

MARTHA WASH

**DANCE DIVA
DISHES ON
CHICAGO
MUSICAL
AND NEW CD**

PAGE 11

Martha Wash.
Photo by Sean Black



WINDY CITY TIMES

ARTS+THEATER

WEEKLY

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PUBLISHER Terri Klinsky

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Andrew Davis

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 NATIONAL SALES Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863
 THEATER AND DANCE EDITOR Catey Sullivan
 SENIOR WRITERS Jonathan Abarbanel, Mary Shen Barnidge, Liz Baudler, Charlsie Dewey, Ross Forman, Carrie Maxwell, Rev. Irene Monroe, Jerry Nunn, Tony Peregrin, Angelique Smith, Sari Staver, Sarah Toce, Melissa Wasserman
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 CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Jean Albright
 DISTRIBUTION Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Sue and Victor
 WEB HOSTING LoveYourWebsite.com (Lead programmer: Martie Marro)
 PRESIDENT Tracy Baim
 (773) 871-7610 FAX (773) 871-7609
 Editorial: andrew@windycitymediagroup.com
 Sales: terri@windycitymediagroup.com
 Calendar: calendar@windycitymediagroup.com
 Circulation: jean@windycitymediagroup.com
 Art/ad copy: kirk@windycitymediagroup.com
 Theater: cateysullivan25@gmail.com

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THEATER REVIEW

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

By: Simon Stephens

At: Steppenwolf Theatre Company,
1650 N. Halsted St.

Tickets: 312-335-1650 or Steppenwolf.org;
\$20-\$30

Runs through: Oct. 27

BY SARAH KATHERINE BOWDEN

Christopher is always watched. As he goes about his afternoon routine, his father hovers. At school, talking about taking his A-level exams, his teacher listens with a supportive eye. When interrogating a neighbor about gossip at a local park, strangers are on the lookout for his well-being.

Because Christopher is not like most teenagers in his southern England community. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,

adapted by Simon Stephens from Mark Haddon's acclaimed novel, and performed as part of the Steppenwolf for Young Audiences programming, never identifies Christopher's condition, but it is clear he is neurologically atypical, a deeply intelligent young man who works hard to process the confusing and sense-driven world around him by breaking his experiences into mathematical patterns and maps.

Although he lives on a quiet street, Christopher's (Terry Bell) world is shaken one night when he discovers a neighborhood dog has been killed with a garden fork. He sets out to solve the mystery of who murdered Wellington, despite his father Ed's (Cedric Mays) warnings to keep his nose out of other people's business. His teacher Siobhan (Caroline Neff) encourages him to write his investigation down in a notebook, believing it could be staged as a play. Kindly neighbor Mrs. Alexander (Meg Thalken) provides vital information about Judy (Rebecca Spence), Christopher's recently deceased mother, that destroys Christopher's controlled world, and sends him on an adventure to London, so he can solve an entirely different sort of mystery.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.

Photo by Michael Brosilow

Stephens' script follows the outline of Haddon's first-person novel, but he makes Christopher an equal member of his town by allowing other actors to narrate his story along with him. The ensemble of eight actors embody his experiences with neighbors and strangers, but they also guide him physically through the use of ATM machines or paying for a train ticket. Memories of his father

and teacher advise Christopher on how to move through the world. Christopher may feel singular and alone, but it is very clear he is not.

Director Jonathan Berry's attention to detail matches Christopher's. When Bell moves across the spare stage to meet his next challenge, those around him create not only the background atmosphere of a comfortable park or a full tube car, they watch, curious about his investigation and protective of his progress. Dan Plehal's precise, poetic movement work allows actor to exaggerate their physicalities into dance-like sweeps and dips, showcasing how Christopher's senses can be overloaded during the simplest interactions. And Joseph Burke's projection design invites the audience to experience Christopher's overload, which often resolve from a fuzzy TV static into a clear image and resolute decision.

The joy of this production is that the audience experiences the world as Christopher experiences it. We, too, are watching. And by witnessing Christopher when he succeeds, or when he retreats into himself, our understanding of those we might excise from our daily life expands, and our own community grows, just as his does.

THEATER REVIEW

The Madness of Edgar Allen Poe: A Love Story

By: David Rice

At: First Folio Theatre, Mayslake Hall,
Mayslake Peabody Estate,
1717 W. 31st St., Oak Brook

Tickets: firstfolio.org; \$34 - \$44

Runs through: Oct. 27

BY AMELIA OROZCO

Shadows tell stories that eyewitness accounts cannot; they mimic and follow one's every move. This fall, theatergoers can enter the shadows for

an eye-witness, up-close account of Edgar Allen Poe's life in First Folio Theatre's production of The Madness of Edgar Allen Poe: A Love Story.

The location, Mayslake Hall on the grounds of the Mayslake Peabody Estate in Oak Brook, lends itself for exploring the darkness and the creativity of one of America's most talented writers.

David Rice's adaptation of Poe's life and works takes theatergoers through six different scenes, moving them through six locations inside the looming mansion. Under Skyler Schremp's direction, the audience feels as if it has stepped not only inside the mind of the writer, but also into the threadwork of his literary works as they are being pieced together one agonizing thought after another.

Wear comfortable shoes and travel lightly, as the ambulatory production involves a little walking and stair-climbing. You'll be in close quarters

and darkness with both the audience and the actors.

The story starts inside the bedroom where "The Tell-Tale Heart" unfolds and the Madman (Sam Pearson) tells of his mania and obsession with the "pale blue vulture eye." He confesses his horrible deed mere inches from theatergoers; be prepared for a jump-out-of-your-seat moment.

Poe (a convincing Christian Gray) paces, runs and writes "The Bells" in all his madness, papers askew, eyes wild, passionate, dreadful and furious. Outside, the wind whistles and eerily whips around the home. Gray embodies Poe fully. Each tear seems marked with agony and despair. The agony is over the curse Poe felt befell him as he lost loved ones - first his mother, later his wife - to tuberculosis.

Behind the macabre is a love story about Poe's marriage to first-cousin Virginia Eliza Clemm (Er-

ica Bittner), who he we when she was 13. Her presence is all-pervasive in his writings, which bring her fragile life and tragic death into frame. Bittner's Virginia is the portrait of innocence, her own life a sacrifice and gift to the troubled writer. Rice's production brings Poe aficionados into his life by allowing them to step inside the parlor room where Virginia sips tea and speaks directly to her guests.

She was his biggest supporter, his "sissy" (his favored term of endearment for her), and fuel for his creativity.

The depth of Poe's despair is measurable by the layers found in his writing. His imagination unwound itself and wrapped him tightly inside. Perhaps that is why he says in Eleonora, "Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night."

A stroll through this mansion with Poe and his Virginia is one way to dream with eyes wide open, as shadows amble near.

THEATER REVIEW

Oxy, Ohio

Playwright: S J. Spencer

At: The Side Project Theatre Company
at McKaw Theater, 1439 W. Jarvis Ave.

Tickets: TheSideProject.net; \$15-\$20

Runs through: Oct. 14

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

More than a half-century ago—1956, to be exact—Michael V. Gazzo called our attention to the dangers of pharmaceutical drug addiction in a play premised on a returning war hero's craving for the morphine administered by doctors during his recovery from wounds received in action. His entire family's happiness is soon threatened by affliction arising from his desperate search for the now-illicit curatives.

Nowadays we know better than to allow such suffering, right? Not according to S.J. Spen-

cer's play, making its debut at the Side Project, which portrays a nation once more under attack from within, only this time the addicts are honest job-holding citizens, while the purveyors of the toxic substances are licensed physicians and the deadly potions dispensed at commercial vending outlets like Walmart.

We're talking about Opioids, of course—a collective term covering OxyContin, Vicodin, Fentanyl, Percocet and a number of other exotic-sounding palliatives that inflated advertising budgets have rendered familiar at all levels of a populace represented by four residents of the economically crippled town called Dayton, Ohio: a single mother employed in a nursing home; her teenage daughter, clerking for budget hotels and big-box stores; the latter's likewise peripatetically employed boyfriend, and a doctor striving to ease his charges' injuries.

Where Gazzo's prototype focused on the human dynamics of the contagion under scrutiny, however, Spencer appears to mistrust his audi-

ences' perceptive powers. In order to ensure our full recognition of the lesson inherent in the misfortune we witness, his characters periodically break the fourth wall to apprise us of the bigger picture—backstories, statistics, analyses, news items et al.—underlying their warning.

This cross-generic approach renders the progress of his personnel less a tale of innocents battling a pervasive menace than a school-assembly lecture augmented by live-action illustrations—elements absolving its author of the necessity for integrating his factual material into the dramatic action, but ultimately undermining the efficacy of both.

Director Adam Webster and his four-person cast struggle mightily to forge coherent personalities from their author's overstuffed text, but the emotional distance imposed by its instructive purpose ultimately defeats the connection needed for us to share in their sorrow when tragedy inevitably strikes.

CRITICS' PICKS

Indecent, Victory Gardens at the Biograph, through Nov. 4. The history of a play surviving through good times and bad invites us to look at ourselves and decide what kind of world we live in today. MSB

Nell Gwynn, Chicago Shakespeare Theater at Navy Pier, through Nov. 4. This based-on-a-true-story history play features all the elements we love: music, romance, politics, a sassy feminist heroine, scrumptious costumes—even a dog. 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 flaying bare (yes, I do mean flaying) the racism and misogyny of the Deep South both then and now. CES

—by Barnidge and Sullivan



Michael Fabiano and Maria Agresta in *La Boheme*.

Photo by Todd Rosenberg

OPERA REVIEW

La Boheme

By: Giacomo Puccini

At: Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20. N. Wacker Dr.,

Tickets: 312-827-5600;

LyricOpera.org; \$49-\$279

Runs through: Oct. 20

BY AARON HUNT

Opera takes the elevated form of classical theater and replaces spoken word with music. From that lofty perch, how do the artists share the souls of their characters?

With the Lyric's season opener *La Boheme*, they do it with seeming ease. In Giacomo Puccini's famous love story, the cast sings with such vocal assurance that their technique is invisible and unheard. You'll be so engrossed in their characters' lives, you'll forget they are singing. Lofty artifice falls away, and all that's left is all humanity.

Director Richard Jones has talked about the importance of backstory, biography and research. He's a fan of clarity of intention and not averse to having his actor/vocalists study Stanislavski. You can see that approach in *La Boheme*: Under his direction, all the players "speak" their lines as if for the first time, finding the emotions anew. From awakening to catharsis, they seem to live rather than telegraph their emotions.

Jones' choreographed blocking complements and contrasts with the world of set and costume designer Stewart Laing's sparse, vibrating, geometric Paris. This *La Boheme* is defined by girders of gray girders and the starched-linen whiteness of Cafe Momus, the bohemian cafe where the city's artists love to gather. Laing uses a distinctive color palette—the black rectangle of a tavern, the blacks, whites and grays of along snow—throughout the production. That makes the sudden, almost intrusive golden arcades and Christmas-card color and light of Act II's opening all the more powerful. Rather than inviting us in, the colors push us into the world of *La Boheme*. Human bodies seem more alive against all the cold, sharp angles.

Making his long-awaited Lyric debut as *La Boheme*'s struggling playwright Rudolpho, tenor Michael Fabiano is tall and handsome, and sings with a ringing tone that echoes back to the golden days of such tenors as Mario Del Monaco and Franco Corelli. (Rudolpho's romance with Mimi has a happier parallel in real life: Fabiano is set to marry Bryan McCallister later this month.)

As the doomed Mimi, soprano Maria Agresta shines. It is Puccini's genius that this character's sweetness is depicted in music that falls on the ear as tinkling tunes, but she is no easy sing. The chiaroscuro of Agresta's voice, and her generous, Italianate phrasing conjured thoughts of Mirella Freni.

As Musetta, Danielle De Niese sings her famous waltz aria while weaving atop the café's tables, love-besotted, half-drunken and Lucille Ball-funny. (Spoiler alert: Panties can be weapons.) Musetta's last act prayer aria has to be earned. De Niese always evokes vulnerability on some level, and when that vulnerability floats to the surface, it's without a false note.

As Musetta's ex, Marcello, Zachary Nelson reads masculine in that distant way we once preferred in our male movie stars. His passions are shared with his buddies, but his inability to be emotionally open with Musetta makes fantastic sense. Adrian Sampetean's Colline is sweet, and Ricardo Jose Rivera is a lovable, goofy-gus as Schaunard.

Here's De Niese on *La Boheme*: "Everything is so heightened and dramatically extended. It's what we do vocally—we extend emotional thought. [Jones] is trying to juxtapose that with natural human behavior." Consider the attempt achieved in this production.

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SPOTLIGHT

Chief Hell in a Handbag hellion David Cerda conjures a special kind of camp for 10 performances with **The Golden Girls: Bea Afraid! The Halloween Edition**. Herein, Bea and her crew of extraordinary crones deal with priests, devils and hair-raising drag. Bea Arthur may be dead (*kisses fingertips, look skyward) but surely she is looking down with bemusement. The Hell in a Handbag production runs through Nov. 3 at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. HandbagProductions.org



Caption: Photo by Rick Aguilar Studios

THEATER REVIEW

Roald Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

By: Roald Dahl (original novel),
David Grieg (book),
Marc Sharman (music and lyrics)
and Scott Witt (lyrics)
At: Oriental Theater, 24 W. Randolph St.
Tickets: \$27-\$95; BroadwayInChicago.com
Runs through: Oct. 21

BY AMELIA OROZCO

Liquid chocolate may inspire erotic fantasies. But the newest musical adaptation of Roald Dahl's 1964 novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* strikes that and reverses it, delivering a production filled with heartfelt, wholesome moments.

Dahl's children's classic is no stranger to adaptation: The 1971 movie version starred Gene Wilder as the candy man Willy Wonka; in 2005, Johnny Depp took on the role amid Oompa Loompas (Wonka's factory workers) with steampunk attire that would fit in at Burning Man.

Directed by Jack O'Brien, the new stage production (book by David Grieg, music by Marc Shaiman, lyrics by Shaiman and Scott Witt) of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* captures Dahl's original nuggets of goodness, albeit with a techy twist.

The stage is a world of wonders and confection-



Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.
Photo by Joan Marcus

ary surprises. The delectable treats serve their purpose in exposing the ugliness of gluttony. The Oompa Loompas are half-body puppets designed with cartoonish effect by Basil Twist. Joshua Bergasse's choreography (for both puppets and people) in this highly mixture of human talent, technology and chocolate is to be lauded.

Like the book, the plot follows a group of "golden ticket" winners—impoverished, noble Charlie Bucket and a group of insufferable children—as they tour Wonka's factory.

Augustus Gloop (Matt Wood) gorges unabashedly at Willy's many edible delights, hardly believing marshmallows and a chocolate river are free for the taking. Veruca Salt (Jessica Cohen) is the bratty Russian princess that dances circles around her daddy (Nathaniel Hackmann), who gives her whatever her little heart desires. (It's a treat seeing Cohen's ballet skills, which include a number with the giant squirrels.)

But it is Golden Ticket winners Violet Beauregarde (Brynn Williams) and Mike Teavee (Daniel

Quadrino) and their more tech-savvy world that bring this story to the 21st century. Violet's desire to really pop comes true after she ingests forbidden fruit—er, gum—that is supposed to replace a full meal. Her agent-dad (David Samuel) is the quintessential dance mom, showcasing his little Hollywood starlet on Twitter and Instagram—at least until she really starts blowing up.

Mike Teavee is a moody kid permanently attached to his earphones, eyes glued to video games. He all but shoots the middle finger to his mom (Madeline Doherty), a self-medicated 50s-era housewife swilling "grown-up" juice to cope with her little man. (Keep a close eye on Mike to see how the brilliant tech work in this production made the audience gasp on opening night.)

Each child demise is proof that too much of one thing is like too much marzipan—sweet at first, but cloyingly nauseating after too much.

The final golden ticket goes, of course, to Charlie. His mom (Amanda Rose) works to provide with a song in her heart and a skip in her step despite the family's gray-hand-beige existence and cabbage-heavy diet. The Buckets are poor, but it's not just poverty or old age that keeps Charlie's grandparents in bed throughout the story—it's their lack of hope. As in Dahl's original book, Grandpa Joe (James Young) as springs back to life and is Charlie's chum and crusader throughout the magical journey.

Their adventure—filled with Charlie's innocence and Mr. Wonka's unapologetic demeanor—are just the right combination of sweet and sour in a stay-on-your-toes-or-you'll-miss-it production of a favorite classic.



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THEATER REVIEW

Zurich

Playwright: Amelia Roper
At: Steep Theatre, 1115 W. Berwyn Ave.
Tickets: \$10-\$38; 773-649-3168;
SteepTheatre.com
Runs through: Nov. 10

BY LIZ BAUDLER

A monochrome luxury Swiss hotel room encased in glass is the only set you'll get throughout Amelia Roper's *Zurich*.

The play, in its Midwest premiere at Steep Theatre, is told in five scenes, none starring more than three people. Plot points and occasionally characters intertwine with previous, if not necessarily chronological moments within a similar sliver of time. Each scene unfolds a relationship between two usually unnamed people: man and woman, two siblings, mother and daughter. All five are tense, tightly told affairs, and a few involve weaponry.

While they alternate in dramatic potential, the first and third scenes stand out. Sasha Smith and Jeff Kurysz open the play as a couple negotiating the aftermath of a hookup, including a heart-stopping moment where Kurysz literally shoves past Smith's stated boundary. The third, where



Brandon Rivera and Valerie Gorman in *Zurich*.
Photo by Lee Miller

Maya Lou Hlava and Cole Keriazakos are siblings who make an unexpected discovery in their parents' luggage, equals the opening in intensity. Keriazakos in particular is a spot-on annoying

little brother to the teenage Hlava, and their dynamic grows more complex yet heartfelt as the scene progresses.

Four of these five scenes have the same emo-

tional bones. They feel real, breathing life into issues such as race and male entitlement in vivid, non-didactic example. The fifth...well, the fifth could stand on its own as a short, gut-busting, tear-jerking absurdist satire about what causes people to do drastic things. Unfortunately, it's the scene that ends *Zurich*, and it does an abysmal job of tying the previous four scenes together. We're left with only place and fate as a unifying factor, and the characters' fate remains somewhat unclear. Roper's slightly skewed timeline doesn't help, leading to maddening after-show conversations about what is supposed to occur when. And a very poor choice of scene transition, whose implication only becomes clear after the lights go out for the final time, had audiences cringing and covering their eyes each of the four times it was deployed. This is the only off-note in otherwise sound staging, but it's a big one: audiences should not be in danger of having a seizure each time the scenario shifts.

Given how unsatisfying *Zurich*'s conclusion can feel, it feels awkward to recommend four-fifths of a play. But Roper's topical dialogue weaves neatly between humor and tension, and humanity abounds in the space between the characters. The fault is hers for an imperfect concept, but the cast carries out the best parts of Roper's vision with finesse—all within the confines of an innovative, effective set.

THEATER REVIEW

Witch

By: Jen Silverman
At: Writers, Gillian Theatre,
325 Tudor Ct., Glenview
Tickets: 847/242-6000 or
Writerstheatre.org; \$20-\$80.
Runs through: Dec. 16

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

It's tough to think of a world premiere this year with more resonance than Jen Silverman's *Witch*. Raging, hopeful, weeping: No matter how you leave *Witch*, you won't leave unscathed.

Set in vaguely Shakespearean-era Britain, Jen Silverman's script creates a world of long ago, when men were allowed to marry/rape/kill whomever they want, generally with impunity—and where women of outspoken intelligence are condemned and ostracized as witches. *Witch* takes place 500 years ago. *Witch* takes place today.

Directed with tremendous impact by Marti Lyons *Witch* opens with a monologue from Elizabeth, aka the Witch of Edmonton. It closes with a monologue from Scratch, aka the Devil. These inverted bookends create a portrait of 16th-century England that is as specific and meticulously detailed as the needle-point chair-cushion tapestries that adorn the set.

Through Elizabeth (Audrey Francis, whose command of the stage increases and intensifies with every passing year) and Scratch (Ryan Hallahan, covering a vast spectrum from abject evil to vulnerable-as-a-puppy), the story unfolds.

Audrey Francis and Ryan Hallahan in *Witch*.
 Photo by Michael Brosilow



The plot centers on a transaction. Scratch offers Elizabeth and vengeance in exchange for her soul. She's not having his petty nonsense. She wants to hear the pitch he'd give a man. As the play winds on, his sales pitches become listening

sessions. Here's Elizabeth, talking to Scratch:

"There are so many times in which I want to say something and then I don't—because there's a voice in my head, it says, 'What's the use?' It says, 'Do you really want to draw attention?' And

I want to speak, but I get so tired, I just get so tired that in the end it's easier not to."

Catch Hallahan's expressions during Francis understated, tsunami-powerful delivery. You can see the scales dropping. And then Scratch silently emotes denial, pouting, dismay, anxiety and—as the acceleration toward panic ratchets up—denial again. Because she's got to be exaggerating, right?

Elizabeth and Scratch are surrounded by deft subplots that make the primary story richer, deeper and more entertaining. The entire supporting cast fills even the smallest moments with. Potent, telling details. Arti Ishak as the maid in the the local castle; Steve Haggard as Cuddy, the gay, depressed son of Lord of the Manor Sir Lawrence, David Alan Anderson as that jocularly entitled lord and Jon Hudson Odom as Cuddy's machismo rival for Lawrence's love—they are all vivid and meticulously recognizable.

The action (including Matt Hawkins' stunningly realistic-looking brawl) plays out Shibagaki's immersive set which moves from hovel to castle with brevity and grace. The story is further enhanced by Mieka van der Ploeg's costumes, which reference Elizabethan fashions with a minimalist elegance. Paul Tobin's light design and Mikhail Fiksel's sound design give the world beauty and dimension.

Under Lyon's diamond-clear direction, *Witch* is a shard of light, a rip in the muck that makes it known that light still exists. To address the final, quiet, thunderingly-impactful seconds of *Witch*: There is hope in that realization. Maybe not for your future, but for somebody's.

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Libby Rudolph.
Photo by Elizabeth McQuern

MUSIC

collective, Third Eye Theater, and Opera on Tap-Chicago.

"In writing music, I discover myself. Creation is a form of mediation. I need that. We all need that. Now, more than ever, creation is important," Rudolph said. The intersection of art and politics is also paramount, she said.

"It's so important to make things political right now. My dad (and other conservatives) like to patronizingly dismiss my concerns by saying that 'politics isn't personal.' But politics is totally personal.

"I have a pre-existing condition and I have to get individual insurance. Before the Affordable Care Act, I couldn't get insurance at any price. Anyone who votes for a candidate who pledges to eliminate the ACA without providing another way for me to get insurance, is voting for me to live in constant fear and stress. That's just one example."

In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, Rudolph turned the fear and stress toward amping up her powers of creation.

"I had no comprehension that the conservative movement was so strong. I was absolutely confident Hillary would win. The composition I eventually wrote about it is called 'Sickness.' It's about the sickness that has taken control of our culture.

"It's potent here in the U.S.A., but it's happening all over. Look at Doug Ford in Ontario. Look at what's happening in Poland. Look at Theresa May and Brexit. It's important for artists to express themselves. If we don't say anything now, we might not be able to say anything later," she said.

Rudolph's work also takes on Shakespeare, who gets his own set in the Oct. 16 concert. The segment includes compositions Rudolph set to Richard III's most harrowing monologues: Lady Ann's inconsolable sorrow and rage over the Richard's butchering of her husband and father-in-law, and Queen Margaret's hair-raising, Cassandra-like incantations.

Many of Rudolph's compositions are set to poems penned by her aunt, Appleton Wisconsin-based Julia Ball. "Family Relations," featuring Ball's lyrics, includes "Perfect Fog," a song about Rudolph's grandfather and his decline into Alzheimer's. "The last eight years of his life, it was like he wasn't there. (The song) is about the transition between grandpa being grandpa and grandpa being gone," Rudolph said.

The concert also has an instrumental section, where musicians including Meghan Guse, Rachael Long, Samantha Attaguile and Katherine Dalin, will be in the spotlight. Other pieces feature the words of August Strindberg ("The Third Night," two songs with lyrics by Strindberg for bass-baritone, bass clarinet, and piano) and mezzo soprano/composer/poet Yvonne Strumecki ("e Gustaria Hablar," a song cycle for soprano, violin, and piano).

Rudolph's queer identity and bisexual orientation shows up in subtle ways in her performances. "I don't know that my sexuality shows up that much in my composition so much as it does in my artistic choices as a performer.

worked to provide works to empower women and trans* people with pay-what-you-can-afford, high-quality health care and health education.

"I don't believe it's actually music until somebody performs it," Rudolph told Windy City Times. "It's not music when it's just sitting on a page. I have all these black-and-white notes I've written over the past 40 years, all these pieces that in my mind, aren't really music yet."

Rudolph has been writing songs since 1980, when she was a teenager growing up in tiny New Berlin, Wisconsin. She describes her sound as minimalist, contemporary and classical. She loves Stravinsky, Strauss and big band, loves and hates Wagner and once loved Philip Glass, but "burned out" on his music in high school. Her friends say they can hear jazz in her compositions. She insists she's not good at lyrics ("I'm not confident writing in English. I am confident writing in music.").

With degrees in vocal music and composition from Minnesota's prestigious St. Olaf College, Rudolph can deliver Cole Porter and operatic art songs with equal verve, and works regularly with Chicago's Transgressive Opera, New Moon Opera and The Floating Opera Company. Her pieces have been performed and/or recorded by VOX3

Composer Libby Rudolph turns music to activism

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

When composer/vocalist Elizabeth "Libby" Rudolph was an undergraduate at the University of Illinois, one of her professors gave her some guidance that changed the shape of her education.

"He told me I was shouldn't write music because I was too female and too emotional," Rudolph said. At the time, Rudolph had been already composing for years, was a veteran of the world-renowned Interlochan Arts Academy and an award-winning tutor in the more-complicated-than-calculus study of musical theory.

She had a ready response for her university advisor: "I told him to go piss up a rope. Then I found a new college."

A few decades out from that exchange, Rudolph is both an acclaimed vocalist and composer. On Oct. 16, the queer-identifying artist is turning over a recital's worth of her own compositions to other vocalists and musicians. Finding Home, Finding Self: The Music of Elizabeth Rudolph begins at 8 p.m. at the Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church, 600 W. Fullerton Ave. Proceeds from the deeply personal concert will go to the Chicago Women's Health Center, which since 1975 has

"I can flirt with everybody on stage. It's Off-Loop storefront, so nobody cares," she said. "I always sang boy songs, girl songs. Change the octave and you're fine. I came out in 1994 as a lesbian, but then I realized I still liked men too. So I've identified as bi forever," she said.

"Although," Rudolph added, "somebody recently reprimanded me on the Internet for calling myself that. They said 'bi' enforced the binary and I was actual pansexual. I've had relationships with men, women be people who didn't identify as either gender."

Rudolph's coming the concert is at once performance and a testimony to art as resistance and resilience. "If you're feeling overwhelmed and sad, go home," she said. "Lock the door. Create."

"Finding Home, Finding Self: The Music of Elizabeth Rudolph" is at 8 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 16, at the Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church, 600 W. Fullerton. Tickets are \$15. Proceeds go to the Chicago Women's Health Center. For more information, go to <https://www.facebook.com/events/1615725035199317/>; ticket info is at <https://findinghomefindingself.brownpapertickets.com/>.



Marin Alsop.
Photo by Kym Thomson

Alsop leading CSO in concerts Oct. 18-20

Marin Alsop—the openly lesbian music director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra and chief conductor designate of the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony—will lead the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) in subscription concerts on Thursday, Oct. 18, at 8 p.m.; Friday, Oct. 19, at 1:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Oct. 20 at 8 p.m.

The concerts (at the Symphony Center, 220 S. Michigan Ave.) are part of a larger set of public programs, "A Time for Reflection—A Message of Peace," organized to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the World War I Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918.

These programs are presented with leadership support from Colonel (IL) Jennifer N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (retired), who is the president and founder of the Pritzker Military Foundation and the president/CEO of TAWANI Enterprises, Inc.

Tickets for all CSO-presented concerts can be purchased by phone at 800-223-7114 or 312-294-3000; online at CSO.org; or at the Symphony Center box office, 220 S. Michigan Ave.

Windy City Times interviewed Alsop recently; the conversation is at <http://www.windy-citymediagroup.com/lgbt/MUSIC-Marine-Alsop-the-maestra-returns/63457.html>.

Les Innocents.

Photo from (re)discover theatre



'Les Innocents': City of bones

BY ADA CHENG

Ann Kreitman was surrounded by bones when she dreamed up *Les Innocents*.

Touring the catacombs of Paris—an underground ossuary where the remains of more than a million people rest—(re)discover theatre's co-artistic director learned that the cavernous space had been a popular place for concerts in the late 19th century. She dreamed of creating a stage play set against the ghostly backdrop of the City of Light's tomblike, subterranean city of bones.

"It's literally a city underneath a city. The Nazis had a bunker down there. At one point there was a movie theatre there. I found it fascinating," Kreitman said.

(re)discover Theatre's *Les Innocents* is the result Kreitman's inspiration. Running through Sunday, Nov. 4 at Uptown's Preston Bradley Center, 941 W. Lawrence Ave., Kreitman's queer, immersive thriller is set in the Parisian Catacombs in a mythical era. Kreitman's new play investigates our relationships to death, duty and defeat.

How did the queerness enter into the conception of the play then? "I created this show as I was coming out," said Kreitman, who directs the piece she created. "[T]hat was when I was 24. I had to unpack the 24 years of repressing my truths. I wanted to explore how nasty that repression can make you. How it comes out in small and unsettling way. That's what this story about for me. The story is about the things we hide from each other. About the essential selfishness about being human," Kreitman elaborated.

But Kreitman wants to tell this queer story differently than many others. "A lot of times we are made out to be tragic heroes. There is a real danger to always be portrayed as tragic heroes. We are so much more than that," she said. "We are allowed to be flawed. We have the right to reckon with our death. I want to create a story about my life in a mythical proportion," she said.

Kreitman said she hopes to disrupt the simplistic narrative about queer people and human beings in general. While she started the project while she was wrestling with her own sexuality, the play itself is not about coming out. "It's not a coming out story," she said. "This is a myth with queer stories. Coming out is important to us because that's how we enter the community. We have to start talking about ourselves in order to find our community.

"But we have more stories to tell, stories about flaws, stories about fucking up, stories about being selfish, not being the perfect role model. I think that's actually a necessary representation as well. If we put ourselves on a pedestal, how do we live up to that? ... Just because we are a marginalized community doesn't mean we are perfect," she said.

In essence, the play is about all human beings wrestling with flaws and vulnerabilities; which makes the piece's Catacombs setting important as a backdrop. The story *Les Innocents* tells "is about living in the gut. Living in those impulses. In those base desires that we are trying to repress," Kreitman said. "Paris is the head, the logical center for us. We are seven stories below that

THEATER

and fight dirty."

The eerie underground setting is crucial to audience immersion into the world of *Les Innocents*.

"It's epic. It's huge. It takes the audience through the catacombs. Really gives them a whole immersion experience. Maybe scares them a little bit. So they can be vulnerable as well," Kreitman said.

Co-artistic director (with Janet Howe) if (Re) Discover since 2017, Kreitman said part of her job is bring a fresh set of eyes to the company. "As (Re)Discover really developed, we got more and more specific, audience immersive and interactive," she said. "I have seen the landscape and the ecology of Chicago Theatre. I am trying to see where we fit. Chicago has a reputation for being very experimental, and we are trying to live up to that expectation," she said.

Kreitman is proud that the production team and cast members for *Les Innocents* are predominantly LGBTQ theatre professionals and performers. It is important for her to make room for people of diverse identities and backgrounds. "This is a collaborative and a community effort. This is what queer means to me. It's about family. Bringing on collaborators has been fantastic for me," she said.

Les Innocents runs through Nov. 4 at Mason Hall in the Preston Bradley Center, 941 W. Lawrence. Tickets are \$30; visit rediscovertheatre.com/the-innocents.

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Leslie Jordan and Vicki Lawrence
in *The Cool Kids*.
Photo by Crystal Shin



NUNN ON ONE

Leslie Jordan is now one of 'The Cool Kids'

BY JERRY NUNN

Out actor Leslie Jordan may have finally landed his dream role of Sid on a new television show called *The Cool Kids*.

Brought by executive producer Charlie Day, the series stars David Alan Grier, Martin Mull and Vicki Lawrence along with Jordan, and is the story of four friends living in a retirement community who get into screwball situations.

This makes his first regular cast member role in a series since *Hearts Afire* in 1995. His many guest appearances on television include *Boston Legal*, *Ugly Betty* and *Reba*. He received an Emmy for Best Guest Actor in a Comedy Series for *Will & Grace*.

Movie credits include *Sordid Lives*, *The Help* and *Leslie Jordan: My Trip Down the Pink Carpet*.

Windy City Times: Are you thrilled about your new show?

Leslie Jordan: Yes. For something like this to fall in my lap at age 63 is great because I think it will have some longevity.

My manager called and said something was cooking at Fox from the boys that wrote *Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. They are so cute and just adorable. They are big ol' straight boys!

We all had to audition. Some actor's managers will call and say that they don't audition. That is bullshit. Meryl Streep auditions. There is nothing worse than showing up and not being right for the part.

WCT: Talk about your part as Sid in *The Cool Kids*.

LJ: I had reservations because Sid was a

73-year-old, straight, Jewish man from Brooklyn. A lot of my lines were "meh." I walked in and said, "I'm going to put a different spin on this!"

Now, Sid is an aging gay man. There is an aging African-American man, [and] an aging, quite straight hippy full of conspiracy theories and Republican ideas. Vicki Lawrence plays a woman of a certain age, and we are all best friends. It is about friendship and deals with a gay man growing old.

I have had many gay men write for me, from *Del Shores* to *Ryan Murphy*, but this is so different because it is not the nail on the head. It is a roomful of straight boys, but they are so open to suggestions.

They had me in drag on the second episode. David Alan Grier asked me if there were any gay men that don't do drag. I said, "Yes, of course." I have done drag so much, I thought maybe there is a better way to say things without it. It was a hilarious episode about catfishing. I didn't even know what that was...

I go online because my character has had success on Grindr and try to help my straight friends. I make up a character named Destiny and both the men fall in love with her. Vicki Lawrence says, "Honey, you are not going to be able to land this plane!" I walk out in a wig and she says they will know who I am.

The writers were able to make it the right way for the gay community. We are not tackling big issues. This is *The Golden Girls* on crack! Our biggest problem is that the four of us have no moral compass. People get stabbed. We crawl through windows trying to get into clubs. I fall into a

TV

urinal.

WCT: I saw in the pilot you have some really great one-liners.

LJ: I do. I love the fact that the characters on *Cool Kids* don't care that he's gay.

WCT: Who's the Blanche Devereaux of the group?

LJ: I am. They have really tailored these characters to us. This is the first time I ever been allowed to play me. From someone who came from the background I did with so much internalized homophobia growing up I can now look you in the eyes and say I am one hundred percent comfortable with who and what I am.

It is a marriage between Charlie Day, from *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, and Patrick Walsh, from *2 Broke Girls*. They have created a playground that is so safe. We shoot in front of a live audience.

WCT: How does a multi-camera show differ from other projects you have worked on?

LJ: The last hour show I did was *American Horror Story* and I don't know how they do it. They have 5:30 a.m. makeup calls and work until the sun goes down.

With three camera it is amazing. We come in on a Monday and do a little table read. We will go on the set to rehearse until 1 p.m. then we go home. We come in on Tuesday and will get it ready for the Fox people then go home by 3:00 p.m. We never have a call before 10 a.m. On Wednesday, we show it to the network so a little stressful,

but not bad. On Thursday, we camera-block all day and, [on] Friday, we bring in the audience. It is the best gig in the world!

WCT: I saw actor Jamie Farr on the first episode. Is this giving opportunities for people that are overlooked in Hollywood?

LJ: Absolutely. We want to trot everyone out. That's our plan. I am fighting for Tina Louise to play my mother! I told Vicki to ask Carol Burnett and Lyle Waggoner.

Jamie Farr is 84 and was so happy to be there for the job. He was willing to do anything we asked. People just want to work. That older group has been so overlooked.

One time, Debbie Reynolds told me that a casting girl asked her what she had done and she said, "I'm Debbie fucking Reynolds. That's what I've done!"

WCT: Are you going to be back on *American Horror Story*?

LJ: No. This time it is a recap of *Coven* and some of the other seasons. I saw Ryan Murphy at the up-fronts in New York and we talked a bit, but I am not on it.

I am back on *Will & Grace*; I can only do two episodes. When Fox pays you that kind of money for series regulars, there are a lot of rules. I told them I won an Emmy for that show so they allowed me to do two. If *Will & Grace* goes up against *Cool Kids* in the same time slot, I can't do any.

WCT: Are you doing any upcoming one-man shows?

LJ: I am. I have one called *Exposed*. I had to cancel Provincetown this year so I can only do it on a Saturday night because of shooting. I am going to San Francisco to host a GLAAD event and Dallas doing *Exposed* for the Legacy Counseling Center in a few weeks.

My fee has gone up. I keep thinking they won't pay it, but they do!

WCT: Do you ever go back to Tennessee?

LJ: I do. We have long hiatuses during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

I am bringing my mom, her sister, who is almost 90, and my identical twin sister out for a taping. This is the first time they have traveled in a really long time. The greatest thing I ever did was buy them a place in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The house is so beautiful. It looks like Laura Ashley threw up in there!

The Cool Kids runs Fridays on Fox.

Jungr-McDaniel cabaret show Oct. 25

Barb Jungr and John McDaniel will bring their cabaret show to Davenport's, 1333 N. Milwaukee Ave., on Thursday, Oct. 25, at 8 p.m.

British singer Jungr has been making music of all kinds since the '70s in London. McDaniel, who sometimes partners with Jungr, was the music director on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* during its entire run.

Tickets are \$25 each, plus a two-drink minimum; visit <https://tinyurl.com/ycfhqum> or call 773-278-1830.

Martha Wash: Dance-floor diva talks Chicago musical, new CD

Martha Wash.
Photo by Sean Black

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Even those who may not heard Martha Wash's name have certainly heard her voice.

From the dance classic "It's Raining Men" (recorded with the late Izora Armstead, Wash's partner in the duo The Weather Girls) to the C&C Music

Factory song "Gonna Make You Sweat (Everybody Dance Now)" and the Black Box tune "Everybody Everybody," Wash's voice has been a staple at clubs as well as events such as weddings. In addition, she has recorded several of her songs as well as dance-club number-one hits such as "Carry On" and "Keep Your Body Working."

MUSIC

Now, Wash is keeping her body working in a different way: as part of the cast of *WaistWatchers The Musical!*, running at Chicago's Royal George Theatre, 1641 N. Halsted St. (Wash is there through Sunday, Oct. 28.)

Windy City Times: Of course, you're known for your legendary voice. I'm wondering what your thoughts were regarding another legendary singer: Aretha Franklin.

Martha Wash: Oh, she was my all-time favorite. I worshipped her. I sang one of her songs in junior high school. I thought the world of her; I admired her talent very much.

My favorite song of hers was "Chain of Fools," which I sang in junior high. I sang "Ain't No Way" in high school. I have all of her Columbia and Atlantic albums.

WCT: I assume your interaction with the LGBT community goes back to singing with ['70s disco artist] Sylvester. Could you provide some insight into what he was like?

MW: It does. Sylvester was a gay Black man who was a fantastic singer, and he didn't care if you liked him or not. He wasn't going to bow down to what you thought. He was this great talent—and he was way ahead of his time.

WCT: Let's jump to *WaistWatchers*.

MW: Yes. It's a musical set in a women's gym. It's a great departure for me, in a way. This is a high-energy show, and it's fun. There's no intermission.

Think about going to a gym—the kind of people you meet there. There are five characters, and each one has her own story. It's real life.

WCT: What drew you to this musical? Was it the challenge of doing something different? Was it the message of the show?

MW: Oh, it's the challenge. [Laughs] And I'm hoping and praying that I'm up to the challenge.

WCT: But this isn't the first time you've done theater.

MW: I did theater in 2003. It was a show called *Love on Layaway*; it was written by David Talbert, and it starred Deborah Cox. I was in the

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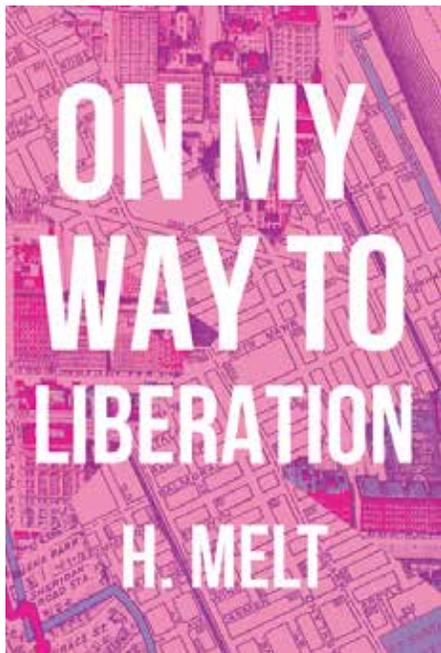
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BOOK REVIEW

On My Way to Liberation

by H. Melt

\$10; Haymarket; 28 pages

REVIEW BY KELSEY HOFF

On My Way to Liberation, by H. Melt, is a chapbook-length preview of their forthcoming book *There Are Trans People Here* from Haymarket Books.

In just 16 short poems and a page-long introduction, Melt approaches the insidious problem of gender misrecognition and microaggressions from many directions, in numerous settings. Their poems oscillate between straightforward testimonials of firsthand experiences and provocative lyric poems that juxtapose reality with possibility.

The first poem, "Trans Lit Is Bullshit," immediately smashes expectations and meets all readers where they are: picking up a book of poems by a trans person, approaching trans lit for the first

time or for the thousandth. The refrain "I want trans lit..." reveals H. Melt's motivations for writing, but also calls out to anyone and everyone to rethink their own relationship to trans lit: how (and if) they write it, consume it, and circulate it.

Melt's introduction states, "I yearn for trans spaces within the cis world and try to imagine living outside of it." Most of the early poems end with a point of misrecognition or deliberate ignorance for the reader to linger on in the shoes of a transgendered person, giving cis readers a taste of the emotional burden these lapses create. Later poems end with affirming messages to trans people who've lived these situations. The final poems begin to outline fundamental changes that would enable non cis-normative life: a city "Where there are/no borders between/who we were and who we are/Becoming." The speaker is not asking for a specific set of conditions, but re-tracing social situations to highlight where trans identities are being rejected by cis people and opening up ways to recognize and appreciate them, always upholding freedom over restraint.

The speaker/poet teases out interactions with all different kinds of people: strangers and family, cis people and other trans people, friends and celebrities. One source of cognitive dissonance is detailed in the introduction: "I am in the strange position of being an openly trans writer while simultaneously not being recognized as a trans person on a daily basis." The speaker can walk away from a stranger's verbal assault "trying to forget / what will die / in a few days / time," but deadnaming and misgendering by family members is much more difficult to resolve. No single solution is going to improve trans visibility and liberation—misrecognition occurs on many different levels, for many reasons.

The title comes in at the final poem, the point where the speaker leaves the reader. Without retelling the whole story (this book needs to be read slowly, experienced line by line), if both parties have succeeded, the speaker and the reader have renewed senses of their quests concerning trans literature and recognition. Both have been re-contextualized in history and in the contemporary climate of social justice; they have an understanding, but the work remains of making it manifest in their lives off the page.

BOOK REVIEW

Black Queer Hoe

by Britteny Black Rose Kapri

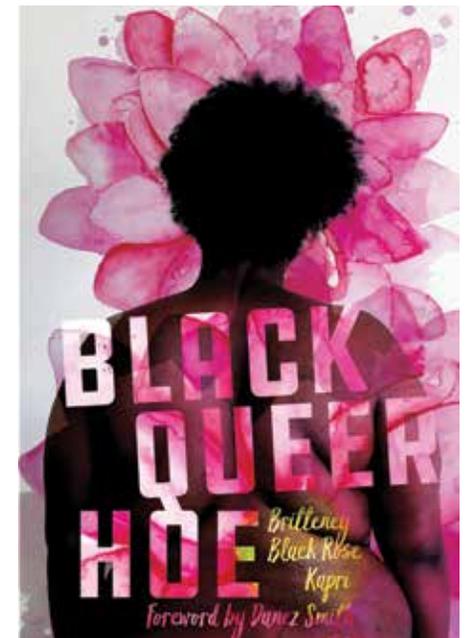
\$16; Haymarket; 55 pages

REVIEW BY KELSEY HOFF

In her poem "a reading guide: for white people reading my book," Britteny Black Rose Kapri writes "this book isn't for you. it's a celebration of my Blackness, my Queerness, my Hoeness, none of which exists without the other." In full disclosure, as a white reviewer, I cannot understand this book the way Kapri's intended readers do—the foreword by Danez Smith welcomes Black readers and contextualizes Kapri's work for them. What I can do is tell you about my experience reading it as an outsider and why it's important that all kinds of people read this book, even though it's not meant for us.

Kapri stated in an interview for another Windy City Times article, "the only speaker in this collection is me." She brings her entire experience, her entire self to the page, calling her readers to do the same—at the same time maintaining complete control of what she's revealing to her readers and when, with an exacting attention to her modes of speech. This book is powerful because it doesn't allow you to "accidentally forget who you are. or where you are." It challenges readers to keep up with turns both sharp and sly, speaking on levels far below the surface—though the surface messages pack their own punches.

These poems live in the real world. Screenshots of Kapri's tweets scattered throughout the book with proclamations like "Sia 'leaking' her own nudes so someone couldn't sell them is the cornerstone of my feminism" call attention to the art of a good tweet, a super-decontextualized medium that requires readers to bring their own awareness and sensibilities to each encounter, as Kapri demands in her poems. The content in Kapri's tweets puts poems with similar messages and references into the context of her day-to-day consciousness, adding another dimension of reality and community. These poems exist in a time-



line measured by the date and time stamps on the tweets, not in the imaginary realm of poetry that aims for universal appeal.

Obviously, a few of the messages in this book were for (white) people like me. For instance, "purple" gives a nuanced account of how white people demonize Black life with their language, even when race isn't the issue at hand. But what do outsiders do with the bulk of this book, the experiences we will never have, the jokes we can't laugh at? Kapri addresses this in "a reading guide: for white people reading my book." Read this poem first if you want. As for me, I can remember the pain and fear in poems like "pink crayon", the joy in poems like "the day my nudes leak," the humor in many of the poems, especially "before they can use it against you" and "pansexual," the lust in "bad feminist," and the tenderness. I can respect their value to the speaker and be less judgmental of others for these things I haven't experienced myself. And also encourage others to go pick up a copy of *Black Queer Hoe*.

WASH from page 11

original production but not in the version on DVD.

WCT: The last CD was *Something Good*, with the song "It's My Time."

MW: Yes, and that whole album was great. I'm in the studio working on another one. It won't be out until next year sometime. It'll have a little blues and a little R&B.

WCT: And you also have a YouTube series called *10 Minutes with Martha Wash*?

MW: Yes. I've interviewed Paul Shaffer [the bandleader from *Late Night* with David Letterman, and who co-wrote "It's Raining Men"] and some others. It has me talking with people and singing. It's about grabbing your attention for 10 minutes; then you can go about your business. [Both laugh.] People can't seem to concentrate for too long.

WCT: You've noticed that, too?

MW: Oh, yes. It's been like that—going back

to people using telephones; now there's [more advanced] technology.

WCT: And with you having been involved in music for a while, is that the biggest change you've noticed—the technology?

MW: Well, yeah, I would say. In terms of getting music, I would say yes, with the downloads and the streaming. People just get their music any kind of way now.

WCT: So, after *WaistWatchers*, you'll be devoting your time to the new CD?

MW: Well, I will be focusing on that; I have about four more tracks to do. Then I'll probably take some time off because I've been really busy for the last couple of months. Then I'll do another show: *The First Ladies of Disco*, with Linda Clifford and Norma Jean Wright, of Chic.

Tickets start at \$45 each for *WaistWatchers The Musical!*; visit WaistwatchersTheMusical.com or call the Royal George Theatre Box Office at 312-988-9000.

Gay film wins top award at CSAFF

The Indian feature film *Evening Shadows* won the audience award for Best Feature Film at the recently concluded Chicago South Asian Film Festival (CSAFF).

"We are happy that our film *Evening Shadows* is being awarded and appreciated even at mainstream film festivals, apart from LGBTQ film festivals. This fulfills one of the objectives of the film—to reach out a mass audience with the message of acceptance. Now we push for the second objective—of releasing the film commercially, in theaters and television—in India," director Sridhar Rangayan said in a statement.

Evening Shadows screened to a full house,



Mona Ambegaonkar and Devansh Doshi in *Evening Shadows*. Photo from Sridhar Rangayan

and received support from the local LGBT South Asian group *Trikone Chicago*. Local transgender artist Sal moderated the Q&A.

The festival presented more than 70 films at the Showplace ICON Theater and Columbia College in downtown Chicago as well as AMC Oakbrook Center on Sept. 20-23.

Kim Petras.
Photo by Thom Kerr

NUNN ON ONE

Trans singer Kim Petras talks family, transition, big break

BY JERRY NUNN

Transgender singer Kim Petras is performing for the first time nationwide at large concerts, thanks to Troye Sivan, who is on his "The Bloom" Tour.

Born in Cologne, Germany, Petras knew her identity at age 2. She received medical treatment in Hamburg and announced on her blog that, at age 16, she had completed gender-reassignment surgery in 2008. (Under German law, a person would normally have to be 18.)

Her dreams of becoming a singer began with a debut single "I Don't Want It at All" and video featuring Paris Hilton. She has released several successful singles, such as "Hillside Boys" and "Heart to Break."

Then, Petras was part of mixtapes, including Charli XCX's Pop 2; also, just in time for October, Petras has released a Halloween-themed mixtape titled Turn Off the Lights Vol. 1, featuring Elvira on one of the eight new tracks, with songs like "TRANSylvania" and "Boo! Bitch!"

Windy City Times: Tell our readers about yourself so they can get to know you.

Kim Petras: I'm a pop songwriter. I was obsessed with pop music since I was 10 years old. I listened to music from Carole King, Max Martin and the Bee Gees. I knew people weren't going to write me a song so I would need to be a good songwriter like them. That was my way into the whole thing.

At age 16, I wrote a laundry detergent jingle. That was my foot in the door—my big break! I got a publishing deal in Germany and at 19 I came to LA. I wanted to write pop music and become amazing at it.

Nothing happened for two years, then I wrote a song for Fergie that was going to be her big single when "M.I.L.F \$" came out. It was called "Dancing." It might still come out. It is my mom's favorite song that I ever wrote.

WCT: Did you record it?

KP: Yes. In the beginning I had me singing it, so I still have that version. It has a really good

MUSIC

rap hook. Let's hope it comes out.

WCT: How did you wind up working with Charli XCX?

KP: A singer named Sophie works a lot with Charli XCX. I went to Sophie's break out show in LA. It was the first show she had done as an artist herself. Charli was there so we went backstage and partied. She hit me up two days later to do the song.

WCT: How did the Troye Sivan tour happen?

KP: My management called me and asked me to be on the tour. Troye messaged me before and said he liked my music. It is like 32 dates across the country so I am excited.

WCT: You have new music to perform. "Can't Do Better" sounds like an anthem.

KP: I love Pat Benatar and big '80s moments. It is about me having a crush on a boy having a crush on another girl. I can be insecure and it is a hype yourself up song. I have been sitting on it for a year and it's a very special song.

WCT: "Heart to Break" is a jam.

KP: Thank you. It is very hard to sing live because the verse is so low and the chorus is so high. I am getting more and more used to it. I love the music video.

WCT: Did you have a lot of input on the video treatment?

KP: Yes. The creative director is my homie and we just hang out. We wrote the treatment while at Harry Potter World at Universal in LA.

WCT: Are you into Harry Potter?

KP: Yeah, I'm a Hufflepuff all the way!

WCT: What have been challenges in the music business?

KP: I think you need to know everything about it in order to be a success and make money off of it. My goal is to be touring my whole life and really build a real fanbase.

It took me awhile to find myself as an artist. It's about timing. I have been talking with people about contracts. I have had to wait and

get out of some of them. There has been a lot of frustration. It's a lot of work to release stuff and have a shot.

We are doing an old school radio tour and playing lounges acoustically. Radio Disney is playing my music, which is amazing!

WCT: Has your family always been supportive of your transition?

KP: Yes. I told them, "I am a girl and want to live as one." I wanted to mutilate myself. I did not want to have a male gender.

My mother told me we could go see doctors together once I was old enough that there was a way to live as a girl. I didn't feel hopeless after that so that helped me around the age of 10. I woke up everyday and was scared I would grow a beard. I would cry and was terrified. I was scared my voice would get lower.

Some doctors told them to shave my hair off and send me to school in boy clothes. I did and nothing changed. It hasn't been easy.

We found a doctor when I was 12 that started me on hormone therapy. I got the blockers for male puberty and ever since then I have been happy. After I had the surgery I didn't hate myself anymore. I finally felt connected to my body.

WCT: Was the process easier in Germany?

KP: It was, in a way. My family is not rich, but health insurance covered it there, so that was incredible. I hope health insurance will change in America. It's really important.

If you are different and face struggles in school it will be hard enough for you.

WCT: You have brought a lot of attention to those struggles through your story.

KP: That was my whole childhood and teenage years. I was all about doing documentaries. I think my first one was at 12 and my last one at 16. I wanted to help people. Not every child is lucky to have supportive parents. We have a responsibility to be a good example. I get to live a completely normal life as a girl and I am happy!

Petras will perform on Troye Sivan's Bloom Tour on Friday, Oct. 19, at The Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St., at 7:30 p.m. Visit MSG.com/The-Chicago-Theatre for ticket information.



Save the date! The Lakeside Pride Jazz Orchestra is celebrating the joys of wedded bliss for people of all genders and you're invited! Whether you're married, single or just love weddings, bring your handkerchiefs and your dancing shoes!

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10 questions with Vic

Gerami headshot by Stephen Blaha

BY VIC GERAMI

Kathy Griffin is officially on the A List—period. An army of fans around the world rejoiced seeing Kathy overcome and conquer the onslaught of over-reaction, aggression and bullying by Donald Trump, his administration and the Federal Government. We love her as a comedian, a courageous public figure—and a bad-ass who tells it like it is at the pinnacle of her career. We first tuned in to Suddenly Susan to watch Kathy's character, Vicki Groener, because she was the most interesting person to watch, and because we knew she was headed up Hollywood's alphabetical pecking-order. Two Emmy awards for her hit show on the Bravo network's My Life on the D List and a Golden Globe award followed, and in 2013 Kathy attained the Guinness World Records title for most televised stand-up specials with the premiere of her 20th show on HBO. We live vicariously through her victory as she leaves the small d behind and steps into the big A, while laughing our heads off.

Windy City Times: Modesty aside, how would you describe yourself?

KG: I'm a goddamn legend! Alright, I may not be one until I'm dead, but, oh, what a legend I'll be! I describe myself as someone who lives to make people laugh. Yes, I like to stir things up and push boundaries, but hey, if you want to see some nice, homespun clean humor, watch the 700 Club.

WCT: How does it feel to receive the Comedian of the Year Award from the Palm Springs International Comedy Festival?

KG: What a difference a year makes! This award is so meaningful to me because I have spent decades truly trying to hone my craft and being the very best comedian, actress and improviser I can be. After my Trump mask scandal, I learned very quickly that I simply had to up my game with my material and be truly fearless about it.

WCT: You went through a tough, tumultuous and controversial year and came out victorious. Your world tour, Laugh Your Head Off, is a smashing success, selling-out quicker than you can add dates. How is the sweet smell of victory?

KG: Like a brand new lavender scented candle. Honestly, it has been a slow and laborious claw back, but completely worth every up and down.

I have enjoyed doing the Kathy Griffin Laugh Your Head Off World Tour, even though it has been the most difficult tour of my life. If nothing else, it is vital to me that anyone who is interested and watching sees that this president or any other should not have the

Kathy Griffin.
Photo by Jerry Nunn



power to try and decimate a single American citizen. I have actually enjoyed fighting back one joke at a time.

WCT: What have you learned in the last year, having gone through what you did? Would you do anything differently?

KG: I would do many things differently! I think it is hilarious when celebrities jump to the "I wouldn't change a thing" B.S. This experience, which started with a photo amplified on TMZ, to Federal agencies investigating me, and being put on the "No Fly List" as if I am a terrorist, is so over the top I had to make many missteps to try to figure my own way out of this unique and historic situation. Looking back, I am probably most grateful that I ultimately listened to my inner comedy gut and decided to basically put my middle finger in the air and get back on the road.

WCT: You volunteer your time and open the drag pageant, Best in Drag Show, which is an annual fundraiser for Aid for AIDS. Why is this cause important to you?

KG: Best in Drag Show benefits a great organization called Alliance for Housing and Healing, formerly known as Aids for AIDS. The event started out very organically in the living room of Alexis Pittman's apartment. We lost Alexis to HIV, and in his honor, the show gets bigger and better every year. It is an over-the-top drag show like you have never seen. The evening is also wildly inappropriate when

it comes to the characters, costumes and humor. And who doesn't love that?

WCT: Do you feel pressure to be funny all the time during your daily life? Is there an expectation?

KG: I'm pretty "on," as they say. I would say I am a little atypical compared to most comedians I have known, in that I am similar off stage to my incredibly delightful persona on stage. Many comedians are very shy and often pensive, bruiting types off-stage. I like my quiet time, but I really do try to make the people around me laugh every day.

WCT: What does your average day look like?

KG: When I'm on tour, I'm on a nighttime schedule. Sleep in, have a healthy meal three hours prior to show time, and it usually takes me about three hours to come down after the show. I watch a lot of late-night cable. When I'm off the road, I do a lot of writing, producing fun little videos for my social media, and I'm just now starting to be asked to do guest appearances on television again. I was very

honored to play Kellyanne Conway twice this season on Comedy Central's The President Show.

WCT: What's new on your play list?

KG: I like to let my friends contribute to my playlist. It is quite varied. If it were up to me, it would pretty much be Céline, Backstreet Boys, Britney—you get the idea. But my more musically sophisticated friends keep me in my place. Although I wish I could get Josh Groban to stop taking off all my Michael Bolton songs.

WCT: You have a massive army of fans around the world, tell me about them.

KG: Well, they sure showed up this year, didn't they? One thing that gave me a sliver of hope days after the Trump photo was a video on Twitter of a group of gay guys dressed as I was in the photo (blue dress and all), carrying Donald Trump masks and parading around Fire Island. The LGBT community is ahead of the curve,

once again. And yes, I know that is a pun. I will admit the photo that has caused me so much angst is the photo that this year has single-handedly turned me into a global touring artist. Before North America, I started this show in Auckland, New Zealand and ended up in Reykjavik, Iceland and everywhere in between.

WCT: Tell me a secret—a good one!

KG: After the infamous Trump photo, Cher sent me the following text that made me laugh out loud: "You wanted to be famous bitch!"

For information on Kathy Griffin's World Tour, including tickets, please visit www.kathygriffin.net.

'ACE Comic Con Midwest' Oct. 12-14

The pop-culture experience ACE Comic Con Midwest (involving ACE Universe) will take place Oct. 12-14 at Chicago's Navy Pier.

According to the event's website, founders/brothers Gareb Shamus and Stephen Shamus are "producing the first live-streaming platform combined with the most curated and immersive Comic Cons."

Slated guests include actors Tom Hiddleston (the Thor movies and Avengers: Infinity War), Josh Brolin (Avengers: Infinity War; Deadpool 2), Matt Smith (Doctor Who), Zazie Beetz (Deadpool 2), among others.

See ACEUniverse.com.

MUSIC

Carlie Hanson: Yes, about six hours away from here in Chicago. I was born and raised there in Onalaska. I live in LA now. I just moved there in February.

WCT: Did you always want to make music?

CH: My mom said when I was two years old that I sang a Destiny's Child song called "Survivor" in the car. I have always been singing.

When Justin Bieber started being big—that is when I knew I wanted to be a singer.

WCT: Did you start on YouTube?

CH: I tried, but I did not do as well as he did obviously. I put out videos and had my friends watch them. It never went anywhere and they were really embarrassing. I thought it was easy when I watched Justin, but it's not that easy!

WCT: How is your family with your career?

CH: My mom and my sisters are very supportive. I started this whole music thing by going to Canada and working with some producers called House of Wolf. My mom was invested in it from that time forward.

WCT: What was it like being in the studio with House of Wolf?

CH: It was everything. They have made my sound and I still work with them. I wanted to be in the studio when I was little. It is a dream to be in there.

WCT: Talk about your song "Only One."

CH: It was one of the first songs I ever recorded. My best bud Dale Anthoni wrote on it and has been a huge help in developing me. Dale and I got matching tattoos for that song. The song blew up and I didn't expect that all.

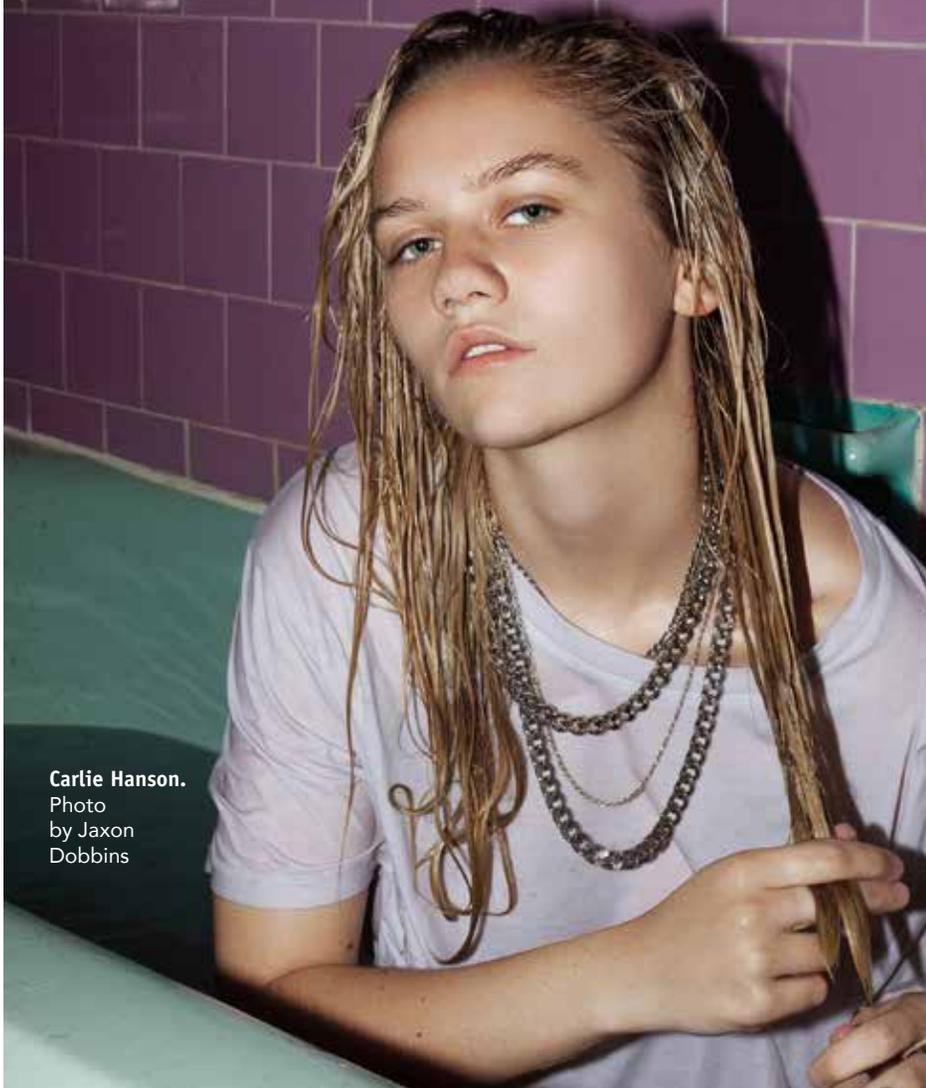
I am more excited about my new music. It is more urban sounding and not as pop. I am nervous, but excited to see what people say about it.

WCT: Is there a certain genre that you want to try but haven't yet?

CH: I don't want a certain genre. A good example is Post Malone. I can't put him in a genre. He's one of my biggest dream collaborations.

NUNN ON ONE

Carlie Hanson talks new CD—and coming out



Carlie Hanson.
Photo
by Jaxon
Dobbins

BY JERRY NUNN

Singer Carlie Hanson has gone from serving hungry customers at McDonald's in Wisconsin to performing for huge crowds in large venues across the country.

YouTube videos were her inspiration to make music and, after posting a cover of Zayn's "Pillow Talk" on Instagram, producers noticed her. After traveling to Canada with her mother, she made two songs with those producers "Why Did

You Lie" and "Only One," which was featured on Apple Music's Playlist curated by Taylor Swift.

The two then went to California to make more music that has now led to her performing at Troye Sivan's shows. Sivan and his boyfriend shot her first artwork.

Her song "Mood" was written by her and Brett McLaughlin (also known as Leland), who closely worked with Sivan and Selena Gomez. The song was released on her 18th birthday this year in May.

Windy City Times: You are from Wisconsin?

WCT: Was working at McDonald's a hard job?

CH: It was when it was super-busy. Lunch hour gave me anxiety!

WCT: Was there something you would never eat again from McDonald's menu?

CH: I didn't eat it until I started working there because we had 50 percent off the menu, but I was obsessed with McDoubles for a long time. I try not to eat McDonald's anymore.

WCT: How was turning 18?

CH: I didn't want it to happen. I wanted to stay 17 forever. I was going to buy a pack of cigarettes to celebrate, but you have to be 21 in LA. What can I do at this age? Vote? A strip club?

WCT: How do you feel about opening for Troye Sivan?

CH: I am pumped, but nervous. I have a tour that I am going on before that to get prepped with Jeremy Zucker. His fans are diehard and sing every word to his songs.

WCT: I spoke with another opener for Troye named Kim Petras the other day.

CH: We just hung out at an event that Bebe Rexha was hosting.

WCT: There is a whole new generation of LGBT performers in the music business now with Troye and Kim.

CH: I don't know if you saw my Twitter, but I actually came out the other day. I had a girlfriend, but we are no longer together. I had never been with a girl before. I was always dating guys. I met this girl and completely fell in love. They are just people. Gender doesn't mean anything to me at all. It is whatever is inside; as cheesy as that sounds, it's how I feel.

WCT: What do you want to tell people as a new artist?

CH: Always be yourself. If you are feeling nervous about going for it, just do it. Everyone is worried about themselves, so just worry about yourself. Don't hold yourself back!

Hanson opens for Troye Sivan's Bloom Tour on Friday, Oct. 19, at The Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St., at 7:30 p.m. Visit MSG.com/The-Chicago-Theatre for ticket information today.

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Ryan Serhant.
PR photo

NUNN ON ONE

Selling It like Ryan Serhant



BY JERRY NUNN

Everything is coming up roses for Ryan Serhant these days. This year, the Bravo celebrity celebrates a seventh season of Million Dollar Listing New York; a spinoff called Sell It Like a Serhant premiered; his book of the same name hits the shelves; and his podcast debuted on iHeartRadio. He describes the podcast as “a rags to riches focused show interviewing people that have built a business from the ground up.”

Windy City Times: Where are you from originally?

Ryan Serhant: I was born in Texas. My passion was in acting. I was terrible at sports.

When I graduated college I went to New York City, but ran out of money. I got my real estate license.

WCT: Did you have odd jobs?

RS: The oddest job I did was a hand model for a while. I held cell phones for AT&T for a long time, and watches, to pay the bills.

WCT: Was there money in that?

RS: It was \$150 an hour. I would work 10 hours, so it was great for me.

WCT: Was it hard to conquer real estate?

RS: I didn't know anyone in New York and had no money. I only did it because a friend told me

not to temp or be a waiter. With real estate, I could run around and make my own hours. I still thought acting was what I would do. I thought real estate was the better bet for longterm happiness. It took five years for it to turn over and work.

Million Dollar Listing played a role in that. We started shooting in 2010 and it came out with the first season in 2012. It didn't blow up my business. People don't call up a person they see on TV. It helped me in a room that I already had gotten in, but took me a while to get up on my feet.

WCT: Was it hard to get on the Bravo show?

RS: I went to an open casting call at the Hudson New York with 3,000 agents. It took nine months, then they cast us and we started that December.

WCT: Your new book is not a biography, but instead a sales book?

RS: It is my playbook. I didn't want to be another Bravo person writing a book. I wanted a sales guidebook for the people that work for me.

When I did Sell It Like Serhant for Bravo, I realized I could apply my real estate skills to selling anything. I put everything into a book, then fleshed it out with stories and humor. It is not my memoir, that's for sure.

TV

WCT: Is selling a certain personality trait or can anyone learn?

RS: Anyone can learn it. There are some people that have the personality traits of a good sales person. I think anyone can learn because I didn't have the personality of a sales person. I was very shy and introverted. I had to build it on my own.

WCT: When I did sales for Windy City Times, it was hard to stay motivated sometimes. Any tips for that?

RS: I call it the four Ws in the book: the wall, win, why and work. The wall is your motivation. For me it was running out of money in the summer of 2008. I never want to do that again. I am constantly afraid of that.

WCT: What would you tell people about reality shows?

RS: They are a lot more work than people think. It takes a lot of time. Million Dollar Listing shoots for nine months out of a year. They follow me for the majority of the year and I have been doing it for seven years. It is my life for better or worse!

WCT: Thoughts on Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles?

RS: They are the tentpole. They started it. New

York is a different beast with a different type of energy. I think there are people that like one versus the other.

WCT: What do you think of gay cast member Fredrick Eklund?

RS: He's great and has a big personality. We've gotten to know each other really well over the years. We are the O.G.'s of Million Dollar Listing. The third guy on the show has come and gone. We are a lot more alike than we ever anticipated or will admit.

We are both competitive and want to be the best. I think I am successful because of him and he is someone to push against.

WCT: How about another gay man involved with the show, Andy Cohen?

RS: He has always been a huge supporter and a big fan. He loves the show. We just did his radio show. He's the dad of Bravo and everyone treats him as such.

WCT: Have you heard from gay Bravo fans?

RS: Yes. They are awesome and really like my moustache!

For more on this million dollar seller's projects, visit RyanSerhant.com.

Former Chicago Force star gets taste of NFL

BY ROSS FORMAN

Darcy Leslie spent eight years playing for the now-defunct Chicago Force, establishing herself as one of the best women to ever put on the pads. She was a national champion, and was decorated with many individual awards every season, including perennial team Defensive MVP and league All American. She also was Women's Football Alliance (WFA) Conference Player of the Year in 2013.

"My Force [career] entails some of my greatest athletic accomplishments," said Leslie, who lives in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood and is a general manager for Canine Crew and CrossFit Coach at Hardware Crossfit.

Football is still in her blood, though now retired from playing. Leslie was a Summer Scouting Specialist for the New York Jets.

Yes, the Jets of NFL fame.

"Last year, I applied for the Women's Careers in



Photo courtesy of Leslie

SPORTS

Football Forum, [which] helps the NFL identify qualified women to join its next generation of leaders," Leslie said. "I was accepted and went to Orlando [this past] January for two days of panel discussions, presentations and breakout sessions. It was a very educational experience and it helped me gain knowledge about various fields within the NFL that I was interested in, such as strength and conditioning, scouting and coaching.

"That weekend help solidify my desire to pursue a career in the NFL. Since then, I was able to make some invaluable connections, with individuals such as Sam Rappaport, NFL senior director of football development, and Scott Pioli, assistant general manager of the Atlanta Falcons. Sam and I have been in contact since the Forum and she was a huge advocate of mine. Because of her advocacy I was able to go to the Chicago Bears' training facility to watch practice and meet some of the players and coaches. After that experience, the opportunity to intern with the New York Jets was introduced to me and it is an offer I could not be more grateful for."

Leslie assisted the Jets' Scouting Department throughout training camp. "I was responsible for learning the ins and outs of football scouting, operations and analytics," she said. "The Jets taught me how to identify and differentiate between players. I learned how to evaluate the talent of football players and the critical factors for each position. With that, I was then in charge of writing weekly scouting reports for the position group I was assigned. In these reports, I had to differentiate and articulate different athlete body types, list their strengths and weakness and evaluate where this player stood on making our roster. It warranted a high attention to detail and helped me look at football from a different lens."

Leslie spent six weeks with the Jets, throughout training camp.

"I also learned that football at this level is made possible by the countless efforts of hundreds of people," she said. "Everyone is here putting in the long hours to help do what they can to make the team successful. It was pretty unreal to get a glimpse of what all goes on. I love football and have been a fan of the sport my whole life. As a fan, we just see what happens on game day. I had the pleasure of interacting with so many different departments while I was here, whether you are in the business department, equipment, operations, video etc, [and] everyone is working extremely hard day in, day out. It was truly one team, one goal around here."

Leslie, with a strong passion for fitness and nutrition, asked the Jets' strength and conditioning coach out to lunch to talk about his role and what his workload entailed. "I was expecting a 'No,' but instead, Coach [Justus] Galac welcomed the opportunity to share his knowledge. I learned



Darcy Leslie.

Photo by Ross Forman

so much in that hour about his role and how he manages to balance his job and family. He then invited me to sit in on the players' workout. It was definitely one of my highlights while being here. Justus and his two assistant coaches, Aaron [McLaurin] and Joe [Giacobbe], were very knowledgeable. They are always busy, but were so open to answer any questions that I had and I was never made to feel like I was wasting their time. I was grateful for that."

Leslie is convinced that women are capable of holding more "nontraditional" roles in the NFL. "We might have to work harder to get there, but it is not unrealistic," she said. "I learned that the most important thing is winning. If what you bring to the table will help the success of the team, then you are an asset, regardless of your sex."

"Some people are skeptical when it comes to having women in football and as a woman, when you get your foot in the door, there tends to be an even larger focus on the fact that you are a woman. My focus is putting in the work and making sure I work hard and have there be no question whether or not I belong there. I wish I could say me being a female shouldn't matter, but it does. It matters to me, it matters to the other women trying to pursue a career in this field and sports in general and it matters to that little girl that turns on the television. It's crucial that our young girls can see representations of women in the media, that they can see a female referee or coach during an NFL game and ultimately see what is possible."

Leslie also is a proud representative of the LGBT community, as she's an out, married lesbian.

"I was open about my sexuality my entire time with the New York Jets and was never once made to feel uncomfortable or less than," she said. "I shared with some of the coaches, players and staff that my wife was pregnant with our son and I got several congratulations and tips on the best products my wife and I will need once our son

is here. Several of them also gave me insight on what life would be like having a career in the NFL while trying to make time for your family. I am grateful for their inclusivity and affirmation of the LGBTQ community."

Leslie added, "I'm so grateful that Sam Rappaport and the New York Jets saw something in me that allowed me to earn this opportunity. Being a minority in nearly every space I have played sports in, worked in, and trained in, I understand the importance of including as many people from different walks of life as possible. What people see on camera and on sports teams is what they see as possible. Without such representation, future generations won't know what is possible. My son will be here in November and when he grows up, I want him to be able to turn the television and see someone who he can relate to and I hope I could offer that now to some little girl or boy."

Despite a taste of NFL life, Leslie has certainly not forgotten her Force roots.

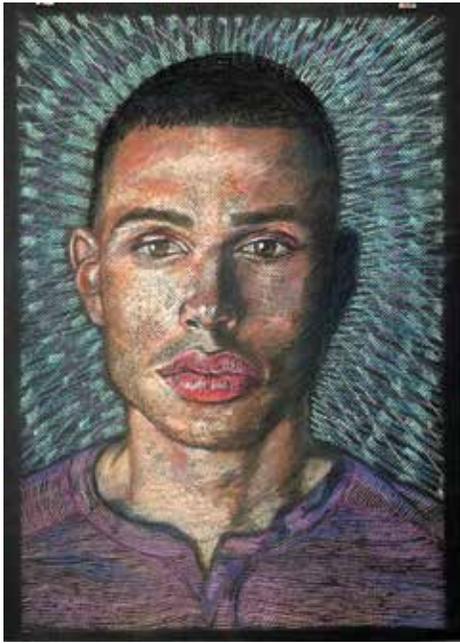
"The Force is the reason why I'm experiencing this amazing opportunity," she said. "I was coached by the best coach in women's football, [John Konecki]. I learned so much from Coach K and I believe having him as my coach and utilizing all that I've learned from him will help me on my path to a career in the NFL. I would also say, the Force helped me grow into the woman I am today. I started on that team at a very young age. I had the opportunity play and be mentored by some amazing women who were older and wiser than me. Linda Bache, Rosalyn Bennett, Pam Schaffrath, Jessica Mcpeake, and Keesha Brooks played pivotal roles in my development as a player and a young adult. If it wasn't for them and the Force, I'm not sure what my life would look like today."

Former Force owner Linda Bache was the first person Leslie called to tell her about the Jets' gig.

"Linda has been a big part of my life since I joined the Force [and] the one who suggested I apply for the Forum in January, and she is the one who wrote my letter of recommendation," Leslie said. "She's always had my back and has only wanted the best for me. I'm not sure what will come from this internship, but I do know I am grateful for Linda and for all that she has done for women's football and all that she continues to do for me."

Leslie said she developed good friendships with some of the Jets, such as Leonard Williams and Trumaine Johnson.

"I was able to interact with the players and coaches daily," she said. "Coach [Todd] Bowles is a great man, very knowledgeable about the sport and his players. I would chat with him several times a week. Since I was there as a scouting intern, I would be assigned a different position group each week and had to write scouting reports about each player in that position. This meant that each week I was interacting with a new set of players. Daily I had the chance to spend time with Coach [Karl] Dorrell, Coach [Jimmie] Johnson, several of the other coaches and in time, all the players. I got to know many of the coaches and players on an individual level, as we ate all three meals together in addition to spending countless hours together on and off the field."



From left: The artwork of Roberto Balderas, Gail Mancuso and Justin Suico. Images courtesy of Art For Life Chicago



'Art for Life' gears up for annual auction

BY KERRY REID

For years, the Chicago branch of Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS (DIFFA), an organization composed of architecture and interior design professionals, has raised money for AIDS nonprofits. Some of those who've received DIFFA grants include the AIDS Legal Council (now known as the Legal Council for Health Justice), Chicago House and VIDA/SIDA.

However, DIFFA stepped up its profile in the last year through the "Art for Life" auction, which returns for a second year on Thursday, Oct. 18, at Venue West, 221 N. Paulina St. Around 60 works of art—selected through a juried process—will be available at the auction. (Online early bidding begins Monday, Oct. 15.)

For Art for Life committee co-chair Oliver Aguilar, a senior designer with Gooch Design Studio, the auction isn't just about raising money and awareness. It's also about creating community and connections for the artists themselves. And as an avid art collector himself (he estimates he owns about 500 pieces of original work), Aguilar also wanted to help people just starting out as collectors be able to find good work at affordable prices.

"We want to have everyone that comes to our auction to be able to go home with an original piece of art," said Aguilar. "We believe everyone deserves good original art." So he advocated for creating an auction similar to those that have been held by DIFFA chapters in other cities. In the past, Aguilar said "We auctioned off furniture and things that were related to the architectural and interior design businesses."

One way to get original art for less at the auction is through the "Off the Wall" piece. This collaborative effort consists of a large canvas (around eight feet tall by 20 feet wide) with sec-

ART

tions painted by several of the artists participating in this year's auction. Buyers acquire parts of it through bidding on square footage. So, as Aguilar explained, "I think we started at \$200 per square foot last year. Every 30 minutes it goes down to a lower number. Thirty minutes before the end of the event, it's \$5 per square foot. But you may not get the section you want, which is your risk if you wait."

The committee did have to put some restrictions on the kinds of art submitted. Aguilar noted that they've also limited the number of pieces. "We had way too much last year because I think we were just super-excited to receive so many artists who wanted to participate," he said. He added "We can't take anything bigger than six feet by six feet." (The Off the Wall piece is an obvious exception.) Aguilar also noted that video art isn't featured, although the auction does have a sculpture this year. "We have photography, a variety of painting styles such as abstract and figurative in all types of mediums, from decoupage to oils and acrylics and other mixed media."

But Art for Life isn't just a one-night event. As Aguilar noted, there are "pop-up" parties throughout the year, where participating artists give a sneak preview of the work they're donating. On Thursday, September 20, the BLNC yoga studio in the West Loop provided the wall space for several pieces. Artists and patrons mixed and mingled over hors d'oeuvres and drinks as a string trio played in the background.

Justin Suico, a painter and native Chicagoan, was there with one of his pieces titled *Invictus*, a vibrant abstract in red and gold with elements of graffiti art. He was also part of last year's auc-

tion.

"It's been a great introduction to other curators and collectors," Suico said. "So often when you donate to auctions, you don't know what happens to the piece." By contrast, he stayed in touch with the buyer of the painting he donated last year. Through the connections he made with the auction, he's also participated in some "live" painting events (creating art on the spot) as well as other pop-up parties with DIFFA.

Fine-art photographer Gail Mancuso noted that the mix of "cultural event and community effort" makes Art for Life stand out. "Art is almost secondary to the community vision," she said.

But as Aguilar noted, the quality of the work, even from artists who may not be well known yet, has been improving. This year's jurors included Richard Bentham of the Smithsonian Institution,



Art for Life committee co-chair Oliver Aguilar. Photo from Art For Life Chicago

Aron Packer of Leslie Hindman Auctioneers, and Laura-Caroline Johnson of the DePaul Art Museum.

Bringing in new patrons from outside DIFFA's usual target audience has also been important for Aguilar. "Last year we succeeded in having a mixed group of people coming in. We did have our steady supporters in the architectural and interior design industries, but we had new buyers out there who were not part of it." Aguilar

estimates that they raised \$80,000 last year. This is less than DIFFA auctions in other cities, but he notes that those cities, such as Dallas, are partnering with major art museums, while Chicago's Art for Life is still growing up from the grassroots.

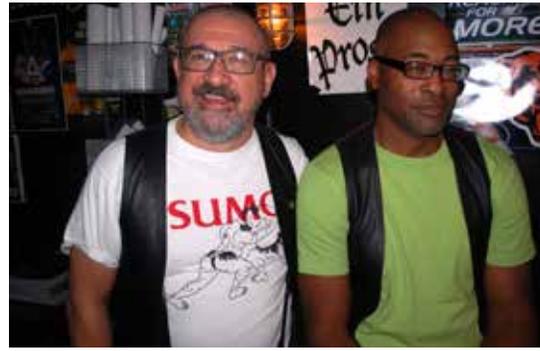
One poignant aspect of the auction is the "Memoriam" section. This year, work by the late Kieran McGonnell, donated by his partner, Gregg Driben, will be featured. The Irish-born McGonnell, who had relocated from Brooklyn to Chicago before his death from a head injury in 2011, was celebrated for working across a wide range of subjects—some inspired by Celtic themes. At the pop-up party, one of his abstracts as well as a Warholian Pop Art homage to a Van Gogh self-portrait adorned the walls.

Aguilar noted that raising awareness about HIV and AIDS is perhaps even more important now that the disease isn't dominating headlines as it did at the height of the crisis. "I think we need to have an understanding that even though it's not a deadly disease based on the media reports anymore, extensive research still needs to happen. I am doing this work for my friends and people I know that have it and I want to support them." Suico noted that for people of his generation (he is in his early 30s), there's "a false sense of security" about the risks of the disease.

Many of the organizations that benefit from Art for Life work with chronically underserved populations, including homeless people and youth of color. Aguilar said "I actually see and shake hands with the people who receive the money, along with the rest of my DIFFA team." Building lasting connections with them is part of the continuum with building connections with the artists who contribute their work.

"It is so much more than them giving their art for a donation," said Aguilar. "We consider them as a family from now on."

Art for Life Chicago will take place 6 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 18, at Venue West, 221 N. Paulina St. Tickets are \$100 (including cocktails and "bites"); call 312-644-6412 or visit DIFFAChicago.org.



TOUCHE

Feeling the togetherness of American Brotherhood Weekend.

Joseph Stevens Photography

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 Chaõs, 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 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.: **Divas' 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.



BILLY Masters

"Please give it up for Garrett Colton."—Mariah Balenciaga introduces **Garrett Clayton** at Gay Days Anaheim. Oops. Clayton said, "Thanks, Mariah, for getting my last name wrong." I would have added the word "bitch," but y'know, I'm a professional.

With all the news we're being bombarded with day in and day out, it's not surprising that most media outlets didn't cover my being detained by TSA. It all happened after leaving Masters Manor in Boston for Los Angeles. At Boston's Logan Airport, security flagged what was termed as a "suspicious mass" in my luggage. Excuse me—did they inadvertently give my bag a mammogram? Upon further inspection, the officer discovered a large unidentified metallic item. That's when it hit me—Big Mama Masters had sent me off with a baked potato wrapped in aluminum foil. Imagine: I almost missed my flight over a suspicious potato. Thank God it wasn't loaded!

Moments after I landed at LAX, the police raided **Cher's** Malibu estate! Although the Dancing Queen was not in residence, the fuzz weren't looking for her—they wanted her assistant's nephew. Allegedly, said 23-year-old lad is accused of supplying narcotics to someone who had a drug overdose. My God—hasn't Cher suffered enough?

In addition to many fabulous things I have on my upcoming agenda (including my virgin excursion to New Orleans—and for Halloween, no less), I am thrilled to be attending the Point Foundation's Gala on Oct. 13. As I've told you many times in the past, this is one of my favorite non-profits. Point supplies scholarships to LGBTQ (and probably other letters of the alphabet) kids to attend college—and most of these kids have been thrown out by their families because they're gay! At the upcoming gala, **Eric McCormack** is being honored with the Impact Reward, and there will be a performance by **Leona Lewis**. Check them out at PointFoundation.org.

Britain's Royal Family is always good for some scandal. This week, we hear **one of Queen Elizabeth's gay footmen** has quit. First, I have no idea how many footmen QEII has—I mean, she's only got two feet! Be that as it may, the gay footman (as if there's only one gay footman) quit because he was told by the royal household management that he needed to "tone down the gayness!" Girl, he's the queen's footman—it doesn't get gayer than that! As it happens, Ollie Roberts is not only the queen's first openly gay footman; he was her personal footman. Apparently, the 21-year-old Ollie is quite active on social media and has given interviews to lots of gay press. He was accused of "courting publicity" and demoted to just being a regular footman—which is ultimately why he quit. Unless he was taking selfies with Lizzie's feet or wearing open-toed shoes, I say leave him be.

I don't watch any of those Real Housewife shows (except for the one where I confronted **Kim Zolciak**—P.S. Where are my residual checks??). But



Garrett Clayton (center) did not get a proper introduction recently, Billy says.

Photo by Jerry Nunn

last week, **Michael Darby**, who is the husband of one of the Real Housewives of Potomac, was accused of getting "handsy" with another man on the set! According to the report, 59-year-old Darby has been charged with criminal sexual assault and improper sexual contact for allegedly groping a male cameraman.

That's the legalese, but lemme break it down for you: Cameraman Orville Palmer claims Darby grabbed his butt and gave it a firm squeeze. When Palmer said, "What the fuck?" (an appropriate response from a union cameraman), Mikey allegedly gave him a "flirtatious look." That's one way of looking at it. But I have found that the "flirtatious," "nauseous" and "Do you smell that?" looks are all pretty similar. I'm gonna need more than that. I didn't have to look far: It turns out this is not the first time Darby has been accused of groping another man. During the first season of the show, he was seen grabbing a guy's butt on the dance floor. His wife said, "It's a joke. My man has sex with me, he loves me and he gives it to me good. Whatever he does in joking manners is not a reflection of my man's sexuality." Or is it? As it turns out, the Montgomery County state's attorney's office has dropped charges due to "insufficient evidence."

Have you heard about this ill-conceived remake of West Side Story that **Steven Spielberg** is making? After all the hullabaloo about finding unknowns through an open casting, Spielberg ended up casting **Ansel Elgort** as Tony. Here's a little footnote to the story—your beloved Billy was actually privy to a conversation between composer **Leonard Bernstein** and **Michael Eisner** when he was heading Disney. Eisner wanted to remake "WSS" as an animated feature with cats playing all the roles. Needless to say, it never happened—but he bought us all lunch.

I've already mentioned that I'll be cavorting



in New Orleans over Halloween. But people everywhere can celebrate Oct. 28 when NBC airs A Very Wicked Halloween. This special, subtitled "Celebrating 15 Years on Broadway," centers on Wicked, and brings together the musical's original stars **Idina Menzel** and **Kristin Chenoweth** to host and perform. Must see, indeed.

The cast of the Broadway hit *Head Over Heels* just recorded its original cast album—with a bonus track. The performers assembled the classic *Go-Go's*'s lineup to re-record "This Town," which will be the first new studio recording from *The Go-Go's* in over 15 years. It drops digitally Oct. 12 and physically Nov. 9.

When I'm head over heels about a new release from *The Go-Go's*, it's definitely time to end yet another column. You don't need a Presidential alert to remind you to check out BillyMasters.com—the site that features lots of guys with their heels over head. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before that gay footman gets a job giving pedicures! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.



the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Showroom Food Hall; Conn's Catering

BY ANDREW DAVIS

The purposes of a food court or hall is to make sure patrons have a variety of culinary items to choose from—and to make said items are tasty.

On both counts, the Marriott Marquis' Showroom Food Hall (2121 S. Prairie Ave.; <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/restaurant/chimq-marriott-marquis-chicago/>) succeeds. The first of its kind at any Marriott restaurant, the food hall manages to incorporate an automotive theme (hence the name) with stops that offer everything from pizza to baked potatoes—along with tables that feature games (tic-tac-toe and more), outlets for charging and even a retro music player with headphones.

As for the stops at Showroom, they include



Showroom Food Hall.
PR photo

Revolution Coffee & Sweets, The Nomad, Argosy, Winged Warrior and Hot Licks (seriously).

What Revolution offers is quite obvious—and delicious. I'm not a coffee drinker, but the wondrous sweets are enough to attract anyone. Towering pies (including the phenomenal banana-cream option) sit next to tempting hand pies and other desserts—and the dispositions of the workers are almost as sweet as the items they sell.

For those who need to unwind during lunch, The Nomad might be the solution; get a brew, wine or cocktails while chatting with a co-worker or friend. And Argosy is a great retro food truck where one can choose from a selection of

sandwiches and other dishes with names like Holy Bologna, Mama Bear and Pho-Show.

And, yes, Winged Warrior has wings—but there's so much more, including pizza and charcuterie (!). Lastly, Hot Licks was probably my favorite stop, as guests can get baked potatoes or sweet potatoes and choose from dozens of toppings, ranging from marshmallows to pulled pork.

Not only does Showroom have enough variety to keep you coming back for me, but you may not even want to vary things because you'll become addicted to the guilty pleasures you order initially. Try the spot—you'll like it, indeed.

Conn's caters to couples

On Oct. 3, Conn's Catering held an event at Chicago Mosaic School that was primarily for engaged couples, event planners and others.

Various exhibitors were present, such as Dish & Decor (which loans vintage china—a current trend—for various events) and AngiLily Floral Studio. However, all eyes and taste buds were mainly directed toward Conn's (1535 W. Devon Ave.; <http://www.conncatering.com/>), which offered a variety of tables and passed hors d'oeuvres for attendees to enjoy.

Among the standouts were the chicken piccata (a simple dish that was expertly done), rumaki, focaccia with pesto aioli, and corn fritters. However, the main attention-grabber was a mac'n cheese bar (with martini glasses for the pasta)

that had various toppings to choose from, such as scallions, bacon bits—and more cheese.

It's not hard to see why Conn's has been around for decades.

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



From the Conn's Catering event at Chicago Mosaic School.

Photo by Andrew Davis



JACKHAMMER

Take a bite of Kink It: Vampirism,
Sat., October 5.
Joseph Stevens Photography

BOOK REVIEW

And Then We Danced: A Voyage into the Groove

by Henry Alford
\$26; Simon & Schuster; 229
pages

REVIEW BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

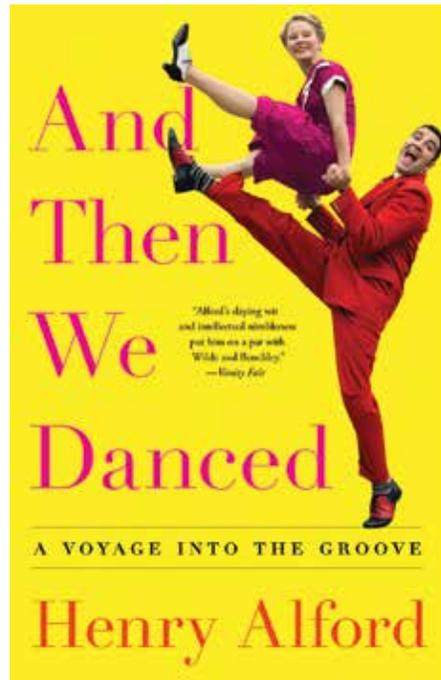
You can't stop your feet.

They need to move, to tap-tap-tap, to side step, and do-si-do. The music's on and you gotta move. You can't help it, your toes gotta go and in *And Then We Danced*, by Henry Alford, you take the lead.

Think of all the times you danced in your life.

Your first was likely some bouncy-toddler thing you did, and the adults around you laughed. Later, you endured embarrassing and awkward boy-girl classes, or school events until you became cool (even if only in your mind) and snuck into clubs. You've danced at weddings, for fun, for joy; and Alford has danced for work. He's a journalist who immerses himself in his subject in order to write about it but, in the case of dance, he's been immersed his whole life.

Dance, he says, is a "universal language." If you suddenly found yourself in Siberia and you began dancing, nobody would mistake what you were



doing. It's an art, yes—but it's so much more.

Dance, he says, is a way of "Social Entrée." Co-tillions and debutante balls are good examples, dancing in a club falls into this category, and if you ever took classes from an Arthur Murray studio, you get the picture.

Politics can step onto the dance floor, Alford says. Think about your favorite candidate on the

campaign trail, dancing with potential constituents. Or think of the cakewalk, a dance that was "Originally devised as a way for slaves to mock their masters..."

Teenagers know that dance can be a form of rebellion; icons such as Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham knew that, too. Dance can be a form of emotional release, happy, sad, or angry, and it can involve one's entire body, almost without thought. Any good church choir can tell you that dance is spiritual. With the right group, it can bring on feelings of nostalgia. And dance, if you need it, can be healing.

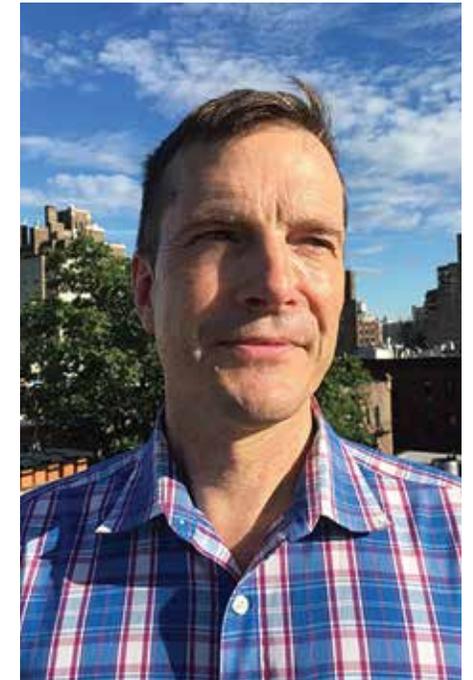
There're a few pleasant little surprises to this book about moving your body: it's also author Alford's memoir, and it's a series of mini-biographies of dancers you may know and admire. And it's delightful.

Part of the reason is that Alford uses his youth as example here: he was a gawky kid who tried very hard to ignore his gayness, an attempt that made junior high boy-girl dances understandably more awkward. His tales are mostly universal (who didn't hate forced dance class?) and they'll make you laugh, while anecdotes of researching to write this book—Alford dives into dance, remember—are woven between the life stories of Murray, Duncan, Graham, Savion Glover, Toni Bentley, and other dancers, as well as lighter-side dance history through the ages.

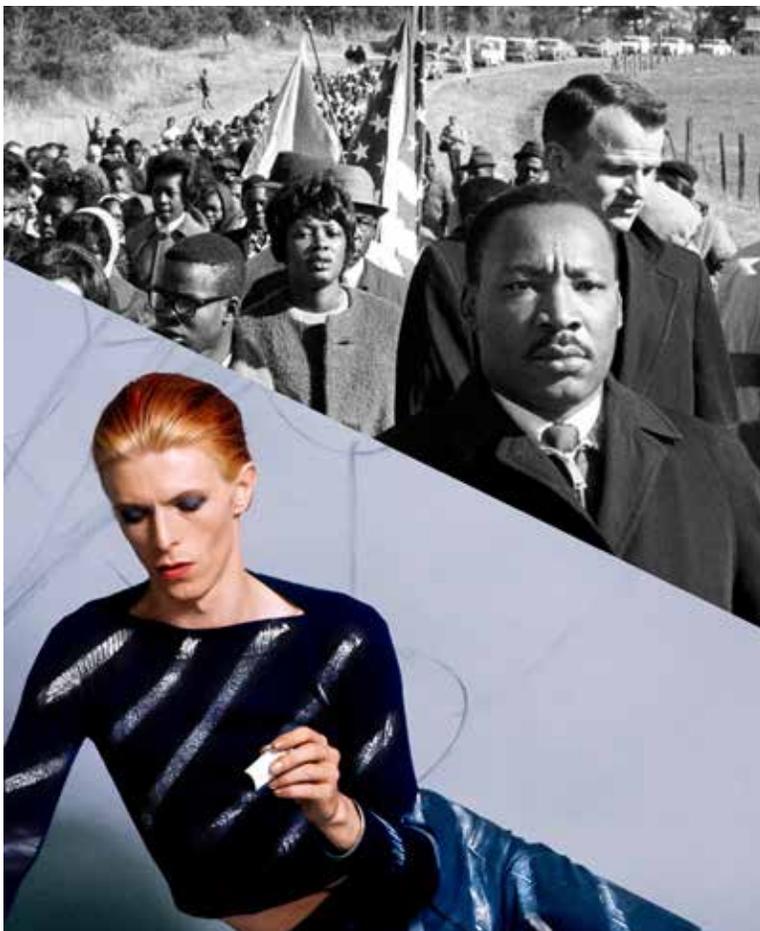
Yes, there are "Awww, naw" moments along here with the Nae Nae, but the joy in this book supersedes any sadness. All in all, it's a quickstepper, and for a hooper, ballet lover, line dancer, or

anyone who shimmies and bops, "And Then We Danced" will have you on your feet.

Want more? Then look for "Would It Kill You to Stop Doing That" and "How to Live," both by Henry Alford.



Henry Alford.
Photo by Greg Villepique



ACTIVISTS AND ICONS

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& EDUCATION CENTER
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© Steve Schapiro courtesy of Fahey Klein Gallery.

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Oct. 10

Self-defense class for LGBTQs As a part of its series of events for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Center on Halsted will be hosting 90-minute self-defense classes, taught by IMPACT Chicago, to help empower LGBTQ community members to protect themselves in the face of interpersonal violence. 6:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/events/1106911946126486/>

Thursday, Oct. 11

Personal PAC 25th Annual Awards Luncheon Illinois organization whose sole mission is elect to pro-choice leaders and defeat anti-choice candidates with former two-term Michigan governor and attorney general Jennifer Granholm speaking. 12:00pm Chicago Hilton and Towers 720 S Michigan Ave Chicago <http://PersonalPAC.org>

Proud To Run kickoff party \$20 suggested donation gets you one drink ticket and a chance to win a fabulous prize. Sign up for Proud To Run 2019 for a low registration price. 7-9 pm Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1858183790939444/>

More Than A Month: Pariah Screening & Discussion Adepero Oduye, portrays Alike (pronounced ah-lee-kay), a 17-year-old African-American woman who lives in Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood, quietly but firmly embrac-



STRIKE UP THE BAND Saturday, Oct. 13

Lakeside Pride Jazz Orchestra will hold a "Love and Marriage" concert at Center on Halsted.
Photo by Chuck Kramer

ing her identity as a lesbian. 6:30pm - 8:30pm Oak Park Public Library Maze Branch, 845 Gunderson Ave, Oak Park

Athleisure Underwear Collection Richard Dayhoff, celebrity catwalk and local designers. Latino Fashion Week Chicago. Reception 7 p.m. 8:00pm Block 37, 108 N. State St, Chicago., <http://www.latinofashionwk.com/>

Friday, Oct. 12

Queer Genre Fiction Book Group Each second Friday 7:00pm - 9:00pm Gerber Hart Library and Archives 6500 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.gerberhart.org>

Judy Garland: Come Rain or Come Shine

Jeff Award-winning dynamo Angela Ingersoll (End of the Rainbow) superbly captures the emotional and vocal power of Judy Garland live in concert. With her great big voice and naturally winning humor, Ingersoll soars in this loving homage. Iconic songs include Over the Rainbow, Get Happy and The Man That Got Away. Through Oct. 14. 8:00pm Nichols Concert Hall, 1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston <http://angelaingersoll.com> Tickets: <http://musictheaterworks.com>

Saturday, Oct. 13

Open House Chicago 2018 Free public festival that offers behind-the-scenes access to more than 250 buildings across Chicago. Tour soaring skyscrapers, repurposed mansions, opulent theaters, exclusive private clubs, industrial facilities, cutting-edge offices and breathtaking sacred spaces. Free 8:00am Chicago Architecture Center <http://openhousechicago.org>

Women's March Chicago March to the Polls 2018 March as the polls open for early voting in Illinois. Celebrate new voters, in particular young women, immigrants, and other youth, and get facetime with elected officials, guest speakers and live musical performances. 9:00am Grant Park 337 E. Randolph St Chicago <http://www.womensmarch-chicago.org>

Phase VII Dedication of the Legacy Walk Two bronze memorial plaques on Halsted commemorating Marsha P. Johnson and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky complete the only outdoor LGBT history museum in the world. Doors open 12:30p.m. for pre-ceremony reception 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. "Remembering Marsha P. Johnson." \$10,

refreshments. Part II outdoor inductee dedication ceremonies follow at 2 p.m. Free and open to the public 1:00pm Begin with reception at Center on Halsted, 3656 N. Halsted. Followed by a Dedication Celebration featuring live music and a silent auction at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St. Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/legacy-walk-dedication-7-tickets-50592824500>

Little Black Pearl Women's Action Council at Center on Halsted presents a night of celebration and recognition of Tamara Allen, Lora Branch, and Megan Carney. DJ Lineup: Rae Chardonnay, Rhated R, and DJ Castro. Hosted by Gwen La Roka. \$50 early tickets include open bar and gourmet bites 1:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://bit.ly/2MkrZvw>

By Women for Women Presents: Harlem Renaissance Women's Action Council throws a night of celebration and recognition of outstanding contributions from honorees Tamara Allen, Lora Branch and Megan Carney. The Harlem Renaissance themed event will feature sultry performances, music and dancing. Early ticket \$50 includes open bar from 6-8 pm and gourmet bites from Premier Catering & Events. 6:00pm - 10:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted St.; <http://community.centeronhalsted.org/bwfwevent>

Lakeside Pride Jazz Orchestra's Love and Marriage Musical nuptial favorites performed by the Lakeside Pride Jazz Orchestra, Strayhorns Jazz Combo, and the Wilde Cabaret. Presented by 90.9fm WDCB. 7:30pm - 9:30pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago Tickets: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/love-and-marriage-presented-by-909fm-wdcb-tickets-49321559111>

Sunday, Oct. 14

2018 Victory Fund Chicago Champagne Brunch Meet President & CEO, former Houston Mayor Annise Parker, and hear about Victory Fund's groundbreaking LGBTQ candidates this cycle. 11:00am - 2:00pm Chez Chicago, 247 E Ontario St 2nd floor; <https://victoryfund.org/event/chicago-champagne-brunch/>

Tuesday, Oct. 16

Putting the 'T' First: Honoring the Role of the Transgender Community in the LGBT Rights Movement Part Two Coalition of community agencies will focus on expanding awareness of the transgender community. Part 2 will focus on the lived experience of members of the trans community, behavioral health support services, and support services for identity issues from childhood and up. Free 3:00pm - 5:00pm Lake View Presbyterian Church 716 W Addison St., Chicago

Thursday, Oct. 18

DIFFA/Chicago's Art For Life Chicago Juried art auction and exhibition. Painting, photography, sculpture, other 3D media, live and silent auctions, ranging in price from \$50 to \$5,000. 6:00pm Venue West, 221 N. Paulina St. <http://artforlifechicago.org>

Jill Soloway Discussing forthcoming memoir She Wants It: Desire, Power, and Toppling the Patriarchy. Guests Hannah Gadsby, Pidgeon Pagonus, Precious Brady Davis, Faith Soloway, Elaine Soloway 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://jillsolowaychicago.brownpapertickets.com/>

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