

DEPARTMENTS



THE 312

- 21
Politics
Dave McKinney grades Bruce Rauner on his first six months in the governor's office
- 24
Real Estate
Ian Spula takes you inside legendary filmmaker John Hughes's massive mansion
- 24
City Life
Could TriNoCo soon be a neighborhood near you?
- 26
Vox
Northwestern professor Laura Kipnis on banning student-teacher romances
- 28
Travel
How to find the right hotel for your summer staycation
- 30
The Urbanist
Rod O'Connor helps his fisherman dad break a catchless streak



CULTURE

- 35
Music
The cello, a jazz instrument? In the hands of Tomeka Reid, absolutely
- 38
Art
A sneak peek at the Hancock lobby's illuminating new sculpture
- 38
Opera
Wunderkind composer Matthew Aucoin premieres a work for kids
- 39
Theater
Eight new plays bring Kafka into the 21st century
- 40
Dance
Chicago Human Rhythm Project's tap extravaganza
- 42
Taste Maker
Heiji Choy Black visits Joffrey Ballet dancers Victoria Jaiani and Temur Suluashvili
- 44
Trend
Luxe leather backpacks
- 133
Go
The 139 best theater, dance, music, and art events recommended by *Chicago's* critics this month



DINING

- 51
Recipes
Expand your culinary repertoire with one of these six new summer cookbooks
- 54
The Liquid Hot List
Five places where everyone wants to drink right now
- 54
Drink
Cup, a rye whiskey cocktail at the Game Room
- 55
The Hot List
10 restaurants everyone's talking about
- 56
In Season
How to make a killer tomato gazpacho
- 57
Budget
Logan Square's homey Same Day Cafe
- 57
The Buzz
Three restaurants on the way
- 58
Review
Jeff Ruby on 10 years of Schwa, one of the city's most idiosyncratic restaurants
- 62
New and Updated
Two new listings, two updates, and indexes to nearly 200 restaurants reviewed by *Chicago's* dining critics

ETC

- 12
Editor's Note
Elizabeth Fenner on hunting and gathering
- 14
Inside Peek
The making of this issue
- 16
Talk to Us
Feedback from readers
- 148
At Work
FarmedHere director of agriculture Veronica Shaughnessy

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DANCE



In the Meantime celebrates flamenco, tap, and Irish dancing, among other styles.

TOUR DE TAP

A new work explores rhythmic dancing from around the globe. **BY NOVID PARSİ**

Over the past eight years, the Chicago Dancing Festival has established itself as the biggest event of its kind in the Midwest. That's because it was founded with the idea that its job is to bring dance to the masses. "We have a cultural responsibility," says Jay Franke, who started the free five-day festival with choreographer Lar Lubovitch in 2006. "If we can't make this work accessible to everyone in Chicago, then it's not worth us doing."

With that in mind, for this year's fest Franke and Lubovitch commissioned

a work from Lane Alexander, a tap dancer and founder of the 25-year-old dance company Chicago Human Rhythm Project. Alexander, 55, believes anyone can connect to tap. "Every culture in the world has an ancient tradition of foot drumming," he says. "American tap is just the youngest version of the oldest dance form."

Alexander's piece, *In the Meantime*, riffs on the ubiquity of dance, an art that he says dates back to the earliest days of human community: "Paintings on caves that are 10,000 years old relate to either hunting or dancing."

In the Meantime draws on the cross-cultural tradition of percussive dance, including flamenco, Irish dancing, and American tap. "We feel a deep connection to percussive dance when we see and hear it," Alexander explains. "If you see an Irish dancer, Mexican dancer, and African dancer all moving at the same time, there's a metamessage there about bringing people together through rhythm." ●

GO The Chicago Dancing Festival runs August 25 to 29 at various locations. chicagodancingfestival.com

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What's Next

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

Through 8/16 The Writers Theatre bookstore space provides an intimate setting for this powerful portrait of a young girl clinging to hope in a time of tragedy. The production, extended to August 16 due to popular demand, provides insight into life in the "secret annex," where tight quarters serve as an ever-present reminder of the danger just outside—allowing audiences to come to know the familiar story of Anne and her family in a new and strikingly honest way. \$55-\$75. *Writers Theatre at Books on Vernon, 664 Vernon Ave., Glencoe. writerstheatre.org*

EVENINGS AT THE GARDEN

Through 9/7 Chicago Botanic Garden offers various types of music four nights a week during summer hours. On Mondays, the Carillon Concert Series presents one-hour musical performances of carillon bells beginning at 7 p.m. Start Tuesday mornings with hour-long musical performances at 10 a.m., while evenings bring Music on the Esplanade at 6 p.m. with various genres represented. Children can romp around during whimsical, lively Dancing Sprouts performances from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday nights. Hot Summer Nights serves up music and dancing in the McGinley Pavilion on Thursdays. Food is available for purchase and picnicking is permitted during concerts as well. *Free admission; \$25-\$30 parking. 1000 Lake Cook Rd., Glencoe. chicagobotanic.org*

RAVINIA

Through 9/12 Ravinia's 2015 season features more than 120 events, including the annual summer residency of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Some of the noteworthy performers still to come this season are Steely Dan (7/24-25), Harry Connick Jr. (8/7), Diana Krall (8/9), Seth MacFarlane (8/21), Alan Jackson (8/31), and Itzhak Perlman and Emanuel Ax (9/9). \$10-\$60. *Lake Cook and Green Bay Rds., Highland Park. ravinia.org*

NORTH SHORE FESTIVAL OF ART AT OLD ORCHARD

7/25-26; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Find unique pieces from juried artists specializing in painting, glass, ceramics, photography, sculpture, jewelry, furniture, and more, in the 26th year of this two-day event. Listen to live music, eat from a variety of food stalls, and even express your own creativity with an onsite still-life photography contest or a souvenir snapshot taken at the festival's photo booth. Kids stay entertained with Art Bingo and the color creation station. *Free. Westfield Old Orchard, 4999 Old Orchard Center, Skokie. amdurproductions.com*

SOUTH PACIFIC

8/15-30 With music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II set to a 30-piece orchestra, this classic musical immerses theatergoers in the romances of two couples from different worlds and includes well-known songs like "Some Enchanted Evening" and "Bali Ha'i". \$17-\$94. *Light Opera Works at Cahn Auditorium, 600 Emerson St., Evanston. light-opera-works.org*

SKOKIE'S BACKYARD BASH

8/22-24 There's something for everyone at this three-day festival, including an eclectic range of music, a large carnival midway, 5K run, classic movies at the Skokie Theatre, a beer and food tent, kids' activities, a classic auto show, a downtown sidewalk sale, bingo, a Sunday pancake breakfast, farmers' market, and more. \$6-\$60. *Oakton St. and Floral Ave., Skokie. backlotbash.com*

CHICAGO DANCING FESTIVAL

8/25-29 Established in 2006 and the only free festival of its kind in the nation, Chicago Dancing Festival aims to increase access to the art form with a wide variety of dance performances from top-notch companies. Choreographer Lar Lubovitch and highly acclaimed Chicago dancer Jay Franke use the festival

as a platform to raise the national and international profile of dance in Chicago. *Free, but tickets for indoor events must be reserved at the venue's box office. Harris Theater, Millennium Park, 205 E. Randolph St. Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave. Jay Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph St. chicagodancingfestival.com*

CHICAGO FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

8/28-30 This inaugural festival, presented by Food & Wine Magazine, highlights top chefs, wine and spirits experts, and winemakers from Chicago and across the nation. Sample from more than 90 wine, spirit, and artisanal food exhibitors and attend tastings, seminars, chef demonstrations, and more. Cooking enthusiasts can purchase cookbooks onsite and get them autographed by the chef authors. On Saturday, Toast & Taste serves up libations and live music with the Chicago skyline as a backdrop, while Last Call features late night "sips and sweets" during a party with a live DJ, drinks, and dessert. \$75-\$550. *Lincoln Park (daytime events); Grant Park (evening events). chicagoodandwinefestival.com*

AMERICAN CRAFT EXPOSITION

9/25-27 View the work of more than 150 talented artisans across 12 media, including ceramics, glass, jewelry, metal, and wood, in this highly competitive juried show. The fundraising event is presented by The Auxiliary of NorthShore University HealthSystem, and supports critical breast and ovarian cancer research and care at NorthShore University HealthSystem. A preview party on September 24 includes hors d'oeuvres and cocktails in an elegant atmosphere with a chance to meet the artists. Preview party tickets include admission to the three-day exposition. \$13-\$45. *1000 Lake Cook Rd., Glencoe. americancraftexpo.org*

a wandering prince in ninth-century France. \$24 and up. *Broadway in Chicago at Cadillac Palace, 151 W. Randolph. broadwayinchicago.com*

MEN OF SOUL WITH A TRIBUTE TO BILL WITHERS

Through 8/31 Daryl Brooks wrote and directs this musical about Bill Withers, the 2015 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee whose hits include "Lean on Me," "Ain't No Sunshine," and "Just the Two of Us." Plan on an evening of Grammy-winning hits and deep cuts from the B-sides. \$55-\$65. *Black Ensemble Theater, 4450 N. Clark. blackensemble.org*

DANCE

BY TOMI OBARO

CHICAGO DANCING FESTIVAL

8/25-29 Premier companies descend upon Millennium Park for the city's largest outdoor showcase. See page 40. *Various venues. chicagodancingfestival.com*

MUSIC

BY GRAHAM MEYER AND MATT POLLOCK

CLASSICAL, NEW MUSIC & OPERA

CHICAGO FOLKS OPERETTA

Through 8/2 Now in its 10th anniversary season, this hard-working company pulls another underappreciated work from a seemingly endless well and presents *Madame Pompadour*, fully staged and with a 21-piece orchestra, in a world premiere of the company's own new translation. The operetta, by the Austrian composer Leo Fall, presents a screwball scenario involving philandering, poetic extortion, disguise (what operetta doesn't?), and Louis XV. \$30-\$40. *Vittum Theater, 1012 N. Noble. chicagofolksoperetta.org*

FREQUENCY

8/9 at 8:30 For the third year, Bitchin Bajas and friends perform Terry Riley's minimalist masterpiece *In C*, meant for an indefinite number of players playing at an indefinite tempo for an indefinite period of time. Every musician plays a score of 53 musical cells, in order, any number of times, to a backdrop of octave Cs at the top of a piano. \$5. *Constellation, 3111 N. Western. constellation-chicago.com*

GRANT PARK MUSIC FESTIVAL

8/1 at 7:30 The festival brings the umlauts as Christoph König leads the overture to Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* and Bruckner's Symphony No. 6. **8/7 at 6:30, 8/8 at 7:30** Carlos Kalmar returns to the podium with two works prefixed with the German word *harmonie*. First, he calls on the choir for Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, a setting of the Mass named for its prominent use of woodwinds—*harmonie* meant "wind band" in Haydn's day. Second, Kalmar displays his pet specialty in American music, leading the orchestral work *Harmonielehre* by contemporary giant John Adams. **8/14 at 6:30, 8/15 at 7:30** Back after a knockout performance of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 2 at last summer's festival, the nimble pianist Natasha Paremski jitters out the difficult *Four Parables* by the contemporary composer Paul Schoenfield. Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, a six-movement quasi-autobiographical tone poem, anchors the program. **8/19 at 6:30** A common programming strategy bookends a contemporary piece with a standard-repertoire overture and a symphony by some classical titan, presumably because no one will leave in the middle. Here, the bookends are Howard Hanson's gorgeous *Elegy*, written in 1956, and Magnus Lindberg's *Aventures*, still in toddlerhood. Centering the program, James Ehnes plays Beethoven's violin concerto, a combination of all-time great piece and premier soloist that should persuade people to stay. **8/21 at 6:30, 8/22 at 7:30** For the festival's grand finale, the orchestra and chorus stage Edward Elgar's oratorio *The Kingdom*, a dramatization of early events in the founding of the Christian church, largely taken from the book of Acts. The rarely performed high-drama piece will feature top-drawer soloists familiar to Chicagoans: Erin Wall (Britten's *War Requiem* at Grant Park), Jill Grove

(many Lyric appearances, mostly recently *Rusalka*), Garrett Sorenson (Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* at Grant Park), and Brian Mulligan (Lyric's *Hansel and Gretel*). *Jay Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park, 201 E. Randolph. grantparkmusicfestival.com*

LYRIC OPERA

8/19-20 *Second Nature*. The *New York Times* recently bestowed upon Matthew Aucoin the no-pressure title of "opera's great 25-year-old hope." Part of opera's need for hope stems from its older-skewing audience, so Lyric, in a year of ambitious commissions from its Lyric Unlimited arm, tapped Aucoin to write an opera for children. The result, *Second Nature*, imagines a dystopian future in which two kids dare to explore the world outside the zoo-like habitats to which humans have retreated to escape an increasingly hostile natural environment. See page 38. *Coff Brewer, Lincoln Park Zoo, 2021 N. Stockton. lyricopera.org*

RAVINIA

8/1 at 7 Every year, the most militaristic percussion instruments come out of storage for Ravinia's all-Tchaikovsky night. The "1812" Overture fires the now-canonical cannons 16 times, and then they return to the shed until next year or until Glencoe invades. Because the festival is combining its gala benefit with the Tchaikovsky concert this year, the metaphorical big guns appear alongside the literal ones. The sought-after violinist Maxim Vengerov plays the familiar concerto, and music director James Conlon conducts. \$10-\$100. **8/3 at 7:30** Vengerov, a former wunderkind now in his 40s, makes it a long weekend in the Chicago area with a recital of pillars of the pantheon (Brahms, Dvořák, Prokofiev) and violin virtuosos (Kreisler, Paganini, Ysaÿe). \$10-\$60. **8/4 at 7:30** The Russian pianist Nikolai Lugansky, who, like Vengerov, appeared at Ravinia as a rising star and now burns at first-magnitude brightness, has fashioned a Romantic recital headlined by one of Schubert's late sonatas (D. 958, in C minor) and Tchaikovsky's woolly but dramatic "Grand" Sonata in G major. \$10-\$60. **8/5 at 7:30** The seemingly everywhere conductor Pablo Heras-Casado leads the CSO in Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture, Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 19 with the flexible soloist Peter Serkin, and Mendelssohn's "Scottish" Symphony. \$10-\$50. **8/6 at 7:30** Violin takes center stage (not that it needed any help) as Pinchas Zukerman bows through Max Bruch's melodic Violin Concerto No. 1 and the CSO plays Rimsky-Korsakov's concertmaster showcase *Scheherazade*. \$10-\$50. **8/8 at 7:30** The jazzman and consummate Chicagoan Ramsey Lewis turns 80 this year, and Ravinia invited him to celebrate by writing himself a piano concerto. He premieres it in the first half of the concert and then jams with his ensemble in the second. \$10-\$75. **8/9 at 2, 8/11 at 8, 8/13 at 8** In the fame department, the piano sonatas of Sergei Prokofiev pale in comparison to those of Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, and others, but their range and excitement-generating virtuosity argue for a more prominent perch. The bold pianist Yefim Bronfman makes this argument, playing all nine, split up into three recitals. \$10-\$60 per concert. **8/10 at 8** The Finnish soprano Karita Mattila, last in Chicago for Lyric's *Katya Kabanova* in 2009, carries opera-world notoriety, most recently for refusing to share the stage with conductor and Putin supporter Valery Gergiev, and most scandalously for going the full monty in the "Dance of the Seven Veils" in Richard Strauss's *Salome*. A summer recital ought to stay tame, but the sketchy program does promise Strauss. \$10-\$60. **8/15 at 7:30** In James Conlon's tenure as music director, his concert opera presentations have put the cherry on impressive seasons. Conlon's expertise (he's also music director at the L.A. Opera) means the music spurs the imagination to fill the visual gap from seeing the opera unstaged. In his final Ravinia year, Conlon's swan song concert opera is Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*, the tale of a ghost ship and arranged marriage, starring Greer Gilmsley as the Dutchman. \$15-\$120. **8/19 at 6** In his *Dauidsbünderlertänze* (*Dances of the League of David*), an exuberant set of piano

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