

TIME OUT!

The suburbs' entertainment source

On stage
Aurora native takes on
Drury Lane's 'Saturday
Night Fever' » **4**

Movies
It's all about Affleck
in crime drama 'Live
By Night' » **26**

**Suburban musician
Robbie Fulks talks
Chicago shows,
Grammy nods » 20**



Telling 'Stories'

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SAT, FEBRUARY 11 8PM
MICKY DOLENZ
FORMERLY OF THE MONKEES

music

Next month brings big things for Wilmette's Robbie Fulks. The singer is up for two Grammy Awards on Feb. 12. And he wraps his long Monday-night residency at The Hideout in Chicago.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDY GOODWIN

Life 'Stories'

Robbie Fulks wrapping up Chicago music residency, looking to Grammys

By Matt Arado
Daily Herald correspondent

There's a moment on his 2007 live album, "Revenge," where suburban musician Robbie Fulks jokingly tells the audience that he has a hard time writing songs as a middle-aged man because he no longer likes anything very much.

Fulks laughs when reminded of the comment.

"It was a joke, but there is a kernel of truth there," he said. "The subject matter that interests you when you're young doesn't really serve you well when you're older."

Fulks, whose early work includes songs such as "She Took A Lot of Pills (And Died)"

and "(Expletive) This Town," said that today he seeks creative inspiration in the small triumphs and heartbreaks of everyday life. Those tales dominate his acclaimed 2016 record, "Upland Stories."

The album has garnered rave reviews, with numerous

See **FULKS** on page 22

Local legend Bonnie Koloc plays the Metropolis

Folk singer **Bonnie Koloc** made a name for herself as part of the "Chicago folk trinity" during the 1970s along with John Prine and Steve Goodman. After taking some time to hone her craft and teach, Koloc is back on the stage



proving she still has the pipes to belt out her hits, such as fan favorite "Jazzman." Catch her at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre when she plays with her bluesy folk band.

7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13, at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, 111 W. Campbell St., Arlington Heights. \$35-\$40. (847) 577-2121 or tickets.metropolisarts.com.

Gallery-81 release party

Following up on the success of 2016's singles "Freight Trains" and "Punk Rock Art Show," **Gallery-81** drops a new EP Friday, Jan. 13, at the Hard Rock Cafe. This year, the alternative rock band takes things to the next level with songs that dive deep into more honest emotion, particularly "Unfair," while still channeling the fun of the first two singles. Hear the new stuff (and grab the "Freight Trains" CD) when they play an EP-release show, joined by pop artist **Brandon James** and funk rockers **Yeh Boi**.

9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13, at Hard Rock Cafe, 63 W. Ontario St., Chicago. \$7.50-\$10. (312) 943-2252 or hardrock.com.

Help Hope for the Day help

Pop-punk-with-emphasis-on-punk band

See **NOTES** on page 21

Robbie Fulks

When: 7 p.m. most Mondays through Feb. 27; no show Feb. 13

Where: The Hideout, 1354 W. Wabansia, Chicago; hideoutchicago.com

Tickets: \$10 suggested donation



from page 21

The Temptations, Diana Ross and the Supremes, Gladys Knight and the Pips and many others. \$15-\$45. (847) 543-2300 or clcillinois.edu/tickets.

The Rhythm

Rockets: 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, Frankie's Blue Room, 16 W. Chicago Ave., Naperville. R&B, swing and more. General admission is \$8. frankiesblueroom.net.

Donnie Biggins (album release),

Dickie, Ryan Joseph Anderson: 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, Fitzgerald's, 6615 W. Roosevelt Road, Berwyn. \$10. (708) 788-2118 or fitzgeraldsnightclub.com.

Damaged Justice (Metallica

tribute): 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, BrauerHouse, 1000 N. Rohlwing Road, Lombard. \$7-\$10. (630) 495-2141 or brauerhouse.com.

Mike and Joe: 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, BaseCamp Pub, 5750 Lakeside Drive, Lisle. \$7. (331) 777-

4712 or basecamppub.com.

Arriver, RLYR, Luggage: 10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago. \$8-\$10. (773) 281-4444 or beatkitchen.com.

Afterlife featuring Nick Rockwell, Kings of Class, Nikho, Corduroy Xavier, Tista, DangerWayne, Ryan Mansfield: 10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, Annex Nightclub, 1958 W. North Ave., Chicago. \$5-\$10. (630) 291-5986 or afterlifechi.com.

The Lettermen: 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan.

15, Arcada Theatre, 105 E. Main St., St. Charles. \$19.26-\$95. (630) 962-7000 or arcadalive.com.

Northbrook Symphony Orchestra with "In the Realm of Royalty" concert: 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 15, in the Sheely Center for the Performing Arts, at Glenbrook North High School, 2300 Shermer Road, Northbrook. Classical. Concert features guest pianist George Vatchnadze. \$10-\$50. Purchase tickets by calling (847) 272-0755, or by visiting

See **CONCERTS** on page 25



COURTESY OF DANNY CLINCH

Lukas Graham plays Chicago's House of Blues Tuesday, Jan. 17.

FULKS from page 20

outlets, including Rolling Stone magazine and NPR, placing it on their "best of the year" lists.

"Upland Stories" also has earned Fulks two Grammy nominations — for Best Folk Album and Best American Roots Song (for album opener "Alabama At Night"). The nominations are the first for Fulks and the first for an album put out by his label — Chicago-based Bloodshot Records. "It's absolutely wonderful to see such a hard-working and supremely talented artist be recognized," reads a statement on the Bloodshot website.

"We have been fortunate to work with Robbie for the last couple of decades."

Fulks, a former Lake County resident who now lives in Wilmette, moved to the Chicago area in the mid-1980s after spending his childhood in small towns in North Carolina and Virginia. Since moving here, he has been a key fixture in the city's thriving roots-music scene, turning regional (and national) heads with a slew of literate records that blended punk, country, bluegrass and pop.

"Upland Stories" retains the mostly-acoustic sound of its predecessor, 2013's "Gone Away Backward" — fiddle, banjo and pedal steel accompany Fulks' guitar-playing and expressive, twangy vocals. The songs observe daily life with the keen eye of an ace fiction writer.

"Never Come Home" tells the story of a sick old man who is greeted with scorn and bitterness when he returns to his hometown.

In the quiet but affecting "Needed," a father reflects on the wonderful and terrifying bonds that form between husband and wife and parent and child.

The song "Baby Rocks Her Dolly" is not a Robbie Fulks composition — it was written by Merle Kilgore and became a hit in the 1960s for Frankie Miller — but Fulks' strong vocal performance makes this tale of domestic nostalgia his own.

"I'd always liked the song, and it seemed to fit with the other songs on this record," Fulks said.

"These are all life stories, really. That's the thing for me now, and I think my audience is probably grateful. You know, when a gray-haired man gets up and starts singing some love song, asking the listener to picture him in a furtive embrace with some-

one, that just makes everyone uncomfortable. I know I would be disturbed by it."

"Upland Stories" was recorded by longtime collaborator Steve Albini, a veteran of the

Chicago punk scene known for his noise-rock band Shellac and for creating the jagged electric sound on rock albums such as Nirvana's "In Utero" and P.J. Harvey's "Rid of Me."

Fulks said Albini's skills are just as formidable with acoustic material.

"The recording aesthetic that Steve has is really great," Fulks said.

"He creates an unfussy sound, an honest sound. The song 'Katy Kay,' for instance. It's a comic song, one of the slighter ones on the record, and Steve's mixing on it was amazing. There's a banjo that you almost can't hear, but it really adds something to the song. That's his genius."

Fulks is known for a relentless touring schedule, one that includes a long-running Monday-night residency at the Hideout in Chicago. The residency, which comes to an end in February, allows Fulks to perform with a variety of collaborators and play Roger Miller classics, Velvet Underground covers or whatever strikes his fancy.

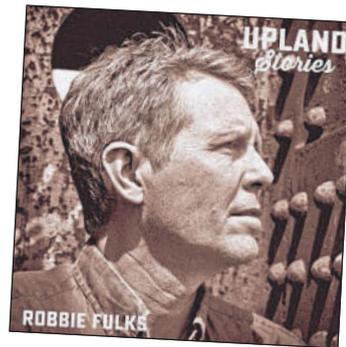
"I've been doing it for about seven years, and it's been great for me, a laboratory where I could try new things," he said.

"But it feels like a good time to bring that to a close."

The Grammy Awards ceremony, meanwhile, airs on Sunday, Feb. 12, on CBS. Has Fulks thought about what it might feel like to win?

"The whole thing is pretty surreal," he said.

"But hey, I'd take it."

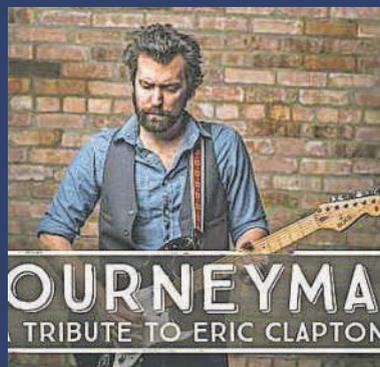


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JOURNEYMEN

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