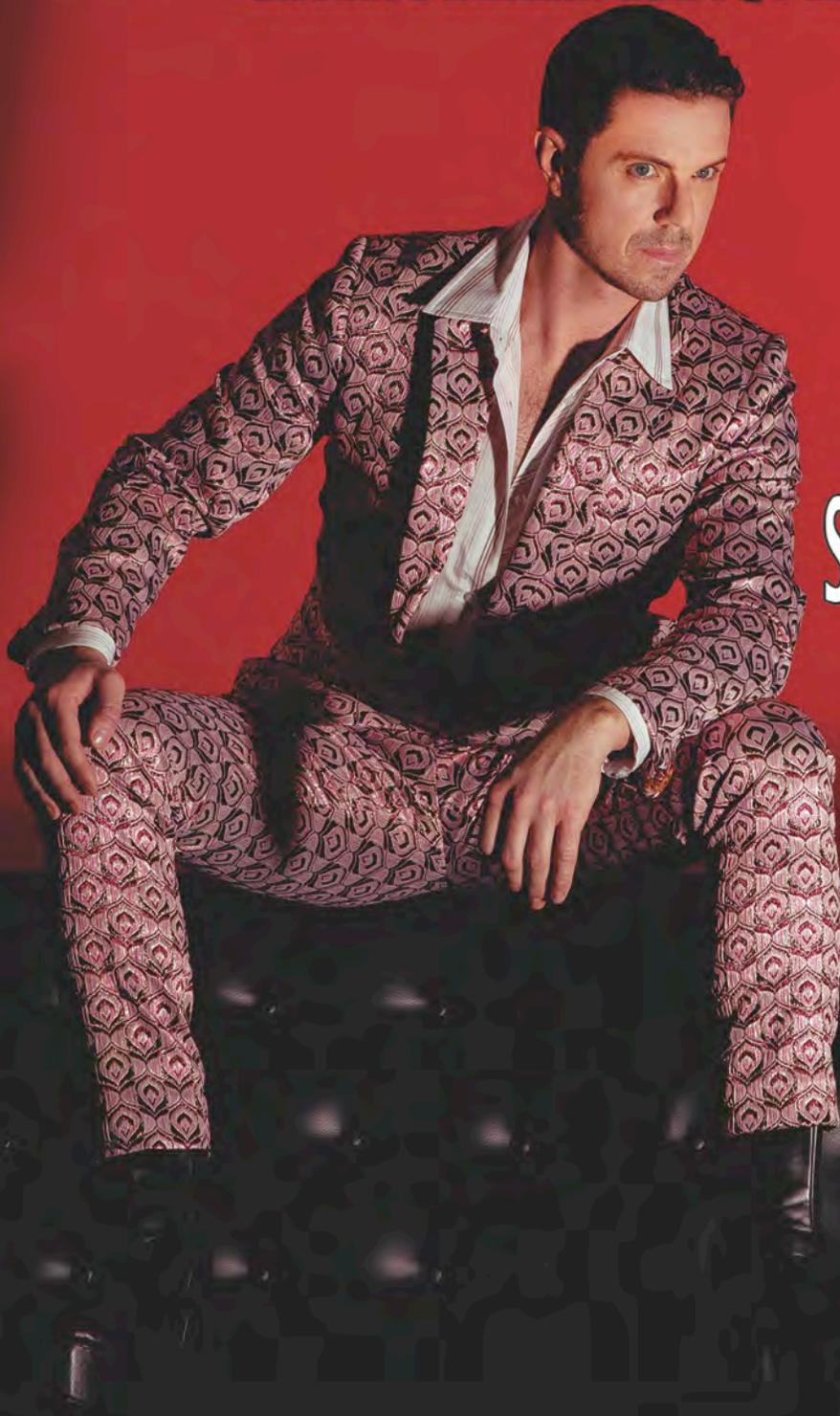


# GRAB MAGAZINE

CHICAGO'S BIWEEKLY LGBTQ PUBLICATION



SCISSOR SISTERS  
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**Please see page 21 for facts about the COVID-19 Coronavirus.**

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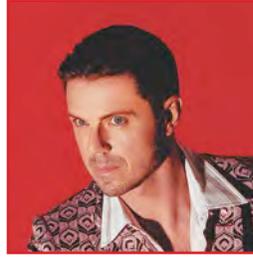
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 1961 - 2019

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*Kevin Tachman*



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## GRAB JAKE

## Jake Shears Finds His Roots

### Scissor Sisters frontman talks new Scissor-sounding 'Meltdown,' his next dance album and Judith Light

By Chris Azzopardi

Chill vibes permeated his 2018 self-titled solo album, but Jake Shears feels like dancing again. Shears' latest single "Meltdown" is a club-made banger with shared Scissor Sisters disco DNA – which is exactly the point. Because even though the band has been on a hiatus since 2012, the glam-rock group's frontman says his latest solo music is an extension of their legacy.

From New Orleans, Shears talked about the constant "are the Scissor Sisters reuniting?" question, why Judith Light should play him in a biopic about his life, and how his *Masked Singer* unicorn costume got him DMs from the plushies community.

**Chris Azzopardi: What did you want people to feel when they heard "Meltdown"?**

**Jake Shears:** I wanted to make people dance. It's absolutely my straight-up tribute to the fabulous Sylvester in such a big way. I wanted it to really invoke that kind of carefree spirit through the vocal styling and the bassline and just sort of how the song is structured, but at the same time I also wanted the song to feel unsettling and a little bit creepy (laughs). I don't know why I always tend to have a creepy streak run through my stuff, but I like stuff with a little bit of a dark edge.

It's funny, because with my last record, I followed this vision. The last record was so personal and it was such a crazy thing to be detached from the band. I just followed my heart with that record. Not that I'm not following my heart with this, but I definitely was not making club music with my last record.

**CA: The last record sounded a lot like you were cutting the umbilical cord.**

**JS:** (Laughs.) I think that's a good way

of putting it. I just made the last record with almost a set of rules. It was creative in a very specific way. So now I'm feeling like I can kind of throw the rule book out the window at the moment and just make some dance music again. It's been a while since I fully made a carefree club song.

**CA: How far along are you?**

**JS:** About half of the record is done. The songs are so fucking good. I'm really very excited about them. They share a common feel. And yeah, I've just got a bunch of great singles right now.

**CA: When we last spoke, you talked about how joyful music is important right now, when things happening in the world aren't all that joyful. Is that vibe something you're bringing to the rest of these tracks?**

**JS:** Yeah. The music is super fun, but it's – I don't want to say it's cynical

because I'm not a cynical person at all. It's just a little more abstract. I was just reading an article in the Times about TikTok killing the radio songwriter and all kinds of contemporary pop records. It's changing songwriting, and there's this whole piece about it. And I guess. I mean, I don't listen to a ton of contemporary music, but people are only really writing lyrics that are words that would only actually come out of their mouths in conversations. I guess a lot of pop singers are basically only singing things that they would say. That's not what I'm doing. (Laughs.)

**CA: So you're not writing this album for the TikTok audience?**

**JS:** That's the thing: Who knows! There's an old Scissor's song that's just been making the rounds on there. Do you know the song "I Can't Decide" off *Ta-Dah*? If you go on Spotify, I think it's our most played song now. It became some fucking meme. But,



Photo By Kevin Tachman



SAT 3.21 9PM

# BAR WARS EPISODE 3: REVENGE OF THE SITH

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SUN 3.22 4PM

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basically, every teenager knows this song (laughs). It's very strange.

**CA: I guess you can't really think about how a song will impact an audience at this point because there are just too many ways it can.**

**JS:** Yeah, I just don't even think about it at all really anymore. It's the kind of thing where I don't know at this point; it's sort of all bets are off. And there's so much music that gets put out. We're sort of living in this time where there's this excess of music. There's too much music out there, and there's too much stuff to sift through. I think it's a really difficult time for listeners, that is if people are even really listening.

So now I'm just sort of making this stuff for pleasure and passion, just stuff that gets me excited and stuff that I like to listen to. I mean, when I make a good song, I play the hell out of it until it comes out. Once it's out, I never listen to it again (laughs). But I will basically make stuff that I like to rock out to, even on my own.

**CA: I imagine that was more difficult to do in the band. It was a collaboration, so you all had to be in agreement.**

**JS:** Yeah, I mean, some of the time (laughs). No – it would be that way in the Scissor Sisters, but this stuff doesn't have to go through as many filters.

**CA: What does the culture of where you live now – in New Orleans and sometimes in Louisville, Kentucky – bring to you creatively?**

**JS:** In New Orleans, I can turn everything down a bit. I get so much stimulation, and I'm so stimulated day to day in my life in general, so I come to New Orleans to really slow down. It gives me the space and it gives me elbow room. I just do a lot of reading and writing and fucking playing video

games and hanging with my dog. I really have it to kind of unwind and sort of reset. I'm buying a house down here. I've got an apartment here that I've had for four years and now I'm fully sort of ... I don't know, it's weird. My life has felt very sort of unmoored the last four or five years or so. I'm at this point where I really do need to put down some solid roots and really make a new home for myself because I've really

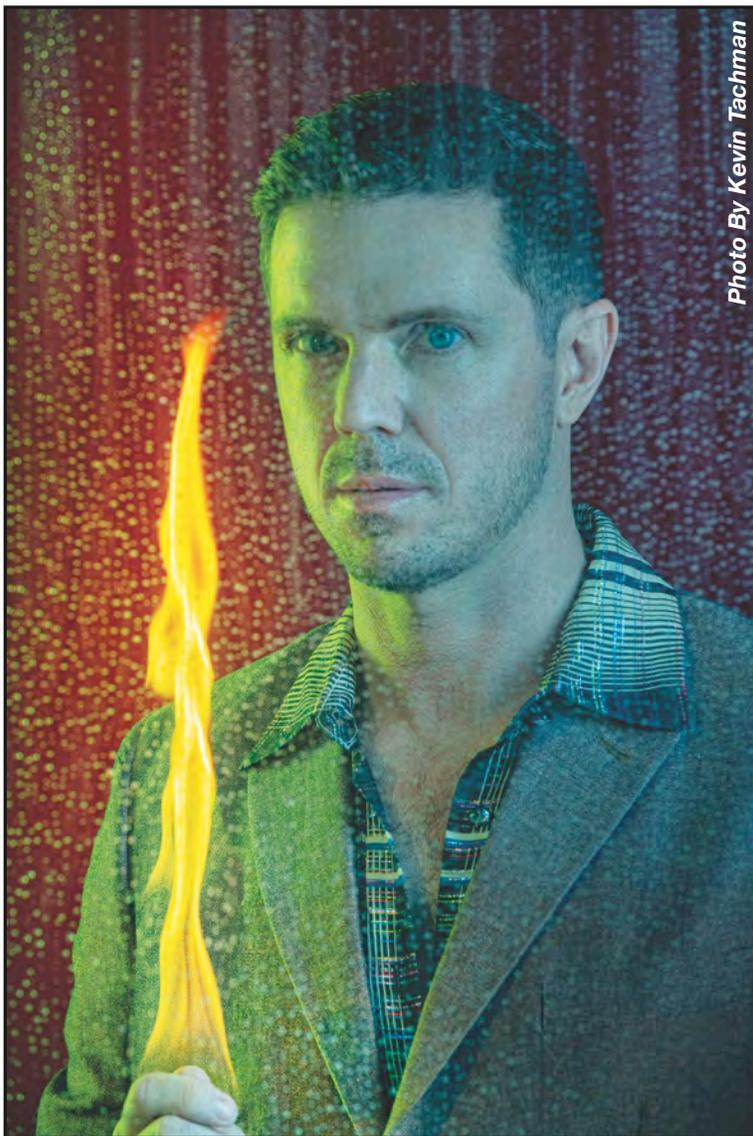


Photo By Kevin Tachman

been living out of a suitcase the past couple of years.

**CA: That's a life you're used to.**

**JS:** It's true. But also, I'm 41 years old (laughs). And it's really easy to just not commit and keep floating, so I'm just trying to make some strong commitments in my life just to anchor myself a bit.

**CA: Are you bored yet with people asking you if you're ever going to reunite with the Scissor Sisters?**

**JS:** I mean, it's sweet, but I'm already giving you what you'd be getting. These would be the Scissor Sisters records for the most part (laughs). In general, this would be the stuff that we'd be putting out. So it's a bit of a confusing question. But I know, I understand.

There's a magic, especially live, seeing everybody together. But musically I feel like I'm continuing the legacy of the band. I'm definitely not reinventing a wheel when it comes to my own stuff. This is just the stuff I like to make.

**CA: If you're going back to this disco-dance-club sound, why not make it with the Scissor Sisters?**

**JS:** (Laughs.) Because I don't feel like twisting anybody's arm. I don't want to pull teeth to make it happen. I'm sure someday we will write again, there's no doubt. But no one's really chomping at the bit. I think I'm kind of the only one who really truly loved it. Being in the band, everyone sort of answers to this entity, which is this thing that you're doing together. It has the last word. And I think after a long time that gets frustrating for everybody, especially if it wasn't necessarily what you thought you'd be doing with your life. If everybody wanted to do it again, I'd be super happy to, but I would want them to want to do it and do it for the pleasure of it. And I'm sure someday maybe they'll get the hankering

for it.

**CA: You were recently revealed as the masked singer on the UK's version of 'The Masked Singer'. How did you go about picking the songs you sang on the show?**

**JS:** I just had a long list, and my number one: I really wanted to do "Babooshka" by Kate Bush. In the UK

they hadn't had *The Masked Singer* yet so this was the first season, so I wanted to do something that the British public would know, sort of a standard song over there, but still a weird one.

It was truly not the easiest song to start off with. Just singing under that thing was really, really tough. But they were all hard. The other ones were even kind of harder, but I was getting used to it. You just can't breathe in there. You're out of breath the whole time. But they let me choose the songs and my "Girls and Boys" cover (originally by Blur), I was really proud of. It was just so much fun. It was a blast. I was devastated when I got unmasked. I truly was. I was really bummed out. (Laughs.)

**CA: I imagine for some people seeing you in a unicorn costume was a different kind of thrill. Did some plushies slip into your DMs?**

**JS:** Yeah, I got a lot of DMs telling me that people thought it was very sexy, that unicorn outfit, so there were definitely some furies or plushies or whatever that were super into it. (Laughs.)

**CA: Have you thought about who you might cast as you if a biopic based on your 'Boys Keep Swinging' happens?**

**JS:** God, that's a good question.

**CA: Maybe your friend Kelly Ripa in Jake Shears drag?**

**JS:** Yeah (laughs). If it were me at 20 years old, she would be amazing as my mom. I mean, she'd be so good. God, I'm trying to think who would play me.

**CA: Keep in mind we have access to CGI and other post-production tricks.**

**JS:** I mean, I feel like Judith Light is so versatile and she really is truly one of the best actors of our time, so I feel like she'd at least bring something interesting to the table with it. And they could do motion capture. So I feel like Judith Light could do me in motion capture and it would be incredible.

**CA: What about another book – would you be up for writing one?**

**JS:** Yeah, I would love to. I'm planning on someday writing another one that starts where this one left off. That one finished in 2006 and we're in 2020 now,



so I would probably need five more years and I will write the next one. The next one would be even trashier and juicier than the last one. My 30s were pretty decadent. (Laughs.)



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# GRAB BRANDY



Photo By Chris Phelps

## Brandy Clark Is Living Her Country Dream The country musician is picking up Grammy nods, writing for Reba and, oh, she's gay too

By Chris Azzopardi

So, about doing an LGBTQ press interview such as this one: coveted out country music singer-songwriter Brandy Clark is really into it. "This is exciting for me," she tells me one recent afternoon.

To be clear, Clark, who's been carrying the torch for LGBTQ people in country music since launching a recording career in 2013, has never shied away from LGBTQ press. Who knows why, then, she's done so little of it. Clark has, after all, a full resume: four-time Grammy nominee (including a nod, in 2015, for Best New Artist), songwriter for Reba McEntire and Miranda Lambert and Jennifer Nettles and Keith Urban, and co-writer of Kacey Musgraves' progressive country ditty "Follow Your Arrow," which casually brought LGBTQ inclusivity to Southern consciousness.

On the heels of her third album, *Your Life Is a Record*, Clark, 44, opened

up about how coming out in her 20s served her career well, being embraced in Nashville, and hoping for a major out gay male country star.

**Chris Azzopardi: Who knows which songs will affect me tomorrow, but right now I'm feeling "Bad Car" and "The Past Is the Past" because I'm a sucker for nostalgia.**

**Brandy Clark:** That's always great to hear because "Bad Car" was one that I just didn't know if it would fit on the record. It was in the mix for my last record too and ended up not fitting. We didn't even record it; it was just one that was tossed around. And it came up again, which always tells me it's a great song if it continues to bubble up, and that one's really hitting a lot of people.

**CA: I'm a big fan of the way you write. How did you learn to write so**

**well?**

**BC:** Oh, good question. I think it starts with: I love stories and I grew up around great storytellers in my family, and I'm drawn to great storytellers. So there's that. I love to read, I love to watch great TV shows that are written really well, and I love country music. And I think I was fortunate to grow up in a time where there was a lot of great country songs. I grew up next to my grandparents, so the music they were listening to wasn't necessarily on country radio at the time.

I remember my grandma coming home from both a Loretta Lynn and Merle Haggard concert, who I think are two of the greatest songwriters to ever live. Dolly Parton was big in our home. Then when I was a teen and in my early 20s the country music of the '90s was happening and there was so much great songwriting in all that. The first modern country artist that I really was a

huge fan of was Patty Loveless and she had songs like “You Don’t Even Know Who I Am” written by Gretchen Peters, who is one of my favorite writers and someone I would consider a huge influence.

I love songs that make me feel like I’m right there, I love songs that describe in three-and-a-half minutes a split-second decision, and then I love great story songs like (Kenny Rogers’) “The Gambler.” I think that’s what it was for me: It started out with just a love of storytelling and a love of music, and then being in Nashville and being around some of the best songwriters in the world, you’re only going to get better. And that’s what I did: I put myself in this place where the greatest are at.

**CA: With Kacey Musgraves and out gay country songwriter Shane McAnally, you co-wrote “Follow Your Arrow.” How much input did you have in the line “kiss lots of boys, or kiss lots of girls if that’s something you’re into”?**

**BC:** What’s funny about that was: I think when we were writing that it wasn’t even something that was like, “Oh, should we put that in there?” It just worked. And with Shane and I being gay – and Kacey just being someone who’s so fluid in her thinking – it wasn’t a big deal.

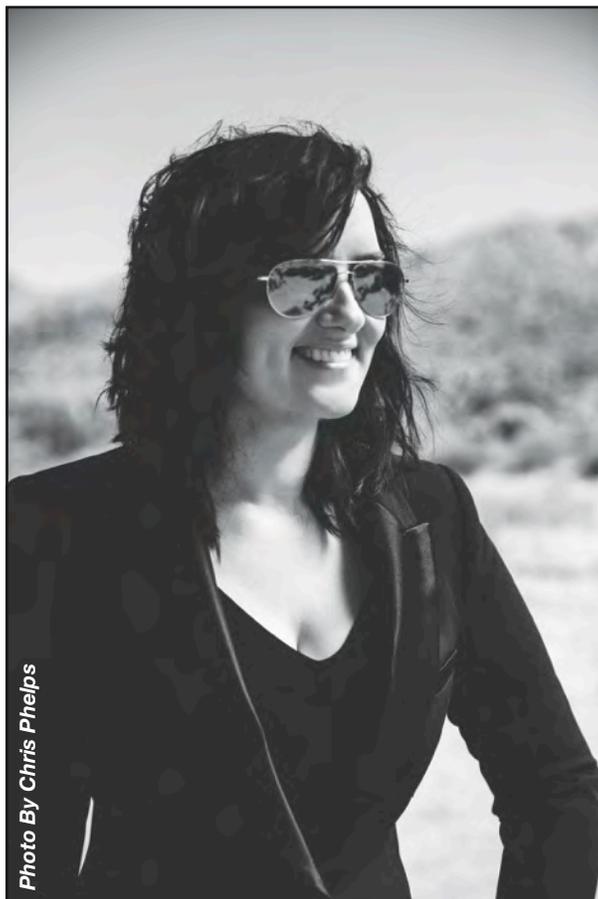
And people would always say to me, “Oh, I bet you wrote that ‘kiss lots of girls’ line (laughs). I said, “I don’t even remember! I hope I did!” But I don’t know if I did or not. I mean, I’m really proud of it. It’s crazy because it’s by far not the biggest hit I’ve had, but impact-wise one of the biggest songs I’ve had. When people find out I was a co-writer on it, it’s like I wrote “Bridge Over Troubled Water.” (Laughs.)

**CA: But you understand why, right?**

**BC:** Yes! Oh, I’m so proud of it. And I don’t think any of us realized that day or even when she put it on the album what a moment it was for a lot of people. I’m really proud of that, that the LGBTQ community feels represented, because I live in a bit of a bubble. I’ve always lived in pretty progressive areas. I grew up in the Northwest and I had parents who were gonna be accepting of me no matter what I was; if I was a

green alien, they would be like, “OK, well we love you. Don’t smoke.” (Laughs.) And then moving to Nashville and discovering I was gay: I was a late bloomer. Nashville’s a pretty liberal city for the South, and I was always in a group of people who were gay.

**CA: I can’t imagine that was the case in Morton, Washington, where you**



**grew up, and where the population is around 1,000. How did you survive that experience?**

**BC:** The truth is, luckily, I didn’t realize I was gay until I was in my early 20s.

**CA: Did not knowing until you moved to Nashville work in your favor?**

**BC:** Had I realized early on, I don’t know what that would’ve been like for me. Because it was hard enough when I was in my 20s. My dad had passed away by this time. I had a mom who was so accepting, but I can’t imagine being in high school, being in a small school. I think the things about me that are pretty gay actually helped me fit in. I love sports, and one way to fit in in Morton was to be good at sports, and so I was. And I just didn’t have a clue I

was gay, and some of that was probably because gay was not represented.

**CA: Right. Conceptually you didn’t really know what you could identify as.**

**BC:** Exactly. I just knew that good girls didn’t sleep with their boyfriend and I was a good girl. I mean, that’s what I thought. And my parents were pretty strict. I didn’t have a lot of rope to figure those things out. I didn’t have real serious boyfriends. If there was a dance, I had to be home 10 minutes after the dance, so I didn’t have a lot of room to explore sexuality. I had friends who were sexually active; I just wasn’t. And I think so much of it was: I was so focused on sports at the time, and right when I got out of high school I got really into music. It wasn’t until I fell in love for the first time, and happened to fall in love with a woman. It really freaked me out. Like, “Oh my god, I can’t be gay. But if being in love with her makes me gay, I guess I’m gay.” (Laughs.) I have a really strong heart in that way. And I’m a fool and will follow it off a cliff. But then the second time I fell in love with a woman, I was like, “Oh, you know what, I think I’m gay.” (Laughs.) And then I was able to wrap my head around it a little differently.

Like I said, I had an incredibly accepting family. I didn’t have heavy-duty religion playing into it for me, telling me I was going to hell. I had a lot of acceptance, and it was still difficult for me, so I can’t imagine what these kids go through that have those things working against them.

**CA: Did songwriting help you come to terms with being gay?**

**BC:** It did. One of my early co-writers in Nashville, I remember coming out to her and not knowing what she would think. She was so loving and she said to me, “I think it’s part of why you’re a really great songwriter.” I started to embrace myself differently. And I do: I think writing songs helped me process it.

**CA: I’ve heard it said that LGBTQ people are as evolved as they are because we have to go through**

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- **Take 1 tablet once a day, every day**, not just when you think you have been exposed to HIV-1.
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- Get tested for HIV-1 at least every 3 months. You must stay HIV-negative to keep taking DESCOVY for PrEP.

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- Know your HIV status and the HIV status of your partners. If your partner is living with HIV, your risk of getting HIV is lower if your partner consistently takes HIV treatment every day.
- Get tested for other STIs. Some STIs make it easier for HIV to infect you.
- Practice safer sex by using latex or polyurethane condoms.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about all the ways to help reduce HIV risk.

**GET MORE INFORMATION**

- This is only a brief summary of important information about DESCOVY for PrEP. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist to learn more.
- Go to [DESCOVY.com/prep](http://DESCOVY.com/prep) or call 1-800-GILEAD-5
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\*Advancing Access<sup>®</sup> co-pay support is available for commercially insured eligible patients only. Subject to change; for full terms and conditions, visit [GileadAdvancingAccess.com](http://GileadAdvancingAccess.com).



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**years of self-reflection. We are forced to self reflect.**

**BC:** That makes sense. I can tell you one thing: There are a lot of reasons I feel fortunate that I'm gay, but one of them is that I've never fallen in love for the wrong reasons. It's never been because of what someone looks like or what they did for a living because it was already like, "OK, this isn't the popular choice already," (laughs) so it's always been what my heart wanted.

I saw there's this new show on Netflix called *Love Is Blind* and I haven't watched it, but I feel like that every time I've fallen in love, that's what it's been for me. It's been an emotional connection first. And I do feel fortunate about that.

**CA: Years ago, you were proclaimed our "great lesbian hope" by AfterEllen. Maybe you've seen that.**

**BC:** No, I didn't see that! But I love that.

**CA: When I read that, I wondered if you felt pressure to carry the torch within a genre where there is so little LGBTQ representation?**

**BC:** Pressure's not the word. I feel a responsibility. Not everyone can be visible; I can be. And so if me being visible makes it easier for the next person to be, then that makes me really

happy. And also I loved country music from probably the time I was conceived and I didn't know I was gay, so I didn't know I didn't fit into that. I just knew I loved it. I loved Patsy Cline. I love, like I said, Merle Haggard. George Strait. Reba. I'm kind of glad I didn't know I was gay then because I would've maybe thought, "Oh, well, I can't be that."

**CA: But later, did you ever worry your sexuality could be an issue if you were going to be a country music artist?**

**BC:** Yeah, for sure. When I really came out of the closet I thought, "OK, that dream is dead," and then it's funny how when you start being your authentic self things line up differently. It wasn't long after that that I got approached about making my first record and I remember saying to my manager at the time who I was just meeting who approached me about it: "I feel like I need to tell you before we go any further that I'm gay." And it was no big deal to her. She said, "I just think the focus is your music." And I've been really fortunate in that I've had two managers now and a couple of publicists and everybody's been really good about "It's part of the story, it's not the whole story." And it's definitely not something I'm ashamed of. But I

definitely did think, "Oh, I can't have that."

**CA: Because there was no template for artists like you?**

**BC:** Yes. By the time I had the opportunity to make an album, k.d. lang was way far out of the closet. Chely Wright had come out.

**CA: But look what happened to Chely's career. She admits it stalled.**

**BC:** I think part of my journey is that I was always out, so I don't know what would have happened had I come out. I just know that I've been embraced and I've never felt like something didn't happen because I was gay. Maybe it has, but if it has I've never felt it.

**CA: It must've lit a fire under your feet once Reba – a country music icon – recorded some of your songs, and that, I think, happened early in your career.**

**BC:** Well, it's funny that you would say "early." I had been in the game of writing songs and been around Nashville for over 15 years at that point. When that happened, it started to feel like my ship was coming in.

**CA: So you'd been working toward this for many years before you actually released your debut album '12 Stories' in 2013.**

**BC:** I've been in Nashville for 22 years, I think. So really it's only been in the last seven years that I've had an artist career, and before that I was toiling away as a staff songwriter. All of it kind of happened at once. I mentioned Shane and some other people, and some people who are creatively like-minded, and things started to happen for that group of people that I was in, and I don't think that was an accident. I think everybody in there had been working a long time and (when they) met, little fires started popping up everywhere, like that new book. Reba had cut another song of mine and it fell off the album, which meant it didn't make the album, so when she did *All the Women I Am* (in 2010) and I had two cuts on that I thought, "This can happen." It was a real turning point, and then right when that was happening I had the opportunity to make *12 Stories*.

**CA: Apparently you grew up just a couple of hours away from another out gay artist with your first name: Brandi Carlile. Is there ever going to be a duet? Do you guys talk? Do you guys go to gay bars together?**

**BC:** (Laughs.) We've never gone to a gay bar together. Absolutely love the

other Brandi. We've done some shows together, and I was going to get her to sing on my record and it just didn't pan out. There was a song I was going to do that I didn't do that I was going to have her do with me.

Maybe next time that will work out. But I thought it would be really cool because it was a part that typically a man would've sung. I thought it'd be great to have Brandi on this.

**CA: After listening to this album, it's clear you like to challenge gender norms. On "Who You Thought I Was," you sing about being a kid and pretending to be Elvis and not a cowgirl but a cowboy.**

**BC:** It's very funny you would mention that. I actually have my manager to thank for that. And at the time it seemed like a small thing, but it's such a big thing. So right before I went in to make this record I was going back through my catalog and listening to everything, and I had written that song "Who You Thought" with Jonathan Singleton and Jessie Jo Dillon. Jonathan's a great singer and he sang the demo, so I always thought of it as a guy song, but I loved it. And so I said to my manager, "I wanna play you this and it's probably not right but I just don't want to miss anything." And she

was like, "Brandy, you have to record this song." And she's like, "Don't change it to 'cowgirl' and don't change the Elvis thing," and I said, "Oh. I hadn't even thought about it." She said, "It's way more badass if you don't."

**CA: It reads as queer to me. I love it.**  
**BC:** Reads as queer – I like that!

**CA: Do you find people in the LGBTQ community expect you to be more political than you are because you're a lesbian and there's so much happening that is directly affecting the community?**

**BC:** I don't know what people expect of me. I'm not a real political person, and I'm not even necessarily that proud to say that. I'm just not. I mean, I vote. The way I lean would not shock anyone (laughs). But I just ... I never get into it. Maybe I should more. Maybe that's something I should do more of. I will say one thing: When I was growing up I didn't see a lesbian that looked like me and that was part of my hang up. I don't have short hair, not that there's anything wrong with short hair. If I had different features, I'd wear it and wear it proudly, but I can't. And so I do think I represent a kind of lesbian that maybe somebody growin'

up is like, "Oh, OK, well, I could see myself like her."

I can't wait for the time, and I think we're moving toward it, that being gay or lesbian is not such a big deal. I see with my nephews, it's not. And we've had to pave that way, by the way. It's way easier for us than it was even 10 years ago. But I really do look forward to a time where, like with country music, it wouldn't be a big deal for a male singer to be gay because I haven't seen that.

**CA: Is it easier for a lesbian to be a country star?**

**BC:** It is.

**CA: Why do you think that might be?**

**BC:** I don't know, but I can tell you this: When I met Shane McAnally I drew a lot of strength from him. He wasn't the only guy I knew who is gay who writes songs, but he was the one I knew the best at the time. I was out but I wasn't super loud about it, but when I met him and we started working together I thought, "This is so much easier for me than it is for him. So, by god, I'm just gonna be who I am." And I don't know why that is. I really don't. But I'd love to see it. Because I think if we see a (a major) gay male country singer, it would change a lot of people's minds.

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# GRAB BETTY

## More than just a memory – an interview with Betty Buckley

By Gregg Shapiro

In the hierarchy of divas, few would disagree that Betty Buckley ranks close to the top. From her Tony Award-winning star turn in the Broadway musical *Cats* and her recent run in the national tour of the revival of *Hello, Dolly!*, to the countless other musicals in which she's performed including *1776*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Triumph of Love* and *Sunset Boulevard*. Not limited to the stage, Buckley has been acting on the big and small screen alike for more than 40 years, beginning with her portrayal of compassionate gym teacher Miss Collins in the Sissy Spacek version of *Carrie*. Buckley is also renowned for her live performances and her most recent albums, *Story Songs* and *Hope*, do a marvelous job of capturing that energy. I'm grateful to Betty for taking the time to speak with me in early 2020.

**Gregg Shapiro:** *I'd like to begin by saying that I love everything about your 2017 and 2018 live albums *Story Songs* and *Hope*, respectively, beginning with the song selection, which included tunes by Radiohead, Steely Dan, Peter Gabriel, Joni Mitchell, Emmylou Harris, J.D. Souther, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Rosanne Cash and T-Bone Burnett, among others. Would you say that that is an accurate representation of your musical taste?*

**Betty Buckley:** Yes, a lot of it. I love beautiful story songs wherever I find them, in whatever genre. My musical taste is very eclectic. From singer/songwriters, both contemporary and from the '60s, '70s, '80s. That spectrum of writers that you listed are some of my favorites. But I also love jazz and jazz instrumentalists which is why I works with jazz musicians. They have a wide musical palette and they are capable of helping me interpret the stories I want to tell with beautiful dissonance and beautiful colors in the chords that they use. I love good

stories or songs that have a character, someone that I can play as an actress in situations that can be defined in a musical setting.

**GS:** *As expected, you also performed an array of songs from musical theater, including a few by the current generation of Broadway songwriters including Joe Iconis and Jason Robert Brown. When I interviewed Jason in late 2018, he said that having you as a champion of his music was "thrilling and unexpected". What is it about*

**Brown's music that appeals to you?**

**BB:** He's one of our best! I recently did three concerts with him at Subculture in New York with some new material, for me, and one or two pieces that he's written for me for those concerts. I'll be adding those into my new repertoire, as well. He's one of my favorite writers in that he writes character and story songs so beautifully. The language he uses, lyrically, is so vivid. He creates the scenes for the character to live in.

**GS:** *Another cover you performed was "Falling in Love" by Lisa Loeb,*





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**who like you is from the Dallas/Fort Worth region. Did that have anything with why you chose it?**

**BB:** No. I've just been a fan of her work for a really long time. We share a sound man. I was able to access some songs of hers via our mutual love for this sound man Terry. It's been really interesting [laughs], through the many years that we both worked with him, our concerts don't fall on the same day so we both get to have access to him. I met her through Terry and then discovered that she was from Dallas. That song, "Falling in Love", I think is one of her best songs. I recorded it years ago and then brought it back in recent history. It's such a great story song.

**GS: Jerry Herman passed away in late December 2019. Would you please say a few words about singing his songs when you played Dolly Levi in the 2018/2019 national tour of Hello, Dolly!?**

**BB:** It was a remarkable gift of a job, a wonderful blessing to be able to do that great show in that remarkable production directed by Jerry Zaks and produced by Scott Rudin. It was really a joy. I had previously done Jerry Herman's play Dear World, directed by Gillian Lynne, in London several years ago. I have done two Jerry Herman shows. It was an honor to be invited to sing at his memorial on February 3rd. I'm excited to be a part of that and to celebrate his incredible life. I met him, when I was very young, about a possible project. I don't remember what it was or what happened with it. He invited me to his apartment in New York City and gave me a beautiful lunch. It was my only one-on-one encounter with him, but I'll never forget that. When my friends called me to invite me to be a part of this memorial service, they said that Jerry requested that I sing for him there. It's a real honor.

**GS: Your work in theater has no doubt garnered you a large following in the LGBTQ+ community. What does that following mean to you?**

**BB:** There's nothing like an audience of the LGBTQ community. They're the most supportive, the most loving. They

have such tender hearts and are ready to go with you on an emotional journey. That's what I do. I'll never forget the first time I performed "Meadowlark" from The Baker's Wife for a huge audience that was largely gay at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. I was discovering my interpretation of that song and people went crazy. I was like, "Oh, my God!" Through the love and appreciation of this community I've found myself as an artist. I'll be forever grateful for that.

**GS: In the 10 years that has passed since you released your country-**



**oriented Bootleg: Boardmixes From The Road country music has only grown in popularity. Is there any possibility of a new album in that vein from you, perhaps one featuring the new breed of female country singer/songwriters such as Brandi Carlile, Kacey Musgraves, Miranda Lambert and Brandy Clark?**

**BB:** What a brilliant idea! Thank you [laughs]! It's a great idea.

**GS: Since first playing Abby on Eight Is Enough more than 40 years ago, you have been regularly acting on TV, in shows such as Oz, Preacher and Supergirl. What's the best part of working in television?**

**BB:** It's fast [laughs]. I've really been

blessed to be able to do Supergirl a few times, and prior to that Pretty Little Liars. It's a joy! They're such sweet people. I love that. The showrunner has literally written a role for me and it's very gratifying.

**GS: You have acted in two M. Night Shyamalan movies – The Happening and Split. What do you like best about working with Night?**

**BB:** He's an incredible person. He's a beautiful radiant being and he's filled with wit and mischief and humor and joy. He works with the same group of people in Philadelphia where he shoots his films. It's like a family environment. He's been a great patron of mine. He likes my work and I love him. It's just a pleasure. I hope he keeps hiring me. Split was one of the biggest international box office hits of 2017.

**GS: Finally, if the subject isn't off-limits, would you mind sharing some of your thoughts on the Cats movie?**

**BB:** I was happy to be at the premiere in New York City last month. It was great to see Andrew (Lloyd Webber) again. Basically, it was a time period of remembrances of the original team, which was one of the greatest joys of my life. To work with Trevor Nunn and Andrew and the great Gillian Lynne. That great job opportunity to play Grizabella who has been such a teacher and friend and soulmate for all these years, and to have that song, "Memory" be one of my signature songs is an incredible thing in my life. It was joyous to be there. The movie itself, I really enjoyed some of the performances tremendously. The girl who played the white cat Victoria – Francesca Hayward. And Robbie Fairchild who played Munkustrap was wonderful. Of course, Judi Dench and Ian McKellan, I'd watch them read a phone book. It was incredible to see them. My friend Paco Delgado, who designed Split, was the costume designer, so it was a wonderful reunion with him. I really liked Taylor Swift's new song; I think she did a great job. And I thought Jennifer Hudson did a kickass version of "Memory". I think that some of the CGI would have been better rethought. There are moments of the movie, such as Skimbleshanks, the railway cat's number they do on the train tracks, was great. It certainly has its highs [laughs].



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# POSITIVE THOUGHTS

## I'm a Beautiful Black Queen Living With HIV, Not Stigma

By Porchia Dees

HIV

I am a Beautiful Black Queen Living with HIV. It has taken a long time for me to come to terms with that statement, because the concepts of beauty and HIV don't usually go together. Growing up poz and trying to cope with the stigma surrounding my experience has been challenging, to say the least. I am a part of the first generation of children who were born positive. I was born Dec. 5, 1986. At the time, my biological mother was using drugs and heavy in her addiction. If it weren't for my aunt, who I call mom and who took legal guardianship of me, I don't think I would be here today.

My pediatrician told my parents that he didn't think I'd live to see my 5th birthday, but clearly God had other plans. As a kid living with HIV, I was assigned a social worker who kept me involved in lots of events for children battling different life-threatening diseases. I attended camp every summer, which gave me the chance to be around other kids who understood what I was going through. We all had our camp "crushes." But I would soon find out that dating at camp was a lot different from dating in the real world, and that the dating and hook-up guidelines we follow as a society are not inclusive of someone living with HIV – someone like me. My parents are old-school, African-American, super-religious types, so I never had the sex talk. My social worker at the hospital didn't say this to me directly, but in her attempt to educate me on HIV transmission, without realizing it, she led me to believe that I would never be able to have sex or have babies. And there was one huge thing she forgot to prepare me for: stigma.

The next time I learned about HIV, I was a seventh grader in Sex Ed. It terrified me. I remember sitting in a classroom of about 30 kids, with the health educator showing us all these disgusting pictures of sexually transmitted diseases, and listening to how grossed out everybody was. When she started talking about my experience, I got really quiet. The pictures she showed didn't look anything like me. Instead, they were pictures of middle-aged, white, gay men or Africans wasting away. They were all pictures of people who were really sick or dying; there were no pictures of people who were healthy and living. Everyone left class believing that if you have sex, you could get HIV. And that if you get HIV, you are going to die. It made me even more afraid to have sex, and it further deepened the notion in my mind that someone with HIV wouldn't be able to have a normal, healthy sex life.

Throughout the years, I had to learn how to navigate dating and sex with HIV on my own. The only thing I ever learned

about disclosure was from my mom, who told me to be careful who I shared my business with because people in this world could be cruel.

Although my mother didn't mean to, her advice, along with the isolation I was already feeling, further perpetuated stigma. She made me feel like I had something to hide, which in turn created more feelings of fear and shame. I struggled the hardest with stigma in my adolescent years. When I was younger and trying to fit in with the rest of society, it was hard for me to accept my HIV status, because it came with so many different misconceptions.

Dating and maintaining a social life became difficult for me, because of all the ignorance surrounding my experience. I dealt with many fake friends and lovers who would gossip about me and disclose my status to people, with the intent of making me look less attractive. I started to internalize all of the negative things that were being said.

I never thought I'd be able to have kids; I didn't know what I could do sexually; I didn't think I would be able to find someone open-minded enough to want to date me. I watched my mom pass away from AIDS-related illnesses during my junior year of high school, so I never really planned for a future, because I didn't think I'd live to be the age I am today (33 years strong). I went through this really dark stage in my early 20s, and I almost died from rebelling and not adhering to my medication.

Stigma is killing people more than the actual disease now. Treatment adherence is greatly affected by the stigma. Treatment has come such a long way, and people are able to live long and healthy lives with HIV – if they can get connected to care and stay adherent to HIV medication. It is no longer a death sentence. It is a chronic, manageable illness.

I see it happen often. When someone is newly diagnosed, they internalize that stigma, which can lead to deep depression. They believe their lives are over and they will never be able to lead a normal, healthy life or find love. In my opinion, it's because they struggle with this sort of pre- and post-diagnosis identity crisis, and being positive becomes hard to accept. I don't have a pre-diagnosis identity to refer to, but I do know what it's like to internalize the stigma that has been programmed into our minds.

The stigma has never sat well with me. Living with HIV is my normal, and I didn't die. I am still thriving. I had to grow to understand that the insults, judgments and shade that people attempted to throw were actually projections of their own fear, misconceptions, pain and insecurities,



and that it had absolutely nothing to do with me.

For so long, I just let people gossip about their perceptions of my reality. Even today, every time I get up and share my story, I am extremely nervous, and my anxiety starts to kick in. I think it's because I am experiencing PTSD from all of the stuff that I went through growing up, and remembering all the things people said about me. But then, as I push through that fear, I experience this sort of liberating sensation. I get to portray my experience in the way that I want to, and I get to change the narrative.

In hindsight, I can't believe I let stigma keep me silent for so long. Now that I have embarked on this advocacy journey, it is like I am seeing things through a new lens. I have discovered this new world full of people who can either relate to living with HIV, or with other parts of my story. By remaining silent, I was unconsciously allowing that stigma to thrive in the silence.

Disclosure has been one of the scariest, most difficult things to deal with in my experience. Yes, I have encountered a lot of ignorance and hate, but I have also found a lot of people who understand me, like me, and love me regardless. Contrary to what people believe about my experience, it has been a blessing in disguise, and I know now that this is a gift. I believe God created me specifically for this purpose: to change people's perspective on what it means to live with HIV. To know me is to love me, and the beauty in that lies in the fact that my whole being dispels the stigma.

I am a Beautiful Black Queen, and my status doesn't change that.

*Porchia Dees was born HIV positive in 1986 and is from San Bernardino, California. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBT wire service. Visit their websites – <http://thebody.com>, <http://hivplusmag.com>, <http://positivelyaware.com> and – <http://poz.com> for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.*

# Share Facts About COVID-19

Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

FACT  
**1**

**Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.**

Fear and anxiety about COVID-19 can cause people to avoid or reject others even though they are not at risk for spreading the virus.

FACT  
**2**

**For most people, the immediate risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be low.**

Older adults and people of any age with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, lung disease, or heart disease, are at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

FACT  
**3**

**Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.**

For up-to-date information, visit CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

FACT  
**4**

**There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

FACT  
**5**

**You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:**

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you

- Develop symptoms

AND

- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.



# GRAB A PLANE



## MILE HIGH FUN – YOUR DENVER WEEKEND

By Bill Malcolm

Denver is a millennial magnet and has grown 20 percent since 2010. The metro area now has 2.9 million people. Happily they put in an excellent light rail system in anticipation of the boom. The nearby Rockies offer plentiful recreation. The Amtrak ski train leaves every Saturday if you want to spend the day skiing. Governor Jared Polis is a gay parent raising two children. The state makes millions in profits off marijuana sales. The economy is so strong that the local transit agency (RTD) is cutting service since it can't find enough transit operators. In short, it is an amazing and beautiful state that is worth a visit.

### WHAT TO DO

The Frontrunners meet Saturday at 9:15 a.m. on Capitol Hill at 9th and Downing for a run or walk through nearby Cheesman Park which features great views of the Rockies. It's a great way to meet locals and get travel tips. Afterwards they go for brunch at the Buzz Café.

The History Colorado Center at 1200 Broadway is a great way to learn about the state's interesting history. Current exhibits include "The Chicano Movement in Colorado" which chronicles the amazing Hispano and

Mexican contributions to the state. Another exhibit chronicles the development of skiing in the state while still another showcases the development of craft breweries (which now total 300). You will also learn about the origin of the Denver boot and the Denver omelet. Finally, don't miss the exhibit which chronicles the painful Amendment 2 which barred LGBT protections in 1992 only to be repealed in 1996.

Nearby you will find the stunning architecture of the Denver Art Museum, complete with hotel (The Art Hotel).

Learn about the varied topography and plant zones of the state at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in City Park as well as the state's interesting geography. Plus it features great views of the Rockies.

### NIGHTLIFE

The Pride and Swagger at 450 E 17th Avenue is near the Hampton as is the very popular X Bar at 629 East Colfax. They pack them in for the nightly 2-for-1 drink specials which run until 8 p.m. The crowd is cute and friendly. Just up the road is Charlie's which, like Xbar, has Sunday afternoon events. You will find Charlie's

at 900 E. Colfax Avenue.

### WHERE TO STAY

I like the Hampton Inn Downtown on Sherman Street near 17th Avenue. It is actually in Uptown (just east of downtown) and close to the Capitol Hill LGBTQ bars and other neighborhood attractions. Nearby is the Warwick Hotel which is also nice but charges a resort fee. Avoid the downtown hotels along the 16th Street Mall for a more neighborhood feel in Uptown.

### WHERE TO EAT

The authentic Mexican food at Las Delicias is very good. It is at 439 East 19th Avenue. The Marczyk Market at 770 E. 17th has great gourmet food to go. There is also a Hamburger Mary's nearby.

The Zuni Street Brewing Company has great craft beers and local fare plus a food truck. Try the Zuni Street IPA. You can even bring your dog. You will find them in the trendy Highlands neighborhood west of downtown.

### GETTING THERE

I took Southwest from Reagan in D.C. via a one stop at Midway. The fare was reasonable and they don't charge to check your bag or change your ticket. Leaving Denver, I took American Airlines. From the airport, hop on the

commuter rail to the recently renovated Union Station downtown and then take the free 16th Street Mall bus to the Court Street station for a short walk to the Hampton.

**DENVER TRAVEL TIPS**

At 5,280 feet in elevation, you may notice the altitude difference which can cause various issues. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. Take aspirin if you get a headache. You will probably adjust after 24 hours.

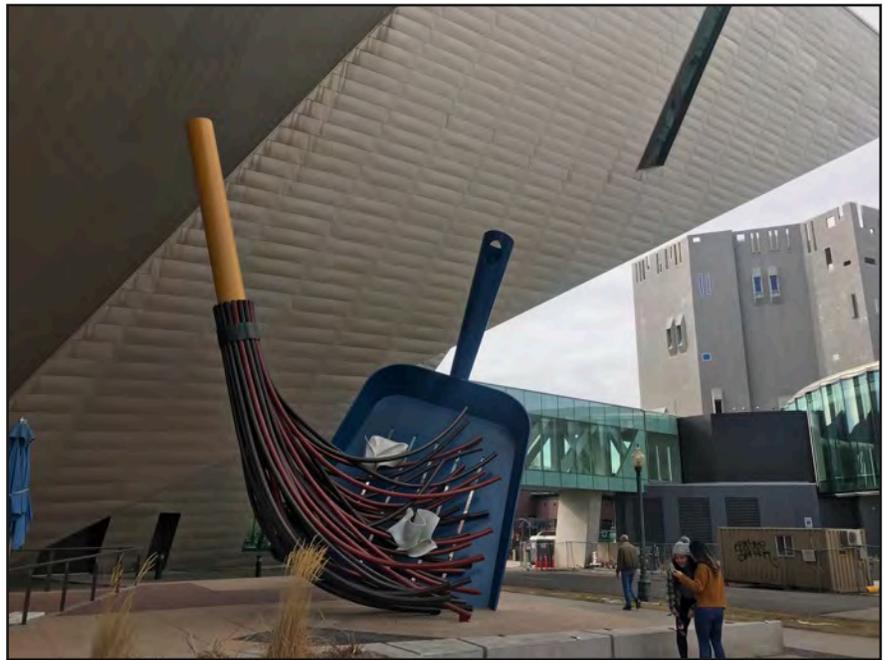
Winters can be cold and snowy but neither lasts. After a storm, Chinook winds off the Rockies raise the temperature to the 50s and 60s with abundant sunshine 300 days of the year. Be warned, though, that it is not uncommon to have a snowstorm in October or even April. It was 64 degrees the Saturday I was there, although snow was predicted for Sunday. You are not in Chicago.

Uptown has avenues while downtown has streets. So you can get confused if you are on 17th Street or 17th Avenue.

You won't need a car since Denver has a great transit system (and bad traffic). RTD is the name of the agency that runs the light rail, buses, and commuter rail.

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

Outfront Colorado is the local LGBTQ magazine which also has a great map of



(Denver Art Museum)

where the bars are. Westword is the weekly alternative paper which has lots of local events.

Denver is ever changing and I find something new every time I visit. You will too.

*Bill Malcolm has lived in Colorado twice – in Boulder and in Snowmass – and currently travels there for his day job. His syndicated LGBTQ value travel column currently appears in Chicago's GRAB Magazine, The Washington Blade, Q Notes (Charlotte), and other publications.*

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by Sam Ward

# GRAB MR. MAN

AWARDS



## The Chicago-based Movie Nudity Maestro

By John Stein

Earlier this month, Mr. Man revealed the winners of the 6th Annual Manatomy Awards, spotlighting the past year's naked male achievements in film and TV. The top "Best Picture" prize went to *Savage / Wild*, Jack Reynor won "Best Full Frontal" for *Midsommar* and Ricky Whittle won "Best Butt" for his work in *American Gods*.

It got us to wondering, what is Mr. Man? Turns out it is a website that serves as an IMDB of sorts for male nudity on film and television. It was founded by a former worker at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange who had, after years of viewing, developed an encyclopedic knowledge of nude scenes on film.

Mr. Man is a spin-off of Mr. Skin, the popular hetero site featuring female nudes, and both sites remain headquartered here in Wicker Park. We spoke with Mr. Skin himself — a.k.a. Jim McBride — to learn more.

**John Stein: What gave you the genius idea to make a database of all nude scenes?**

**Mr. Skin:** The whole thing began in the '90s when I was working as a clerk at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Word got around that I knew every detail about every nude scene in the history of

Hollywood, and it became a fun game. One night, I was at a bar, rattling off the details of one nude scene after another, and local radio host Harry Teinowitz just happened to overhear me. He invited me on to his radio show and gave me the nickname "Mr. Skin," and it just took off from there. After Harry's show, I started appearing on Chicago radio icon Steve Dahl's show. One day I was playing in a Steve Dahl celebrity softball game in 1999 and this guy came up to me and said, "Hey, Mr. Skin, you should turn your nudity knowledge into a website." My actual response, for real, was, "What the f@#\$ is a website?"

**JS: How has Hollywood responded?**

**Mr. Skin:** Hollywood has only ever been supportive. After all, the only thing we do at Mr. Man and Mr. Skin is help promote their shows and movies. Most major studios and countless independent studios have regularly sent us material to review through the years. One absolute key to the success of both sites is that we always celebrate every nude scene and heap praise on every performer who gets naked. Our affection is sincere and it comes off that way because, truly, we love nudity and we're grateful for every nude celebrity. That editorial policy was a conscious decision early on and it went against the

overwhelming venom of gossip sites and other online outlets at the time. I know our customers responded well to our philosophy of "every naked body is a beautiful body" because they tell me so and, also, I'm still going strong after 21 years.

**JS: Have any actors or actresses voiced their opposition to the site?**

**Mr. Skin:** Not only has no one ever voiced an objection, we've received high praise in public from Anna Pacquin, Sarah Silverman, Alexandra Daddario, and other stars.

**JS: What inspired you to create the male version, Mr. Man?**

**Mr. Skin:** It's big, naked world of celebrities out there, so it only makes sense that we would cover — or, rather, uncover — both women and men. We're equally opportunity oglers.

**JS: You can't possibly watch every film and TV show. How do you find all the nude scenes?**

**Mr. Skin:** That's where my army of Skin Skouts, Skininterns, and mad geniuses at the Skin Labs come in. In the office alone, a round-the-clock squad combs through hours upon hours of TV shows, streaming videos, and online content to scope out naked body parts, which they

then record in extreme detail. We also have correspondents stationed around the world who go to film festivals. From there, another department captures the nude scenes, our editorial team writes up bios and reviews, and then it all makes it to the site.

**JS: Do you include the scene if the actor used a body double for the nude scene?**

**Mr. Skin:** We do—and we always, always make it clear that it's a body double. Determining that is actually a big part of the job for our content department, and it can be amazing and amusing the lengths they'll go to on this sacred quest—comparing old photos, body language, muscle-tone, you name it. Sometimes, we are able to find out who the body double was and credit them as well. Nick Frost used porn star Boomer Banks as a stunt duck in *Unfinished Business* (2015), and Willem Dafoe used Horst Baron for the hardcore penetration scenes in *Antichrist* (2009).

**JS: Who are the most popular male actors on Mr. Man?**

**Mr. Skin:** Right now, our top five most searched actors, in order, are Nick Jonas, Henry Cavill, Zac Efron, Tom



Hardy, and Timothée Chalamet. Big movie releases always bring in a lot of traffic. Adam Driver saw a huge bump in traffic when the latest *Star Wars* came out, same with Jason Derulo in *Cats*. It's the same with TV shows. Right now, Henry Cavill from *The Witcher* is very popular.

**JS: Is there a popular young actor that is not on Mr. Man yet? Who is someone you hope to add to Mr. Man soon?**

**Mr. Skin:** Tom Holland and Noah Centineo. They both have shirtless scenes on the site, but judging by the number of page views they get, MrMan fans are hoping to see more nudity from both of them very soon!

For more information and the complete list of 6th Annual Anatomy Awards winners, visit: <https://www.mrman.com/manatomyawards/2020>.

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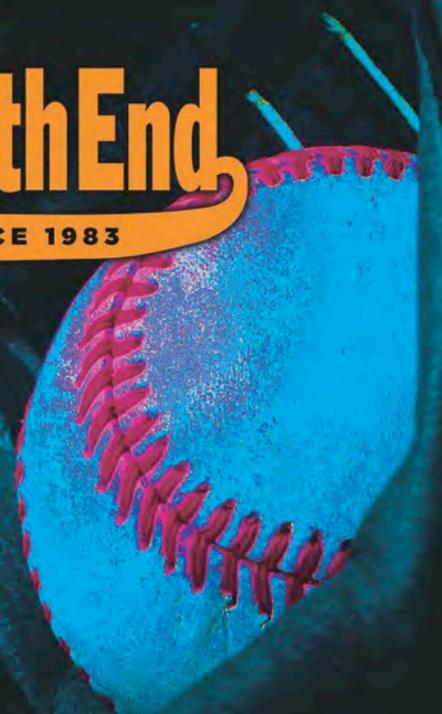
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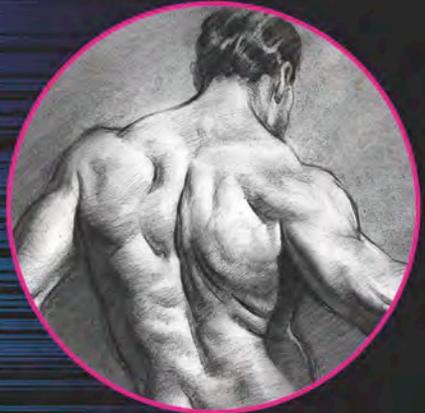
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# RIHONCÉ

SATURDAY, MARCH 28

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# GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

## Daily Specials

<p><b>Monday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> Open 6pm - Midnight - Industry Night \$5 call drinks, \$2 house shots. <b>Cell Block:</b> Free pool \$4.50 Draft Beer \$5 Fireball or Jager Shots. <b>Charlies:</b> Open 3pm- 4am, 9pm - 1am, Double 'D' Bingo hosted by Darla Dae and Bella DeBalle --- \$3 Well Drinks, \$2 Draft Pints, \$3 Apple Pie Moonshine Shots \$4 Bacardi Bombs and \$17 Deep Eddy Vodka Pitchers, 3rd Monday of the Month is Birthday Bingo with prizes sponsored by the SUGAR FACTORY in River North. <b>Hydrate:</b> \$2 Drinks, \$5 Cover after Midnight, DJ Laura B. <b>Lark:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm, Bottles of Wine 50% off with dinner entree purchase. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 4pm, Dancers 7pm. <b>North End:</b> Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, \$5 Draft Beers. <b>Progress Bar:</b> VAMP Drag Show hosted by Mercedes Tyler featuring Mimi Marks and DJ X-tasy \$5 ABSOLUT Flavored Vodka, \$5 Jameson Irish Whiskey, \$3 Blue Moon Drafts. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Z Report (Industry Night): \$3 Bud Lights, \$4 Wells, \$5 Drafts <b>Shakers:</b> \$3 Domestic Bottles, \$4 Well Mixed Drinks, \$4 Fireball and Jager shots. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm. Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> \$5 off w/Student ID, Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. <b>Touche:</b> Euchre Night Come out &amp; Play 7-10pm, Sports on our screens, Club Room Open.</p>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> Open 6pm - Midnight. 90s Night, \$7 Signature Drinks, \$6 Beer &amp; Whiskey shot, \$5 Absolute Vodka \$4 Sexy shots. <b>Big Jim's:</b> Freeballer Night \$3 Drafts. <b>Cell Block:</b> Free Pool \$2.50 Old Style or High Life Cans. <b>Charlie's:</b> Open 3pm- 4am, 7pm - 11pm, Tune-Up Tuesday Karaoke hosted by Bella DeBalle, 11pm - 2am, Tag-Team Tuesday hosted by Alexandra Diamond and Sapphire Feliciano --- \$4 You-Call-It Cocktails and Beer all night long. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Half priced martinis &amp; 1/3 off small plates; Tarot Card Readings by Therese Murphy. "Burger, Beer, Bitch!" \$14.95 Burger &amp; Beer. \$12.95 Chicken &amp; Waffles w/ champagne. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. <b>Lark:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm Pizza BOGO Buy One Get One at 50% off. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open Auditions for male dancers 7pm. Open at 4pm, Dancers 7pm. <b>North End:</b> Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, \$3 Deep Eddy Cocktails. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> \$6 Bombs, \$7 Deep Eddy Vodka Red Bulls, \$8 Beer+Shot Combos, Free Tattoo Raffle Giveaways! <b>Shakers:</b> \$3 Domestic Bottles, \$4 Well Mixed Drinks, \$4 Fireball and Jager shots. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, OUTspoken LGBTQ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of month from 7-9pm, TRL Tuesday: Mix of 90's, 00's &amp; Today's Music Videos 9pm-2am, Schitt's Creek Viewing Party 8pm. <b>Steamworks:</b> Come Back Tuesdays Use your weekend receipt to get \$4 off anytime Tuesday or Wednesday, 4p-7p-Howard Brown Open Testing To the Public. \$5 off w/Student ID. Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. <b>Touche:</b> Hardcore Cruisin', Sponsored by Leather 64Ten, Club Room Open \$1 off drinks for those in Leather, No Cell Phones/WiFi.</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> Open 6pm-Midnight American Horror Story Viewing Party 9pm-10pm (Starting in October) Stripper Bingo 10pm-12pm, \$8 Martinis, \$7 Margaritas, \$6 Mojitos, \$5 Wines. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm &amp; 12:30am. <b>Cell Block:</b> Vodka Wednesday \$5 Top Shelf Vodka Drinks. <b>Charlie's:</b> Open 3pm - 4am, First Wednesday 11pm - 2am Strip Factor hosted by Alexandra Diamond and Jalen, Remaining Wednesday's 11pm - 2am, Teases and Tucks hosted by Sapphire Feliciano --- \$3 Well Drinks, \$2 Pint Draft Beer. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> \$7 Martinis, Half-price Cocktails &amp; Martinis, Buy one entree get one free. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. <b>Lark:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm 50% off Nachos and Totchos with purchase of beverage. <b>LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:</b> 7pm Twisted Broadway Hosted By NYC'S Delilah J Brooks. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 4pm, Dancers 7pm. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 ALL whiskey &amp; tequila shots, \$3 Miller Lite drafts &amp; \$3 Coors Light tall boys on special all day &amp; night. <b>North End:</b> Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, \$5 Lagunitas Drafts &amp; Cans. <b>Progress Bar:</b> \$6 Crystal Head Vodka \$4 el Jimador Shots. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Karaoke Wednesdays \$5 You-Call-Its. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Men's Room 1st Wed. of month, All Things Beyonceé 2nd Wed., All Things Gaga 3rd Wed., Syncit! Party 4th/5th Weds. 9pm-2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> Come Back Wednesdays Use your weekend receipt to get \$4 off anytime Tuesday or Wednesday, \$5 off w/Student ID. Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. <b>Touche:</b> Jockstrap Party Sponsored by Full Kit Gear Show your jock for \$1 Off drinks, Free clothing check.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> Throwback Nights Hours: 6pm - 2am, \$7 Long Islands, \$6 Stoli, \$5 Jose Cuervo, \$5 IPAs. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm &amp; 12:30am. <b>Cell Block:</b> Cheap drinks \$4 Well, \$5 Domestic Beers. Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. <b>Charlie's:</b> Open 3pm- 4am, First and Third Thursday 9pm - 11pm Boylesque Hosted by Ben D. Mann and Coco Shonel, Every Thursday 11pm - 2am Drag Survivor Hosted by Alexandra Diamond --- \$4 You-Call-It Cocktails and Beer all night long. <b>Hydrate:</b> \$5 Effen Cocktails &amp; Bombs. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> \$7 Martinis, \$5 mojitos, Daiquiries &amp; Pina Coldas. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. <b>Lark:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm, All Mule Drinks 50% off. <b>LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:</b> 7pm Divas Show Hosted by Angel Lebare. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 4pm, Dancers 5pm. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> 9pm Thirsty Thursday Karaoke, \$5 You Call Its on special all day &amp; night. <b>North End:</b> Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month \$5 White Claws. <b>Progress Bar:</b> The Gig with Host Debbie Fox. \$6 Grey Goose Flavored Vodka \$5 Aviön Tequila \$4 Fireball Shots. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> #TRULY Thursdays: \$5 Truly Cans and \$5 Stoli Vodkas, Rotating DJs and Drag Shows <b>Shakers:</b> \$3 Domestic Bottles, \$4 Well Mixed Drinks, \$4 Fireball and Jager shots. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, POP ROCKS 9pm-2am Dance to Pop Songs, Slay to Drag &amp; get on stage to Win with Dixie Lynn. <b>Steamworks:</b> \$5 off w/Student ID. Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. <b>Touche:</b> Throwback Thursdays 70's &amp; 80's Music &amp; Porn by Bijou Video.</p>

# GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials

<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> 6pm - 2am 1st Friday - Spice (a Spanish theme night), 2nd Friday - Soul (an Urban Jam theme night) 3rd Friday - Dance Party, 4th Friday - Ladies &amp; Lads (Dancers &amp; drags perform). <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm &amp; 12:30am. <b>Cell Block:</b> Budweiser Friday \$4.50 Bud or Bud Light, \$5 Tequila Shots Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. <b>Charlie's:</b> Open 3pm - 4am, Every Friday Country Line Dancing Hosted by the Second City Country Dance Association from 8pm - 11pm, First and Third Friday 11:30pm - 2am Charlies Angels hosted by Bella DeBalle, Alexandra Diamond, Sapphire Feliciano, and Luna La Catrina, Second Friday 11:30pm - 2am Strut Party hosted by Bella DeBalle, Fourth Friday 11:30 - 2am Glow with the Flow Neon Party hosted by Alexandra Diamond and Luna La Catrina, Fifth Friday 11:30pm - 2am Bella's Blackout hosted by Bella DeBalle, \$4 Stillhouse Whiskey, \$3 Apple Pie Shot. <b>Hydrate:</b> \$4 Jameson Shots. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> \$32 three course prix-fixe menu- includes a martini, salad and entree. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. <b>LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:</b> 7pm &amp; 9:30pm Glitz and Glam Hosted by Shovonna B Brooks. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 4pm, Dancers 5pm. <b>North End:</b> Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, Happy Hour 4pm-7pm (\$3 Coors Light and Miller Lite). <b>Progress Bar:</b> Power Hour \$2 Smirnoff Vodka Cocktails from 9-10pm. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Shot Power Hour 9p-10p \$3 Fireball, Jameson, Dobel Tequila, Coldspell Mint Whiskey / DJs spinning live starting at 10p. <b>Shakers:</b> \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-7pm, RuPaul's Drag Race Viewing Party 7pm, Friday Night Dance Party after till 2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers., 9p-12a TPAN HIV Rapid Test. <b>The Office:</b> DJ's @ 10pm. <b>Touche:</b> 3/20 Rip It Up! with DJ Germ &amp; Cubs/Sox Fans Faceoff. 3/27 ONYX Club Night.</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> Theme Nights &amp; Dancers, Hours: 6pm - 3am, \$7 1800 Tequila, \$6 Bacardi Run, \$5 Heineken, \$4 Rumble Shots. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm &amp; 12:30am. <b>Cell Block:</b> Beer and a Shot \$5 Jager/Fireball/Malort Shots \$5 Domestic Pints of beer. Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. <b>Charlie's:</b> Open 3pm - 5am, 10pm - 12am The Balle hosted by Bella DeBalle, 12am - 2pm The Dollhouse Hosted by Alexandra Diamond — \$3 Apple Pie Shots, \$5 Draft Pitchers. <b>Hydrate:</b> \$5 Effen Bombs. <b>Lark:</b> 10 am - 3 pm Disco Brunch Featuring cool dance tracks and videos from the 70s and 80s Mimosas, Bellini and Bloody Mary Specials. <b>LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:</b> 7pm &amp; 9:30pm Glitz and Glam Hosted by Shovonna B Brooks. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 2pm, Dancers at 3pm. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$4 Shot of the Month Happy Hour 11am-3pm (\$3 Coors Light and Miller Lite). <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Supersonic Saturdays: \$3 Rotating Beer Special, \$10 Super Power Pitchers, rotating DJs. <b>Shakers:</b> \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. Happy Hour 1pm-5pm \$3 Bud Light and Miller Lite Bottles \$3 Well Mixed Drinks \$3 Svedka Grapefruit Jalapeño shots Free Pool Table and Darts. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 1pm, Dog Day Afternoon 1st Saturday of the month from 1-5pm, Sidetrack Video Mix 1-9 pm, High Energy 9pm- 3am. <b>The Office:</b> DJ's @ 10pm. <b>Touche:</b> 3/21 Gear Night with BLUF/ Chicago Barber &amp; Boot Black Dress Code in Club Room BNC 6pm.</p>
<p><b>Sunday Sunday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> Doggy Days (every other Sunday) Hours: 2pm - Midnight, \$6 Bloody Marys, \$5 Sangria, \$4 Mimosas \$4 Domestic Beer <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Shows at 7pm, 9pm &amp; 11pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> \$5 Bloody Mary's w/Effen Cucumber, \$4 Miller Lite Bottle or 16oz Drafts. Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. <b>Charlie's:</b> Open 3pm- 4am, 3pm - 7pm Line Dancing Hosted by the Second City Country Dance Association, 7pm - 11pm Singsational Sunday Karaoke hosted by Bella DeBalle, 11pm - 2am Mas Leche Hosted by Alexandra Diamond — Happy Hour from 5pm- 8pm \$2 Well Cocktails and \$3 Domestic Draft Pitchers, ALL DAY: \$2 Tecate, \$3 Fireball, \$4 Cazadores Tequila, \$5 Draft Pitchers, \$17 You-Call-It Pitchers. <b>Hydrate:</b> \$3 Bud Light, \$12 Bottles of Champagne, \$15 Fish Bowls. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Divalicious Brunch starring Madam X, 11am-4pm; \$29.95 prix-fixe; \$14.95 "Build your own" cocktail package. Happy Hour 4-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. <b>Lark:</b> Happy Hour 3-6:30pm Drink and Appetizer Specials. <b>LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:</b> Gospel Brunch at Noon Hosted by Chicago's Ms. Ruff-N-Stuff. 7pm Showstoppers Hosted by The Chicago Legend Ms. Mimi Marks. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 2pm, Dancers at 3pm. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$4 Shot of the Month Happy Hour 7pm-10pm (\$3 Coors Light and Miller Lite). <b>Progress Bar:</b> \$7 Crown Royale, Crown Apple and Crown Vanilla, \$10 Pitchers of Miller/Coors lite, \$10 Bottles of J. Roget Champagne and at 9pm SAUCY with DJ BrianX and DJ Chaco. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Tailgate Sundays: \$2 Bud Lights, \$3 Fireball Shots, \$4 Coors Light cans, \$5 Tres Generaciones Tequilas, DJ Gavin at 2pm, Complimentary BBQ. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-10pm, Sing &amp; Dance to the Best of Sidetrack 10pm-2am. <b>SoFo Tap:</b> \$5 PBR and a Shot of Jameson, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 SoFo Marys, \$4 Skinny Lemonades. <b>Steamworks:</b> DJ Jim Belanger 10pm-6am. <b>Touche:</b> 3/22 St. Pats Beer Bust \$1 Bud, Bud Light Drafts &amp; Sodas all day &amp; night, Movie Night 7pm.</p>



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	Artist	Title
1	Steve James x TELYKast	Hurts ft. Jordan Shaw
2	Dua Lipa	Dont Start Now (Pink Panda Remix)
3	Lucas & Steve	Perfect
4	Pet Shop Boys	Dreamland ft. Years & Years
5	Chris Hype	Hold my love
6	Da Buzz	Touch My Soul
7	Landis	Under Cover (Original)
8	DJ Licious	Young Blood ft. Bright Sparks
9	Braaten & Chrit Leaf	Burn
10	PNAU	All Of Us ft. Ollie Gabriel
11	The Him	Walk Alone
12	Trobi	Looking For Somebody
13	Alok & Hugel	I Don't Wanna Talk ft. Amber Van Day
14	Michael Calfan	Could Be You ft. Danny Dearden
15	Paige	You'll Be There (Radio Edit)



## Sukie de la Croix and Owen Keehnen need your assistance once again!

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS/PARTICIPANTS: TELL ME ABOUT IT 3**

THE TWO WRITERS/HISTORIANS ARE NOW COLLABORATING ON A THIRD VOLUME OF THE POPULAR TELL ME ABOUT IT SERIES AND ARE LOOKING FOR FOLKS TO ANSWER UP TO 15 QUESTIONS.

SHARING OUR STORIES IS A KEY COMPONENT IN BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS IN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY. HELP US TO COLLECT AND CELEBRATE THE DIVERSITY AND REALITY OF LGBTQ EXPERIENCE BY TELLING A LITTLE BIT OF YOUR STORY. PARTICIPANTS MAY SHARE AS THEMSELVES, USING A NICKNAME, A FIRST NAME, AN ALIAS, OR ANONYMOUSLY.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN TAKING PART IN TELL ME ABOUT IT 3, PLEASE EMAIL US FOR BRIEF INSTRUCTIONS AND THE 15 QUESTIONS.

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# GRAB ERIK

## Life is full of Tops and Bottoms

By Erik Sosa-Kibby

I recently came across a quote by Chilean author, Isabel Allende, that resonated deep within. "Creativity is not always something to do with the arts or writing, it has to do with the way you carry your life." I was shook! Not because I paint and write or am expressive and an out of the box thinker, so therefore, I may be creative. But because, as of late, I better understand that I need to carry my own weight in life, instead of having life toss me around like a plastic bag in the wind. Queue in Katy Perry. Pretty mesmerizing at times, but overall aimlessly pointless. If creations are to be truly effective, it should not be about the final result for others to judge that should take precedence, but what stems from within when taking control of things, making decisions and learning from that process with flair.

(Artwork by Erik Sosa-Kibby)



Who says you can't teach a loose cannon how to sparkle with direction? In world a full of color, life is full of tops and bottoms, and it is through tongue in cheek that I can often better express myself. Creatively speaking, nothing is ever easy if it's meant to be substantial. Here are a couple of lessons that being my artistic journey has taught me about life.

First, one can only control the inputs, not the outputs. I have been painting for almost 20 years, and conveniently enough, I found much "success" early on in my career. Soon after, I found myself pregnant and living a suburban commemorative plaque kind of wife lifestyle. And, as with all things in life, one day you're in and the next day you're out. Trying to recapture the limelight, while raising kids and living in Wisconsin, well, let's just say that had an effect on me and what I was producing as an "artist." In time, I would again find my artistic voice in writing for GRAB. Fast forward to

today, and I find myself in place where I know who I am as an artist, because in time, I have found a way to marry artistry with fatherhood and have come to realize that to a certain point, I can control how my work is received. I can only control what I put into it. Although this deep revelation didn't happen overnight, I can assure you this was very freeing to know that expression of self is about letting go of the negativity, faults and flaws of one's



own life and its perception that others may have. I realized soon after, that all I had to do was to keep moving forward by working and producing my hearts desires. That was it.

You are not guaranteed external validation. We yearn for it and think that we need it. But it is foolish to base our self-esteem and our creative life source on something we can and never will be able to control. Do this often enough, and the self validation you will find within will be greater than what anyone else can give you.

Second, it's about the journey not the destination. Creativity is really about the process, not just the end result. Following on from lesson one, the natural conclusion is if you are to continue working, while experimenting with different ideas or mediums, some of which will be complete fails, you will find solace and comfort in the knowledge of efforts made. Eventually, through time, trial and error, you will eventually get to a place, an achievement of metamorphosis of sorts, where elucidation of self becomes easier and easier as we pull from past experiences. You know your work is done, because your heart will lead you there. This is the process. This is what the work is all about. The results of that work is the least important.

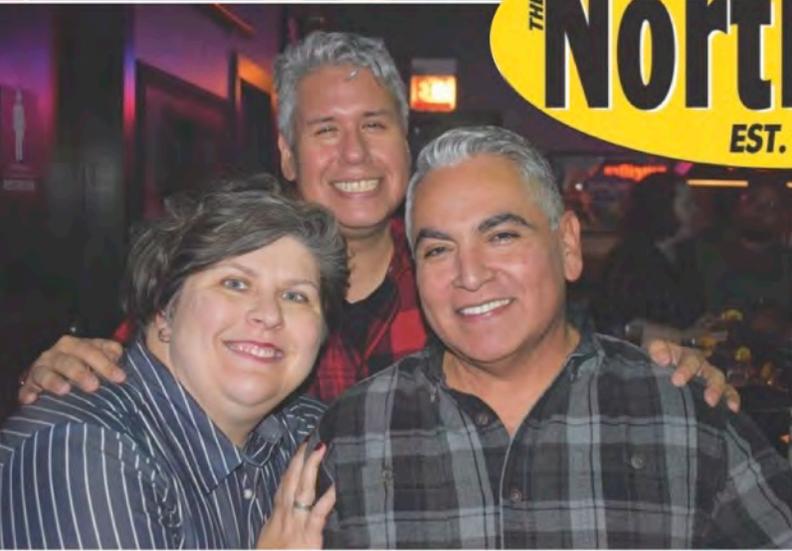
Maybe people will love it, maybe they'll hate it or maybe they won't even notice. Remember, you can't control the result and how it is received. Once it is done it is out of your hands, your part of the process is over. And on to the next.  
'Cause baby I'm a firework!

*Erik Sosa-Kibby is a Chicago based artist. Paintings printed through this column will be displayed and available at his end of the year show "20/20 Vision."*



# THE North End

EST. 1983



Photos By Anthony Meade



# GRAB LEE

## Lean body mass and body fat.

By Lee Gonzalez

Gaining lean muscle mass can be challenging for some Broz. Eating the right foods and performing the right exercises are key to gaining the mass your masculinity desires! Math is also involved [boo] but it's okay. I'm here to help you through it all!

Body Mass is composed of two components: Lean body mass and body fat. Lean body mass includes your skeletal muscle, cardiac muscle and smooth muscle.

Skeletal muscles are your muscles that move your body. They are voluntary which means you can actively control them. The Cardiac Muscle is your heart. It is involuntary because you can't control it consciously. Finally, Smooth Muscles would be organs and vessels. Are you bored with the science? Good, me too. Let's move on.

You can't technically measure or weigh lean body mass. Sooo, what we do is keep track of body fat percentage while measuring the growth of your muscles, via measuring tape and body fat devices.

The best way to grow while staying lean first and foremost is diet. Here are some of my favorites:  
 Greek Yogurt  
 Eggs  
 Apples  
 Spinach



Chicken

Fish, Salmon and even Lean Beef (LB to gain Lbs) can also help those toxic muscles grow!

"The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that to increase muscle mass in combination with physical activity, you need to consume between 1.2 and 1.7 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day, or 0.5 to 0.8 grams per body weight."

Shoutout to all the bodybuilders out there who have it down to a science how they're growing their body! However, most homo sapiens don't want to go through all of that. Jobs, family, bathhouse trips and pets to take care of doesn't leave time for sitting down and doing da math. The best way I can recommend taking ownership of nutrition is as follows:

Cook/Meal Prep most meals  
 Add plenty of fruit and green veggies  
 Healthy carbs for energy and growth

Keep in mind protein turns into fat! If your workouts aren't up to par, the calories you consume won't be used and it will turn to fat. Multi Joint exercises are best for building muscle, like deadlifts. When gaining muscle, you want to stick to hypertrophy reps, which is heavy weight maxing your reps out around



6-10 (I like to max myself out around 8 reps). I like to do 4/5 sets of each exercise. You need to workout 5/6 days a week for an hour at least. Working out isn't a luxury or one's hobby; it needs to be part of your lifestyle!

Most gyms now have ways for you to easily get a good idea of what your body fat percentage is. They have little handheld devices that calculate it. For more detailed accuracy, you can ask your doctor... Keep track of muscle growth by using a measuring tape. Don't obsess over it. I recommend monthly measurements.

Eat Well. Eat More. Workout Hard.

*Note: Lee Gonzalez is not a doctor. If you have any questions about your health, exercise or these tips please consult your physician. Lee Gonzalez Illinois A/P Diploma, Obsessed Fitness Owner. To Contact Lee Email: [TheLeeGonzalez@Gmail.com](mailto:TheLeeGonzalez@Gmail.com)*



### Body Fat % Chart

	Men	Women
<b>Athletic</b>	2-5 %	14-20%
<b>Fit</b>	6-13 %	21-24 %
<b>Average</b>	18-24 %	25-31 %
<b>Obese</b>	25 % +	32 % +



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# GRAB HOLLY

## Playing the Percentages

By Holly Maholm

The Pareto Principle states: “80% of the productive output of any organization is attributable to the efforts of just 20% of its employees.” (And there is a Corollary to that Principle, which states: “20% of the employees of any organization are responsible for 80% of the fuck-ups.”) Now, as to Donut Time, and as to which 20% could claim Xandra among its number, I assure you that everyone would place her within the “productive” 20%.

I was looking for Xandra, but not finding her in the kitchen at Donut Time, I checked the alley outside the back door. There I found her sitting on an orange crate, slumped over in despondency. “Xandra, what’s going on?” I asked. “Are you okay?” She reluctantly raised her eyes to me and replied.

“I got a call from my sister. She’s been taking care of our Grandma Lily for a couple of years, but now she’s pretty far along pregnant with her second child, so she can’t do it anymore. She’s going to bring her here for me to take care of. She’ll be here in three days.”

What Xandra did not need to say was that the launch of our new business at Donut Time (home delivery of donuts and coffee) was just four days away. The expression on Xandra’s face told me how devastated she was at this news.

She opened up. “Back in junior high, when I started feeling like ‘Xandra,’ I found out how profoundly alone I was going to be in life. I already knew I was part of one minority – one burdened with a legacy of bigotry and discrimination – but once I knew I was transgender, I saw that even my friends and classmates – who were just as black as me – had no use for a tranny. So I suffered persecution, not just for my race, but for my gender, as well. There was no one I could turn to; nobody but Grandma Lily.”

“So growing up, I learned to be somewhat of a ‘hard ass.’ To be strong and stand up for myself. Later, I met Cindy, and she and I supported ourselves by doing what we had to do – hooking. But then Donut Time came along, and now I’ve got a whole posse of friends. There’s you and Cindy, Aly, and the Outlaws; there’s Dot and all the customers I’ve become friendly with. And don’t forget Blossom and Biscuit; they mean a lot to me, too.”

She fell silent, then resumed. “I’m afraid I’m not strong enough; that I’m going to let you all down... all my friends at Donut Time, and Grandma Lily, too.”

Finally, Xandra pulled herself together and announced, “Enough of this self-pity. I’ve got things to do.” She went inside.

I knew what I had to do. I hurried off to find Cindy and found her out front with the retirees. She and I headed over to the stable, where we knew we would find the Outlaws. Upon arrival, I called a “war council,” which – considering its importance, and who needed to attend – I convened in the corridor outside the stalls where (disguised as ordinary horses) you would have found Sassy Pants, Victor and Scallywag.

I relayed the upsetting news that Xandra had shared with me. Though everyone was already busy with preparations for the launch of our new venture, this



unexpected challenge instantly became our highest priority. How could we help Xandra meet her obligations as a caretaker? How could we share some of Xandra’s kitchen work amongst ourselves, so that her burden could be made lighter?

Cindy spoke up. “How about if Aly and I move out of our bedroom on the second floor over Donut Time? Xandra’s grandma can move in there, and Xandra will be in the bedroom right next to her?” “That’s a good idea,” I agreed, “but it depends on whether her grandma can go up and down stairs by herself. If not, they’ve got to go somewhere else.”

“So anyway you look at it,” Recon observed, “you need to find two more bedrooms, or apartments, or something.”

Fender interjected, “I hate to bring this up at a time like this, but I’ve been thinking that Recon, Tuco and I need more permanent accommodations. We can’t go on living in those old tents and cardboard shelters out in the woods. We need a warm place to sleep at night; some place that is convenient to the stable. Remember, we have to get up at 6:00 a.m. to harness the horses to the chariots, and we ought to live closer to the stable for that.”

I summed up our situation. “We’re like any other entrepreneur launching a new business: We’ve collected exactly 0% of our new revenue, but still, we have to make 100% of our investment up front.”

*(To be continued)*

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Volume 2 of *What Would a Unicorn Do?* (now available on Amazon) which contains additional episodes of Holly’s on-going story of her life among the unicorns, plus additional articles and a short story of a transgender woman confronted by Satan! Send a message to Holly [www.hollymaholm.com](http://www.hollymaholm.com).

### The Law Office of Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, P.C.

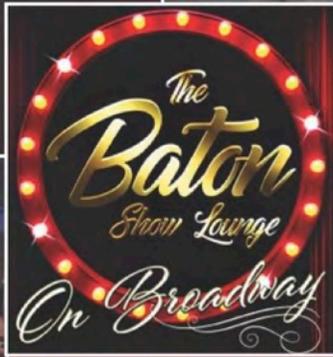
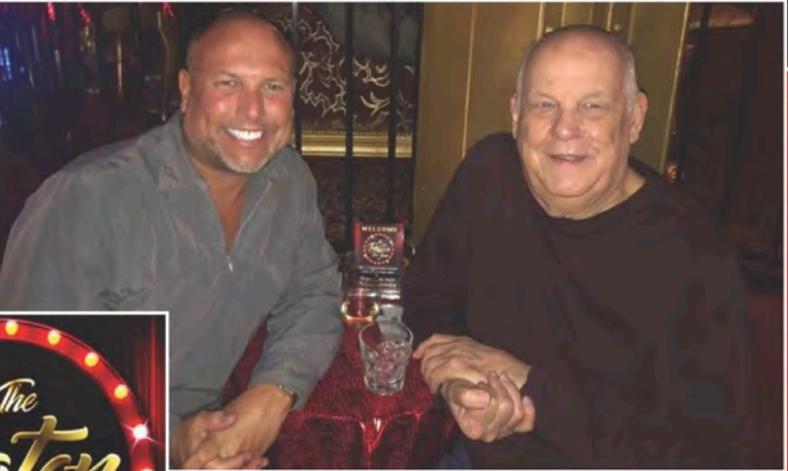


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**Happy  
51st Anniversary**



**The House Theatre of Chicago's "The Spectacular" A Second Annual Gala Fundraiser Saturday March 28th**



The House Theatre of Chicago's Board of Directors has announced the 2nd annual incarnation of *The Spectacular*. Hosted by NPR's **Peter Sagal** (Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me!), the fundraiser celebrates the company's continuing commitment to amazing feats of storytelling with dinner, dancing, a silent auction, live music from This Must Be The Band, and a one-of-a-kind floor show.

This year the organization will honor **David Schmitz** (Executive Director of Steppenwolf Theatre Company) with a roast in recognition of his many years of service on the Board of Directors of The House and his contributions to Chicago's theatre community. *The Spectacular* will be held Saturday, March 28 at 7 p.m. at the unique venue Ignite Glass Studios, 401 N Armour St.

Artistic Director **Nathan Allen** remarked, "The House has long considered Steppenwolf and their leadership to be mentors and extended family. If Martha Lavey and David Hawkanson were my surrogate parents, David Schmitz has been my older brother. David joined our board at a pivotal time for the company, and over the last decade has made an indelible impact on The House as Vice President. But it's not just The House that has benefited from his generosity, David has served many companies in Chicago as a professional resource and advocate. The thoughtful sincerity of his professional guidance is matched only by his sense of humor and mischievousness. I am proud to call David a friend, and am thrilled he is allowing us to celebrate his impact on Chicago by roasting him at our big, fun, gala fundraiser, *The Spectacular*."

Honoree **David Schmitz** remarked, "I am honored to be recognized by the House Theatre of Chicago for my impact on the arts community in Chicago at their upcoming gala event. Theatre is the lifeblood of my life, and the amazing feats of storytelling The House creates are always joyful. I've been an audience member, supporter, board member and admirer of the house for at least 15 years and I couldn't be more excited about where they are going. The House is one of the special theatres that could only exist in Chicago, and I look forward to

celebrating their work by humbly accepting this honor on March 28." Schmitz is a former Board Member of The House Theatre of Chicago, and is Executive Director of Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He serves on the boards of the Theatre Communications Group and the League of Chicago Theatres.

Tickets may be purchased through The House Theatre of Chicago at **773-769-3832** or online at [theHouseTheatre.com](http://theHouseTheatre.com).

**Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Holds Bowling Fundraiser Saturday, April 4**



The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, now entering its 30th year, has announced that it will hold its annual fundraising event, the *Dick Uyvari Memorial Celebrity Bowl* on Saturday, April 4 at Waveland Bowl, 3700 N. Western Ave. in Chicago. Registration will begin at 10 a.m., bowling will take place from 11 a.m. to noon. Bowlers have been gathering pledges and all monies raised will be used to help support the work of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame.

From its founding in 1991 until 2016 the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame relied on support from the City of Chicago. The city ceased funding the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2016 as part of then mayor *Rahm Emmanuel's* cost-cutting programs. At that time, it was rechristened the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame and has since been supported and maintained by the Friends of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, a 501(c) not-for-profit organization, with approval from the City of Chicago.

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame inducted new members, from a slate submitted by Chicago's LGBT community, in 2016 and 2017. At that point the LGBT Hall of Fame decided to take a year in which to restructure itself, selecting new board members and bringing on new volunteers..

The first Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame ceremony took place during Pride Week and was held at Chicago City Hall. Mayor Richard M. Daley hosted the ceremony and afterwards, photos of the inductees were displayed in City Hall. The Hall of Fame has no physical facility but maintains a website, which allows anyone to visit the Hall of Fame at any time. Traditionally, the City of

Chicago has displayed the Hall of Fame materials during induction periods.

The event is held in honor of Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame member, the late *Dick Uyvari*, a community activist and philanthropist. For more information or to learn how you can help, by bowling or pledging to support a bowler, visit the organization's web site [chicagolgbthalloffame.org/](http://chicagolgbthalloffame.org/)

**PlayMakers Laboratory Presents Fancy Schmancy: A Gala of Living Art Saturday, April 4**



PlayMakers Laboratory will present its annual benefit: *Fancy Schmancy: A Gala of Living Art* on Saturday, April 4, 2020 from 7 – 11 pm (6 pm VIP reception) at its new venue, Wintrust's Grand Banking Hall, 231 S. LaSalle St. in Chicago.

Support arts education and join PML for an evening of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a DJ, dancing and live entertainment, plus an exciting raffle and silent auction featuring pieces by artists from across the country. Proceeds support PML's "Summer of Stories," a new initiative to bring the company's hit revue *That's Weird, Grandma* to Chicago's South Side launching this summer.

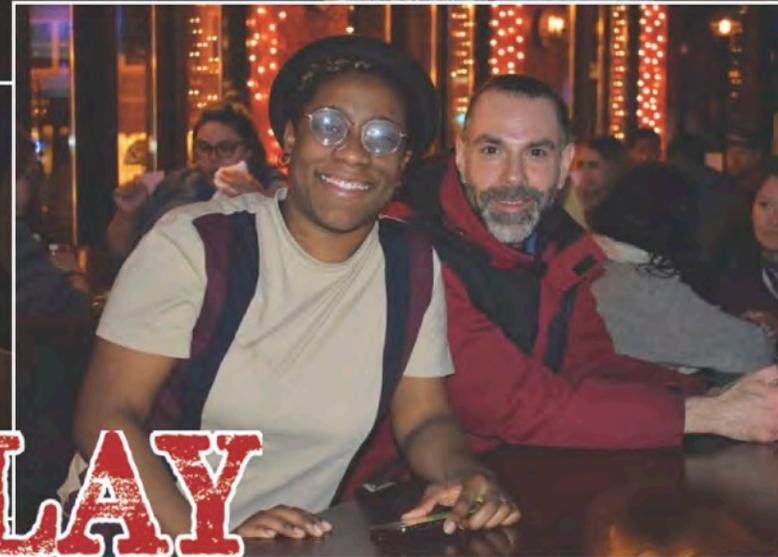
PlayMakers Laboratory will also welcome PML alum and current star of the hit television sitcom "*Mixed-ish*," **Christina Anthony**, who will be honored with the company's inaugural "Storyteller of the Year" Award, which honors leaders in the arts who embody PML's core values of artistic excellence, radical kindness and advocacy for the marginalized voices of youth.

Comments PML's Executive Director **Colette S. Gregory**, "We are so proud to recognize Christina Anthony as our inaugural honoree for creating innovative work as a writer and performer, for her generous contributions as a former Playmakers Laboratory teaching artist and active emeritus company member, and for her ongoing contributions to telling the stories of underrepresented youth through her work on *Mixed-ish*."

Tickets are currently available at [playmakerslab.org](http://playmakerslab.org),

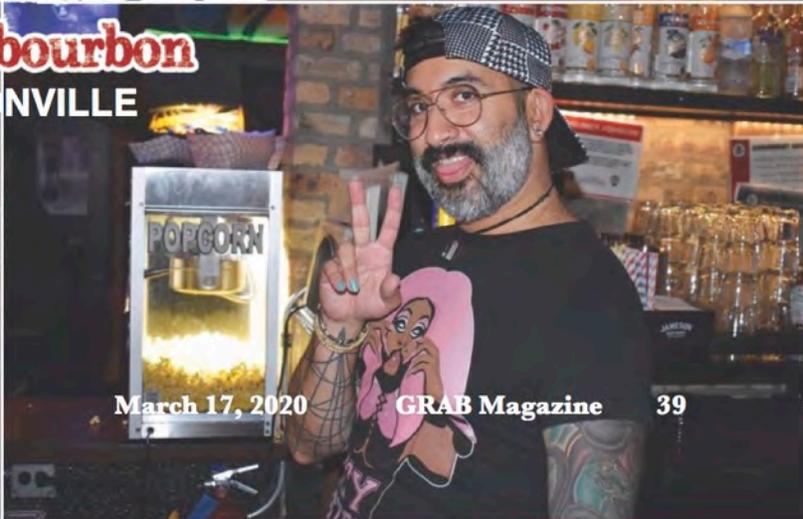


Photos By  
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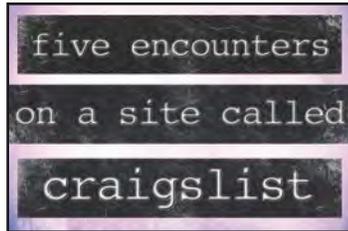


# REPLAY

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Pride Films & Plays presents  
**Five Encounters on a Site  
 Called Craigslist**  
 Now Through April 12th



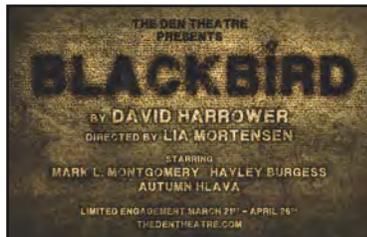
Pride Films and Plays will produce the American premiere of *Five Encounters on a Site Called Craigslist*, an Edinburgh Festival hit by the British playwright and actor Sam Ward. Desperately hilarious and achingly bleak, this is an intricate and tender exploration of our attempts to encounter each other in a technologized world, performed by a single actor interacting extensively with the audience. The play follows a twenty-something man as he recounts, sometimes very graphically, five of the sexual hookups he had with men he met through Craigslist. He asks the audience to help him recreate those encounters, but in ways that are symbolic rather than realistic.

Now through April 12 on the Broadway stage of the Pride Arts Center at 4139 N. Broadway.

**Erik Sorensen** will play the man. The production will be directed by **Jeremy Ohringer**. The production team will also include **Shawn Quinlan** (production design), **John Nichols III** (sound design), **Samuel Stephens** (lighting design) and **Sophie Hart** (assistant director).

Tickets now on sale at [www.pridefilmsandplays.com](http://www.pridefilmsandplays.com) or by phone at 866-811-4111 or 773-857-0222.

The Den Theatre Presents  
**Blackbird**  
 March 21 – April 26



The Den Theatre presents a revival of **David Harrower's** critically acclaimed drama *Blackbird*, directed by ensemble member **Lia Mortensen**, playing March 21 – April 26, 2020 at The Den Theatre (2A) 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago.

After spending time in prison for sexually abusing a minor, 56-year-old Ray has now changed his name, relocated and found a new job – with no one aware of his dark history. Una, the girl from Ray's past, has been left with

an utterly shattered life and only herself to try and pick up the pieces. Now 27, in search of healing and closure, she discovers where Ray works and shows up unannounced at his office to confront him. David Harrower's *Blackbird* is a raw, real and unforgiving play that shines a light on sexual abuse, child molestation, abuse of power and the devastation that results in its wake.

The cast includes **Haley Burgess** and **Mark L. Montgomery** with **Autumn Hlava**.

Tickets are currently available at [www.theden theatre.com](http://www.theden theatre.com), in person at The The Den box office or by calling 773-697-3830.

Underscore Theatre Company  
 Announces Casting for  
**Notes & Letters**  
 April 17 – May 23



Underscore Theatre Company has announced casting for its world premiere of *Notes & Letters* featuring book, music and lyrics by **Annabelle Revak**, based on Revak's great-great grandfather's letters sent to his family upon his immigration to Chicago.

Directed by **Leah Geis**, with music direction by **Anna Wegener** and choreography by **Ebrin R. Stanley**, *Notes & Letters* will play April 17 – May 23, 2020 at Underscore's newly-remodeled, permanent home, The Understudy, 4609 N. Clark St. in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood.

*Notes & Letters* follows Joe's journey from war-torn Prague to Williams Piano Shop in Chicago in 1917. He quickly befriends the owner Charlie, his girlfriend Nora, and composer Olivia. The foursome become inseparable – until World War I hits the U.S. Businesses, relationships and lives are put to the test. Based on a true story and set to a jazz-contemporary score, four young people struggle to make choices amid complete chaos.

The cast includes **Katy Campbell**, **Tessa Dettman**, **Michael Mejia** and **Steven Romero Schaeffer**. Swings include **Nate Hal** and **Madeline Lauzon**.

Comments Artistic Director **Whitney Rhodes**, "Notes & Letters is special to our team for a number of reasons. Not only is this a universally appealing, sweet and charming human story based on the writer's family, it's also a story set in Chicago, which is always a treat. The sound and feel of it will be very Chicago, which I think hometown audiences will adore. Additionally, this is the first show to go through Underscore's full pipeline process – from reading to workshop to fully-

realized mainstage production – which showcases the true heart of what our company is all about. We are excited to have had a direct hand in the growth of this project with Annabelle and look forward to seeing its continued life beyond us."

Tickets are currently available at [underscoretheatre.org](http://underscoretheatre.org)

Broken Nose Theatre  
 Announces Casting for  
**This Is Only A Test**  
 May 1 - May 30



Broken Nose Theatre has announced casting for its world premiere of **Eric Reyes** Loo's terrifyingly timely drama *This Is Only A Test*, directed by **Toma Langston**.

*This is Only a Test* will play May 1 – May 30, 2020 at The Den Theatre (2A), 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood.

Nowadays, it could happen anywhere, at any time, and the faculty at Washington High have decided to take "being prepared" to a whole new level: through a series of cutting-edge Active Shooter Drills, their students will be trained on how to fight back, just in case their school is the next to hit the news cycle. But as they're asked to quell violence by responding violently, four teenagers begin to wonder: if we're so prepared, why do we feel even more unsafe?

The cast includes ensemble members **RjW Mays** and **Aria Szalai-Raymond** with guest artists **Zhanna Albertini**, **Trevor Bates**, **Shane Rhoades** and **Austyn Williamson**. Understudies include **Tatyana Chante**, **Liz Coin**, **Jeremiah Davis**, **Tim Huggenberger**, **Toma Lynn Smith** and **Ben Weiss**.

BNT Artistic Director **Elise Marie Davis** comments, "It's impossible to deny that school shootings are like an infection that has seeped into the very bones of our nation. Gone are the days where we ask if it'll happen again. It has become the devastating and ever-present question of 'where' and 'when.' When the students at the center of this play are asked to accept fighting back as the best solution to a problem adults have created, they rightly begin to question this new normal, and with sometimes devastating results. This is *Only a Test* is a darkly satirical new play that unflinchingly looks at this epidemic, and at the proposed solution at its core and asks, 'How did we get here, and why do we believe this is a viable response?'

Tickets available now at [www.brokennosetheatre.com](http://www.brokennosetheatre.com).



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Photos By Anthony Meade



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Congratulations to T Wayne Maples  
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(Pictured Below)



## AVA MAX REIGNS SUPREME WITH NEW SONG "KINGS & QUEENS"



Global pop sensation **Ava Max** has officially unveiled her first new song of 2020. "Kings & Queens" is available now at all DSPs and streaming services; an official visualizer is streaming now on

YouTube. With the release of her empowering new anthem, Ava continues her reign as "Princess of Pop," imagining a better world in which everyone is treated with respect. "Kings & Queens" is the first new song to be released from Ava's hugely anticipated debut album, due to arrive later this year.

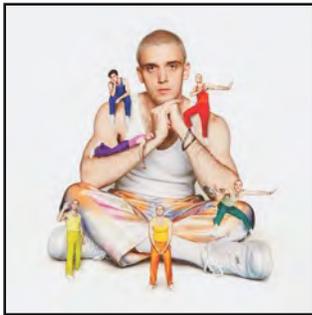
In December, Ava celebrated her extraordinary year with an energetic performance on *ABC's Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest 2020*. She also gifted fans with the release of "On Somebody" which *PAPER* quickly called "a three-minute sugar-rush." "On Somebody" arrived shortly after the release of longtime fan favorite track, "Salt." "Salt," which had already earned over 4 million plays via YouTube before being shared across additional

platforms, was met by unanimous critical applause from *Billboard*, *MTV*, *E! News* and more. The official launch of "Salt" came not long after Ava celebrated Halloween with the surprise drop of her hauntingly beautiful music video for "Freaking Me Out," which *MTV News* praised as "a spooky, romantic Halloween Treat."

A truly international artist, Ava recently teamed up with Norwegian DJ/producer **Alan Walker** for "Alone Pt. II," joined by an official video now with over 41 million views via YouTube. Ava also joined forces with Spanish superstar Pablo Alborán for their hit single, "Tabú," a chart-topping, platinum certified sensation in Spain.

For more on Ava visit <https://www.avamax.com/>

## LAUV RELEASES 21 SONG DEBUT ALBUM ~how i'm feeling~



**Lauv** has released his highly anticipated 21-track debut album *~how i'm feeling~*. The album features previously released hit singles "i'm so tired..." with **Troye Sivan** and "fuck, i'm lonely" with **Anne-Marie**, among others. The project also includes Lauv's anthemic new single for the technology driven generation: "Modern Loneliness." The power ballad is both a statement and a commentary on our current society,

where we are increasingly "alone together." The song already has over 15 million streams in only two weeks, has reached #48 at Top 40 radio and rising, after being the most added song the first week of impact, including early adds from both Z100 and KIIS.

Lauv said on his debut album release, "I can't believe this day has come. ~how i'm feeling~ began from dark time in my life when I was depressed and having a bit of an existential crisis. I wasn't sure if I would ever actually be able to make an album. But it marks my journey from my rock bottom at the beginning of 2019 to a stable place of happiness, full self-expression and self-acceptance. This album is everything to me and I hope the world loves it as much as I loved making it."

The album features 11 unreleased tracks, including a few highly anticipated collaborations. Lauv paired up with the biggest group in the world, K-Pop sensations **BTS** for track "Who." He also collaborated with **Alessia Cara** on "Canada" and

on "El Tejano," with **Sofia Reyes**. Speaking about the collaborations, Lauv said, "With everybody I've worked with...Each situation shows me something new about the process of creation and how different artists work." And on his song with **BTS** specifically, he added, "It was a fucking dream! I met them at their show at Wembley Stadium and we got a chance to talk. They had a playlist of a bunch of my songs. So we were mutual fans, and I played them a song they really loved. The process was actually super-easy, especially for a group that's so massive musically and culturally."

Lauv has quietly and steadily become one of pop's brightest rising stars. The artist has released all of his music completely independently with billions of streams to his name, while writing for some of the biggest stars in the world and simultaneously selling out shows all over the world as a headliner. And he had done all of this without releasing an album.

For more information visit <https://www.lauvsongs.com/>

## SAM SMITH RELEASES "TO DIE FOR" ACOUSTIC TRACK AND VIDEO



Sam Smith debuted an acoustic version of their latest single, "To Die For," along with an ambient visual, filmed and recorded live in Los Angeles, this version sees the single stripped down to a piano and cello,

with Smith's vocals front and center in a sentimental performance reminiscent of their earliest releases. The original version was released on Valentine's day alongside the profound Grant Singer- directed video and the announcement of Smith's long-awaited third album, *To Die For*, out May 1 on Capitol Records.

Opening with a sample from the 2001 cult film *Donnie Darko*, the new track pairs soaring strings and evocative piano with Smith's distinctive vocals and the plaintive confession, "I just want somebody to die for." The global superstar recorded the song with Jimmy Napes and Stargate, who also collaborated with Smith on 2017's "Too Good At Goodbyes," now certified 4x Platinum in the U.S.

Since the release of their 2014 debut album, *In The Lonely Hour*,

Sam Smith has sold over 25 million adjusted albums worldwide. They have won four GRAMMY Awards®, an Oscar, a Golden Globe and three BRIT Awards. Smith's sophomore album, *The Thrill Of It All*, debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* 200 in 2017 and also topped the charts in the U.K., Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium.

For more information visit <https://samsmithworld.com/>

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