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Our guide to Chicago International Film Fest: The 5 movies and events not to miss so far

By **Michael Phillips**
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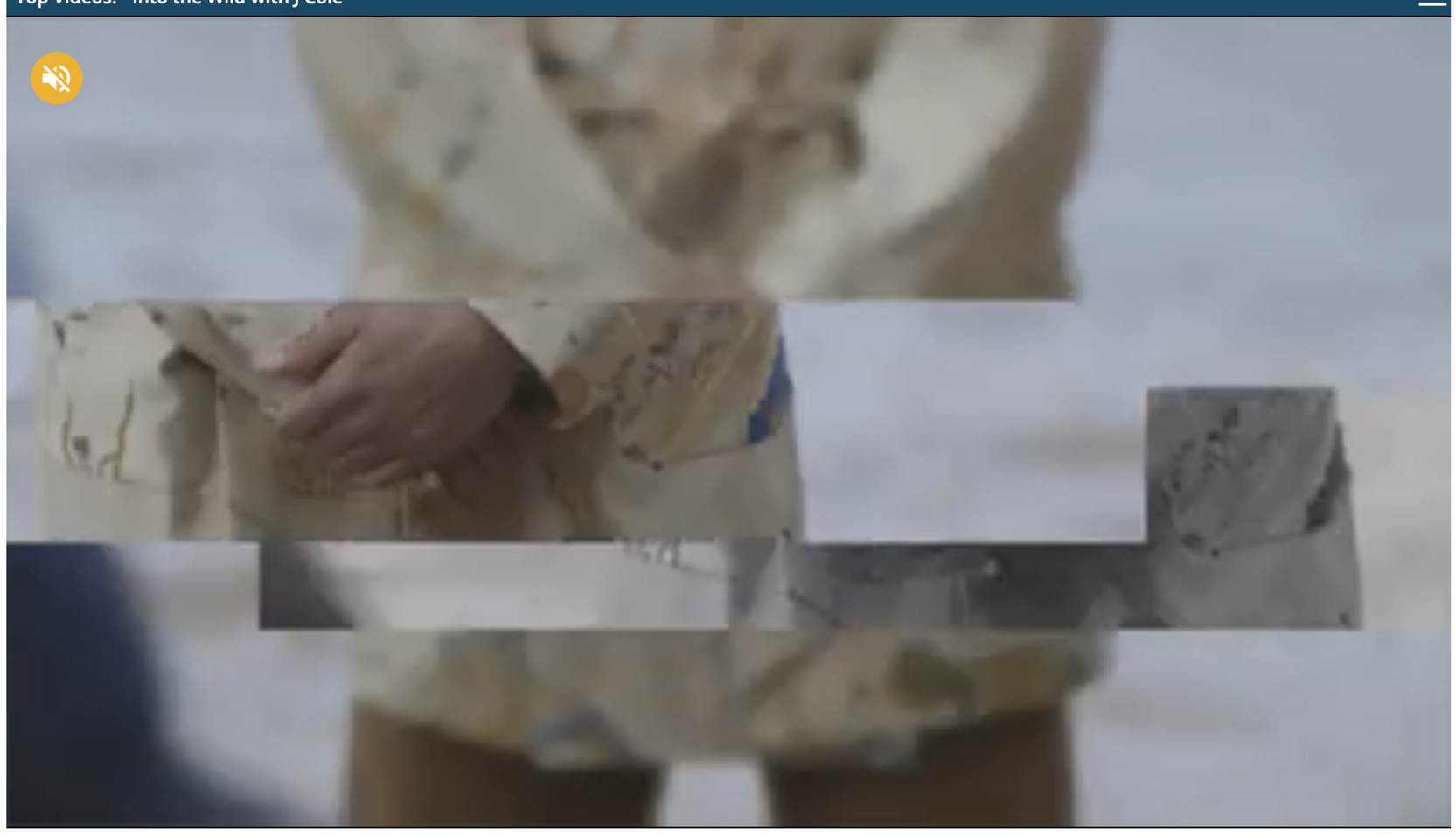

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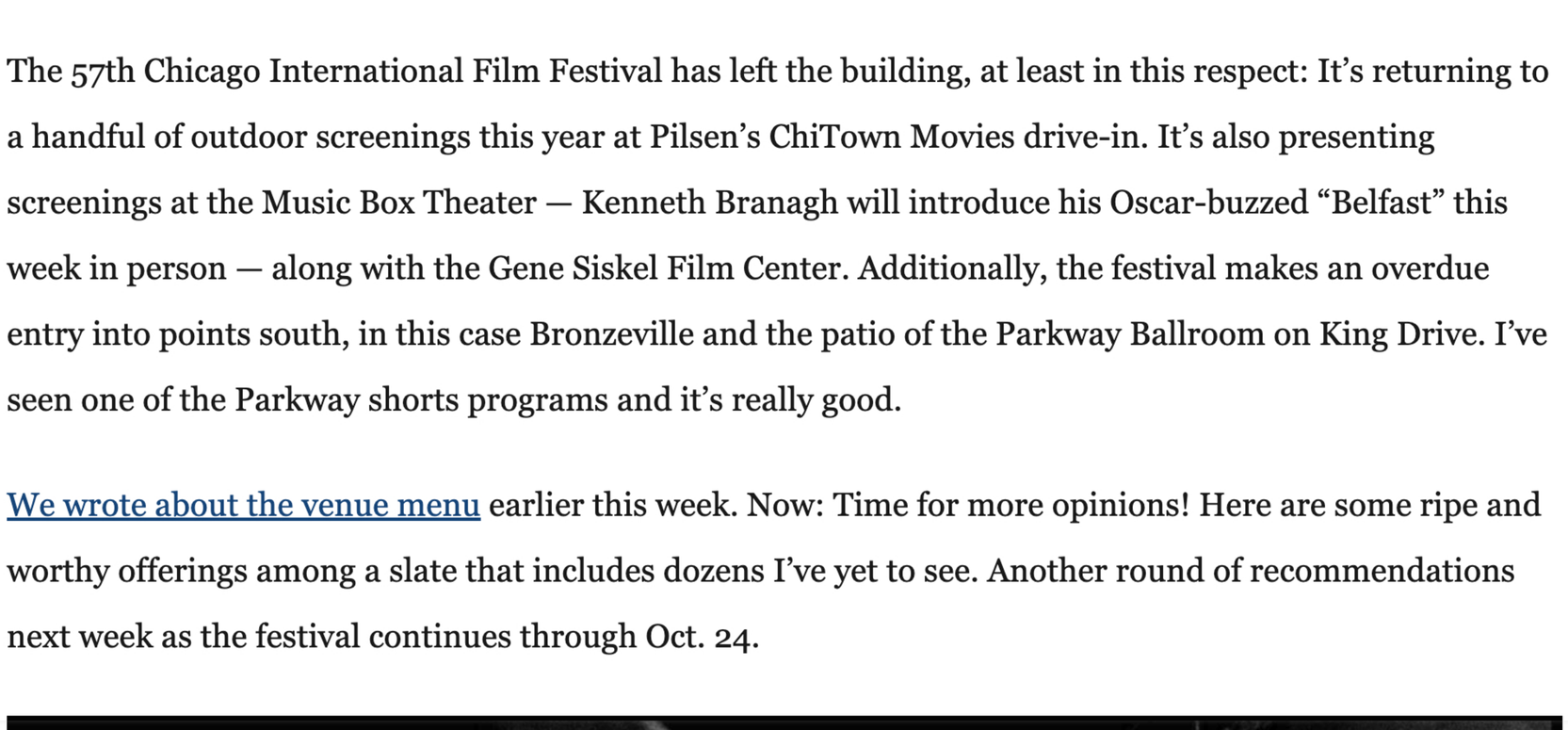
The 57th Chicago International Film Festival has left the building, at least in this respect: It's returning to a handful of outdoor screenings this year at Pilsen's ChiTown Movies drive-in. It's also presenting screenings at the Music Box Theater — Kenneth Branagh will introduce his Oscar-buzzed "Belfast" this week in person — along with the Gene Siskel Film Center. Additionally, the festival makes an overdue entry into points south, in this case Bronzeville and the patio of the Parkway Ballroom on King Drive. I've seen one of the Parkway shorts programs and it's really good.

We wrote about the venue menu earlier this week. Now: Time for more opinions! Here are some ripe and worthy offerings among a slate that includes dozens I've yet to see. Another round of recommendations next week as the festival continues through Oct. 24.



A paragon of Chicago's late 20th Century fine dining revolution is the subject of "Love, Charlie: The Rise and Fall of Chef Charlie Trotter," making its world premiere in October at the Chicago International Film Festival. (Paul Elledge photo)

"Love, Charlie: The Rise and Fall of Chef Charlie Trotter" (6 p.m. Oct. 18; 5 p.m. Oct. 22 at AMC River East): Finally, after several game but frustrating attempts, here's the first fully successful documentary about a high-flying Chicago chef's triumph and torment. Director Rebecca Halpern's portrait of Trotter (who died in 2013) is neither hagiography nor smear job. It's a clear-eyed account of Trotter's path to fame, and his role in putting Chicago fine dining on the map — remaking the map, really — as well as what that cost him on the way up, and down. Astute contributions from, among others, Trotter mentee/rival Grant Achatz and longtime Chicago arts and culture writer Mark Caro flesh out the nuances. The man was a bully, and clearly Trotter lost track of what was an act and what wasn't. It's a relief to see a film about a famously tricky personality that, like its subject, isn't afraid of contradictions. *Also streaming virtually Tues. Oct. 19-Sun. Oct. 24.*

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