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GRAB MAGAZINE

CHICAGO'S MONTHLY
LGBTQ+ PUBLICATION

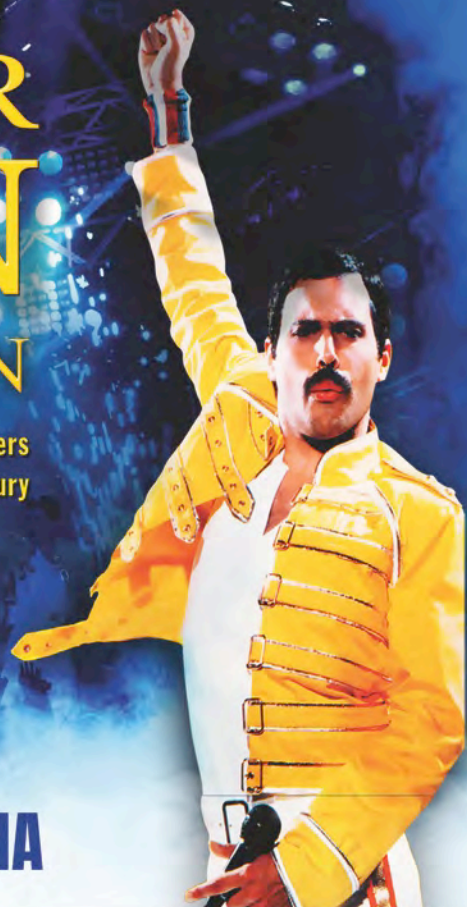


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 1961 - 2019

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GRAB A BEAR



The Host with the Most Hunter Harden Hosts Hunter's Hot Nights on Bear World TV

By Shane Gallagher

Move over *Queer Eye* - there's a new fab five coming to town and they're furry! Bear World TV launched August 7! The channel will feature five bear hosts - Marquis The Honey Bear, Joe Martone, Alexander Rodriguez, Ravi Roth, and Hunter Harden - each presenting weekly two-minute segments that spotlight diverse and entertaining facets of bear life, including nightlife, travel, pop culture, humor, and community events. Bear World TV is the place to go for weekly doses of news, entertainment, and culture created specifically for and by the bear community.

The channel spotlights five dynamic hosts—Marquis The Honey Bear, Joe Martone, Alexander Rodriguez, Ravi Roth, and Hunter Harden—each presenting weekly two-minute segments that explore the many diverse, fun, and entertaining aspects of bear life, including nightlife, travel, pop culture, humor, and community events. Each segment brings its own unique perspective; delivering a rich mix of flair, humor, and

authenticity, from globe-trotting travel adventures to curated party picks and playful nods to niche bear culture.

Hunter Harden, international gogobear and nightlife expert, brings the party to the screen in his nightlife-focused segment, *Hunter's Hot Nights*, sponsored by Gun Oil Personal Lubricant. "It's all about vibe," Harden explains. "A party with hugs, a great DJ, body positivity, and a little glitter? That's what I call a hot night."

He tells us more...

Shane Gallagher: Is Bear World TV only for bears?

Hunter Harden: Bear World TV is bear focused but it's for everyone in the LGBTQ community. We quick dive on multiple aspects of queer and bear culture.

SG: Quick is the operative word!

HH: Everything today has to be two sentences or less in order to get people interested online. Getting quick news is daily life so why shouldn't our "Bear" news be the same?

SG: How would you describe the overall vibe of the channel?

HH: Fun, supportive, and personal.

SG: The channel is launching during Bear World Magazine's 13th anniversary. How does it feel to be part of this next evolution in bear media?

HH: This is very exciting for me. I've been modeling and doing Instagram posts for so long. Of course, they're just pictures. Making short videos will allow me to show more of my personality and my own experiences touring the world attending Bear events and parties.

SG: Did you know your co-hosts before Bear World TV?

HH: I've known some from being at parties. Joe and I have hung out. I was on Alexander's podcast a few years ago. Marquis and I were at a group photoshoot the day before we started shooting for Bear World TV. We are all very supportive of each other and now we share this channel, our new baby cub, and we all want it to grow!



Alexander Rodriguez Photo by Nathan Noyes



Hunter Harden Photo by Nathan Noyes



Joe Martone Photo by Nathan Noyes





Marquis the Honey Bear Photo by Nathan Noyes



Ravi Roth- Photo by Nathan Noyes

SG: Of all of the hosts, who is the biggest bear diva?

HH: Yikes, that's a hard one. After our group photoshoot, I'd have to say: all of us! We all needed attention and we all got it in our own bratty way.

SG: Besides your own, which segment do you most love on Bear World TV?

HH: I love them all, but Ravi's videos in particular, because I love his humor and style.

SG: His segment takes viewers around the world. Where is your favorite place to vacation?

HH: I was recently in Sitges, Spain. The bear community is amazing there and the town is too beautiful for words. It's like a bear oasis.

SG: Is Marquis the Honey Bear as funny in-person?

HH: He is! Humor is so important. It helps to loosen our shoulders and knock down the walls that we all tend to build up in our lives. It does a lot of good to laugh at ourselves

and not be so serious!

SG: Joe Martone's "What to Know with Joe" highlights the movers, shakers, and unsung legends of the bear world. Who is someone you think he should feature?

HH: I would like him to interview Domita DeBaun Sanchez. She is a bear chasing drag performer!

SG: As the party boy on Bear World TV, what's on your radar?

HH: The weekend event, Texas Bear Round Up (TBRU), is always an option for those looking for an easy and safe weekend. As for a one-night party, I'm paying attention to OUTLAW by Dusti Cunningham in Los Angeles. It's a great crowd with fun country music and the hottest cowboys!

SG: What's the trend in nightlife?

HH: I am noticing a lot more genres of music being played at clubs that are not your typical circuit or top 50

playlist songs. I think it's great because it's bringing out different

groups of people in our community and creating fun new atmospheres.

SG: Any chance we'll see a group episode with all of the Bear World TV hosts together in one episode?

HH: I'd love that! Possibly at a large party weekend where we can all deep dive into different elements of the event.

SG: What do you hope viewers take away from Bear World TV?

HH: I hope that they see that the bear community accepts all shapes and colors with big bear hugs. And while we're bear focused, I think the channel will provide insight for all people in our LGBTQ+ community and allow them to share in our experiences.

Tune in to Bear World TV at bearworldmag.com and follow @bearworldmag on all platforms.



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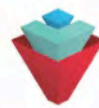
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GRAB JENN

The return of Girl in a Coma: An interview with Jenn Alva

By Gregg Shapiro

With only four albums to its name, the San Antonio-based, all-female, two-thirds queer, Girl in a Coma still managed to make an enduring impression on listeners. Signed to Joan Jett's Blackheart Records label in the mid-2000s, the threesome – out members Jenn Alva and Phanie Diaz, and Phanie's straight sister Nina – rocked original songs and cover tunes, performing live at SXSW and on Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Tour, among others. But by 2018, it was all over. The band broke up. Nina released a solo album, and Jenn and Phanie formed the band Fea. But guess what? Girl in a Coma is back, on tour and in the studio. Jenn was gracious enough to make time for an interview to discuss the band during the summer of 2025. [Girl in a Coma performs at Riot Fest 2025 in Douglass Park on 9/19.]

Gregg Shapiro: Since this interview is taking place following a hiatus of a few years for Girl in a Coma, I'd like to begin with some history of the band for the readers, beginning with the origin of the band's name?

Jenn Alva: We chose Girl in a Coma, because we were huge Smiths fans, after the song, "Girlfriend in a Coma." Originally, we wanted to be called Ordinary Girls. I kind of wish we chose that now. At the time, it sounded boring, but now it kind of sounds fitting, especially through everything we've experienced in our career. It probably would have been a



really good name, too. Girl in a Coma was on a hiatus for a few years. We didn't think we were gonna get back together. Then Nina had brought up the idea of maybe we should do some final shows since we never did that. We did a few shows in Texas, and they went so well. Everything seemed like maybe we should get back together for one more album.

GS: Is Girl in a Coma the first band of which you were a member, or were you in bands before that?

JA: Girl in a Coma was my first band. Phanie, the drummer, and I were best friends. We met at age 12. We've been in smaller groups, but not like any group that played more than five shows. Yeah, Girl in a Coma was the first band, and of course, later Phanie and I started Fea.

GS: You mentioned being a fan of The Smiths. Who are some of your other personal music influences?

JA: When we first started, it was definitely Jeff Buckley. A lot of the British indie wave that came through.

Travis, Coldplay. We really gravitated to The Verve. Prior to that, I would say, Phanie and I went to a Babes in Toyland concert, and it just changed our lives. That's why we wanted to start a band in the first place. When Nina became the singer, we were like, "Well, it's not the band we thought we were gonna make." She sings so melodically, she writes stories, and it just became this kind of alternative indie group. Phanie and I got to do our tribute to the Riot Grrrl movement. We like all kinds of music, including oldies. Of course, we're here in San Antonio, so there's Tejano music. It's just a big melting pot of a lot of music, and from our parents. We love it all, honestly.

GS: How long have you been playing bass, and do you play any other instruments?

JA: Let's see, I'm 45 now, and I've been playing since I was 20. A little bit before, but before I was kind of lying. Saying, "Oh, I know how to play bass, I really like it." That's true punk rock spirit, right?



Lori F. Cannon

May 22, 1951 - August 3, 2025

*"May her memory be a blessing."
(Zichronah Livracha).*

GS: That's true punk rock spirit, right?

JA: Yeah! If anything, Phanie showed me root notes. She'd play guitar and I'd follow along. It wasn't until *Girl in a Coma* that, being a three-piece, you have to open your mind to make it sound fuller, as much as you can. I play a little guitar; I dabble in everything. I've kind of got this ADHD mind where I pick up something, and bass is my love. I could never stop playing bass. But I pick up all sorts of instruments, I learn a little bit and walk away [laughs].

GS: Both 2009's "Trio B.C." and 2010's "Adventures in Coverland" featured songs sung in Spanish, and you also mentioned Tejano music being an influence. Please say a few words about the role of Latin culture on the band.

JA: Absolutely! I mean, we're here in South Texas, of course Selena was a huge part of growing up. There were similar parallels with Selena and Nina. Nina, desperately wanting to learn Spanish, and kind of going through the same thing. Nina started so young. We were touring. She dropped out of school. She got her GED. Music was number one (for her). Selena was all around. She was our pride here in San Antonio, and of course, Corpus and South Texas. We've always wanted to pay tribute. We all know a little; we don't speak Spanish as fluently as we'd like to because growing up, your grandmother, your parents, spoke Spanish, but they weren't teaching it to you because they felt like it could hold you back. We know that's ridiculous. It's been a downfall because obviously knowing another language is just a level up of intelligence, which would have been great. But, yeah, we always want to pay tribute. Songs in Spanish are just beautiful. We wanted to add Spanish songs, as well.

GS: Speaking of influence, as a queer-identified band, with you



and Phanie being out members, how do you see *Girl in a Coma's* place in the realm of LGBTQ music?

JA: We've always tried to be a part of everything we could be, like festivals. If anything, besides learning about ourselves and our community, our community has always helped us. Our fan base has grown so much in South Texas. On our very first tour, we ran out of money in San Francisco. We were hitting up all those bars with a CD player, back in the day, like "Here, listen to this. Can you buy this demo? We need to raise money to get back to San Antonio." Those were queer bars. They were helping us. They wanted to support an all-woman group. It's great to be visible. Onstage, I try to talk a little bit more about the work we've done within the community. Right now, they're hitting trans people, and I feel like we need to stand up even more. So, when I'm on stage, I'll try to catch the vibe of the crowd. Usually, it's very good. Obviously, they're there for us, and I'll mention

to take care of your LGBTQ+ and trans people. Be visible with them. Just a short sentence on stage does so much. When I was growing up, I saw (the band) The Toadies play, and Lisa, the bass player, was a lesbian, and she looked like me. It's important to be present, because you don't know, you may change someone's life just by playing music.

GS: Representation matters, and it matters more every day now in this current political climate.

Finally, is there new *Girl in a Coma* music forthcoming?

JA: We do have a few songs that are already done. Before the hiatus, we were playing them a little bit. We've brought them back, and we've done slight rearrangements. We've got about three songs totally ready for the new album. We're going to start working on it some more. Everything is just very delicate. We haven't been back together in so long. I don't want to say, "We've got five albums in us," when life is just life. There will definitely be a new album, I can say that.



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GRAB A PLANE



I'm Just a Broadway Baby... and I Need a Fix!

By Rick Karlin

There are meetings for AA, NA, GA, and even OA. There should be one for BA. Not to minimize the struggles of those who struggle with addiction, but I have one, too. I am addicted to Broadway. I can listen to the Sirius Broadway channel, go to showtune Friday, Sunday, and Monday at Sidetrack, even see the shows at Broadway in Chicago, as well as local productions, but they just put off the inevitable fix I need; a trip to NYC for the original. If I had more discretionary income, I'd go up at least twice a year; as it is, I get an occasional week now and then.

A perfect Broadway getaway involves strategic planning and immersive experiences. Start by securing your theater tickets early, especially for popular shows. Consider staying in the Theatre District or nearby neighborhoods for easy access to shows and the vibrant atmosphere. That's especially important if you're going to be seeing a matinee and evening show. With only a few hours in between, do you really want to be riding the subway back and forth or spending \$50 or more on a taxi round-trip? If you book near Times

Square (and there are options in every budget), popping back to your room to change clothes or pick up something you forgot is no big deal.

Stage Business

Take advantage of potential discounts for Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, but be sure to check on the reliability of the websites you're using and always purchase with a credit card so that your sale is protected. Although this is contrary to planning ahead, many shows offer discount tickets the day of the show (called rush seats) at the box office, or you can try TKTS in Times Square for day-of-show discount tickets.

Many shows have matinees, not only on Wednesday, but Tuesday and Thursday as well, upping the number of shows you can see during a given visit. Off-Broadway doesn't necessarily mean location (although it can). Broadway is classified as (loosely) in the Times Square area, and seating 500 or more. Off-Broadway seats 499 or fewer. It has nothing to do with the quality of the production. Beyond the theater, explore the

neighborhood, dine at local restaurants, and perhaps even catch a matinee performance to maximize your Broadway immersion. Broadway Week has already passed but keep it in mind when planning next year's trip. Off-Broadway Week runs Tuesday, Oct. 14 to Sunday, Oct 26. For more info go to nyctourism.com/off-broadway-week.

I went up at the end of summer, during one of New York's worst heat waves. The weather was cooler in Florida, and less humid. But I still managed to squeeze in no less than seven shows. I got to see the brilliant Jean Smart in "Call Me Izzy." She was working on crutches because of a knee injury. I won't give away the storyline, but it worked for her character. You don't need to be a fan of the television show to be enthralled by "Stranger Things, First Shadow." The special effects are enough to dazzle, and the story is a prequel to the show, so if you know the show, there are some "a-ha," moments, but nothing you need to know to follow the plot. "Death Becomes Her" open with a bang (and a wink) with "For The

Gaze” and the rest of the show continues with tongue firmly planted in cheek. Megan Hilty gives it her all, while Jennifer Simard seems as if she’s ready to move on.

I caught one of the last performances of Audra McDonald in “Gypsy.” She may have been the star everyone talked about, but the rest of the cast was her equal. Titus Burgess was out the night we saw “Oh Mary!”, and we were given the chance to exchange our tickets, but we were booked every night. Hannah Solow was the understudy, and she was a delight. You must see this wackadoodle play, no matter who is starring. It is silly, wicked fun, and so very gay. We also caught two off-Broadway shows, “Ginger Twinsies,” a parody of Lindsey Lohan’s movie, “The Parent Trap.” I don’t know the movie that well, but I still laughed my ass off.

We also caught a play that might be working its way to Broadway, “Prince Faggot.” It imagines what might happen if Prince George were gay and brought home his first very (very hot) Indian boyfriend to Kate and William. Two of the best sites I’ve found for looking up shows are Broadway.com and Playbill.com. Both have links to buy tickets, although you may be able to get a better deal by going directly to the show’s website. On the night I saw “Gypsy” you could get orchestra seats for \$99.

Off Stage

Man (or woman) cannot live on theater alone. There are times when houses are dark, or you’re between shows. Occasionally, one must have a cocktail. If you want to keep in the Broadway theme of things, stop by Marie’s Crisis, 55 Grove St., in the West Village. Marie DuMont, a French national, opened her restaurant/speakeasy in 1929. Throughout its history, Marie’s has always prided itself on being a safe space for all, but particularly the gay community, long before Stonewall. Nobody knows for sure when it became a sing-along piano bar, but you’ll often find theater folk (and wannabees) creating incredible harmonies (mariescrisiscafe.com).

Head uptown for a trio of other must-visit spots for BAS. 54 Below, 252 W. 54th St., a non-profit organization with a mission to



preserve and expand the art of the cabaret. It’s your chance to see emerging and established artists (54Below.org). Don’t Tell Mama, 343 W. 46th St., opened in 1982. It is a world-famous entertainment destination; a veritable nightlife mall with four individual spaces: a piano bar, a restaurant, and two separate cabaret showrooms (donttellmamanyc.com). The Townhouse, 236 E. 58th St., open since 1989, is a grand old gay piano bar (townhouseny.com). Looking for a top-notch cocktail experience and a place to avoid the crowd? Go to 113 St. Marks Pl., it’s just a hot dog stand. Or is it? Enter the phone booth, pick up the receiver, and the back panel of the booth opens to reveal Please Don’t Tell, a speakeasy with limited entry and wonderful mixologists (pdtnyc.com).

Culture

It’s Not Just For Yogurt

Of course, you can’t visit New York without taking the opportunity to visit some of its exquisite museums. One of my first stops is always MOMA (Museum of Modern Art), 11 W. 53rd St. It maintains an active schedule of modern and

contemporary art exhibitions addressing a wide range of subject matter, mediums, and eras, highlighting significant developments in the visual arts and new interpretations of major artists and art historical movements, and it has the best gift shop (moma.org.) The Met, or Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 5th Ave., has 5,000 years of art from around the world in every genre, and also has a killer gift shop (metmuseum.org).

Of course, not all museums have to be so highbrow. Since you’re going to be around Times Square anyway and you’re a Broadway geek, you know you want to go to the Museum of Broadway, 145 W 45th St., where you can walk through Broadway’s history, starting in 1732 with the first documented performance in NYC, and go backstage with your favorite Broadway stars to learn how a show is made. As you walk the timeline, you’ll come upon exhibits dedicated to groundbreaking moments in Broadway’s history – those that pushed creative boundaries, challenged social norms, and paved the way for change. Oddly enough, not much is mentioned about how



much the LGBTQ community has meant to the creation of this history (themuseumofbroadway.com).

The same shortcoming can be found in another, otherwise wonderful attraction across the street at Rise NY, 160 W 45th St., which is equal parts museum and amusement park ride. It starts with a film by Ken Burns about the rise of New York as a major city, as you take a virtual ride on the city's first subway car, and ends with a thrilling skyride around the city, dropping you off at the Statue of Liberty's torch. Throughout the tour, you learn about notable events in the city's history. I guess the Stonewall riots and AIDS/Act-Up weren't that important, or is that not palatable to tourists? (timessquarenyc.org/entertainment/riseny).

Pop Culture

If you were as obsessed with "Friends" as I was (I once drew family trees for all the characters), you'll want to check out "The Friends Experience: the One in New York City," 130 E 23rd St. The multi-floor experience, located in, of all places, an office building, starts with a brief film of the show's creators and stars discussing the beloved series. From there, you wander through a maze of corridors that

open onto the sets from the show, Joey and Chandler's and Monica and Rachel's apartments (complete with ugly naked guy across the way), the stairway with the sofa ("Pivot!"), and of course, Central Perk. There are plenty of photo ops. The higher-priced package includes photos, but employees are more than willing to take photos using your phone (friendstheexperience.com).

No Soup For You

The Soup Nazi may be closed, but you must eat something while you're there. Of course, there are the famous street vendors, but for me, New York is all about the classic diner, and my favorite is Applejack, 1725 Broadway. It's everything you want from a diner; it's cheap (a bagel with a schmear and a coffee is less than \$10, most breakfasts are less than \$20, full dinners, including soup or salad and dessert, are around \$25 – that's cheap for Times Square). It's a family-run business, and Angie is always willing to please (applejackdiner.com).

On the other end of the spectrum is Sardi's, 234 W. 44th St., opened in 1927 and an institution in Broadway theatre. It's where the idea of the Tony Award was devised and is known for the caricatures of

Broadway celebrities on its walls. I sat beneath Rosie O'Donnell and the late Gavin Creel and enjoyed a lovely charcuterie plate and a glass of wine between the matinee of "Death Becomes Her" and the evening performance of "Gypsy." I did not see one Broadway star, nor did I care (sardis.com).

After another show, my travel companion Steve and I grabbed a piece of Junior's Cheesecake, 1626 Broadway (juniorscheesecake.com). If you find yourself uptown near 56th St., I highly recommend you stop in the Thompson Hotel, 119 W. 56th St.; both of its restaurants are excellent.

The Burger Joint serves what might possibly be the best burger in New York City, and Parker's, while a little pricey, offers spectacular service (ask for Suset). At The Parker the steak frites is magnificent, the flat bread is not flat and a bit greasy, but the cocktail and wine selection are wonderful (hyatt.com/Thompson).

If you're in town over the weekend, head over to Murray Hill to Dim Sum Garden, 338 Lexington Ave., for the all-you-can-eat dim sum menu. It's the best \$30 you'll spend. We didn't eat anything else that day, and the dim sum was fresh and well prepared.

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GRAB MUSIC



Sunny War

Q-Music: Women's world of song

By Gregg Shapiro

Beginning with her first full-length album in 2018, Sunny War (born Sydney Lyndella Ward) has established herself as an artist of merit. Fans of Brittany Howard and Rhiannon Giddens will likely appreciate War's new album "Armageddon in a Summer Dress" (New West). Beginning with the rocking locomotion of "One Way Train" to the modern spiritual "Bad Times" (with its "Bad times stay away" mantra), to the haunting "Ghosts" and the modern blues of "Cry Baby" and the unexpectedly bouncy "Debbie Downer," War continues to be a wonder. Her line-up of guest artists, including Tre Burt, Valerie June, John Doe, and Steve Ignorant, is also impressive. **[Sunny War performs as part of the Evanston Folk Festival in Dawes Park on Sept. 6]**

"No Way To Relax When You Are On Fire" (Island/Made of Elves) is the debut LP by Experimental folk-pop singer/songwriter **Dora Jar** (aka Dora Jarkowski). She shares a musical sensibility similar to that of

Lorde and Billie Eilish but is distinctive enough not to be confused with either. Whether she's working with electro beats, as on "Ragdoll," "Smoke Out the Window," and "Behind The Curtain," or more organic instrumentation on "Debbie Darling," "This Is Why," the Yoko Ono-esque "She Loves Me," and the Lana Del Rey-like title track, Dora Jar makes music that benefits from repeated listens. **[Dora Jar performs at The Rave / Eagles Club in Milwaukee on Sept. 13.]**

On her amazing 2021 album "The Turning Wheel," Oakland, CA-based **Spelling** (aka Chrystia Cabral) sounded like a 21st century version of the late Julee Cruise, with a touch of Kate Bush. Her "deeply personal" new album, "Portrait of My Heart" (Sacred Bones) puts her harder rocking side on full display on "Drain," "Love Ray Eyes," "Alibi," and "Satisfaction." Chaz Bear (of Toro y Moi) joins Spelling on "Mount Analogue," and songs such as the dramatic pop of "Ammunition" and the propulsive title number

demonstrate Spelling's versatility.

To say that there's no shortage of country divas is an understatement. I mean, where the hell did Lainey Wilson come from? This makes the challenge of standing out from the crowd an even more arduous task than when it was just Loretta, Tammy, and Dolly, or Miranda, Maren, and Kelsea, let alone Reba or Kasey. **Esther Rose** seems to understand that and illustrates the point on her new album "Want" (New West). Rose sets herself apart right from the title track with which she opens the album, and there's not a clunker amongst the songs that follow, of which highlights include "Tailspin" (on which Rose is joined by Video Age), "Scars" (featuring Dean Johnson), "Ketamine," "Had To," and the gorgeous "Color Wheel."

You don't have to be a Spanish-speaker to comprehend the irresistible attraction of queer Latinx artist **Reyna Tropical** (aka Fabi Reyna). Recipient of a 2025 Libera Award (honoring independent

musicians and their support teams) for Best Latin Record, "Malegría" (Psychic Hotline) is Reyna Tropical's full-length debut album. Integrating various Latin musical influences, the black vinyl LP, which includes a colorful poster, is described as "a voice and a platform for the joy and injustices living with the spectrum of Queer Love & Afro-Mexico." Dedicated "in loving memory of Sumo" (Nectali "Sumohair" Díaz, Reyna Tropical's late bandmate), you might think the songs would be somber. On the contrary, tracks such as "Suavecito," "Lo Siento," "Cartagena," "Conexión Ancestral," "Puerto Rico," and "Cuaji," are lively, pulsating with inviting rhythms. One listen and you will understand why it's natural for listeners to continue seeking comfort in this "warm blanket" of an album.

Anyone the least bit familiar with the meteoric rise of **Alanis Morissette** knows it wasn't as meteoric as it appeared. By the time her 1995 breakthrough album "Jagged Little Pill" was released, she was already a music veteran with two albums released in her Canadian homeland. But we all know what happened after she teamed up with songwriter/producer Glen Ballard. Turns out he knew exactly what to do with Morissette's powerful voice and songwriting skills. The result was a record deal with Madonna's Maverick Records label, and a multi-platinum, award-winning album that spawned numerous hit singles, as well as a Broadway musical. Of course, this meant that Morissette had her work cut out for her when it came to the follow-up, 1998's "Supposed Former Infatuation

Junkie" (Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab), newly reissued on SACD and LP in an Original Master Recording edition. Opening with "Front Row," featuring her rapid-fire delivery of a lyric-packed song that has more in common with Ani DiFranco than, say, her fellow Canadian Joni Mitchell. It's a song that would have fit in well on her previous album. Chart-topping single "Thank U" and "Baba" find Morissette on the kind of spiritual quest that artists often experience following massive popularity. "That I Would Be Good" (another of the album's singles), "Are You Still Mad," "Can't Not," and "Joining You," also echo Morissette's knack for creating list songs. Perhaps the album's most daring number, "The Couch," incorporating the Eastern musical influence that permeates the whole project, is a song about a therapy experience, that can be listened to sitting up or lying down.

Artistic and stylistic evolution was as important to Morissette as it is to **Valerie June** on her outstanding new album "Owls, Omens, and Oracles" (Concord). Like Morissette, June has a distinctive and unmistakable vocal quality that immediately helps listeners identify the performer. "Owls, Omens, and Oracles" kicks things off in high gear with the roof-raising "Joy! Joy!" that is exhilarating as its title suggests, with the ability to stir the soul of even the doorest listener. June indulges her retro side with the delightful yearning of "All I Really Wanna Do" and "Endless Tree." June's Memphis roots come to the surface on "Love Me Any Ole Way,"

"Trust The Path," "Changed" (on which she's joined by The Blind Boys of Alabama), and you better believe her when she sings "My Life Is a Country Song."

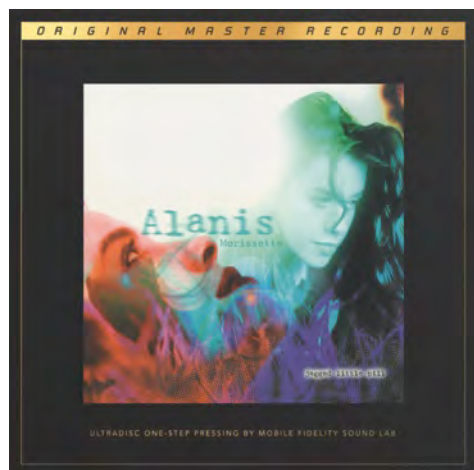
Jesika Von Rabbit is both a musical artist and a performance troupe. Said troupe includes queer member Beautox Rocks, a self-described "dancer/ performance artist/ weirdo." There's plenty to dance to on the new LP "Bunnywood Babylon" (Dionysus), including the electro gallop of "Wacko," "Gotta Keep My Buzz Going," "I Can't Find

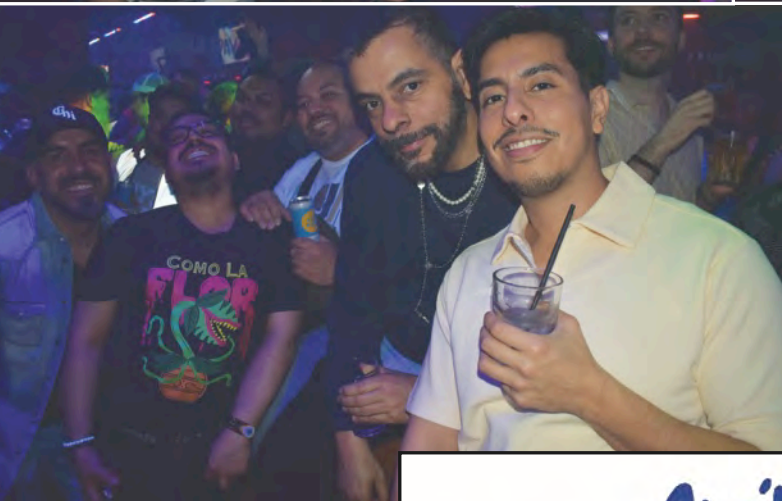


Me," and the retro-rock of "Go Back To L.A."

Can we all agree that, with the possible exceptions of Thalia Zedek and Taylor Swift, there is a particular sonic quality related to female singer/songwriters connected to Massachusetts? I remember thinking the first time I listened to the sophomore album by **Kris Delmhurst** that she was reminiscent of formerly Mass-based Jonatha Brooke. You can still hear that influence on Delmhurst's new album "Ghosts In the Garden" (krisdelmhurst.com), on the title tune, for example. Like Sunny War, Delmhurst has a stellar line-up of guest musicians, including queer singer/songwriter Ana Egge, Anais Mitchell, Rachel Baiman, Anna Tivel, Rose Cousins, and Jeffrey Foucault. Standout cuts include "Not The Only One," "Wolves," "Age of Innocence," and "Dematerialize."

On devilishly red vinyl, "Switcheroo" (Innovative Leisure), the debut album by **Gelli Haha**, creator of the Gelliverse, is 21st-century retro-disco to the nth degree. Integrating the "vintage gear" of producer Sean Guerin (of De Lux), the album is as much fun as the kooky cover suggests. "Spit," "Tiramisu," "Bounce House," "Funny Music," and "Pluto Is Not A Planet It's A Restaurant" belong on every party playlist this summer (fall, winter, and spring, too!). Combining a seductive dance beat, a revealing spoken-word monologue, and a catchy chorus, "Piss Artist" is as they say in Boston, "wicked pissah." The only thing missing is a yellow bandana.





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Daily Specials;

MONDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlies: Half off Hennessy and Patron 7pm - 11pm ABC Bingo, 11pm Charlie's Live. Hydrate: Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. Shakers on Clark: Comedy Night \$1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. Steamworks: Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. The Sofo Tap: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, \$5 Tecate Tallboys, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. Touche: Open 5pm-4am. Horny Bastards A Night for those who just didn't get enough over the weekend. 9/1 Labor Day Beer Bust Cookout at 7pm.</p>
TUESDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: \$4 You Call It's 5pm - 9pm, 7pm - 11pm BS Karaoke, 11pm Baddies Block Party. Hydrate: TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. Shakers on Clark: \$3 Domestic Beers. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. Steamworks: Every Tuesday 4 pm - 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). The Sofo Tap: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts Touche: Open 5pm - 4am. Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/ Wifi, 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock.</p>
WEDNESDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 7pm - 11pm SCCDA Country Dancing, 11pm Boys and Booze. Jackhammer: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$4 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Stoli Cocktails (All Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. North End: Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. Shakers on Clark: Karaoke Night \$1 Off Long Islands. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Dua & Ariana last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. Steamworks: Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. The Sofo Tap: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Stoli Cocktails (All Flavors), \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. Touche: Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check,</p>
THURSDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. Charlie's: 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm Mother Rebirth, 10pm - Power up Reloaded. 2nd Thursday of the Month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm the Pop Ball, 10pm Scissor Sisters. 4th Thursday of the Month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm the Pop Ball, 10pm Vinyl. Jackhammer: \$3 House Shots, \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. Shakers on Clark: \$1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks, Karaoke 10pm-1am. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursday! Pop Music Videos in Glass/Side Bars 9pm-2am, Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month in Main Bar, All Things K-Pop other Thursdays in Main Bar. Steamworks: Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. The Sofo Tap: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Stoli Mules (All Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts Touche: Open 5pm - 4am. Throwback Thursdays 70's & 80's Music & Porn By Bijou Video.</p>

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Chicago Handshakes, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st Friday of the Month 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Charlie's Presents. 2nd Friday: 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Glow Up. 3rd Friday 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Thirst Trap. 4th Friday 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars 11pm Haus of Charlie's. **Jackhammer:** \$8 New Amsterdam & Red Bulls, \$8 WYNK THC, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **Meeting House Tavern:** HAPPY HOUR (5-8 PM): \$5 Chicago Handshakes, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$6 Tito's Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR (3-6 PM): \$4 Signature Margaritas, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. 8/22 These Boots are Made for Walkin' Boot Fetish Party. 8/29 Porn Poker Party. 9/5 Man 'Nipple'ate Play Night. 9/12 Friday Funder caring for our community. 9/19 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA.

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): 1/2 Off All Draft Beers, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm - 1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-3am. **Charlie's:** 7pm - 11pm SCCDA Country Dancing, 11pm Under the boots tonight. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots, \$8 New Amsterdam & Red Bulls, \$8 WYNK THC, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** HAPPY HOUR (2-5 PM): \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat Drafts, \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$8 WYNK THC, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Post-Brunch SaturGay Fun 1pm-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR: (12-3 PM): 1/2 Off All Draft Beers, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Signature Margaritas, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 5am. 8/23 RIPE PARTY Dim Lights, Deep Beats Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T, 8/30 GLORY HOLE'D. 9/6 CHICAGO'S BEAR NIGHT MIDNIGHT PIZZA PANIC 9/13 DUNGEON MASTER NIGHT S& M DEMO @ MIDNIGHT CWB 5PM. 9/20 Oktoberfest Begins! Gear Night barber & bootblack on duty dress code in ClubRoom.

SUNDAY FUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$6 Chicago Handshakes, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st and 3rd Sunday of the Month 5pm - 7pm Queeriod, 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. 2nd Sunday 5pm - 7pm Queeriod Presents Drag U 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. 4th Sunday 5pm - 7pm Queeriod Presents Boyfriend Material, 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. **Hydrate:** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. **Jackhammer:** HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): \$3 House Shots, \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$7 Jackhammered Long Islands, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm. **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off Bloody Mary's, \$1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And \$1 off all Revolution beers. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR (1-3 PM): \$3 House Shots, FREE Hotdogs (while supplies last) ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$6 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 4am. Beer Bust \$2 Draughts & Sodas Clubroom opens 6pm Movie Night 7pm. Clubroom Open. 8/31 "DROP YOUR PANTS" Jockstrap & Underwear Fetish Party, 9/1 FULL MOON PARTY & CONTEST.

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GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of August 2025



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	Artist	Title
1	Two Friends	No One Else Ft. Corbyn Besson
2	Ryan Ennis x Carla Monroe	Blow My Mind
3	Aki Nair	Alibi (Edit)
4	Stryv x Malachiii x Adam Port	Positions
5	Chris Lake	Savana
6	Zevy	Good Enough
7	Victoria Nadine x Kygo	Can't Get Enough
8	Sachi x Poppy Baskcomb	Holding Your Hand
9	Hugel X David Guetta X Kehlani & Daecolm	Think Of Me
10	Illenium X Hayla	In My Arms
11	Avicii & Elle King	Let's Ride Away
12	Joki x Ridges	Don't Let Me Down (Radio Edit)
13	Linney	The Crown
14	Younotus X Lavinia	Canyons
15	Voltage	Break 'm With You
16	Vic Latino	Cielo (Dee's Version)
17	Nimino X Maverick Sabre	Beside Of Me
18	Alle Farben X Majestic	From Disco To Disco
19	Klangkarussell X Oliva	Holy Father
20	Shouse & Cub Sport	Only You
21	Allegra	Wildfire
22	Manyfew	Vacker
23	Alok & Agents Of Time	Fever
24	Nick Elliott	Angel Eyes (Radio Edit)
25	Avi Snow & Zeeba	Starlight
26	Blanke & Linney	How It Feels (Radio)
27	Dancingfaraz	Deja Vu
28	Jules Liesl	Cherry (Mousse T. Slow Jam Remix)
29	RscL & Vassy	Beg
30	Lucas & Steve	Legacy



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GRAB ROGER

LGBT Parenting – Schools First

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Twenty-eight years ago, my husband and I became parents, having adopted two boys, one in 1997 who just turned 27 and the other in 2000.

We used to be concerned about diapers, bottles and preschools. That phase ended as the kids grew, then our lives totally revolved around school schedules, activities and sports. When the kids were small, we had small problems and when they were big, we had big problems as the old saying goes.

Who is friends with whom? Who is invited to his birthday party? What about sleepovers at someone's house? Can friends come over and do they know the kids have two dads and will they be teased? Who has a cell phone and can they use it to text pictures to their friends – an absolute no due to an Indiana case where a 12-year-old girl and a 13-year-old boy were charged with

felonies for texting nude pictures of themselves to each other.

We vacationed to all the standard mainstream vacation sites – Wisconsin Dells, Great America and camping. And I learned how to ski one winter with the kids at Granite Peak with the LGBT Ski Group, Skibiudz.

When we first adopted, we decided to live in Oak Park due to its reputation of tolerance and openness of the LGBT community, as well as for the racial diversity. We had been reading past press in the Tribune and the Oak Park local paper, The Wednesday Journal, one of the elementary schools in Oak Park, had been on the receiving end of a lot of press concerning objections to a LGBT teacher training they had one summer.

In typical Oak Park fashion, generic petitions were signed, more training and resources promised to protect diversity and more politically correctness engaged with the school

superintendent and school board president all affirming their commitment to the key word “diversity.” Yet in standard Oak Park fashion, no mention of action to be taken, accountability or responsibility.

Without going into detail, we learned the hard way that what we read is the essence of what Oak Park is really about – giving the impression that values of diversity are important but actually doing nothing about it.

What was interesting to us was when we decided to move for better schools,

everyone asked us “What about diversity?,” which we took to mean that as a LGBT family or couple, you can’t live anywhere else but Oak Park because you won’t be accepted. Bottom line for us is that “diversity” in Oak Park was a myth that basically says to LGBT community “you are not free to live where you want because you won’t fit in.”

We scoured the Chicago area and suburbs to find a good area with good schools and an open and accepting community. We chose Highland Park in the North Shore because we felt that we were with “like-minded people,” demanding of a good education with higher standards and expecting that our kids would go to college.

After we moved to the North Shore, we loved the schools, the quality of life, and found more tolerance, acceptance and diversity to LGBT families, their kids and children of color than ever existed in Oak Park.

Things and attitudes may have changed in the past 10 years but this was our experience.

The policies of the Highland Park High School to LGBT kids was unbelievably wonderful. When the school administrator at our kids’ school, in scheduling an intake meeting with us, unsolicited, asked me, “will your husband be meeting with us?” I knew we had come to a good place.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at RVMLawyer@aol.com. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.



SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUTH

You Are Not Alone



It's time to take action if you notice these signs in family or friends:

1. Talking about or making plans for suicide.
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future.
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
4. Showing worrisome changes in behavior, particularly in combination with the warning signs above, including significant:
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 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

Text or call 988 or chat 988lifeline.org, or reach out to a mental health professional.

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A group of men are shown from the waist up, wearing black and red SQUIRT.org branded underwear. They are holding small cupcakes with white frosting and red swirls. In the center, a man with dark hair and a pearl necklace looks directly at the camera. The background is a solid dark color.

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GRAB HOLLY

Cui Bono (Who Benefits?)

By Holly Maholm

Xandra and I were sitting in a booth at Donut Time, basking in the afterglow of our realization that Donut Time was not, in fact, on the fast track to bankruptcy. And yet... we were now even more vulnerable to one of the most common forms of financial flimflam, having received an offer expressed as: "Would you like to double your money?" By which we understood the message to be: "Here's a scam which perhaps you've never encountered. Would you like to be its next victim?"

But in this case, the person making the offer was emphatically no scammer. It was Tracy, whom we all trusted like a brother. Tracy went on, "From your point of view, asking me to pay my tab is just 'Collecting a Debt.' Which, if that's what you want, then fine. However, my offer is this: Let's change the subject to 'Celebrating what Donut Time means to our City.' Which if you like that approach, then here's what I'm offering: I and my staff at the Bee will organize, plan and stage that 'Celebration of Donut Time,' and when it's over, you can add up how much extra income you earned, and if you're satisfied with that result, you just keep it as full payment for my tab. However, if you don't make

enough money, then we'll total up my tab and I'll pay it straight away. What do you think?"

You've heard the phrase "An offer you can't refuse." Which finds its persuasive power in a threat of bodily injury or death spoken by a gangster. However, in this case, Xandra and I heard "An offer from a friend." Which finds its persuasive power in our trust and affection for someone we know only wishes us well. We had to say yes.

We adjourned our gathering, and Tracy rushed off to consult with his staff at the Bee. We did not see him any more that day, but the next morning, early, he pranced into Donut Time and – clearly energized to share his plan with us – took Xandra and me into the kitchen, where we could talk privately.

Tracy promptly launched into a description of his proposed "Festival in Honor of What Donut Time Means to Us." (As if it were necessary to remind us of the pleasure – and sugar-rush – we all experience when we Grab one of Donut Time's signature pastries.) When he finished describing his plan, it was clear that the involvement of the horses (actually unicorns) stabled out at the Horse Rescue was an essential feature of that plan. Thus, I knew I would need to

get Queen Penelope's approval for Tracy's plan to be realized.

I called Dot and asked her to prepare herself. Our Queen and the Queen's Attendants for a visit, after which I explained to Tracy that anything having to do with the rescue horses would require Dot's cooperation. We started off for the Horse Rescue to convene with Dot and the others.

Arriving there, we found the following: In the yard in front of the old farmhouse was a large and stately Sugar Maple, and around the base of that tree was an expanse of long grass, for many years spared of either mowing or cultivation, and much favored by Our Queen when she seeks both refreshing shade and a comfortable bed for a well-earned nap.



There, Tracy and I saw Queen Penelope curled up in that long grass (her horn hidden by her unicorn magic). Behind her to one side was her Chief Attendant, Sassy Pants, and behind her on the other side was her Chief Protector, Victor (their horns similarly disguised). Dot was kneeling behind Penelope, holding a brush in her hand and combing out Penelope's mane with long, gentle strokes.

This striking tableau – to all appearances casual and innocent, but under the surface infused with drama – made a powerful impression upon Tracy. Though he, unlike Dot and I, had lived his whole life free of any contact with Royalty, or any person (or other living creature) suffused with any aura of Majesty, he instantly perceived that he was in the presence of an extraordinary soul. He presented his plan to Dot (and thus to Penelope) and waited for a reply.

Our Queen turned her head slightly, and Dot dipped her head to hear what Penelope whispered, after which Dot announced: "I like your plan, but don't you think that rather than a celebration of your private business selling sugary treats, you might better change the beneficiary of your festival to... let us say, a poor farm and orchard that struggles to provide shelter for orphaned and homeless horses?" Still under the spell of that avatar of purity and grace sitting so near to him, Tracy could only nod his assent, thereby bowing his head in obedience to a Queen.

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly's book *Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns* (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly's adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message to Holly at www.hollymaholm.com.

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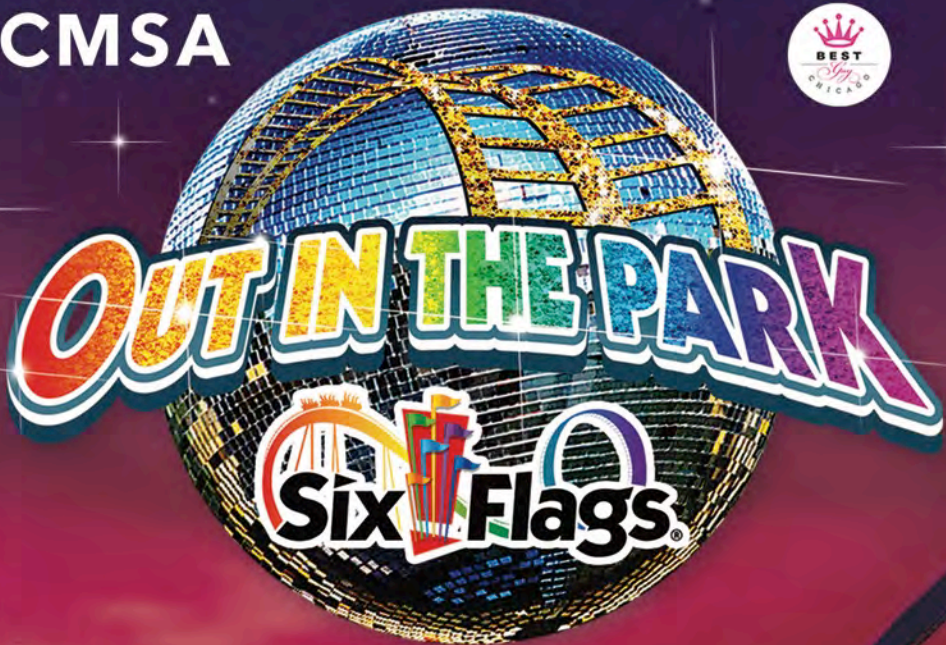
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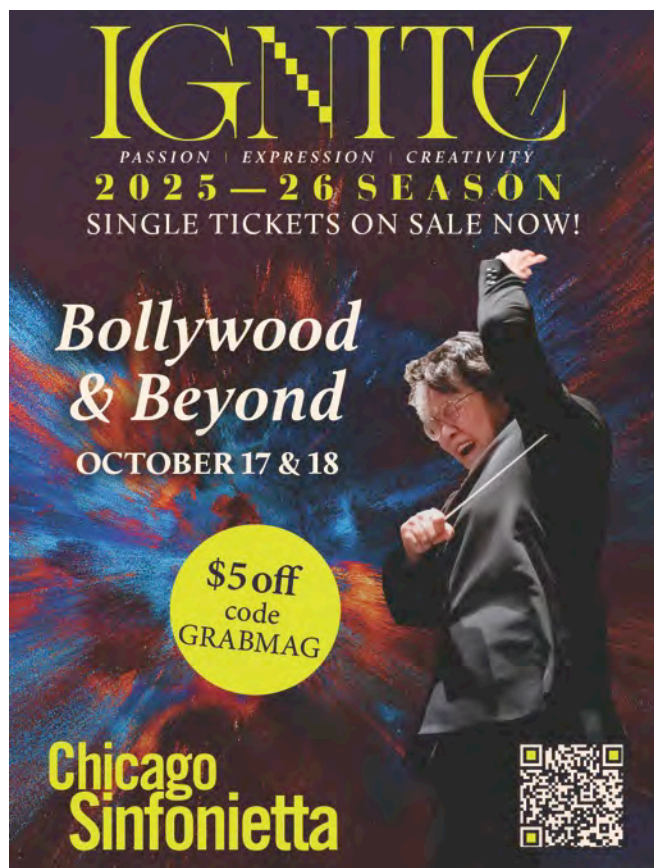
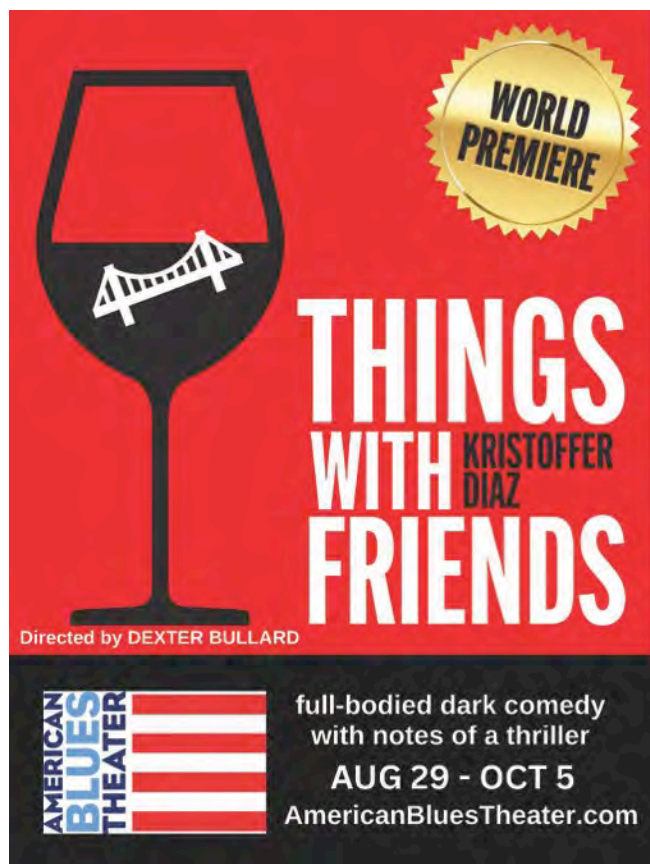
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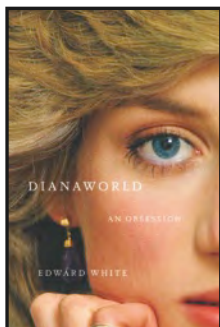


GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"Dianaworld: An Obsession"

by Edward White c.2025, W.W. Norton \$32.50 402 pages



Your head was always meant for a tiara.

Or a crown, maybe both. Elegant clothing was supposed to fill your ample closets and you were meant to have a maid or valet to help you dress. And yeah, glass slippers should be on your feet right now. Then again, being royalty can have its drawbacks: as you'll see in "Dianaworld: An Obsession" by Edward White, it can be a royal pain.

Even as a child, young Diana Spencer was proud of her heritage.

By the time she was born, White says, "her family [was] a mighty social presence" in Great Britain, with many ties to the Royal Family. Little Diana often played with the Princes Edward and Andrew, and she supposedly met Prince Charles when she was just five years old and he was seventeen.

That age difference meant much less when the Prince was searching for a bride and Diana flirted with him at a "shooting weekend" event. Soon, they were engaged, though they only "spent time together... a handful of times" and the marriage was broken before it scarcely began.

You probably know how it ended, and how her life ended, too.

And yet, nearly twenty-eight years after her death, Diana continues to fascinate people.

Says White, the frenzy over royal-watching compounded when it appeared that the "world's most eligible bachelor" had found his princess, and the paparazzi were relentless. Every outfit Diana wore was scrutinized, condemned, and mimicked; she was criticized for being candid, and for being overly-drama. She seemed to think that "part of her solemn duty was to appear as the Princess of Wales as often as possible" but she also apparently disliked what happened when she did. She shook up the Royal Family's status quo by refusing to participate in stiff-upper-lip-ness or emotional

distance, and that touched the hearts of many.

Here we are, a generation removed from August 31, 1997, and there is still only one Diana for a lot of people. Those are the readers for whom "Dianaworld: An Obsession" seems to have been written, and you can think about this book in two basic parts.

Author Edward White takes a deeper-than-usual look at Princess Diana's life, mostly as a Royal, but you'll also read about her before and her after. Alas, those who arose in the dark to watch her wedding in 1981, or who cried when she died won't find much new. Heavy sigh.

What you will find, however, is a subtle new attitude about Diana, as seen through a backward lens. Gone is the gushing, in favor of facts. There's snark here, and some degree of gossip but it feels fresh, maybe because the blast of Diana books has been a trickle in the last decade. We're not inundated with Diana, so this book feels right, right now.

Despite that, forever fans of the Princess will get the most out of it. And if that's you, well, you know the assignment. "Dianaworld: An Obsession" is a book to wrap your fingers and your head around.

"Judy Garland: The Voice of MGM"

c.2025, Lyons Press \$65.00 405 pages



The monkeys used to scare you a lot.

The Wicked Witch was one thing but those flying simians with their booming voices? Ugh, they gave you nightmares for weeks. And despite that you knew how things would end – you'd seen the movie annually, for heaven's sake – let's just say you spent a lot of time covering your eyes. So now be like a Lion. Get uncowardly and find "Judy Garland: The Voice of MGM" by Scott Brogan.

When most people think about Judy Garland, two images come to mind: the teenager in pigtails or "The one-dimensional image of an always

suffering and always tragic Garland..." Neither one, says Brogan, is totally correct. In reality, Garland was "positive, joyful, and funny."

Her parents, Ethel and Frank Gumm, were performers who moved their little family around Michigan and Wisconsin before landing in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, where their youngest child, Frances, was born in 1922. An adorable baby, little Frances loved an audience almost from the time she could walk; her parents happily added her to the family troupe.

In 1926, the Gumm family performed their way across the country to Los Angeles, where Frances and her sisters appeared in many shows, but critics were not entirely impressed. Still, Ethel pushed and the girls toured with Paramount Circuit in the northwest, and then in Chicago in 1934 where Frances had "one of [her] biggest career milestones."

By 1935, she was formally using the name "Judy Garland" onstage and she'd secured informal representation. That same year, she signed a contract with MGM, a studio which took a near-total control it "would exert over Garland's personal life" and her schedule, denying her wish to be with her father at the end of his life and dictating what she ate or didn't eat.

Still, says Brogan, their methods worked: by the time Garland was twenty years old, her "career seemed to know no limits."

Page through "Judy Garland: The Voice of MGM" and you'll instantly know that you're in for a treat: this book is loaded with photos, stills, publicity shots, and newspaper recreations. There's a lot to look at here, but what there is to read is better.

Author Scott Brogan makes Judy Garland his *raison d'être* in this book, but it's not entirely all about her. Brogan shares an overview of the movie studio that made her famous, including what is arguably her most top-of-mind film, the gossip that surrounded it then, and the mythology that still lives on. There's a comprehensive list of World War II-era appearances that Garland made, and what happened at each one. If you're expecting dirt-dishing, you'll read about her father's secret, her marriages, and her addictions, but not in an over-the-top scandalous way. Brogan is factual, inclusive, and respectful, just as you'd want.

If you're planning on having guests soon, put "Judy Garland: The Voice of MGM" away or your guests will want to read, rather than mingle. It's the kind of coffee-table book that, for fans, will make you *Get Happy*.



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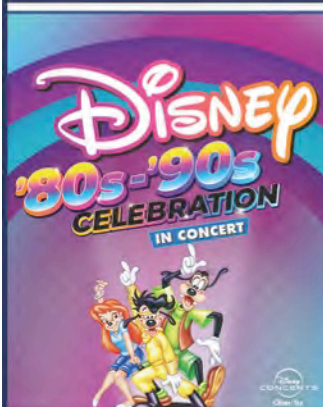
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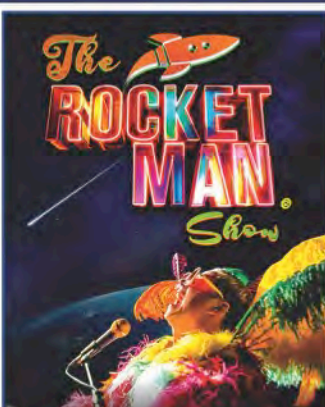
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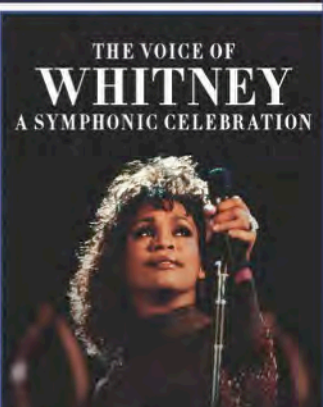
"Bennie and the Jets" and
"Goodbye Yellow Brick Road"

Fri., Oct. 10 7:30 PM



"Time Warp" and
"Two Out of Three Ain't Bad"

Sat., Oct. 25 7:00 PM



"How Will I Know" and
"I Will Always Love You"

Sat., Nov. 15 7:30 PM

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**CITY OF CHICAGO HOSTS
THE 2025 CHICAGO HOUSE
MUSIC FESTIVAL AND
CONFERENCE AUGUST 21-24**



The City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) has announced the lineup for the 2025 Chicago House Music Festival and Conference, celebrating the birthplace of House Music with four days of events that are open and free to the public from Aug. 21–24.

The celebration kicks off Thursday, Aug. 21, with the Chicago House Music Conference and Cultural Center Open House, an inspiring evening of community conversations, dance workshops and live DJ sets inside the Chicago Cultural Center. Panel discussions with music industry professionals will explore themes such as community and collaboration, creative processes, nightlife and culture, music marketing and more.

"The Chicago House Music Festival and Conference celebrates Chicago's global impact on House music," said DCASE Commissioner **Clinée Hedsbeth**. "This year's lineup pays tribute to the genre's deep roots in the city while spotlighting the next generation of DJs and artists. Whether you're a longtime 'house head' or new to the scene, everyone's invited to join us for a weekend of music, dance, and community."

On Friday, Aug. 22, the festival heads outdoors to Grant Park's Spirit of Music Garden for Chicago House at SummerDance. Daytime programming will include dance masterclasses led by professional instructors inside the Dance Studio at the Chicago Cultural Center. The evening will feature additional dance lessons and DJ sets by Vince Adams and DJ Lil John in Grant Park.

On Saturday, Aug. 23, the heart of the festival returns to Millennium Park with a daylong celebration across four stages: the Legacy Stage at Jay Pritzker Pavilion, the Soulful House Stage, the Chicago House Stage and the Groove Garden Stage. The event will also feature youth workshops and the Chicago House Dance Summit, offering a mix

of family-friendly experiences and a showcase of the genre's top talents. Mainstage acts providing the soundtrack of the day include **Andre and Tony Hatchett** of the Chosen Few DJs, DJ **Pharris Thomas**, **Waxmaster**, **Tyree Cooper**, **Ralph Rosario** and more.

On Sunday, Aug. 24, Wind Down: House on the Riverwalk offers music lovers a laid-back afternoon of grooves along the Confluence of the Chicago River, featuring DJ **Jerome Baker** and **Julio Bishop**.

For the full event lineup and additional information, visit **ChicagoHouseMusicFestival.us** or follow on Instagram (@chicagodcase), Facebook and X for the latest updates.

**OUT IN THE PARK SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 6TH**



Out in the Park returns Saturday September 6th from 7:30pm-Midnight at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee Illinois. A Private night in the Park to celebrate Diversity and benefit Chicago Metropolitan Sports Association with 2 DJ this year DJ Sean Parks and DJ RNB. Tickets now on sale at <http://www.CelebrateDiversityChicago.com>.

**LAKEVIEW EAST CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF
THE ANNUAL
LAKEVIEW EAST FESTIVAL
OF THE ARTS, SATURDAY AND
SUNDAY, SEPT. 13 AND 14**



The Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce to host and produce

the 20th Annual Lakeview East Festival of the Arts, along Broadway, from Belmont Ave. to Hawthorne Place, in the heart of Lakeview, with 150 juried artists, family attractions, food, music and more. The official hours for the Lakeview East Festival of the Arts are Saturday, Sept. 13 from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. with additional hours for live music, food and drink tents until 10 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 14 from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Lakeview East Festival of the Arts asks for a \$5 donation upon entrance, this fee goes to supporting additional Lakeview East events and offerings.

Visit **LakeviewEastFestivalOfTheArts.com** for more information on artists, bands and offerings.

**THE AUDITORIUM PRESENTS
ARRIVAL FROM SWEDEN: THE
MUSIC OF ABBA THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 6TH**



The Auditorium (Chicago's landmark stage at 50 E. Ida B. Wells Drive) has announced an upcoming performance by **ARRIVAL From Sweden: The Music of ABBA** on Thursday, November 6 at 8 PM.

Founded by ABBA original musician **Rutger Gunnarsson** and the Swedish artist **Vicky Zetterberg** in 1995 in Gothenburg, Sweden and very soon became one of the world's most popular and best-selling ABBA show bands. Since its start in 1995, the band has toured in over 80 countries, conducted almost 140 successful USA tours and has appeared in TV and radio shows all over the world.

This production has all the features of a great ABBA show: vibrant costumes, talented musicians, and breathtaking singers. Millions of people all around the world celebrate this show as the best ABBA show in the world.

Tickets are available at **auditoriumtheatre.org** or by calling The Auditorium's Ticket Service Center at **312.341.2300**.

**STRUT, SPARKL & SOAR:
DIVAS® RUNNING SERIES
CELEBRATES CHICAGO
COMEBACK SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 13TH**



Get ready to unleash your inner diva! The Divas® Running Series has announced its 5K & half marathon is returning to Chicago after a 5-year hiatus on Saturday, September 13! Lace-up those rhinestone sneakers and gather your glam squad for a fierce celebration centered around fitness - complete with tiaras, tutus, feather boas, and red-carpet flair - all set against Chicago's iconic Soldier Field and beautiful lakefront. While aimed at highlighting amazing women, men who support them or have an "inner diva" are also invited to this DIVA-riffic experience! "I am personally thrilled to be bringing this event back to Chicago," said Divas® Running Series owner, **Danielle Snare**, a 20-year event industry veteran. "This event is about more than miles, it's celebrating strength, building community and creating lasting memories - and we are so proud to be partnering with WINGS Program, Inc. as our charity beneficiary to support this organization's mission."

Event Highlights

- Two distance options: The 13.1-mile half marathon kicks off at 7 a.m. - 5K at 7:15 a.m.
- Charity Beneficiary: WINGS Program, Inc., a premier domestic violence solutions provider that empowers and serves survivors of all ages, ethnicities, gender identities.
- Signature glam experience: Expect pink-themed décor, a bubbly post-race toast and awards ceremony, feather boas, and an unforgettable red-carpet finish!
- Superior swag: All participants receive a Diva Dri-Fit shirt, flouncy tutu, sparkling tiara, personalized sash, race bib, and blazing finisher

medal.

- Prime location: Divas (walkers and runners) will begin/end at Soldier Field's StadiumGreen (1410 Special Olympics Drive), with a scenic course along the lakefront.
- Parking: Available at Waldron Parking Deck (458 E 18th Drive) for \$27. Carpooling is strongly recommended due to expected traffic and street closures.

Divas® Running Series is all about empowerment, and celebrates the joyful power of fitness and camaraderie. Whether you're trying for a personal best or simply want to bask in a morning of glitz, glam, and community, Divas® Running Series delivers on every front! "We're proud to be the charity beneficiary of the Divas Running Series at Soldier Field," said **Rebecca Darr**, WINGS President and CEO. "This empowering event aligns with our mission to help survivors of domestic violence reclaim their independence. Together, we're running toward a future free from abuse." Register today to take advantage of Early Bird Glam Deals for both the 5K and half marathon.

Visit divasrun.com for all the information, so you can be a DIVA on September 13!!

**REELING: CHICAGO LGBTQ+
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
ANNOUNCES
OPENING, CENTERPIECE
TITLES FOR 43rd EDITION
PROGRAM**



Reeling: The Chicago LGBTQ+ International Film Festival today revealed a peek at this year's program with the announcement of the Opening Night and Centerpiece Films for the 43rd annual film festival, running in person September 19 - 28, 2025. This year's Opening Night and Centerpiece presentations screen at the Landmark Century Centre Cinemas (2828 N. Clark St.).

On September 19, Opening Night sees audiences strap in for a cosmic quest with directors **Emma Hough Hobbs and Leela Varghese's** *LESBIAN SPACE*

PRINCESS, the first animated film to open Reeling. Filled with endless sapphic jokes, addictive pop songs, and candy-colored animation, introverted princess Saria ventures out of her bedroom into the unknown to rescue her kidnapped girlfriend Kiki.

This year's Narrative Centerpiece turns gender-swap comedy conventions inside out in first-time director **Siobhan McCarthy's** SXSW breakout *SHE'S THE HE*, a hilarious, heartfelt teen satire following two best friends who pretend to be trans girls during their last week of high school, shaking up everything from graduation to their friendship. With an almost entirely queer, trans, and nonbinary cast and crew, the biting satire and sincere coming-of-age film unspools Thursday, September 25.

Documentary Centerpiece *IT'S DOROTHY!* tells the story of Oz through the women who've played its iconic heroine. Ever since Dorothy Gale started her epic journey on the Yellow Brick Road more than a century ago in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, she's become a celebrity, a brand, and a beacon for marginalized voices across our culture. *IT'S DOROTHY!* brings to life her timeless adventures in Oz with those who've portrayed her from **Judy Garland** to **Shanice Shantay**, and the cultural icons who she's inspired to hope and to dream, including **John Waters**, **Lena Waithe**, and **Rufus Wainwright**. With a magical remix of archival and cinematic art, director **Jeffrey McHale** presents an insightful look at a queer cultural touchstone, screening September 21.

Tickets are available online at www.reelingfilmfest.org

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