

Life!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025 SECTION B

FDA’s abortion drug review under growing public scrutiny

By Sofia Resnick
STATES NEWSROOM

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is facing increasing pressure from abortion opponents and advocates over how it regulates a drug that has become central to abortion access since Roe v. Wade was overturned three years ago.

Abortion medication manufacturers, health care providers and state attorneys general have continued to petition and sue the agency to loosen regulations for mifepristone, a key abortion drug. At the same time, anti-abortion policy leaders have successfully lobbied the Trump administration — on the basis of a self-published white paper funded by anti-abortion groups — to review mifepristone’s safety again and consider reviving old restrictions.

On Nov. 13, the American Civil Liberties Union sued the FDA under a federal public records law for refusing to disclose the parameters of its new review, as well as communications with outside groups.

Abortion opponents have called on the FDA to ban telehealth abortion, which has allowed abortion rates to rise slightly nationally despite state bans. A shift in mifepristone regulation could dramatically change abortion access throughout the country, and health advocates and litigators on both sides of this dispute are closely watching how the agency justifies any changes.

Abortion-rights advocates have also seized on a recent federal ruling from a Trump-appointed judge, which orders the FDA to justify its 2023 decision to maintain restrictions on the abortion pill and argues the agency excluded from its review, without explanation, a wealth of research and evidence that it previously accepted.

Reproductive health legal experts say the action

Please see **FDA** | 2B

SC measles outbreak shows chilling effect of misinformation

By Lauren Sausser
KFF HEALTH NEWS

BOILING SPRINGS, S.C. — Near the back corner of the local library’s parking lot, largely out of view from the main road, the South Carolina Department of Public Health opened a pop-up clinic in early November, offering free measles vaccines to adults and children.

Spartanburg County, in South Carolina’s Upstate region, has been fighting a measles outbreak since early October, with more than 50 cases identified. Health officials have encouraged people who are unvaccinated to get a shot by visiting its mobile vaccine clinic at any of its several stops throughout the county.

But on a Monday afternoon in Boiling Springs, only one person showed up.

“It’s progress. That progress is slow,” Linda Bell, the state epidemiologist with the Department of Public Health, said during a recent press briefing. “We had hoped to see a more robust uptake than that in our mobile health units.”

As South Carolina tries to contain its measles outbreak, public health officials across the nation are concerned that the highly contagious virus is making a major comeback. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has tallied more than 1,700 measles cases and 45 outbreaks in 2025. The largest started in Texas, where hundreds of people were infected and two children died.

For the first time in more than two decades, the

Please see **SC** | 3B

« RIDES »

Land Rover Defender 130 delivers on sports utility legacy of power and luxury

By Winfred Cross
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

Land Rovers are expensive and can be troublesome, according to almost anyone I’ve asked who owns one.

I also asked if they would buy another and to a person each has said yes.

I’ve driven several Land Rovers and I know why. These things are deliciously smooth, drive like dreams and scream prestige. The Defender fits into those categories. It was discontinued in the states and was revived in 2020. It is available in lots of trim levels but the one I sampled was the Defender 130 V8.

The Defender 130 has a

longer wheelbase than the other models. It can seat up to eight or you can get it with captain’s chairs in the second row. You can also get it as a two-row vehicle with a huge cargo area.

The Defender 130 is also available with a supercharged V8 that produces 493 horsepower. You can power your way to 60 miles per hour in 5.4 seconds, which is impressive for something this big and heavy.

The Defender 130’s power is certainly impressive. Take this thing on the interstate and you get to see how quickly this vehicle moves. Gobs of power in on tap to punch past slow moving traffic. The

handling was better than expected and the ride comfort is surprisingly smooth. The air suspension which can control ride height makes the vehicle feel almost plush.

Like most Land Rovers, the Defender 130 can be driven on about in surface except the bottom of the ocean. If water tightness wasn’t an issue, it probably could. I’m not the guy to go through the outback, so I take the company’s word on off-road capabilities.

The Defender also offers a quiet ride for something with such an upright stance. There is a bit of tire hum, but not enough to be a problem. You can drown that out with the Meridian



Land Rover’s Defender 130 is big, luxurious and can navigate any surface.

sound system which is standard on all models. It sounds great on any type of music. The Defender is a handsome vehicle, especially in the matte paint finish. The longer wheelbase accentuates the

Please see **LAND** | 3B



WIKIPEDIA

Classic soul food fare doesn’t have to lose its flavor in order to be healthier.

Healthier classic soul food (without losing the flavor)

Traditional fare is higher in sugar and salt but workarounds abound

By April McQueen
BLACKDOCTOR.ORG

Collard greens so delicious they “make you want to slap your grandma.”

Mac and cheese so rich and incredible that you just know your mama “put her foot in it.”

Auntie’s sweet potatoes topped with marshmallows.

All the salt and pork added to season everything just right, like folks used to do back in the day—before low-sodium, no-fat, and low-sugar were more than just ideas.

Black-eyed peas? Add some fat to them. Pinto beans? Add some fat to those, too. Lima beans? You guessed it: add some fat. And don’t forget the sweet tea to wash it all down. Fried chicken or fried fish, along with baked ham, are usually included in the spread. Buttermilk biscuits made from scratch are smothered in butter and honey, and hush puppies and cornbread are readily available with the expectation that you’ll indulge in all three starches (without

worrying about the carbs) rather than just choosing one.

And it wouldn’t be a meal without a multitude of desserts — sweet potato pie, apple pie, pecan pie, peach cobbler, and pound cake, please. It’s like a litany of treats that will be completely devoured by the end of the gathering. If there are any leftovers, folks will make you a plate to take home.

These are the traditional standards that define a typical meal we share at special gatherings. When we sit down at the table to break bread with family and friends, we expect to enjoy comforting food in good company, without worrying about whether our meals are healthy. The classic dishes we refer to as soul food are rich in traditional flavors, but could all that flavor be too much of a good thing? While soul food can be comforting, if consumed regularly, it might negatively impact your health.

Soul food is often perceived as less healthy than other food options, which are typically considered more expensive. While soul food can be flavorful and comforting, it is generally high in sodium, fat, and sugar, which can lead to negative health outcomes. Contrary to popular belief, soul food is not necessarily cheaper than more nutritious meals. The core ingredients of soul food are budget-friendly and won’t strain your finances.

Importantly, soul food carries cultural significance, stemming from ingredients that were affordable and accessible to enslaved people. By making a few modifications to traditional recipes, it is possible to prepare soul food in a way that is more nutritious and lower in excess sugar, fat, and sodium. In moderation and on special occasions, you can enjoy a healthier version of this beloved cuisine while still savoring its rich heritage.

Let’s examine the ingredients we have, identify what makes traditional soul food unhealthy, and

Please see **HEALTHIER** | 2B

New Black church leaders take the baton

By Hazel Trice Edney
TRICE EDNEY WIRE

It was Nov. 24, 2014, when then Howard University student Kevin Lamár Peterman first felt a sermon rise from his belly.

That was the same day that a grand jury decided not to indict a white Ferguson, Missouri police officer, Darren Wilson, in the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Mike Brown, an unarmed Black teenager walking down the street in his neighborhood. It was a police killing that sparked historic protests across America; including fiery demonstrations in Ferguson that were met with military force.

Having returned from the uprisings in Ferguson, Peterman was leading a community and student protest on the steps of Howard’s Douglass Hall when the announcement came that Wilson would not be indicted.

“I remember giving a



TRICE EDNEY WIRE

Kevin Lamár Peterman is pastor at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.

speech that night that I felt turn into a sermon. And it was really social justice that led me to ministry,” Peterman said in a recent interview. “I felt that the best way to advance the cause of Black people in America was through the church and through education. And so that’s kind of how my ministry began.”

A little more than 10 years later, the stirring that Peterman felt that night has now come full circle. On Nov. 22 at the age of 32, he was installed pastor of the Nineteenth Street Baptist Church, the oldest and

Please see **NEW** | 3B

Healthier soul food (without losing flavor)

Continued from page 1B

explore healthier substitutions for the less nutritious preparations and ingredients. By transforming soul food into more health-conscious options, you and your loved ones will keep coming back for more.

The core: nutritious and cheap

- Leafy greens such as cabbage, collard greens, mustard greens, and turnip greens are rich in fiber, folate, and vitamins A, C, and K.

- Legumes: Black eyed peas that grace the table of many soul food feasts are a great fiber and protein source.

- Root vegetables like sweet potatoes and yams are full of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

- Lean protein meat was more of a way to enhance flavoring in small amounts and not featured as a main dish. Lean poultry and fish can do the same and provide flavor with healthier results.

With such a healthy core to soul food, you may be wondering: what's the problem? The problem isn't in the basics above that make up the core ingredients of soul food, but in the traditional preparation of those core ingredients.

What makes soul food unhealthy

Consider the unhealthy ingredient additions and health-harming cooking methods in soul food's traditional preparations.

- Excessive fat. Claiming the core as healthy does not mean that you can overlook the use of excessive fat in the nutrient-rich ingredient base of soul food. The excessive fat includes lard, butter, and ham hocks as seasoning.

- High sodium. Salty, processed meats like bacon and salt pork, with other high-sodium commercial seasoning blends that are often used in soul food, are a contributing factor in negative outcomes to our health, such as high blood pressure.

- Frying. "If it can be eaten, then it can be fried" could be the soul food motto. Think about how common fried chicken, okra, and fish are in a soul food meal. It might elevate the taste, but it also increases the amount of fat and calories contained in the transformed core, which becomes detrimental to a traditional feast.

- Added sugars. Candied yams, desserts, and other sweets are often referred to as "sugar." When sugar in

any of its many forms is added as an ingredient to any of the soul food treats, from pies to rutabagas, it can do serious damage.

- Refined grains. These can be found in classic favorites such as cornbread and macaroni and cheese. These common soul food staples usually use less nutritious refined grains.

How to make it better for better health

That was the bad news. Now for the hope:

- Swap unhealthy fats by using olive or canola oil. Substitute liquid smoke and smoked paprika to flavor food instead of relying on fatty meats for flavor.

- Reduce sodium by using natural herbs, spices, onion, and garlic instead of added salt or commercial seasoning blends that are high in sodium. If your veggies come from a can, then rinse them right before use.

- Cook using healthier methods like baking, grilling, roasting, or air frying. Try preparing your greens in a slow cooker with vegetable broth and a little oil to replace meat as a flavor distributor.

- Increase plant-based foods by filling half your plate with non-starchy vegetables like collard greens, okra, or cabbage, and including legumes like black eyed peas as the main protein source. Meat does not have to be the star of the suppertime show to make it a meal.

- Use whole grains when you can and substitute whole wheat flour and whole grain cornmeal instead of refined items. Choose brown rice in place of white rice.

- Watch portion sizes and, in general, eat in moderation, avoiding calorie-rich dishes as a daily delight. Save these treats for special occasions.

Save money and improve your nutrition by using these modifications, swaps, substitutions, and adjusted cooking styles. You can return to the healthy core of soul food, and not only will it be good for your soul, but it will also be good for your body.

Try out these tips for intentional cooking and ingredient changes on yourself, then by the holidays, you'll have your family and friends eating healthier without noticing any change in flavor. Your soul food ingredient swaps will be healthy, but also tasty and worthy of any special occasion or feast.

FDA abortion drug review under growing scrutiny

Continued from page 1B

could prevent the anti-abortion white paper from being the main thing the agency considers before modifying its policy.

"This is where the debate, both in the courts and the FDA, is taking place, around how it is considering evidence, making sure it is reviewing valid evidence and not junk evidence, and getting really reasoned explanations based in that evidence, as opposed to politics or ideology," said Diana Kasdan, the legal and policy director for the Center on Reproductive Health, Law, and Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law.

Where reproductive health legal experts say the abortion pill has been over-regulated for a drug with a high safety record, anti-abortion attorneys, like senior counsel Erik Baptist of the Christian-right powerhouse Alliance Defending Freedom, have been arguing that the drug's risks are exacerbated by its increased availability.

The law firm, which was integral to the overturning of Roe v. Wade, is also representing a Louisiana woman in an abortion medication lawsuit against the FDA.

"The FDA's actions have created an even more unsafe environment for women," Baptist said. "We expect the Trump administration to zealously appeal this dangerous decision."

'It's the same data set, essentially'

Putting pressure on FDA's review team are national anti-abortion policy groups like Americans United for Life, one of several groups that criticized the agency for approving a new generic version of mifepristone this fall.

The group is part of a coalition that helped produce and, at the end of April, publicize the white paper on mifepristone's safety, which U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. soon after cited as the basis for ordering a new review of the drug.

The Ethics and Public Policy Center's self-published paper analyzed a commercially available data set of all-payer health insurance claims from 2017 through 2023 and found an 11% rate of severe adverse events — 22 times higher than the less than 0.5% rate that's on the label for mifepristone.

Reproductive health researchers have criticized the paper's broad classification of serious adverse events while noting it also reports low rates of the most serious side effects associated with medication abortion, like sepsis (0.1%), transfusion (0.15%), and hospitalization related to the abortion (0.66%).

Meanwhile more than 100 peer-reviewed studies have found low rates of serious adverse effects, including for abortion medication provided through telehealth.

The paper, which has also been cited by lawmakers like U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, did not go through a scientific peer review, and the Ethics and Public Policy Center would not disclose the exact data set used. Spokesperson Hunter Estes previously told States Newsroom the group was not legally permitted to provide the data set but that the paper's description of it should be enough to replicate the study.

Americans United for Life CEO John Mize said he hopes to see the paper peer-reviewed in the near future. But he said the coalition has for now achieved its goal of convincing the FDA to look at the same insurance claims data set analyzed by the Ethics and Public Policy Center and then do its own analysis.

"What we've been told is the FDA is doing their own internal analysis of the EPPC data," Mize said. "It's to be seen what the FDA does with methodology. That's the important component, because the data is the data. It's the same data set, essentially."

HHS did not respond to questions about its ongoing mifepristone review or the federal judge's recent order to review all of the safety data, instead directing States Newsroom to an Oct. 2 post on X from Kennedy defending both the FDA's review of mifepristone and its approval of a second generic version.

"Recent studies already point to serious risks when mifepristone is used without proper medical oversight," Kennedy posted. "@US_FDA only approved a second generic mifepristone tablet because federal law requires approval when an application proves the generic is identical to the brand-name drug."

But if the FDA's review ultimately draws different scientific conclusions than the anti-abortion movement, Mize said his side won't stop pursuing challenges to the drug.

"If it comes out that it's not nearly as dangerous as what EPPC is reporting, and the data appears to be quality and not skewed by politics, then personally, I might take a different perspective," Mize said. "But I am still fairly confident that a drug that induces abortion at home without clinical oversight is probably something that needs a little bit more scrutiny. ... We might continue to fine tune methodology and look at pursuing other avenues of peer review."

Politicized science

Anti-abortion policy and legal advocates have been lobbying for tighter restrictions on mifepristone since the drug was first approved in 2000, and especially since the FDA started dropping restrictions, such as allowing the regimen to be used until 10 weeks' gestation instead of seven in 2016.

After Roe v. Wade was overturned, the FDA under President Joe Biden's administration permanently dropped the in-person dispensing requirement, allowing people to obtain the abortion pill via telehealth and through the mail.

But the FDA maintained other regulations, as part of the drug's Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy, such as requiring prescribers, pharmacists and patients to sign forms agreeing to meet certain qualifications and acknowledging the drug's common side effects, like heavy bleeding and nausea, and potential severe risks, like infection. Abortion providers have argued that some of the rules are unnecessary and burdensome.

Of the more than 20,000 prescription drug products approved by the FDA, less than 100 have REMS, and many of those are injectables with serious side effects like coma and death. In a quarter century, the FDA has reported 36 deaths associated with, but not necessarily caused by, mifepristone.

U.S. District Judge Jill Otake on Oct. 30 ordered the FDA to review all the relevant safety data on mifepristone, ruling that the agency erred years ago when it failed to justify maintaining strict rules on the drug despite a strong safety record after 25 years on the market. One week later, the U.S. Senate Democratic Caucus sent a letter to Kennedy and FDA Commissioner Martin Makary demanding the ongoing mifepristone review be based on science and evidence.

"That court order reinforces that, in conducting this new review, FDA may not cherry-pick junk science serving an anti-abortion agenda, but must instead look at the full body of evidence both confirming mifepristone's safety and underscoring the harms of the FDA's onerous restrictions," reads the letter obtained by NOTUS. The senators ask HHS to respond by Nov. 28, to questions about the evidence being considered and the methodology.

Anti-abortion research groups also produced new studies for their first legal attempt to reinstate restrictions on mifepristone in a lawsuit filed in 2022. The plaintiffs persuaded a Trump-appointed district court judge to order the FDA to change its policy on the basis of studies funded by the anti-abortion movement that were later retracted by the journal's publisher because of their methodology.

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected the case, not on the merits but because plaintiffs did not have proper standing. The high court is expected to consider similar questions again, as at least seven mifepristone-focused lawsuits work their way through the lower courts.

University of Pittsburgh law professor Greer Donley said that to meet the FDA's policy on approving new drug regulations, the agency will need more than one or two outlier studies as justification.

"To survive arbitrary and capricious review, they have to provide a reasoned decision that's based on the facts, and if the facts taken as a whole suggest that this is a safe and effective drug, even though there's one new paper out there that suggests it's maybe a little less safe than it was before, they're going to have to justify why that one paper outweighs the 50 papers on the other side that were published in peer-reviewed journals," Donley said. "I don't know how they could explain that."

Donley has studied mifepristone regulation closely and said she watched the science around the medication become increasingly politicized, much more than other drugs. While controversial medicine, like gender-affirming care, involve drugs with multiple purposes, mifepristone was approved for the explicit purpose of ending a pregnancy.

The FDA's medication abortion regimen involves another drug, misoprostol, which was approved to treat ulcers, and is used off-label for abortions and miscarriages. It has not faced the same scrutiny as mifepristone.

Abortion providers have said they would likely pivot to a misoprostol-only regimen if mifepristone were to become much harder to access, which it has even for miscarriages in states that have banned abortion entirely, like Kentucky and Louisiana.

Mifepristone manufacturer Danco Laboratories last year confirmed ongoing efforts to add miscarriage management as an approved use to its drug label. Were that to happen, it could be a game changer for access, Greer said.

"It actually would be a pretty huge deal if they added it," she said. "Because all of these attacks against mifepristone for abortion, even if they succeed, then mifepristone would theoretically remain on the market for miscarriage care, and then it could be used off-label for abortion."



STOCK PHOTO

Adults can help lay the foundation for children's social connection.

Help children build connections

By Niyoka McCoy, Ed.D

BLACK PRESS USA

Swinging side by side with a friend on the playground.

Sharing chalk over bright, colorful sidewalk drawings. Hiding behind a tree during a spirited game of hide-and-seek.

These simple moments between children may seem small, but they matter more than we think: They lay the foundation for some of life's most important skills.

Through everyday play, young children begin learning essential social and emotional skills like sharing, resolving conflicts, showing empathy, and managing their emotions. These social skills help shape emotional growth and set kids up for long-term success. Socialization in early childhood isn't just a "nice-to-have"—it's essential for development.

Yet today, many young children who haven't yet started school aren't getting enough consistent, meaningful interaction with peers. Research shows that there's a decline in active free play and peer socialization when compared to previous generations.

There are many reasons for this. Children who are home with a parent during the day may spend most of their time with adults, limiting opportunities for peer play.

Those in daycare or preschool may have restricted free play, and large classrooms can reduce supervision and social coaching. Some children live in rural areas, are homebound due to illness, have full schedules, or rely on screens to fill their playtime.

And for some families, finding other families with young children to connect with isn't easy.

While these challenges can feel significant, opportunities for connection still

exist in every community. Families can take simple steps to help children build friendships, create a sense of belonging, and strengthen social skills. Here are some ideas to get started:

- Storytime sessions at libraries or local bookstores
- Community offerings such as parent-child workshops, art, music, gymnastics, swimming, or sports programs
- Weekly events at children's museums, which may include art projects, music workshops, or science experiments
- Outdoor exploration, where kids can play with peers
- Local parenting groups that organize playdates and group activities

- Volunteer opportunities where children can participate, such as pet adoption events or packing meals at a food bank
- Classes for kids at local businesses, including hardware, grocery, or craft stores

Some of these community activities are free or low-cost and give kids the chance to build friendships and practice social skills. Parents can also model positive social behavior by interacting with other parents and encouraging their children to play with their peers.

These may seem like small moments of connection, but they can have a powerful impact. Every time your child shares a toy, plays make-believe with peers, or races a friend down the slide, they're not just playing—they're learning the skills that build confidence, empathy, and lasting friendships. And it's good for you, too.

Creating intentional opportunities for play also helps you strengthen your own network of parents who can support one another as your children grow together.

Niyoka McCoy Ed.D. is chief learning officer at Stride/K12.

"The Voice of the Black Community"

New Black church leaders take the baton

Continued from page 1B

most historic Black Baptist congregation in Washington, D.C., dating back through enslavement more than 180 years.

Today, as issues of racial justice continue to simmer – and grow – across the nation, the pastoral installation of Peterman and other young men and women in his age group is being viewed as a resurgence of sorts, part of a spiritual uprising of a new generation of civil rights leadership in the Black church.

“What you’re seeing is that there are a number of young Black preachers who are taking over historic Black churches in historic cities, who are doing this work of social justice and also doing the work of social impact while also preaching salvation,” Peterman said. “Every generation of ministers is called to move the thermometer one notch, one pace forward. It’s like a race. The baton has been passed to the next generation to run our leg of the race.”

Among those who have risen to church leadership from coast to coast – during what Peterman describes as the “Black Lives Matter” era is Melech Thomas, who led protests alongside him after the Baltimore police custody death of Freddie Gray. Thomas was installed pastor of Baltimore’s Payne Memorial AME Church earlier this year.

Also, the Rev. Devon Jerome Crawford, pastor of the Third Baptist church in San Francisco, the home church of former Vice President Kamala Harris; the Rev. Art Gordon is pastor of the oldest Black Baptist church in New England, the People’s Baptist church in Boston; the Rev. Malcolm J. Byrd is senior pastor of the Mother African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the oldest Black Church in New York State, founded in 1796; the Rev. Marissa Farrow has been named senior pastor-elect of Baltimore’s Mt. Calvary Church & Ministries; and the Rev. Rodney Carter is pastor of the Greater Mount Calvary Holy Church, the largest Pentecostal congregation in D.C.

“You’re seeing a new generation of pastors coming into the pulpit and taking over historic churches and many of us are trying to do the work that was being done 60 years ago, prior to the civil rights movement,” Peterman said. “It’s not a new vision. It’s a continuum. And hopefully, when we die, life in America will be better than it was when we were born.”

Therefore, during the services surrounding Peterman’s installation, it was made clear that his generation will not carry the mantle alone. As they rise to leadership, they join their mentors, their fathers and mothers in ministry who remain alongside them in the preaching of salvation, the battle for social justice, and the sharing of wisdom and experience.

The three services celebrating Peterman as the new pastor included preachers, known nationally for their leadership. The Rev. Howard-John Wesley, senior pastor of the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va, preached a one-night revival. The installation service was led by Rev. Lawrence E. Aker, III, lead pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York; and the events were culminated during a Sunday service preached by the Rev. Otis Moss III, senior pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, where Peterman served as a pastoral intern.

Aker, the pastor who ordained Peter-

man at Cornerstone, where he served as young adult and social justice minister, preached from the scripture, II Timothy 1:7, “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” The title of the message was “A Divine Assignment.”

Peterman listened intently, having been ceremoniously robed by his mother, Mrs. Donna Holley-Nelms. He recounted that he was raised by a “single parent mother and grandmother in Vauxhall, New Jersey with the church as the center of our life.”

Essentially, Aker elaborated that Peterman has been called to preach in a time that has been described as the “fourth industrial revolution,” which, in part, means the world’s rise to 21st century technology; including AI, (artificial intelligence) and that the multi-generational Black church must not be afraid.

Greater Mount Calvary Pastor Rodney Carter, 34, gave a charge to the congregation that appeared strongly in agreement with Aker.

“There are some who are going to grieve the past. I want to encourage you to follow the vision. Don’t fight the vessel,” Carter said.

Aker’s message likely heartened Peterman, who, in the pre-installation interview, expressed that the Black church must use maximum technology and social media in order to communicate its Gospel and social justice messages.

“We have to communicate our story. We have to communicate the work that we’re doing at Nineteenth Street. We have to embrace technology one hundred percent. We have to communicate what we’re doing and the work that we’re doing in 21st century ways. Social media for us has been on the back burner,” Peterman said. “The reality is that nobody is looking for or most people under the age of 50 are not looking for something to come in the mail to them. Most people now under the age of 70 want to be online, want to be digitized, want it to be on their phone. We have to embrace multiple platforms. I want people to know that I’m on a mission. I’m on a mission for God. And I am on a mission for my people.”

The fact that Nineteenth Street Baptist is located in the heart of the nation’s capital, is crucial to his national leadership in social justice, Peterman said.

“As goes Washington goes the rest of the country. The country is always looking to Washington, DC for leadership in every industry and in every sector. The same for the church,” he said. “I think the churches across the country are going to be asking the question, ‘What are the churches in the nation’s capital doing to advance the efforts of marginalized people, of Black people, of Brown people?’ So that will be an example for churches throughout the rest of the country.”

He concludes, “We particularly have a great opportunity because we eat at the same restaurants where the law-makers eat. We are literally in proximity of and can go to the Supreme Court and demonstrate and make our voices known in ways that a congregation in Kentucky or Los Angeles or in Houston or Chicago cannot easily do. So, for us, our proximity to power comes with great responsibility and a privileged burden. Our proximity to power comes with a responsibility to speak truth to power on behalf of everybody else as loud as we can speak it.”

SC measles outbreak shows chilling effect of misinformation

Continued from page 1B

United States is poised to lose its measles elimination status, a designation indicating that outbreaks are rare and rapidly contained.

South Carolina’s measles outbreak isn’t yet as large as those in other states, such as New Mexico, Arizona, and Kansas. But it shows how a confluence of larger national trends — including historically low vaccination rates, skepticism fueled by the pandemic, misinformation, and “health freedom” ideologies proliferated by conservative politicians — have put some communities at risk for the re-emergence of a preventable, potentially deadly virus.

“Everyone talks about it being the canary in the coal mine because it’s the most contagious infectious disease out there,” said Josh Michaud, associate director for global and public health policy at KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News. “The logic is indisputable that we’re likely to see more outbreaks.”

Schools and ‘Small brush fires’
Spartanburg’s vaccination rate is among the lowest of South Carolina’s 46 counties. And that was true “even before covid,” said Chris Lombardoizzi, a senior vice president with the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System.

Nearly 6,000 children in Spartanburg County schools last year — 10% of the total enrollment — either received an exemption allowing them to forgo required vaccinations or did not meet vaccine requirements, according to data published by the state.

Lombardoizzi said the county’s low vaccination rate is tied to misinformation not only published on social media but also spread by “a variety of nonmedical leaders over the years.”

The pandemic made things worse. Michaud said that fear and misinformation surrounding covid vaccines “threw gasoline on the fire of people’s vaccine skepticism.” In some cases, that skepticism transferred to childhood vaccines, which historically have been less controversial, he said.

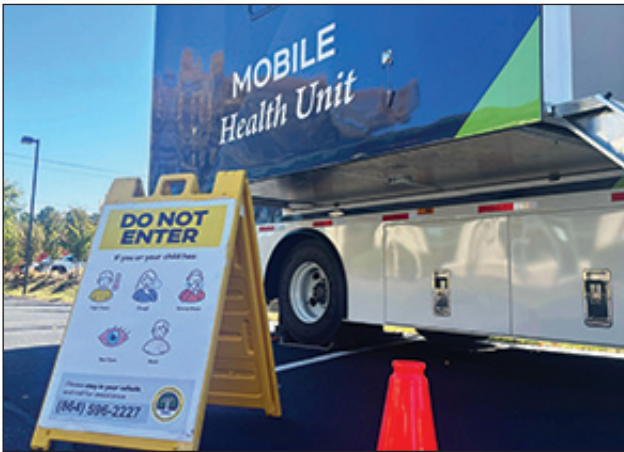
This made communities like Spartanburg County with low vaccination rates more vulnerable. “Which is why we’re seeing constant, small brush fires of measles outbreaks,” Michaud said.

In Spartanburg, the overall percentage of students with required immunizations fell from 95.1% to 90% between the 2020-21 and 2024-25 academic years. Public health officials say a minimum of 95% is required to prevent significant spread of measles.

Children who attend public and private schools in South Carolina are required to show that they’ve received some vaccinations, including the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, but religious exemptions are relatively easy to obtain. The exemption form must be notarized, but it does not require a doctor’s note or any disclosure about the family’s religious beliefs.

The number of students in South Carolina who have been granted religious exemptions has increased dramatically over the past decade. That’s particularly true in the Upstate region, where religious exemptions have increased sixfold from a decade ago. During the 2013-14 school year, 2,044 students in the Upstate were granted a religious exemption to the vaccine requirements, according to data published by The Post and Courier.

By fall 2024, that number had jumped to more than 13,000. Some schools are more exposed than others. The beginning of the South Carolina



LAUREN SAUSSER | KFF HEALTH NEWS

In early November, the South Carolina Department of Public Health opened a pop-up mobile vaccine clinic in a library parking lot in Boiling Springs. Dozens of people in South Carolina’s Upstate region have been diagnosed with measles this fall.

olina outbreak was largely linked to one public charter school, Global Academy of South Carolina, where only 17% of the 605 students enrolled during the 2024-25 school year provided documentation showing they had received their required vaccinations, according to data published by the Department of Public Health.

No one from Global Academy responded to interview requests.

‘Health freedom’

In April, after visiting a Texas family whose daughter had died from measles, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wrote on social media that the “most effective way to prevent the spread of measles is the MMR vaccine.” He made a similar statement during an interview on “Dr. Phil” later that month.

But these endorsements stand at odds with other statements Kennedy has made that cast doubt on vaccine safety and have falsely linked vaccines with autism. The CDC, under his authority, now claims such links “have been ignored by health authorities.”

“What would I do if I could go back in time and I could avoid giving my children the vaccines that I gave them?” he said on a podcast in 2020. “I would do anything for that. I would pay anything to be able to do that.”

Throughout 2025, he has made other misleading or unsupported statements. During a congressional hearing in September, Kennedy defended his past claims that he was not anti-vaccine but affirmed his stated position that no vaccines are safe or effective.

Emily Hilliard, a spokesperson for the Department of Health and Human Services, told KFF Health News that Kennedy is “pro-safety, pro-transparency, and pro-accountability.” Hilliard said HHS is working with “state and local partners in South Carolina” and in other states to provide support during the measles outbreaks.

Meanwhile, Kennedy has frequently championed the idea of health freedom, or freedom of choice, regarding vaccines, a talking point that has taken root among Republicans.

That has had a “chilling effect all the way down through state and local lawmakers,” Michaud said, making some leaders hesitant to talk about the threat that the ongoing measles outbreaks poses or the effectiveness and safety of the MMR vaccine.

Brandon Charochak, a spokesperson for South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, said the governor was not available to be interviewed for this article but referenced McMaster’s comment from October that measles “is a dangerous disease, but in terms of diseases, it’s not one that we should panic about.”

On a separate occasion that month, the Republican governor said he does not support vaccine mandates. “We’re not going to have mandates,” he said, “and I think we are responding properly.”

Even though the South Carolina Department of Public Health has repeatedly encouraged measles vaccines, the push

has been notably quieter than the agency’s covid vaccine outreach efforts.

In 2021, for example, the agency partnered with breweries throughout the state for a campaign called “Shot and a Chaser,” which rewarded people who got a covid vaccine with a free beer or soda. By contrast, the pop-up measles vaccine clinic at the Boiling Springs Library featured no flashy signage, no freebies, and wasn’t visible from the library’s main entrance.

Edward Simmer, interim director of the Department of Public Health, would not speak to KFF Health News about the measles outbreak. During a legislative hearing in April, Republican state lawmakers voted against his permanent confirmation because of his past support for covid vaccines and masking. One lawmaker specifically criticized the agency during that hearing for the Shot and a Chaser campaign.

Public health officials in other states also have been blocked from new roles because of their covid response. In Missouri, where MMR vaccine rates have declined among kindergartners since 2020 and measles cases have been reported this year, Republican lawmakers rejected a public health director in 2022 after vaccine opponents protested his appointment.

In South Carolina, Simmer, lacking lawmakers’ confirmation, leads the public health agency in an interim capacity.

South Carolina Sen. Tom Davis of Beaufort was the only Republican on the Senate Medical Affairs Committee who voted to confirm Simmer in April. He told KFF Health News that his Republican colleagues raised valid questions about Simmer’s past support for covid vaccines.

But, Davis said, it would be “tremendously unfortunate and not beneficial from a public health perspective” if the Republican Party just took a stance against vaccines “as a matter of policy.”

The Department of Public Health had administered 44 doses of the MMR vaccine through its mobile health unit from October to mid-November. The last mobile vaccine clinic was scheduled for Nov. 24. But health officials are encouraged that patients are seeking vaccines elsewhere. The agency’s tracking system shows that providers across Spartanburg County administered more than twice as many measles vaccines in October as they did a year ago.

As of mid-November, more than 130 people remained in quarantine, most of them students at local elementary and middle schools. Cases have also been linked to a church and Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport.

“We’re reminding people that travel for the upcoming holidays increases the risk of exposures greatly,” said Bell, the state epidemiologist. “Due to that risk, we’re encouraging people to consider getting vaccinated now.”

KFF Health News correspondent Amy Maxmen contributed to this report.

Land Rover Defender 130 delivers on sports utility legacy of power, luxury

Continued from page 1B

ates the vehicle’s rugged stance but elegant style. The interior is spacious and luxuriously finished in leather, mowl and wood. I love the touch screen and it’s sharp and modern graphics. The screen is intuitive as well.

The front seats are comfortable, and the driver gets a commanding view of the road. Power adjustments allow you to find the prefect driving position. The second-row captain’s chairs are nice and there is plenty of leg and head room. The third row is adequate but a little hard to get in and out.

The Land Rover Defender 130 comes with a lot of standard equipment which includes roof rails, Meridian sound system, panoramic glass roof, keyless entry and ignition, adaptive cruise control, 11.4-inch infotainment system, power adjustable heated steering wheel, tri-zone climate control, 40/20/40 split rear seats and Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

The V8 package includes the 5.0-liter V8, 22-inch wheels, tow-hitch receiver, leather seating, cabin air purifier, leather-wrapped steering wheel, heated third row seats, heated windshield, refrigerated front console bin, massive head-up display and automated steering system web reversing with a trailer.

There may have been a few options thrown in but I’m not sure. I do know the 130 V8 starts at \$123,900. Destination charges total an additional \$1,850. That’s a lot of cash, but this is a lot of vehicle.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025 PAGE 5B



DANCE/USA

Tamara Williams of Charlotte is one of 25 creatives to earn a national fellowship from Dance/USA.

Charlottean earns dance fellowship

By Herbert L. White
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

A Charlotte dancer has earned a national fellowship.

Tamara Williams is one of 25 fellows in Dance/USA's Fellowships to Artists program, the national service organization's initiative to support dance and movement-based artists from across the U.S. and its territories.

Williams, a choreographer and founder of Moving Spirits Inc., has presented choreography internationally in Africa, Europe, South America and the Caribbean. She's been published in several dance journals and her book "Giving Life to Movement" was published by McFarland & Co. in 2021; and her manuscript, The African Diaspora and Civic Responsibility, was published this year.

Williams, who earned the 2025 Gantt Center's Black Artist residency, was commissioned by Kaatsbaan International Dance Center to create a new work for "Moving Spirits" and received multiple grants from the Arts & Science Council, including support for free African diaspora dance workshops in Charlotte and the annual African-Brazilian Lavagem Festival. She was awarded the 2019-20 UNC Charlotte Board of Governors Teaching Award, a 2020 commission from the National Center for Choreography, and 2021 ASC Emerging Creative Fellowship. In 2022, Williams received the North Carolina Dance Festival's Jan Van Dyke Legacy Award.

In 2024, Williams launched the first bi-annual International African Diaspora Dance Traditions Conference in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, which included scholars and artists from around the world. She co-created the Benin Movement Research and Exchange in Cotonou and Ouidah, Benin, in 2023, which focused on African diaspora dance and music with Beninese traditions.

AI country hit sparks issues of attribution, race and ethics

By Jonathan Landrum
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — When an AI-generated country song called "Walk My Walk" hit No. 1 on Billboard's country digital song sales chart last month, it was credited to a fictional artist named Breaking Rust — a white, digitally generated avatar that didn't exist two months ago.

But the song's vocal phrasing, melodic shape and stylistic DNA came from someone who does exist: Grammy-nominated country artist Blanco Brown, a Black music artist who has worked with Britney Spears, Childish Gambino and Rihanna.

And he had no idea. "I didn't even know about the song until people hit me up about it," said Brown, whose 2019 country rap hit "The Git Up" helped usher in a new, hybrid era of country crossover. He didn't learn about the chart-topping AI track until his phone was flooded with messages from friends.

"My phone just kept blowing up," he said. "Somebody said: 'Man, somebody done typed your name in the AI and made a white version of you. They just used the Blanco, not the Brown.'"

The moment is the latest example of how generative AI is upending the music industry, giving anyone the ability to instantly create seemingly new

Please see A1 | 6B

« ON THE MARQUEE »



SACRAMENTO OBSERVER

The Philharmonik with Bobby Carter fuses orchestration with hip hop Jan. 17 at Booth Playhouse.

Philharmonik headlines Booth Playhouse show

Black Notes Project Music Weekend kicks off 2026 with hip hop fusion

By Herbert L. White
herb.l.white@thecharlottepost.com

Dec. 5
Gaston County Museum of Art & History kicks off the holiday season with the annual open house and carriage rides from 6-9 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Carriage rides, which start from the parking lot of the Museum's Daniel Stowe Carriage House on West Church Street, are free. The event coincides with Carols on the Square, presented by the Town of Dallas, which begins at 6:30 p.m. on the Historic Court Square in Dallas.

The museum is free and open to the public Tuesday-Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Western Piedmont Symphony presents "Foothills Pops: The Magic of Christmas" at 7:30 p.m. at the J.E. Broyhill Civic Center in Lenoir. The holiday spectacular celebrates the season with an evening of music, and tradition.

The program includes classics from "A Charlie Brown Christmas," "Frozen," "Sleigh Ride," and Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Tickets are \$33-\$58 for adults. Student tickets are \$10 with a valid ID. Students can buy \$10 tickets in section B when accompanied by an adult who also buys a ticket in the same section. For tickets, go to wpsymphony.org, call (828) 324-8603, or Western Piedmont Symphony Box Office on the SALT Block at 243 Third Avenue NE in Hickory.

Dec. 5-21
Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux's "Nutcracker" performed by Charlotte Ballet at Belk Theater. Weeknight performances are 7:30 p.m., weekend shows at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets available at charlotteballet.org or call (704) 372-1000.

Dec. 6
"Backstage With Louis Armstrong," an off-Broadway musical drama, is 7-9 p.m. at The Arts Factory, 1545 W. Trade St. Admission is \$20 and

available at Eventbrite. Danny W. Mullen Sr. portrays the legendary jazz trumpeter.

The Sol Kitchen, Black Notes Project and Carolina Theatre collaborate on "Franklin Presents: My Christmas" with the Renaissance Orchestra, 8 p.m. at Carolina Theatre.

The performance celebrates the 60th anniversary of Vince Guaraldi's iconic jazz album "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Renaissance Orchestra of Atlanta, Charlotte Youth Symphony Orchestra, Opera Carolina Youth Choir, The Sol Kitchen, and Black Notes Project reimagine the album through the lens of Franklin, the first Black Peanuts character.

Tickets start at \$76 and a portion of proceeds benefit Charlotte Symphony Orchestra and Opera Carolina youth programs. For details: thecarolina.com/events.

Dec. 7
Historic Rosedale hosts its annual candlelight tour featuring a garden stroll and guided house tour from 5-7 p.m.

Check out the site by candlelight, where items like clothing, dinnerware, and furniture were designed to enhance the darkness that night

brought without the benefit of electric lighting. The guided tour also features a holiday performance of strolling characters courtesy of Queen City Groove and light holiday treats including coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and sweets at the pavilion.

Gates open at 5 p.m. and the house tour begins at 6 p.m. Organizers request no cell phone lights be used inside the house; individual electric tapers for additional lighting will be provided.

New this year is Santa at work in the reconstructed blacksmith shop. Photos with Santa are available for \$10 each, and can be taken with your own phone, or you can choose a printed souvenir photo.

Dec. 12-21
Matthews Playhouse of the Performing Arts' production of "Scrooge! The Musical" is back for its fourth year.

The musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" is story of redemption, compassion, and the holiday spirit. Shows take place at Matthews Playhouse, 100 McDowell St. Tickets are available at

Please see THE PHILHARMONIK | 6B



WESTERN PIEDMONT SYMPHONY

Western Piedmont Symphony presents "Foothill Pops: The Magic of Christmas," Dec. 5 at J.E. Broyhill Civic Center in Lenoir.

Trump push nets 'Rush Hour 4' distribution deal

By Jake Coyle
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — After President Donald Trump's reported intervention, Paramount Pictures is set to distribute Brett Ratner's "Rush Hour 4," a project that Hollywood had eschewed after earlier sexual misconduct allegations against the director.

Paramount Pictures on Tuesday was in closing talks to distribute the film, according to a person close to the negotiations who requested anonymity because they weren't authorized to announce a deal. Paramount would be stepping in to take a distribution fee on the film, not finance it.

In 2017, during the #MeToo movement, six women said Ratner sexually harassed them in a Los Angeles Times report. Warner Bros., which had a \$450-million co-financing deal with his production company, severed ties with Ratner. Ratner, who denied the allegations, hasn't produced a film this decade.

But on Sunday, Semafor reported that Trump personally requested Paramount take on "Rush Hour 4." Paramount recently merged with Skydance in a \$8 billion deal that required regulatory approval from the Trump administration. Trump has praised the



PARAMOUNT

Chris Tucker and Jackie Chan will reteam in "Rush Hour 4," a project that had been shelved after director Brett Ratner was embroiled in sexual misconduct allegations.

studio's new chairperson and chief executive David Ellison, the son of Oracle executive chairperson and prominent Trump supporter, Larry Ellison.

The White House didn't immediately comment Wednesday.

Ratner had been shopping "Rush Hour 4" after Warner Bros., which released the three previous films in the franchise, passed on the project. The

movie would reteam Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker in the action-comedy series launched in 1998, with sequels in 2001 and 2007.

Ratner has managed to get one other film made: a documentary on first lady Melania Trump. Earlier this year, Amazon MGM Studios acquired the film for a reported \$40 million. It's set to open in theaters Jan. 30.



BLANCO BROWN

The artificial intelligence-generated hit “Walk My Walk” used vocal phrasing by Blanco Brown, a Black country music artist, and credited it to Breaking Rust, a white digitally-generated avatar.

AI music sparks issues of attribution and ethics

Continued from page 5B

songs by typing prompts into a chat window, often using models trained on real artists’ voices and styles without their knowledge.

Who is behind the AI-generated country song?

The credits for the grit-filled, chant-heavy track “Walk My Walk” list Aubierre Rivaldo Taylor as one of the song’s creators, with streaming platforms such as Apple Music and Spotify identifying him as both the songwriter and producer. In recent months, Taylor has also been credited on streaming platforms as the songwriter and producer behind Defbeatsai — one of several X-rated, AI-generated country artists that exploded across social media last year.

The Defbeatsai ecosystem, however, connects back to another figure in Brown’s past: Abraham Abushmais, a collaborator Brown once jokingly called “Abe Einstein” for his sharp studio instincts. Abushmais co-wrote a couple of songs on Brown’s 2019 album “Honeysuckle & Lightning Bugs” and is listed as the developer of Echo, an obscure AI-powered music generator app promoted on one of Defbeatsai’s Instagram pages with a link encouraging users to “make your own hit country song.”

Brown said he wasn’t notified about their involvement in the AI hit, and the collaborator he once mentored has since become unreachable.

“Abe’s number changed,” Brown said. “We used to talk. I ain’t heard from him in a year or two.”

The AP reached out to Abushmais for comment but did not receive a response.

The digital avatar fronting “Walk My Walk,” a white, AI-generated country singer built with a vocal approach modeled on Brown’s sound, is where the moment shifted from eerie to uncomfortable.

“It’s a white AI man with a Black voice,” Brown said. “And he’s singing like a Negro spiritual.”

For Brown, the shock quickly gave way to action. He went into the studio and recorded his cover of the song, which was released last week. He’s also putting out a reworked derivative of the track on Monday with new lyrics and a new arrangement.

Brown’s management said his response to the song is a direct challenge to the legal, ethical and policy void surrounding AI-generated music. He wants to use his own lived experience to force the industry and lawmakers to confront who owns art and what happens when technology outpaces the rights of the human creators it imitates.

“If someone is going to sing like me, it should be me,” he said.

A new kind of hit rewrites rules faster than the industry can respond

For musicians and educators, the success of “Walk My Walk” made one thing clear: AI-generated music has leapt from internet experiment to commercial disruptor.

“We are entering a very strange and unprecedented period of both creation and industry,” said Josh Antonuccio, director of the Ohio University Music Industry Summit. “AI has essentially democratized the act of music creation itself.”

That democratization has come with no guardrails. Major record labels sued Suno and Udio — two most popular AI song generators — accusing them of training their models on copyrighted recordings without permission.

“These companies trained their platforms on a volume of recorded music

without permission,” Antonuccio said. “It leaves creators in this strange purgatory where they’re not getting compensated.”

Some labels have now shifted from lawsuits to negotiation. Universal Music Group recently settled a copyright infringement lawsuit with Udio and signed a new licensing agreement with the platform. Warner Music Group followed with its own deal on Tuesday, partnering with Suno in what the companies called a “first-of-its-kind” agreement to develop licensed AI music that both compensates and protects artists.

“There’s no accountability mechanism at the moment,” he said.

The sudden success of “Walk My Walk” also raises questions about the tools enabling it. Educators say most chart-ready AI vocals today are generated through systems like Suno and Udio, which let users create full songs by prompting musical genres, vocal styles and lyrical ideas.

A white AI avatar singing in Black artist’s voice raises deeper questions

For Brown, this situation is a legal and cultural issue.

He spent years navigating country music as a Black artist who blends gospel, hip-hop, pop and twang. He’s been nominated for a Grammy and embraced by the Recording Academy, but country radio hasn’t given him consistent traction.

Meanwhile, an AI song built on his vocal identity and paired with a white avatar went straight to No. 1, a dynamic he says reflects a familiar pattern in Nashville: innovation from Black artists being reattributed.

“He created something with my tone and gave it a white face,” Brown said. “(Race) is an understatement in Nashville.”

Music educators say the issue goes beyond authorship. While AI tools can convincingly approximate sound, they aren’t able to capture the source of it.

“There are things a real artist conveys that the digital part never will,” said Shelton “Shelly” Berg, dean of the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music and a Grammy-nominated pianist. He spoke shortly after appearing on a Future of Music panel at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles last week. “They occupy fundamentally different spaces.”

Berg said AI tracks can sometimes be polished in an eerie manner, but the intangible elements of performance remain out of reach.

“There’s an energy between an artist and an audience that happens in real time that you can’t see but you can feel,” he said. “We are so many light years away from that happening in an AI environment.”

AI is revealing but not threatening

Brown insists he’s not anti-AI. He’s not even angry with Abushmais. He’s proud that his sound inspired someone, but he understands what the moment exposes.

For him, the arrival of an AI artist built on his tone only underscored something he has learned repeatedly in Nashville: talent is one thing, but how the industry assigns value is often something else.

“I go through this every day with real people who steal and borrow from what I do,” Brown said. “So I don’t care if it’s a robot or a human. They’re not giving me credit anyway.”

In a fast-changing landscape, Brown said artists will have one final advantage that machines can’t mimic.

“Real artists are always going to prevail,” he said. “Purpose lives where greed can’t.”

The Philharmonik with Bobby Carter at Booth

Continued from page 5B

matthewsplayhouse.com or by calling (704) 846-8343.

In addition to the eight regular performances, “Scrooge! The Musical” includes a “Pay What You Can” performance on Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the Women’s Health and Resilience Foundation, which advocates for women’s health from the inside through knowledge, inspiration, and support.

• Middle C Jazz

The club is hosting a series of music celebrations from smooth jazz artists to R&B favorites throughout the month. Tickets for all December performances, including the exclusive New Year’s Eve event, are available.

A major highlight is the two-night run with the smooth jazz artists Peter White, Mindi Abair, and Vincent Ingala Dec. 12-13. It also includes an optional VIP pre-show wine and jazz tasting with Mindi Abair.

Among the highlights:

(Dec. 4) “Happy Holidays – A Soulful Christmas” with Jay D Jones (R&B and holiday soul)

(Dec. 11) Ray Singleton Holiday Party Night (R&B favorites and holiday classics)

(Dec. 12-13) Peter White Christmas with Mindi Abair & Vincent Ingala

VIP Pre-show Wine & Jazz Tasting with

Mindi Abair

(Dec. 14) Adrian Crutchfield: “For You at Christmas ... with Love & Jazz!”

(Dec. 17-18) “A Charlie Brown Christmas” featuring Lovell Bradford and Tyra Scott, family-friendly celebration of the Vince Guaraldi Trio

(Dec. 19) Joey Santo sings Christmas Classics of Sinatra, Crosby, & Martin perform vintage holiday standards

(Dec. 21) Jingle Jazz Tour featuring B.K. Jackson, Erin Stephenson and Gino Rosaria

(Dec. 31) New Year’s Eve celebration with the Voltage Brothers

For tickets, showtimes, and schedule, go to www.middlecjazz.com.

Jan. 17

The Philharmonik with Bobby Carter at Booth Playhouse, 8 p.m.

Black Notes Project Music Weekend kicks off with the ensemble, which fuses classical orchestration with hip-hop’s energy and contemporary groove. Christian Gates, known professionally as The Philharmonik, is an American vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, lyricist, music producer and genre defining artist. Special guest Bobby Carter, producer of NPR’s Tiny Desk concerts, opens with a live DJ set.

Tickets: blumenthalarts.org/events/detail/the-philharmonik.

OUT & ABOUT

PHOTOS BY DANIEL COSTON | FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST



Spoken word artist Bluz debuted a new single, “Sail” at the Visulite Theatre on Nov.14. The new single is a collaboration which the Charlotte band Falllift.



Violinist Karen Briggs returned to the Bechtler Museum for two shows on Nov. 7.



WJZY news anchor Alicia Barnes MC’ed the Magic Of Love gala, benefiting Dahlia Grove, held at Myers Park Country Club on Nov. 22.

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