Call Me By Your Name director Luca Guadagnino shifts genre gears by remaking horror maestro Dario Argento's 1977 classic, bringing Dakota Johnson, Chloe Grace Moretz, Tilda Swinton and original star Jessica Harper along for the ride.

November

—*Bohemian Rhapsody*: (Nov. 2) British band Queen will rock you with the story of singer Freddie Mercury, leading into the group's performing at Live Aid in 1985. Some in the LGBT community were concerned Mercury's gay backstory might not be in the forefront, so stay tuned.

—*The Girl in the Spider's Web*: (Nov. 9) Claire Foy stars as bisexual hacker Lisbeth Salander in the film version of the popular novel.

—*Boy Erased*: (Nov. 9) Based on Garrad Con-

FILM

ley's memoir, *Boy Erased* has the not straight in real life Lucas Hedges playing the son of two religious parents who put him in conversion therapy. Gay singer Troye Sivan and lesbian actor Cherry Jones are among the cast.

—*Instant Family*: (Nov. 16) Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne adopt foster children and out comic Tig Notaro plays a social worker involved in the process.

—*Widows*: (Nov. 16) Strong female cast including Viola Davis and bisexual actor Michelle Rodriguez in an intriguing caper movie brought to us by *Gone Girl* writer Gillian Flynn.

—*Second Act*: (Nov. 21) Jennifer Lopez portrays a big box store worker who has big dreams. Real life bestie Leah Remini and Milo Ventimiglia

join her onscreen for this romantic comedy.

—*The Favourite*: (Nov. 23) Director Yorgos Lanthimos reunites with Olivia Colman and Rachel Weisz (after working together on *The Lobster*) for this lesbian love triangle period piece.

December

—*Anna and the Apocalypse*: (Dec. 7) A zombie Christmas musical has a lesbian character in the main cast. Can Ella Hunt and the gang sing their way out of the situation or is this dead in the water?

—*Aquaman*: (Dec. 14) *Game of Thrones* hunk Jason Momoa returns as the Superfriend perhaps least likely to have their own dedicated motion picture. Amber Heard also reprises her Justice League role as Mera; Patrick Wilson (*Angels in America*), Willem Dafoe and Nicole Kidman co-star as well.



Jason Momoa from *Aquaman*.

Photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

'La Boheme' at Lyric Oct., Jan.

Giacomo Puccini's romantic opera *La Boheme* (which, among other things, inspired *Rent*) will run at Lyric Opera House, 20 N. Wacker Dr., on Oct. 6-20 and Jan. 10-25.

The two-hour, 15-minute co-production (between Lyric Opera of Chicago, London's Royal Opera House-Covent Garden and Teatro Real Madrid) will mark Lyric's 64th season. Note that the new curtain time for performances Monday through Friday will be 7 p.m.

La Boheme centers on a group of young, spirited Bohemians living in the Latin Quarter of 19th-century Paris.

It will be sung in Italian, with projected English translations above the stage.

Visit LyricOpera.org/Boheme or call 312-827-5600.

EXPO Chicago Sept. 27-30

EXPO Chicago: The International Exposition of Contemporary & Modern Art will take place Sept. 27-30 at Navy Pier's Festival Hall.

The seventh annual exposition will host 135 galleries from 27 countries and 63 cities, and introduce diverse programming. Said programming will include the /Dialogues panel series, featuring artistic discourse with leading artists, curators, designers and arts professionals on the current issues that engage them; IN/SITU, featuring large-scale sculptures and site-specific works; EXPO VIDEO, highlighting a dynamic screening program for film, video and new media works; and more.

See <https://www.expochicago.com/>.

NUNN ON ONE

Wash Westmoreland creatively connects to 'Colette'

BY JERRY NUNN

Independent film director Wash Westmoreland continues to take on new endeavors that push the mainstream idea of cinema, such as *The Fluffer* and the doc *Gay Republicans*.

He paid his dues as a camera assistant on the movie *Hustler White*, then worked his way up to co-writing and co-directing *Quinceañera* with his husband Richard Glatzer, making it a hit at Sundance in 2006.

With *Still Alice* he broke into mainstream thanks to Julianne Moore winning an Oscar for Best Actress. Glatzer was fighting amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in the hospital at the time of the win, then later died in 2015.

Westmoreland's latest project, *Colette*, is based on the life of Gabrielle Sidonie Colette, and stars Keira Knightley. The film tells the story of a husband-and-wife writing team, wherein the wife, Colette, is determined to break free of her husband Willy's hold, at any cost.

Windy City Times: How was working with Keira Knightley for Colette?

Wash Westmoreland: I really enjoyed working with her, and she's an incredible actress. She's also a lovely person. We got along very well straight away.

I heard she was interested in the film. I was at the Shanghai International Film Festival. We were Facetimeing and I only had two percent left on my battery. I told her, "No one else can do this role but you." She said, "Let's do it then," and my phone died! I was just left looking at my phone.

Keira has a lot of things in common with Colette. She has a spark, intelligence, sensuality and a wry sense of humor. She has it all. She really invested in researching the character, reading a lot of books and immersing herself in the world of Colette.

WCT: I had heard she was a diva. Were there moments like this?

WW: No. She was completely down to earth and really nice. She has an assistant who was lovely. She had a child with her and is a working mom. She balances being an actress during the day and taking care of her daughter very well. She's very

committed to both.

WCT: What attracted you to Colette in the first place?

WW: The initial attraction was the character of Colette herself. She has a very dynamic personality and a brilliant writer.

My co-writer, co-director and late husband Richard Glatzer was an avid reader and started reading a lot about Colette. He felt there was a movie there and that being the ideal marriage to show in a feature film. It's the story of a heterosexual marriage with an unexpected queer explosion in it.

WCT: That reminded me of another movie



Eleanor Tomlinson and Keira Knightley talking with Wash Westmoreland on set of *Colette*. Photo by Robert Viglasky/Bleecker Street

called Professor Marston and the Wonder Women about a polyamorous relationship also.

WW: Colette and Willy had an open relationship too, so it is interesting to see from that perspective. He laid down the rules of it. He felt Colette could have affairs as long as they were women, feeling that was not threatening.

This was a time when the feminist underground was rising with some radical thinking lesbians that altered her world view. They were very instrumental to the path for her liberation.

WCT: How was casting the movie to make

in 60 businesses, vacant storefronts and public art locations across the neighborhood. The self-guided walking event will take place from noon to 7 p.m. from West 95th Street to 111th St., and from South Western Avenue to the Metra line on South Wood Street.

Free trolleys will be available to guide visitors on the route.

Visit BeverlyArts.org/events/5th-annual-beverly-art-walk/.

FILM

sure everyone had the right chemistry with Keira?

WW: The most crucial role, of course, was the role of Willy. I thought Dominic West had the right approach to it, because he takes characters that behave badly and uses charm to get away with it. He and Keira knew of each other's work, but had never met. The first time they read together, it was like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dancing together. It was magical!

They had a rapport and it was a filmmaker's dream come true. We had a long shot where they were just talking to each other and it was fascinating because it was like playing tennis with their minds.

The other people were either incredible actors or discoveries that we auditioned for the roles. We put together a very inclusive and diverse cast, including trans actors that were playing cisgender roles, lesbians that were playing straight roles and straight people that were playing lesbian roles. Actors of color who were playing char-

tuning.

WW: When you see old sepia tone photos, people are buttoned down. Colette is the opposite. You can't believe how far she goes by using clothes to express herself. Rather than going frilly and over adorned, she goes for simple lines. It is very striking and [utilizes] looks that would work now. When Keira wears them they look really astonishing.

Our costume designer, Andrea Flesch, had a theory that everyone in the background should have multicolors, feathers and beads. Colette should have a simplicity and be the modern one. As Colette progresses, she should move away from feminine clothes to more masculine signaling.

WCT: I almost didn't recognize Keira at the beginning of Colette.

WW: She is amazingly convincing as a teenager at the beginning of the film. She goes from 19 to 34. We worked on her body language being freer as a young person. Her voice was higher and less confident. You see as she progresses, all of these things change.

WCT: What does Colette say to women in current times?

acters in history who were white. It was about letting actors explore different lives, but including everybody within the casting process.

WCT: Isn't that something you have done throughout your career, by showing things not usually depicted on screen?

WW: Yes. Richard and I always approached films by seeing the genre rules and breaking them. We want to see something new so in all of our films we have tried to do that.

With *Colette*, we tried to do something that wasn't a typical period piece. In many period pieces you wait two hours for a couple to be engaged. In *Colette*, she's in the barn with Willy within the first five minutes having sex. There's no consequence for a woman being sexual, which is something else revolutionary in this genre.

WCT: I noticed you dedicated Colette to Richard at the end.

WW: It was really his baby and his idea. He wrote the first draft in 2001. He passed away about three and a half years ago, but before that, he said he wanted Colette to be our next film. It was part of the grieving process to make this creatively connected to him.

WCT: Talk about the androgyny of the cos-

WW: One thing that caught me by surprise was the extraordinary relevance to this film to the discussions that are happening around the #MeToo movement, Time's Up and LGBT issues.

The story is essentially about a man who takes credit for a woman's work. That is happening a thousand times a day all over the world. I think the *Colette* story finds resonance with a lot of women who are kept down by male power structures in the workplace.

As far as LGBT issues [go], it shows that queer characters are part of history. There were a lot of secret histories of queer people in the past, but *Colette* was actually public about it. I think it is astonishing that she kissed her girlfriend at the Moulin Rouge, causing a riot. She went with what felt natural above and beyond what society allowed. I feel she is inspiring for anyone facing barriers in their lives. They should just charge through them like Colette did!

Colette challenges the norm at Landmark's Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St. on Friday, Sept. 28, with showtimes at Landmark-Theatres.com/Chicago.

See the film review of *Colette* on page 29.

Beverly Art Walk Sept. 29

On Saturday, Sept. 29, The Alliance (Beverly Area Arts Alliance) will host the fifth annual Beverly Art Walk, a free event to highlight the arts uprising in the Beverly and Morgan Park neighborhoods.

The Beverly Art Walk will feature works by nearly 200 area artists and artisans displayed

FILM REVIEW

New movie reclaims voice of 'Colette'

BY DANIELLE SOLZMAN

Telling the story of French literary icon Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, *Colette* is a film that is appropriate for this new era following the start of the Times Up movement.

The film starts as Henri Gauthier-Villars, best known as Willy (Dominic West), gets engaged to Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (Keira Knightley).

FILM

Their marriage is a real depiction of the sexism, much less the feminism, of their time. Willy is an author, but when money troubles become too real, he revisits an old manuscript written by Colette. The resulting Claudine à l'école becomes a huge hit. Three sequels would follow over the next three years. Claudine becomes popular and there's discussion of stage plays and film rights.

Feeling trapped in a marriage and without a voice, Colette starts to explore herself sexually. There's a fling with Southern belle Georgie Raoul-Duval (Eleanor Tomlinson), followed by a long-term relationship with Marquise de Belbeuf or "Missy" (Denise Gough). Missy dresses in a masculine manner. History describes Missy as a lesbian but Colette refers to Missy using the masculine pronouns, which may suggest that Missy should be viewed as a transgender man.

Right off the bat, the film drives into some critical commentary that could seemingly be

discussed around the table today. As Willy offers opinions of theater, art, books, etc., he gets into a disagreement with his mother-in-law-to-be, Sido (Fiona Shaw). She suggests that she'll see it and make up her own mind, reminiscent of present-day situations wherein large numbers of white men offer their critical thoughts as women and other minorities struggle to break through.

Knightley handles the role brilliantly, taking on the character from ages 19-34. Colette was a woman who had no fear. For the era in which she lived, some of the things Colette did were uncommon for women, especially in public.

I do have to applaud director Wash Westmoreland for some of his casting decisions. While transgender talent are starting to become more common on screen, casting trans actors in cisgender roles is still rare. But Westmoreland did so anyway in *Colette*, by casting Jake Graf and Rebecca Root as Gaston De Caillavet and novelist Rachilde, respectively. Never mind the fact that this film is a period piece, but it's still a rare feat in films taking place in present day. This trans-

gender film critic heartily approves!

The casting goes beyond this. Westmoreland seems to draw from the Hamilton playbook in other roles. The film has an Asian-British actor and a person of color cast as people who were white in real life. The casting in general seems to go with the vibe of who Colette was as a person.

The film ignores some of the typical tropes that audiences associate with period films. Cinematographer Giles Nuttgens tends to keep us focused in on Colette's every move as the camera follows her. First-time film composer Thomas Adès pays tribute to the innovative music of the era with his score.

A film such as *Colette* speaks to the current times, especially with its commentary on sexism. It speaks to the women working hard at lifting up their voice. After all, *Colette* wasn't allowed to have her voice. While her husband was getting all of the success, she was the one doing all the ghostwriting. It wasn't until after their failed marriage in which she starts getting the credit she rightfully deserved.

NUNN ON ONE

Aptly named Lila Star takes Chicago scene by storm

BY JERRY NUNN

The multitasking Lila Star is the mother to the House of Escada and currently lives in Chicago where she performs regularly. Star is known as the first, Latina trans rapper and nothing can take away that crown. In 2011, she released a hip-hop single, "I'm a Killa," and has released several songs since.

For many years she has continued to perform in drag at The Baton Show Long as well as the Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club. Star competed in the ballroom scene more than 10 years ago and won Miss Latina Continental 2015.

Her film debut came with the short movie *Lakeshore Drive*, leading her to the new project *TranHeist*.

Chicago filmmaker Maureen Maundu is a student at Tribeca Flashpoint College and is the director and producer on the film. It's the story of a trans strip club manager named Morgan, played by Star, who is anxious to have her gender-reassignment surgery. Her friend Iffy asks her to help steal money from her drug-dealing boyfriend and they come up with a plan to do so.

Maundu took a break from filming to talk about creating *TranHeist*, saying even though she is straight she wanted to learn more about the LGBT community: "When I saw the tape of Lila auditioning I knew I had found her! When I met her she was so relaxed and I asked deep questions. I didn't want my script to offend people. Morgan is a character from the culture and not anyone I knew, so Lila made me feel great about the project."

Star also spent some time talking about her life during the making of *TranHeist*.

Windy City Times: Is your last name an homage to Brenda K. Starr?

Lila Star: No. As a child I always fascinated by stars so I took that on. I was born on the North Side of Chicago. I grew up singing in church and mariachi with my grandfather, but English is my first language. I am Puerto Rican and Black.

WCT: How is your family?

LS: Super-supportive. My dad passed in 2007, but he was my biggest fan. I am one of the lucky ones, because not everyone has that support system.

I was put in a bubble until I was 19, because my parents were very strict with me. I finally went to my first drag show at a gay club. I didn't know a transgender person. After that, it sparked a light bulb and I could relate.

You know Monica Beverly Hillz from *RuPaul's Drag Race*? She was the first one to take me to a gay club.

WCT: She used to work at the teen clubs.

LS: She did. She wasn't doing drag then, she was living in Indiana. I reached out and got her booked for her first job by pretending to be her manager. Then we started to perform.

That is when I learned about the transgender community and reached out to Howard Brown. I started to transition and my parents realized it was not a phase. I learned that I could still perform as a transgender person. I didn't want to just do shows even though I do it to this day. I wanted to act and make music. I love drag so I always go back to it.

WCT: What do you think about the RuPaul controversy with trans performers on his show?

LS: It upsets me. I had auditioned for the show and couldn't make it because of the boob thing. If you go on YouTube you can find my audition tape. I was told to talk deeper and act differently.

When I went to DragCon someone told me to not waste my time by auditioning again since I have boobs. I was so sad because I love drag and I think if I was on the show I could keep up!

WCT: You also do make-up?

LS: Yes. I was self taught, then I majored in cosmetology. My dad passed away when I was in college so I left that to perform full time. I got my bartending license and a few years ago started studying at Second City.

WCT: You rap also?

LS: I rap! I am the first Latina trans rapper. I just wrapped up my first music video with a reggaeton song with Lester Rey called "Ni Santa." He is so soulful. When you hear the song it has an acoustic, reggae-type feel to it. It is beautiful.

WCT: Talk about your film *Lakeshore Drive*.

LS: That was my first film—right out of school, which I was lucky enough to land. When I first got the audition for the part, that project was shelved by the director because they hadn't

found a Latin trans actress for two years to play that role. It was a beautiful thing with timing for everybody.

Two months after getting that part I landed my second role in a film. It hasn't been released yet. I have to film the last scene of it because it is being shot in 35mm and is more expensive. I play leader of a group of activists and it is never even discussed in the film that I am trans, which I love.

WCT: Isn't that more validating that you can play any role?

LS: I think so. I don't want to be defined playing the escort or the prostitute. That is the problem with a lot of trans roles.

I think things are getting better. Laverne Cox has opened a lot of doors for trans actresses. She has shown they can be more than escort. She even started that way. I saw in her bio she played an escort early on.

I am not oblivious to it all. I know there will be bumps in the road. I know I have to prove myself and don't mind doing that, whether as a person, a businesswoman or a trans actress. I am down for it. I'm a gangster. I can do it!

Read the full interview with Lila online at WindyCityMediaGroup.com.



Lila Star.
Photo by Maureen Maundu

Hello, Columbus:

Much more than a college town

BY ANDREW DAVIS

I've had the good fortune to travel to Columbus, Ohio, a few times—and I've convinced more and more people that it's a great place to visit.

Why is that? Because, despite some individuals' perceptions that The Ohio State University (and don't forget to put "the" in front of the school's name) dominates the city, there really IS a lot to see and do. After all, it is the state capital.

My most recent trip to Columbus involved doing some of the same things I'd previously done—but also involved some exploration, revealing new aspects of this charming city.

DIY and diversity

After checking in at Hotel LeVeque (50 W. Broad St.; <http://www.hotellevequecolumbus.com/>)—which still looks and feels as fabulous as ever—I was in an LGBT media group that checked out the scene at **The Kitchen** (231 E. Livingston Ave.; <http://thekitchencolumbus.com/>), which employs a concept called "participatory dining." I honestly didn't see the point of preparing dishes myself (that's why I pay THEM), but the point of doing this became clear (even if it was clear that I'm not the next Rachael Ray): bonding. As we made such dishes as olive bread swirls, it was nice to have conversations with other people, even comparing cooking skills—and the items turned out quite well, if I do say/write so my-



A lamp at Karavan.
Photo by Andrew Davis

TRAVEL

self. (By the way, the five-year-old Kitchen has a newer event space, The Studio at The Kitchen, conveniently located next door.)

Then, it was the fabulous and friendly drag queen **Plenty O'Smiles** (aka Plenty O'Cookies; <http://www.plentycookies.com/>) who took the reins and instructed us in the art of decorating cookies. She was incredibly patient, even with some of us stragglers (ahem). Be sure to book her; she really is adorable.

And from there we went to **Club Diversity** (863 S. High St.; <http://clubdiversity.com/>), a very laid-back space with friendly staff and stiff drinks—the kind of place where one could easily become a regular. (For a list of Columbus' LGBT clubs, see ColumbusGayBars.com.)

Clintonville, COSI and vets

The next day, I decided to hit a part of Columbus I'd never experience: Clintonville. What resulted were some nice surprises.

Clintonville is a large neighborhood, and it reminded me of Chicago's Andersonville—and I later understood why. I discovered after I arrived in the area that it's extremely LGBT-friendly, and many lesbians call the district home. (In fact, my Uber driver from Clintonville to my next destination happened to be a lesbian who said she and her wife hoped to move there.) By the way, those in the area must check out the wonderfully named **Dough Mama** (3335 N. High St.; <https://www.dough-mama.com/>), which not only has a nice selection of bakery items but an all-day menu that includes biscuits smothered in delicious sausage gravy.

And in a shift, this writer (who was a biology major in college) decided to check out the science museum **COSI** (333 W. Broad St.; <https://cosi.org/>). Yes, there were approximately 5,000 kids when I went (and I might be lowballing that number), but hurdling the little ones was worth it, as this place has some incredible exhibitions, including the Dinosaur Gallery. (For the kids and kids at heart, there's now a "Hot Wheels: Race to Win" exhibit through Jan. 6.

Speaking of museums, our group was allowed to take an early look at the **National Veterans Memorial and Museum** (300 W. Broad St.; <https://www.nationalvmm.org/>), which officially opens Oct. 27, complete with a keynote speech from Gen. Colin Powell. We were informed that the facility will include timelines, interactive kiosks and 25 stories from veterans, among other things. (When asked if any LGBT veterans will be profiled, Windy City Times was told that the memorial/museum "scoured the country." I'm really hoping this results in at least one LGBT vet being profiled, after so many devoted time—and their



The National Veterans Memorial and Museum.

Photo by Andrew Davis

lives—to defending this country.)

After that serious visit, things turned a bit lighter upon visiting **Basi Italia** restaurant (811 Highland St.; <http://www.basi-italia.com/>), with charismatic chef/co-owner Johnny Dornback. The menu is as audacious Dornback, with tantalizing items such as arancine fumo (with saffron, smoked mozzarella and crushed tomato marina), braised beef shortribs and cannoli awaiting customers.

Short North sojourn

The area of Columbus known as the Short North is, simply, a treasure.

It may hold a special place in my heart because my initial stay in the city was a Hampton Inn in this neighborhood. However, to me, the Short North has practically something for everyone.

Now, the Hotel LeVeque doesn't have a spa (yet)—but **Le Meridien Columbus, The Joseph** (620 N. High St.; <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cmhdm-le-meridien-columbus-the-joseph/>) has pretty cool spa suites, and includes a warmed marble seat that feels like heaven. And this hotel is pretty unique, as it has everything from innovative artwork to athletic gear that it loans its guests.

And no visit to the Short North is complete without stopping by **North Market** (59 Spruce St.; <https://www.northmarket.com/>), with dozens of merchants offering everything from chocolate-bacon donuts to Indian dishes to stone-crab claws—and there's a large dining area on the second floor.

Walking along the main strip of the Short North—High Street—reveals a cornucopia of stores and inviting opportunities. **Big Fun** (672 N. High St.; <https://bigfuncolumbus.com/>) has vintage toys (Albert Einstein bobblehead, anyone?), while **Karavan** (771 N. High St.; <https://www.karavancolumbus.com/>) had Turkish treasures I couldn't resist. Make your own customized candles at **The Candle Lab** (751 N. High St.; <https://www.thecandlelab.com/>); marvel at the leather goods at **Fount** (668 N. High St.; <http://fountleather.com/>); and pore through the vintage CDs at **Magnolia Thunderpussy** (1155 N. High St.; <https://www.thunderpussy.com/>), a 47-year-old store named after a San Francisco burlesque performer.

For a fantastic meal, **Service Bar** (1230 Courtland Ave.; <https://servicebarcolumbus.com/>) is definitely a place to hit. Among the cool dishes from Executive Chef Avishar Barua are Cheese & Poof (with fire-roasted pimento spread, pork rinds and barrel-aged hot sauce), lamb wontons, sticky pork shank (with papaya salad, sticky rice and Thai basil) and cinco leches cake.

Then, there is the **Gallery Hop** (<http://short-north.org/arts-galleries/gallery-hop/>), during which people visit galleries and witness the talents of street performers the first Saturday of each month. It's a can't-miss experience that's been going on for more than three decades (and, by the way, be sure to check out the many murals along the street, including a recent one of late comedian Richard Pryor).

However, there is still so much more to do in Columbus, including visiting nationally known attractions such as the Columbus Zoo and Franklin Park Conservatory, along with the renowned art museum Pizzuti Collection; and quaint neighborhoods like German Village. Columbus—take it all in!

Many thanks go to Experience Columbus and Weirick Communications for arranging this visit. Also, I'm grateful to Short North Trolley (<https://www.shortnorthtrolley.com/>), and very interesting co-founder Jeff Shugarts, for the transport.

NUNN ON ONE

Adam Rippon skates into success

BY JERRY NUNN

Figure skater Adam Rippon won a bronze medal at the 2018 Winter Olympics, making history by becoming the first openly gay U.S. athlete to do so. He followed that by being the first openly gay celebrity to win *Dancing with the Stars*. Rippon came out publicly in 2015.

The road to success was full of ups and downs for Rippon, who started skating at 10. The hard work has paid off with many medals and accolades over the years.

He also joined other celebrities on Sept. 24 for a benefit reading of *The Laramie Project* for a video leading up to *Laramie: A Legacy* in New York City.

Before his recent Chicago House Speaker Series appearance with Wanda Sykes, Rippon spoke about his current life and upcoming projects.

Windy City Times: How did you wind up working with Chicago House?

Adam Rippon: I just had a great meeting with the team, and they went over everything that they do. It is such an incredible organization. I am super grateful to be working with them.

WCT: Do you work with charities often?

AR: I try to. I get so much joy out of helping other people. I try to be involved with as many different communities as possible.

WCT: What is your day-to-day schedule like?

AR: Each day, I open up my Google Calendar and see what is on it, because I usually don't know. I have a great group of people around me who keep me organized. It has been a lot of travel with a few things sprinkled in.

WCT: Why did you decide to come out publicly in the first place?

AR: For a really long time, I thought it would be something that I wouldn't share with anybody. Life kind of takes over. I felt it was really important.

I am from a really small town. Two weeks ago, a religious university outside of my hometown just expelled someone for being gay. That is the area I come from and why it is important to talk about who I am and where I come from, to normalize it.

I have been really lucky to do things where someone who is out can get in the home of someone who wouldn't necessarily be accepting of someone who is gay.

WCT: Do people reach out to you through social media about this?

AR: Yes. I have heard from tons of people. The stories are really amazing.

It is crazy because I still feel like me. I haven't changed and things aren't really that different. That I was able to reach so many people and share who I was, then to have them reach out and say I have been helpful to them, has been amazing.

WCT: Is there the other side to it where people ask why are you involved in politics?

AR: Of course, but I am 28 years old. I am

SPORTS

confident in who I am. Everybody will have an opinion. I think it is better to be vocal than to be silent. To be silent means you don't stand for anything.

WCT: Is that why you started talking about politics?

AR: I started talking about politics because I was asked about it. I didn't go to the Olympics to talk about politics; someone asked me a question. If I get a question about it, then I will answer it. I thought it was important and wanted to be honest about what I was asked.

If I was asked about the competition, I would say I was nervous or just doing well. I answered honestly. When I was asked a question about the current administration I answered it honestly.

WCT: Has that spiraled into more questions asking about politics in interviews?

AR: I have been more politically involved now. I think some people wonder why, because it can be such a taboo subject matter and really polarizing to talk about, but I think it's important. If we don't talk about it, then we are never going to be on the same page.

WCT: Why do you think more sports figures are not out of the closet?

AR: There is an underlying notion that if you are gay then you are more effeminate, or not strong. There is a mentality that women can't be as strong as men, and if you are feminine like a woman, you are not a fierce competitor. It is obviously bullshit.

I think you never want to be perceived as weak. I know in my experiences as a competitive athlete, I never wanted anyone to think I was weak.

When I finally came out publicly, I felt so much stronger and was no longer hiding a part of who I am, especially in my sport where you are out there by yourself. You have a few minutes to show who you are and what you are made of. The best way to show all of me was to be honest with everybody about who I was.

WCT: What are your thoughts on Johnny Weir?

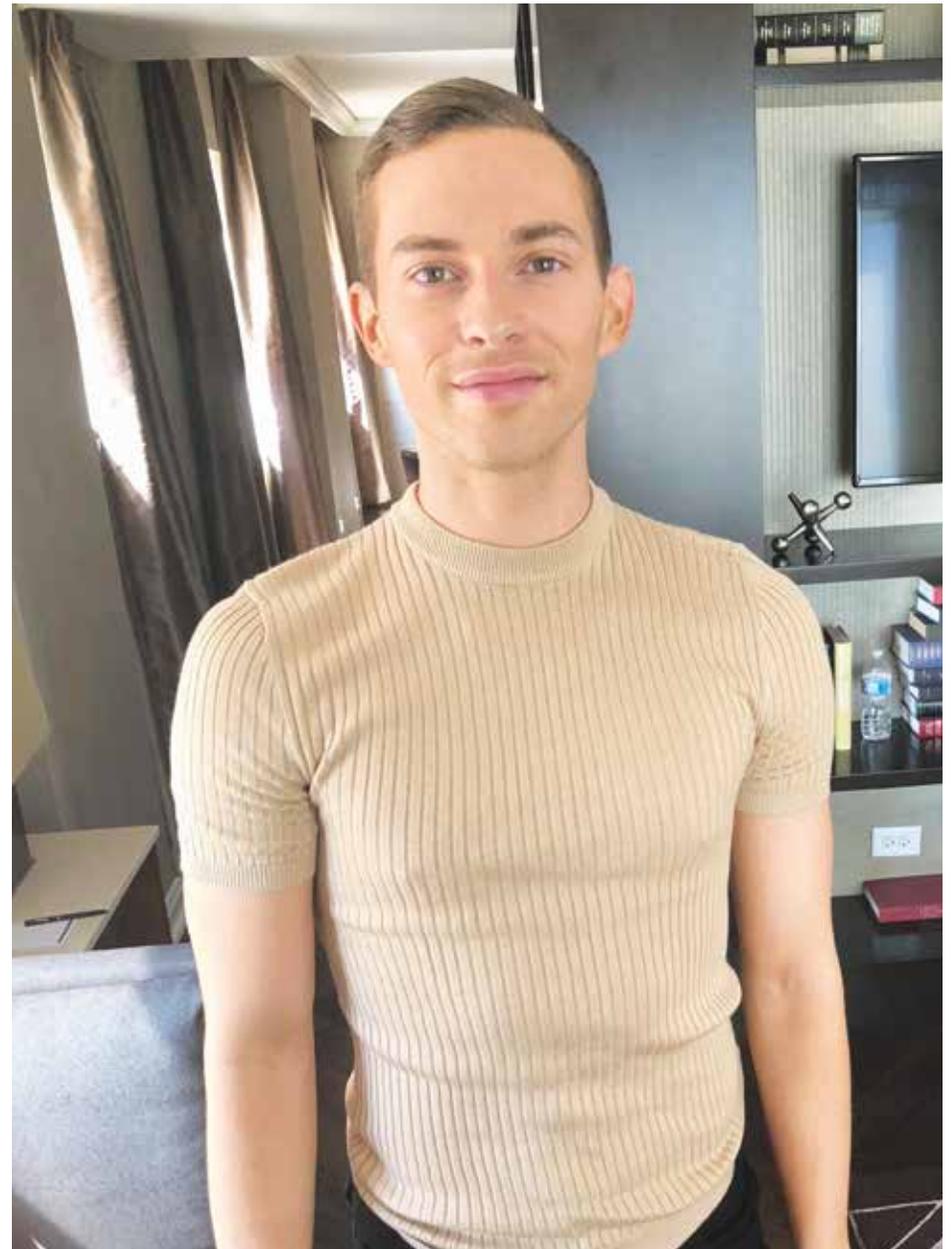
AR: I think someone like Johnny Weir helped make the road for me a lot easier. Are we the same person? No. He's way more flamboyant than I am. I appreciate someone like Johnny Weir so much, though—especially within my own sport.

WCT: Do you pick the music you skate to?

AR: I do. When I was younger I had some input from choreographers and coaches, but when I got older, it was really a collaboration between me and my choreographer.

You can have a great idea, but when you talk to somebody they may think it's awful. You want to talk to someone you really trust, because you can't see yourself skate.

I had a great team around me getting ready for the games. They helped me pick my music, but



Adam Rippon.
Photo by Jerry Nunn

ultimately it was my choice.

WCT: What do people misunderstand about ice skaters?

AR: They think it is a lot easier than it really is. Being an athlete of any kind is a full-time job. When I was training for the Olympics, I would skate for about four hours, then there was another four hours of work off of the ice. It was eight hours of working out. I think every sport takes about that much time.

WCT: Wearing the harness at the Oscars made a splash. What were the best and worst moments of wearing it?

AR: In men's fashion, there is a limited amount of choices. With a woman's gown it can be so many shapes and cuts, but a tuxedo is pretty straightforward.

Getting to work with Jeremy Scott—who loves cutouts, straps and harnesses—was such a blessing. I did it because I thought it was interesting and fun. Some people felt like it wasn't appropri-

ate, but I wasn't one of those people so...

WCT: What are you working on next?

AR: I filmed an episode of *Will & Grace*; that was great. I just filmed an episode of *Dancing with the Stars: Juniors* that premieres Oct. 7 and we run through December.

I started working with the When We All Vote campaign for the midterm elections.

WCT: One special thought from the *Dancing with the Stars* experience?

AR: It was one of the busiest times of my life. It was fantastic.

I have been able to work with that *Dancing with the Stars* family more with Juniors, so I felt right at home. It was great to be with everybody.

WCT: If they made a movie about your life—like *I, Tonya*—who would you want to play you?

AR: I thought Allison Janney was so good. I would want her to play me! [Laughs]

Photos by Carrie Maxwell



AIDS Run & Walk unveils 'Live True. Be You' at annual event

BY CARRIE MAXWELL

Amidst perfect weather conditions, approximately 2,500 participants gathered for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago's (AFC) 17th annual AIDS Run & Walk Sept. 23 at Soldier Field. This year's theme was "Live True. Be You."

Since the event began 16 years ago, over \$5 million has been raised to help many organizations do their work.

AFC and 34 CommunityDirect partners from across Chicago and the surrounding suburbs are the fundraising beneficiaries this year, with 90 percent of the money raised going directly to these organizations. Over \$360,000 has been raised so far and fundraising will be ongoing through Nov. 15.

These partners are Agape Missions, Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Center on Halsted, Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus, Chicago Center for HIV Elimination, Dance for Life, Chicago House & Social Service Agency, Chicago Recovery Alliance, Chicago Women's AIDS Project, Children's Home & AID, CORE Foundation, Erie Family Health, Heartland Alliance, Howard Brown Health, Legal Council for Health Justice, Loyola University Medical Center, Lurie Children's SID, Men & Women in Prison Ministries, Michael Reese Research & Education Foundation, Midwest AIDS Training + Education Center, New Age Services, Night Ministry, Open Door Clinic, Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative, Pride Action Tank, Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago, Puerto Rican Cultural Center—Vida/SIDA, Specialized Assistance Services Inc., Season of Concern, Sinai Health Systems, UI Health Community Clinic Network and Youth Outlook.

Jeff Award-winning director Christopher Paz-

dernik kicked off the event with his special brand of humor. He also spoke about being diagnosed with HIV in 2009, adding that, about five years ago, he decided to get involved with this event after he saw an ad for it on the CTA.

WGN entertainment reporter Dean Richards emceed the opening ceremonies. He emphasized that the event's significance to the community is one reason why WGN has hosted it since its inception. He also called on everyone to vote on Nov. 6.

"We remember and honor those who we have lost in this crisis through the years, and salute those who are living healthy with HIV," said Richards. "There is still so much more work to be done."

"The AIDS epidemic has taken the lives of so many of our friends and loved ones," said AFC President and CEO John Peller. "What would the world look like if we were able to learn from and be inspired by the people we have lost? Their voices and vision have been taken from us by the most stigmatized disease on the planet. Today we are here to carry on their legacy."

Peller called on everyone to observe a moment of silence for two leaders in the community who have passed away in the past few months—Marcia Lipetz, AFC's first full-time executive director; and Dan Bigg, Chicago Recovery Alliance's founder and executive director.

"We are almost done building a roadmap toward the day in Illinois without a single new HIV transmission," said Peller. "The campaign is called Getting to Zero Illinois and the goal is to end the HIV epidemic in the state by 2030."

Peller also told this publication that "we are elated by the weather and that fundraising is looking really strong. The support from the community is incredible. We are thrilled to have so

many corporate and community teams participating. This is the largest HIV event in Chicago where the whole community is uniting in the fight against HIV."

AFC Board Member Craig Johnson led The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt presentation. Volunteers carried one of the two panels featuring Chicago-area people who have died of the disease throughout the crowd while Johnson read their names.

"Coming back from D.C. where things are tough, and being a part of this extraordinary event, gives me hope," said U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-5). "The common question I get in the time of Trump is, 'What can I do?' ... [T]he answer is love each other through word and deed, and there is no better deed than what people are doing here today. After we flip the House, this should be a lot more fun run, because we are going to have the money to provide the healthcare and do the critical research to make this an AIDS-free world."

State Rep. Thaddeus Jones (29th District) spoke about his two nephews who died of AIDS being the driving force behind his HIV/AIDS advocacy. Jones also called on everyone to sign the petition to have the state legislature override Gov. Rauner's veto of HB 4096. That bill would establish a Medicaid single drug formulary and provide access for HIV/AIDS drugs sooner.

The Chicago Gay Men's Chorus performed "Seasons of Love" and "True Colors" while Jeff Award nominee Donica Lynn sang "You'll Never Walk Alone."

Austin Head from Fitness Formula Club led warm-up stretches for participants ahead of the run/walk while DJ Harry Tyner spun tunes during the race.

First-place winners in the 10K race include Beth Mask in the female category and Ryan Mork in the male category. There were no participants in the gender-neutral category. The 5K race first-place winners were Vanessa Righeimer in the female category, Mark Begovich in the male category and Irvin Almonte in the gender-neutral category.

The event also featured free flu shots courtesy of Walgreens, a MillerCoors Beer Garden, free hot dogs from the Oscar Mayer Wienermobile and many sponsor booths.

See http://events.aidschicago.org/site/TR?fr_id=1480&pg=entry to make a donation and <https://gtzillinois.hiv/> for more information.



John Schneider and son Mahin.
Photo courtesy of John Schneider



Father, 12-year-old son take part in Ride for AIDS Chicago

BY ROSS FORMAN

John Schneider lives on the North Side, yet has been working on the South Side of Chicago around HIV prevention since 2001. He is a fierce advocate for ensuring resources are available in neighborhoods most impacted by HIV and that clinical settings are affirming, responsive to client needs and a fun place to work.

"I specialize in providing high quality primary care, sexual health, hormone therapy and HIV care to young Black gay, bisexual and other MSM as well as Black transgender persons," he said. "My clinic is at Howard Brown 55th Street, where I am medical director. My five hours of clinic each week is busy and the highlight of the week. I have learned so much about what it takes to live intersectional (SGM and Black) and how that impacts health outcomes.

"I work in HIV and know firsthand what people living with HIV go through as well as those who are vulnerable to HIV."

Schneider also is a biker, so participating this September in the 15th annual Ride For AIDS Chicago seemed logical.

The catch was, he did the two-day Ride along with his 12-year-old son, Mahin, who is believed to be the youngest Ride participant ever.

"I take him to many HIV prevention or other health fair events that our Center runs on the South Side, so this was just another one," Schneider said. "He is a young athlete and I have seen him accomplish some other long endurance activities, like hiking. I thought he could do it. He tends to be shy and I thought it would help him to interact with many people."

And it didn't take much convincing for Mahin to agree to ride, his dad said.

After the Ride, Dad was brimming with pride, particularly for his son.

"I did a long walk at his age, but that was it. He has a special capacity for these sorts of things," John said. "We were both very tired," after the two-day, almost-200 mile ride.

When asked if they'd do it again, John said they absolutely would

"In the final mile of the Ride, we made a pact to do it again in the next five years, maybe for the 20th anniversary," of the Ride, Schneider said.

Mahin is in the seventh-grade at Lab School in Chicago. He plays competitive soccer and admitted that he had "some trepidation" before the Ride.

Afterward, Mahin said the Ride was "just as hard as climbing Mt. Olympus."

But the youngster also was filled with pride.

"I was happy [to finish] and excited to get [to eat] Cheetos," which he normally doesn't get to enjoy, he said.

Mahin said his Ride highlight was cycling along the beach and crossing the finish line at the end

of day one, when he rode 103 miles.

When asked about being the youngest Ride participant ever, Mahin simply shrugged his shoulders.

John Schneider, 44, who is married to Nammi, said the Ride was a "privilege" to cycle alongside "so many fighters and people passionate about what they do."

The Ride exceeded his pre-event expectations, he said.

"The outpouring of support for Mahin was incredible and not what I had expected," he said. "He was like a mascot. Mahin was very nervous because I always bring him to events where he is the only kid. He kept asking, will there be other kids. I kept saying, probably not. I think including him in these sorts of activities are so important to his development."

John acknowledged the challenge that is the annual Ride, but added, "I am part of something special."

"The final 10 miles of the first day were the hardest, particularly for Mahin," John said. "His hardest point was a fall he had and then the final 10 miles. Particularly when his odometer said 100 miles, but then we had another 5 [miles or so] to go. The first day was 103 miles and [the] odometer was off by 2. I bought him the odometer so I didn't have to hear 'are we there yet?' the entire Ride."

John said his personal highlights of the Ride were the long beach and coastal riding [areas and] seeing people who had not previously ridden using their mental power to get through."

When asked about participating in the Ride to support those impacted by HIV/AIDS, Schneider said he is "hopeful that we will reach no new cases by 2041, which is our Center's projection. The official Illinois projections are for 2030, so I am optimistic and driven to do all I can to contribute to this effort."

Architect to discuss local projects Oct. 2 in Loop

Mark Sexton—co-founder of the firm that designed the Millennium Park's Crown Fountain (2004) in collaboration with artist Jaume Plensa—will tell the story behind the fountain and other projects in the 40-year history of Chicago-based Krueck + Sexton Architects on Tuesday, Oct. 2, at the the University Club, 76 E. Monroe St. (The venue has changed.)

The evening will start with a 5 p.m. cocktail reception followed by Sexton's presentation at 6 p.m.

Another important Chicago project by Krueck + Sexton is the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies (2007). Also, the firm recently completed restoration work on two Mies van der Rohe masterworks: the 860-880 Lake Shore Drive apartments and Crown Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Admission is \$25, and \$20 for Frank Lloyd Wright Trust members; University of Chicago alumni, faculty and staff; and AIA Chicago members. Student admission is \$5. For more information, visit FLWright.org/thinkinginto-thefuture.

E. Faye Butler in 'Gypsy' Oct. 12-Nov. 25

Porchlight Music Theatre's Mainstage 2018-19 season launches with *Gypsy*, A Musical Fable, Oct. 12-Nov. 25, at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St.

E. Faye Butler will star in the production, which features a book by Arthur Laurents, music by Jule Styne and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

Single tickets are \$20-\$66 and are on sale now, as are subscriptions to the entire Mainstage season that includes *Gypsy*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love & Murder* and *A Chorus Line*; visit

PorchlightMusicTheatre.org or call 773-777-9884.

Pro-LGBTQ group HomeField forms

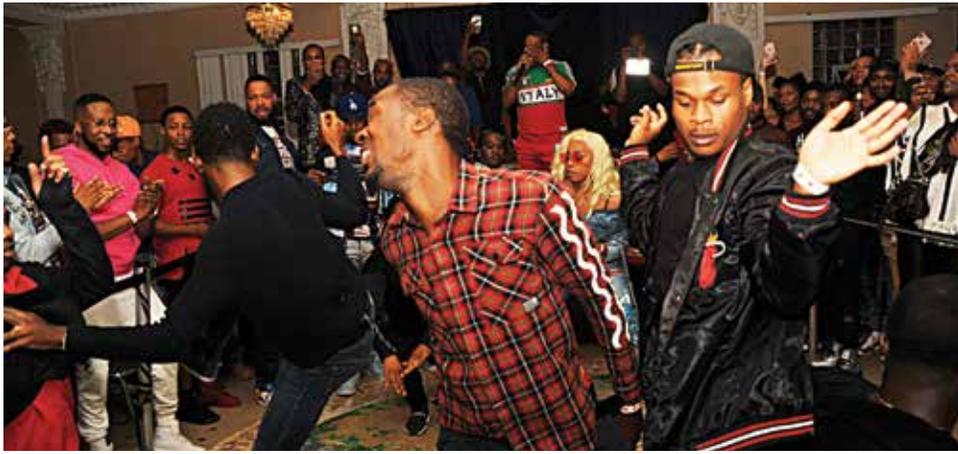
Looking to fill a gap in networking, knowledge and training for LGBTQ employees and their allies in the sports and entertainment field, a group of industry professionals has launched a new nonprofit organization called HomeField Alliance.

The organization seeks to create relationships and professional development opportunities across teams, leagues, organizations and other stakeholders through member networking events and public programs.

A registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, HomeField Alliance, Inc. NFP is headquartered in Chicago, with a focus on membership from across the United States and Canada.

Those interested in membership can apply through HomeFieldAlliance.org.

SPORTS



Ball celebrates contributions of trans pioneer

BY VERNON HESTER

On the evening of Sept. 22, Mothers LaSaia, Lauren and Jahari Mizrahi presented The Pay It No Mind Ball in celebration of the contributions of LGBTQ activist Marsha P. Johnson.

The free event (which Brave Space Alliance presented) featured a number of ball competitions, a buffet dinner and cash prizes with several icons of the ball scene in attendance. Emcees for the evening included the Legendary Father Kentrele, Sha Sha Lauren and Denim Mizrahi, and judges for the competitions included, among others, LaSaia Wade and Solomon Arnold.

Johnson was a prominent figure at the Stonewall Uprising in 1969 and is often cited as throwing the first brick that ignited the riot. Apart from being named by a number of Stonewall veterans interviewed in David Carter's book *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (Macmillan Publishing, 2004) for her actions, she was also

DRAG/NIGHTLIFE

known as "the mayor of Christopher Street," a founding member of The Gay Liberation Front, co-founder of a trans-advocacy organization (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries or S.T.A.R.) with close friend Sylvia Rivera, a model for Andy Warhol, and an activist with ACT UP for the last years of her life. She and Rivera also started Star House—a living space for young drag queens, trans women, gender non-conforming individuals and other LGBTQ+ street kids. Johnson died July 6, 1992.

For The Pay It No Mind Ball, the overflow crowd was treated to several performance categories and a seemingly endless night of entertainment as contestants competed in areas like New Vogue, New Realness, Pretty Girl Realness, Executive Realness, Revolutionaries vs. Hippies, Hand Performance (in white gloves), Sex Siren and Glitz and Glam.





BILLY Masters

"America's Got Talent got a bigger audience than the Emmys. Write your own punch line. It's a Jewish holiday."—Perennial awards show scribe **Bruce Vilanch's** quip on the ratings for the Emmy Awards.

If you missed the Emmy Awards, you weren't alone. Not only were the ratings down 11 percent from last year; the show hit an all-time low. But don't take these numbers as a waning interest solely in television—ratings for this year's Oscars telecast were down 19 percent, while the Grammys tanked more than 23 percent. The decline for a televised awards show about television is also deceptive—the vast majority of nominees were for cable and streaming services, while the show was hosted by Saturday Night Live cast members on NBC. Relevance is as hot a topic as diversity, which was the theme of the Emmy's opening musical number.

Since most of you missed the show, here are some of my highlights. **Jenifer Lewis** showed her support for **Colin Kaepernick** by arriving clad head to toe in Nike (and she threw in a high kick on the red carpet just to show those bastards she still could). After his first nomination 42 years ago, **Henry Winkler** finally won an Emmy! I'm not entirely sure **Betty White** knew where she was, but she managed to pull it off ... even though she was dangerously close to exclaiming, "Gladiator!"

RuPaul presented an award with **Leslie Jones**. Girl, would it kill you to wear a gown? Yes, I'm talking to you, Leslie! As to Ru, congrats on making history by winning Best Host of a Reality Competition Series and snagging Best Reality Competition Series with RuPaul's Drag Race. **Darren Criss** never misses an opportunity to remind us he's straight. I LOVED the "Reparation Emmys" sketch. Why is it that **Tina Fey** always looks as comfortable walking in a dress as Jodie Foster or Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg? **Taraji**, you work that train! **Sandra Oh** is still trying to explain to her mother that she didn't win (but as she said, "It's an honor just to be Asian"). I'm still not convinced **Tim Gunn** isn't being held hostage by Heidi Klum and possibly the Symbionese Liberation Army. Lastly, that was an awfully chaste kiss between **Ricky Martin** and his hubby.

I am proud to announce what is likely destined to be one of this year's Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions—the **Stormy Daniels** comic book. Political Power: Stormy Daniels is available digitally and in two collective and one hardcover edition on Amazon. It's not what one would call heavy reading—the 24-page comic will likely hold the attention of an 8-year-old boy or a 72-year-old commander-in-chief. Written and drawn by Joe Paradise, it chronicles Stormy's "journey from scrappy opportunist to unlikely feminist icon." The artist kinda made Stormy look like Pamela Anderson as Stripperella or Barb Wire, and shows her in such situations as spanking a sitting president. We'll show some of the more choice illustrations on BillyMasters.com.



Bruce Vilanch pointed his usual acerbic lens on the Emmys.

WCT archival photo

Adam Rippon is officially an American treasure. Last week, he announced (on Twitter, of course): "Pretty cool to soon have something on display in the American History Museum. Now, I just need to convince someone that they need to be next to the ruby slippers." Rippon donated his Olympic costume and skates to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History.

I'd say Sesame Street qualifies as an American treasure. And I'd place **Ernie and Bert** near the top of the list of indelible inhabitants. Every once in a while, people wonder whether the "roommates" are gay or straight. Former "Sesame" writer Mark Saltzman added fuel to the fire, saying, "I always felt that without a huge agenda, when I was writing Bert and Ernie, they were gay. I didn't have any other way to contextualize them."

It should be noted that the characters were actually created in the original Sesame Street pilot in 1969; Saltzman didn't start writing for the show until 1984. The Sesame Workshop issued a statement of their own: "Sesame Street has always stood for inclusion and acceptance. It's a place where people of all cultures and backgrounds are welcome. Bert and Ernie were created to be best friends, and to teach young children that people can get along with those who are very different from themselves. They also added "they remain puppets, and do not have a sexual orientation." Tell that to Miss Piggy, who constantly lusts after an ambivalent amphibian: Kermit.

With all the buzz about **Bradley Cooper's** remake of *A Star Is Born*, many media outlets say that the one film you have to see FIRST is **Barbra Streisand's** remake of *A Star Is Born*. The 1976 version has been available in the home video market for years. However, Streisand recently remastered it, added in some deleted scenes and spruced it up for Netflix. Well, you didn't expect her to sit back and let **Lady Gaga** have a moment, did you?

When I heard that **Cicely Tyson** was receiving an honorary Oscar, I was sure it was for her stirring performance at Aretha's funeral—except, of course, that wasn't a film (but it might as well

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
OCTOBER 3

MEN'S ROOM
WEDNESDAY

9PM TIL 2AM
GIVEAWAYS &
SEXY FUN GAMES WITH
DIXIE LYNN
NO COVER

33 49 N HALSTED SIDETRACKCHICAGO.COM #SIDETRACKBAR 21+ WAD

have been). This particular honor is for her body of work on the silver screen. The presentation will take place at the 10th Annual Governors Award on Nov. 18—because, of course, they don't have time to give it out during the Oscars telecast.

Those of you in Southern California will want to save the date of Oct. 6. That's when the AC Gallery in Hollywood will host a "red-carpet" life celebration of Tab Hunter, which will coincide with a series of life-size paintings of the actor by video director Vance Lorenzini. Hunter's partner, Allan Glaser, came up with the idea of remembering Hunter with this event, which will start at 6 p.m. The exhibition runs through Nov. 28.

When we're saying goodbye to Tab (the actor, not the drink), it's time to end yet another column. And what a long column it was. I barely have time to remind you to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that doesn't need remastering. As always, send your questions to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Ernie and Bert get married in a very special episode of Sesame Street! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Merchant; breakfast at The Palm

BY ANDREW DAVIS

One of the most challenging things for a restaurant is to retain the patrons from a similar business that occupied the same spot.

This was the daunting task facing the co-owners of **Merchant** (3137 W. Logan Blvd.; <https://www.merchantchicago.com>), a Logan Square restaurant that replaced longtime favorite Dunlay's on the Square. And, so far, Merchant has met the challenge, according to co-owner Christopher Huizar, attracting everyone from families to couples to late-night guests. (Nick Barone and and Chef Matt Skolarus—of Girl & The Goat and Japonais, among other places—are the other owners). By the way, there's even a DJ to entertain patrons on the weekends.

Overall, Merchant is a pretty attractive spot, with a cool decor and welcoming staff (and my dining companion apparently loved the music, as she sang along to the diverse mix of tunes).



Smashburger at Merchant.

Photo courtesy of C. Louise PR

The restaurant also features a nice selection of drinks as well as cuisine that could be classified as “globally influenced American fare”—items that ranged from solid to excellent.

Regarding small plates, we tried items that managed to hit the highs and lows in one fell swoop. The elote fritters should be eaten with the accompanying garlic aioli and cotija to get the full effect—but the standout was certainly the addictive broccoli gratin with mornay and charred toast. (Think of your creamiest macaroni 'n cheese, but with the cruciferous vegetable in place of the pasta.) That second dish is definitely worthy of a return all by itself. Other small plates include the fried-rice arancini (same caveat as with the fritters) and wings.

There are many other intriguing-sounding items on the menu. A watermelon salad comes with feta, basil oil and shaved jalapeño; pastor

tacos come with chipotle-marinated pineapple, bacon wrap and tomatillo; and the Mama Gallucci salad features charred romaine, mandarin orange, avocado, blue cheese and a red-wine vinaigrette. One can't-miss item is the smashburger, which has a cheese skirt cooked into it—and is even better with egg and/or bacon.

For your pleasure, Merchant also has all-day breakfast items. They only number two (the braves burrito and parfait bowl) but, hopefully, that will expand. And there's only one dessert: a budino that, unfortunately, wasn't ready for patrons dining mid-afternoon. I have high hopes for it, though—just like I do for Merchant.

Breakfast at The Palm

Not so long ago, I profiled **The Palm Restaurant** (in the Swissotel at 323 E. Upper Wacker Dr.; www.thepalm.com/restaurants/chicago/), and lauded the quality of the food. (There's also some cool people-watching and you can even marvel at the caricatures on the walls of members of the spot's 837 Club, which offers exclusive benefits to Palm regulars.)

Well, add breakfast to the reasons to swing by The Palm. Sure, there are plenty of the usual suspects, but there are also some unique items that are practically sinful.

Start with the cinnamon-streusel Pullman French toast. I don't know exactly what's in this seemingly normal concoction, but these were the best slices of French toast I've had in ages. And if you're feeling truly indulgent, the lobster omelette is a phenomenal treat; perfectly



French toast at The Palm.

Photo by Andrew Davis

poached lobster is cooked with egg and tomatoes, chives and cheddar cheese—making for a can't-miss option. Even my dining partner raved about the breakfast sandwich.

The Palm's breakfast menu isn't the most expansive—but the few items on there are bound to make your day. Give this place a try.

Note: Restaurant profiles/events are based on invitations arranged from restaurants and/or firms.



CHARLIE'S
Happy 25th anniversary!
Joseph Stevens Photography

BERLIN
Harem of Oddities, Friday, Sept. 21.
Joseph Stevens Photography

Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series: October's featured storytellers

The October edition of OUTspoken! LGBTQ storyteller series takes place Tuesday, October 2, at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Doors open at 6 pm, stories begin at 7.

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

—**Anna DeShawn** is a Chicago-born media professional and social entrepreneur. She is determined to ride media into its next era by utilizing online radio streams to tell the stories that need to be heard.



—**Gearah Goldstein** is a nationally recognized diversity and inclusion consultant. Gearah has been the lead trainer at the Center on Halsted, training over 2,000 new volunteers over the past two years.



—**James Jones** grew up in Baltimore, Maryland and is one of 12 kids. He majored in computer science and theatre and works for the Children's Hospital as a Senior IT Engineer and started his own production company for film and music two years ago.



—**Victor Salvo** is the founder of Chicago's The Legacy Project. He brings 30 years' experience as both an LGBT activist and a business owner to his work.



—**Rick Schlattman** is currently a student in Rush University's College of Nursing MSN program and will be starting what someone called his "encore career" as a nurse when he graduates in August 2019, a week after turning 59.



—**Brandon Strawn** describes himself as an educator, a musician and a delight. He has lived and worked in the Chicago region for 10 years, leaving a trail of math, music and mirth behind him.



DRAG IT UP! Our list of all the regular drag shows in and around Chicago. To include your show in our listings, please submit info to kirk@windycitymediagroup.com.

MONDAYS

Chicago's Best Worst Drag Show, hosted by Arby Barbie, weekly, 2 a.m., no cover. The Jackhammer Complex, 6406 N. Clark St.

Vamp, featuring Mimi Marks, hosted by Mercedes Tyler, weekly, 11 p.m., no cover. Progress Bar, 3359 N. Halsted St.

Lipstick & Mascara, hosted by Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 11:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

Plot Twist, hosted by T-Rex, every 3rd Monday, 10:30 p.m., Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.

TUESDAYS

Killer Babes, hosted by Lady Ivory, every 3rd Tues., 10 p.m. @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

Roscoe's Drag Race, Chicago's longest-running amateur weekly drag competition hosted by Frida Lay, Roscoe's, 3356 N. Halsted St.

Dixie Wins a Talent Show (while Alexis Bevels stage-manages), featuring Dixie Lynn Cartwright and Alexis Bevels, a showcase for local drag queens, performance artists and comedians, last Tues. of the month, 9:30 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

WEDNESDAYS

Honeys on Halsted, hosted by Mimi Marks and Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 11:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

All Things Beyonce, hosted by Dixie Lynn Cartwright, featuring Dida Ritz, Saya Naomi and guest queens, 2nd or 3rd Wed. of the month, 9 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

THURSDAYS

Babes In Boyland, featuring Monica Beverly Hillz, Lila Star, Teri Yaki and Otter Chaös, weekly, 1 a.m., no cover. The Jackhammer Complex, 6406 N. Clark St.

Sirens of Splash, featuring Lila Star, Mimi Marks, Aura Mayari and Silky, weekly, 9 p.m., no cover. Splash Chicago, 3339 N. Halsted St.

POP ROCKS, dance party with drag from Alexis Bevels and Saya Naomi, get on stage to Win with Dixie Lynn Cartwright, weekly, 9 p.m., Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.

Body Beautiful, hosted by Danika Bone't and Alexandria



DRAG PROFILE OF THE WEEK
BAMBI BANKS

AGE
24

HOMETOWN
Houston, Texas

DRAG INSPIRATION
"Black women are my inspirations."

FAVORITE NUMBER
"Unlock It" by Kim Petras

WHEN DID YOU BEGIN DOING DRAG?
"Almost 2 years ago."

WHERE CAN WE CATCH YOU?
Berlin for Drag Matinée, Plot Twist, Off-Book, The Function and Femme's Room; Beauty Bar every 2nd/4th Wednesday for Fabitat

FUN FACT
"I have rats and rollercoasters."

SOCIAL MEDIA
@Bambi.banks on Instagram;
@itsbambibanks on Twitter

Photo by Erik Michael Kommer

Diamond, 4th Thu. of each month, shows at 11:30 p.m., 12:30 a.m. and 1:30 a.m., no cover. Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

FRIDAYS

Beauties and Beaus, hosted by Naysha Lopez, Mimi Marks and Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 9:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

Dining With the Divas, featuring Angel LeBare and CeeCee LaRouge, shows weekly at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Hamburger Mary's Oak Park, 155 S. Oak Park Ave., Oak Park, Ill.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

SATURDAYS

Drag Matinee, hosted by T-Rex, weekly, 10:30 p.m., Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.

#POPular, featuring 2018 Fan Favorite Tiffany Diamond, hosted by Veronica Pop, weekly, shows at 10:30 p.m., Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway

Beauties and Beaus, hosted by Naysha Lopez, Mimi Marks and Mz. Ruff 'n Stuff, weekly, 9:30 p.m., no cover. Hydrate, 3458 N. Halsted St.

Drag shows at Manuevers: 1st Sat.: **Raven's Ravishing Revue**, hosted by Raven Samore; 2nd Sat.: **The Dymond Standard**, hosted by Diamond Calloway; 3rd Sat.: **Diva's Den**, hosted by Sasha Love; 4th Sat.: **Noche Latina**, hosted by Aleyna Couture. All shows at 11:30 p.m., no cover. Maneuvers, 118 E. Jefferson St., Joliet

Stardust, hosted by Natasha Douglas, 1st Sat. (starting Nov. 2018), 8:30-10:30 p.m. @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

Sofia's Dragtacular Review, hosted by Sofia Saffire, every 2nd Sat., 10:30 p.m., Shakers on Clark, 3160 N. Clark St.

Ashley Morgan Presents A Drag Revue, featuring Coco Shonell, Dominique Diamond, Vivian Dejour and Juan M. Wette, hosted by Ashley Morgan, every 3rd Sat., 9:30 p.m. seating, \$5 suggested donation, The Call Bar, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

6 Queens 1 Diva, hosted by Muffy Fishbasket, every 4rd Sat., 10 p.m., \$5 cover, The Call Bar, 1547 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

Dining With the Divas, featuring Angel LeBare and CeeCee LaRouge, shows weekly at 7:30 and 9:30 p.m., Hamburger Mary's Oak Park, 155 S. Oak Park Ave., Oak Park, Ill.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 8:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m. and 12:30 a.m. 436 N. Clark St.

SUNDAYS

Reinas de la Casa, featuring Windy Breeze, Veronica Pop, Zafina Hasheesh and Danika Bone't, hosted by Alexandria Diamond, 2nd Sun. of each month, shows at 11:30 p.m., 12:30 and 1:30 a.m. Charlie's, 3726 N. Broadway

Angel LeBare's Fish Hatchery, contest for aspiring drag queens, every 4th Sun., 8 p.m. @mosphere, 5355 N. Clark St.

The Baton Show Lounge, shows weekly at 7, 9 and 11 p.m. 436 N. Clark St.

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Sept. 26

Book Launch Party: The Eggshell Skull Rule Amy Strauss Friedman also author of the chapbook *Gathered Bones* are Known to Wander, nominated for the Pushcart Prize 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event>

Genderqueer Chicago Discussion based group for genderqueer and nonbinary transgender related topics. It is open to all (with the exception of reporters and researchers), but has an emphasis on being an intersectional safer space for nonbinary trans people. 7:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://centeronhalsted.org>

L Lounge The L Lounge is an informal, social space for lesbians to come together for friendship and support. 6:00pm - 9:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org>

Thursday, Sept. 27

Peer-led grief support group Coping with loss is an ongoing process. This peer led support group is an informal way to connect with others who have experienced loss and gain support for your journey. 12:00pm - 2:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15342>

Successful Aging: A Self-Management Program Four-session weekly educational session to learn how to manage your health including physical activity/exercise, fatigue, mood, and nutrition. 1:00pm - 2:30pm Center on Addison, Conference Room <http://www.centeronhalsted.org/newevents-details.cfm?ID=15491>

LatinXs en Accion Activism Panel More information and ticket link 6:30pm - 8:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <https://community.centeronhalsted.org/pages/latinx>

The Caregiver After author Samuel Park died after a long battle with stomach cancer, his literary friends meet to celebrate the publication of his new and final book 7:00pm - 8:30pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com/event/presenting-caregiver-samuel%E2%80%99s-friends-curtis-sittenfeld-rebecca-makkai-nami-mun-and-shauna>

Friday, Sept. 28

Trans/Gender Affirming Name Change Mobilization Hosted by Transformative



ANNE DO Friday, Sept. 28

Author Anne Balay will be at Women & Children First.
Photo by Riva Lehrer

Justice Law Project. Volunteers will assist Cook County residents with filling out the documents required for a name change. Last Friday of every month in room 1202. 9:00am - 3:00am Daley Center Plaza 50 W Washington St Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/transformativeljesticlawproject/>

SexuWellness For women and TGNC individuals, a wide variety of sexual and reproductive health-related services like chest/breast exams, mammogram referrals, pap tests including HPV screening and pelvic exams, STI testing, birth control prescription, IUD placements. Fourth Friday of every month. whs@howardbrown.org 5:00pm - 8:00pm Howard Brown, 6500 N. Clark, Chicago 773-572-8359 <http://howardbrown.org/womens-health/>

Official Chicago release party for Cher's Dancing Queen Get on stage with your host Debbie Fox and win in the Cher SyncIt! contest and SLAY to drag from Chamilla Foxx & Jasmine Phoenix. Sing along and dance to your favorite Cher hits all night long mixed in with our Friday Night Dance Party. Giving away Cher concert tickets 9 pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago

The Sip online show Live show every Friday night, three gay men from diverse occupations and life journeys discuss everything from world headline news to pop culture from a Black LGBTQ perspective. 6:00pm - 7:00pm On line <http://goo.gl/pL7wWA>

Anne Balay, author Semi Queer Queers, truck stops and 18-wheelers. Also reading in Indiana the same weekend, and then in New York and Philadelphia. 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago

Holly Near Celebrates her first album in three years, *Peace Becomes You*

8:00pm Old Town School of Folk Music 4544 N Lincoln Ave Chicago Tickets: <http://www.oldtownschool.org/concerts/2018/09-28-2018-holly-near/>

Saturday, Sept. 29

Queer mural unveiling Artists Sandra Antongiori, Andy Bellomo, and Sam Kirk have completed the first of what they hope to be a series of LGBTQ tribute murals. Honoring Chicago artists, hard-working activists, healers, teachers, leaders, queers working to bring our community together. 2:30pm - 5:30pm Outside at Melrose/Halsted at Howard Brown Clinic, 3245 N. Halsted St. http://www.facebook.com/events/1914075525561034/?active_tab=about

In Search of Pure Lust: A Memoir by Lise Weil Reading and Discussion A Quest for Love During the Heady Lesbian Feminist Movement of the 70s & 80s 4:00pm Barbaras Bookstore, 111 N. State St., Chicago

Sunday, Sept. 30

Chicago Fringe Festival Fest offers 24 shows, one hundred performances. 7:30pm Various locations <http://chicagofringe.org>

Tuesday, Oct. 2

Crown Fountain Architect Mark Sexton At the intersection of architecture, art and 21st century technology, Crown Fountain in Millennium Park, is one of the city's recognizable works of public art. Co-founder of the firm that designed the project in collaboration with artist Jaume Plensa, will tell the story. 5 p.m. cocktail reception 6:00pm New location University Club, 76 E. Monroe St., Chicago <http://flwright.org/thinkingintothefuture>

OUTspoken monthly storytelling evening OUTspoken occurs on the first Tuesday of every month, new storytellers, stories from the perspective of LGBTQ persons Doors 6pm 7:00pm Sidetrack 3349 N Halsted St Chicago

Wed., Oct. 3

OPALGA Scholarship Gala Dine, dance, celebrate, honor peers, help emerging leaders. 6:00pm Nineteenth Century Club 178 Forest Ave Oak Park, IL 60301 <http://opalga.org>

Friday, Oct. 5

Tootsie Pre-Broadway World Premiere The story of a talented but difficult actor who struggles to find work until an audacious, desperate stunt lands him the role of a lifetime. Through Oct. 14. 7:30pm Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph <http://www.BroadwayInChicago.com>

Joan Baez: Fare Thee Well...Tour 2018 Tickets now on sale. 8:00pm The Chicago Theatre (Chicago) 175 N State St Chicago <http://www.msg.com/calendar/the-chicago-theatre-october-2018-joan-baez-fare-thee-well-tour-2018>

BOOK REVIEW

Straight Expectations: The Story of a Family in Transition

by Peggy Cryden (with Janet E. Goldstein-Ball) \$17.95; Jessica Kingsley Publishers; 183 pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Always be prepared.

That's not just a motto to wear on a badge; it could save you money, time, or health. It might get you where you're going, faster or easier. Being ready for anything can you feel secure and safe, it can help you bounce back against any adversity and, as in the new book *Straight Expectations*, by Peggy Cryden (with Janet E. Goldstein-Ball), it can make you a better parent.

Everything in her life, it seemed, had readied her for what was to come.

Adopted as a small infant, Cryden grew up with a father who was a genius, but was distant; and a mother with emotional issues and what Cryden indicates was probably mental illness. Cryden didn't completely understand the latter until she was an adult and a working therapist, and it took many decades for her to make peace with her mother's legacy.

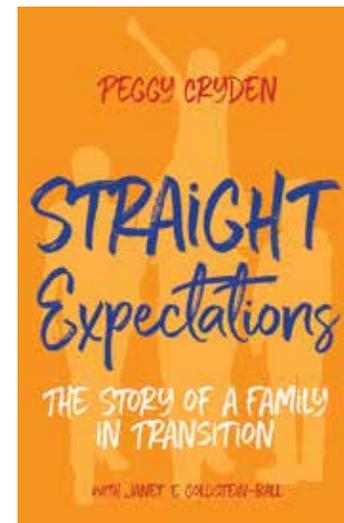
Before that, however, as children, Cryden and her brother were often left to their own devices. They woke themselves, prepared themselves for school, learned to swipe lunch money from their father's pocket change, and they tried not to be embarrassed by their mom's antics, eccentricities, or melt-downs. Untaught by her mother, Cryden learned resilience and basic skills from her grandmother, her grandmother's Black housekeeper, and from a neighbor woman who obviously noted a child in need.

Though she was generally independent much earlier, Cryden moved out of her parents' house when she was still in high school. Later, while attending community college, she met the man she would marry, although Cryden indicates that she sometimes felt she couldn't "bond."

That feeling extended to her first-born child, a girl she named Julia.

She was a little better centered when her second child, a boy, Jay, was born.

Finally, Cryden had stability and the family she always dreamed of having: two children, a girl and a boy, and a supportive husband. Theirs seemed to be the perfect, TV-ready, typical family down the block until Julia, who was



just a teen, confessed to her mother that he'd come to the understanding that he was really a boy. Shortly after this, fragile Jay, who'd always felt left out, came out to his family...

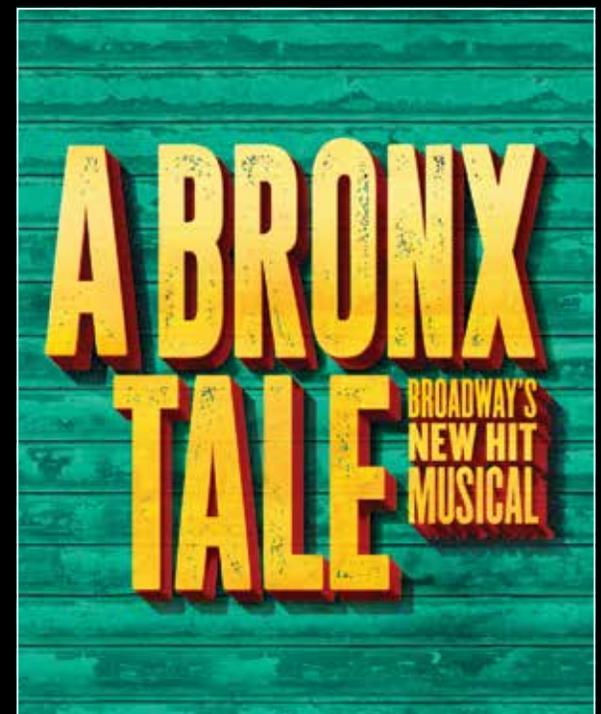
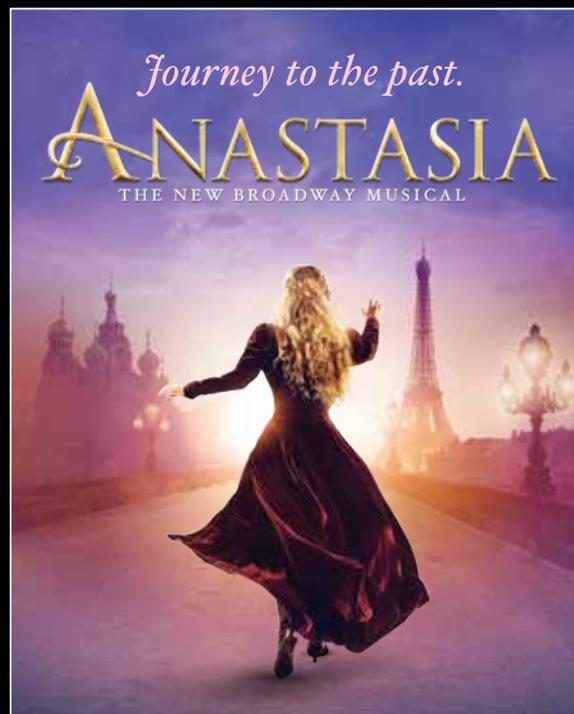
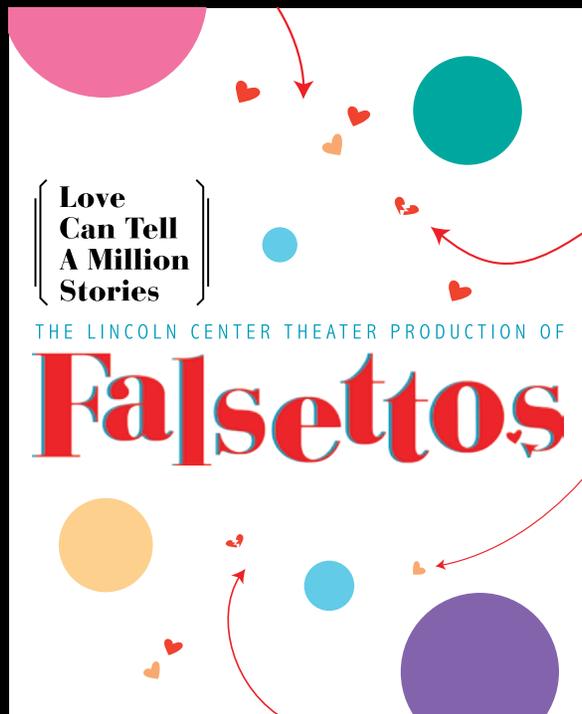
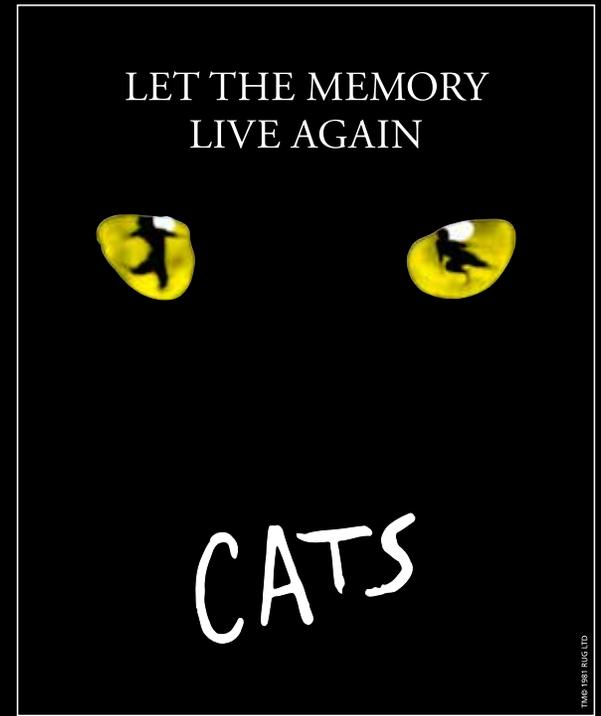
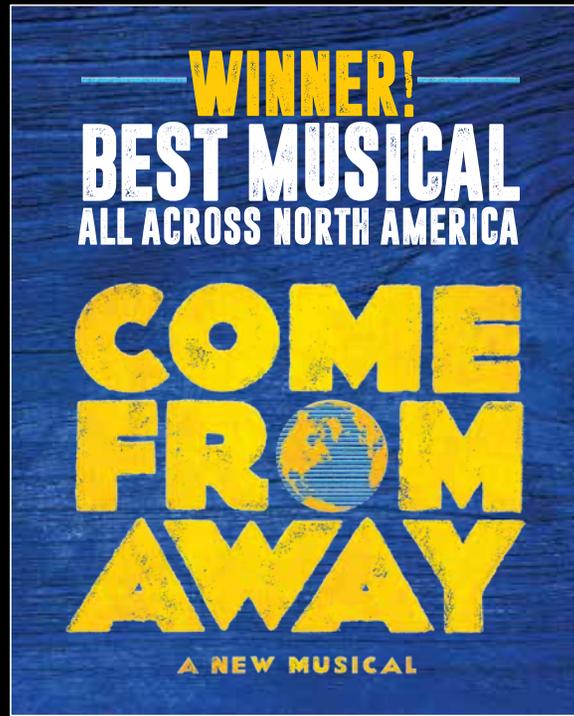
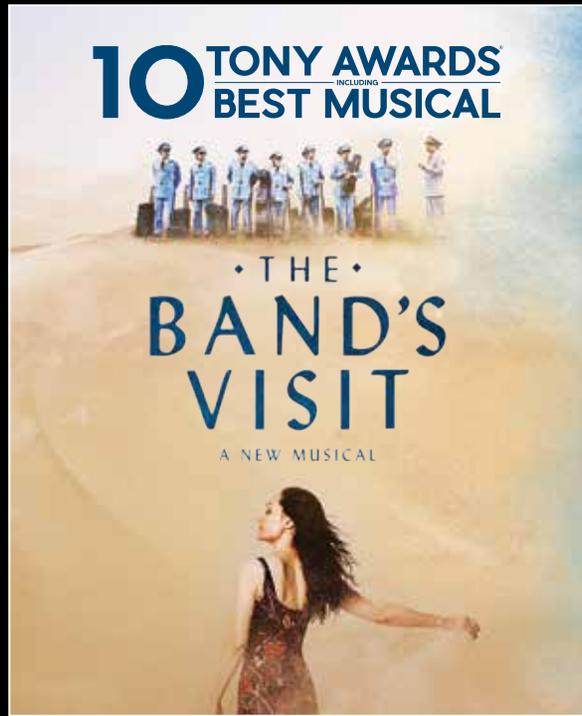
Although it has steel-strong messages of affirmation, unconditional love, acceptance, and healing, *Straight Expectations* is a rough read.

Cryden (with Goldstein-Ball, who offers pertinent information in her introduction) tells an absorbing story of childhood neglect and how she turned her own experiences into self-lessons on raising her two sons confidently. Readers will clearly see that there's power in those words but there's also repetition, often within the same half-page, causing the sentiment to wither like a pinpricked balloon. Add in an overabundance of choppy sentences and you've got frustration in the form of a book you very much want to read ... but will you?

Yes, it's worth a try. *Straight Expectations* contains is a basically good story plus resources, but it needed love with an editing pen. Yes, you may like it enormously—just be prepared.

Want more? Then look for *Raising the Transgender Child: A Complete Guide for Parents, Families, and Caregivers*, by Michele Angello and Ali Bowman; or *The Transgender Teen*, by Stephanie A. Brill and Lisa Kenney.

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