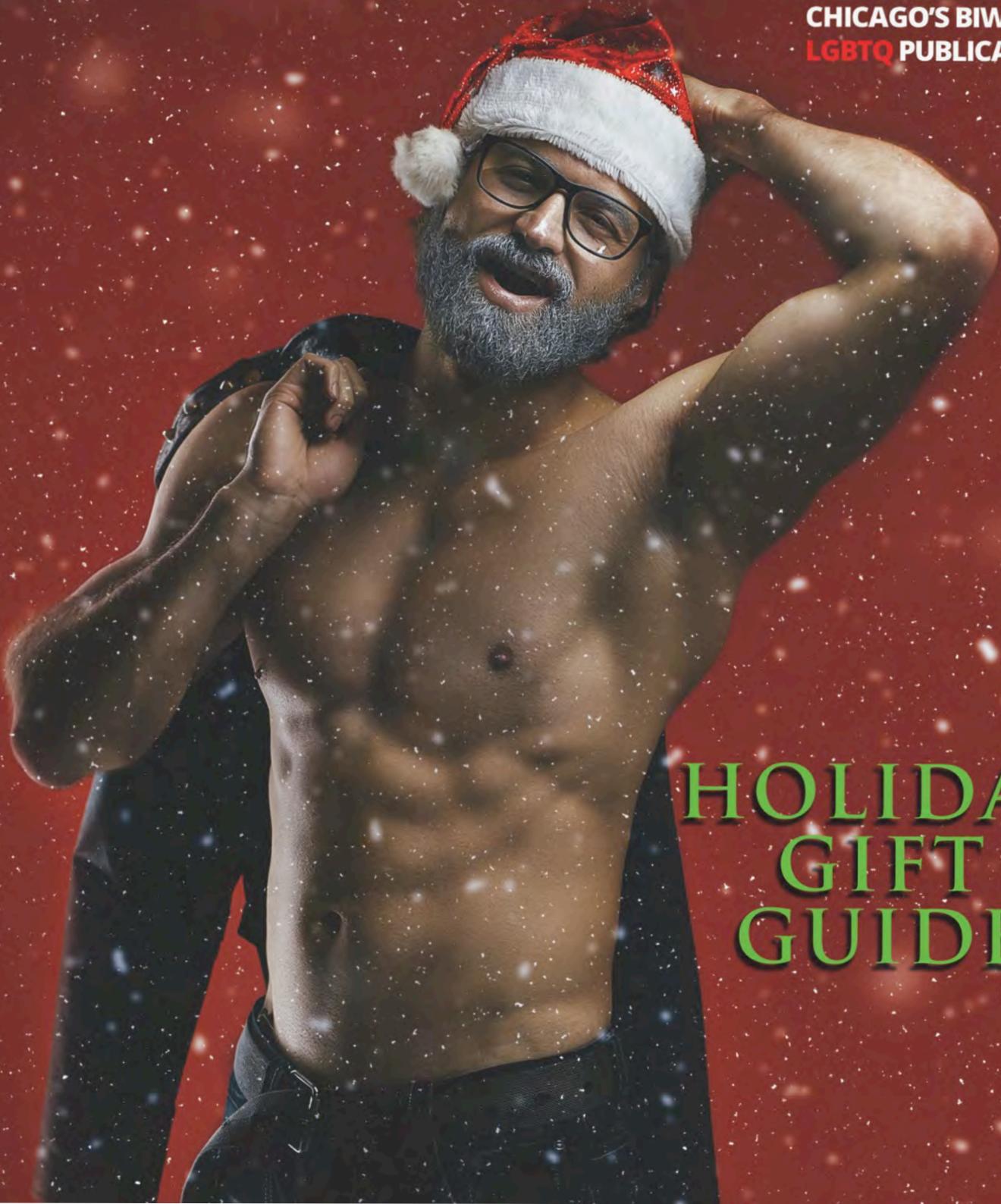


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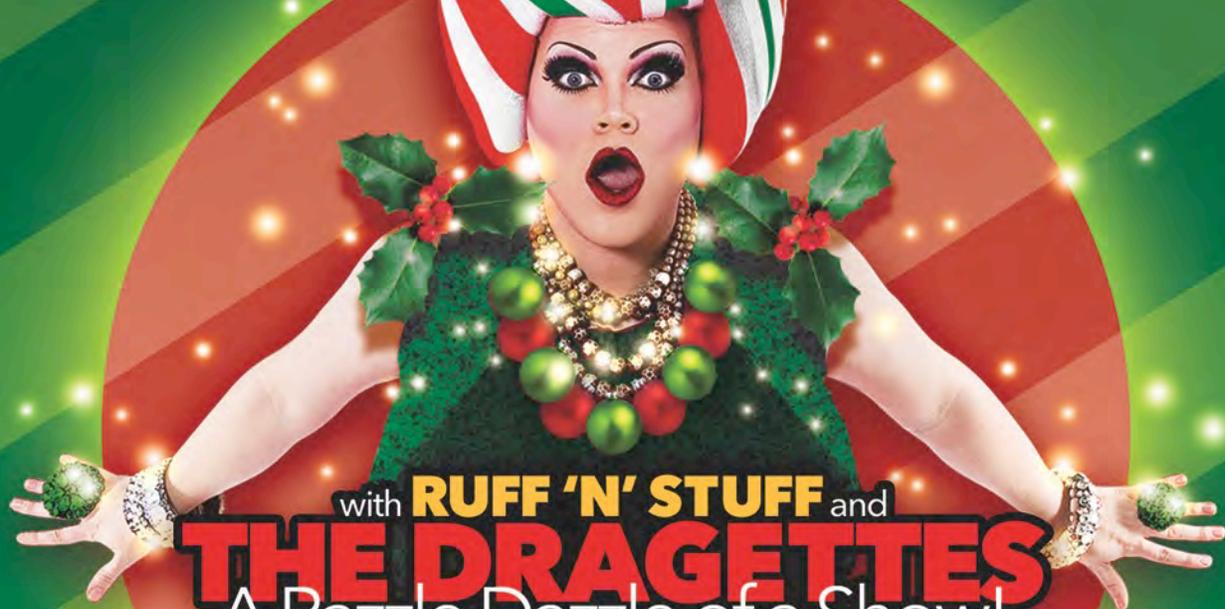
# GRAB **MAGAZINE**

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# GRAB SHARON

## Complaints department: An interview with actor Sharon Gless

By Gregg Shapiro

Have you ever read a memoir that is so intimate, so revealing, so honest, that you as you were turning the pages it felt like the writer was sitting next to you, speaking directly to you? Kudos to multiple Emmy Award-winning actress Sharon Gless for making that a part of the experience of reading her new memoir *Apparently There Were Complaints* (Simon & Schuster, 2021). The Los Angeles native with Hollywood in her veins (her maternal grandfather was a hotshot entertainment lawyer), Gless rose to prominence via her portrayal of New York police detective Christine Cagney in the popular and groundbreaking 1980s TV series *Cagney & Lacey* (alongside Tyne Daly). As if she hadn't already established an LGBTQ+ following through that show, she went on to play Debbie Novotny, the smart and sassy mother of Michael on Showtime's equally groundbreaking *Queer As Folk* in the early 2000s. Gless was generous enough to sit down for an interview in advance of the publication of her book.

**Gregg Shapiro:** Your new memoir, *Apparently There Were Complaints* opens on a serious note with your 2015 pancreatitis diagnosis. So, I'd like to begin by saying that, from one Gemini to another, I hope you are in good health.

**Sharon Gless:** Thank you, honey, I'm in very good health. Thank you, my fellow Gemini.

**GS:** Why was now the time to write your memoir?

**SG:** Well, it's taken seven years. It's not



like it was yesterday. I never actually intended to write a memoir, Gregg. I was called in to a meeting by CBS for what I thought was a conversation to offer me a new series. We talked for an hour and, apparently, I was so entertaining that at the end of the hour meeting, the president of CBS said, "You know we own Simon & Schuster." I said, "I didn't know that." She said, "We do, and I think you've got a book in you." I said, "I don't usually write." She said, "That doesn't matter. You're a

storyteller, Sharon." So I walked out with a book deal [laughs] with Simon & Schuster and not the series I was hoping for. Actually, I didn't meet (with) Simon & Schuster for another year. I sort of let it go. The next day there was a text from the president of Simon & Schuster. I sort of ignored it because I didn't want to do that. I wanted to act! A year went by, and I wasn't so busy, and I was in New York, and I said, "What the hell!" I went to meet him. I read one chapter to him, one chapter

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that I had written in case he asked for anything. He signed me that day[laughs].

**GS: Were you a journal or diary keeper or did you rely on your memory for the details?**

**SG:** Never. No. My very best friend Dawn (LaFreeda), who's been my best friend forever and... I'm a talker, a storyteller, and I would tell her stories about my life throughout our relationship. She kept them! She said, "You have a book in you." So, there's another person saying so. She kept the stories. When Simon & Schuster made me the offer, Dawn dragged out all my stories. A couple of times I had gatherings at my house where I had four people over, and I said, "Ask me some questions," and put a recorder down. I'd just start talking. Then as more of my life coming out on the page, which is hard to do, I started remembering more and more. It took a form that I had always intended. I came up with the title, *Apparently There Were Complaints*, very early on. I made the book about all the complaints people had about me throughout my life. It helped that Dawn had kept records of all the stories I've told. Some of those I used (in the book). It's funny, as you write, as you keep going, you start remembering more and more and more because one emotion leads to the next emotion or the next time someone hurts your feelings or the next complaint.

**GS: I'm glad you mentioned the emotional part of it, because writing a memoir means revisiting the past, including your complicated relationship with your grandmother, whom you called Grimmy, as well as your parents. Did you find it to be painful, freeing or both?**

**SG:** Sometimes because some of the memories were painful. There were times when I was reading some of it that I would go back to that place. I just

finished recording it (the audio book) a couple of weeks ago. What surprised me is when I'd get to certain places, especially about Grimmy, you can hear on the recording, my voice breaks. I left it in. They asked me if I wanted to (rerecord it) and I said, "No. Leave it in." She was really the best thing that ever happened to me. It's that she was tough.

**GS: One of the things that stood out**



**to me about *Apparently There Were Complaints* is the way that not only does it sound like you – I've interviewed you before so in reading the book, it sounded like you...**

**SG:** Thank you! It's very important to me that you hear my voice in that.

**GS: It totally comes through. The other thing that shines through is your sense of humor and comic timing.**

**SG:** Thank you!

**GS: How important was it for you to make that aspect of your personality a part of the book?**

**SG:** Very important. I do have a sarcastic, not a mean sarcastic, a funny sarcastic side. Some of the complaints and some of my addictions and some of the things I talk about... you've got to take some of it lightly or who's going to want to read that? Clearly, I survived. It's not all bad news. When I came up with the title, [laughs] which was perfect because there were so many complaints about me in my life, sometimes you just have to laugh, even at the sadder stuff. I'm still standing, Gregg!

**GS: Yes, you are! Memoirs, like TV shows such as *Finding Your Roots*, are a way for both the subject and the audience to uncover fascinating details that might not otherwise have been public knowledge. The story about your boarding school classmate Gibbie, also known as the late Abigail Folger, in chapter seven feels like an example of that. Would you ever consider being on one of those genealogy tracing shows?**

**SG:** I didn't know a show like that existed. I would never do something like *This Is Your Life* [laughs], remember that? I didn't know about a show that traces your genealogy. I'm always fascinated in my background. I'm certainly not opposed to anybody scraping up my genealogy.

**GS: You write about your interactions with LGBTQ+ people in your life, personally and professionally, and Chapter 43, titled "I'll Be There," which is about your experience playing Debbie Novotny in Showtime's *Queer As Folk* made me weep, it was so beautiful. This is less a question than it is an expression of gratitude for, well, being there.**

**SG:** Thank you! The pleasure, for lack

of a better word, is all mine. You have all changed my life. I became so much more educated. I thought, "Oh, I know it all. All my best friends are gay." Right? But I learned so much on *Queer As Folk*. The stories that they wrote and the performances. I didn't realize the real plight, the behind-the-scenes pain that went on in the gay community. Because of *Queer As Folk* I became quite educated and impassioned. I meant it when I said, "I'll be there."

**GS: The Peacock streaming service is doing a *Queer As Folk* reboot. What do you think about that?**

**SG:** Yes, I'm aware they're doing a reboot of it. What I think about it is I'm so sorry they're not using the original cast. It's never going to be better. But good luck to them, and I hope they have even close to the hit we were. I think the biggest star of that show right now is going to be the city of New Orleans. We'll see how the stories go.

**GS: Because the entertainment industry is a central component to your memoir, if *Apparently There Were Complaints* was to be made into a theatrical movie or TV miniseries, who would you want to play you?**

**SG:** It would take several actresses

because there's a lot of years. If there was somebody who could span it. I'm a big fan of Jennifer Lawrence. She has a husky voice, too. And there's also an irreverence and a sensitivity to her. If anybody ever wanted to do that, I think she'd be great.

**GS: Finally, in addition to us both being Geminis, we also share South Florida as our home. What do you like best about living here?**

**SG:** The happiness on my husband's (TV producer Barney Rosenzweig) face. When he retired he moved us here. I'm married to a man who if he's happy, everybody's happy [laughs]. He adores Florida. Los Angeles was always my home. I was born there, raised there. I'm an Angeleno, through and through. I've been to Los Angeles over the last year and I don't like what's happened to it. Now I'm grateful to be returning to an island as beautiful as the one I live on. Los Angeles needs a total reboot, rebuild, re-everything. It's fallen on hard

# Apparently There Were Complaints



**Sharon  
Gless**

a memoir

times, L.A. I remember it when I lived there. It was a magical city.

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# GRAB A GIFT

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By Mikey Rox

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*Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @mikeyroxtravels*

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# GRAB TROY

## Troy Story Netflix Star, Troy Iwata, Sings about Sexual and Gender Identity in 'Place and Time' album

By Tom Tietjen

Troy Iwata is best known for his role in the Netflix series *Dash & Lily*, where he stars as the slightly immature, hopeless romantic, big brother Langston.

What fans of the show may not know is Troy is a singing and dance man! He received his big break in Broadway's *Be More Chill* and this month, he joins Tituss Burgess and a cast of Broadway artists from under-represented segments of the theatre community in the new musical album, *Place and Time*.

Written by EllaRose Chary and Brandon James Gwinn, the team behind the 2021 Richard Rodgers Award winning musical, TL;DR *Thelma Louise*; *Dyke Remix*, *Place and Time* shines a spotlight on women, queer POC, theys, enbys and trans folk. Troy plays a character awakening to a part of himself and he hopes his song, "Why I Chose," is a reminder to queer youth that identity expands further than sexual orientation.

We spoke with Troy from his Manhattan apartment.

**Tom Tietjen:** What was it like growing up in a little town in the mountains of California?  
**Troy Iwata:** If I had to sum up my early childhood in a nutshell, it mostly consisted of the never-ending question, "Should I believe the things my

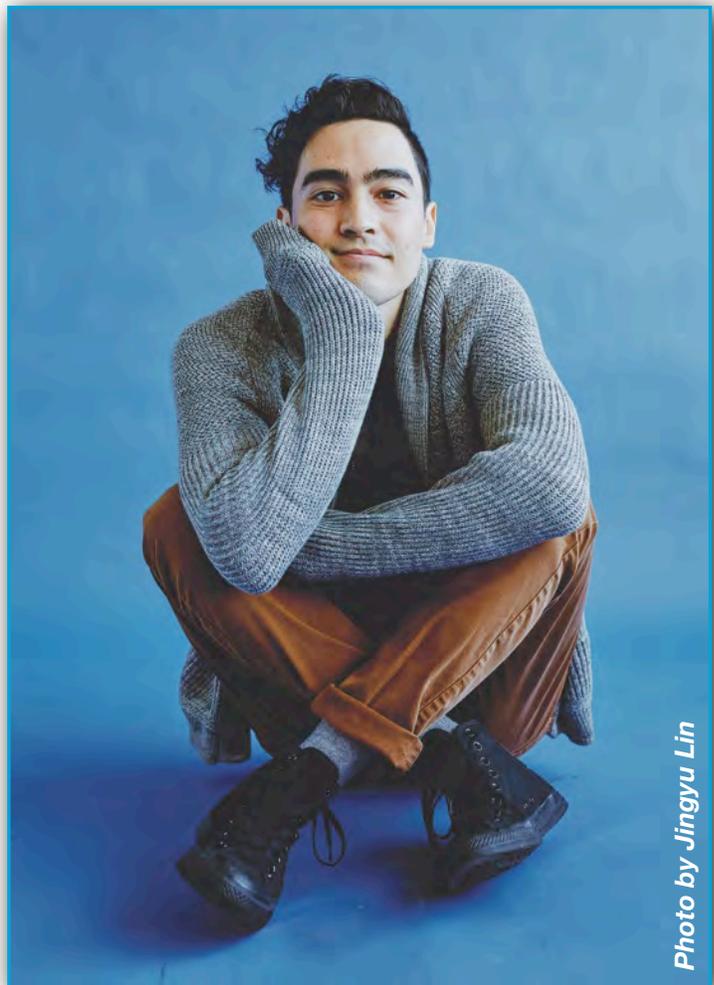
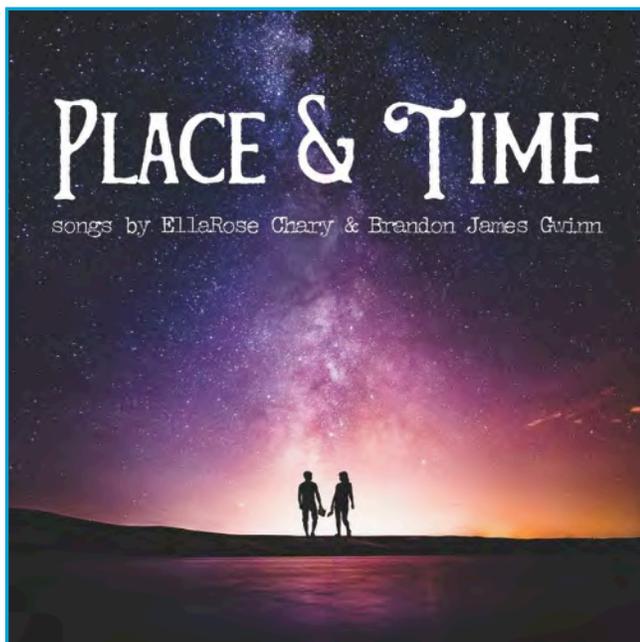


Photo by Jingyu Lin



conservative, born-again Christian Dad and my secular Mom says?' I spent all of high school in the closet despite looking back and realizing I wasn't fooling anyone. 24/7 anxiety and depression, repressing gay thoughts, shutting my eyes as tightly as I could thinking that would make my pray-the-gay-away prayers stronger.

**TT: Did you find solace on stage?**

**Ti:** I didn't start drama 'til my junior year of high

school and it's all thanks to my older brother who forced me to audition for *The Wizard of Oz*. I got cast as the Scarecrow and for the first time in my life, I felt I had an outlet for my emotions that wasn't crying alone in my room or trying to hit the gayness out of my head. I remained in the closet but the drama club was the closest thing to comfort I'd ever felt. No one there was in a rush to grow up. We were silly, stupid and less afraid to love the things about life that made us happy.

**TT: Did things get better for you in college?**

**Ti:** Believe it or not, I ended up going to a small Christian school, mainly because I knew how to navigate that world. It wasn't new to me; I'd been doing it for eighteen years. I majored in theatre because it's just what I gravitated towards. It gave me access to a healthier emotional outlet. I genuinely was not thinking about a career in any way. I was purely still in

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mental and emotional survival mode.

**TT: What led you to Broadway?**

**TI:** I moved to NYC after college because I honestly didn't know what else to do. I thought the worst that could happen would be I'd fail, have no money and have to move back home and be sad, and that was what most of my life had been anyway so it didn't seem so terrible. I had no goals to be on Broadway. I never allowed myself to have it as a goal, it was always a "that would be really special" dream.

**TT: How did you find yourself in *Be More Chill*?**

**TI:** My journey there wasn't traditional. I had auditioned for the regional show and didn't get it. Then, years later, when they made the Off-Broadway announcements, I emailed my agents and told them I'd love to be seen for it. I auditioned, got cast as an understudy and then when it moved to Broadway, they took me with them. I'll cherish everything about that experience for the rest of my life.

**TT: Did you find your community among the Broadway actors?**

**TI:** Um, sure? (Laughing) Yeah, I made some great friends in the process. Others remained lovely co-workers which is also great. Theatre is so temporary, I don't think it's fair to pressure yourself to become like family with every cast that you work with.

**TT: How did you come to connect with Brandon and Ella on their *Place & Time* album?**

**TI:** I've known Brandon for a few years. He reached out to me and asked if I was available and I was. Sometimes the stars align on certain projects. Getting to work together on something that means a lot to him is really special.

**TT: "Why I Chose" is a beautiful song with a wonderful message. What does the song mean to you?**

**TI:** I'm not gonna lie, when Brandon sent me the rough cut of the song, I listened to myself sing for hours and I was like, "Omg I'm amazing." The song is gorgeous and it's a lovely reminder to queer youth that your identity can expand further than your sexual

orientation. Even who you're attracted to doesn't - or at least shouldn't - come attached with societal rules about how you should act, think or look. We live in a society that's obsessed with categories and it shames people, specifically black, brown, people with disabilities and queer people for stepping out of their box. This song is a

**TI:** I love how warm and cozy it is. I love how family centric it is. I love its ability to be inclusive without pushing an agenda. *Dash & Lily* simply exists unapologetically and has a gorgeous message of finding the beauty of stepping out of your comfort zone and having faith in yourself and others.

**TT: Will there be another season?**

**TI:** No, and even though that makes me sad, I think the show is such a perfect little thing for the world and I hope people enjoy revisiting it. Midori's in my phone as "Lil' Sis".

**TT: Now we start the tough questions. What is something fans would be surprised to learn about you?**

**TI:** I do this crazy, random thing where I like to have cereal in the morning, like with milk, cold milk, it's just my own little, I don't know, I'm weird. That's a joke. (Laughing) But that is a tough question! I don't really know.

**TT: Do you have a secret talent?**

**TI:** I can do lots of origami. I'm sure people reading this are like, "We assumed Mr. IWATA."

**TT: If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?**

**TI:** My shoulder keeps popping and I'd love for that to stop. Other than that, I'm gonna try to not waste my time fantasizing about things I can't change.

**TT: What is your most treasured possession?**

**TI:** These questions! I'm literally looking at objects around my studio apartment asking, "Would I care if this was lost in a fire?" I like my eyebrows.

**TT: Last one and then the torture stops. What or who is the greatest love of your life?**

**TI:** Aside from myself, I'm with a lovely human who is my boyfriend and they are constantly making me laugh and surprising me with the way they communicate and make me feel more special than I sometimes feel about myself. I love them very much. And yes, they go by they/them. I still call them my boyfriend. We've had a conversation about it, this is what they decided, shut up.

*Place and Time* is available on Spotify and Apple Music. Learn more at <http://www.brandonandella.com>.



Photo by Jingyu Lin

small encouragement to dare to live in the in-between.

**TT: We have to ask about *Dash and Lily*. How did that come about?**

**TI:** Joe Tracz, who wrote the book for *Be More Chill*, approached me during rehearsals and said, "I'm working on a Netflix show and there's this character who a half-Asian, gay, comedic brother. I think you'd be good for it." I was...I was good for it.

**TT: What do you love about the show?**

# Holiday 2021

Sun	Dec 12 3pm-9pm	World's Shortest Holiday Bar Crawl
Tues	Dec 14 8pm-10pm	Big Gay Holiday Gayme Show with Sofonda Booz
Wed	Dec 15 8pm-11pm	Wil's Winter Workshop Ornament Decorating
Sun	Dec 19 2pm-6pm	Sunday Social Slay Ride Drag & Burlesque Revue
Thurs	Dec 23 9pm-1am	Thirsty Thursday Karaoke Bradley K's Holiday Heaukdown
Closed Christmas Eve. & Christmas Day		
Fri	Dec 31 5pm-2am	New Year's Eve. Pajama Party Game Night

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# GRAB JANICE-MARIE

## Sweet as can be – an interview with Janice-Marie Johnson of A Taste of Honey

By Gregg Shapiro

**Gregg Shapiro:** Janice-Marie, for those who might not know the history of A Taste of Honey, I'd like to begin by asking you to say something about the name, which I have read has a connection to the song "A Taste of Honey," made popular by Herb Alpert & The Tijuana Brass.

**Janice-Marie Johnson:** The name was not taken from the song by The Tijuana Brass. That's an assumption that people make. They either think it's taken from the play or the song. The name A Taste of Honey was the name that was for a group that was the predecessor to the band A Taste of Honey. The singing group had two guys and two girls. We were put together to try to do some originals, to try to get a record deal. After four months, they said, "That's taking too long [laughs]!" So, they all quit. One of the guys that had been in that group, Smokey, who has since passed on, had come up with the name A Taste of Honey. What made him think of that name? It could have been the song, but I don't know. I just carried it over.

**GS:** I also want to ask you about being a female bass player in the 1970s. Today, we have numerous well-respected female bass players, including Gail Ann Dorsey, Meshell Ndegeocello and Esperanza Spalding, to name a few. Were there any female bass players you looked to in your early career for inspiration?

**J-MJ:** The only female bass player that I was even aware of was Carol Kaye. I had all her books. There was no female bass player for me to look to or any of that. Back when I was in college, I was in the string class. In that class, you had the violas, violins, cellos, and bass. They only had ten bass available for the class, but there were 11 bassists who wanted to play. Of course, I'm the only female. The instructor, Mr. DeSario, I

remember him so well. I don't remember all my teachers, but I remember Mr.

DeSario. He said, "OK, one of you bassists is going to have to play cello or violin. We don't have enough bass."

Everyone in the class turned to me because the bass players are up high in the back, and looked at me as if I'm the one who's supposed to switch instruments. What an assumption! The wrong assumption! They were adamant. "You should just play another instrument because girls don't play bass anyway." So, I really laid into them. I said, "First of all, the bass is my first instrument. And you, young man, aren't you a keyboard player? Aren't you a sax player? You're trying to pick up a second instrument? There's no way in the world I'm letting this instrument go." I don't even know what all I said, but I did a whole spiel. "How dare you say a female can't play bass?" I'm doing my whole women's lib speech. Mr. DeSario said, "I've heard enough!



Photo By Kathleen Lantos

All of you can play bass! Janice, I am bringing my German bass from home for you to play." What he did was he brought me the best bass ever. His bass. Because all the bass that were in the school were made of plywood. They can only give you certain tones. But my bass [laughs]; he brought in the real deal. That's the last I heard from those other bass players. I felt it was my duty to do well in the class, so I did get straight A's. I could play everything written on paper. Other people were jamming. But because I had just started playing bass, so I was jamming but I could play what was on that paper and get creative. I was the best bassist in that class!

# Holiday 2021

SATURDAY · DEC 4TH  
9PM TO 3AM  
DILF: FELIZ  
NAVI-DADDY  
TOYS FOR TOTS

SATURDAY · DEC 11TH  
12PM TO 3PM  
DOGGY DAYS  
WITH SANTA

SUNDAY · DEC 12TH  
3PM TO 9PM  
WORLD'S SHORTEST  
BAR CRAWL

FRIDAY · DEC 17TH  
9PM TO 2AM  
GRRR: JINGLE BEAR  
ONESIE PARTY

SATURDAY · DEC 18TH  
9PM TO 3AM  
SLOPPY  
OTTER XMAS

SUNDAY · DEC 19TH  
9PM TO 1AM  
JOLLY OL'  
BEARAOKE

WEDNESDAY · DEC 22ND  
8PM TO 10PM  
POLAR BEAR  
TRIVIA

FRIDAY · DEC 24TH  
3PM TO 2AM  
SATURDAY · DEC 25TH  
12PM TO 3AM  
OPEN

FRIDAY · DEC 31ST  
9PM TO 2AM  
NYE COUNTDOWN  
WITH VJ THOMAS



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**GS:** Some people might be under the impression that *A Taste of Honey* was an overnight sensation because the group's first single, "Boogie Oogie Oogie," and 1978 self-titled debut album were smash hits. But *A Taste of Honey's* musical roots stretches back to the early 1970s. What did that well-earned success in 1978 mean to you?

**J-MJ:** Earning success in 1978 meant everything, absolutely everything. People called us an overnight success, but nothing could be further from the truth. By the time we got our record deal, we had already toured overseas – Japan, Philippines, Guam, Okinawa, Taiwan, Thailand, Spain, Morocco. I can't even think of all the places. We had toured quite a bit with the USO. We had played all over the world, all over California, even a few states back east and down south, which was quite interesting. We didn't care what they called us; as long as they called. Being a female bass player always got the question. "Are you really playing that bass? Where's the real bass player?" It's like, "OK, that's just the way you're thinking. It doesn't matter because your opinion of me does not make that my reality."

**GS:** The bassline of "Boogie Oogie Oogie" is as central to the song as the beat and handclaps. Was that, and is it still, a conscious decision you make when writing music, to put the bass front and center?

**J-MJ:** It depends on the song. For a dance song, of course, the bass is going to be front and center, along with the drums [laughs]. We've got to get our groove on. You can't have a dance song with the bass buried in the bottom. Not these days. That was a conscious decision. But the bassline itself just kind of came. "Boogie Oogie Oogie" has to be one of the quickest songs I've ever written. We were already in the process of recording the album. But we were booked at March Air Force Base in Perris, California.

Hazel (Payne) hadn't been in the group too long. The other guitar player, Carlita Dorhan, she had been with the group since its formation in '71, '72, and she was also in one of my earlier singing groups prior to *A Taste of Honey*, so we grew up together. She was the guitar player. But she fell in love and quit. Then I recruited Hazel. After we got Hazel, we were already shopping for (record) deals and getting turned down, you know how it goes. We had been performing for quite a while before Hazel joined and the rest is history.

**GS:** It's a good thing you stuck it out.

**J-MJ:** This was my dream. I formed this band. I'm not going anywhere. It's so funny, I'm the only one in the beginning the only one in the end.

**GS:** "Boogie Oogie Oogie" was released in 1978, probably disco's biggest year, and went on to earn *A Taste of Honey* a Best New Artist Grammy. What did all that attention mean to you?

**J-MJ:** Stress [laughs]! Here's the deal, when you come out and you're successful and you hit number one, where do you go from there? People had categorized us as a disco group because of the "Boogie..." but in reality, *A Taste of Honey* was not a disco group, if you listen to the first album, it was mid-tempo. But that's the category that was selling at that time so that's where they placed us. Being number one without management, without career guidance, it wasn't easy.

Even our first gig that we did – we opened up for The Commodores, LTD and Con Funk Shun – we had come straight out of the club scene, so our techs and roadies did not have the experience for such a fast-paced stage changeover. Had it not been for Con Funk Shun, our good friends who we had known since '73 in Japan, we go way back, we had the same management at the time, their techs helped change the stage. We lost so much equipment that year with our techs because they just weren't ready for that pace. When you come out number one, it's a struggle to stay up.

The record company doesn't listen to you as to what songs you think should be released [laughs]. They do what they want to. But it's OK. We were out there. I got to take my mom to the Grammy Awards with me. Got her all decked out. Had a limo; just really made it her day more so than mine,



Photo By Kathleen Lantos

because she had put so much into my career. I remember driving her Falcon back then. The Falcon ended up looking like a hot rod car because the front was so swooped up. But it was only swooped up because my big, heavy bass amp was always in her trunk [laughs]. So, one of the first things I did was I bought her a brand-new car.

**GS:** What a great daughter!

**J-MJ:** I would do it all over again. You don't get to be successful without support coming from somewhere. Some musicians don't get it at home, but I did.

**GS:** Disco and the LGBTQ+ community have a long history of association and mutual admiration. Were you and the members of *A Taste of Honey* aware of a gay fanbase?

**J-MJ:** Are you kidding? How can we not be made aware? They're my favorite audience. Letting your hair down, grooving, no inhibitions, just having fun. Stop worrying about who's watching what you're doing. Go ahead and do your little groove, that little step

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you've been doing for the past 40 years. We're with you [laughs]! I have the same step. I plant my feet. The feet don't move, but my body moves. My body used to move more when I was younger, but now I just flail my arms around, look like I'm having a great time. That's an audience that 100 percent supports A Taste of Honey. I don't know why I have not been booked to play the Gay Pride Festivals. Are you kidding? You're talking about the best audience ever! Ever!

**GS: From February 26 to March 3, 2022, A Taste of Honey will be one of the musical acts performing on the Ultimate Disco Cruise 2022. What are you most looking forward to about the cruise?**

**J-MJ:** I'm looking forward to being on the stage! Oh, my God, being on the stage and I get to perform for a whole hour. That is music to my ears. The last time I performed was March 6, 2019. I performed at The Orleans Hotel with the First Ladies of Disco, which includes Linda Clifford, Martha Wash and Norma Jean (Wright). I was a special guest performer at the show.

I've done that show a couple of times. I was a surprise guest because they couldn't mention my name. I was booked the next month in Vegas, as

well, with the Village People. You can't say "Featuring Janice-Marie as special guest A Taste of Honey." You have to say, "surprise guest." We had the best time! Thank God for that gig, because it got us all the way through this pandemic and not being able to work.

**GS: I think Norma Jean is also scheduled to perform on the disco cruise.**

**J-MJ:** Yes, she's on there, as well. That's one of the other things I'm looking forward to. Seeing all of my fellow musicians. Usually, they only all get together when it's a memorial service or a funeral because we're all spread out all over the place. These kinds of gigs are wonderful. We get to go see each other's show, which we don't often get the opportunity to do because we're usually performing somewhere else on the same weekend.



Photo By Kathleen Lantos

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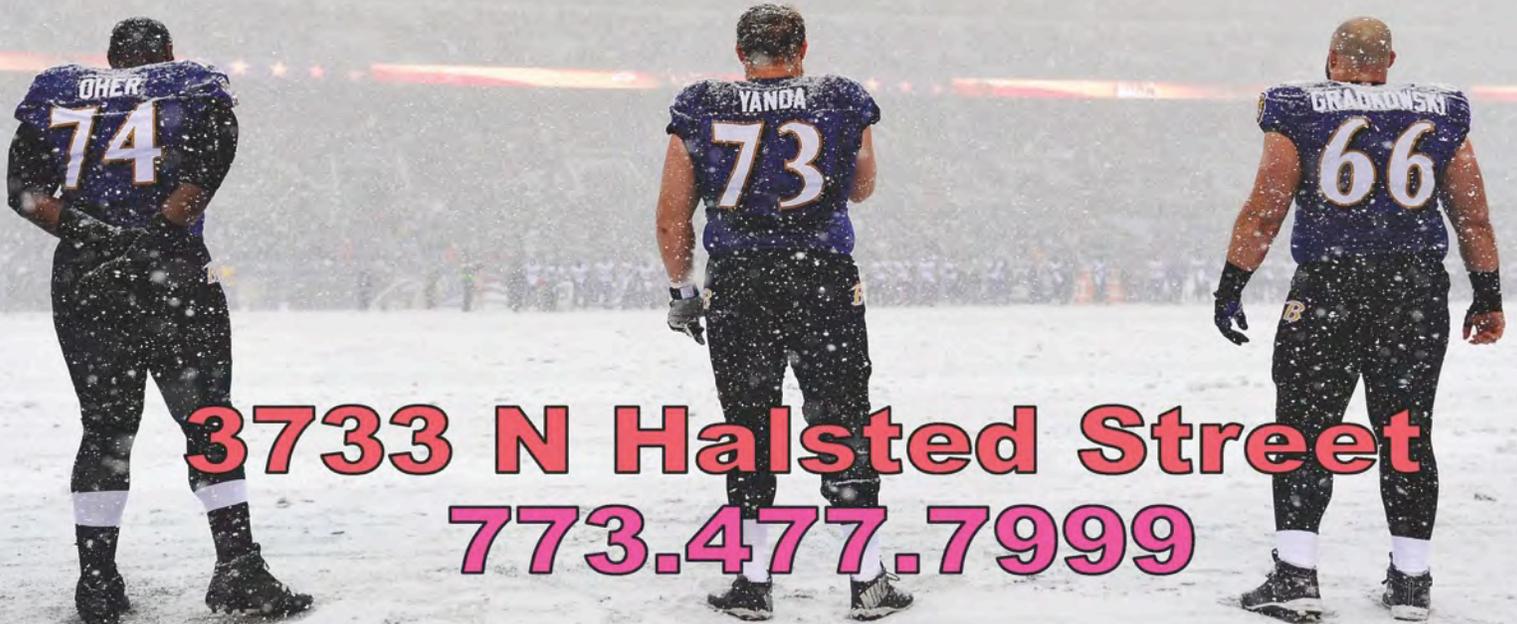
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<p><b>Tuesday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. <b>Hydrate:</b> 8/10 TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis <b>Lark:</b> 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers &amp; Ciders. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. <b>Steamworks:</b> Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). <b>The SoFo Tap:</b> \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$4 Tallboys, \$5 Jager, Fireball &amp; Malort. <b>Touche:</b> Hardcore Cruisin' Sponsor Leather 64Ten. No cell phones/Wifi.</p>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis <b>Lark:</b> Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos &amp; Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$3 Regular Miller Lite, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft &amp; Cans. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Taylor &amp; Ariana 4th Wed of month – all 9pm-2am. <b>Steamworks:</b> Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. <b>The SoFo Tap:</b> \$3 House Shots, \$4 Tito's Cocktails, \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Jager, Fireball &amp; Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>Touche:</b> Jockstrap Night Sponsored by Full Kit Gear, Free Clothing check.</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. <b>Hydrate:</b> RuPaul's Drag Race Season All Stars Viewing Party Doors Open 6:30pm, Bubble POP Hosted by Khloe Coulee 9pm. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. <b>Lark:</b> RuPaul's Drag Race All Stars 6 viewing party &amp; Bogo Pizza 7pm, Buy One Pizza, Get One Pizza Half Off (Dine in Only), Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts &amp; Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, Chicago's RuPaul's Drag Race Viewing Party 7pm, Drag &amp; Games Dance Party 9pm-2am <b>Steamworks:</b> Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. <b>The SoFo Tap:</b> \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$4 Tallboys, \$5 Jager, Fireball &amp; Malort. <b>Touche:</b> Throwback Thursdays 70's-80's Music &amp; Porn by Bijou Video.</p>

# GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily  
Specials

<p><b>Friday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 4pm-2am. <b>Charlie's:</b> 1st and 3rd Fierce Fridays 10p – 1am, 2nd Fierce Fridays - Traffic Light Party 10p – 1am, 4th Fierce Fridays - Glow Up Party 10p – 1am, 5th Fierce Fridays – Strut 10p – 1am, Dancing until close. <b>Hydrate:</b> 8/6 Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. <b>Lark:</b> Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open with dancers at 6pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 Tito's, \$7 Big Miller Lites, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 3pm, T.G.I.F. Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. <b>The SoFo Tap:</b> \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jager, Fireball &amp; Malort. <b>Touche:</b> 12/10 WTNB Leather Social 8pm, Club Holiday Party. 12/17 Cowboy Round Up "Christmas on The Range".</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$5 Well Cocktails &amp; Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 2pm-3am. <b>Charlie's:</b> Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, The Main Event 10pm – 1am Dancing until Close. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.). <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag &amp; Games 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day Saturday 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. <b>The SoFo Tap:</b> \$4 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Jager, Fireball &amp; Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>Touche:</b> 12/11 Dungeon Master Night S&amp;M Demo @ Midnight CWB 5pm. 12/18 Gear Night &amp; Full Moon Party, Dress Code in Club Room, BNC 6pm.</p>
<p><b>Sunday Funday</b></p>	<p><b>@mosphere:</b> \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. <b>Baton Show Lounge:</b> Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm &amp; 11:30pm. <b>Cell Block:</b> Open 2pm-2am <b>Charlie's:</b> Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. <b>Hydrate:</b> Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. <b>Kit Kat Lounge:</b> Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. <b>Lark:</b> Free Flowing Brunch 11am-3pm. <b>Lucky Horseshoe:</b> Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. <b>Meeting House Tavern:</b> \$3 House Shots, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Frozens, \$5 Jäger, Fireball &amp; Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>North End:</b> Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm <b>Replay Beer &amp; Bourbon Lakeview:</b> \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) <b>Sidetrack:</b> Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. <b>The SoFo Tap:</b> \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$6 Chicago Handshake, \$5 Prairie Vodka Cocktails, \$5 Jager, Fireball &amp; Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers. <b>Touche:</b> 12/12 Bears vs Packers 7pm, Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, Bears vs Ravens at Noon, Movie Night 7pm.</p>

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DANCE

	Artist	Title
1	Riggs & Piros	What If This Is Love ft. Dani Poppitt
2	Gregor Potter	Mean It
3	Morgan Page & Lights	Turn Off My Mind (Clean Edit)
4	SACHI	Down On Your Luck (Dance Radio Edit)
5	DVRKO x Forbes	Mean Something
6	Tommie Sunshine & Breikthru & Fahjah	Feel Something More
7	KREAM x Milleann	What You've Done To Me ft. Bemende
8	Surf Mesa Featuring Bipolar Sunshine	Lose My Mind
9	MEDUZA	Tell It To My Heart ft. Hozier (Radio Edit)
10	Tiesto & Ava Max	The Motto
11	VASSY x Vinny Vibe	Don't Wanna Be Right
12	Don Diablo	Cheque (Clean Radio Edit)
13	Karen Harding	You & I
14	Sam Feldt & Sam Fischer	Pick Me Up
15	Sam Feldt	Call On Me ft. Georgia Ku
16	Gryffin & LOVA	Piece Of Me
17	A7S	By My Side (Radio Edit)
18	Viiq	Heartless
19	Bingo Players & Oomloud	Holiday ft. Seb Mont (Festival Mix)
20	Kito x Bea Miller	Steal My Clothes (Clean Version)
21	Afrojack x Lucas & Steve x DubVision	Anywhere With You
22	Lee Dagger & Melanie Fontana	Making It Up (Luca Debonaire Radio)
23	DallasK x Lauv	Try Again
24	Tiesto & Karol G	Don't Be Shy
25	Sonny Fodera x KOLIDESCOPES x Sinead Harnett	Nah (KREAM Remix)
26	ManyFew	Power ft. Jenny Adesanya
27	Ofenbach x Ella Henderson	Hurricane
28	TELYKast with Sam Gray	Unbreakable
29	Sigma & Carla Marie	Hope (KC Lights Radio Mix)
30	Kim Petras	Future Starts Now
31	Steff da Campo	Delusional ft. Cassa Jackson
32	Frank Walker x Amber Van Day	Feel Like Us Again
33	Lucas & Steve x Tungevaag	Paper Planes
34	HRVY	1 Day 2 Nights
35	Mahalo	Nothing Matters
36	tyDi x Electric Polar Bears	You Never Know ft. Neverwaves
37	Charli XCX	Good Ones (Joel Corry Remix)
38	Elderbrook	Broken Mirror
39	Sonny Fodera & Vintage Culture	Last Thought ft. MKLA
40	Paul Oakenfold & Aloe Blacc	I'm in Love



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# GRAB ROGER

## Buying a Condominium, Avoiding Condo Hell

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

With careful planning, you can buy a condominium, take advantage of the current low interest rates and enjoy many of the same benefits and satisfactions as owning a house in the suburbs. The key is to do your homework in making your choice of purchase so that your condominium can easily be sold without a loss on your investment.

In choosing a building, it is usually best to buy in the worst building in a good area than into the best building in an adequate or marginal area. Learn about your building – talk to the janitor or building engineer. Ask about the physical condition of the building – recent repairs, structural improvements, plans and the like.

Is there a security system – do the lobby doors lock properly and is the doorman alert and polite? Notice how the doorman and the building employees carry themselves and perform their duties in performing the building's functions. While in the lobby, watch the people as they enter and leave the building – these people are

your prospective neighbors.

After looking at the apartment and building, make sure the neighborhood meets your needs and desires. There have always been three rules in buying real estate: "Location, location and location." Look for elements that make the area good for investment. Look for access to public transportation, nearness to good shopping areas and restaurants. And walk the neighborhood, a drive-through is never enough.

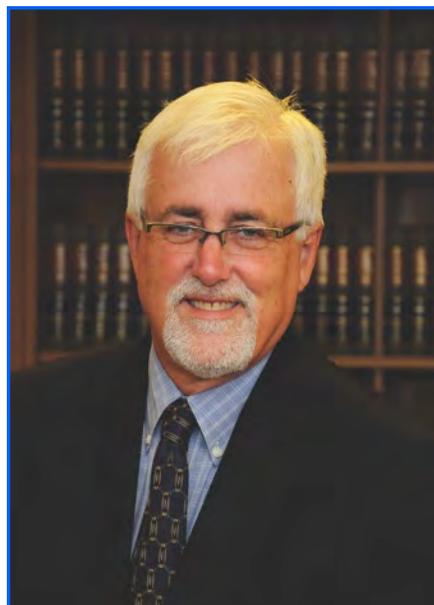
Finally, and most importantly, inquire about your neighbors. Get the names of several owners on the same floor, find their names in the phone book and call them to find out about the apartment building. A neighbor is your best source for information because they will also want to know who you are and what you are all about.

When it comes time to make an offer have your lawyer review the contract. Merely because the contract is preprinted does not mean that the terms are standard or universally accepted. The boilerplate terms and fine print have to be reviewed and edited to correspond with your purchase.

Additionally, your sales contract should be subject to your review of the following condominium documents before being committed to complete the purchase. They are:

- Declaration, bylaws, rules and regulations. You must be satisfied that you can live within the guidelines that each building imposes. The bylaws can cover pets, leasing your condominium and requirements that the apartment floors must always be carpeted to reduce noise.

- Statement of any large expenditures by the association. This information will let you know if the association is planning a major



building repair or improvement that could cause your assessment to increase. Your seller may be trying to unload the unit before being levied with the extra charge.

- Statement of the amount of the reserve or replacement fund. This information will tell you how well the board of managers is running the building and providing for future unforeseen repairs.

- Copy of the financial statement of the association. Use your lawyer or accountant to analyze the association's financial statement. It can prove whether the board is good at running the building and foretell matters that will affect future assessments.

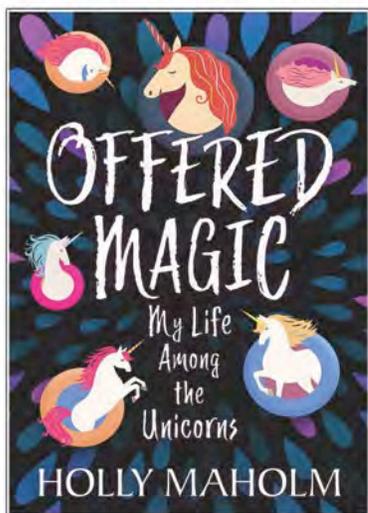
- Statement of any pending litigation against the association. This will disclose any potential liabilities against the association which could cause a change in the financial condition of the association – higher assessments.

Additionally, you should review the minutes of the building's board meetings. This may reveal significant matters that may affect your decision to buy the apartment.

Before you buy any condominium, you should be prepared to examine a fair amount of paperwork. It is better to work hard before the closing than to wake up to a nightmare of problems afterwards.

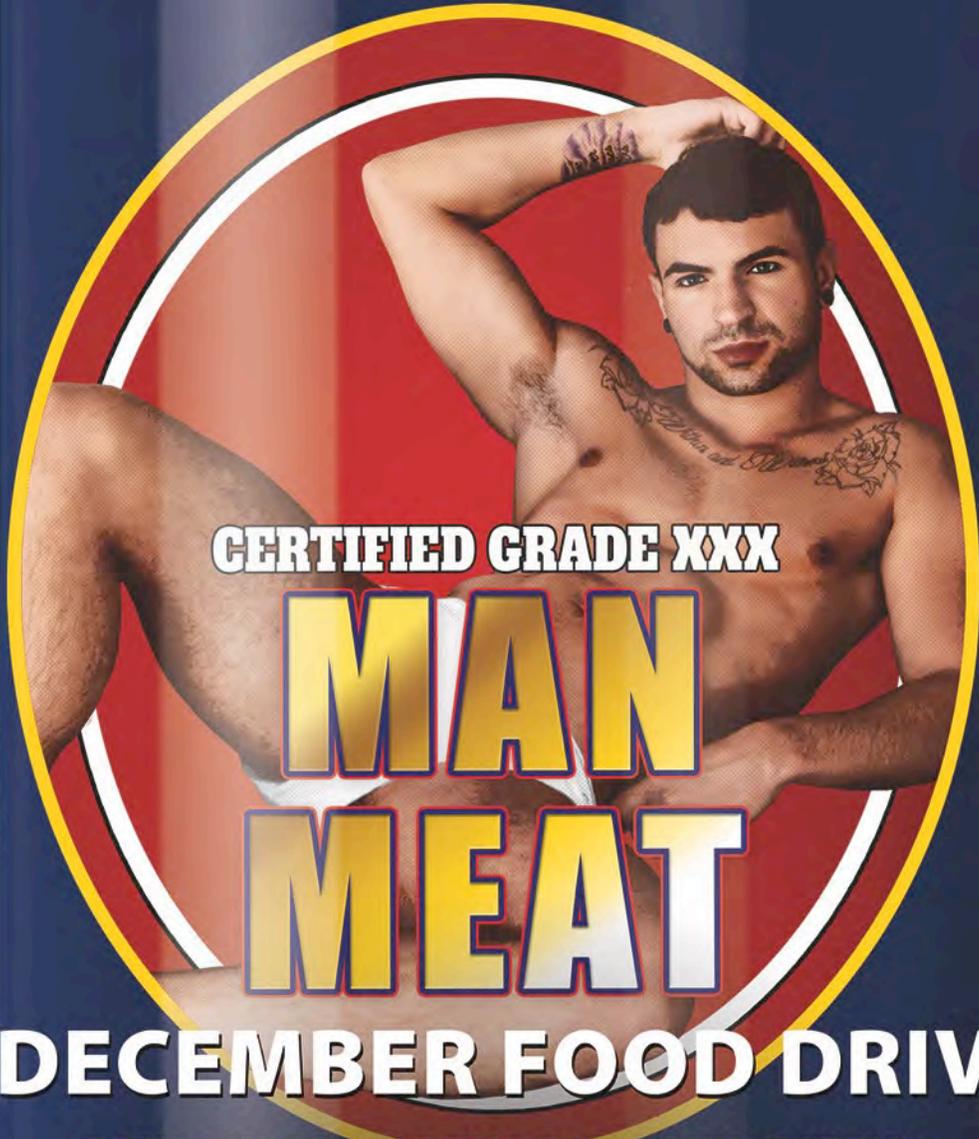
*Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at [RVMLawyer@aol.com](mailto:RVMLawyer@aol.com). He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues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

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# GRAB HOLLY

## The Perfect Gift

By Holly Maholm

What is “the Perfect Gift?” And because the Christmas Season is upon us, what is “the Perfect Christmas Gift?”

Today, for children, the Perfect Gift is likely to be a toy, game or novelty most intensively advertised on TV and the internet during the first three weeks of December. But for adults, we do not have such a ready-made definition. We must dig deeper. In my experience, there are three essential attributes of “the Perfect Gift” – in each case defined by reference to the particular “Giver” and “Recipient” concerned – as follows.

First, the Gift must be wholly unexpected; something the Recipient would never have anticipated, and for which much of the delight experienced by the Recipient is due to the unforeseen nature of the gift. Second, the Gift must be something created or produced by the Giver, himself. It cannot simply be some expensive bauble that owes its existence to the Giver’s good credit. It must have been “purchased” by an expenditure of labor, imagination and creativity by the Giver.

Finally, and most unexpectedly, the “Perfect Gift” must be something that only the Giver was in a position to give. Something which – but for the thoughtful generosity of the Giver – the Recipient

would never have enjoyed, and the possibility of which would have remained forever unknown and unsuspected by the Recipient. Let us see, now, just such a Perfect Gift bestowed.

It was early Christmas morning at Donut Time. The doors were barred to customers, but open to its workers and friends. Tables had been arranged in the middle of the room to provide seating for those invited. One by one the invitees arrived and took their seats, and from the kitchen all could hear – and smell (!) – preparations for a Christmas morning feast!

And the “founder of this feast” (to borrow a phrase from Dickens), was Grandma Lily, then busy in the kitchen. With her as helpers were Phyllis, High Priestess of the Goddess Athena, and Martha, former Lunch Lady. In the seats around the table – eagerly anticipating the feast – were Xandra, Cindy, Aly, Recon, Fender, Tuco, Mike, Dave, Dot and me.

Now, this feast was entirely Grandma Lily’s idea. It was she who had announced that she wanted to “give back” to all her friends at Donut Time by treating them to a fancy breakfast banquet.

You ask: Why was Grandma Lily going to all this trouble? It was this. Ever since Xandra had taken up her spoon and mixing bowl as Chief Donut Officer of Donut Time, she had always given the same reply when anyone raved over her flakey crusts, tasty fillings and sugary creations. In an excess of modesty, and wishing to show her gratitude to her grandmother, Xandra always declared, “I owe it all to Grandma Lily.”

And when, as it often happened, Xandra was pressed to share with others the secrets of her sugary delights, she invariably declined and replied simply that she had learned all her skills and “kitchen tricks” from Grandma Lily, and if there was any recipe that quickly sold-out, she would always say, “Don’t thank me – thank Grandma Lily.”

Thus, you can easily appreciate why the invitees considered it a most unique and fortuitous dispensation to be selected to enjoy a breakfast prepared by Grandma Lily, herself! After all, why should they be satisfied with dishes prepared by a mere Student of the Master, when they could



experience a meal Blessed by the Hands of the Master, herself?

At last, the noises coming from the kitchen abated, and savory smells mounted to a symphonic crescendo of flavorful anticipation. The door to the kitchen opened, and Grandma Lily, Phyllis and Martha began to serve. Let me describe the feast. (I hope I do it justice!)

First was a serving of grits, each bowl featuring a half-dozen lumps of glutinous, uncooked corn meal. Served with it was a large platter of bacon (to be crumbled on top of the grits), so overcooked as to have been reduced to dry, desiccated strips of charcoal, black with carbon. Next were Sticky Rolls, baked – apparently – so as to approximate the similar layers of limestone in the nearby State Forest (e.g., multiple strata of petrified white flour - powdery, tasteless and stale). Finally came a vegetable souffle, this being so dense, overcooked and rubbery that the Outlaws agreed it compared favorably to the tires on the delivery chariots.

After serving, Grandma Lily and her helpers retreated to the kitchen, and as I followed them, I heard Grandma Lily announce, “We’re done! Now I hope I never hear any more about what a good cook I am! Xandra’s the one who should be getting all the praise for her skills and hard work, and if this is what I had to do to give her that gift, then it was worth it.”

*(To be continued)*

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

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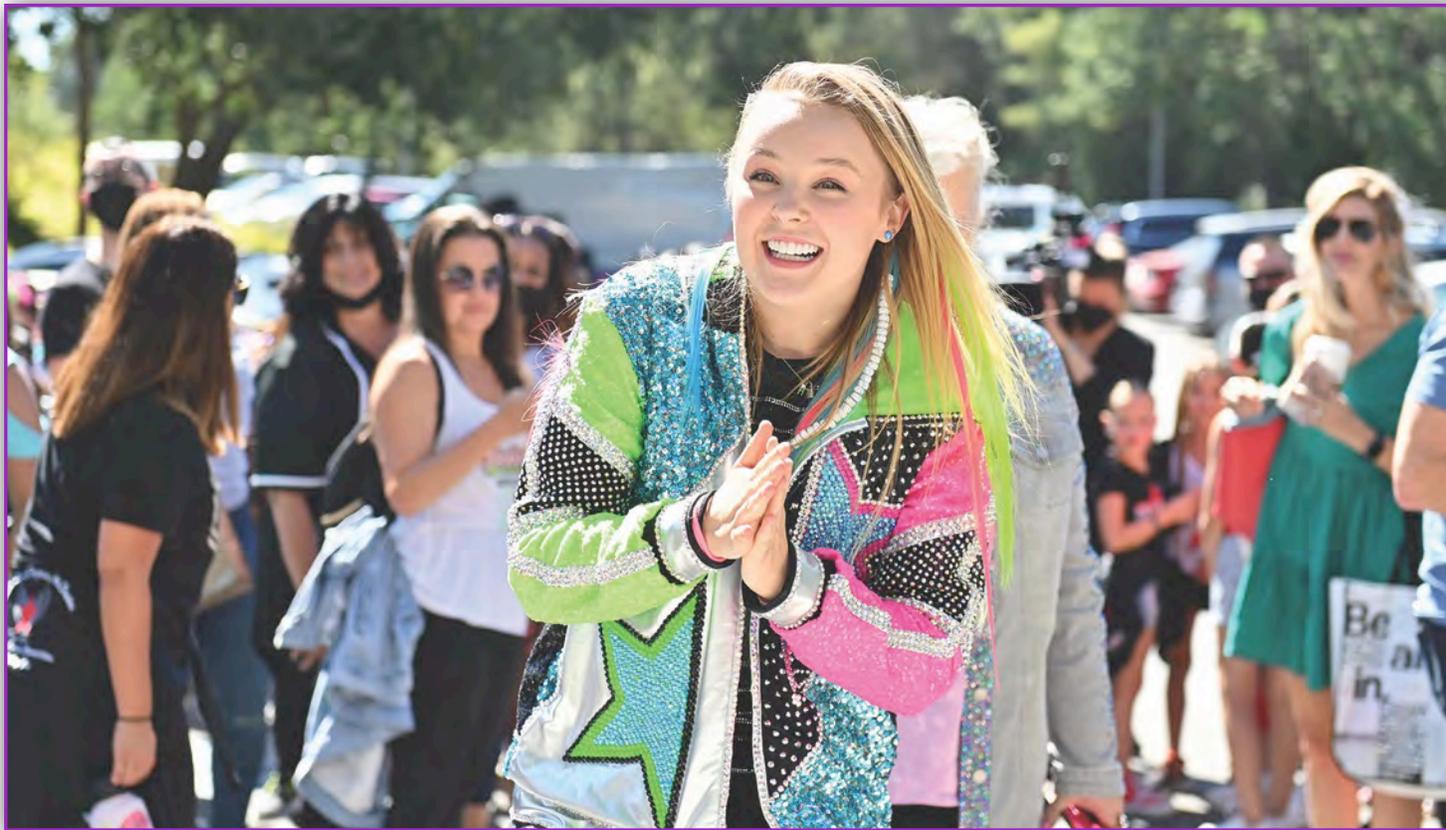
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# GRAB JOJO



## Dancing Fearlessly into the Spotlight

### Teen dance sensation JoJo Siwa on coming out, making history on ‘Dancing with the Stars’ and being a role model for queer youth

By Chris Azzopardi

This year, JoJo Siwa made history as the first “Dancing with the Stars” contestant to compete with a same-sex partner. With Jenna Johnson, she performed the Argentine tango to Britney Spears, did the cha-cha to Lady Gaga and busted out her best moves for a sexy queer rumba to Janet Jackson.

And maybe, somehow, you’ve missed all the JoJo buzz, which means you probably also missed her “Grease” foxtrot, but you should know this: JoJo is everywhere right now. That’s great because she’s queer, and we love to see LGBTQ+ visibility on TV, especially on shows like “Dancing with the Stars” where you least expect it.

But JoJo, who made Time magazine’s annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2020, has actually been dancing for years — which is a strange thing to say about

someone who’s only 18. JoJo, however, got her start at 9 when she competed on the “Dance Moms” spinoff “Abby’s Ultimate Dance Competition” during its second season in 2013.

JoJo is as beloved on “Dancing with the Stars” as she is on YouTube, where she has amassed over 12 million followers (that number, she tells me, “exploded” after she came out earlier this year, in January). Now she’s teamed up with her mom, Jessalynn Siwa, who’s also her manager (hence, “momager”), for their own Peacock show, “Siwas Dance Pop Revolution.” Over eight episodes, JoJo mentors and choreographs 11 tweens, some of her biggest fans, as they compete to be a part of XOMG Pop, a new pop group. The crowned group will open for JoJo on her 2022 tour.

Recently, JoJo, alongside Jessalynn, spoke about being fearlessly

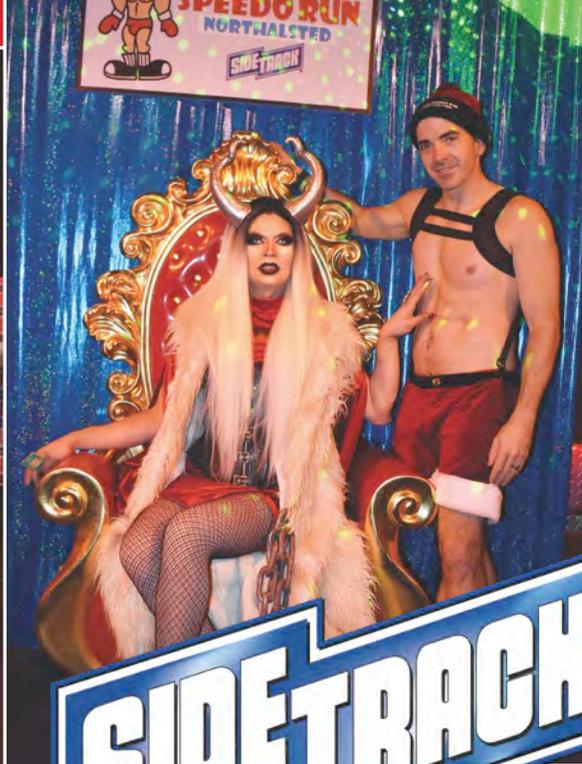
queer, going through a public romance and breakup with ex-girlfriend Kylie Prew, and what it feels like to inspire other LGBTQ+ youth to come out.

**Chris Azzopardi: How are you bringing diversity and inclusion to “Siwas Dance Pop Revolution”?**

**JoJo Siwa:** You know, we wanted to create a girl group that was for everybody and for everybody in the world to be like, “That one’s like me.” And I think that we have made sure that the kids who are in the girl group, and even the kids on the show, have all been able to have their say and make this exactly what they want it to be.

**CA: As a queer person yourself, who was the person that made you say, “I see me in you”?**

**JoJo:** I looked up a lot to Freddie Mercury and Lady Gaga. I like what they



# SIDETRACK



Photos By Anthony Meade

December 7, 2021

GRAB Magazine 37

stand for. I mean, "Born This Way" is literally a gay anthem for everybody in the world and the most genius song ever and, for me, that song hits so home that it's literally my life.

**CA: Did you ever hear from Gaga after lip-syncing "Born This Way" on TikTok?**

**JoJo:** No. [Whimpers.] Don't mention it, it makes me sad.

**Jessalynn:** One day, one day.

**CA: As somebody who's representing the queer community on "Dancing with the Stars," and now with your own dance show, why do you think LGBTQ+ representation is important in shows like these?**

**JoJo:** I think that something that's really great about today's day and age is, being gay or being a part of the LGBTQ community is not only accepted, but it's also celebrated. And I think that every single day it's less weird and less not typical. Every day it's becoming a little bit more normal for everybody, and, I mean, being normal is boring. Nobody wants to be normal; everybody wants to be a little different. So I think that it's something to be celebrated, not scared of.

**CA: Growing up in Omaha, Nebraska, which in some people's mind might be more conservative, was it ever weird for you? What was your experience growing up as a queer person there?**

**JoJo:** Growing up I didn't know many gay people. I knew a few people on my mom's side of the family. Her godson is gay, and he was probably one of the first people that I ever knew to be gay. I think being in the dance community, I know of a lot of people there who were gay. It never, ever once for me was wrong. And I think that's something that you always told me; you were never like, "Oh, that's weird."

**Jessalynn:** No, it's not.

**JoJo:** Like, it doesn't matter. I love the person [who's like], "If my kid comes out to me as gay, the next thing I'll do is ask him what he wants for dinner." I started dating my first girlfriend on January 8th. So what is the difference between January 7th and January 8th for me? There's none. One, I'm happily in love and dating and have a girlfriend and the other, I'm halfway in love and she's just not my girlfriend yet. So it's like, there's no difference. Nothing



changes inside the person that wasn't already there.

**CA: I am so happy to see you live so unabashedly bold as somebody who is in the queer community, but I also wanna shout out to your mom and say it's equally as important to see a parent be as supportive as you are.**

**Jessalynn:** Thank you. I think kids just wanna feel love from their parents and be accepted and unconditionally able to be themselves no matter what, and that's what I always tell JoJo: "I love you no matter what." And I've been saying it for 18 years, and I'll say it for a hundred more.

**CA: Jess, what has it been like for you to see her live so boldly, just completely unabashedly out, loud and proud in such a public way?**

**Jessalynn:** You know, I'm so proud of her. I'm so proud of her because she's so brave. And the world is crazy, and sometimes I'm sure it's hard to be brave — and it's hard to be out there and put yourself out there — but she just does it and she loves it, and she's happy. And it's really cool, and even as someone that's older than her, it's inspiring. To look at somebody so young and so brave... well, we only have one life to live, you know? "Live your best life" is something else we say a lot, and I truly love to see JoJo just living her best life.

**JoJo:** Thank you.

**Jessalynn:** You're welcome.

**CA: That's so sweet. JoJo, what's your life been like since coming out? You have over 12 million YouTube followers, and I imagine that number surged as soon as you made that**

**statement.**

**JoJo:** Right away it did — it exploded. And I think it's a thing that a lot of people may've been scared of for me, and I was never scared of it myself. I kind of just did [it] and then, if anything, went bad then it went bad and I didn't care because I was happy, and if I lost everything because of who I love, then so be it.

**CA: How aware have you become of the influence that you're having on LGBTQ+ youth who may not be comfortable with who they are?**

**JoJo:** I think that every kid has a feeling when they're little and you know how you feel, and you don't really know how to make what you're feeling OK. And I think that having somebody to look to, to be like, "Oh, I'm like they are," is really special, and I love that I get to be that person for a lot of kids.

**CA: What advice might you give to a young queer person who's really struggling with their sexuality?**

**JoJo:** I would say, if you did it a month ago, would you regret it? And depending on the answer, I hope the answer would be no. Because I think sometimes just in the moment it's scary, but think if you would've done it a month ago, would you be OK with it today? And hopefully that answer will be yes. And then I would just say, "So that's how you'll feel in one month."

**CA: When it came to coming out publicly, what was the scariest part for you, JoJo, but also for you, Jess?**

**JoJo:** Honestly, there was nothing scary about it for me. I had zero fear of coming out.

**Jessalynn:** For me, just the unknown. I didn't ever want to say the wrong thing to JoJo. I don't mean to say anything wrong or bad; just tell me if I do. And with the pronouns, I'm trying to learn, I'm trying to figure it out.

**JoJo:** Even somebody like Demi Lovato — there's somebody who I looked up to since I was a baby, and Demi came out as non-binary this year. Sometimes when we're talking about Demi, you'll accidentally say "she." But Demi actually said, "It's OK as long as you're trying."

**CA:** This can be personal for a lot of people, but in hopes that maybe this will help other queer youth come out to their parents, would you mind sharing how you came out to your mom?

**JoJo:** Honestly, I got in the car and my mom said, "You really like her, don't you?" And this [was] after Ky and I had spent a few nights together. My whole family was there, and it was our last night together, and we kissed. And I said, "Yeah." And my mom goes, "As a friend or as more than a friend?" And I just said, "As more than a friend." And my mom then said, "I figured." [Laughs.]

**Jessalynn:** [Laughs.] That was like a one-minute conversation.

**JoJo:** Yeah. It lasted one minute. It was easy. She made it easy on me, and truthfully, I knew my feelings for Ky, but if we didn't kiss I would've just said,



"Just as a friend." Like, it was only because it was so real to me that I was comfortable with fully telling everybody.

**CA:** What do you remember from that moment, Jess?

**Jessalynn:** I remember sitting on the Sprinter [Camper] waiting for JoJo to come back and then when she came back and she was crying 'cause she had said goodbye, I knew. And I just remember thinking, "I really need to know." Like, I just wanted the scoop, but I was afraid. But then before I even knew what I was saying —

**JoJo:** You were saying it.

**Jessalynn:** I was saying it. And then it was just simple, and we just carried on. And then you were sad because you were separating and I was like, "Tell her to come to California for the weekend."

**CA:** JoJo, you've gone through both a public romance and a public breakup. What has that been like for you?

**JoJo:** Honestly, it's been a rollercoaster. The good news about it is, I am still best friends with Ky, and she will forever be the first girl that I was ever in love with and the person who made me realize that I was gay and the person who made me so happy, that I was so in love with, that I was head over heels for. And I'm so lucky that even though a romantic relationship ended, our platonic relationship is still there, and our friendship is still there and she's still one of my best friends.

We talk almost every day

still, and she is awesome. So supportive of "Dancing with the Stars" and "Dance Pop." She loves [the] little kiddos on the show, so they all love her. It's tricky to navigate because the world always has their own view on things and their own opinion on things, so when the world started speculating [about] things between the two of us, I was checking in with Ky being like, "Hey, you good? You want me to say anything?" So it's tricky. But one day at a time, and you just keep moving forward.

**CA:** Dancing with another female partner, Jenna Johnson, on "Dancing with the Stars," has meant a lot to a lot of queer youth. What has it meant to you?

**JoJo:** It has meant a lot to me. I think that being paired with another female for the first time ever, first-ever same-sex couple, is such an honor. And I wanna use the word brilliant — it's so brilliant because love is so accepted and so celebrated that it's not weird; it's cool, it's nice, it's awesome. And every week Jenna and I are faced with the new challenge of figuring out how to do a new style with two females. But we always get through it, and we always make it out on the other side.

*This interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity*

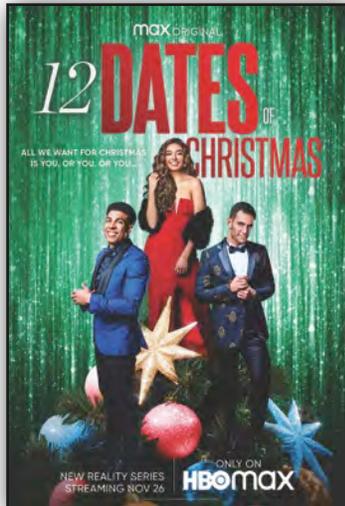
*Chris Azzopardi is the Editorial Director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ+ wire service. He has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.*



# GRAB A FILM

By Delven Shaw

We have a seat at the table for **12 DATES OF CHRISTMAS**



For those wondering where the gay version of *The Bachelor* is, check out **12 Dates of Christmas** on HBO Max. The concept is a nice variation on a familiar trope – but with a twist. In Season 2, one of three principal love seekers is a gay man, another is a lesbian, and the third is a straight dude.

Markelle is the gay man, and he is striking and self-confident. We first see him introduced to another man who is equally sizzling. While they share the hot tub, a man in a bear suit emerges from the woods in the beautiful mountain setting, to join them as one of Marcell's first love interest. When he peels off the bear suit, there is a great body with lots of tattoos to admire.

Shortly thereafter, when the entire cast is at a pool party – again in the hot tub – another dude enters in a Bay Watch speedo. The new dude has a lot to offer, as a Truth or Dare game leads to a hot gay make out while everyone watches. Marcell has a decision to make, as following in the tradition of *The Bachelorette* franchise, one suitor must go home, and heads off in a beautiful antique horse drawn sleigh.

Of course, it is all very silly, and might be best viewed with cocktails during a merry holiday gathering. The lesbian story is equally compelling, and the inclusion of non-binary women is a plus. The racial diversity is encouraging. Sometimes you wonder who these people are, why they would go on a reality show, and why they think what they are wearing is attractive.

Debate might rage on reality TV destroying television. Unlike many of the European shows of similar ilk, there is no nudity or overt sexuality. But it is nice to be included in at the table.

**tick, tick...BOOM!** is an explosion of creativity



If you love theater, or *Rent*, or *Stephen Sondheim*, or *Lin-Manuel Miranda* you will most likely adore *tick, tick...BOOM!* You will most likely know that **Jonathan Larson** - who created *Rent* - died on the morning of its first preview. *that tick, tick...BOOM!* was another musical he performed as a rock monologue. After his death, the book of the musical was rewritten by **David Auburn**, and subsequently produced with small cast.

Autobiographical, *tick, tick...BOOM!* follows a struggling artist who aspired to create a great Broadway musical. Anyone who has artistic aspirations or inclinations, will appreciate it a lot.

Now, Miranda's directorial debut is a slam dance powerhouse that explodes off the scene, **Andrew Garfield** providing terrific singing and acting skills as Larson. He is surrounded by a glorious cast who fully populate the underbelly of New York in the 90's, a bohemian period in which getting by as an artist meant long hours working in a dinner.

The music for Larsen's show never rises to the greatness of the score of *Rent*, and you may not come away from your experience with the film humming any of the songs. "Sunday," Larson's homage to Stephen Sondheim's classic song from the musical *Sunday in the Park with George*, is populated with a cast of Broadway superstars, and is already considered a classic in Miranda's hands.

It is Garfield's performance that will remain with you, as his energy thrums and burns with the desire to create, only thwarted by money, and ultimately, time. I imagine people who love musicals will find themselves drawn to *tick, tick...BOOM!* again and again.

**EVENING SHADOWS** Love in India is complex!



Director **Sridhar Rangayan** is doing trailblazing work for queer film content coming from India, and he is justifiably proud of **Evening Shadows**, now showing through January on Netflix.

**Devansh Doshi** plays Kartik, a charming photographer who has returned to Southern India from the home he shares with his lover in Dubai. His father is a strict traditionalist who shows no affection to his wife who serves him hand and foot, and no respect for his son. The battle between father and son will be familiar to many, but the locale adds tremendously to the tension.

But it is the sensational performance of **Mona Ambegaonkar** as the mother that makes *Evening Shadows* a must see. The journey Kartik and his mother take which begins as a lighthearted trip to the country to see some newly discovered ruins, is a sequence that I will never forget.

The film is set during a recent period in India in which the high court upheld a colonial-era law, known as section 377 under which gay sex is categorized as an "unnatural offence" and that adds greatly to the tremendous stress of all involved. The film is populated with minor characters dealing with love (and sex) in traditional ways.

*Evening Shadows* is a very progressive look into a society with a complex history of variant sexualities. You will not forget it.

**There are a lot of queer culture available screening right now. Check out the two-minute reviews at [DelvenShaw.com](http://DelvenShaw.com) for more!**



Photos By Anthony Meade



## Quigley, Baldwin, Bennet, Warren, Neguse, Cicilline Push FDA to End Discriminatory Tissue Donation Policy



U.S. Representatives **Mike Quigley** (D-IL), **Joe Neguse** (D-CO), **David Cicilline** (D-RI), and U.S. Senators **Tammy Baldwin** (D-WI), **Michael Bennet** (D-CO), and **Elizabeth Warren** (D-MA), are leading a bicameral effort in asking the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to review and update its longstanding policy recommending the disqualification of men who have had sex with men (MSM) in the preceding 5 years as potential tissue donors for corneas, heart valves, skin, and musculoskeletal and vascular tissue.

These guidelines, which have not been significantly updated since 1994, have contributed to a significant shortage of needed tissue products nationwide, including most critically an acute need for donor corneas. In addition to depriving patients of the opportunity to receive life-changing transplant surgeries, the current tissue donation policy unnecessarily stigmatizes and harms the LGBTQ+ community. The broad consensus among the medical community indicates that the current scientific evidence does not support these discriminatory restrictions.

In a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary **Xavier Becerra** and

Acting FDA Commissioner **Janet Woodcock**, the members of Congress wrote:

"The FDA's restrictions on MSM tissue donation date back to 1994 Public Health Service guidance stating that any man who has 'had sex with another man in the preceding five years' should be disqualified from tissue donation. This policy originated from the discriminatory notion that gay and bisexual men, by virtue of their sexuality, have HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). Unfortunately, the FDA continues to recommend that establishments making donor eligibility determinations disqualify men who have sex with another man in the preceding five years as potential donors of human cells, tissues, and cellular and tissue-based products, based on agency guidance issued in 2007, despite current science and the serious need for tissue donations."

"FDA policy should be derived from the best available science, not historic bias and prejudice. As with blood donation, we believe that any deferral policies should be based on individualized risk assessment rather than a categorical, time-based deferral that perpetuates stigma," they continued. "It is imperative that we move away from discriminatory deferral policies that prohibit individuals from contributing much-needed tissue donations. The time is long overdue for the FDA to use modern evidence to revise its outdated restrictions on tissue donors, in addition to its recent and ongoing work to revise blood donation deferral policies."

The group of members from the Senate and House requested a written update on the FDA's progress in reassessing its policy. They also requested an estimate of when recommendations for policy changes would be announced publicly and when these changes would take effect.

"The discriminatory practice of focusing narrowly on men who have sex with men in determining who is allowed to donate certain tissues does not reflect current science, limits access to needed tissues, and continues to unfairly stigmatize one segment of society," said David Stacy, Government Affairs Director of the Human Rights Campaign. "The FDA instead should focus its considerations for tissue donation deferrals on risky behavior by any potential donor, regardless of one's sexual orientation. This would both advance equal rights and help maximize safe access to the nation's supply of organ tissue."

The letter was signed by U.S. Representatives Carolyn B. Maloney (D-NY), Katie Porter (D-CA), Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ), Ritchie Torres (D-NY), Nikema Williams (D-GA), Paul Tonko (D-NY), Ted W. Lieu (D-CA), James R. Langevin (D-RI), Brian Higgins (D-NY), Mark Pocan (D-WI), Sara Jacobs (D-CA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Ted Deutch (D-FL), Scott Peters (D-CA), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Sylvia R. Garcia (D-TX), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Judy Chu (D-CA), Jason Crow (D-CO), Jim Himes (D-CT), John Yarmuth (D-KY), Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Mondaire Jones (D-NY), Linda T. Sánchez (D-CA), Marie Newman (D-IL), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Mark Takano (D-CA), Madeline Dean (D-PA), Nanette Diaz Barragan (D-CA), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), and Ro Khanna (D-CA) and U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Tina Smith (D-MN), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Bob Casey (D-PA), Cory A. Booker (D-NJ), Chris Coons (D-DE), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Ed Markey (D-MA), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

## Marty Rouse to Lead Victory Fund's Political Program



LGBTQ Victory Fund – the only national LGBTQ organization dedicated to electing LGBTQ people to public office – announced longtime political and community organizer Marty Rouse will lead its political team as it readies itself for the 2022 election cycle. Rouse – who currently works to advance global LGBTQ political inclusion as an Equal Voices Advisory Council Member with the National Democratic Institute –

will serve at Victory Fund on a six-month contract. From 2004 to 2020, Rouse served as National Field Director for the Human Rights Campaign.

"Marty has dedicated his career to building LGBTQ political power through community and political organizing and that experience will prove invaluable for the hundreds of LGBTQ candidates we endorse in 2022," said Mayor Annise Parker, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund. "Marty will lead our experienced existing political team during a crucial moment for candidates, when the early implementation of their campaign and fundraising plans have an outsized impact on their success at the ballot box. Few people are as prepared as Marty to take on this role and I am thrilled for him to get started." Rouse will serve as Victory Fund's Senior Director of Political Programs beginning Wednesday, December 1. He takes on the role as Sean Meloy,

Victory Fund's Vice President of Political Programs, moves into a part-time Senior Advisor role with Victory Fund while he runs for a seat in the U.S. Congress. As head of the political team, Rouse will lead the organization's endorsement process and efforts to support candidates through campaign consulting and fundraising.

During his tenure at the Human Rights Campaign, Rouse and his team of field organizers were on the ground mobilizing support for marriage equality and nondiscrimination protections – building and executing strategic campaigns to achieve those goals. Before joining HRC, Marty led MassEquality, the statewide group in Massachusetts that successfully defended marriage equality, making Massachusetts the first marriage equality state in the country.

For more information visit <http://www.victoryfund.org>



Photos By Anthony Meade



# REPLAY

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**HELL IN A HANDBAG PRODUCTIONS  
ANNOUNCES 20TH ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT  
SUNDAY DECEMBER 19TH  
BETTE'S BAWDY BRUNCH**

Hell in a Handbag Productions is has announced its 20th anniversary benefit: *Bette's Bawdy Brunch*, a festive afternoon of food, drink and show-stopping entertainment from Handbag diva **Caitlin Jackson**, reprising her popular role as *Bette Midler*. The event will be held on Sunday, December 19, 2021 from 11 am – 3 pm at The Chicago Yacht Club – Belmont Station, 300 W. Belmont Ave. in Chicago.

Tickets (\$100 - \$150) are currently available at [brunchbenefit.eventbrite.com](http://brunchbenefit.eventbrite.com). All proceeds benefit Hell in a Handbag Productions, Chicago's leading camp and parody theater company. Celebrate 20 years of Handbag with a lavish brunch spread and cocktails overlooking Lake Michigan.

While The Divine Miss M belts out a mix of standards and holiday favorites with **Andrew Milliken** on keyboards and back-up vocals from the Handbag ensemble. The benefit also includes a fabulous silent auction including a week at a Lake Geneva vacation home, two weekend passes to the first ever *Golden Girls*



*Fan Convention* in Chicago in April 2022, spa treatments, restaurant gift certificates and so much more.

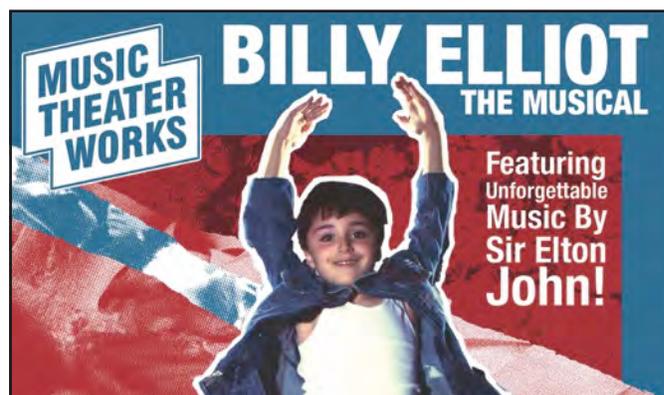
Please note: Handbag will be following City of Chicago COVID protocols. Proof of vaccination is required to attend. You must be 21 + with I.D. to be served alcohol.

For tickets or for additional information, visit <http://www.handbagproductions.org>.

**MUSIC THEATER WORKS PRESENTS  
BILLY ELLIOT: THE MUSICAL  
December 23, 2021 through January 2, 2022**

Music Theater Works presents *Billy Elliot: The Musical* at the North Shore Center For The Performing Arts In Skokie (9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, IL 60076) from December 23, 2021 through January 2, 2022 as the final production of the 2021 Season.

Boasting a Tony Award and an Olivier Award for Best Musical, *Billy Elliot* is based on the 2000 international smash-hit film and features a score by music legend **Sir Elton John**. *Billy Elliot* is an inspirational story about the power of being true to yourself, the unity of family, and the coming together of a community backgrounded by the UK miners' strike in 1984. From the bleak, muggy streets of northern England to the bright stage lights of a London stage and a brighter tomorrow, *Billy Elliot* tells the story of a boy's desire to express himself through dance and is the inspirational story about the power of being true to yourself, the unity of family and the coming together of a community during the UK miners' strike in 1984.



For Tickets or more information call 847-673-6300 or visit <http://www.MusicTheaterWorks.com/Billy-Elliot>

**PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE ANNOUNCES  
CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR BLUES IN THE  
NIGHT**

Award-winning Porchlight Music Theatre announces the cast for the "Best Musical" Tony Award-nominated *Blues in the Night*, conceived by **Sheldon Epps**, with the music of **Bessie Smith, Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen, Vernon Duke, Gordon Jenkins, Alberta Hunter** and others, January 15, 2022 - February 27, 2022 at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St. The first Mainstage production of 2022 is directed and choreographed by **Kenny Ingram**, music directed by **David Fiorello**, assistant choreography by **Ariel M. Dorsey** and associate music director and conductor **Maulty Jewell IV**. *Blues in The Night's* previews are Saturday, Jan. 15 at 3 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 16 at 2 and 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 19 at 7 p.m. and Thursday, Jan. 20 at 1:30 p.m.

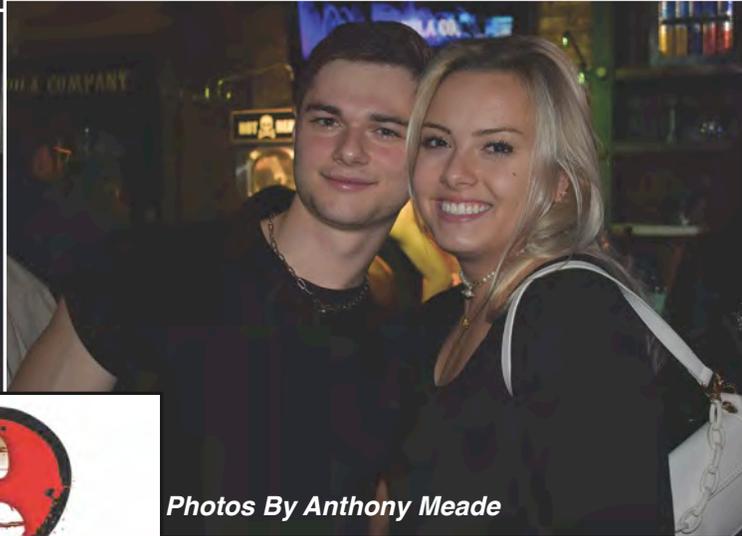
The Blues is one of America's original art forms and Chicago was the home to some of the greatest Blues performers ever. Set in a history-filled hotel on Chicago's south side one fateful night in the late 1930s, this Tony Award-nominated celebration interweaves the stories of three women who share their highs and lows of romance through the iconic songs of **Bessie Smith, Duke Ellington, Johnny Mercer, Harold Arlen, Alberta Hunter, Jimmy Cox, Ida Cox** and others.

*The Blues in the Night* cast includes **Felicia P. Fields** ("The Lady from the Road") in her Porchlight Mainstage debut; **Donica Lynn** ("The Woman of the World") last seen by Porchlight audiences in her Jeff-Award nominated role in Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies*; **Clare Kennedy** ("The Girl with a Date") a follow up to her performance in Porchlight's New

Faces Sing Broadway 1961; **Evan Tyrone Martin** ("The Man in the Saloon") last seen in Porchlight's Jeff Award-winning *Dreamgirls* and **Terrell Armstrong** ("The Dancing Man") last seen in Porchlight's *A Chorus Line*.

Tickets are available at [PorchlightMusicTheatre.org](http://PorchlightMusicTheatre.org) or by calling the Porchlight Music Theatre box office, 773-777-9884.





Photos By Anthony Meade



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# GRAB MAGAZINE MAPS

- GRAB a Bite
- GRAB a Drink
- GRAB Some Sleep
- GRAB Some Culture
- GRAB a Towel

# GRAB CLASSIFIEDS

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**MALE DANCERS WANTED:** The Lucky Horseshoe Lounge 3169 N. Halsted. Open Auditions every Tuesday at 7pm. 21+ I.D. Required.

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