

THE SALEM NEWS
tvspotlight

Your Weekly Guide to TV Entertainment for the week of January 27 - February 2, 2018



Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine stars in "The Chi"

South Side drama

Brandon (Jason Mitchell, "Mudbound," 2017) looks for a place to go after Jerrika (Tiffany Boone, "The Following") kicks him out in "The Chi," airing Sunday.

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Showtime's 'The Chi' shines spotlight on Chicago's South Side

By Kyla Brewer
TV Media

Chicago may be known for deep-dish pizza, the Sears Tower and the Bears, but the Windy City is also notorious for unusually high crime rates. Beyond the statistics and the headlines are stories of vibrant people struggling for a better life, and a new series shines a light on life on the city's South Side.

A group of people find themselves bound together when tragedy strikes their neighborhood in "The Chi," airing Sunday, Jan. 28, on Showtime. The gritty, 10-episode drama was created by Emmy winner Lena Waithe ("Master of None"), who based the series on her experiences growing up in Chicago. The program introduces viewers to a diverse community that includes youngsters, parents, dreamers, a drifter and a benevolent cop seeking justice.

"I hope when they watch the show, they connect with these characters. The truth is we're all a lot more alike than we think," Waithe said in a trailer for the show.

Jason Mitchell ("Mudbound," 2017) leads the ensemble cast as Brandon, an aspiring chef who dreams of one day opening a restaurant with his girlfriend, Jerrika (Tiffany Boone, "The Following"). Young actor Alex Hibbert ("Moonlight," 2016) plays Brandon's brother, Kevin, a pre-teen whose life is disrupted when he witnesses something shocking. Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine ("Heroes") portrays Ronnie, a drifter. Carefree teen Emmett (Jacob Latimore, "The Maze Runner," 2014) suddenly finds himself with new responsibilities, which he handles with advice from his mother, Jada (Yolanda Ross, "Stranger Inside," 2001). Meanwhile, Det. Cruz (Armando Riesco, "Garden State," 2004) keeps a watchful eye as he strives for justice, not incarceration.

"The Chi" is executive produced by Waithe, Elwood Reid ("Hawaii Five-0"), Aaron Kaplan ("Life in Pieces"), Rick Famuyiwa ("Dope," 2015) and recording artist Common, an outspoken Chicago native. The Grammy-winning rapper is undeniably excited to bring the story of his city to prime time.

"This is the story I want to tell about our city," Common said in a promo for the show. "We are a colorful, incredible, beautiful people that are dealing with some tough situations."

While police procedurals are familiar prime-time fare, fewer series explore how people in rough neighborhoods cope with the day-to-day challenges of life in the city. Showtime's series takes a multi-generational approach with an ensemble cast that ranges from child actors to seasoned veterans of film and television.

Mitchell is a rising star in Hollywood, thanks to his recent turn in "Mudbound," which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival last January and garnered significant Oscar buzz for the actor's portrayal of a World War II veteran. He began his career in such films as "Contra-band" (2012) and "Broken City" (2013) before gaining attention from critics for his role as rapper Eazy-E in the 2015 biopic "Straight Outta Compton."

Playwright, actor, photographer and documentarian Mwine was nominated for an NAACP Image Award for his role in a national

touring production of "Six Degrees of Separation" in 1992. He made his film debut in "Blood Diamond" (2006), and his TV credits include "Heroes," "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," "The Riches" and "Treme."

Mwine's "The Chi" co-star Ross also had a role in HBO's "Treme." Her work in the cabler's "Stranger Inside" earned her a nomination for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Debut Performance. She's appeared in other prime-time hits, such as "Third Watch," "Law & Order" and "Law & Order: Criminal Intent."

Like Ross, Riesco is a "Law & Order" alum, though he's more well known for his work in the independent films "Pieces of April" (2003) and "Garden State" (2004), along with the Hollywood action flick "National Treasure" (2004), the acclaimed drama "25th Hour" (2002) and the romantic comedy "Fever Pitch" (2005).

Other cast members have amassed an impressive list of big-screen and small-screen credits. A graduate of the California Institute of the Arts, Boone is best known as Mandy Lang in Fox's now defunct drama "The Following." Hibbert appeared in the Best Picture Oscar-winning "Moonlight." Latimore started his career as a rapper before turning his attention to acting in such films as "Ride Along" (2014) and "Collateral Beauty" (2016).

Sonja Sohn ("The Wire"), Jahking Guillory ("Kicks," 2016) and Steven Williams ("The X-Files") have recurring roles in "The Chi" as well.

Of course, the heart of the series is Waithe, whose passion for the subject matter and locale shine through. She's given "The Chi" authenticity by filming the entire show on location in Chicago, her hometown, where she'd dreamed of becoming a television writer since she was a child. She's

written for Fox's "Bones" and Nickelodeon's "How to Rock," among other television series. In 2017, she made history when she became the first black woman to win the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series for an episode of "Master of None."

Now a few weeks in, "The Chi" kicked off Showtime's original programming with its Jan. 7 broadcast premiere. However, viewers could access the premiere episode as of Dec. 15 via YouTube, Facebook, SHO.com and other platforms when Showtime released the debut for early sampling.

In the latest episode, Brandon finds himself looking for a place to go when Jerrika kicks him out. At the same time, Quentin (Williams) swipes something Trice (Tosin Morohunfola, "Chicago Med") values. Find out what happens next in "The Chi," airing Sunday, Jan. 28, on Showtime.



Jason Mitchell stars in "The Chi"

Video releases

Boo 2! A Madea Halloween

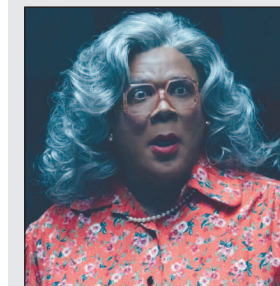
When Brian's (Perry) teenage daughter Tiffany (White) goes to a Halloween frat party against her dad's wishes, Madea (Perry), Uncle Joe (Perry), Aunt Bam (Davis) and Hat-tie (Lovely) set out to find her and drag her home. When the four finally reach the supposedly haunted Camp Derrick, where the party is taking place, though, they discover that horrors have been unleashed, and they're forced to flee for their lives as horrible monsters ripped straight from horror movies besiege the Halloween party.

Director: Tyler Perry. Stars: Tyler Perry, Cassi Davis. 2017. 101 min. Comedy.

Last Flag Flying

After his son dies while serving in Iraq, former marine Doc (Carell) reconnects with some friends from his past: bar owner Sal (Cranston) and pastor Richard (Fishburne), two men he served beside in Vietnam. He requests that they accompany him as he retrieves his son's body, and together they make the trip to Washington, D.C. On arrival, though, Doc learns that he'd been told a lie about how his son died, driving him to insist that the boy not be buried in Arlington National Cemetery but instead in their hometown.

Director: Richard Linklater. Stars: Steve Carell, Bryan Cranston. 2017. 125 min. Comedy/Drama.



Tyler Perry in "Boo 2! A Madea Halloween"

Continued on page 16

'Another Period' sends up the late Gilded Age

By Andrew Warren
TV Media

Historical funnies: Ah, the period piece. They've always been popular in media, but it definitely feels like they've been on the upswing in recent years, buoyed by British imports such as "Call the Midwife" and "Downton Abbey," and World War II epic "Dunkirk" cleaned up at the box office last year.

Well, period pieces don't have to be dramas, and Comedy Central's "Another Period" proves that by taking the genre and giving it a wrenching twist. The late Gilded Age series takes a look at the era through heavily tinted lenses, giving it a hilarious (and more than a bit, ahem, raunchy) twist. The third season of the comedy premiered last week, and continues Tuesday evenings.

Natasha Leggero ("He's Just Not That Into You," 2009) and Riki Lindhome ("The Last House on the Left," 2009) return as Lillian and Beatrice, a pair of sisters and members of the wealthy Bellacourt family of Newport, Rhode Island. For these socialites, the most important things in the world are their clothing, the parties they attend and their efforts to become famous far and wide — something that's much more difficult to accomplish in the pre-television and pre-internet age.

It's a bit of a spoof on reality shows like "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" and the various Real Housewives iterations, but the laughs to be found here are no joke. David Koechner ("Superior Donuts") also stars as Commodore Bellacourt, the family patriarch, and Jason Ritter ("Gravity Falls") plays the girls' younger brother, Frederick, who's involved in a less-than-savoury relationship that's more than a little bit taboo.

Last season ended with several cliffhangers, with Lillian becoming depressed and Beatrice finding God while at a nunnery. Last week's premiere already dealt with some of last season's lingering issues, but, really, the Gilded Age laughs have only just begun. The latest season of "Another Period" continues Tuesdays on Comedy Central.

Grammy fever: We're in the thick of awards season, when the best in entertainment from the past year is feted, celebrated and

recognized, and the music industry is no exception. Excellence in the many genres of music is recognized every year with the Grammy Awards, and this year's ceremony has made a pretty big move.

The 60th Annual Grammy Awards broadcasts live on CBS Sunday, Jan. 28, from New York City's Madison Square Garden — a huge change of venue for the ceremony that's called Los Angeles' Staples Center its home for more than a decade. The change in cities and in venues hasn't come with a change in host, though. "The Late Late Show" host James Corden returns as MC for the second year in a row.

This year's nominees really run the gamut, from longtime favourites to exciting up-and-comers. Childish Gambino (the "Atlanta" star is known outside of his music by his real name, Donald Glover) has been nominated for two of the most coveted awards, Record of the Year and Album of the Year, a feat matched by Bruno Mars, Kendrick Lamar and Jay-Z.

In the Best New Artist category, R&B singer Khalid, Canadian Alessia Cara, pop star Julia Michaels, hip-hop artist Lil Uzi Vert and singer-songwriter SZA all compete for what's often a career-changing award that can bring instant recognition for a newer voice in the industry.

There are so many more categories and even more nominees waiting for their chance at one of the gilded gramophone trophies, representing one of the highest achievements in the music industry. The 60th Annual Grammy Awards airs live from New York City Sunday, Jan. 28, on CBS.

Baldwin's back: Alec Baldwin is getting back into sitcoms. The Hollywood movie star struck success with his seven-season run as TV network executive Jack Donaghy in "30 Rock," but since that show wrapped up for good in

2013, his TV work has been largely limited to hosting the game show "Match Game" and frequently guest starring on "Saturday Night Live," where he does an impression of President Trump.

The accomplished actor has partnered with "Black-ish" creator Kenya Barris to develop a new, as-yet-unnamed sitcom that was recently ordered straight to series by ABC. It's still too early for any casting announcements, but it potentially could be a new starring vehicle for Baldwin, although nothing is written in stone.

The series will focus on an aging and opinionated TV star who's forced to move in with his far more liberal daughter, her girlfriend and their child, setting up a generational clash as the foundation of its comedy.

Baldwin first came to prominence in television in the

1980s with his two-season stint in "Knots Landing" before successfully making the transition to big-ticket movie star, with film credits that include

"Beetlejuice" (1988), "The Hunt for Red October" (1990) and "The Cooler" (2003), the latter of which earned him an Oscar nomination.

Natasha Leggero as seen in "Another Period"



Q&A Hollywood

By Adam Thomlison
TV Media

Q: What can you tell me about the actor who plays Otto Ganz in the new season of "Berlin Station"? He's great, and he looks really familiar.

A: Thomas Kretschmann is a household name in his native Germany (see what I did there?), but over here he's still just coming to people's attention. And he's still mostly being typecast as the villainous German.

Kretschmann was born in East Germany and was actually a competitive swimmer in that Olympics-crazy country before fleeing to the pre-unification West to become an actor.

"Berlin Station" is a hit show on a rising network (Epix, which used "Berlin Station" to get into the premium scripted-drama game), so it's a good profile-raiser, though there's a chance of getting lost in the large ensemble cast.

Of course, that's nothing compared to his highest-profile role in North America, in the famously overstuffed casts of two of the recent Marvel movies. He played Baron Wolfgang von Strucker in 2014's "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" and reprised the role in 2015's "Avengers: Age of Ultron."

That role gives a good sense of the sorts of roles he's being given over here — supporting, usually villainous, but highly impactful.

Next on his list of notable American roles is 2004's "Resident Evil: Apocalypse," in which he played the central villain in entry number who-knows-what of the ongoing action-horror series we've all lost count of.

He had a smaller but slightly more prestigious part the following year in the megabudget remake "King Kong," co-starring Naomi Watts, Jack Black, Adrien Brody and Andy Serkis in a motion-capture suit.

Q: Is it true they're making a movie about André the Giant? Who could play him?

A: You're on to something there. No one could play André except André himself, and so that's who they got.

Sadly, that's a bit misleading. The legendary professional wrestler, who stood at between six-foot-10 and seven-foot-four, depending on whom you ask, died in 1993. But the film about his life will be a documentary, so no actor is needed.

It's being made by HBO and is due out this spring. The film plans to lean hard on his status as "a real human but, at the same time, a mythological figure" (as per the trailer).

His genetic disorder, which caused his pituitary gland to emit too much growth hormone, made him an actual giant (as a professional wrestler, he was billed as weighing 520 pounds). However, the film promises to focus more on his outsized life than his outsized, well, size.

"Everyone who ever crossed paths with him has an André story — and usually four or five," said the film's producer, Bill Simmons.

Q: Why was Dudley Moore famous? He seemed to come out of nowhere with "Arthur."

A: There are multiple answers to that question, which can be broken down as why he was famous in general, and why he was famous here.

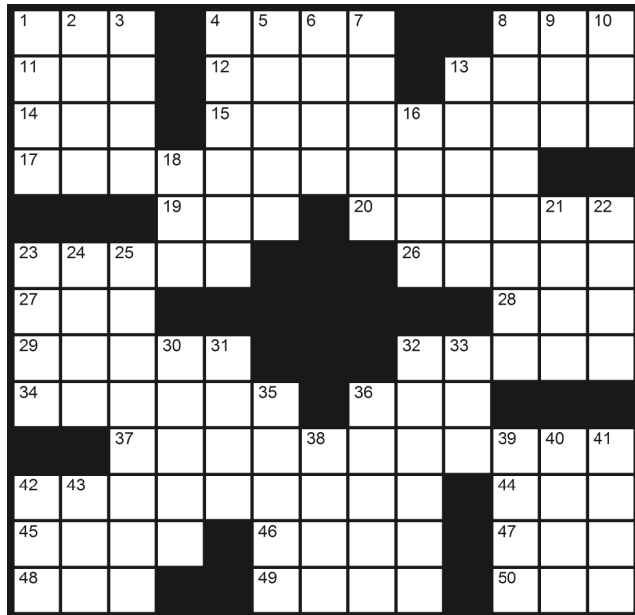
As with most British comedy stars, he started on the London stage, but he really came to prominence there as one-half of a comedy duo along with Peter Cook. It started with their BBC comedy series "Not Only ... But Also," which led to a number of big-screen movies together, most notably 1966's "The Wrong Box" and 1967's "Bedazzled." A couple of popular comedy albums followed.

In the mid-'70s, Moore left his home, and his stage partner, behind to try his hand in the U.S. He was basically starting from scratch over here, with little to no name recognition, but soon got it, thanks to a scene-stealing turn in the 1978 comedy "Foul Play" (and stealing scenes from stars Goldie Hawn and Chevy Chase is no easy feat).

A bit of luck intervened next. George Segal was all set to play the composer undergoing a mid-life crisis in the 1979 comedy "10," but he dropped out at the last minute, and so director Blake Edwards gave it to Moore — his first lead role in the U.S.

Have a question? Email us at questions@tvtabloid.com. Please include your name and town.

Crossword



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ACROSS

- 1 Salt found naturally in tomatoes
 4 Brothers
 8 Barbecue sound
 11 Suffix with cord
 12 "Game of Thrones" actress
 14 China's Lao-____
 15 X-ray
 17 New Fox medical drama starring Matt Czuchry
 19 Nova Scotia clock setting: Abbr.
 20 Motrin alternative
 23 ____ see (not to be missed)
 26 Milo of "Ulysses" (1967) and "Barbar-ella"

science

- (1968)
 27 Like some ears
 28 Psychic's claim
 29 South American range
 32 Waste maker
 34 New drama about Chicago's South Side
 36 In need of a refill
 37 Meals for ingenious coyotes
 42 Revived NBC sitcom starring Debra Messing: "____ & ____"
 44 Not just "a" bachelor
 45 "The Bachelor's" bachelor
 46 Bird sacred to ancient Egyptians
 47 Part of a royal flush
 48 "Life of Pi" (2012) director Ang
 49 Musical chairs goal
 50 Take the cake

DOWN

- 1 Barack's 2012 opponent
 2 Beauty pageant accessory
 3 High school drama that starred Jane Lynch
 4 Woodland area
 5 Comedy Central celebrity takedown
 6 "Me, myself ____"
 7 "You ____ mouthful!"
 8 Johnnie Walker and Glenfiddich
 9 Mattress problem
 10 Like some grins
 13 Forearm bones
 16 Vintner's prefix
 18 Dorm overseers, for short
 21 Superlative suffix
 22 Back of the neck
 23 Rat tail?
 24 Ho Chi ____ City
 25 Support
 30 Nice school?
 31 Thick carpet
 32 "No kidding!"
 33 Bristle on cereal
 35 "The Dark Tower" (2017) star Elba
 36 Eastern Caribbean nation, with Saint
 38 "Hurly-burly" playwright
 39 Kitchen extension
 40 Flightless South American bird
 41 Email folder
 42 ____-Mart
 43 Furious feeling

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Director: Angela Robinson.
Stars: Luke Evans, Rebecca Hall, Bella Heathcote. 2017.
108 min. Biography.

Sudoku

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