

A black and white portrait of Cole Escola, a young man with short dark hair and light eyes, looking upwards and to the right. He is wearing a dark, textured, long-sleeved top. The background is solid black.

COLE ESCOLA:

**FROM CRAIGSLIST
TO THE PARK WEST**

PAGE 10

**Cole
Escola.**
Photo by Allison
Michael Orenstein



ARTS+THEATER

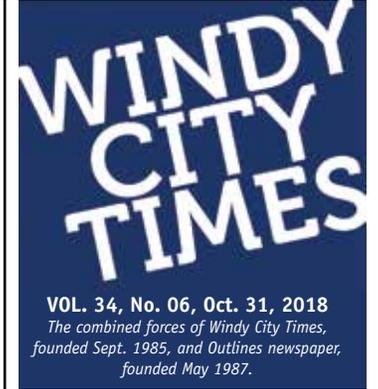
WEEKLY

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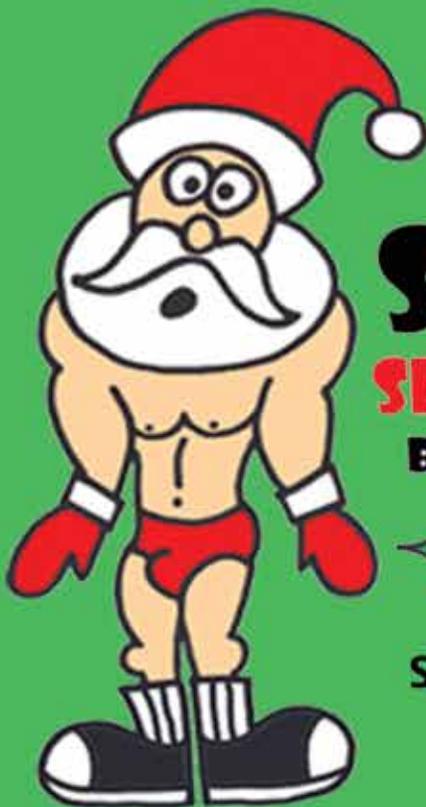
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THEATER REVIEW

The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas

By: Ricardo Gamboa

At: Free Street Theater, 1419 W. Blackhawk St

Tickets: <http://clata.org/destinos-main>;

\$20-\$25

Runs through: Nov. 2

BY AMELIA OROZCO



Ulises Acosta in *The Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de la Rosas*.

Photo by Alejandro Reyes

Here are the ingredients for a Ricardo Gamboa production: A community, strong Latino, black and queer characters, and most importantly, supernatural abilities. Oh, and mutant Chihuahuas. You will find all of these in the *Real Life Adventures of Jimmy De Las Rosas*. The show is part of the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA's) 2nd International Latino Theater Festival.

You may have seen *Jimmy de las Rosas*' grand-

mother (Ruth Guerra) before. She sells fruit, snow cones and Mexican corn in Little Village. It is also likely you have met met Juani (Mia Arevalo), a transgender woman loved by everyone for her sassy spirit. And you may know someone

like Jimmy himself (Ulises Acosta). He's a young kid, loves baseball and a DREAMer. The only difference between a kid you may know and Jimmy de las Rosas is that Jimmy can move things with his mind.

He plans on using this to his advantage by becoming a professional baseball player. This way, like many other boys and girls in Chicago, he will fulfill his dream of becoming a true hero. He will be the one to move his family out of such a dangerous neighborhood, and his mom can quit her factory job.

There are only two problems with this plan—his protective mom (Elizabeth Nungaray) and his worrying grandmother. Because they are undocumented, working hard to make ends meet, they are afraid of being found out and deported. They beg him to keep his powers to himself as they are not pleased with his antics in the baseball field. So Jimmy complies for as long as he can.

That's until he learns of the hundreds of people disappearing from the neighborhood, and when someone close to him falls prey to this, he has no choice but to act fast. He befriends Ayana

(Ashley Bland) and Eddie (Kyle Johnson), two homeless black kids. He soon find out that they have more in common than meets the eye—special abilities. The trio are still discovering their strength and the true purpose of their gifts when they set out into the night to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Who or what is the mysterious kidnapper, and will Jimmy be a hero or just another boy from the hood with shattered dreams?

Worthy of becoming an after-school special, *Real Life Adventures of Jimmy de las Rosas* touches on issues impacting communities today, from the undocumented status of some Chicago families to police brutality and (spoiler alert) pollution.

Get to Jimmy's neighborhood and experience the adventure in Free Street Theater's before the show's run ends.

The Chicago Latino Theater Alliance (CLATA's) 2nd International Latino Theater Festival runs through Nov. 2. For more information about addition Festival productions, go to <http://clata.org/destinos-main>.

THEATER REVIEW

Small Mouth Sounds

Playwright: Beth Wohl

At: A Red Orchid Theatre, 1531 N. Wells Ave.

Tickets 312-943-8722 or

ARedOrchidTheatre.org; \$30-\$40

Runs through: Dec. 9

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

The wordlessness of A Red Orchid Theatre's *Small Mouth Sounds* takes getting used to, at least initially. But playwright Beth Wohl's 100-minute drama about a "silent retreat" lacks nothing in drama or storytelling. In director Shade Murray's seven-person ensemble, the intricate lives of six retreat participants and their increasingly frazzled teacher are vivid, compelling and dynamic.

A largely dialogue-free play could seem gimmicky, more of an exercise for actors than anything an audience could fully appreciate. But

Wohl has descriptive powers that many more conventional wordsmiths lack. Murray's ensemble is up to the formidable task of creating characters largely without the benefit of words.

As the group trudges in toting various backpacks and satchels, each individual in it takes shape. Rodney (Travis A. Knight) is some kind of Youtube yogi, tall, supple, and a fan of shirtlessness, leather necklaces and the micro-bikini briefs that male Bikram devotees favor. Joan (Jennifer Engstrom) and Judy (Cynthia Hines) arrive as a couple, their faces etched with stress and hope. Alicia (Heather Chrisler) is wried with tension and can't stop twiddling with her phone. Ned (Levi Holloway) has the bearing of somebody who has been beaten down, repeatedly, for years. Jan (Lawrence Grimm) is uneasy, all suspicious glances and awkward limbs.

Wohl incrementally, ingeniously illuminates the reasons that brought everyone to this wilderness of wordlessness. Holloway gets a monologue (in the retreat's "satsang," aka a sacred gathering and/or Q and A session) that reveals a lifetime of woes that would try Job. It's to Holloway's credit

that his soap-opera worthy litany makes Ned a figure of genuine empathy. You'll feel for the guy, even if he is all but wearing the thumb-and-index finger "L" on his forehead.

Engstrom and Hines' Joan and Judy are also dealing with tragedy—or rather, the very real possibility that tragedy will hit them both with tremendous force in the very near future. When Joan has a meltdown that sends her fleeing for the nearest Starbucks, it's as primal as it is relatable. Hines' Judy doesn't have the same emotional pyrotechnics, but in her stillness, there's immeasurable, unmistakable anger and sorrow.

Chrisler shows the reason behind Alicia's inability to unplug with ferocious impact during a feral moment when the only sounds are screams and the lulling birdsong of the forest. Rodney, meanwhile, is wholly fascinating. He's one of those people who seem to glide with ease through the world: Exceptionally, conventionally beautiful by any measure and wholly at ease with his body. Rodney's issues, Wohl leads us to conclude, aren't necessarily rooted in things that have been done to him but rather things that he has done.

Gerachis' off-stage teacher offers guidance you can find in just about any self-help book you'd care to peruse, but it's not without wisdom. Still, her soothing tranquility cracks as the retreat continues, eventually revealing that enlightenment is always a destination, never a place one actually reaches.

Grimm has one of the toughest assignments as Jan, for reasons that don't become clear until the final moments of the production. There's a short, searing (wordless) moment when he reveals the reason for his stay, a quick shrug that makes up understand precisely what has happened to him. But when the retreat ends and the others grasp in relief at the connective tissue that words provide, Jan remains misunderstood and isolated.

Sound designer Jeffrey Levin fills the space with the alternately soothing and fearsome sounds of untrammelled nature, while Myron Elliott-Cisneros' costumes provide a thousand words (at least) worth of character development.

CRITICS' PICKS

MUSICAL REVIEW

Women of Soul

Written and directed by: Daryl D. Brooks

At: Black Ensemble Theater, 4450 N. Clark St.

Tickets: BlackEnsemble.org; \$55-\$65

Runs through: Jan. 27, 2019

BY JEAN ALBRIGHT

If you're in need of music to feed your soul, dance on over to Black Ensemble Theater for *Women of Soul* (With a Tribute to the Queen), written and directed by Black Ensemble Theater Associate Director Daryl D. Brooks. The queen, of course, is Aretha Franklin.

Most of the singers in this talented ensemble hold up fiercely against the originals. A few knock it out of the auditorium.

Tribute subjects include Mahalia Jackson, Whitney Houston (a fantastic medley to end Act 1), Natalie Cole, Donna Summer, Etta James, Anita Baker, Diana Ross, Janet Jackson, Mavis Staples, Janis Joplin, Jill Scott and Big Mama Thornton. Some numbers are done in full or medley form, others are just a taste of the divas.

The cast includes Cynthia Carter, Robin DaSilva, Jerica Exum, Hannah Efsits, Dwight Neal, Colleen Perry, Rhonda Preston, Jessica Seals, Aerial Williams and Jayla Williams-Craig.

The singers play multiple divas, and standout voices include Carter, Seals, Preston, DaSilva and Williams. But they all give their heart—and

soul.

The creative team includes Denise Karczewski (set and lighting design), Aaron Quick (projection design), David Samba (sound), Reuben Echoles (costume design) and Nic Bellanger (technical direction).

The excellent musicians making the show work smoothly are led by musical director/arranger Robert Reddrick (drums). The musicians include Adam Sherod (keyboards), Dolpha Fowler Jr. (keyboard 2), Mark Miller (bass) and Gary Baker (guitar).

The stories told are simple, with just a few facts of the main singers featured, and one could beg to see many more divas from the past. But this is rousing, invigorating show, and a terrific escape in these troubling times.

Flyin' West, American Blues Theater @ Stage 773, through Nov. 3. In all-Black Nicodemus, KS in 1898, four feisty farming women deal with a rogue male. An endearing cast puts over this enjoyable melodrama-comedy blend. JA JA

Blue Man Group, Briar Street Theater, open run. If your nieces and nephews are too old for Bunnacula, but too young for Golden Girls: Be Afraid, the silent blue men with the splashy drums and oozing vests still conjure some spell-binding spectacle. MSB

Frankenstein, Remy Bumpo Theatre Company at Theater Wit, through Nov. 11. The theater company associated with tidy classics embraces British playwright Nick Dear's visceral interpretation of Mary Shelley's horror masterpiece to deliver what may be the scariest menace ever created by technology gone bad. MSB.

—By Abarbanel and Barnidge



Betty Buckley and Lewis J. Stadlen in Hello, Dolly!

Photo by Julieta Cervantes

THEATER REVIEW

Hello, Dolly!

Authors: Jerry Herman and Michael Stewart
At: Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St.
Tickets: BroadwayInChicago.com; \$27-\$95
Runs through: Nov. 17

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

Broadway in Chicago's touring Hello Dolly! is a gigantic spectacle that has everything a lavish musical needs: rainbow gowns, fleets of impeccably timed dancers, grand set-pieces, perfect pitch, and a gleefully mugging Broadway veteran at the helm. It's perfect; so why does it feel like a bit of cotton candy dissolving in water?

Director Jerry Zaks and choreographer Warren Carlyle have crafted an inoffensive production that takes no risks, has no speaking roles for actors of color, and offers minimal commentary on life in 2018. But if you're mostly on board for one woman's descent down a red carpeted staircase while a chorus of waiters sing her name, you've come to the right place.

It's 1895 and cranky Yonkers half-millionaire Horace Vandergelder (Lewis J. Stadlen), has decided to take a second wife. He consults Dolly Gallagher Levi (Betty Buckley) to arrange the match. Dolly however, would much rather have Horace's estate and fortune to herself. She schemes of ways to introduce him to unsuitable women, woo him and trick a marriage proposal out of him.

To add to the chaos, Dolly has also promised to help artist Ambrose Kemper (Garrett Hawe) to wed Horace's niece Ermengarde (Morgan Kirner), despite her uncle's objections. Oh, and Horace's shop clerks, Cornelius (Nic Rouleau) and Barnaby (Jess LeProtto) have stumbled into the fray, inadvertently tricking a widowed milliner Irene Molloy (AnaLisa Leaming) and her apprentice Minnie Fay (Kristen Hahn) into thinking they are wealthy playboys. Of course there's singing and dancing, that's the point of having an exclamation point in the title, right?

Betty Buckley's Dolly will have you eating out of her hand. She has the beating heart, the soaring vocal, and the comic timing (holding just long enough for those balcony laughs) you've been wanting

Supporting the grand dame are Lewis J. Stadlen, simmering with cartoonish gruff as Vandergelder, and Jess LeProtto speaking volumes with just spinning arms and feet as Barnaby. Nic Rouleau and AnaLisa Leaming flood the mezzanine with perfect vocals as Cornelius and Irene, and Kristen Hahn? Lock up your impressionable comediennes or she will easily inspire a dozen hilarious copycats in Chicago alone.

Make no mistake, this Hello, Dolly! is a testament to what good funding and a ridiculously talented cast can do. But, seeing the safest musical theatre libretto staged with the safest cast only makes you wonder if a more inclusive staging would have made a good production profound. For all this talent and precision, and for the sheer number of costume changes, I wish these artists had something more substantive to say.

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SPOTLIGHT

Still searching for (something free, cool and fascinating) to do Halloween? It's final call for **Director's Haven 2018**, Haven Theatre's showcase of early-career directors. Charlotte Drover's directs Madame Rachilde's "horror ballet" The Crystal Spider (pictured above); Airos Sung-En Medill directs Josefina Lopez' Simply Maria and Dani Wieder directs William Inge's People in the Wind. The Haven Theatre production starts at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 31 at the Den Theatre, 1331 N. Milwaukee. Tickets are pay-what-you-can; visit HavenTheatreChicago.com.



Photo by Austin D. Oie



David Portillo.
Photo by Simon Pauly

Tenor shines on stage in 'Idomeneo,' finds true love off stage

BY AARON HUNT

David Portillo makes his role debut as Arbace in Mozart's *Idomeneo* at Lyric Opera of Chicago. The tenor has been out on social media for years, but his interview with *Windy City Times* marks coming out in the press.

"This is the first time I'm going to be out that isn't a personal, social media-thing. "I'm happy about it. I had a wedding!," the San Antonio native said of his May nuptials to David Lawrence. "I can't imagine spending my life with anybody else. He makes me the kind of person I strive to be," Portillo said. He and Lawrence live in Minneapolis.

Portillo makes his debut as Arbace (running through Nov. 2), but he's no stranger to Chicago: From 2007-10, Portillo—then in his late 20s—was a member of the Lyric's Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center, a training ground for young singers. Portillo has since returned to the Lyric to sing David in *Die Meistersinger*, Trin in *La fanciulla del West*, and Andres in *Wozzeck*. He returns to the New York's Metropolitan Opera later this season for his debut as the Chevalier de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

The flimsy, fable plot of *Idomeneo* would be laughable if Mozart hadn't blessed it with his genius: King Idomeneo (played at the Lyric by Matthew Polenzani) makes a pact with Neptune. If Neptune saves Idomeneo from a shipwreck, Idomeneo will kill the first person he sees when safely ashore. Arbace is the king's counselor and confidante.

Known for his portrayals of Mozart's tenor roles (Tamino, Don Ottavio, Ferrando, and Belmonte) Portillo wasn't always sure the role of Arbace

would end up in his wheelhouse.

"I saw [a production of *Idomeneo*] a long time ago with Luciano Pavarotti [as King Idomeneo]. I never dreamed that I was going to be a part of something like this. I thought Arbace had great arias, so I learned it years ago. But when I was

OPERA

younger, I didn't know how to handle its vocal challenges," he said.

"I love this opera. There aren't tunes that you've heard a million times. But there are powerful, beautiful things that sound like the emotions of what's going on onstage; you can just feel the theater in the music," Portillo said.

When Portillo was new to the Ryan Center, he faced both the personal stress of being the closet with his family and the professional stresses of a fledgling opera career.

"When I went home, I could talk to my family about what I was doing professionally but I couldn't talk about why I wasn't bringing anybody home or why I hadn't been on dates. I couldn't share what I was going through with my family," he said.

"My father was a minister, and my mother was the music leader at my church," Portillo said. "They raised us up in the most spirit-filled family. We learned how to sing together, and how to keep a tight-knit community. There's group of people there who are still really close to my mom, and really close to me."

When Portillo came out to his parents at 30, a member of that community helped him through. "I have a really good friend who I grew up with in the church who helped me a lot. He didn't ask me, 'Hey David, are you sure you're not gay?' but instead said, 'Let's hang out and talk about who you are, what you like, what you want for your life.'"

"I was held back by my need to make sure my family didn't disown me. Being that age and not having a partner already, they knew, everyone knew. I just had to admit to myself, first and foremost, that that's who I was. (I)t's not a sin,

it is because that's how I was made," he said.

At the Ryan Center, Portillo's professional career flourished. Learning to trust was a crucial part of that.

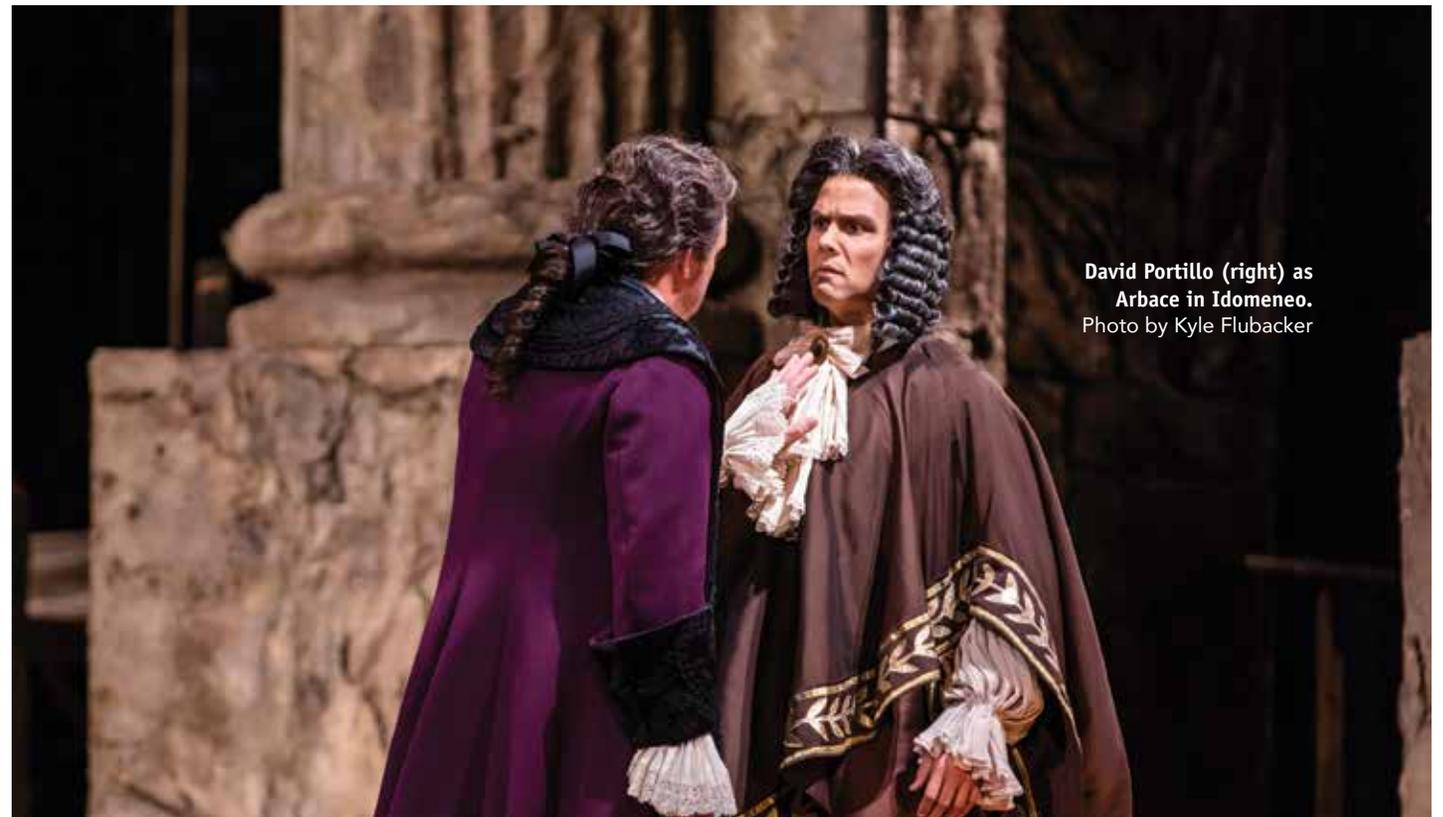
"My first year in the [Ryan Center] program, I remember thinking it's a big season for a young person, but I was very honored to be there. There's a lot of things I could have been better at, and I was hoping to represent myself well.

"By my second year I realized I wasn't going to be given role-assignments I couldn't handle. The biggest lesson I learned was to trust the conductors, coaches, teachers [and] other colleagues to help create the best sort of collaborative experience, which is all this is about, to create something beautiful for the audience."

Like many other industries, the world of opera has been shaken by allegations of sexual harassment and abuse, and criminal investigations into the same. After 40 years at New York's Metropolitan Opera, conductor James Levine was fired in March after allegations that of sexual abuse and harassment. Renowned countertenor David Daniels, who is married to conductor Scott Walters, is currently under investigation by the Houston police department after vocalist Samuel Schultz accused both men of drugging and raping him after a performance at Houston Grand Opera in 2010.

"Gay or straight, being a victim is not a good thing," Portillo said of the scandals and their potential impact on young singers just entering the field. "I don't think that we should ever allow those who have made bad choices to force us back into the closet, to outshine the community we're creating," he said.

Idomeneo plays at Lyric Opera of Chicago, 20 N. Wacker Dr., through Friday, Nov. 2. Tickets are \$49-\$279 each; call 312-827-5600 or visit LyricOpera.org.



David Portillo (right) as Arbace in *Idomeneo*.
Photo by Kyle Flubacker

THEATER REVIEW

In the Canyon

Playwright: Calamity West
At: Jackalope Theatre at the Broadway Armory, 5719 N. Broadway
Tickets: JackalopeTheatre.org; \$30
Runs through: Nov. 25

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Here's the thing about abortions. Despite what Republicans and many men of all persuasions insist, they don't generally leave women with a lifetime of weeping trauma and regret.

As Calamity West underscores with *In the Canyon*, the procedure is fast, safe and about as painful as a severe case of menstrual cramps. As Hope (Liz Sharpe) makes clear in the first segment of *In the Canyon's* five-part, 60-year span, abortion does not result in some baby ghost that haunts you for the rest of your days.

Tellingly, the most traumatic part of Hope's abortion is the ensuing judgment. Sometimes that judgment is merely annoying, as when

her boyfriend (actually, some guy she slept with a few times) has a tantrum because his budget took a hit on account of Hope getting pregnant. Hey, if Hope can afford a post-abortion burrito, why is the boyfriend stuck paying the doctor's bill? And sometimes, as in the not-so-shocking future that *In the Canyon* imagines, that judgment has far more dire consequences.

For those of us who remember the pre-Roe v. Wade world, Wes's depiction of the future is an entirely inaccurate of the past (or present, depending on where in the world you live). Pre-Roe, abortion could mean prison time—or, all too easily, death.

Starting in 2007, *In the Canyon* follows Hope and eventually Hope's daughter Wendy (a magnificent Shariba Rivers) through roughly 60 years. Over the decades, the world of Obama becomes the world of Trump and then a world not unlike Margaret Atwood's *Gilead*.

That a fiftysomething woman could be legally murdered for a legal procedure she had decades earlier seems, on the surface, almost unthinkable. But as deftly directed by Elly Green, *In the Canyon* shows just how the unthinkable becomes normalized.

As that progression unfolds, *In the Canyon* become alternately exhausting and distressing before ultimately landing in violent ca-

tharsis. It's far better to take the energy you'd spend bemoaning your weariness and use it to actually do something—work a phone bank, canvas for progressive candidates, learn to use a shotgun.

West writes like a vise, slowly tightening the screws until her characters are trapped and her audience is rapt. Sharpe's Hope and Rivers' Wendy provide the ferocity that keeps *In the Canyon* moving relentlessly from the present into the foreseeable future. But Green's mostly double-cast supporting cast (Paloma Nozicka, Peter Moore, Andrew Swanson, Diego Colón, Helen Joo Lee and Asia Jackson) is ruthlessly effective. You'll know these people, from the annoying roommate to the scarlet-red, evangelizing relatives you really don't want to see at Thanksgiving.

Green's design team use stark visuals to enrich the story and amp up the tension. Cinderblock gray and deceptively simple, William Boles' set morphs from apartment to prison cell to frontier outpost with grace and efficacy. Shain Longbehn's sound and projection design gives the production a gritty, kinetic, cinematic feel.

West is far too gifted to preach or hammer the obvious, endless hypocrisies of the anti-choice, "Christian" right. Those points come through with insidious, chilling banality, especially when Hope gets together with her family in the wake of the 2017 election.

THEATER REVIEW

Master Class

Playwright: Terrence McNally
At: TimeLine Theatre Company, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave.
Tickets: 773-327-5252;
TimelineTheatre.com; \$42.50-\$56.50
Runs through: Dec. 9

BY KERRY REID

Terrence McNally first wrote about Maria Callas in 1989's *The Lisbon Traviata*, in which "La Divina" is the shared obsession for a group of gay men. By 1995, he put Callas front and center in *Master Class*, based on open-to-the-public sessions Callas conducted for Juilliard students in the early 1970s. The play has drawn stage legends such as Zoe Caldwell, Patti LuPone and Tyne Daly to the role.

Add to that list Janet Ulrich Brooks, whose performance as Callas in TimeLine's current revival is not to be missed. What's astonishing about Brooks' take on the role is that she, like McNally's Callas herself, knows exactly how to calibrate her performance for both her fellow actor/students and for we the audience as she slides from generosity to bitterness and back again.

Although McNally's script provides melodramatic reveries as Callas recalls her unhappy love life (first with a husband much older than she and then with Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis), Nick Bowling's staging and Brooks' smart intense performance never devolve into cheap histrionics. As Brooks' Callas—long retired but still capable of throwing shade on other singers, such as Joan Sutherland—takes a trio of students through their vocal paces, she's also taking us through her own development as an artist and a woman.

Essentially, she's trying to find bits of herself in each of her students—from sweet ingenue soprano Sophie (Molly Hernandez), who improbably insists that she too is "fiery," to smug tenor Tony (Eric Anthony Lopez), to formidable diva-in-waiting Sharon (Keirsten Hodgens). It's the latter, so upset by her first encounter with Callas' caustic side that she runs offstage to vomit, who finally calls out the mentor. "You want to make the world dangerous for everyone, just because it was for you," she accuses. (All three are excellent, but Hodgens' delivery of the letter aria from Verdi's *Macbeth* is stunning.)

Is it a fair cop? The beauty of McNally's script and this



Janet Ulrich Brooks as Maria Callas in *Master Class*.
Photo by Lara Goetsch

production is that it takes no sides. Callas is right to note that too many of us are "looking for an easy way out." Her insistence that her students really listen to the music and do their homework is spot-on—singing is a form of acting. And yet, despite saying that the classes aren't about her ("Poof! I'm invisible!"), inevitably every encounter Brooks' Callas has with the students strips away part of them as well as herself, leaving them exposed and vulnerable. Is she there to help them, or is she more interested in making them—and us—see her as more than a fading legend?

There are plenty of operatic in-jokes here, but like Arnel Sancianco's handsome-but-austere rehearsal room set, those are just the backdrop for a story that could be about any powerful woman mourning her lost gifts and lost loves, yet still struggling to make herself heard.

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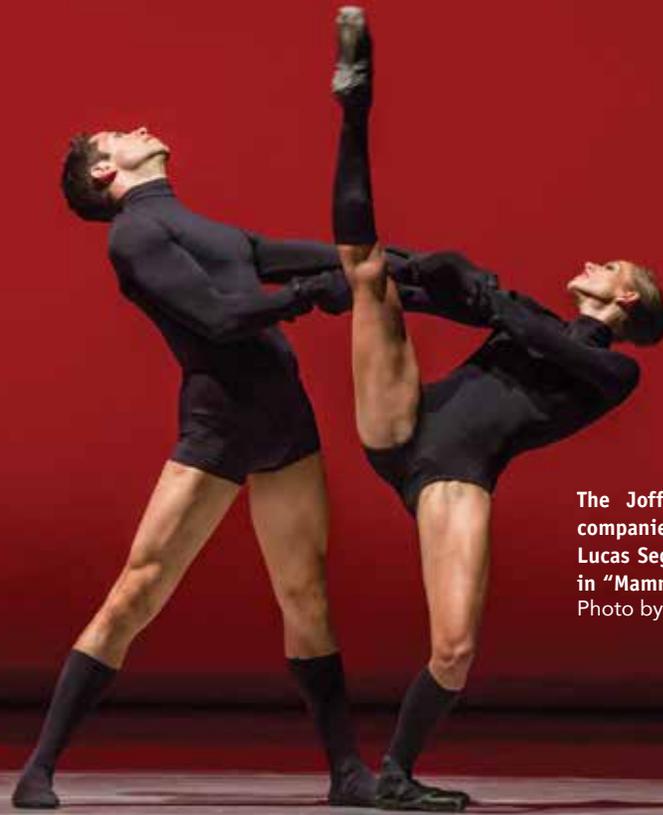
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WT
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Measure for Measure



The Joffrey Ballet is among the many companies listed at ChicagoPlays.com. Lucas Segovia and Anna Gerberich here are in "Mammatus."

Photo by Cheryl Mann

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

As part of its newly expanded arts coverage, Windy City Times is resuming Measure for Measure, a monthly digest of news about classical music in Chicago that first appeared in 2000 but has been on hiatus for several years.

The name references both Shakespeare and a musical score. Of course, a great deal of work in this category is thoroughly modern and contemporary, and we doubt anyone will mistake Philip Glass for Johann Sebastian Bach. What we mean by classical music is work derived from historic formal structures such as trio sonatas, fugues or operas, as well as musical organizations that keep the classical tradition alive. This writer is old enough to remember when it was called long-hair music, in the era before the Beatles changed male hairstyles forever.

Even those who are thoroughly up-to-speed about things symphonic, operatic, choral and chamber may be unaware that one of the best information and ticketing sources for classical music events is the League of Chicago Theatres website, ChicagoPlays.com. For some years now, the League membership has been expanding to include classical music and dance organizations,

not only theater companies, and the result is a website with extensive listings of performing arts goings-on.

Last week, the site had several dozen listings/links for dance, classical music and opera representing both major organizations—such as the Joffrey Ballet, Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Lyric Opera, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Pick-Staiger Hall and Chicago Opera Theater—plus many smaller groups such as Rembrandt Chamber Musicians, Lira Ensemble, the Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company and Petite Opera Productions. Filters allow you to access info by city or 'burbs and select a time period from today to 30 days out. There's also a link (bottom of the page) to Hot Tix, the League's half-price ticket program. These listings are for last-minute or this-weekend performances, with classical music, opera and dance listings appearing from time to time, so it's your go-to place if you are flexible and want to save money.

As we scrolled through the League's music and opera listings, Petite Opera Productions (POP) caught our attention, initially because we weren't familiar with it and then because of POP's slogan, "Saving Opera Heroines From Certain Death." The troupe's website pledges to "take the stuffy out

of opera" with small-scale productions in English and an emphasis on comedy. Seems POP was formed in 2009 by three classically trained vocal-ist comedians.

POP's Nov. 3-18 production of Mozart's Don Giovanni seems to typify what they are all about. They are calling it Don Giovanni #MeToo, and debuting a completely new English translation that updates the story to modern Hollywood where Donny G. is a producer and Leo Porello is his fixer-lawyer and Donna Anna is a starlet. All performances are at the Mary Wilson House Beyer Auditorium of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Park Ridge. Info/tickets: PetiteOpera.org

The violins made by Antonio Stradivari are the most famous in the world, but those made by Giuseppe Guarneri (1698-1744) are nearly as renowned and held by many to be equally superlative or better (a darker tone, some say). His name has been given a modest re-birth in Chicago's newest chamber music venue, Guarneri Hall, a performance space seating 85 at 11 E. Adams St., third floor. The venue, which opened Oct. 23, is acoustically engineered and equipped (lighting, audio, video) for live performances, recording and webcasting, including a three-camera high-definition video capture system and rear

MUSIC

projection capabilities. It's available for rentals. (Contact Executive Director Barbara Goff.)

It's operated by a non-profit concern, Guarneri Hall NFP, which promotes music education by offering live performances at Guarneri Hall and elsewhere in Chicago and by sponsoring music education programs aimed at young people with limited access to classical music. For example, Guarneri Hall events are live streamed via <https://guarnerihall.org>. The next live event at Guarneri Hall is a January 30 tribute to the 200th birthday of Clara Schuman, in which pianist Orion Weiss joins chamber music ensemble Frankly Music in works by both Clara and husband Robert Schuman.

When I was a kid growing up in Highland Park, the high school auditorium became the venue several times a year for classical music concerts featuring professional recitalists or chamber music ensembles. I remember a family friend—who was a clarinetist and a wag—once sent a note backstage to a pianist requesting The Muskrat Ramble as an encore. Obviously, Highland Park classical music (beyond Ravinia) has come a long way as the Highland Park Strings celebrates its 40th anniversary season.

Founded in 1979 by Lawrence Block (still co-principal cellist), the Strings is a full chamber orchestra of advanced amateur players and young professionals tackling the symphonic repertory as well as chamber works. For the 40th season, the Strings is offering three free concerts (all Strings concerts are free), with the next one on Dec. 2 featuring works by Bach, Vivaldi, Saint-Saens and Schubert, under the baton of principal conductor Dr. Robert G. Hasty. The concerts still are at the Highland Park High School auditorium. More info is at HighlandParkStrings.org. FYI: The 2018-19 season also is the 150th anniversary of Highland Park itself, the successor town to Port Clinton and originally home to Potawatomi Native American settlements.

Nov. 11 is the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day (now Veterans Day), which brought World War I to an end, and a number of arts-related events will mark the occasion. Perhaps none will be grander or more evocative than the concert presented by the Rembrandt Chamber Musicians, "War and the Human Heart," which will combine a chamber orchestra, chorus, film, and live narration in a moving performance that honors the experience of war for every veteran, past or present. Rembrandt Chamber Musicians will be joined by the Valparaiso University Chorale, the Valparaiso University Bach Choir in works by Beethoven, Strauss, Holst, Schumann, and others under conductor Craig Jessop (former director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir). The concert date actually is Nov. 10, at St. James Cathedral on the Near North Side. Info/tickets: RembrandtChamberPlayers.org

Veteran theater critic Jonathan Abarbanel has written extensively over the years about classical music for the Lerner Papers, Lyric Opera of Chicago and Virgin Records. He created the original Measure for Measure column in 2000.

Daniel Desmarais and Sheldon Brown in *This Bitter Earth*.
Photo by Anna Gelman



'This Bitter Earth': LGBT play tackles class, race and political apathy

BY SHERI FLANDERS

Political apathy has dire consequences for everyone, but especially for marginalized groups who bear the brunt of draconian conservative policies and police shootings.

So when a white gay activist confronts his mild-mannered Black boyfriend's lack of political engagement, love becomes very tricky, indeed.

This is the crux of the Chicago premiere of *This Bitter Earth*, produced by About Face Theatre. Written by Harrison David Rivers, (winner of the McKnight Fellowship for Playwrights, a Jerome Foundation Many Voices Fellowship, an Emerging Artist of Color Fellowship, a Van Lier Fellowship and the New York Stage & Film's Founders Award) and directed by Mikael Burke, (winner of a 2017 Princess Grace Award Winner in Theatre and a recipient of the 2012 Robert D. Beckmann Emerging Artist Fellowship)—both Black queer men in interracial relationships—this non-linear love story follows two men who meet at a Black Lives Matter rally and explores the ways their relationship changes over the years, affected by the shifting political tenor of the United States.

Although not autobiographical, playwright Harrison David Rivers calls *This Bitter Earth* "the most personal of my plays." The play originated thanks to a commission from Ed Decker at the New Conservatory Theatre, seeking work that centered on Blacks in this country. After several drafts, a seminal moment in the development of the work occurred when Rivers realized that many of the characteristics of his own life were rarely portrayed onstage. This prompted him to begin writing from the heart, realizing that if he felt this way, others must as well.

Most of Rivers' work is about queer relationships, and *This Bitter Earth* is reflective of his mission to portray the specific dynamics of those relationships and the way that the world interacts with Black men with nuance. Although both characters in the play hold wildly different views

on activism, Rivers deeply identifies with both. The Black character Jesse prefers to stand outside of the political maelstrom, often feeling as if he doesn't have anything to say, or feeling reluctant to place his body within the action.

As these emotions began to hit close to home, Rivers realized that the action of writing *This Bitter Earth* was indeed powerful activism. Neil, the white character, inspires passion and engagement, and is informed by Rivers' view that true activism is showing up for your community when they need you. One need not always be a leader on the front lines, but one must be there somehow; in the group or behind the scenes.

For many years, Rivers didn't believe his writing

was political. On the surface, his play *And She Would Stand Like this* is simply a retelling of *The Trojan Women* by Euripides. Yet through his lens of Black and Brown bodies moving through the world, the work is clearly political and prescient. Staged as members of a diverse family receiving a mysterious unnamed diagnosis, the varied reaction of the hospital staff to each family member comments on the way that marginalized groups interface with large and powerful organizations in healthcare and beyond.

This story, as does much of his work, is an extension of the experiences that the LGBTQ community is having—specifically those surrounding HIV/AIDS. Alarming, awareness seems to be dropping in importance, especially in communities of color where the disease is still decimating large numbers and healthcare is sorely lacking.

Rivers said he's excited to have *This Bitter Earth* staged with About Face Theatre, a company that has a reputation for championing challenging work by queer voices. His personal mandate is not only to shed light on these issues, but to make sure that his stories are the most deeply and thoroughly human he can possibly create, not steeped in stereotype like so many. In his plays, his characters can express love, anger, sadness and all of the emotions that makes us real in the deepest possible way.

As a child, Burke was fascinated with building worlds. He would assemble his toys by first following the directions, then dismantling them and reimagining them in his own unique way. Today Burke's work is highly imagistic, and his propensities for deconstruction and reconstruction pushed him into this field. He originally started undergrad in music, then switched to theatre halfway through.

As he worked to translate *This Bitter Earth* from page to stage he queried the experiences of each man in the play. Being a queer Black man in an interracial relationship comes with a particular set of complications, and each character has different coping methods. One strong underlying theme involved love and trust—in personal and

THEATER REVIEW

Radio Culture

Authors: Maxim Dosko, Natalia Fedorova and Amber Robinson

At: TUTA Theatre, 4670 N. Manor Ave.

Tickets: TUTATheatre.org; \$20-\$30

Runs through: Dec. 2

BY SEAN MARGARET WAGNER

TUTA Theatre has concocted one of the most tightly packed, powerful theater experiences from source material that should be the opposite.

Radio Culture, by Maxim Dosko (translated by Natalia Fedorova and Amber Robinson), stems from the eastern European "New Drama" movement, hyper-focused on the normalcy we all exhibit. Director Amber Robinson has wisely avoided embellishments with the understanding that a page from this central character's life will be more than enough.

It's 2013 and Volodya (Kevin V. Smith) is ter-

ribly alone. He is not an eloquent person, nor is he a charming person. He is prone to anxiety and insecurity; he structures his waking hours so that he can withdraw into the hum of a Belarusian national radio program everyone else thinks is old fashioned. The compartments of his life are un-touching and sterile, and it affords him ample time in the company of his endless mundane thoughts.

Lucky for us, we can hear every single one; his observance over the men on his construction site that are prone to drink (Huy Nguyen and Wain Parham), his dislike of counterfeit jeans and raisin bread, if he should get his mother a plot of land or a meat grinder for her birthday. He doesn't spare us a single detail, and it feels familiar and foreign at the same time.

His thoughts are so specific they become universal, and so trivial, they encompass whole lives. It's no mistake that we've reached Volodya on this day, when his tether to a quiet existence is down to some measly strands and all the normally comforting things can't walk him back from

THEATER

broader terms.

In a world where people are bombarded with images of Black bodies enduring pain daily, Black folk can find it hard to trust that white people have their best interests at heart. Working through that distrust can be difficult, and it can be challenging to "give even the most well-meaning the benefit of the doubt," Burke said, acknowledging that this sounds more cynical than it is. As happens in the play, when terrible things occur, people put up walls that can prohibit them from living their fullest possible lives.

Burke said that, compared to the real world, queer and interracial stories are rare in mainstream media. And when they do occur, the stories tend to center on categorization rather than humanity, where race and queerness is simply a matter of fact.

His view is that it is the job of a director to facilitate the audience through the experience of a story, and to find the most effective, compelling and engaging way to allow them to walk in someone else's shoes for just a little while. When approaching a play, he said he asks himself, "Why this play? Why now?" Great art has necessity to it. Burke said he'd rather start a conversation with one person about what the play is wrestling with, rather than to have 100 people leave the theatre and never think about it again.

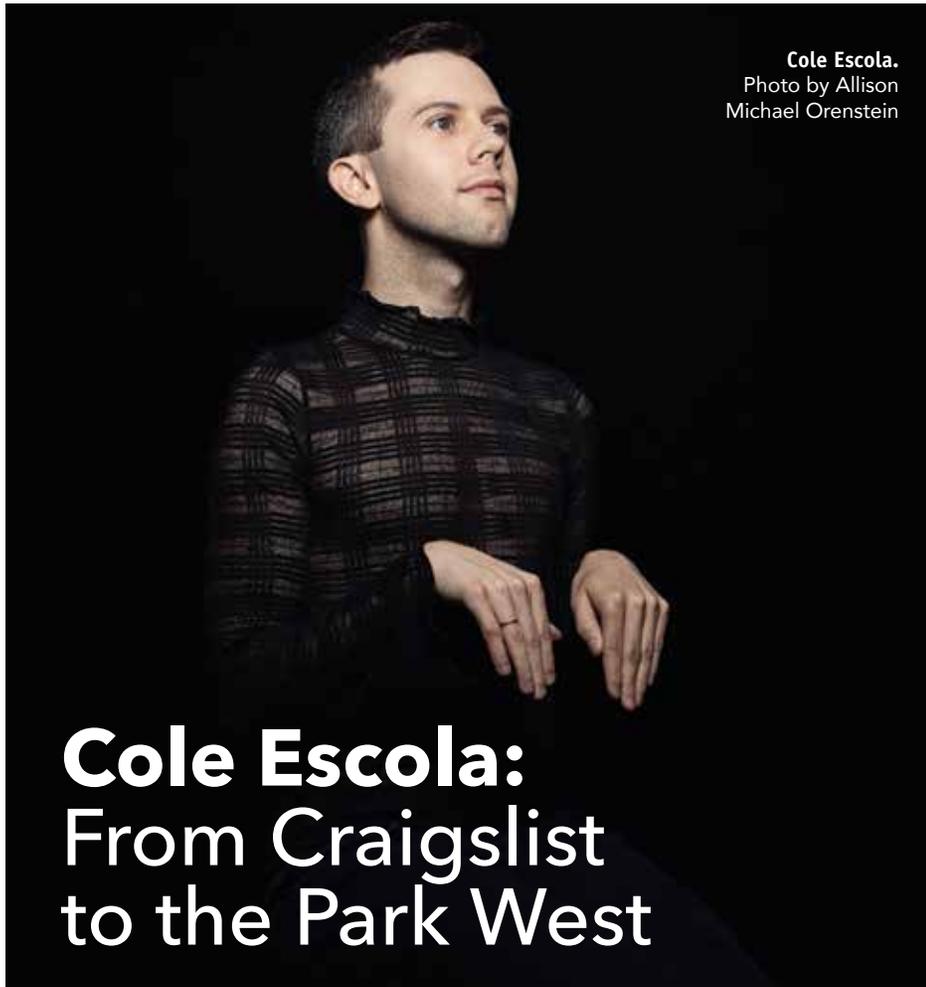
Ultimately, Burke is a big proponent of stories and their amazing power in shaping who people are and become. It is his personal mission to challenge the narrative people typically hear about marginalized folk in order to create togetherness instead of divisiveness. The collaboration between Burke and Rivers on *This Bitter Earth* aims to do just that.

***This Bitter Earth*, which About Face Theatre is producing, runs Nov. 1-Dec. 8 at Theater Wit, 1225 W. Belmont Ave. Tickets are \$15-\$38 each; visit AboutFaceTheatre.com or call 773-975-8150.**

the verge of tears. "It's not normal to worry so much," he says and fixates so hard on keeping his life pristine, that it gives way to an unspoken concern that his thirtysome years of work has been a waste.

Smith is still and calm as Volodya, and seems to have his eyes on everyone, including the workmen on his site, and the Chicagoans fidgeting in their seats. He is purposeful and serious, exhibiting the precise judgments he levies on the people who are not there—and you can't help but wonder what he must think of you. Huy Nguyen and Wain Parham join him very tangentially as Dimon and Serjogin, mostly silent, and staring in what could be menace, but really is just a vast unknown. Volodya assumes Dimon and Serjogin are comprised of nothing but disdain and apathy, so we do too, until we are afforded a glimpse behind the curtain.

That's the thing: Volodya may be terribly alone—but so are all of us, and it's a profound experience to hear an internal voice that is not your own.



Cole Escola.
Photo by Allison
Michael Orenstein

Cole Escola: From Craigslist to the Park West

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

The home page of Cole Escola's website features an irreverent commercial parody. Decked out in a brunette wig, pink lipstick and a sensible pastel plaid button-down, Escola plays a stay-at-home mom who breezily describes her devotion to her children before outlining a dark path of ruin involving cocaine, guns and hiding out in Phoenix—all while pulling cookies out of the oven. The product the commercial is advertising? Orange juice with less sugar, much healthier for the kids she abandoned for two weeks.

This is trademark Escola: darkly oddball situational humor, available at the click of a mouse.

The college dropout turned YouTube star, whose TV credits include *Mozart in the Jungle* and *At Home With Amy Sedaris*, will bring his touring solo sketch show *Help! I'm Stuck!* to Chicago's Park West on Sunday, Nov. 4.

"The [show's] title has nothing to do with anything. I just thought it was funny," Escola, 31, said via phone from his home in New York. "I play multiple characters, but there's [someone] offstage reading all the other parts. I do all the costumes and wig changes onstage, so I'm in my underwear a lot. Take your seasick medication before you get there."

Known for his original comedy shorts on YouTube and A.V. Club and in *Paste Magazine*, Escola has also earned acclaim from *The New York Times*. His live shows sell out throughout the country.

Not bad for someone who once ate body butter. After dropping out of Marymount Manhattan for

COMEDY

financial reasons ("they wouldn't let me take out any more loans, which looking back is a godsend because I don't have any debt!"), Escola opted not to return to his hometown of Clatskanie, Oregon, population 1,500. However, playing Clifford the Big Red Dog at the Scholastic Bookstore couldn't pay the rent, so Escola eventually went back, noshing cosmetics en route.

"I was on a bus to Oregon for three days," Escola said, "and I had no money and no food. I had some body butter from *The Body Shop* and I was like, 'it says Vitamin E! The ingredients look natural!' It was a dark time."

After living on his mother's couch for three months "with an application for community college on the coffee table that I never filled out," Escola heard from a friend in New York who had a room to rent. He set a new goal. "If I [went] back, I needed to have time for myself to do something creative, and I also needed money to get by."

With that, Escola returned to New York and turned to sex work.

"I called myself 'the laziest prostitute,'" he said, laughing. "At that point, I was 22 and very inexperienced with gay sex in my personal life, so I had a long list of things that I wouldn't do." Despite his inexperience, and with the help of a Craigslist-savvy friend, Escola slowly built up a client list while working part-time at a vegan bakery. "That covered my rent," he said, "but

food or going out money or whatever, that was all through sex work."

His former job, Escola said, "has been on my mind lately because of Stormy Daniels. We're so happy to have her when she has something we want, but [we're] not very respectful of sex workers in general, especially trans sex workers and sex workers of color that have been murdered. I was lucky, and maybe I was also stupid, because I never felt endangered."

Sex work's flexible schedule and extra income enabled Escola to write and star in low-budget comedy videos with friend Jeffery Seif. The videos gained a following, which led to live shows in New York. In 2009, the Logo television network gave the duo their own sketch show, *Jeffery & Cole Casserole*.

"We shot on a Mac through the fish-eye lens [and] edited it on iMovie, and the sound was awful," Escola said. "Nobody watched it, but we got to say we had a show on TV."

Meanwhile, Escola built up a name in the local and national comedy scenes, which led to his role as flamboyantly gay waiter and aspiring actor Matthew on the Hulu original series *Difficult People*.

"I happened to be in LA when they were doing a table read," said Escola, who also wrote for the show in its second and third seasons. "I knew Julie [Klausner] through the alt-comedy, downtown cabaret scene here in New York, and I was a fan of hers for years before that," he said of the series creator and star. Though Klausner could only guarantee him exposure to producers, Escola was cast as Matthew immediately after reading.

Escola described his time on the snarky buddy comedy as "a dream," especially playing off of "incredibly sweet and supportive" costar Billy Eichner, who also made a name through online videos and low-budget TV series, and Gabourey Sidibe, who played Matthew's boss and best friend. "I was so nervous because like, Oscar nominee! But it just felt like summer camp."

Since *Difficult People's* cancellation in 2017, Escola has shot more episodes of *Mozart and Sedaris*—in the latter, he plays Amy's nosy female neighbor Chassie—as well as a guest spot on the TBS comedy-noir series *Search Party*. He's also producing a pilot directed by fashion designer Todd Oldham called (wait for it) *Pee Pee Manor*.

"It's about a woman trying to start her life over as a real estate agent...and in order to get the job, she has to sell this dilapidated haunted mansion," Escola said. "There are flashbacks to people who have died in *Pee Pee Manor*, all played by me, and I play the woman as well."

Although Escola has carved out a niche for himself—"old show queen" flair crossed with dark millennial sensibility—and accrued an impressive resumé, one of his proudest accomplishments is a mention on his hometown's Wikipedia page.

"Raymond Carver and I are both listed as notable people of Clatskanie," Escola said with pride. "And I did not add myself!"

"Cole Escola: Help! I'm Stuck!" will play at the Park West, 322 W. Armitage Ave., on Sunday, Nov. 4, at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$20; visit ParkWestChicago.com.

For more about Escola, visit ColeEscola.com.

Wachowskis to sell Chicago studio space

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Lilly and Lana Wachowski—transgender sibling filmmakers behind the *Matrix* trilogy and the lesbian-themed thriller *Bound*—are attempting to sell their Ravenswood Avenue studio space, *Crain's Chicago Business* reported Oct. 22.

The Chicago-based filmmakers' family-owned firm, Kinoworks, is listing the 21,500 square-foot facility for just under \$5 million; the listing is with Brad Lippitz, of Compass.

The filmmakers, whose work also includes the Netflix series *Sense 8*, generally film their live-action material in Berlin and do pre- and post-production work in Chicago, according to *Crain's*. They have been in the current North Side facility since 2007 and had no new productions following the *Sense 8's* production closing.

The *Crain's* article is at <https://www.chicagobusiness.com/commercial-real-estate/matrix-filmmakers-listing-chicago-studio-building>.

LGBTQIA policy handbook out

The Routledge Handbook of LGBTQIA Administration and Policy, with Wallace Swan as editor, is now available.

It is the first book to utilize up-to-the-minute empirical data to examine "post-factual" changes affecting traditional assumptions of LGBTQ public-policy development.

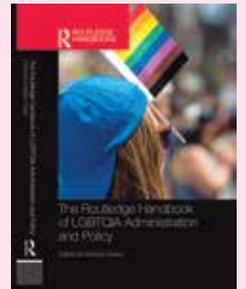
Established scholars and rising stars lend their perspectives to issues of broad interest—including homelessness, bisexuality, transgender rights, health care, immigration, substance abuse, senior care, youth and higher-education issues, resilience, international LGBTQ policy and more.

Montgomery Clift films at Siskel in Nov.

Showcasing noted filmmakers and actors, the Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 164 N. State St., celebrates gay icon Montgomery Clift as part of its November Spotlight along with Hal Ashby, Ingmar Bergman and Buster Keaton.

Among the Clift movies are the documentary *Making Montgomery Clift* (Nov. 2-5) as well as the films *I Confess* (Nov. 2, 4) and *A Place in the Sun* (Nov. 3, 6), which co-stars Elizabeth Taylor.

More details and showtimes can be found at SiskelFilmCenter.org/montgomeryclift.



Festival celebrates queer punk rock for people of color



Photos by Vernon Hester

BY VERNON HESTER

On Oct. 20, the Black, Brown, and Indigenous Collection presented the 2018 edition of "Will It Explode?," an annual festival celebrating queer punk rock for people of color.

The festival featured afternoon workshops such as "Punk and Zines: Self Publishing for Our Movement" and "Decolonizing Punk Rock: Understanding Indigenous Identity," and a concert in the evening featuring six bands who played everything from electronica to rap to hardcore punk. The line-up of artists and bands for the night included Megiapa, Mermaid N.V., The Breathing

MUSIC

Light, K.E.N., Moleajete and Blacker Face. The event took place at DIY space Caliwaukee North.

The Black, Brown, and Indigenous Punk Show Collective and its festival support communities of color through art, activism and fundraising and work to challenge oppressive attitudes in DIY scenes and spaces, especially against LGBTQ individuals. The beneficiary of this year's festival was Chi-Nations Youth Council, a local youth-led Native American organization that focuses on environmental and social justice.



Left, above: Jolene Whatever of Blacker Face and her friend, Johnny. Left, below: Rapper K.E.N. Above: Jorge of Maleajete.



CELEBRATIONS

Wanda B, Stephanie Green renew vows after 25 years

On Oct. 12, Wanda B—found of the social club Stud ("Solidarity, Trustworthiness, Understanding and Dependability") 4 Life—and wife/First Lady Stephanie Green renewed their vows after being together for 25 years.

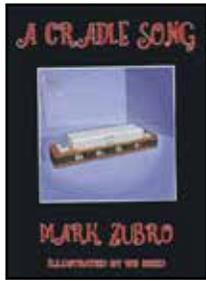
The event took place at Grand Ballroom, 6351 S. Cottage Grove Ave.

According to Wanda, the event "was elegant, filled with a room of nothing but love, family and friends." There were more than 200 guests. Rev. Sam Davis officiated, with Jeanette Spencer as the photographer.

This is a special year for the couple—and not just because of the anniversary. According to Wanda, their first grandbaby is on the way, and she added, "The ceremony was emotional, seeing my wife walk toward me; we then made up our own vows, which I was told had everyone crying. Our marriage shows we can do this in the LGBTQ family."

Photos courtesy of Wanda B





A Cradle Song: Part Three

WRITTEN BY MARK ZUBRO; ILLUSTRATED BY W.S. REED

A Cradle Song, written by Mark Zubro and illustrated by W.S. Reed, debuts in the Windy City Times as the new holiday classic. Filled with travail and woe, warmth and great joy, it is a story for the ages. It will appear in ten installments from October 17 to

December 19 and will also be available for gift giving as an e-book and as a paperback. For the true joy and meaning of the season, this is the book you want to read.

Today **A Cradle Song: Part Three.**

Chapter Two: Matthew Part Two

Then one day in his wanderings, Matthew had found a hospital. Ill people coughed and shuffled in a huge gray room with dark plastic chairs. The people in uniforms seemed very busy.

Just as he got to the front of the line, the emergency room doors crashed open. Bleeding and screaming people had rushed in.

Matthew had been lost in the cacophony. Desperate people who had accompanied the screeching and dying patients had shoved him aside. One moment, as he'd been trying to inch out of the way, he was knocked over by one of the gurneys as it dashed by.

He'd picked himself up and found a corner to huddle in. He'd watched from there as the rush to heal flowed past. To him, his vigil seemed to last forever. While sitting in his corner, he'd fallen asleep. He'd awoken as another shrieking ambulance pulled in.

Matthew had given up and left. At least, he'd been warm while he'd waited and watched.

Each night huddled in his own narrow space, his mind swirled in confusion and worry. Fortunately, he had some blankets from his own home. Often, he'd pile all his clothes around him and he'd be warm as he leaned himself against the warmth of his wall.

Matthew most often fell asleep to the memory of his father. He'd loved it when his dad would sit on the side of his bed and sing songs in his deep voice. No matter what the problems of the day or how tired his dad was, he'd had time for a song for his son. The comfort of those memories were some of the few that Matthew could cling to. When he had those, he slept almost as well as he did when they were a reality.

Matthew would give anything for one more song just like he remembered.

Chapter Three: Luke

At the war, Matthew's dad was a medic. His name was Luke. In their town, he'd worked part-time in a bakery. He'd cleaned and toiled. Somedays, he brought home day-old bread. On rare days, he returned with a sweet treat that he and his family shared. At night, he'd studied to be a medic. He had more years to go before he'd get official certifications.

Like all wars, no one was sure who to blame. Someone started it, and someone was angry. Lots of people shouted and cheated and lied. The ordinary people in the gunsights of the enemy were always the ones who suffered the most. Some of those who died were fighters in uniforms. Others were civilians huddled in hovels or caught in the crosshairs as they rushed from building to building, sometimes missing life and safety by inches.

Some months before winter, in an obscure corner of the nearly forgotten war, Luke huddled in the camp as near to the fire as he dared. Not too close, as that would make him a target. Few remembered or thought of those who fought but that didn't make any difference to the bullets and bombs. Forgotten or remembered, they were just as deadly.

That evening, Luke stayed with a wounded child who was a stranger to him, a local who hadn't run fast enough or soon enough. As he treated the boy, he thought of his son and his wife and daughter. Memories of them were all that permitted hope to enter his heart. Luke put pressure on the wound to stop the bleeding, which eased off. The child had a fever, so Luke gave him some drugs from the emergency kit. They were low on all kinds of medicine, and he had to use them sparingly.

Planes and helicopters roamed the sky and buzzed overhead. From the surrounding hillsides and heavens above, gifts of death rained on him and his friends and foes alike. Their lethal, random choices of who lived or died wore down the spirits of the bravest.

Luke was an ill-trained medic trying to

keep people alive. Local people, members from all branches of the military, sometimes battered and torn bodies from both sides showed up. He fixed them all as best he could to get them on to the doctors in hospitals in the rear. Sometimes, he held their hands as they spoke their last words. Every day, when he awoke, he wondered if this would be the day someone would be holding his hand as he breathed his last.

Every minute he thought of his wife, his little son and daughter, left behind when he had no choice but to go.

He slept between bomb blasts which meant that some nights he never slept at all, but he always tried to do his weary best to make the wounded's pain and suffering go away, or at least, become less.

He wrote letters home, but now they came back unopened. He'd begged for leave, but they said the military needed him. He'd tried to go over his commander's head, so he'd become known as a troublemaker. That had caused his commander to send him to the most dangerous parts of the war.

Luke didn't dare try to go AWOL. If his side didn't catch him, the other most likely would. He knew they would kill him for sure. Even if he got away, he had oceans and continents to cross. He couldn't just walk home.

Then the most horrible day had come. He'd been captured by the enemy. The day had started in misery and ended in horror.

He'd been scraping together bits for breakfast for the wounded in the dim morning light. The drizzle when he woke had turned to rain.

He'd heard a few distant bombs go off, but they seemed far away. Then wild shouts broke out. People began to run in all directions. Then the gunfire went mad followed by a continuous bombardment. He ran to help the wounded, but they died faster than he could work. Ages of hours crawled past.

Bits of blood and brain, bone and flesh flew past him. Spatters of he dared not think what dotted his uniform.

Sorrow and anger for the folly and stupidity of war filled his heart.

As he tried to staunch the wounds and ease the pain, in his deepest heart he held onto compassion, gentleness, and the memory of his family.

The surrounding horror fueled by folly and stupidity might kill or maim him, but it would not take his soul. Hatred and enmity might triumph for the moment, but he would not let it erase who he was.

Compassion, empathy, and gentleness filled his heart for their suffering. The men, women, and children he treated would know at least something of the good of being human.

As the light of the gloom-filled day began to fade, he'd felt a searing pain in his left leg a few inches below his knee. He saw his pants were torn. Flecks of blood dotted the tear.

There was no one to examine him. He'd examined himself. It wasn't a deep wound. He'd put on a few dabs of antiseptic inside it, and as clean a bandage as he could find to cover it. He suspected it wasn't serious. He didn't take anything for the pain as he knew others far more seriously wounded needed the medicine more than he.

Luke had gone back to work. The terror of the assault and the rush of people to mend had, for a time, caused him to forget his own pain.

Then late that night, the enemy made their most fierce attack.

Chapter Four: Matthew

Every day, Matthew made a journey. In the time after his mom and sister had been taken away, his life had become a ritual of hiding and running and sneaking and starving and being thirsty.

At first, he was successful in going to their old apartment. He'd wait across the street behind some trash cans. Eventually, the landlord would leave for at least several hours. He'd use their old place to take care of himself. The food had quickly gone bad, but he could keep himself clean, and be warm for a little while until he braced

himself to go out into the city to hunt for his mom and sister.

Once the landlord had come back early and almost caught Matthew. That time, the boy had run out the back door and through the alley. That was the day he'd been chased and found his current hovel.

He was more careful after that. To avoid the landlord, he crept into every nook and cranny and around every corner. Then one day, a month or so later, Matthew's key hadn't worked. So he had to find new places to spend the hours of daylight.

The adults in the city ignored him. A few tried to hurt him. Now, if any of them approached him, he ran.

He wanted to be clean and go to the bathroom. He knew if he went to the same places day after day, he'd be noticed so he tried to vary his route as best he could.

Different all-night laundromats were the best. Sometimes, he found an old gas station, or a coffee house, or the library. He'd find his way to the bathroom when no one was looking. He'd wash his face, neck, and ears the way his mom and dad taught him. He really wanted to take a bath or a shower, but he didn't know where to do that. He'd use the soap in the dispenser. He'd wipe off the damp with paper towels when they had them. When he could, he'd use the electric machines that made so much noise when they blew hot air.

Matthew hid in rubble and dirt and soot. Most times at night, he shivered. He wished he could change his clothes. Over time, he'd learned to sleep in all he owned instead of piling them all around him as he had in the beginning.

He'd accumulated a few things besides the blankets from his home. They had been bulky and heavy and hard to carry down the many streets and turns to his hovel. In his wanderings, he'd even found a few more that were threadbare and worn. At night, he spread them out and then folded and stacked them over himself as best he could.

He knew if his daddy was around, he would make everything all right.

But his daddy was gone. And now his mom and his sister were too.

Over time, he'd developed a pattern which he changed as often as possible so people wouldn't catch him and ask questions. On different days, he'd make different stops. He had to be alert and wary. He didn't know which adults would be kind or cruel, which might mean him harm. He knew about stranger danger.

Some days, he could sneak into the subway system. He followed some homeless adults at a distance and found places where they managed to squeeze in underground.

It was warmer and drier, but Matthew was afraid to stay underground too long. Someone could see him, or take him, or try to harm him. He saw homeless adults fighting. A few tried to take what little money he had managed to beg or scrounge.

If he stayed on a bus or on the subway, he knew to be careful to keep close to, but not be part of a crowd. If a bus driver or train conductor or security guard saw him too often and unaccompanied, they might get suspicious and ask questions. So he couldn't sit too long and not by himself.

He tried to enter and exit with a crowd and linger near others so a casual observer would think he was with someone.

He got most of his water from a bubbler in the park. As it got colder, he sometimes had to crack the thin ice that had formed in the night. The water always tasted good and fresh. In the park, the trees were barren. He gathered bunches of the fallen leaves and took them to his hiding place. He found that the more of them he could stuff between himself and the ground, the warmer he would be.

He knew that during school hours, he couldn't go out as much. And scrounging at night was better anyway. Fewer people to avoid, more shadows to hide in. Also, it was better to sleep when the sun was out. The heat of the day helped. At night, he could keep moving to help him get warm.

On the streets, he'd seen some awful things. One day, he'd been approaching a trash basket on a corner. Two men had been hunting through it at the same time. At the same instant, they both grabbed onto a sandwich bag. They began shouting at each other and snatching at the bag. The bag ripped. The contents spilled out. One struck out at the other and then they were a flurry of arms and legs and shouts. Then they rolled on the ground as they cursed and fought.

People had stood by and watched. When the police finally came, they snatched and yanked and pulled on them as roughly as they'd been fighting with each other. One of the combatants tried to bite a policeman. He got clubbed unconscious for that. At the end, the officers dragged each of

the combatants away.

After they were gone and the crowd had dispersed, Matthew had walked by the scene. He saw drops of blood on the pavement. He could see the contents of the bag, several moldy pieces of bread covered in crawling ants.

Another day, he'd watched a robbery. Ahead of him on the street, he'd seen an old woman walking with a cane. Two men rushed past Matthew and shoved her to the ground. They grabbed her purse and ran. Matthew had hurried to the woman. Several people joined him. They helped her up. She shook them off and snarled at them.

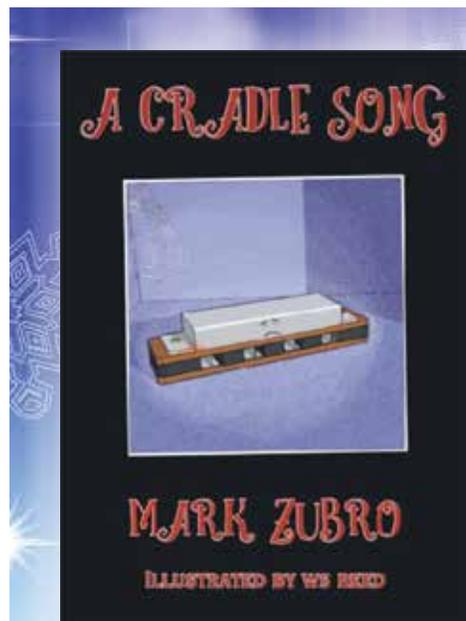
She'd complained and cried. She didn't want the police. Matthew had walked away mystified. He wanted to help. She needed it, but rejected all those who held out their hands or offered kind words.

Matthew didn't understand people very well.

Such incidents made him even more cautious. When he picked through trash cans, he kept careful watch on his surroundings. When he walked on the streets, he kept keen eyes out on the people around him. He was wary of the streets, but he had to eat.

Matthew was ashamed when he begged for money. He saw other kids doing it. Bigger kids. He avoided them. If he had anything, they would take it. Sometimes, they hurt him. He learned to run. And he could go very fast, but he wasn't a very big kid. So, he had to be extra vigilant.

End of part three. Part four coming next week



"A Cradle Song is my very favorite of Mark Zubro's books. Tender, full of insight and love, it made me cry—but they were happy tears."

—**Jeanne M. Dams**,
author of the Dorothy Martin mysteries

"A Cradle Song is a wonderful, heartwarming story, and just right for Christmas. Open this present and enjoy!"

—**Barbara D'Amato**,
author of the Cat Marsala series
and the recent Other Eyes

A Cradle Song will be available soon as an ebook and as a paperback online and from **Unabridged Bookstore** in Chicago and **Outwords Books** in Milwaukee.

Mark Zubro is the author of thirty-six books and seven short stories. He has won the Lambda Literary award for A Simple Suburban Murder and been nominated eight other times. All are available as ebooks and most as paperbacks online or at **Unabridged Bookstore** in Chicago and **Outwords Books** in Milwaukee.

MOVIE REVIEW

'Suspiria' casts suspicion on the artistic mindset

BY BRIAN KIRST

It's 1977, and Berlin is still divided by eastern and western borders.

Lufthansa Flight 181, with several prominent Germans onboard, has been hijacked by the Com-mando Martyr Halima and the country is still bowing under the weight of the evils that many of its providing fathers had committed in World War II. This is the real-life, emotionally combative setting in which Academy Award-nominated director Luca Guadagnino has placed his reimagining of Dario Argento's popular, fantastical horror film *Suspiria*.

Keeping with this more naturalistic mood, Guadagnino replaces the rich, vibrant blues and reds of Argento's fairy-tale vision with earthier strands of green, brown and white. This muted landscape is also reflected in Thom Yorke's (Radiohead) soft score and keeps the Mennonite countryside, wherein heroine Suzy Bannion (portrayed by Dakota Johnson) was raised, as a constant touchstone in the film's design as well.

The story begins in earnest upon Suzy's not entirely expected arrival at the Markos Dance Academy. Nearly forcing her way into an audition for the company, Bannion's animalistic technique quickly gains the approval of the artistic staff. Soon Susie has earned the lead in the revival of one of the company's groundbreaking pieces and is working, forehead to forehead, with the troupe's enigmatic director, Madame Blanc (Tilda Swinton). But Blanc and the whispering tribes of women who rule the walkways and rehearsal halls seem to have darker, mysterious plans for Susie that have more to do with witchery than prima ballerina glories. As Dr. Klemperer (Lutz Ebersdorf), a concerned psychiatrist, begins to search for Patricia (Chloe Grace Mortiz), the missing woman who once held Blanc's prime attention, and other troupe members begin to disappear or suspect their mistresses' intentions, the naturally strong-willed Susie seems destined to alter the predestined courses of all within her reach.

Furthering the already Gaia-drenched source material, Guadagnino—an openly gay man who has admitted to a long-term obsession with Argento's original movie—adds shades of such odd, '70s femme-based horror films like *Burnt Offerings* and *The Sentinel* to the mix here as well. Meanwhile, a more modern, perhaps unwelcome, influence may be Darren Aronofsky's controversial 2017 offering *Mother!* Like Aronofsky, Guadagnino seems more concerned with exploring artistic, vaguely inscrutable notions of femininity, culminating in an orgiastic ending that either will set up deep contemplation or frustrated cries of bewilderment.

Fully using the power that he gained from last year's *Call Me By Your Name* for a totalitarian vision, Guadagnino creates a world far from the

FILM

male gaze, a common attribute of mainstream horror. Even the Sapphic bonds that one may assume would be explored among a company of spell-weaving women in close quarters are defined by proud affection and mentoring gazes, not sheet-rolling lust. Themes of maternal omnipresence, the fight to escape from it, and the longstanding consequences of the bloodthirsty patriarchy all seep through the celluloid cracks here. Interestingly, the violence perpetrated against the victims here is more self-involved and personal than the swish of a serial killer's blade. It revolves, almost exclusively, around the more natural consequences of being a woman in the arts. The injuries inflicted upon the unfortunates are often gross exaggerations of the abuse that professional dancing can inflict upon the female body.

Nicely, unlike Argento's film, which had a handful of semi-prominent male cast members among the confines of the dance troupe, there are almost no men on display here. Their presence may be felt, but it is more of an emotional after effect than a controlled attention. Even Klemperer, in a stunning feat of acting prowess, is actually played by Swinton, who adopted the Ebersdorf moniker as a stage name. Thus, Klemperer's dreamy reunion with his/her supposedly long-dead wife, played in a heartfelt cameo by original *Suspiria* star Jessica Harper, takes on an almost non-binary, inclusive aspect.

Guadagnino works wonders with the rest of the cast as well. Johnson radiates with a quiet maturity, particularly in her final moments, that is miles beyond her work in the popular *50 Shades of Grey* series; she is the granddaughter of Tippi Hedren, whose work with twisted auteur Alfred Hitchcock on *The Birds* and *Marnie* brought everlasting fame. With a skittering sense of mania, Moritz also does her finest acting thus far as the nerve ravaged Patricia. The showy presence of Golden Age movie queen Joan Bennett and savage European beauty Alida Valli in the original is also echoed here. Renée Soutendijk, a regular in Paul Verhoeven's early films who aimed for American superstardom with projects like *Eve of Destruction* in the '90s, brings a creepy irresistibility to her Mrs. Huller. She is aided in atmospheric depth by such foreign indie superstars as Fassbinder collaborator Ingrid Caven and top Sudanese fashion model Alek Wek.

The presence of these fine performers' cinematic luster should appeal to even those who find fault with other aspects in this work of singular, dreamy feministic Gothicism.

After a special Halloween screening, *Suspiria* begins its regular run Friday, Nov. 2, at The Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport Ave.; see MusicBoxTheatre.com.

Dakota Johnson in *Suspiria*.

Image by Sandro Kopp, courtesy of Amazon Studios

SIDEBAR

Filmmakers reflect on original 'Suspiria,' LGBT appeal

BY BRIAN KIRST

From its intense visuals and color schemes to its focus on female protagonists, Dario Argento's original *Suspiria* has not only inspired director Luca Guadagnino with his reimagining, but other creators as well. Here, Chris Moore, the openly gay director of the upcoming horror-comedy *Triggered*, and Adam Marcus, the straight mind behind *Jason Goes to Hell*, one of the most inclusive and homoerotic Friday the 13th film entries, talk about how *Suspiria* has inspired them and why it means so much to the queer and other minority communities.

WCT: Can you talk about how first reacted upon seeing *Suspiria* for the first time?

Chris Moore: I first saw *Suspiria* when I was 9 or 10 years old. *Entertainment Weekly* had listed it as one of the top 50 or 100 scariest movies of all time and I was really intrigued by the picture of Sara tangled up in the razor wire. I rented the VHS a few weeks later and had to turn it off 10 minutes in. I was so terrified. It reminded me so much of nightmares that I had when I was a kid and I just couldn't handle it. I'd never seen anything like that before. An hour or so later, I came to my senses and finished the movie and, by the end, I was a total fan.

Adam Marcus: I want to let you know that it was the first commercial I ever saw that almost scared me to death! I was seven years old when *Suspiria* was first released in the US and they

ran the commercials endlessly on WPIX—holy shit!

I was so absolutely frightened. The "roses are red" poem being teased over the image of a head of raven hair being brushed—only to discover it's the head of a skeleton! Then the fleshy title font coming to life across the screen ... followed by Suzy's roommate, glass dagger in hand, eyes bloody, coming out of the door and straight for us. Come on, now! The commercial was so terrifying that I didn't see the film until I was 11 or 12. And even then, I saw it in the middle of the day with all the lights on. But I LOVED IT!

WCT: Why do you think the original has resonated with the LGBTQ community and female cinema enthusiasts?

CM: I feel like it appeals to us so much because it's so wacky and different. I remember feeling like I'd discovered some strange, hidden gem that only a select group of people knew about. It's like having a little secret. Plus, the set design and the costumes and the lighting are so stylish. It's like a Douglas Sirk movie on crack or one of those bright, colorful MGM musicals.

AM: I think what's incredible about the politics of the film is that the heroes and villains of the story are women. I mean, the whole movie is female. The men are marginalized the way most movies marginalize women. They are there for exposition or to be servicing the plot for the female characters to go further on their journeys. It's a movie that says you really don't need men to tell a compelling horror story. There is also a wonderful bitchiness to the witchy proceedings—a touch of *All About Eve* festering in the dance academy.

Marcus' current project, *Secret Santa* (facebook.com/secretsantathemovie), a holiday slasher featuring a strong LGBTQ presence, and Moore's *Triggered* (www.facebook.com/FindUR-SafeSpace) are currently on the festival circuit.

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Deconstructing spaces to include LGBTQ, minority architects

BY ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Architecture is gaining diversity from women and minority professionals.

In 2016, 36 percent of newly licensed architects were women and 15 percent of new architects and 30 percent of new exam candidates identified as non-white, according to demographics from the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) also saw an increase in African-American and women members, according to its 2015 study, "Diversity in the Profession of Architecture."

The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) encourages this diversity by promoting community engagement and professional development of its members. It hosted its 46th annual convention in Chicago Oct. 17-20, bringing hundreds of Black, Asian, Latino and LGBTQ architects together to network, share design innovation and deconstruct the industry to for broader inclusivity.

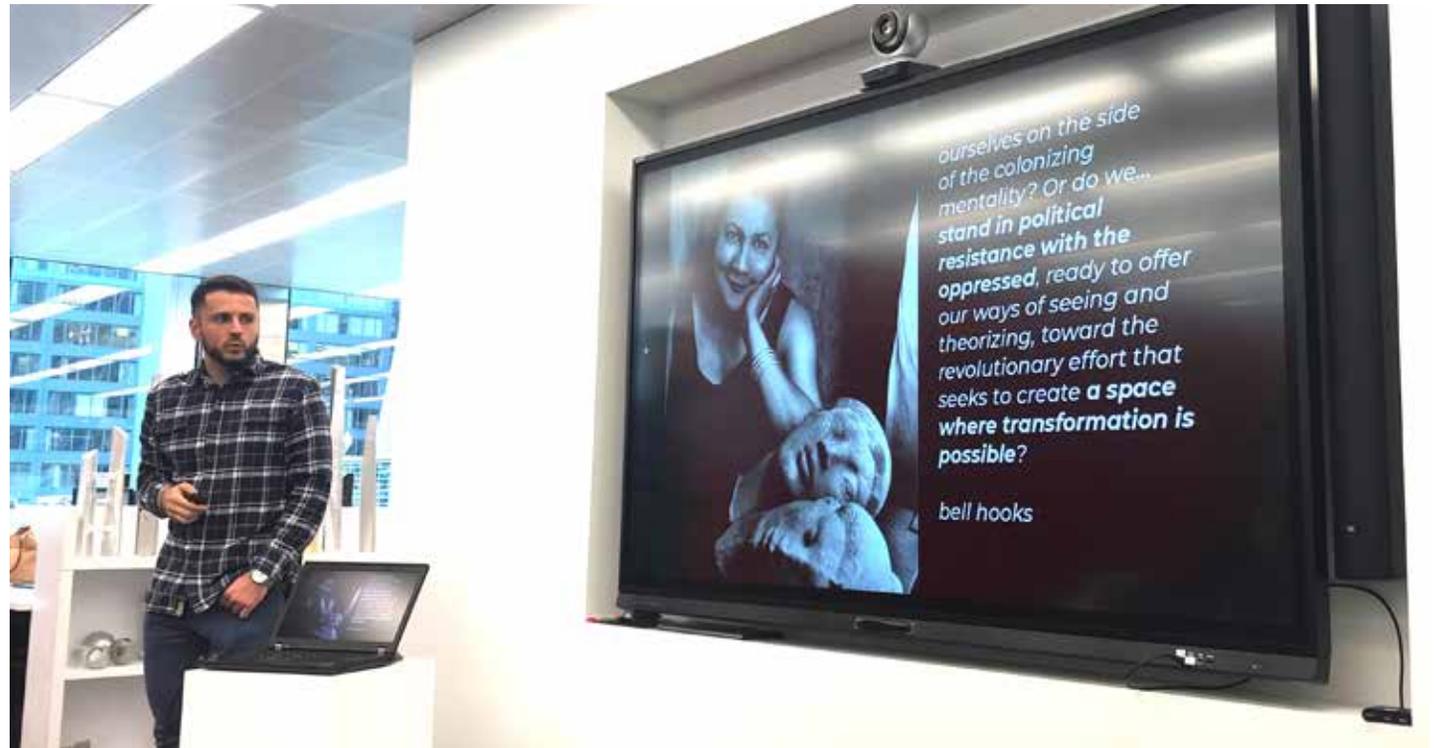
While some groups are still underrepresented, it is growing to encourage future architects that do not represent the heteronormative, white man perspective to be leaders in the industry. One way to inspire them is through education and awareness, which Kathryn Anthony has been doing for almost 33 years. Anthony, a distinguished professor with a Ph.D. at the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, created a seminar called "Gender and Race in Contemporary Architecture," which is one of the longest-running courses on diversity in architecture and is looked to as a national prototype from other architecture professionals. It highlights past Black and women architects, educates students on issues minority groups historically faced and how traditionally designed spaces—like public bathrooms—are discriminatory to them, particularly trans and women.

Anthony, who has written three books on design diversity and is published in over 100 publications, came to speak at the NOMA convention along with students currently taking the class to share its benefits, obstacles in creating it and where the discussion on race and gender is today.

"It's improved but we should still go a lot further; I wish we were further than we are," Anthony said. However, she acknowledging strides by AIA, the Equity by Design movement and research from her 2001 book "Designing for Diversity: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Architecture Profession" as good progress.

Designing space for the LGBTQ community is best seen through bathrooms, which Anthony loves to study and takes her students to see different ones on campus. How they invoke comfort and privacy depending on who they are designed for is so obvious that people do not think twice

about it, she said. But they are a necessity for some in the LGBTQ community, and Anthony wants the design community to be inclusive of all genders.



"These binary divisions cause a lot of problems for people," she said. "We have seen a lot of improvement on college campuses with gender-neutral bathrooms. The trans community has been very effective in voicing their concerns and getting change."

Deconstructing design spaces like bathrooms and learning about the gender and race divide in architecture has been illuminating to Anthony's students. Anirudhvaradan Kalayanaraman, a second-year graduate student from India, said the topic is scarcely talked about in architecture, which he thinks is disappointing.

"When we are in a profession that deals with shaping human lives and how people live their day-to-day; we need to take into consideration all factors—gender and race are two of the main factors," Kalayanaraman said. "When you slap a gender on a space, you put one gender before the other. That's the main cause of gender disparity in bathrooms."

His classmate Becca Vahldick, who is involved in the LGBTQ community, agreed and said both are now more empowered, more educated and more aware.

"Becoming educated on the topic opens a

ARCHITECTURE

whole world of opportunities for people because once you know what people go through, you will be able to change it—you want to change it," Vahldick said.

She realized that the course has focused on many women designers but no LGBTQ architects, although Anthony said students have an option to independently study a designer of their choice for a later project.

The class started with one person and now has taught over 250 students, many from minor-

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Above: R. Chris Daemmrich.

Below: Kathryn Anthony.

Photos by Ariel Parrella-Aureli



THEATER REVIEW

The Lonesome West

Playwright: Martin McDonagh

At: AstonRep (sic) Theatre Company

@ Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark

Tickets: 773-828-9129; AstonRep.com; \$25

Runs through: Nov. 18

BY JONATHAN ABARBANEL

If we believe Irish drama, the wild men of Ireland's Galway and Mayo counties have a tradition of patricide.

Murderous sons boast of their deeds in both John Millington Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* in 1907, and Martin McDonagh's *The Lonesome West* 90 years later, but offing parents isn't the actual focus. The deeds—occurring before the plays begin—are devices to access how Irish institutions suffocate each successive generation.

The main institution in *The Lonesome West* is Catholicism, treated largely as a joke in this pitch-black comedy. Represented by alcoholic priest Father Welsh (Mark Tacderas in a well-drawn performance), the Church is ubiquitous but superficial and powerless. Religion itself is irrelevant. One central character, Valene Connor (Dylan Todd), collects figurines of the saints and Holy Family without the slightest manifestation of belief. He's upset only when his brother Coleman Connor (Robert Tobin) melts them down in the oven.

It's Coleman who shot dear Dad as Valene watched. In exchange for saying it was acciden-

tal, Valene took Coleman's share of Pop's property, consisting of a shabby and somewhat-primitive house and several hundred Irish pounds in cash, which Valene flaunts before Coleman. The unwed adult brothers live in the family house, constantly arguing and physically fighting over everything from potato chips and booze to magazines and the figurines ... which really isn't much of a range, come to think about it.

The brothers are SO contentious, foul-mouthed, misogynistic, petty, selfish and amoral that it's impossible to empathize with them, which makes it difficult to like the play or production. Coleman sums up their merit when he observes, "That's the good thing about being a Catholic. You can shoot your father in the head and it doesn't matter at all, as long as you confess it." Heaven still is his.

As directed by Dana Anderson, the brothers snarl and shout almost from the start, despite Father Welsh's best efforts to pacify them. Problem is, when a play begins nearly at a fever pitch, there isn't much room to move. Boiling water can't boil hotter. By mid-play, McDonagh has engineered the departure of Father Welsh, and the badly underwritten role of a cheeky local girl who cares about him, Girleen Kelleher (sympathetic work by Phoebe Moore), leaving the brothers on their own. Although only 95 minutes long, the play soon becomes repetitive because the brothers don't change one iota from first to last. Todd and Tobin are capable actors with nowhere to go. Anderson is partly to blame, but so is McDonagh. The dark human underbelly dominates *The Lonesome West* through the brilliant mean wit of his words, and compensating values—let alone compassion—are not allowed equal weight.

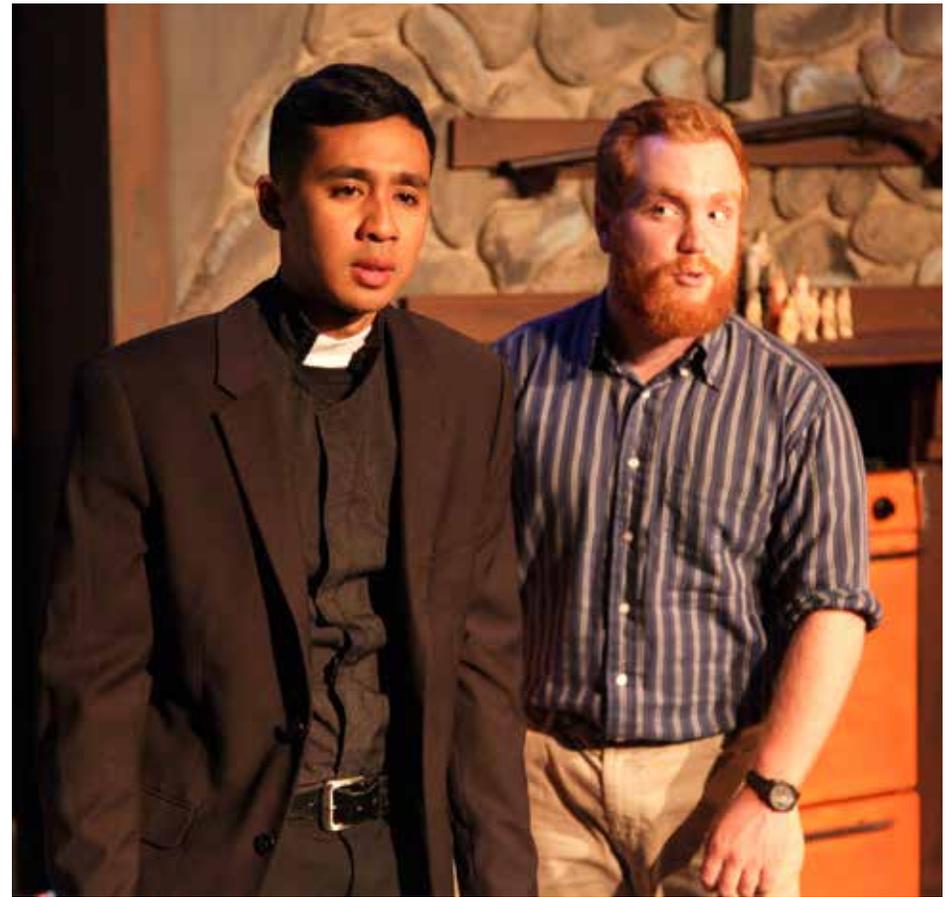
Mark Tacderas and Dylan Todd in *The Lonesome West*.

Photo by Emily Schwartz

Queer singer Mary Lambert on her poetry collection



Mary Lambert.
Photo by
Shervin Lainez

BY LAUREN EMILY WHALEN

Mary Lambert first experienced what she calls “radical vulnerability” at age seven, when she started a group therapy session at a friend’s sleepover.

“I’ve been in therapy since I was 5,” said the queer performer and writer, now 29, who rose to fame after singing the hook on Macklemore and Ryan Lewis’ LGBTQ anthem “Same Love” and has a new poetry collection, *Shame is An Ocean I Swim Across*. “I’ve always had the encouragement to talk about my feelings and emotional development. I started reading *Case Studies in Adolescence* when I was nine years old, like a weirdo.”

At the slumber party, Lambert and her friends began talking about their parents’ divorces, then sexual abuse they’d endured. “I realized I had started a group therapy session for my fellow seven-year-olds,” said Lambert. “Every single one of us had been violated by a man or someone older than us already.”

Amid the crying and bonding, Lambert experienced “an a-ha moment.”

“At that point, I realized how f—ked we all are, and how important it was to be empathetic and compassionate to each other,” she said. “I wouldn’t have had that moment had I not been radically vulnerable [and] facilitated that sort of environment.”

BOOKS

Lambert’s radical vulnerability is a consistent presence in her art. After writing “really, really bad poems” in junior high, she fell into spoken word poetry at 18. Lambert won several regional competitions in her native Seattle and was introduced to Macklemore through mutual friends in the spoken-word community.

“At the time, I was planning on applying to graduate school to be a teacher,” Lambert said. Soon after, she recorded “Same Love” and her life changed forever.

When the song became a hit, Lambert signed with Capitol Records. “When I got the call, I was working three jobs,” she said. “[“Same Love”] gave me a four-year pop career, which I embraced and loved. Now I get to tour the country and sing about my feelings!”

She also has a wider audience for her own words.

“[For] my first poetry collection, I went to a printer and started making books myself. It was a DIY, gritty kind of thing,” she said. “This time I had a whole team behind me! I’m so excited [Macmillan] wanted to make this book a reality and saw the value in my writing.”

However, Lambert refused to rest on her “Same Love” laurels. “I didn’t want to get a book deal

because I’m a former pop singer. I wanted to get a book deal because I’m a good writer.” Over the past three years, Lambert participated in poetry workshops and one-on-one coaching sessions, composing new work and heavily editing select poems from her 2013 self-published collection, *500 Tips for Fat Girls*.

In *Shame*, Lambert opens up about the ups and downs of celebrity, as well as body image, past trauma and mental illness. She also writes about organized religion and faith.

“My family was really strictly Pentecostal,” Lambert said. “Then my mom came out as bisexual and we were immediately shunned. I was six or seven at the time, and I went from going to church three or four times a week to going to drum circles and listening to Tracy Chapman!”

In high school Lambert joined an evangelical Christian church, where she remained even after coming out. “It wasn’t the community that made the coming out process difficult,” she said. “It was the indoctrination of harmful belief systems: there’s a ‘good’ way to live and there’s a ‘bad’ way to live, rather than ‘I just exist!’ It took a lot of self-reflection and rejecting harmful ideology [for me to] embrace the compassionate, loving God that I believe in.”

Lambert still attends church but identifies as Episcopalian. “I feel like they’re very radical and current in ideology, but very classic in liturgy,

which I love. It’s really comforting and reminds me of home.”

Although Lambert is releasing *Shame* with “no expectations,” she recently learned it may have a wider reach.

“I’m used to my fan base, which is generally other crying queers or allies ... people who are very sensitive and like Harry Potter and are like me!” she said. “But a friend said, ‘I don’t have any trauma, but reading your book gave me a lens into what women and queer people, or someone with bipolar disorder, might be experiencing.’”

“I didn’t even consider that, someone who didn’t have my experience picking up this book. But now I wonder if it might offer a lens for people who have a desire to connect but don’t know how, and who want to be allies. I hope there is a feeling of a friend on the other end.”

A friend who staunchly believes in the goodness of people: despite her traumatic childhood, bipolar disorder and “creative differences” with the music industry, Lambert is an eternal optimist. “I never became jaded about humanity. I just don’t have that in me,” she said.

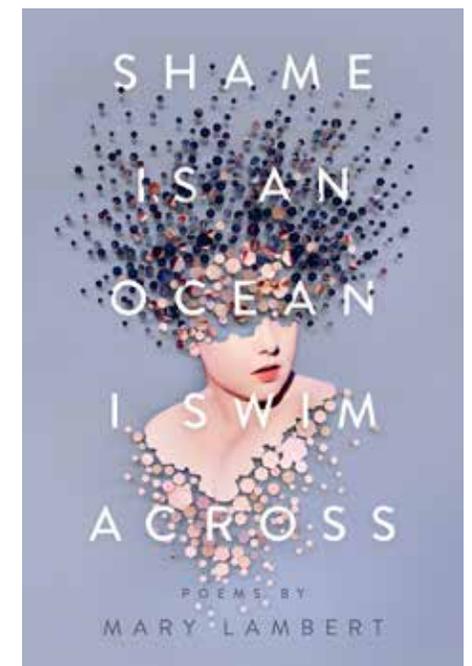
“For me, I’ve always seen the best in people. I know that’s a double-edged sword, but...I just don’t see any other way to exist.”

In the meantime, she’s working on *Shame*’s accompanying album as well as a musical, while enjoying fall from her western Massachusetts home and writing love poems for her partner. Lambert describes her current state of mind as “blissed out.”

“I’m embracing the complexity of life,” she said. “There’s no wrong way to live as long as you’re doing it with compassion and kindness, and I’m practicing that in a way I never have before.”

She added, “I’m going to speak at the UN next month, and I’m gonna play football later today. My life is awesome!”

***Shame is An Ocean I Swim Across* is available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble, and wherever books are sold. For more about the author, follow her on Twitter at @marylambertsing.**



2019 GMC Sierra Denali echoes classic Suburban pickups

CASEY WILLIAMS, GAYWHEELS.COM

Back in 1955, GMC introduced the Suburban pickup, a companion to the luxurious Chevy Cameo fleetside that was essentially a show truck for the streets, stoked with GM's new small block V8 engine. It was the Cadillac of pickups. Sixty-four years later, GMC launches the redesigned 2019 Sierra Denali.

The Sierra Denali embraces the look of luxury with a cliff of a chrome grille, 22" alloy wheels, power running boards, and formal chrome-ringed windowline. LEDs gleam from the headlamps, running lights, foglamps, and taillights. Out back, the new Multi Pro tailgate features a "tailgate within a tailgate" that separates to form a step for hopping into the bed or a comfortable footrest for tailgating. Much of the inner structure of the Sierra's bed is crafted from carbon fiber to reduce weight.

The concept of luxury in pickups has changed dramatically over the decades. Two-tone paint, radio, and air-conditioning would have challenged Cadillac in the '50s, but today's GMC aims much higher. Climb inside where you'll be pampered with sweet-smelling leather seats—heated/cooled in front, heated in rear—that face a dash and console with real aluminum and wood. Dual-zone automatic climate control, power sunroof, Bose audio, and household outlet are but a start.

Embedded in the center of the industrial looking control stack is an easy-to-use swipescreen with icons for audio, phone, navigation, and climate. Phones connect via Bluetooth or USBs

AUTOS

and are wirelessly charged in the front console. There's also 4G Wi-Fi if you want to use your tablet or laptop on the go. A wide-view color head-up display shows speed, speed limits, navigation and safety systems.

And, speaking of, safety is top-flight given forward collision warning with pedestrian detection, low-speed auto brake, blind spot warning, lane departure warning, lane keep assist, and rear cross path detection systems. Select multiple views for the rearview camera that focus directly behind, 360-degrees from above, or trailer hitch for backing.

Upscale truck buyers in the 1950s could choose the 155 horsepower Pontiac-derived V8, connected to a four-speed Hydra-matic transmission, but the Denali packs a 6.2-liter V8 delivering 420 horsepower and 460 lb.-ft. of torque. It routes all of that power to the electronic four-wheel-drive system through a new 10-speed automatic transmission. Auto stop/start, which pauses the engine at rest, and variable displacement, which shuts down cylinders under lighter loads, contributes to fuel economy ratings of 15/20-MPG city/highway. You'll get less pulling up to 9,300 lbs.

Driving the big truck involves far more than an amply smooth powertrain. Continuously adjusting adaptive suspension control can be adjusted, along with the throttle, for drive modes ranging from comfortable Touring to more aggressive Sport. Off-road mode configures the suspension and powertrain for, well, off-roading. The big



2019 GMC Sierra Denali.
Photo courtesy of Gaywheels.com

truck just floats along on the highway, or hauls through the rough, while retaining the ability to plunge down curvy mountain roads.

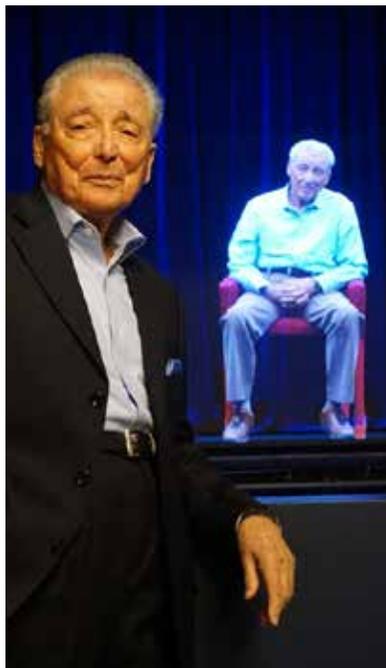
GMC maintains its role in offering luxury pickups. From glitzy style to comfy cabins, advanced infotainment, cutting-edge safety, and smooth performance, the 2019 Sierra Denali is a sweet way to roll – provided you can afford a base price of \$54,700 or \$67,735 as-tested. GM fans will appreciate it's built in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Competitors include the Ford F-150 Platinum, Ram Laramie Long Horn, Chevy Silverado High Country, and Toyota Tundra Platinum.

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Brakes f/r: disc/disc
Must-have features: Luxury, performance
Fuel economy: 15/20 mpg city/hwy
Assembly: Fort Wayne, Indiana
Base/As-tested price: \$54,700/\$67,735

Send questions and comments to Casey at AutoCasey@aol.com; follow him on YouTube @AutoCasey.

See more at Gaywheels.com.



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pronoun.
Photo by Shervin Lainez

pronoun talks about name, breakups

BY JERRY NUNN

Out singer Alyse Velturo (aka pronoun) is attempting to outdo her counterparts—and going by the name pronoun is just the start.

The songwriter grew up in Boston and graduated from the Berklee School of Music. She took her music business major to New York and currently manages independent music labels during the day. At night, she plays her music around town and is heading out on tour.

Her single “it’s the way” benefitted Planned Parenthood and her latest song, “you didn’t even make the bed,” covers the ending of a past relationship with her ex-girlfriend. The new record is planned for spring 2019.

Windy City Times: Have you spent much time in Chicago?

pronoun: We played Riot Fest there this year—very early, at noon.

WCT: When did you first start playing music?

pronoun: I started this almost three years ago. I grew up with music and played a bunch of instruments. In high school I started making my own music. I went to college for music, but gave up on creating my own stuff. I worked with artists and did engineering.

I also studied business and work at a music distributor now. I manage indie labels.

After a bad breakup, I decided to make music and test the waters.

WCT: How did the name pronoun come about?

pronoun: I wanted to be called “Monachopsis,” which is the feeling of being out of place. My friend thought that was a bad idea. I gave her 30 minutes to think of a better one and she came

MUSIC

back with pronoun. I lower cased the p. It happened in about an hour.

As you dive deeper, pronouns can stand alone, which I felt like I was doing. It can be subject or the object of a conversation. It makes a lot of sense that I am called this. At first, I just liked how it looked as I typed it out.

WCT: Look how important pronouns are in the LGBT community.

pronoun: Totally—but that is not why I named myself that. I didn’t think about gender much until now—and have to, thanks to the government! I work at a company where the leaders are all women. I didn’t realize how special that is until recently.

My preferred pronouns are she and her. That conversation is brought up a lot these days. I think it is great people are talking about it now more than ever.

WCT: Do you prefer to be called a lesbian, gay or queer?

pronoun: I like being called gay, but I have friends who identify with all of those names. I just call them whatever they prefer.

WCT: Let’s talk about music. Is “you didn’t even make the bed” a track that had you venting?

pronoun: That song and some others that are about to come out are very old. I wrote it three years ago and I was in a sad breakup mode. It was right when I got back to our apartment and it was trashed. She left all of her laundry. She wanted me to bring it to her. She left a big mess

in a so many ways. This inspired me writing about all of the lazy things that happened during our relationship.

WCT: Has she heard the song?

pronoun: It was so long ago, but it is not out yet for her to hear it. It doesn’t feel like a bad thing anymore.

The breakup was meant to happen. I am a true believer in everything happens for a reason.

WCT: Tell our readers about your live show.

pronoun: There are three people onstage. I play guitar and sing. I have a bass player who also sings. There is a drummer too.

We are rock, but the EP is very quiet, because I recorded it in my bedroom with drum machines. The live shows bring it into a different space. There are so many influences in my live shows. Guitar riffs are the way I view things and based off of things I have been listening to for a very long time.

WCT: Who do you listen to?

pronoun: I’m obsessed with The 1975. In the past, it was Jimmy Eat World and Death Cab for Cutie. Julien Baker’s first album inspired me to get back into music. I have my own record label, so I listen artists on that.

WCT: What advice do you give to new musicians?

pronoun: Don’t give up on your dreams, work really hard, and above all be yourself. That is what I try to do.

See pronoun live at Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln Ave., on Thursday, Nov. 1, with Justin Courtney Pierre. Tickets can be purchased at LH-ST.com.

Lyric adding ‘boheme’ shows in Jan.

Lyric Opera of Chicago announced that it will add two performances of its sparkling new coproduction of Puccini’s *La bohème* in late January 2019.

The added performances are a 2 p.m. matinee on Tuesday, Jan. 29, and a 7 p.m. performance on Thursday, Jan. 31. Casting for these added performances will be announced at a later date.

Patrons who had previously purchased tickets to the performances that were cancelled are being given the opportunity this week to exchange into the added dates, as well as into other performances during the run. Call 312-827-5600.

Joffrey’s ‘Nutcracker’ to run Dec. 1-30

The Joffrey Ballet’s reimagined classic, *The Nutcracker*, by Tony-winning choreographer Christopher Wheeldon, will return to open the holiday season at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Pkwy., in 29 performances on Dec. 1-30.

The Chicago Philharmonic, led by Joffrey Music Director Scott Speck, will provide live accompaniment of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s classic score for every performance. The full Joffrey company will also be joined onstage by almost 90 young dancers from the Chicago area and young vocalists from local choirs.

Single tickets are \$35-\$199 each; people can visit the lobby of Joffrey Tower, 10 E. Randolph St., as well as the Auditorium Theatre’s box office; call 312-386-8905; or go to Joffrey.org.

‘Activists and Icons’ at Holocaust Museum

“Activists and Icons: The Photographs of Steve Schapiro,” an exhibit at Skokie’s Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, will run through June 23, 2019.

Schapiro, a Chicago-based photographer, has works that have been featured in publications such as *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Rolling Stone*, *Vanity Fair* and numerous others. The exhibition’s 46 large-format photographs tell the story of seminal moments in history from the March on Washington (1963) to Robert Kennedy’s presidential campaign (1968).

Visit <https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/activists-and-icons/>.





BILLY Masters

"It was a little thing I did in London and Joe Fiennes played Michael Jackson and there was a lot of to-do about the fact that he was a white guy. And I always thought about Fred Armisen on Saturday Night Live playing Obama and nobody seemed to give a ... about that." — **Stockard Channing** talks about people portraying characters of other races. It's worth noting that toward the end, Michael Jackson was paler than me. Also, SNL previously featured Armisen as Prince, Darrell Hammond as Jesse Jackson, Billy Crystal as Sammy Davis Jr. and Maya Rudolph as Donatella Versace.

The big story last week was about **Megyn Kelly** and blackface—two things I never thought would go together. Megyn Kelly and a lobotomy, yes. Megyn Kelly and peroxide poisoning, yes. Megyn Kelly and a Botox mishap, yes. But blackface? If you don't know, Meg tackled the issue of using blackface for Halloween by saying it was OK.

And that leads us, inevitably, to **Designing Women**. Now, I know my audience—you all saw this coming a mile away. In the famous episode, the ladies were in a talent show lip-synching to The Supremes. There were many problems with this scenario. First off, there were only three Supremes, while there were four "DW." Second, they performed "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," which was a hit for Diana after she left The Supremes (although here's a fun fact—The Supremes and Temptations recorded a cover of the Tammi Terrell/Marvin Gaye version of this song in 1968). Third, and the issue germane to this situation, The Supremes were Black women, while the ladies on "DW" were white. Suzanne had her beautician whip up skin bronzing makeup. Julia balked, saying it was insulting to Black women. Come showtime, the three girls are onstage au naturel when Suzanne walks out with tinted skin.

And that brings us to the question—if you are dressing up as someone famous of a different color, how far do you go? And before you answer, I'm not talking about minstrel makeup with exaggerated lips; I'm talking natural coloring. In theater, this is commonplace. When an opera singer plays "Aida," she must look Ethiopian. When someone sings or acts Othello, he must look like a Moor (although the Met recently stopped doing this). When Whoopi Goldberg hosted the 1999 Academy Awards, she came out as Queen Elizabeth I—complete with the Virgin Queen's heavily powdered white face. For all those reasons—and believe me, I am no fan—I think NBC was just looking for an excuse to dump her.

I've previously expressed my admiration for **Max Ehrlich**, an actor who previously appeared on *Under the Dome* and *The Young and the Restless*, and is rumored to have played an active role in the private life of **Chris Colfer**—speculation, of course, but circumstantial evidence points in that direction. Young Max recently posted the following on Twitter: "I am currently being stalked. I am putting this out there so that this person (ppl involved) are aware that the police are now in-



Opera singer David Daniels is facing even more heat now, Billy says.

Photo by Bernard Benant/Virgin Records

involved. Please leave me alone. I wish I could say that this is all over, but I'm continuing to get my safety threatened even with a security team. I have to step away from social media at this time. Love you guys."

He then posted a photo of a burly gent sitting on his hotel bed with the word "SECURITY" printed on the back of his T-shirt (note to self—never hire a security guard who wears a T-shirt that says "SECURITY"). Max then said, "Just wanted to update you guys that I am safe & secure. I appreciate the messages. Don't take your safety for granted. There really are some sick people out there. Stay safe x." He later told TMZ that a realtor became infatuated with him, sexually aggressive and, at one point, brandished a gun! That fills in some of the blanks, but not all of them. Sources say that this wasn't so much a business relationship that went south as an online hookup that went wrong. Not to victim-blame, of course, but let this be a cautionary tale (or tail).

I recently reported that opera singer **David Daniels** and his husband, William Scott Walters, were accused of drugging and raping a 23-year-old student singer back in 2010. Now two more men have come forward with similar accusations against the singer (but not his husband). Andrew Lipian says that he was drugged and assaulted by Daniels while he was a student at University of Michigan in March of 2017. He claims Daniels invited him to his apartment and gave him several drinks of bourbon. Later, Daniels gave Lipian what he thought was Tylenol PM, but turned out to be Ambien! Lipian says Daniels then removed his clothes, groped him and, throughout the encounter, told Lipian that he'd probably get a full scholarship for the rest of his studies. Lipian also says Daniels sent him a video of the famed singer masturbating and referencing "our bourbon-and-Ambien night."

As if that wasn't bad enough, a third singer who studied with Daniels at UM claims that he, too, was solicited for sex. The 19-year-old claims that he received the solicitation on Grindr, which I really don't think counts. I mean, when you're on a hookup app, you've gotta expect solicitations.

Austin Wolf made headlines for his mile-high encounter with a Delta flight attendant. (The video can be found on BillyMasters.com.) Wolf continues to make the rounds of people in the

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transportation industry. Last week, he posted a video of an Uber driver servicing him—presumably it was part of his tip. As always, we'll post the video.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Gary in San Francisco: "I don't know if you watch *The Good Place*, but the guy who plays *Chidi* just was shirtless, and WOW—for a bookworm, he sure is jacked!"

That revelation was the twist nobody saw coming on *The Good Place*—a ripped Chidi! I admit that the sight of his body really distracted me. Apparently Chidi isn't just a dorky nerd into heavy reading—he's also into heavy lifting! Whatever he's doing, keep it up. Once you see the pics on BillyMasters.com, I predict you'll do the same.

When brains also have brawn, it's time for me to end yet another column. Before I show you my sheepskin, let me remind you to check out BillyMasters.com—the site with nothing to hide. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Megyn gets a job on the Hallmark Channel! Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR

Brunch at etta; The Florentine's aperitivo

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Let's get one thing out of the way: the new Bucktown spot **etta** (1840 W. North Ave.; <https://ettarestaurant.com/>), from the creators of Gold Coast restaurant Maple & Ash, is not named after singer Etta James or any other famous Etta who might come to mind.

Rather, as a server informed me during a recent brunch there, the name means "keeper of the hearth"—a nod to the wood-fired menu items there.

And there's quite a selection at etta, which has friendly staff, open spaces, some groovin' music



Biscuits and gravy with chicken at etta.

Photo by Andrew Davis

(like Alice Merton's "No Roots") and some tasty offerings. (However, there was one negative: the

rickety table with an unintentionally spinning top—although that would be cool in allowing people to share dishes.)

If you're carb-phobic, you might be in trouble, as etta has a tempting selection of breads and pastries—including the multilayered kouign-amann, which has been called one of the fattiest of European breads. There are also items like focaccia (with ricotta and strawberry preserves), various croissants, buttermilk biscuits and cinnamon pecan-glazed banana bread.

The plates cover the savory and sweet—but they're all nice comfort foods. The scrumptious tarte flambe featured uplands cheese, bacon, onion, creme fraiche and egg; the buttermilk biscuits and sausage gravy are savory, and the optional chicken accompaniment was wonderful; and the huge pancakes come with honey butter, bliss maple syrup and strawberry jam. The Sando is an intriguing dish that's topped with mortadella, Italian sausage, pepperoni, avocado, mozzarella, arugula, tomato, onion, giardiniera and fried egg. There's also an intoxicating mix of cocktails (pun intended), although I opted for tangerine juice during this outing.

Regarding brunch, it is a must at this place. In a city where brunch is taken quite seriously, that's saying (or writing) a lot.

Aperitivo at The Florentine

In Italy, the time known as "aperitivo" is taken quite seriously in Italy. It's more than a traditional happy hour, as it's more like a cocktail hour with upscale food.

And local Italian restaurant **The Florentine** (151 W. Adams St.; <https://the-florentine.net/>) is reflecting that time of the day/evening with its own aperitivo.

The Florentine's aperitivo takes place weekdays at 4-7 p.m., with some great offerings, in the gustatory and financial senses. Divided into "sips" and "bites," drinks include the Campari spritz, the Lillet Blonde (lillet, elderflower, grapefruit juice, lemon bitters, soda water) and the Suze Bellini (suze, peach puree, prosecco, tarragon garnish), among others. Culinary treats include burratina (with baby burrata), mini crab cakes, nduja, meatball sliders and crostini—with no item being more than \$5.

In addition, people can receive a complimentary pizza for their group with the purchase of any alcoholic beverages. If that's not a reason for trying out this place, I don't know what is.

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



CHARLIE'S
Windy City Empire candidate
selection show.
Joseph Stevens Photography



JACKHAMMER
Are you going to Heaven or Hell?
Joseph Stevens Photography

Sidetrack's OUTspoken! Series: November's featured storytellers SPECIAL ALLIES EDITION

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

See www.outspokenchicago.com for more info.

—**Amy Binns-Calvey** is a long-time ally. In a past life, she performed in the singing group The Weird Sisters. She is a playwright and a co-author of the long-running show, Flanagan's Wake (which she directed off-Broadway). Her new work, *The Naked Show*, is in pre-production and will open next fall. (The producer is Outspoken's own David Fink.)

—**Erica Nicole Clark** is a Chicago native who started in comedy at Chicago's famed Improv Olympic before starting stand-up. She has opened for Devon Cole, Marlon Wayans and Dave Chapelle. She is currently on tour with Hannibal Buress.

—**Donna Blue Lachman's** "Identity" has been as a writer, actor and director of theater. These days, she lives off the fat of her land in the Michigan countryside. She is currently working on a book about her adventures in Haiti.

—**Francine Less** did 30 years in the human resources field, during which one of her proudest

accomplishments was implementing domestic-partner coverage at The Art Institute of Chicago in the mid '90s. For the last few years, she has been involved with the Youth Empowerment Performance Project (YEPP), a local organization that works with LGBTQ young adults that have experienced housing instability and gender-orientation trauma.

—**Elain O'Sullivan** is an artist, designer, sculpture, teacher and business woman, in addition to a Marine, a parent, a grandparent, a puppeteer, and an aspiring flautist. Her mother was an orphan who was raised by circus people and became a top act in Vaudeville. Her father was an inventor, architect and a bartender. She has lots of stories.

—**Spider Saloff** is a longtime supporter of gay rights, and is acclaimed worldwide as a jazz vocalist. She is also a songwriter, playwright and podcaster. She moved here from NYC years ago and refuses to leave.



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 Chaos, 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 Sasha Love; 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. Manuevers, 118 E. Jefferson St., Joliet

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUNDAYS

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

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

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

WINDY CITY TIMES COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Wed., Oct. 31

22nd Annual Haunted Halsted Halloween Parade & Costume Contest Costume Contest has \$4,000 in cash & prizes in four categories: Theme, Group, Drag & Scary. Featuring a panel of drag queen judges and spectator Instagram hashtag voting! Winners Ceremony presented by Circuit Mom. Halsted St from Belmont Ave to Brompton Ave. Kick Off: X:XX pm at Halsted & Belmont and go to Brompton Ave. <http://HauntedHalsted.com>

Halloween at Daley Plaza Celebrating 35th anniversary of the Thriller. Come in costume. Performance by Michael Jackson: The Live Experience. 12:00pm - 1:00pm Daley Plaza, east lobby on Randolph and Dearborn. Free. 12:00pm - 1:00pm Daley Plaza <http://www.facebook.com/events/459555474452762/>

Thursday, Nov. 1

American Veterans for Equal Rights monthly meeting AVER is a non-profit, chapter-based association of active, reserve and veteran servicemembers dedicated to full and equal rights and equitable treatment. This monthly meeting



IT'S AN HONOR Sunday, Nov. 4

Businesswoman Marge Summit (above) will be honored with the Jon-Henri Damski Award.
Photo by Tracy Baim

supports the chapters work in outreach and visibility for LGBTQ veterans year round. On Facebook, see AVER Chicago Chapter. 7:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago

Vote Her in: Your Guide to Electing Our First Woman President Book Launch Party with Rebecca Sive, founding board

member of the Chicago Foundation for Women and member of groups advising presidents Clinton and Obama, and Karen Hawkins, founder of Rebellious Magazine 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <https://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Friday, Nov. 2

Orlando Traveling Memorial Art installation created by Pulse Nightclub shooting survivors, first responders and family members, The Orlando Traveling Memorial (OTM), will make its first stop here. Through Nov. 23 12:00pm Center on Halsted 3656 N Halsted Chicago <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/Orlando-Traveling-Memorial-to-debut-at-Center-on-Halsted/64350.html>

Author Reading of Grabbing Pussy Author Karen Finley, celebrated performance artist's mesmerizing riffs on sex in American politics Based on her widely praised performance piece Unicorn Gratitude Mystery 7:00pm Women & Children First Bookstore 5233 N Clark St Chicago <http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.com>

Saturday, Nov. 3

The Rugby Weekend World-class international rugby by USA Rugby and TLA Worldwide (TLA), along with host city partners Chicago Sports Commission (CSC) and Soldier Field. USA Women's Eagles open against the 2017 Women's Rugby World Cup Champion Black Ferns.

1:00pm Soldier Field 1410 Museum Campus Dr Chicago <http://TheRugbyWeekend.com>

Gypsy, A Musical Fable Stars E. Faye Butler as Rose, Broadway's legendary "stage mother" who raises her daughters to assume the heights in the world of show business. Through Nov. 25. \$20 - \$66 8:00pm The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St. 773.777.9884 <http://PorchlightMusicTheatre.org>

Black Gold: A Casino Night with Affinity Community Services Affinity's casino night fundraiser supports programming of Affinity Community Services. \$50-\$100. Additional VIP reception 7-8 p.m. requires a special ticket purchase. 8-11 p.m.; Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center at 4859 S Wabash Ave.; 773-324-0377; <http://affinity95.org>

Sunday, Nov. 4

18th Jon-Henri Damski Award to Chicago Legend Marge Summit Honoring Marge Summit for a lifetime of activism 2:00pm - 4:00pm The Call (Chicago) 1547 W Bryn Mawr Chicago <http://www.facebook.com/Jon-Henri-Damski-Tribute-Page442134295851328/?eid=ARC8bWJR A3xgZRYs27Xek0hS17Pd-QFauiazomn74rDbc7rusV-fBLz8yNo73dDXFlNqsrF5nx4rI1/>

The Care Plan 3rd Anniversary Providing excellent care navigation services for all and training organizations in affirming practices serving LGBTQ older adults

2:00pm - 4:00pm Original Soul Vegetarian, 203 E. 75th Street, Chicago <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-care-plan-3rd-anniversary-tickets-50377902663>

Tuesday, Nov. 6

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

Elections Aren't a Drag Watch midterm election returns with Maggie O'Keefe for 40th Ward Alderman starting when the polls close. Emceed by the Coco Shonnell. Win prizes donated from local small businesses. Free. Donations accepted for O'Keefe 7:00pm - 10:00pm The Call (Chicago) 1547 W Bryn Mawr Chicago <http://www.callbarchicago.com>

Monthly Pride Film Fest Pride Films and Plays' monthly festival of LGBTQ independent short films will return with an election night special program, theme "Queer Survival: Art & Activism Will Set Us Free." 71-minute program will explore LGBTQ citizen activism. 7:30pm The Broadway, Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway <http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com>

KYLE'S BED & BREAKFAST

by Greg Fox

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World of
CHOCOLATE

CHICAGO'S PREMIER WORLD AIDS DAY EVENT

Friday

NOVEMBER 30 2018

REVEL FULTON MARKET

FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION:
AIDSchicago.org/CHOCOLATE