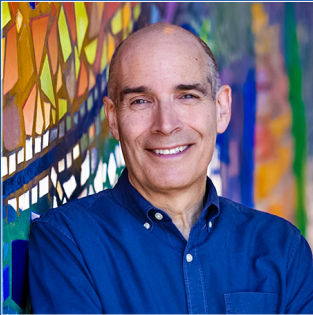


# ANNUAL REPORT

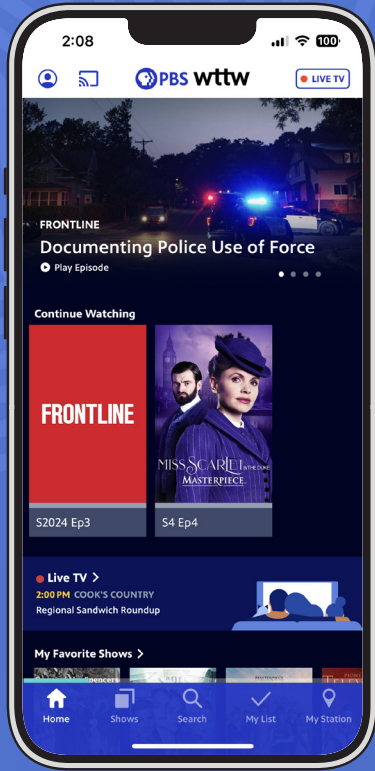
2023

A YEAR OF STORIES

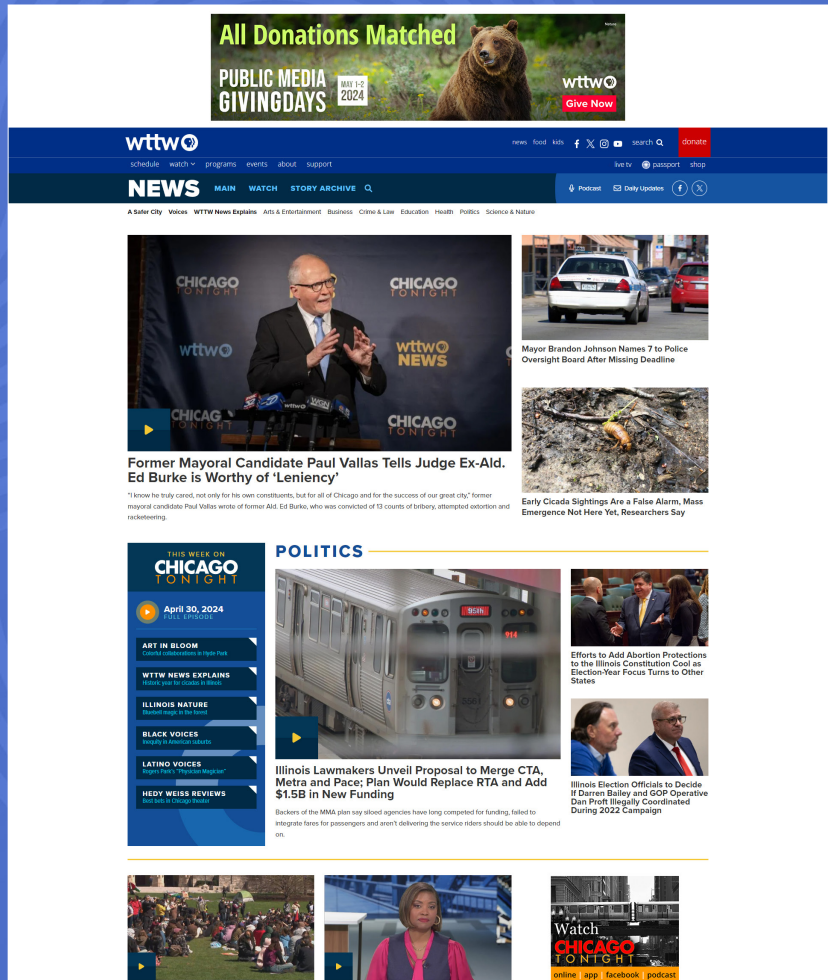


enriching lives | engaging communities | inspiring exploration

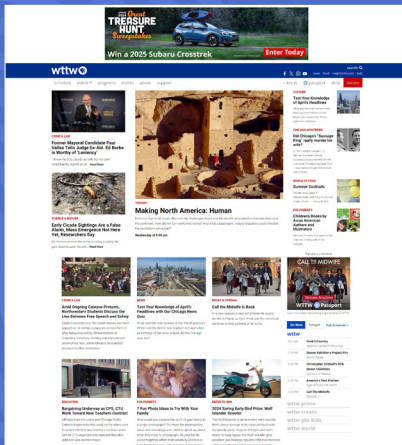
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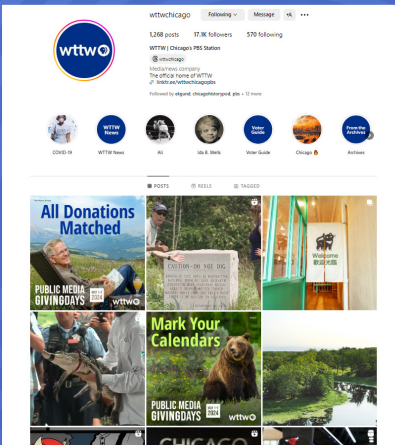
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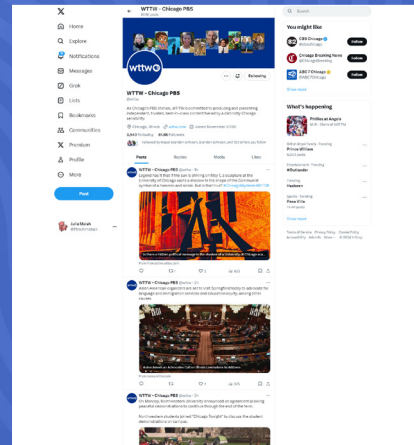
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Cover photos, left to right: Geoffrey Baer, *The Most Beautiful Places in Chicago* by Kristian Lieb for WTTW; Jessie Montgomery by Jiyang Chen; *Introductions* cellist Jan Vargas Nedvetsky by Mike Griitani; *Firsthand: Life After Prison*, Tawana Pope by Liz Farina Markel

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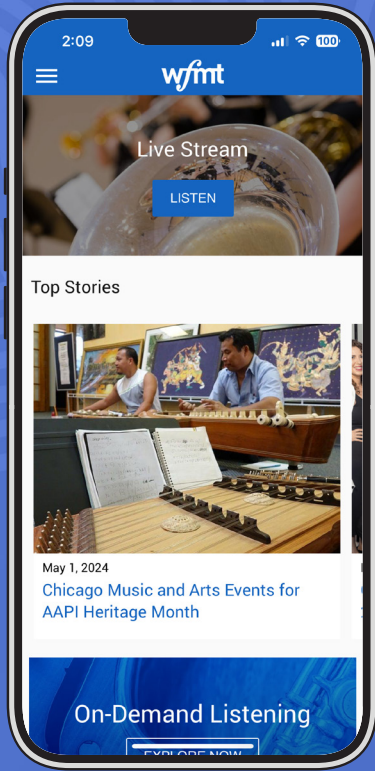
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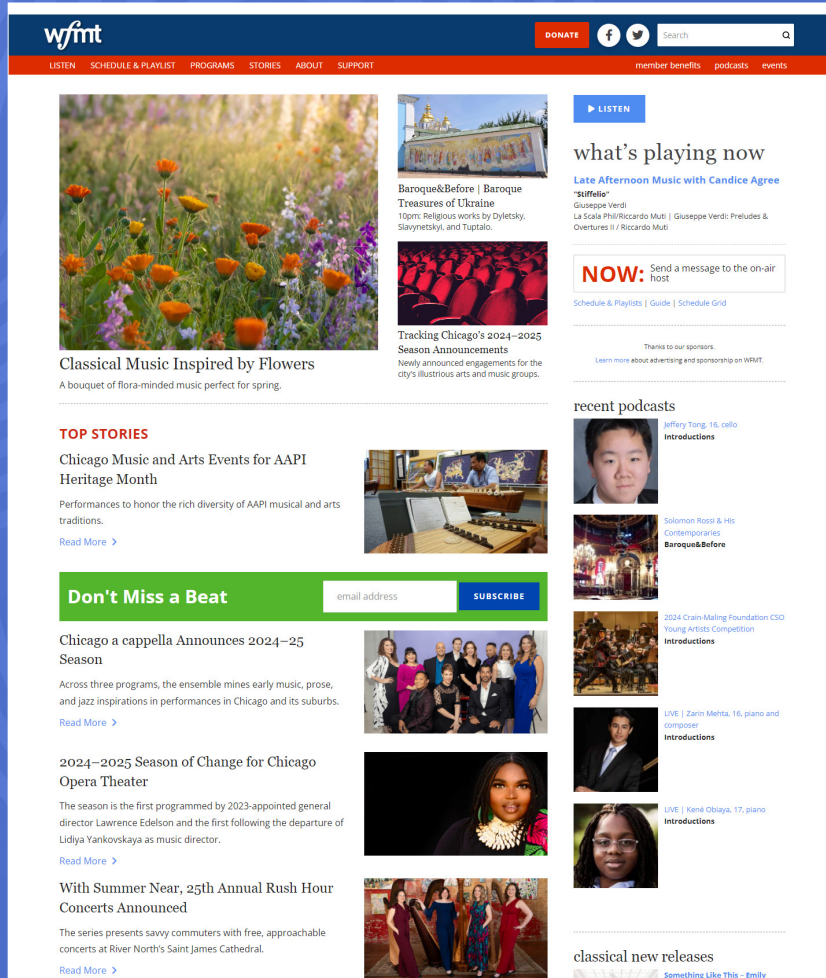
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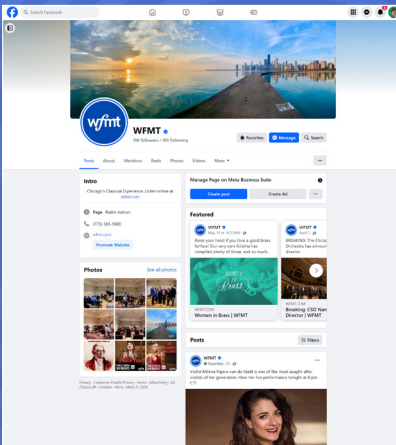
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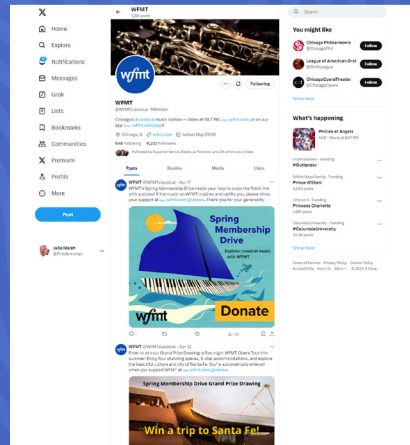
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Photo: Capitol Concerts

A Capitol Fourth conductor Jack Everly



Photo: True to Nature Ltd

Expedition with Steve Backshall



Photo: PBS

America Outdoors with Baratunde Thurston



Photo: Anita Zvonar

Pianist Stewart Goodyear



Photo: Ken Carl

Introductions at Navy Pier



Photo: Jürgen Frank

Emerson Quartet



Photo: Adam McCall

Great Muslim American Road Trip

# JULY

As fiscal 2023 commenced in July, WTTW brought viewers content that highlighted the ways we seek out and experience nature, travel, and adventure. Included were a new season of *Expedition with Steve Backshall* and three new series – *America Outdoors with Baratunde Thurston* about our relationship with nature; *The Green Planet* with Sir David Attenborough who uncovers the secret lives of plants; and *The Great Muslim American Road Trip*, a three-part series that followed rapper Mona Haydar and her husband Sebastian Robins as they embarked on a journey from Chicago along Route 66 in search of America’s Muslim roots. wttw.com offered summer recipes and refreshing cocktails to everyone’s alfresco gatherings special.

Other notable programs included the year’s *A Capitol Fourth* concert live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol; *Joe Papp in Five Acts: American Masters*, about the legendary theatre producer; new seasons of *Grantchester* and *COBRA*; a NOVA episode on the James Webb Telescope and another on alien worlds; and a POV film about [a community in Greenland](#) anticipating the benefits from a proposed smelting plant.

This month, WFMT presented five concerts from the [Grant Park Music Festival](#) including the annual Independence Day Salute and a special CenterStage chamber music performance featuring the Project Inclusion String Quartet. Sounds from Ravinia Festival included the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s season debut featuring pianist [Stewart Goodyear](#), plus three Monday evening chamber music performances recorded in the Martin Theatre featuring [Jonathan Biss](#), [Miriam Fried](#), and the Emerson String Quartet. Also, the Los Angeles Philharmonic concerts returned for a new season and *Introductions* presented a live program from Chicago’s [Navy Pier](#). Visitors to wfmt.com found a lively summer road trip playlist, a guide to all of the area’s summer music festivals, and a list of outdoor concert must-haves – from drinks to seats to sunscreen.





AUGUST



Photo: Mackenzie Quicke and BBC Studios

*The Boleyns: A Scandalous Family*



credit: Christopher Neseman

Pritzker Pavilion, Grant Park Music Festival



Photo: Kim Wollhuter

*Nature: Dogs in the Land of Lions*

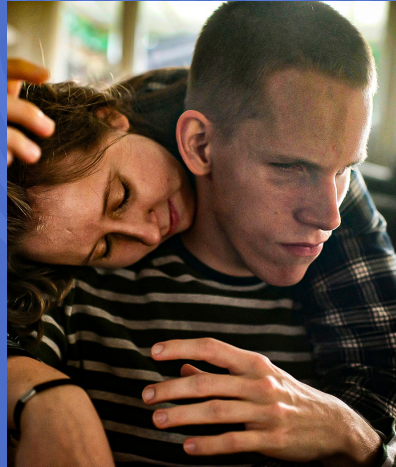


Photo: American Documentary

*POV: He's My Brother*



Photo: Dario Acosta

Soprano Janai Brugger



Photo: Kristen Loken

California Symphony conducted by Donato Cabrera

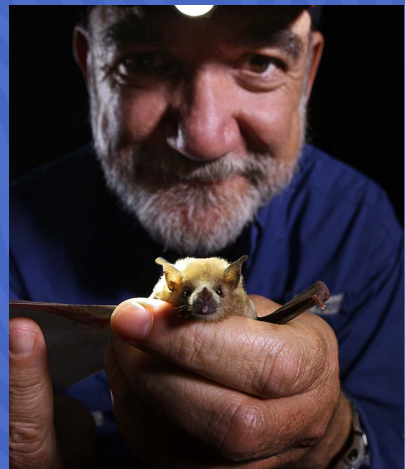


Photo: Amy Cooper

*Nature: The Bat Man of Mexico*

# AUGUST

As summer drew to a close, it was an exciting time for WTTW drama and mystery lovers, with new episodes of (and exclusive recaps of) *Shakespeare & Hathaway*, *Grantchester*, and *COBRA*, and the premiere of the second season of *Guilt* – the story of a drunken hit-and-run in Edinburgh and how increasingly farcical attempts to cover it up spiral out of control, changing lives forever.

Also in August, WTTW provided a front-row seat to a special first-time event from New York's Metropolitan Opera – the original five-act French version of Verdi's *Don Carlos*, set against the backdrop of the Spanish Inquisition, starring Chicago area native Matthew Polenzani in the title role. Continuing with the classical music theme, the schedule included this year's Vienna Philharmonic Summer Night Concert from Austria's Schönbrunn Palace, featuring cellist Gautier Capucon conducted by Andris Nelsons. *Nature* followed *Dogs in the Land of Lions* and *The Bat Man of Mexico*, *POV* covered [political transitions in Zimbabwe](#) and the effects of a euphoria-inducing plant in Ethiopia, and a new three-part series revealed the scandalous story of *The Boleyns*.

WFMT brought audiences four new concerts from Grant Park Music Festival, including Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* with soprano and Chicago native Janai Brugger, tenor Duke Kim, and bass-baritone Douglas Williams. The WFMT Opera Series presented four French Baroque chamber operas plus [Handel's first opera](#), *Almira*. Also, WFMT aired five concerts from [Ravinia Festival](#), launched a new series from [California Symphony](#), and welcomed Ukrainian musicians on *Introductions*. On wfmt.com, WFMT's experts ranked their top 10 Verdi works, shared the long and fascinating history of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, and took a close look at *Don Carlo* – originally a French-language opera usually performed in Italian but set in Spain. Finally, WFMT explored how languages like French, Italian, and German became common languages in opera.







Photo: Library of Congress

U.S. and the Holocaust immigrants at Ellis Island



credit: Marc Hauser

Lincoln Trio



Photo: Tom Hayward BBC Studios 2021

Lucy Worsley Investigates



Photo: Piero F. Glumt

Hispanic Heritage Awards 2022: Los Lobos



photo credit: Julieta Cervantes

Great Performances: Intimate Apparel



Photo: Lenke Szilagyi Endor Productions & MR Film

Fiesta host Elbio Barilari



Photo: Shatesbury Films

Sister Boniface Mysteries



# SEPTEMBER

**B**eginning on September 18, WTTW presented *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, an important new Ken Burns film revealing how the American people grappled with one of the greatest humanitarian crises of the twentieth century, and how this struggle tested the ideals of our democracy by examining with fresh eyes the periods leading up to and during the Holocaust. WTTW created a [special microsite](#) for this eye-opening series that included related content, including a look at the history and architecture of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.

September also marked the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month with *The 35th Hispanic Heritage Awards*, which honored the multi-genre rock band Los Lobos, among several other programs in observance of the occasion. Other highlights included the *Sister Boniface Mysteries* and *Van der Valk*; two *Great Performances: Intimate Apparel* and *Black Lucy and the Bard, Lucy Worsley Investigates*, the nature program *Lion: The Rise and Fall of the Marsh Pride*, and Mary Berry hosting *The Jubilee Pudding: 70 Years in the Baking*. On [wttw.com](#), Geoffrey Baer explored architectural sites illustrating [the history of Latinos](#) in the Chicago area, and WTTW also shared a special salsa recipe perfect for celebrating Mexican Independence Day.

WFMT also marked Hispanic Heritage Month with a [special two-hour episode](#) of *WFMT Presents* hosted by *Fiesta's* Elbio Barilari, who aired contemporary classical music by Latino composers. Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic featured mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges in Peter Lieberon's *Neruda Songs*, and The Lincoln Trio appeared on *Impromptu*. And *Listening to Singers* host Oliver Camacho sat down for a revealing interview with Mexican-American tenor and Ryan Opera Center alumnus René Barbera. On [wfmt.com](#), audiences discovered 10 Spanish-language operas; explored [Studs Terkel's conversations](#) about Latin American culture, art, and history; and learned about 15 Latino musicians who have changed classical music.



OCTOBER



Photo: GBH

Antiques Roadshow



Photo: Shane Sigler

Independent Lens: TikTok Boom



Photo: Cory Weaver for LA Opera

LA Opera: Verdi's Aida



Photo: Nick Wall

Magpie Murders

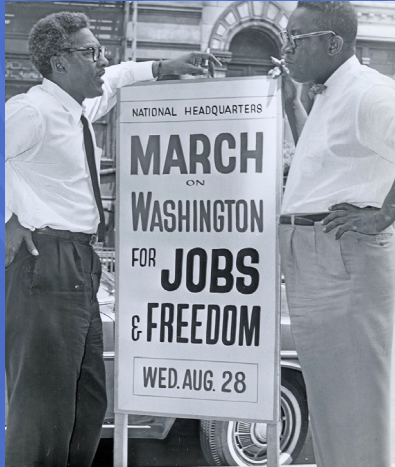


Photo: Getty

Making Black America: Through the Grapevine



Photo: Maria Jarczyka

Pianist Aaron Diehl



Photo: American Public Television

Rick Steves Art of Europe



Sheku Kannah Mason



Trustee John Brennan

# OCTOBER

October brought a new fall season of new content on WTTW, including a project from Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., [Making Black America: Through the Grapevine](#). This four-part series chronicles the vast social networks and organizations created by and for Black people that transformed our country. Rick Steves explored the *Art of Europe*; *Antiques Roadshow* made stops in Palm Springs, Reno, and Grand Rapids; and on Sunday nights, WTTW aired series centered on female detectives, *Miss Scarlet and the Duke*, *Annika*, and *Magpie Murders*. There was also the premiere of the new PBS Kids series *Rosie's Rules*, following the adventures of an inquisitive 5-year-old girl just starting to learn about the world beyond her home. On the website, users discovered how the filmed adaptation of *Magpie Murders* differed from Anthony Horowitz's novel; got Geoffrey Baer's top picks for [Open House Chicago](#); and tried recipes from new seasons of *Lidia's Kitchen* and *Sara's Weeknight Meals*.

On WFMT, a new special, [Music and Conversation with Sheku Kanneh-Mason](#), featured music from the celebrated cellist's new album, *Song*. The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra season opened with a world premiere by Eric Nathan and Aaron Diehl performing [Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue](#). Hispanic Heritage Month continued with European Baroque dance rhythms in South America, and WFMT highlighted Polish Heritage Month by highlighting the [Warsaw Autumn Festival](#). And [Verdi's Aida](#) from LA Opera featured three outstanding Black singers in principal roles. On wfmt.com for Halloween, WFMT offered a playlist of cinema's best [horror movie soundtracks](#), and some classical "candy" from Leonard Bernstein, Maurice Ravel, Amy Beach, and more.

On a sad note, this month WTTW and WFMT lost [longtime trustee John Brennan](#), who passed away at age 60. During his 18 years on the board, he was an active and engaged leader, serving on almost every committee. He has been greatly missed.





NOVEMBER



Photo: Matt Barnes

Buffy Sainte-Marie: *Medicine Songs*



Photo: Steve Ewert for WTTW

Paris Schutz and Brandis Friedman on Chicago Tonight set



photo credit Associated Press

*Taken Hostage: American Experience*



Native America



*Tutankhamun: Allies & Enemies*



Orion Ensemble



Raven Chacon

# NOVEMBER

This month, WTTW continued its Sunday evening triple bill of female-led British crime dramas featuring Lesley Manville as inquisitive book editor Susan Ryeland on *Magpie Murders*; Nicola Walker as the wry and charming police squad chief *Annika*; and Kate Phillips as a fearless Victorian private eye in the second season of *Miss Scarlet and the Duke*. Viewers also relived a seminal event from 1979 in the two-part *Taken Hostage: An American Experience Special*, about the Iran hostage crisis - its causes and resolution; commemorated the 100th anniversary of the opening of King Tut's tomb in *Tutankhamun: Allies & Enemies*; and got some helpful tips for the perfect dinner from our Thanksgiving cooking marathon. And on another note, WTTW News and *Chicago Tonight* provided extensive coverage of, and a [comprehensive Voter Guide](#) to, the 2022 midterm elections to help voters make informed choices at the polls.

This year's [Native American Heritage Month](#) content on WTTW included a new *American Masters* profile of Indigenous folk singer [Buffy Sainte-Marie](#); *The Warrior Tradition*, about Native Americans' experiences in the military; and the *Native America* series. The website also featured a recipe from an [indigenous chef](#) striving to popularize Native American cuisine and a rundown of Chicago locales where traces of Native peoples [still exist](#).

WFMT presented conversations with Native American composer [Raven Chacon](#) on winning the Pulitzer Prize for Music, [Joffrey Ballet's artistic director Ashley Wheater](#) on the company's collaboration with CSO, and composer [Jessie Montgomery](#) on curating the CSO MusicNOW series. And *Live from WFMT* featured early music ensemble [Black Tulip](#), cellist [Alexander Hersh](#) and pianist [Victor Santiago Asuncion](#), and [Orion Ensemble with violist Stephen Boe](#). The website highlighted five must-listen [Studs Terkel conversations](#) about Native American history, education, and literature; and a treatise about the [musical instruments played by indigenous tribes](#) in the Midwest.





DECEMBER



Photo for WFMT by Mike Grittani 3

Sounds Classical, LaRob K. Rafael and Kristina Lynn



Photo: APT

Anthony Williams: Urban Nutcracker



Mexican Christmas



Christmas Carol Remix by the Q Brothers



Photo: Cody Burridge for Plank PR

Mary Berry's Ultimate Christmas



Photo: Kimberly Keller

Folkstage: Jennifer Cutting's Ocean Quartet



Photo: Ron Baldwin

American Masters: Dick Cavett and Groucho Marx



# DECEMBER

This month, WFMT launched an exciting new series – *Sounds Classical*, an innovative and immersive program hosted by Kristina Lynn and LaRob K. Rafael. Each week, they explore the sounds that listeners know – and may not know – to discover along with them how the ever-changing and ever-expanding world around us can influence modern-day experiences with classical music.

Throughout the month, WTTW and WFMT celebrated the holidays with special content. On WTTW, viewers watched an all-day cooking marathon and, in *Mary Berry's Ultimate Christmas*, got tips for prepping, shopping, and making a memorable meal, Mary Berry-style. And for something completely different, the new *Anthony Williams' Urban Nutcracker* retold this treasured story blending the rhythms of Duke Ellington with the classical music of Tchaikovsky. Also, viewers enjoyed *Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas*; journeyed to the Arctic with *Nature*; marked the holiday with local music specials *Wheaton College Christmas Festival* and *Christmas at DePaul*; and were gifted with another all-new *Call the Midwife Holiday Special*. On a separate note, two *American Masters* documentaries focused on the Nobel Prize-winning Saul Bellow and the comedy of talk show host Dick Cavett and irreverent comedian Groucho Marx.

WFMT, as always, presented a wide and diverse array of classical music to celebrate the holidays, including *WFMT Presents: A Mexican Christmas*, featuring music from the Newberry Consort and EnsAmble Ad-Hoc; *Ballad of the Brown King and Other Music for Christmas by Black Composers*, curated and hosted by Dr. Louise Toppin; and *A Polish Christmas* curated by Lucyna Migala and featuring recordings by Chicago's Lira Ensemble. And as always, WFMT aired *A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* from King's College, the *St. Olaf Christmas Festival*, and the *Music of the Baroque Holiday Brass and Choral Concert*. The website also curated a playlist of eight musical works to celebrate Hanukkah.





Photo: Meredith Nieman for GBH

Antiques Roadshow: Shelburne



Photo: Yale University Library

Zora Neale Hurston: American Experience



Photo: Ekaterina Petrik

Pianist Anna Knight



Photo: Playground Entertainment

All Creatures Great and Small on Masterpiece



Photo: Bentley Productions & ITV

Midsomer Murders



Photo: Lenke Szilagyi/Endor Productions & MR Film

Vienna Blood



Photo: Shatesbury Films

Frankie Drake Mysteries

# JANUARY

As calendar year 2023 began, WTTW brought viewers new seasons of many of its most popular programs, including a Sunday evening triple-bill of *Miss Scarlet and the Duke*, *All Creatures Great and Small*, and *Vienna Blood*. *Antiques Roadshow* returned with new appraisals at stops around the country including Filoli House and Garden in Woodside, California; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Cheekwood Estate in Nashville, Tennessee; Idaho Botanic Garden; and Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont. Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. continued his quest to “get into the DNA of American culture” in a new season of *Finding Your Roots*; *American Experience* explored the history of the lie detector and profiled author Zora Neale Hurston; *Frankie Drake Mysteries* and *Midsomer Murders* returned with more baffling unsolved crimes; *Nature* went deep into *The Soul of the Ocean*; and *American Masters* took an intimate look at the life and work of music and civil rights icon Roberta Flack.

Throughout the month, *WFMT Presents* spotlighted African American classical music leaders including composer Adolphus Hailstork and Chicago Jazz Philharmonic founder Orbert Davis. Also in January, WFMT debuted a new 13-part series from the Gateways Music Festival and shared a Music of the Baroque concert with African American countertenor Reginald Mobley in his first Chicago appearance since 2005. *Listening to Singers* sat down for music and conversation with tenor Juan Diego Florez in advance of his recital at Symphony Center, and *Introductions* welcomed 18-year-old pianist Anna Knight, a recent arrival from Ukraine. Visitors to wfmt.com tried their hand at a fun quiz that revealed what their New Year’s resolutions should be — whether it’s taking on a new instrument or going outside of their live music comfort zone. And to that end, they got WFMT’s helpful rundown of 10 new Chicago-area ensembles to watch - and listen to - in 2023.





FEBRUARY



Finding Your Roots

Photo: PBS



Firsthand: Life After Prison



Margaret Bonds



Martina Arroyo as Lady Macbeth

Photo: Metropolitan Opera Archives



Rochelle Sennet

Photo: Bauweiks



WTTW News Mayoral Candidate Forum

Photo: Michael Iaquardo for WTTW



Nature: Dogs in the Wild

Photo: Matt Tomlinson BBC

# FEBRUARY

February is [Black History Month](#), and for the occasion, WTTW premiered *Building/Blocks: Architecture of Chicago's South Side*, a special hosted by architecture photographer and writer Lee Bey; *Live from the Harris Theater: Adrian Dunn's Emancipation*, a multi-genre musical celebration of it means to be Black and free in 21st century America; and *NOVA : Star Chasers of Senegal*, the story of a visionary astronomer in West Africa studying a distant asteroid vital to a NASA mission. In addition, wttw.com spotlighted [Father Augustus Tolton](#), the first Black Catholic priest in the U.S. and founder of a church on Chicago's South Side.

Also this month, WTTW launched *Firsthand: Life After Prison*, the fifth in its award-winning multiplatform, multi-year initiative focusing on the firsthand perspectives of people facing critical issues in Chicago. The project offered an intimate look at the challenges and opportunities facing people returning to society after spending time in prison. The website included an interview with [documentary producer/director Mario Tharpe](#). And WTTW News created a [Voter Guide](#) and moderated a live [Mayoral Candidate Forum](#) featuring eight of the nine contenders.

WFMT's content for Black History Month continued to spotlight African American classical music leaders this month including composers Adolphus Hailstork and Margaret Bonds (with her *Montgomery Variations*), Chicago Jazz Philharmonic's [Orbert Davis](#), and pianist and scholar Samantha Ege. *Live from WFMT* featured performer, teacher, and scholar Dr. Rochelle Sennet; LaRob K. Rafael curated and presented music by Black composers on his weekday morning *Black Music Spotlight* and *Listening to Singers* featured a tribute to opera legend [Leontyne Price](#). wfmt.com, with [Mavis Staples](#) performing at Symphony Center that month, took a look back at the iconoclastic Chicago singer and civil rights champion's greatest moments on and off stage. Also, WFMT shared five new opera titles by Black composers, including Errollyn Wallen and Nkeiru Okoye.





MARCH

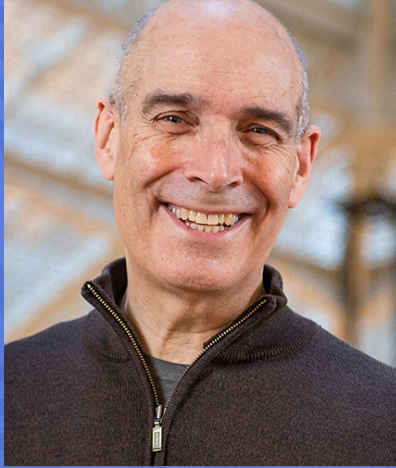


Photo: Liz Farina Markel

*The Most Beautiful Places in Chicago*



Photo: WNET

*Nature: Born in the Rockies*



Photo: C. Dubois Capa Drama Banjlay Studios France Les Gens Gamal +

*Marie Antoinette*



Jim Steere for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Margaret Hillis



Photo: BBC, Neal Street Productions and Ray Burmiston

*Call the Midwife*



Photo: Yukiiko Ontley

Sara Davis Buechner



Photo: Mammoth Screen and Masterpiece

*Endeavour on Masterpiece*



Photo: Dana van Leeuwen, Decca

Violinist Hilary Hahn



Image: Joni Mitchell

2023 Gershwin Prize: Joni Mitchell

# MARCH

This month, WTTW premiered a new program and robust companion website featuring award-winning producer Geoffrey Baer, who took viewers on an adventure to explore *The Most Beautiful Places in Chicago*, telling the stories of how these innovative and uniquely magnificent spaces and places across Chicago's neighborhoods came to be, why they are meaningful to the people who live and work nearby, and why we should all know their histories.

March is Women's History Month, and WTTW celebrated with a Sunday evening triple bill of women-centered British dramas – *Call the Midwife*, *Sanditon*, and *Marie Antoinette*; an *Independent Lens* profile of equal rights activist [Ruby Duncan](#); a Gershwin Prize tribute to legendary singer-songwriter [Joni Mitchell](#); and a replay of several *Chicago Stories* specials focusing on [Iconic female trailblazers](#) and their [legendary achievements](#).

Separately, *Agatha Christie's Poirot* returned on Thursday nights; *American Masters* focused on renowned immunologist [Dr. Anthony Fauci](#), and the crossroads between [opera and country music](#); and *American Experience* told the story of *the Movement and the "Madman"*, about an epic struggle between then-President Richard Nixon and the antiwar protestors who foiled his plans to escalate U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

*WFMT Presents* marked International Women's Day with [violinist Hilary Hahn](#) in conversation with Lisa Flynn in advance of her Symphony Center recital; a playlist of works by women artists curated by pianist [Sara Davis Buechner](#); and Cheryl Frazes Hill's treatise on conductor, chorus director, and educator [Margaret Hillis](#). Also, *Listening to Singers* sat down with the young instrumentalist [Thomas Dunford](#), known as "the Eric Clapton of the lute." On [wfmt.com](#), listeners read about Francesca Caccini, a 17th century Italian musician credited as the first woman to write an opera, *La liberazione di Ruggiero*; and took a deep dive into the creation of Joan Tower's *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman*.





APRIL

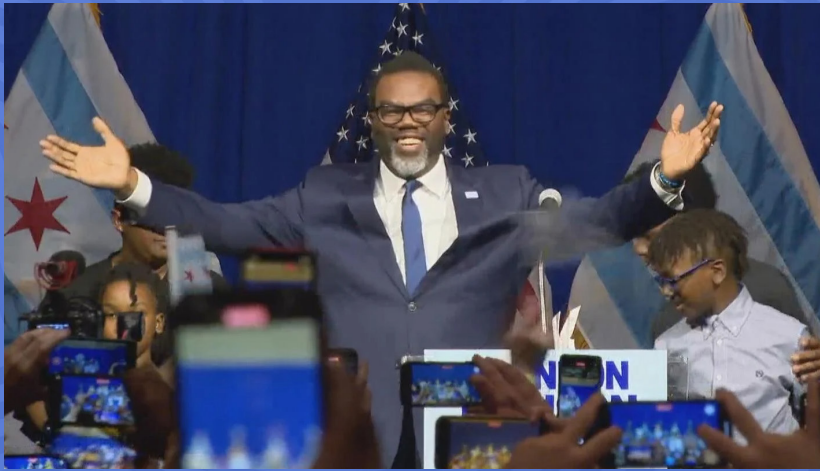


Photo: WTTW News

WTTW News coverage of the Mayoral Runoff: Mayor-Elect Brandon Johnson



Photo: George Woodcock, Mike Birkhead Associates

Nature: Attenborough's Wonder of Song



The Sun Queen: American Experience



Photo: Sandra Powers

Baritone Nathan Gunn



Photo: Chris Vile-BBC Studios

Our Changing Planet



Photo: Sven Erik Amdt-Anterra Picture Library

Wild Scandinavia



Photo: North Park University

Bach Week Festival

# APRIL

This month, WFMT marked a significant milestone: [the 15th anniversary of \*Introductions\*](#), the weekly Saturday morning series featuring the best and brightest pre-collegiate musicians from across the Chicago region. The station celebrated this momentous occasion with a special episode featuring young cellist Jan Vargas Nedvetsky performing Villa-Lobos' *Song of the Black Swan*; the top trombone quartet from the Merit School of Music, The Bone Rangers, with a nod to Marini's *Canzona*; Quartet Bellezza presenting *Romanze* from String Quartet No. 1 by Johannes Brahms; and a performance by Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras, who performed the Finale from Symphony No. 3, the "Organ" Symphony, by Camille Saint-Saëns.

Also in April, WFMT shared a [curated playlist inspired by birds](#) in celebration of spring and *WFMT Presents* spotlighted the [Bach Week Music Festival](#) as it prepared for its 50th anniversary with an upcoming new concert series. And Broadway star and baritone [Nathan Gunn](#) sat down with host Oliver Camacho on *Listening to Singers* to preview his performance as Emile de Becque in the New Philharmonic's April staging of *South Pacific*.

On the British drama front, WTTW viewers watched new seasons of *Father Brown* and *Death in Paradise*, and enjoyed a rollicking new multi-part adaptation of Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones*, with the dashing Solly McLeod in the title role. For Earth Day 2023, relevant programming throughout the month included *NOVA's Hidden Volcano Abyss*; *Changing Planet* with conservationist Dr. M. Sanjayan, who performs a global environmental health check on the Earth's most vulnerable ecosystems; the *Wild Scandinavia* series, *Nature: Attenborough's Wonder of Song*; and *The Sun Queen* from *American Experience* about chemical engineer Maria Telkes, who designed and built the world's first successfully solar-heated modern residence. Finally, WTTW News covered the [Chicago mayoral runoff election](#) between Paul Vallas and the eventual winner, Brandon Johnson.







Cantor David Berger on WFMT



Lidia Celebrates America: The Flavors That Define Us

Photo: Meredith Nerman GBH & Tavola Productions



Great Performances: Richard III

Photo: Meredith Nerman GBH & Tavola Productions



Great Performances: 50 Years of Broadway's Best



Julian Velasco

Photo: Jacynth Simpson



National Memorial Day Concert

Photo: Capital Concerts



Soprano Laura Strickling

Photo: Arielle Doneson

# MAY

In May, WTTW highlighted Jewish American Heritage Month as well as [Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#) (AAPI) with dedicated content, including a new *American Masters* profile of a man known as “the father of video art,” [Nam June Paik](#).

Also, throughout the month, WTTW shone a spotlight on food and how it brings us together. In *Lidia Celebrates America: Flavors that Define Us*, chef, author, and Italian native Lidia Bastianich traversed the country to visit first, second, and third-generation immigrants who shared their culinary traditions and inspirations. Also, among the many food programs, [stories about food, recipes](#), and the Deep Dish enewsletter, WTTW welcomed a new series, *The Dooky Chase Kitchen: Leah’s Legacy*, showcasing New Orleans restaurant Treme and its late chef known as the “Queen of Creole Cuisine”; and the return of *Jacques Pépin Heart & Soul*, in which the French chef and author took a nostalgic back at his 60 eventful years in the kitchen.

Other May highlights included *Fanny: The Right to Rock*, *the National Memorial Day Concert*, and two *Great Performances* specials: a celebration of *50 Years of Broadway’s Best*, and an inclusive production of Shakespeare’s *Richard III*.

WFMT brought listeners a preview of the upcoming Grant Park Music Festival season and shared an archival performance by violinist Rachel Barton Pine of *Billy Childs’ Violin Concerto No. 2*. *Listening to Singers* featured soprano [Laura Strickling](#), covered Chicago Opera Theater’s presentation of *The Cook Off*, a lively opera by Mark Campbell and Shawn Okpebholo; welcomed [saxophonist Julian Velasco](#) and [pianist Winston Choi](#) to *Live from WFMT*, took special requests for [Mother’s Day](#), and marked the 175th anniversary of the founding of Chicago’s first synagogue with a unique [Shabbat Evening service](#) featuring Cantor David Berger, the Hyde Park Jewish Choral Society, and the Rockefeller Chapel Choir.







Photo: Kaupo Kikkas

Randall Goosby



Photo: Emily Butler

Mavis Staples at Symphony Center Chicago



Photo: Collection of Cindy Sherman

Casa Susanna: American Experience



Photo: Denise Allen

Zachary Allen



The Great American Recipe



Ridley



Photo: Rick Steves

Rick Steves: Heart of Italy

# JUNE

As the fiscal year drew to a close with summer in full swing, WTTW viewers bid a fond farewell to the popular long-running series *Endeavour* after nine turbulent seasons that told the story of the conflicted young detective Endeavour Morse and his friend and mentor Fred Thursday as they solved mysteries while grappling with their own demons. WTTW also ventured with travel expert [Rick Steves](#) into *The Heart of Italy*, went onstage at Symphony Center with civil rights and living legend [Mavis Staples](#), premiered the new drama series *Ridley*, and welcomed back *The Great American Recipe* for a second season.

WTTW marked LGBTQ+ Pride Month with new programming including *For the Love of Friends*, the moving story of AIDS activist Brent Nicholson Earle; an *American Experience* film on [Casa Susanna](#), a welcoming Catskills refuge for cross-dressing men at a time when the practice was illegal in most of the country; and an *American Masters* profile of flamboyant rock 'n' roll legend [Little Richard](#), among other programs.

WFMT also spotlighted LGBTQ+ Pride Month with a *Midnight Special* program that looked back on a seminal event that launched the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement: [the June 1969 Stonewall Uprising](#). And wfmt.com featured [a roundup of Pride Month music, dance, and events](#) around Chicago, and a feature story on eight American operas that put LGBTQ+ stories center stage.

In addition, WFMT shared *Music and Conversation* with [violinist Randall Goosby](#); welcomed [soprano Michelle Areyzaga](#), pianist Jamie Shaak, and friends to the Levin Performance Studio for *Live from WFMT*; showcased 18-year-old [oboist Zachary Allen](#) on *Introductions*; and celebrated Juneteenth weekend with chamber music collective D-Composed on *Sounds Classical*, the new program *Let Freedom Ring* hosted and curated by Lara Downes, a dedicated episode of *With Heart and Voice*, and the new special *Juneteenth: Remembrance and Celebration*.





JUNE



Geoffrey Baer



Brandis Friedman and artist Nick Cave



The Grainger Foundation accepts the Renée Crown Leadership Award



WFMT hosts Marilyn Rea Beyer and LaRob K. Rafael



Brandis Friedman interviews genealogist Nick Sheedy



WTTW-WFMT President and CEO Sandra Cordova Micek with gala guests



Host Geoffrey Baer and Imani Winds

# CELEBRATION 2023

## LIVING CURIOUS: A WTTW AND WFMT CELEBRATION

**C**haired by Renée and Lester Crown, *Living Curious: A WTTW and WFMT Celebration* promoted the mission of WTTW and WFMT by highlighting our core value of curiosity. On May 3, 2023, the organization welcomed 300 guests to The Field Museum for a cocktail hour, engaging program, and seated dinner.

Guests enjoyed musical performances by two-time Grammy Award-nominated Imani Winds. The two interviews were rooted in curiosity: one between *Chicago Tonight* co-anchor Brandis Friedman and Nick Sheedy, lead genealogist for the PBS Series, *Finding Your Roots*; and a second between Geoffrey Baer and artist Nick Cave.

We were pleased to present the WTTW | WFMT Renée Crown Leadership Award to The Grainger Foundation for their transformational philanthropy to WTTW and WFMT as well as organizations throughout our region.

*Living Curious: A WTTW and WFMT Celebration* received more than 100 gifts from business, philanthropic, and civic leaders, raising \$1,330,000 in essential general operating support for WTTW and WFMT.





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Photo: Ken Carl

Introductions at Navy Pier



Bach to School



Daniel Tiger at Be My Neighbor Day



Nature Cat at Lurie Children's Hospital



WTTW Kids Learn & Play



Firsthand: Life After Prison panel discussion and screening



Chicago Stories Birth of Gospel screening

Photo: Liz Farina Merkel

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**WTTW and WFMT** have a unique opportunity to [reach beyond our platforms](#) to build personal connections with Chicago's many communities to enrich lives, engage communities, and inspire exploration. In FY2023, WTTW hosted 100 virtual and in-person screenings and panel discussions that explored poverty, racial inequality, religion, Chicago and world history, and much more. These events attracted almost 100,000 participants across all categories, including kids and families. Many of the screenings featured films focusing on Black, Latino, Asian, Jewish, or Native American people and their stories, including *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, *Making Black America: Through the Grapevine*, *Let the Little Light Shine*, *Harriett Tubman: Visions of Freedom* and *Becoming Frederick Douglass*, and *The Big Payback*. In addition, WTTW hosted previews and discussions of three original multiplatform productions - *Ida B. Wells*, *The Birth of Gospel*, and *FIRSTHAND: Life After Prison*. WTTW also strengthened its partnership with PBS Books by co-hosting three [live Facebook events](#) that attracted more than 30,000 viewers.

For kids and families, WTTW continued to offer its free [WTTW Kids Learn & Play](#) series in Cook County Forest Preserves and Chicago Public Library locations, and with Daniel Tiger and Katerina Kittycat at both Aurora's and Pilsen's *Be My Neighbor Day*. Nature Cat rolled out WTTW's newly designed DIY activities in partnership with Chicago Trees Initiative at three meet and greet events, and a new online Explore the Outdoors *Nature Cat* winter camp along with WTTW Kids monthly activity calendars. WTTW also brought Nature Cat to visit patients at Lurie Children's outpatient center. Finally, WTTW's *Nature Cat* traveling museum exhibit *Backyard and Beyond* engaged kids and families in Springfield, Massachusetts.

WFMT continued its popular [Classical Conversations](#) - in-depth interviews with renowned classical music composers and performers, hosting two events in conjunction with the premiere of *The U.S. and the Holocaust* and *Becoming Frederick Douglass & Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom*. Guests included Grammy winners conductor James Conlon and musician Johnny Gandelsman as well as Charles Floyd and baritone Robert Sims, Gold Medalist of the American Traditions Competition.







Sounds Classical on WFMT

Photo: Mike Grittani



Photo: Liz Farina Markel

Firsthand: Life After Prison



Chicago Tonight: Latino Voices



Introductions 15th anniversary

Photo: Mike Grittani



The Most Beautiful Places in Chicago

Photo: Liz Farina Markel

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**FISCAL 2023** JULY 1, 2022-JUNE 30, 2023

(in thousands)

## Assets

Cash and investments	\$54,461
Accounts and pledges receivable, net	4,682
Property and equipment, net	21,871
Other assets	8,427
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$89,442</b>

## Liabilities and Net Assets

### Liabilities:

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$2,363
Long-term loans payable	7,100
Other liabilities	6,302
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$15,765</b>

### Net assets:

Without donor restrictions	\$35,656
With donor restrictions	38,020
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$73,676</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$89,442</b>

## Revenue

Direct Public Support and Development	\$25,855
Underwriting and production sponsorship	6,033
Program Licensing and Facility Rental	1,396
Federal and state grants	3,272
Other	8,081
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$44,637</b>

## Expenses

Programming and production	\$30,691
Fundraising	9,230
Business Support	4,062
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$43,984</b>

<b>Increase in Net Assets from Operating Activities</b>	<b>\$653</b>
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Statement of Activity for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023; figures subject to rounding.





Photo: Abel Arciniega

Living Curious: A WTTW and WFMT Celebration – dinner at The Field Museum

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(as of June 30, 2023)

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**Thank You!**

All of us at WTTW and WFMT  
thank you for your support.