



“I came [to Chicago] to search for my own voice.”

—YOKO NOGE

<8 SWEET HOME, CHICAGO

Singer Yoko Noge left Japan with nothing but a love of the blues. She landed in the right place.

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE Sometimes it seems that the best judges of young talent are those who have logged years on the lookout. This week, with our cover story, “Sweet home, Chicago,” we have a guy with a great eye as our guide. Rick Kogan has covered the cultural scene for years, and this story is the reflection of a career spent in pursuit of hidden gems.

Rick first heard singer Yoko Noge and her band more than a decade ago at the HotHouse and was impressed by the vitality and original quality of their music. He subsequently kept track of them through music critic Howard Reich and, as anyone familiar with Howard knows, his enthusiasms are infectious and irresistible, leading Rick back to Noge.

Chicago is hospitable to musicians and acts as an incubator for fresh voices that defy slick commercialism. Rick reflects: “What Yoko—whose personal story is one of triumph—and her band represent is an exciting, ongoing and important musical journey, and a reminder of the vast pool of talent that performs here, much of it under the radar.”

—Elizabeth Taylor
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On the cover: Tribune photo by Chris Walker of Yoko Noge and her band at Andy’s Jazz Club.

On this page: Tribune photo by Chris Walker of Yoko Noge and her husband, Clark Dean.

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