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## Featured Programs

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## Featured Programs

### Upcoming Events for Spring 2015

**Chloe Hilliard**

**March 28 @ Hansen**

Chloé Hilliard is a larger than life comedian. Well, that's because she's 6'1 and rocks a killer afro. Born in Brooklyn, NY and raised in a large Hasidic Jewish neighborhood, Chloé has spun her unique experiences into side splitting laughs.

Once you know how to tell a story you're set for life. As a journalist-turned-comedian, Chloé Hilliard is entertaining the masses with her wit and ability to find the humor in everything.

For the last ten years, Chloé has been a culture/entertainment journalist. Most recently Chloé was the Editorial Director of *Loop21.com*, which focuses on politics, culture, and entertainment from a hip perspective.

Prior to *Loop 21*, Chloé served as the Managing Editor/Social Media Manager for *VIBE*, a leading urban entertainment magazine and website. She has also been a staff writer for *The Village Voice*, America's largest weekly newspaper. There, she chronicled lesbian thugs, BET's transformation and eminent domain in Brooklyn. Chloé is also a former News Editor at *The Source* for her expertise on Hip Hop culture. She has appeared on CNN Headline News, ABC News, *Our World with Black Enterprise* and C-Span. Her work has been featured in *Best African American Essays: 2009*.

She recently made her comedic debut on national television appearing on NBC's smash hit "Last Comic Standing".



**Damien Escobar, Hip Hop Violinist**

**April 10, @ Hansen**



Easy come, easy go; was the lesson two-time Emmy Award winning violinist, Damien Escobar learned when he and his brother walked away from a multi-million dollar brand that took ten years to build. The now 27-year-old's claim to fame came early on in his teens when he, alongside his brother, appeared on "America's Got Talent" as Nuttin' but Stringz. Two urban kids from Jamaica, Queens, playing a blend of hip hop and classical melodies with a violin was somewhat surprising to viewers, and unique to say the very least; and the duo quickly shot to stardom— appearing in commercials and movies, touring, and even adding a platinum selling album to their accolades. But growing creative differences eventually became too much for the pair to bear, and the success of Nuttin' but Stringz came to an end— shattering the name and reputation Damien worked

hard to establish, and forcing him to rebuild from rock bottom.

In 2010 Nuttin' But Stringz disbanded and Damien Escobar emerged as a solo artist out to make a name for himself. Humble in his dealings but confident in his craft, Damien makes it no secret that he's determined to gain recognition for being the "dopest" violinist to crossover into mainstream music. In an industry not overpopulated by instrumentalist, the urban-rock violinist is looking to change the game. He's a pioneer with a plan, and the future of music rests in his hands.

As a veteran, knowing the ups and downs of the industry, Escobar has committed to centering his career around the loyal fans he refers to as “good people,” who constantly remind him of why he got back into music. His appreciation for the support system he feels sustains him, spawned his Pop-Up Performance campaign. Armed with a giant speaker, a mic, and his violin, Escobar set out to surprise unsuspecting New Yorkers with a pop-up concert experience. The response to his documented journey was overwhelmingly positive, and resulted in Damien announcing a five city pop-up performance tour.

Currently, Escobar is appreciating his journey as a fresh new artist, with the release of his high-energy, inspirational single “Freedom” which debuted on CNN.com. He is scheduled to go on tour in Mid-May, and can be seen on “The Katie Couric Show” on May 28th. The artist has also tapped into the book industry, penning his first children’s book entitled “The Sound of Strings.” He will begin his book tour at the start of the new school year.

## **Undercover 26**

### **April 17 @ Hansen**

Undercover is a biannual Illinois Wesleyan University student music competition that is sponsored by the Office of Student Activities and takes place in the Hansen Student Center.

All IWU students are eligible to audition for a chance to compete in the live competition. All competitors will sing two cover songs for a panel of guest judges who will consider both performance and audience response to determine the competition's winner. Some performers only sing the vocals while other groups may choose to play instruments as well. Past performances have included acoustic ballads, Motown's greatest hits, country songs and rock anthems. In recent years professional musicians and comedians have been invited to host the show. Check back to see if a celebrity performer will be appearing at Undercover 25.

For additional information about the event, contact the Office of Student Activities at (309) 556-3850.

## **Past Programs**

### **EH 440**

#### **January 10 @ Hansen**

Eh440 started harmonizing together in 2012. But their journey really started over a decade and half ago. Using just their voices, this Toronto-based acappella group has wowed audiences across the USA and Canada. The next step in their journey came in 2014 with the release of their debut album *Turn Me Up*. Eh440 is a mix of 5 people from 5 very different backgrounds and musical genres. Joe Oliva has been a low bass singer his entire life, Luke Stapleton is an urban beatboxer, Janet Turner identifies as a country/pop singer while Stacey Kay identifies as soul/pop, and if that isn't confusing enough, Mike Celia is even more of a musical chameleon who cites blues, folk, and "anything with a good groove" as his influences. Together they form "an unforgettable combination of crazy-ass beatboxing, sassy rapping, killer harmonies, and fresh, urban, R&B-influenced compositions". Their debut album, *Turn Me Up*, exemplifies their abundant influences.



### **Mieka Pauley**

#### **January 16 @ Hansen**

Mieka Pauley possesses a voice that flows like good whiskey and a frankness that makes Alanis Morissette



look shy. She conjures up a sonic immediacy with the same masterful command as Ani DiFranco with driving, yearning melodies that stand alongside the work of Michelle Shocked, Neko Case and Emmylou Harris.

*“My songs are like the actions that I can’t really take.”* So says **Mieka Pauley**, a refreshingly candid artist whose vagabond background infuses ***The Science of Making Choices***, her most recent full-length album released in **2012**.

Not content to wait for label backing, Pauley has self-released all of her work, which includes three other EPs and two full-length albums. For Science she’s joined forces with Pledge Music, where her fans proved their demand for more music by donating far more than she requested to fund the project. Having worked with **producer Geoff Stanfield** (*Firehorse, Sun Kil Moon*) to create *The Science of Making Choices*, Pauley feels she’s finally captured in the studio the same rawness she conjures when playing live. “It’s finally like me making that alternative sound while still holding on to what makes my live solo show work. He was able to take that live vibe, that connection, and then put really sweet, respectful production behind it. I really love that Geoff was able to make it happen.”

Pauley’s career pursuits have helped her win prestigious competitions like **Cosmopolitan’s Fun Fearless Female Rock Star of the Year**, the **Starbucks Songwriter Competition** and the **New York Songwriters Circle Songwriting Contest**. She’s shared stages with household names like **Eric Clapton, Lyle Lovett, Carly Simon, Solange Knowles, John Legend, The Lumineers, Natasha Bedingfield, KT Tunstall, Edwin McCain, Ben Kweller, Jason Mraz, Gavin DeGraw, the Black Eyed Peas, Wyclef Jean** and **Citizen Cope**. In the summer of 2012 her song “Devil’s Got My Secret” was featured in the Bruce Beresford film (starring Jane Fonda, Catherine Keener and Elizabeth Olsen) **Peace, Love and Misunderstanding**.

#### **Joel Ward, Magician January 30 @ Hansen**

Joel’s high energy, original magic has astonished people throughout the world. As he makes things appear and disappear, he presents award-winning magic by combining classical magic with a contemporary touch. Joel’s mind-boggling magical talent ranges from comical audience participation, to interactive close-up magic and flashy Las Vegas styled illusions.

Joel became interested in magic when he was 6 years old. A magician at a school assembly had chosen Joel from the audience to assist on stage. Since then, Joel Ward has taken his magic very seriously. A California native and raised in Cardiff by the Sea, California, Joel started his own business at age 10 performing at children’s birthday parties. By age 15, Joel became a World Champion Teen Magician after placing 1st at the International Brotherhood of Magicians annual competition, the World’s Largest Magic Organization. That same year Joel was picked out of hundreds of magicians to appear on television with Master Magician, Lance Burton.

Joel currently performs hundreds of shows a year. In 2009 Joel performed on NBC’s “The Bonnie Hunt Show,” and was part of the series called, “Masters of Illusion,” on My Network TV. That same year Joel headlined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Circus show, “Boom A Ring,” which toured the East Coast and Puerto Rico. In January of 2011 Joel made his first appearance on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and on Comedy Central’s Tosh.0.



#### **Christopher James February 13 @ Hansen**

British born actor/comedian Chris James started his career in New



York performing improv. His dedication and hard work paid off as only a few years later he wrote and directed his one man show, selling out theaters all over the city including the world famous New York Comedy Club. He was soon scouted and signed with one of the city's top agents.

Chris decided the time was right to move to Hollywood and before the ink had dried on his green card he was signed to a top L.A. agent. His first audition landed him a role in the hit FOX show 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer'.

A natural progression from improv, Chris fell into stand-up comedy and soon was performing in all the major clubs in L.A., including the world famous Comedy Store, The Hollywood Improv and The laugh Factory.

Chris also successfully wrote, produced and starred in his first half hour special, "One Night of Stand Up", hosted by HBO's Tourgasm, Jay Davis.