

Chvrches put on performance at Chicago Metro

Annie Zorn
LAYOUT EDITOR

If you wanted to see the Scottish electro-pop band Chvrches last Saturday night, you had to be prepared to spend over \$150. That was the asking price on ticket reselling websites for their show at the Metro that sold out in 20 minutes when they went on sale this August.

The venue was packed as the opening act, Mansionair, varied their mellow Australian alternative chill songs to and make them a bit more upbeat for the live show. They

played a 45 minute set that included songs from their two EP's, closing with their most well-known song, "Hold Me Down."

Chvrches played a mix of songs from their first LP released in 2013, "The Bones Of What You Believe," and their most recent album, "Every Open Eye." They started off the show by playing "Never Ending Circles," a synth-heavy song from the newest album. Their instrumentation is a collaboration mainly between clean synth beats and lead singer Lauren Mayberry's vocals.

Within the simple nature of their music, the songs are complex and sonically diverse. The band showed diversification and

versatility as the lead singer played drums for two songs and the synth player Martin Doherty took center stage to sing "Under the Tide." The other member, Iain Cook, plays a variety of instruments on stage including synthesizers guitar, and bass.

In between songs Mayberry bantered with the audience about topics ranging from the Miley Cyrus movie "LOL" that had a scene filmed at Metro and also the band's plans to watch the newest Paranormal Activity film on their following day off. During a technical difficulty, Mayberry also had a short Q & A with the crowd.

After a raucous minute of clapping

and chanting the band came back on stage for their encore to play "Afterglow," a slower song that closes "Every Open Eye." They then finished the show playing the popular "Mother We Share," which was also their official debut single back in 2012.

For those who missed the show because of plans or weren't able to get tickets, Chvrches will be playing in Chicago again December 30 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont as part of the Reaction New Year's Eve Festival and it is sure to be an enjoyable show.

Fall Fest at The Lincoln Park Zoo

Abha Dalmia
TECHNEWS WRITER

The Lincoln park zoo is a must-visit on every student's list, and what better time to do it than the zoo's Fall Fest? Albert Camus, a French Nobel Prize-winning author, journalist, and philosopher, had once said that "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower." The essence of this statement can be enjoyed in abundance at the zoo.

The zoo is only a seven-minute bus

ride away from the Clark and Division stop on the CTA Red Line. What's more is that admission to this well-kept zoo is free from 10 to 5 pm. The zoo boasted species from the grassland, aquatic, desert as well as the forest biomes. The tundra biome is still under construction and would probably be ready by the end of the year. The whole area consisted of various exhibits and animal houses, namely the sea lion pool, African journey habitat, bird-house, swan pond, forest habitat and others. In addition, they had a show where they showed us techniques they used to train the seals. An

interesting fact we learned was that in order to not surprise the seals with doctor visits, the zoo keepers make the sea lions turn on their backs and open their mounts for dental check-ups everyday. They even have a weighing scale in place for the seals.

There were exotic animals from all over the world and many of some of them were actually endangered species that people will rarely get an opportunity to see and learn about. Specifically, to celebrate fall, parents and children could be seen picking out pumpkins from a pumpkin patch with an array of pump-

kins with different shapes and sizes.

Visiting the zoo is a very effective way to release stress. The whole experience was refreshing and enjoyable. In addition, it was a pleasure to watch small kids being able to tell the difference between mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. A visit to the Lincoln Park Zoo keeps you wanting more and to be honest can make you a romantic date for those of you looking to go out with your significant others!

Chicago Theatre hosts presentation on global financial crisis

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TECHNEWS WRITER

If you crossed The Chicago Theater at 6 p.m. on the evening of October 13th, you would probably wonder what so many people in suits and briefcases were doing there. I am certain if I'd throw a stone in the air it would hit someone who worked at a bank (and would hopefully give me a job). It was indeed a remarkable evening with The Chicago Council hosting an event with Ben Bernanke, former chairman of the Federal Reserve and Martin Wolf, a renowned economic commentator; who had gathered to converse about the Global Economic Crisis.

This highly intellectual crowd was not only eager to hear the speakers that night but also receive signed copies of Bernanke's latest book "The Courage to Act." It then dawned on me, I was at one of Chicago's finest events,

surrounded by the most intellectually stimulating people and was about to attend the most breathtaking presentation of my life. I learnt a lot of interesting things on this occasion since the speakers lucidly covered a wide range of events that occurred during the crisis and the measures that were taken thereafter as well as the overall health of the global economy today.

Bernanke highlighted how he started writing his book as a method of keeping a chronicle for himself. The book thus provides the reader with an augmented experience of the crisis. It is a summary of all significant events in his life, these include his academic career, research, work with Alan Greenspan, and finally his role as the Federal Reserve chairman during the crisis. Wolf rightly exclaimed how Bernanke's early interest and research with the Great Depression was serendipitous considering the role he would play later in his life with the Federal Reserve.

The most important question that

arose that evening was a question that has definitely crossed everybody's mind. Didn't the regulators see this coming? Couldn't they have contained it when the scale was much smaller? To this Bernanke said, "We understood that housing prices were very high and the mortgage prices were too low. However, we did not fathom that the system was fragile and highly dependent on short term lending. Further, banks were meeting the capital requirements of that time. Ultimately the responsibility lies with those who took the risk but I agree that the regulators should have taken better measures."

This presentation was followed by a round of questions from the highly erudite crowd. These questions were answered by both the speakers with great detail and enthusiasm. One could easily note how they had the timeline of the events memorized at the back of their hand. As they objectively answered these questions to palliate the queries of the rather

zealous crowd, I wondered to myself, it is mesmerizing how the economy is recuperating today and how the crisis has not only lead us to be more cautious but also more aware of our financial system.

Though the crisis unfolded in 2008, it is still a subject that is extensively researched. Further, there have been multiple documentaries, books and blockbuster movies that were created to depict the topic. The impact of the crisis cannot be quantified however, it has led to many changes in reforms and increased our understanding of the financial system. The Federal Reserve under the leadership of Ben Bernanke earlier and now Janet Yellen continue to take preventive measures and safeguard the American economy. As I read the signed copy of Bernanke's book, it makes me realize "The Courage to Act" is indeed a befitting title.



Reviews:

New music review: 'U.S. Elevator'

Soren Spicknall
WIIT MUSIC DIRECTOR

On a warm, humid evening in April of 2013, I somehow found myself as the guest of someone who was attending a folk concert at The Frog Pond, an invite-only, BYOB venue in the middle of a collectively-run farm in Silverhill, Alabama, 20 miles southeast of the modest city of Mobile and 20 north of the Gulf of Mexico. It was there, among an army of folding chairs and hundreds of glass jars filled with true southern moonshine that I came across Johnny Irion for the first time. Headlining in a duo with his wife, Sarah Lee Guthrie (daughter of Arlo and granddaughter of Woody, both folk music legends,) Irion was joined additionally that night by Mobile natives Will Kimbrough, Grayson Capps, Corky Hughes, and Spencer Bohren on some of their numbers to form a full Americana band, something that longtime followers of Guthrie and Irion know is seldom heard of from the pair. Though their work is compelling in its own right, the best moments of the show came when the talents of additional performers were added to their compositions, breathing new life into each track. In my mind, it was that night that the seeds were sewn for U.S. Elevator, the new roots rock band fronted by Johnny Irion. A creative mind like Irion's deserves the power of a full range of musicians behind it, and the challenge of working with other creatives of the same caliber. On their first album, a self-

titled LP due out on November 3, we begin to see whether such a collaboration brings out the best in Irion like it should in theory.

Johnny Irion comes from a long line of artists from one discipline or another. His great-uncle was John Steinbeck, writer of such landmark American novels as "Grapes of Wrath" and "Of Mice and Men." His grandmother, Rubilee Knight, was a professional violinist and one of the leading figures in classical music in the American south for a number of decades. Others in his family tree have written, sung, or otherwise performed their way into history, and Irion himself is set to do the same. His first two solo albums, 2001's "Unity Lodge" and 2007's "Ex Tempore," were released on Yep Roc and Rte. 8, respectively, and gained quiet yet concentrated critical acclaim. His collaborative releases with Sarah Lee Guthrie have expanded his reach even more, including one that was added to the catalog of Folkways, the Smithsonian-run label that has a permanent mandate to never allow any of its albums to go out of print. Now, Irion has settled in California and put his full weight into U.S. Elevator, along with Anders Bergstrom on guitar, Brett Long on keyboards, Erich Riedl on drums, and Nate Modisette on bass. The result? A debut album that shows off the talents of each member and sounds mature for a newly-formed band, but suffers from a lack of fresh, passionate material. While everything on "U.S. Elevator" is certainly pleasant, as well as a welcome change

from the low-key, traditional folk sound that characterizes previous work from Irion, it seems like many of the best songs of his might be behind him. Stylistically, it's impossible to deny that "U.S. Elevator" is a natural step forward for Johnny Irion. Spiritually, it feels sometimes like his heart is not really in it.

The first track on this new album, the instrumental "Pierre Lafond" (named for the founder of a namesake vineyard and market in Santa Barbara County), sets an encouraging tone for the LP, with floating sitar tones, a welcome change of pace for Irion. However, the momentum of that impressive piece is dampened by the next couple of songs that follow it, with backing harmonies lacking much spirit and songwriting that seems too intentionally alt-country in style (for example, "Community Service" is all about not being able to tour due to one member of the band having committed a minor crime, territory that has been covered extensively by hundreds of Americana acts in various forms over the years.) In fact, until midway through the album, it almost seems as if "U.S. Elevator" is a dud. From there, though, a bright light suddenly flickers into existence, and stays with the recording through to its end. If it weren't for this album's latter half, it wouldn't even be worth writing about. Listening the whole way through, though, you get the sense that the band formed actively as they recorded these songs, getting into their groove more with each passing moment in the studio.

Starting with "Where The Rubber Meets The Road," Irion and his group begin to seriously diverge from their old folk rock habits, touching on territory claimed by groups like My Morning Jacket and The War On Drugs rather than Neil Young and Jackson Browne. The band shifts styles with remarkable maneuverability, traversing between Dawes-style storytelling and early Rolling Stones psych in a single verse without any loss of cohesion. The sitar comes back into play at some point, and synths are even added in a reinvented reprise of "Pierre Lafond," an element that could have potentially huge ramifications for the group's relevance going forward. There is currently a notable gap in audience between the Americana and Folk Rock communities in the U.S., and with Johnny Irion and Sarah Lee Guthrie firmly in the former camp on previous releases, an electronically-aided expansion of their sound could open up the entire genre to experimentation that has previously been considered taboo to many purists. This willingness to innovate is U.S. Elevator's saving grace, since the actual written content of their debut isn't incredibly strong and songs one through six are pretty forgettable. If they settle into a traditional folk formula from here, it's not likely we will hear much from them again. If they continue to explore new territory, they could become one of the keys to keeping Americana alive and vibrant. For now, though, there's still progress to be made. 5.8/10