

## Crain's Picks: Best bets for the week of Dec. 10

By Crystal Yednak  
 Dec. 10, 2007

### CLOSING

#### "Dia de los Muertos: A New Beginning"

1852 W. 19th St.  
 (312) 738-1503  
[www.nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org](http://www.nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org)  
 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday  
 Donations accepted  
 Here's a last chance to see this exhibition celebrating the Mexican tradition of celebrating the lives of the dead. The National Museum of Mexican Art has collected ofrendas, or offerings, that highlight the artistic nature of the displays placed in homes and on loved ones' graves. The show closes Sunday.

### OPENING



#### "The Nutcracker"

50 E. Congress Pkwy.  
 (312) 902-1500  
[www.joffrey.com](http://www.joffrey.com)  
 7 p.m. Wednesday and Friday; 2 p.m., 7 p.m. Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday  
 Tickets: \$25-\$125  
 The full company of the Joffrey Ballet, the Arpino Apprentices, a puppeteer, five children's choirs and 120 child dancers fill the Auditorium Theatre with elegance and beauty for this year's telling of the classic "Nutcracker" story. Also, check out the Joffrey-themed holiday windows at Macy's on State Street.

### MUSIC



#### Aimee Mann's Second Annual Christmas Show

3145 N. Sheffield Ave.  
 (312) 559-1212  
[www.victheatre.com](http://www.victheatre.com)  
 7:30 p.m. Tuesday  
 Tickets: \$34  
 With her haunting voice and penetrating songwriting, expect a quality evening of entertainment from Aimee Mann, who performs holiday music as well as her own non-holiday songs. Ms. Mann has also invited some surprise guests, including comedians and other musicians, to drop by her show at the Vic.

#### Duran Duran

175 N. State St.  
 (312) 902-1500  
[www.thechicagotheatre.com](http://www.thechicagotheatre.com)  
 7:30 p.m. Friday  
 Tickets: \$50-\$85  
 See if Simon Le Bon and crew can still make fans swoon as pop legends Duran Duran take the stage for the "Miracle on State Street" concert at the Chicago Theatre, playing more than just their old favorites: The band has just released a new album that includes a single co-written by Justin Timberlake. A portion of proceeds benefits La Rabida Children's Hospital.

#### Ann Hampton Callaway and the Chicago Jazz Orchestra

205 E. Randolph St.  
 (312) 334-7777  
[www.harristheaterchicago.org](http://www.harristheaterchicago.org)  
 8 p.m. Thursday  
 Tickets: \$15-\$45  
 Ann Hampton Callaway and the Chicago Jazz Orchestra add some swing to the holidays with a performance of favorites from Barbra Streisand's best-selling Christmas album and Ella



### "Doctor Atomic"

20 N. Wacker Drive  
(312) 332-2244

[www.lyricopera.org](http://www.lyricopera.org)

7:30 p.m. Friday

Tickets: \$42-\$187

This opera directed by Peter Sellars is set in Los Alamos, N.M., in 1945 during the last three weeks before the bomb was detonated, changing the world forever. It runs through Jan. 19 at the Civic Opera House.

## THEATER

### "Good Boys and True"

1650 N. Halsted St.

(312) 335-1650

[www.steppenwolf.org](http://www.steppenwolf.org)

7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Friday; 3 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

Saturday

Tickets: \$40-\$68

The discovery of a disturbing videotape threatens the future of a popular prep school student in this world-premiere drama by playwright Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa. Set in the 1980s, this Steppenwolf production takes the audience inside a world of privilege. Previews begin Wednesday; the play runs through Feb. 16.

## FILM

### "Antonio Gaudi"

164 N. State St.

(312) 846-2800

[www.siskelfilmcenter.org](http://www.siskelfilmcenter.org)

6 p.m., 7:45 p.m. Friday; 3:15 p.m., 4:45 p.m.,

6:15 p.m., 8 p.m. Saturday; 2:30 p.m., 5:45 p.m.

Sunday

Tickets: \$9 general; \$5 members

Filmmaker Hiroshi Teshigahara casts an intense eye on the masterpieces of Barcelona architect Antonio Gaudi in this 1984 documentary, which contains little narration. It's playing at the Gene Siskel Film Center until Dec. 20.

## LECTURE

Fitzgerald's holiday classics. A Chicago native, Ms. Callaway was nominated for a Tony for her work in the hit Broadway show "Swing" and has also written songs for Ms. Streisand.

## BOOKS



### Tom Brokaw

150 N. State St.

(312) 606-0750

[www.bordersstores.com](http://www.bordersstores.com)

Noon Thursday; Free

Another generation is under the microscope in former anchorman Tom Brokaw's newest book, "Boom! Voices of the Sixties." Mr. Brokaw leaves no controversial topic unturned as he writes on race, war, politics and feminism.

### Bill Kurtis

55 Old Orchard Center, Skokie

(847) 676-2230

[www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

2 p.m. Saturday; Free

Venerable local newsman-turned-documentary producer Bill Kurtis turns his attention to sharing the story of the beef revolution with "The Prairie Table Cookbook." In 2005, Mr. Kurtis founded Tallgrass Beef Co., which focuses on a return to classic free-range, grass-fed cattle ranching. His cookbook includes recipes from celebrity chefs such as Charlie Trotter.

## ETC.

**"Connect with Anybody, Anywhere"**

1400 S. Lake Shore Drive

(312) 665-7400

[www.fieldmuseum.org](http://www.fieldmuseum.org)

7:30 p.m. Tuesday

Tickets: \$24-\$30 general public; \$22-\$28 members

A look through the photos of veteran National Geographic photographer Annie Griffiths Belt demonstrates her incredible ability to connect with people. Ms. Belt shares how she learned to overcome language and cultural barriers during this lecture at the Field Museum.

**PETS****Pet photos with Santa**

2660 Valor Drive, Glenview

(847) 724-2025

[www.theglentowncenter.com](http://www.theglentowncenter.com)

12-2 p.m. Sunday

Free

If you don't have that perfect holiday card photo yet, bring your pet and camera out to the Glen Town Center to take his or her picture with Santa. If you forget your camera, the center is handing out free disposable cameras while supplies last. The Charles Dickens Carolers stroll through the center.

**Old-Time Christmas**

523 S. Webster St., Naperville

(630) 305-5555

[www.napersettlement.org](http://www.napersettlement.org)

6:30-9:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 1-4 p.m.

Sunday

Entry: \$9 adults; \$6.50 children

Costumed villagers walk you back through time for a holiday in the 1800s. The buildings of the historic Naper Settlement also are dressed up with holiday decorations from throughout the years. An ice sculptor, dog-sledding demonstrations and carols round out the event. Keep a close eye out for Mr. Scrooge lurking around the grounds.

**Champagne tasting**

1350 Old Skokie Rd., Highland Park

(847) 831-1049

[www.winediscountcenter.com](http://www.winediscountcenter.com)

7:30-9 p.m. Thursday

Cost: \$35

Before you stock up on Champagne for New Year's parties, study up on some of the finest bubbly around at Wine Discount Center's annual tasting. Staffers offer sips from more than 30 bottles. Call to reserve your spot.

**Cocktails and Clay**

5020 S. Cornell Ave.

(773) 324-5520

[www.hydeparkart.org](http://www.hydeparkart.org)

8 p.m.-midnight Friday

Suggested donation: \$15

Who doesn't feel creative after a cocktail or two? Explore your artistic side at the Hyde Park Art Center's monthly event. There are drink specials, and you can play with clay, check out the center's exhibitions and dance.

**DESTINATION: PUNTA MITA, MEXICO**



**GET AWAY:** Quieter and more exclusive than nearby Puerto Vallarta, Punta Mita offers a Mexican resort experience that's heavier on peaceful vistas and beachside dining, lighter on two-for-one margarita specials and souvenir T-shirts. The Four Seasons put the Pacific Coast area on upscale travelers' maps when it opened a resort there in 1999. Now, a mini-surge of new resort openings will bring more golf, spa and other activities. A non-stop 4½-hour flight on United or American from O'Hare to Puerto Vallarta, then a 45-minute drive, will get you there. Prices below are in U.S. dollars.

**DO:** Named one of *Travel & Leisure Golf's* best resort courses in Mexico/Latin America, the Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course sprawls over 200 acres of beachfront — with the exception of one hole that lies on a small natural island in the ocean itself. Players must be guests of the Four Seasons Resort ([www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com); 011 52 329 291 6000; 18 holes \$195, 9 holes \$120). The Punta Mita Residential Concierge can arrange whale-watching tours, a particularly exciting activity from December to April, when migrating humpbacks can be seen and, if you're lucky, heard. Join a group tour for \$80 a head, or charter your own for \$800 ([www.puntamita.com.mx](http://www.puntamita.com.mx); 888/647-0979).



**STAY:** Two new luxury resorts are in the works at Punta Mita: the St. Regis Resort & Residences (scheduled to open early next year) and the La Solana Resort (planned for 2010). They'll join the Four Seasons Resort, which offers private residence rentals as well as guest rooms and suites. Private plunge pools and hammocks are par for the course in most of those suites; the five-bedroom beachfront Coral Suite adds a private drive, fitness room, personal host, media room, outdoor shower and poolside cabana ([www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com); 800/819-5053; \$15,000 per night). Or book a villa, hacienda or condo with the Mita Residential Agency. Until Dec. 1, 2008, it's offering the Minimoon Package. Designed for newlyweds looking for a quick romantic getaway instead of an extended honeymoon, it includes three nights' accommodation, a couple's massage and a three-course beachside dinner ([www.mitaresidential.com](http://www.mitaresidential.com); 877/561-2893; from \$3,135).

**DINE:** Scheduled to open soon in the Punta Mita Beach Club and Spa: the Café des Artistes del Mar, a sister restaurant to chef Thierry Blouet's Café des Artistes Bistro Gourmet in Puerto Vallarta. Expect oceanfront dining and a Mediterranean-influenced, seafood-heavy menu ([www.cafedesartistes.com](http://www.cafedesartistes.com); 011 52 329 291 5414; entrees \$12-\$25). Every Saturday night at Aramara, the most formal of the Four Seasons' four restaurants, celebrate Mexico's national drink with the tequila-pairing menu, which may include chipotle-scented sweet potato cream soup with scallop tempura and tequila syrup. Finish with tequila soufflé ([www.fourseasons.com](http://www.fourseasons.com); 011 52 329 291 6000; entrees \$30-\$50).

**FOR MORE INFO:** Call the Punta Mita Discovery Center at (888) 647-0979, or visit [www.puntamita.com.mx](http://www.puntamita.com.mx).

*Anne Ford; photos are of the Four Seasons Resort and Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course*

Event schedules and availability change — call ahead.  
Send your suggestions to [events@chicagobusiness.com](mailto:events@chicagobusiness.com).

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