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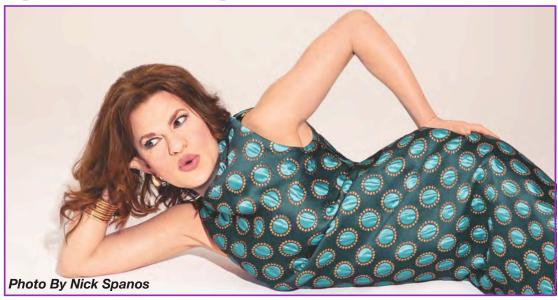
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# GRAB SANDRA



#### Seriously funny: An interview with legendary performer Sandra Bernhard

#### By Gregg Shapiro

With a performing career spanning five decades, there is no one else like **Sandra** 

Bernhard. From stand-up comedy to acting roles, both comedic and serious, in films and on TV to her musical performances, Bernhard is an artist of many talents. In addition to her much-discussed performance as Nurse Cecily in Apple TV+'s "Severance" and her upcoming role in the Timothée Chalamet movie "Marty Supreme," Bernhard has once again taken to the stage with her new live show "Shapes & Forms," with tour dates in various cities. Sandy was gracious enough to make time for an interview in the spring. [Sandra Bernhard performs on June 13 at the Vivarium in Milwaukee and on June 14 at Park West in Chicago.]

Gregg Shapiro: Sandy, I've had the pleasure of interviewing you a few times over the years, most recently in 2017, during your Sandra Monica Boulevard tour, in advance of your South Florida performance in Dania Beach. I noticed that South Florida isn't on

your current tour itinerary. Will you be adding SoFlo dates for your LGBTQ fans?

Sandra Bernhard: Sure, eventually. My agent books the shows. They come as they come. This is not like a huge, endless, proper tour. I might pop in there next year or at the end of this year. You just never know. But we'll work on it, OK?

GS: Good! Living in South Florida, I'm concerned about the way people feel about this place and our horrible governor. I'm glad you're not making a political statement.

SB:No, not at all. There are so many places I haven't been back to in the past five years because I've been busy doing other things. I don't want to be on the road endlessly either. It's not where my head is at. I usually do three or four dates at a time, and then I'm back home. We'll work on South Florida for you.

GS: Thank you! A lot has happened since we spoke in 2017, including Joe Biden's presidency, the COVID-19 pandemic, and,

worst of all, two non-consecutive terms held by the current President. How much, if any, of these subjects are included in your new "Shapes & Forms" show?

SB: I certainly address as much as I think is palatable about the present situation. But of course, I always try to bring it into some sort of more clever or funny way rather than just beating people over the head with the obvious things they can read in the news every day. You try to give them a little bit of simultaneous revelation and relief from what's happening. I think that's one of the things I'm good at.

GS: What is the significance of the show's title, "Shapes & Forms?"

SB: It was the name of my mother's art studio when I was growing up.

She was an abstract artist, and we had driven through New Mexico on our move out to Arizona when I was quite young. She made the comment, "Oh, look at all these shapes and forms," as she observed the mountains and the desert terrain. We always teased her about it. Then

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she ended up using the title to call her studio Shapes and Forms.

#### GS: That's great! Do you have a lot of her pieces?

SB: I do! I have two of my favorites. I have more stuff in storage in LA, because I moved out of my house there, so I've got to get some stuff back. But I've got some of her sculptures, drawings, and paintings. I'm looking at two of them right now that I love.

#### GS: Have you made visual art as well?

SB: No. My daughter is a visual artist. It skipped a generation, and she is also very talented. I have different talents, the ones you are aware of. I'm not an artist in that way. I'm not a visual artist.

**GS: Your busy performance** career includes acting roles in movies and TV series, hosting a podcast, and even being a guest judge on "RuPaul's Drag Race," and you still find time to return to live performance with your stage shows such as "Shapes & Forms." How important is it to you to maintain that profile? SB: I love performing live. As long as I can do it, I will do it. As long as there's an audience that buys tickets to my shows, I'll show up. I love it. I love writing. I love curating my music and working with my band, The Sandyland Squad Band. It's what I've been doing for decades now. When you work that hard at something that most people can't do, you never want to give it up.

GS: That's true. I've always admired the way that you incorporate music into your live shows. Is there a chance you'd consider including songs by queer artists such as Lucy Dacus or Troye Sivan?

SB: It's truly not about that for me. I just like great songs. I really dip into the past. I wouldn't say no. They probably aren't necessarily my songs, but I'll check them out and I'll get back to you on that.

### GS: Do you think you might consider recording another music album?

**SB:** For sure! We record my live shows, and there's a lot of stuff on Spotify, Pandora, and Apple Music; things that I've done over the years.



I've actually written and recorded some new music. It's just sort of in limbo right now. Maybe eventually we'll get it together and put out a little EP.

GS: That would be great. On your 1994 album "Excuses For Bad Behavior," you made a Tracy

### Chapman reference. What do you think of Tracy's unexpected return to the limelight?

**SB:** What's more unexpected to me is that she didn't keep recording and putting music out all these years. I can't imagine why she wouldn't

have. She's a major talent. I'm glad she's back, but I hope that she can duplicate some of her original fabulosity.

GS: "The King of Comedy," featuring your award-winning breakthrough performance as Masha, was released more than 40 years ago. When you look back at the movie, what did that experience mean to you?

SB: Everything! It was a turning point in my career. It gave me the confidence to know that I was a good actress who could handle myself alongside the heavyweights like Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese. It always reminds me that the more talented the people you work with, the better you are. because water always rises or cream always rises, whatever the expression is. When you work with really great people, they encourage you to be as good as possible.

GS: I still get choked up when I think about your performance as nurse Judy in Ryan Murphy's series "Pose." Can you please say a few words about what attracted you to that role? SB: Honestly, I didn't even know what the role was when I ran into Steven Canals and Our Lady J at the airport. We were talking and I said, "If there's ever anything in the show for me, please reach out." They just happened to be casting that

role at that moment. When they ran it past Ryan Murphy, who was a fan of mine, he said, "Yeah, let's cast her." I didn't audition for it, I didn't read it. They just sent it to me and I said, "Of course I'll do it. It's an incredible role. That's how that happened.

GS: Do you think that because you lived through that era, those early days of the AIDS crisis, that that helped you bring something to that role that maybe a younger artist wouldn't have been able to? SB: For sure, I had a lot to draw on. It was easy to access those emotions and those memories. Sadly, yes. But, yes, I think that did help.

GS: In recent years, you've given memorable performances in a variety of sitcoms and dramatic series, such as the aforementioned "Pose," as well as "Survival of the Thickest," "Severance," "American Horror Story," and "2 Broke Girls." What appeals to you as a performer about these kinds of guest spots? SB: As an actress, you always want to challenge yourself and have opportunities to work. That's really what it's all about. Would I love to be a regular on a series? Actually, that's what I'm working toward right now. That's where the money is, and that's where the continuity is. That's

my goal and has been for a while.

GS: It would be fantastic to see you as a recurring regular character. You are the author of three books: "Confessions of a Pretty Lady," "Love, Love and Love," and "May I Kiss You on the Lips, Miss Sandra?" Do vou think vou might have another book in you, perhaps a novel?

**SB:** I don't think so. I don't really think that's what I have time to focus on. There are so many incredible books out there; young writers,



standby writers, and people that have written so much good work. I'm not gonna be like, "Oh yeah, maybe." I think I put my writing into my live performing, and that's good enough for me.



# GRAB SEAN

# Interview with Carnal+ Exclusive Sean Xavier

By Tom Olah

Tom Olah: How did you find yourself in the industry?

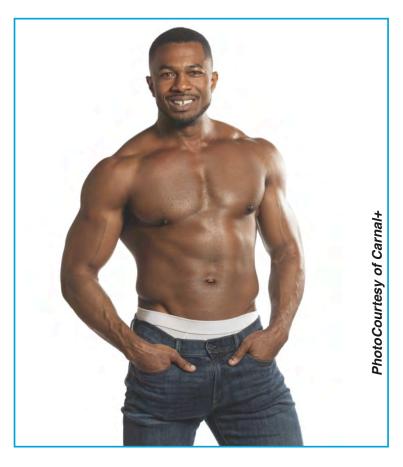
Sean Xavier: I actually started in the industry as a webcam model while I was still in undergrad. At first, porn was a way to gain exposure – a creative, sexy side hustle. But the more I leaned in, the more I realized how much I loved it. Performing gave me the chance to act out fantasies with incredibly attractive men while also connecting with fans who craved something real. Aside from a brief break after grad school, it's been a steady through-line in my life ever since.

#### TO: What did you do before the industry?

SX: I was working in humancomputer interaction – designing apps and user experiences in finance and e-commerce. I've also taught as an adjunct professor while pursuing grad school. So even when I wasn't full-time in the adult space, I was still building systems, teaching and studying desire in different ways. Porn just became the most honest expression of all of that.

### TO: What advice would you give to someone looking to start doing porn?

SX: Start by understanding what you want out of it – emotionally, artistically, financially. Don't just copy what other people are doing. And when you find collaborators who respect you and your vision, stick with them. Porn works best when you treat it like performance and business. Protect your boundaries. Honor your body. And don't be afraid to bring your weird, your wild, your real self to camera.



### TO:What obstacles, if any, have you run into while working in the industry?

SX: Balancing multiple identities – especially when you're someone who straddles academia, tech and porn. I had to navigate judgment, burnout, and the reality that not everyone can handle the complexity of a performer who's also a strategist, a designer and a dominant fantasy. But I've learned to integrate it all. I'm not playing a role – I'm building a world.

#### TO: How do you prepare yourself for a scene?

SX: I approach it like training: physically, mentally, erotically, and even spiritually. I'll do light movement or gym work to warm up, tune into my body with breathwork, and slow my nervous system down. Sometimes I pray, sometimes I do a grounding ritual – especially before high-intensity scenes. And if I'm topping, I treat it like coaching. I'm

guiding someone through their pleasure. That takes focus and trust.

#### TO: What are you focusing on at this point in your career?

SX: Right now, I'm exclusive with Carnal, and that's been a game-changer. I love the access to incredible models, the high-level production, and especially the world-building. They're not just shooting scenes – they're creating fantasy environments that let me push creative boundaries. I'm also launching my own brand within that ecosystem, combining erotic mentorship with fantasy storytelling.

### TO: How has your rise in popularity affected how you approach your career?

SX: It has made me more intentional. I used to say yes to everything – I wanted to be everywhere, do everything. Now, I protect my energy. I think about legacy. What am I building that lasts



beyond the scene? Who am I inviting into this world? I'm less interested in visibility for its own sake, and more focused on creating experiences that feel aligned and unforgettable.

TO: How does it feel for your work to be recognized, like getting nominated for awards? SX: It's affirming. Not just for me, but for the kind of work I want to see more of in the industry – work that blends eroticism with intention, and gives performers the chance to create, not just perform. Every nomination is a reminder that fans and peers are watching – not just the sex, but the story behind it.

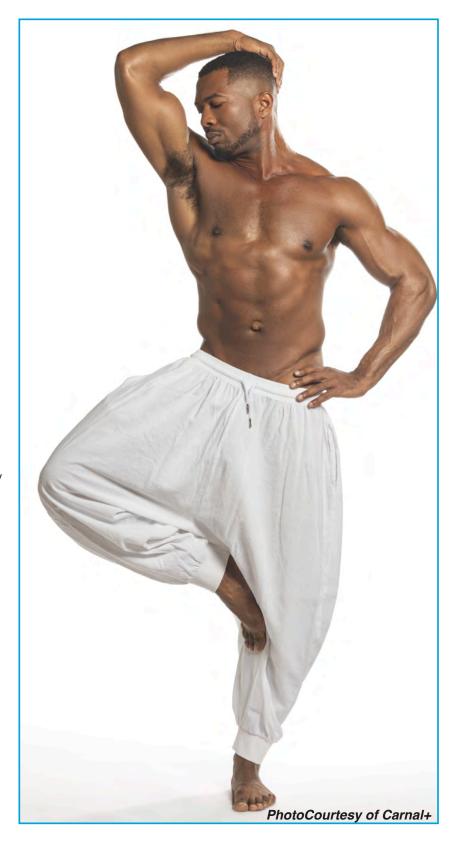
# TO: Do you have anything special planned in the future that your fans would want to hear about?

SX: Absolutely. I'm developing a new series called Super Sean Xavier, where I play a dominant, superhero-like trainer who helps men unlock power through erotic discipline. There's a whole narrative world coming – complete with alter egos, fan club content, and crossover stories that blur the lines between fantasy and reality. It's porn, but with plot – and a lot of muscle.

### TO: What is your ultimate goal in this industry, or in your life in general?

SX: To build something that changes how people experience porn. I want my work to awaken something - whether it's erotic, emotional or spiritual. At the core, it's about embodiment: helping people feel more in their bodies. more connected to their desires, and more free to express them. But honestly? My relationship is the center of my world now. I'm getting married, and that intimacy - real, grounded, transformative love - that's the foundation for everything I create. The goal is to build a life where art, sex, and love all reinforce each other.

To See more of Sean visit https://www.carnalplus.com





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# GRAB MUSIC

#### Q-Music: Pride 2025 playlist

By Gregg Shapiro

Depending on your geographical location, Pride Month is just around the corner. Thankfully, there is plenty of great music by LGBTQ artists to provide a soundtrack for the season.

In 2016, when Tim Kaine was Hilary Clinton's running mate, he revealed in a New York Times opinion piece that gueer singer/ songwriter and fellow Virginian Lucy Dacus was one of his favorite artists, just a few months after her debut album was released. Since then, Kaine has faded from memory while Dacus has become ubiquitous in the best possible ways. She released "Historian" in 2018 and "Home Video" in 2021, both of which were well-received. Perhaps most significantly, she teamed up with gueer singer/songwriter Phoebe Bridgers and Julien Baker to form Boygenius, releasing a debut EP in 2018, followed by a 2023 full-length album which earned the trio three Grammy Awards. Right from the start, "Forever Is a Feeling" (Geffen), Dacus' new LP (available on clear vinyl) feels different, beginning with the instrumental "Calliope prelude." There is a lushness to "Big Deal," the sexy "Ankles" and "Best Guess," that come across like a warm embrace. "Limerence," with its piano flourishes and cabaret-style vocal, is as dramatic as it is daring. "Come Out" is Dacus' most Aimee Mann-esque tune, and the very definition of a highlight. And when Dacus switches sonic course, as she does on "Talk," "Modigliani," and "Most Wanted Man," she reinforces the reasons we were drawn to her in the first place. [Lucy Dacus performs at The Riverside Theater in Milwaukee on July 27.]

Currently enjoying heavy rotation on Sirius XMU, the song "Guy Fawkes Tesco Dissociation," a musical response to a panic attack, is from "You Are The Morning" (Saddest Factory) from the debut album by British band jasmine.4.t. Produced by Julien Baker, Phoebe Bridgers, and Lucy Dacus (fka the aforementioned



Boygenius), and led by trans vocalist Jasmine Cruickshank, the album feels like watching the sun rise over the horizon. Radiant songs such the title track, "Skin On Skin," "Breaking In Reverse," "Roan," "Highfield," "Kitchen," and "Best Friend's House," illuminate an artist who might just be the most important trans voice in music since Anohni or Laura Jane Grace.

Three must be Bob Mould's lucky number. Via trios such as Hüsker Dü and Sugar, Mould built an enviable and devoted following. made even more so because he is an out gay musician. While he began releasing albums under his own name in 1989, since 2012's "Silver Age," he's been recording and performing as a trio along with Jason Narducv and Jon Wurster. Mould has said of his new album "Here We Go Crazy" (Granary Music/BMG), his first since 2020's "Blue Hearts," that it consists of "a number of contrasting themes. Control and chaos, hypervigilance and helplessness, uncertainty and unconditional love," This is something which comes through loud and clear on "Your Side," "Sharp Little Pieces," and "You Need To Shine," giving the album the feel of a statement on the current state of the world. For

example, in "Sharp Little Pieces," Mould sings, "Are you headed to the demonstration? Eyes are open wide. Be the martyr of a generation, I tried." The song "Neanderthal" is one of his sexiest, with its references to "sweat and cum," "leash and collar," and "paint." Known for his blazing electric guitar work, Mould tones things down on the acoustic "Lost or Stolen" and a little more than half of "Your Side."

The brilliant Sharon Van Etten has a history of working with gueer artists including Hercules and Love Affair and Xiu Xiu. So, it's not all that surprising that on her new eponymous album, Sharon Van Etten & The Attachment Theory, she would feature trans musician Devra Hoff in her band. Whether intentional or not, album opener "Live Forever," with its question, "Who wants to live forever?", is sure to bring Queen and Freddie Mercury to mind. Van Etten and company shift gears on the synth beat and keyboard-driven "I Can't Imagine (Why You Feel This Way)," "Afterlife," and "Idiot Box." "Indio," the album's shortest song, rocks the hardest, while album closers "Fading Beauty" and "I Want You Here," each clocking in at more than six minutes apiece, take the whole affair in another direction.



Did anyone have alt-country on their **Perfume Genius** bingo card? If so, good for you! Because that's the dominant, if subtle, sound on the fittingly titled "Glory" (Matador), the seventh Perfume Genius (aka Mike Hadreas) album, and the first in three years. Easily the most accessible release in PG's catalog, "Glory" features a stellar line-up of quest artists including nonbinary musician Meg Duffy (of Hand Habits fame), Aldous Harding, legendary drummer Jim Keltner, Blake Mills (who also produced), and Hadreas' longtime partner Alan Wyffels (who also co-wrote some of the songs). The results are utterly gorgeous, user-friendly compositions that play like the ideal combination of the personal and the universal. Each listen (repeated spins are recommended) reveals something new and, well, glorious, especially on "Clean Heart," "Me & Angel," "No Front Teeth" (featuring vocals by Harding), "Full On," and "It's A Mirror." Even when Perfume Genius returns to the experimental territory for which he is known, as on "Capezio" and "In A Row," it's done in an inviting way. [Perfume Genius performs at The Vic on June 17.]

Even if another classical music effort wasn't on your Rufus Wainwright bingo card, there's no reason to be surprised by "Dream Requiem" (Warner Classics). Early on, Wainwright, the gay son of singer/songwriters Loudon Wainwright III and the late Kate McGarrigle, made it clear that opera was his first love. With "Dream Requiem," he now has three classical albums to his name, including 2015's "Prima Donna" and 216's "Take All My Love: 9 Shakespeare Sonnets." Described as "an amalgamation of two musical and creative ideas" that took shape during the pandemic and the California wildfires, "Dream Requiem" features Meryl Streep reciting Lord Byron's 1816 poem "Darkness" as soprano Anna Prohaska, and Chœur de Radio France, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, under the direction of conductor Mikko Franck, perform the musical portion of Wainwright's composition.

Some artists deserve their own bingo game altogether. Over the last few years, queer singer/songwriter Brandi Carlile's collaborative work with Joni Mitchell, Tanya Tucker, and



Brandy Clark (for all of which she received Grammy Awards), have illustrated her talent in that area. In his own right, Elton John has also proven himself to be an adept collaborator, from "Don't Go Breaking My Heart," his 1976 charttopping duet with Kiki Dee, and his 1991 "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me" duet with George Michael. to entire albums of collabs (1993's "Duets" and 2021's "The Lockdown Sessions," as well as 2010's "The Union" with Leon Russell). In that regard, it makes sense that a collaboration such as "Who Believes in Angels?" (Interscope) by Elton John & Brandi Carlile would come to be. Taking the teamwork even further, all 10 songs were co-written by John, Carlile, producer Andrew Watt, and John's longtime cosongwriter Bernie Taupin. Album opener, "The Rose of Laura Nyro," an affectionate homage to the late queer musical genius Laura Nyro incorporates references to her music throughout, and one can only hope that this will lead to the uninitiated to explore her vast and miraculous catalog. The song itself is pure vintage Elton John and is a fitting way to set things in motion. Would there be an Elton John if not for Little Richard? "Little Richard's Bible," another musical tribute, attempts to answer that question. Carlile steps to the front on the queer anthem "Swing For The Fences," and the gorgeous "You Without Me." The Oscar-nominated "Never Too Late," from the 2024 doc "Elton John: Never Too Late," is a perfect example of the pair's effortless musical partnership. The

album closes with "When This Old World Is Done With Me," which sounds like one of John's most personal compositions, sung from the perspective of a 78- year-old man coming to terms with history, and facing his remaining time with dignity.

"Send A Praver My Way" (Matador) is the highly anticipated musical collaboration by queer singer/songwriters Julien Baker & TORRES. Individually, Baker and TORRES have established themselves as singular artists. But Baker seems to be at her best when she's collaborating, whether as a member of Boygenius (with Phoebe Bridgers and Lucy Dacus), or guesting on solo albums by Becca Mancari, Bridgers, her partner Dacus, and others. That's why this pairing of Baker and TORRES (aka Mackenzie Scott) makes musical sense. The 12-songs on the vinyl LP are steeped in modern country. "Bottom of a Bottle" (from which the album gets its title), with its reference to checking "every honky-tonk in town" after losing her woman, earns it place among torch and twang drinking songs. Baker and TORRES never fail to remind us that this is contemporary music, especially on songs such as "Downhill Both Ways," "Sylvia," "Off The Wagon," and "Tuesday." [Julien Baker & TORRES perform June 26-28 at Summerfest in Milwaukee.]

Salt Lake City's **Talia Keys** is a queer multi-instrumentalist with an activist streak. You canhear it in her brand of blues-tinged folk on her new LP "From The

Ashes" (Midtopia), available on tasty orange vinyl. When Keys sings "I haven't fought this hard in such a long time/it seems like I'm fighting everyone," LGBTQ listeners can surely relate to that sentiment now. The same holds true for "Be The Resistance," which encourages listeners to be their "own empire" in these troubled times. The sizzling soul tune "Matchstick" is fire and heats up with repeated listens. The strings on the soaring number "Sky Is Falling," take the song to thrilling heights. "Find Your Own" brings the funk while celebrating feeling different and the joy of finding your own community. Keys bring it to a close with the beaming country of "Glowin' Golden."

Non-binary folksinger/ songwriter **Olive Klug** cites Adrienne Lenker and Mal Blum among their influences, something that comes through loud and clear on their exceptional second album "Lost Dog" (Signature Sounds). This is 21st century folk at its best – from the distinctive lyrics to the arrangements, these songs sound like a long-awaited update to a timeless genre. "Cold War," is a perfect example of this. What's amazing is that Klua follows "Cold War" with "Train of Thought" which returns to folk's roots, complete with a train theme. It's this balancing act, which Klug makes sound effortless, that makes this record so compelling. Other examples include the title tune, "Opposite

Action," "Taking Punches From the Breeze," and "What to Make of Me."

"Sprinter" (The Orchard) by queer singer/songwriter Cat Ridgeway may rock a little harder than the previously mentioned albums, but that doesn't diminish its emotional impact. In fact, the sheer variety of musical styles found on "Sprinter" may cause many listeners to run towards it. The album opening title track grabs you by the



collar in the most persuasive manner. Then there's that unexpected banjo on "Cursive." "Look Ma, No Plans!" sounds like it might owe a debt to Liz Phair while Ridgeway fully embraces her folkie self on "Restless Leg Syndrome." "What If?" is the album's most daring track while "Get Well Soon" and "Forced Actors" are, to quote Ridgeway, "very punk rock" of her. [Cat Ridgeway performs on May 14 at Subterranean.]



# GRAB CAROLINE

# Caroline Rose on the rise

By Gregg Shapiro

There's never been a better time to listen to queer singer/ songwriter Caroline Rose. Rose's fantastic new album, "year of the slug," released via Bandcamp as a limited-edition physical LP (as well as digitally), follows three varied and worthwhile records on New West. Described as an "impish indie rebel," Rose's songs stick to your ribs. In possession of a wicked sense of humor, Rose is also capable of being dead serious at the drop of a hat. Beginning with opener "Everything In Its Right Place" (which just started receiving airplay on SiriusXMU) and continuing with "Conversation With Shiv (Liquid K Song)" (with its references to the Betty Ford Clinic and robbing Hobby Lobby) to the chugging Western twang of "Goddamn Train" and the catchy pop of "Another Life," Rose rises to the occasion. Caroline was kind enough to make time for an interview, even as she was battling the flu. [Caroline performs on June 4 at Cactus Club in Milwaukee and on June 13 at Sleeping Village in Chicago.]

Gregg Shapiro: Caroline, you recently contributed a track, a cover of Judee Sill's "Down Where the Valleys Are Low," to the Red Hot Organization's "TRAMZA" compilation album. Please say something about your involvement.

Caroline Rose: I know Massima (Bell) who, I believe, is one of the founders of TRAMZA (along with Dust Reid). I was supposed to do a track early on with someone and the timing of it didn't quite line up. So, I got added to the project really late. The song that I was a part of was pretty much already done by the time I got involved. My contribution to it was pretty minimal, but I just wanted to be a part of it [laughs]. It's a pretty amazing compilation. I just love Massima, I think she's amazing. We worked together on the short film

that I made.

GS: Were the 11 songs on your new album "Year of the Slug" written specifically for this project, or were there some that were intended for previous albums that didn't make the cut? CR: I don't know if any were ever intended for another album. Some

of them were little clips that never got finished. One of the clips that never got finished was what ended up being "Goddamn Train." I really liked the riff, and I liked the kind of machine-gun-style vocals. I took the first verse that I had in the little clip, and I had this essay-length page of lyrics that I cut down to fit the song.

GS: I first started listening to you in 2018 and had the pleasure of interviewing you about your "Loner" album from that year. In what ways would you say that you've evolved as an artist since that time?

CR: I would like to think I have [laughs]. I think each time I make something I try and explore something new. Either learn a new instrument or learn a new production technique, or try and make an album within a new set of rules. I feel like that's forced me to learn a lot over the course of the last few albums.

GS: I'm glad you mentioned a



"new set of rules," because the mostly stripped-down "Year of the Slug" was recorded in Garageband from a phone. Please tell the readers something about that recording process.

CR: I basically wanted to do the simplest thing possible. I have so much fancy gear [laughs] and I was feeling like I just wanted to get something really quick and be able to do it on the move. Sometimes when I make something more formal, I go into the studio and turn on all the equipment and hook everything up and by the time I do that, the moment has passed. I'd rather just get the idea down and something about that felt amazing [laughs]. I ended up liking the sound of it. too. It sounded sort of lo-fi. A lot of the music I listen to is lo-fimixed with hi-fi elements.

GS: It reminded me of the Liz Phair "Girly-Sound" recordings. *CR*: Totally! Those are so great.





GS: Most of the songs, 10 out of 11, are guitar-driven, but the instrumental "Dirge (It's Trash Day)" is performed on piano. Was it written on piano, and why do you think that was the best way to record it?

CR: That one and "Kings of East LA" are both on piano. That is because I got a piano [laughs] in my house. It took a long time to get it and I started writing songs on piano when the piano arrived. It wasn't a choice other than I didn't have a piano before that. "Dirge (It's

Trash Day)" is just me noodling on the piano. I think it was a rainy trash day [laughs].

GS: I'm also glad you mentioned the song "Kings of East LA." In it, you refer to Julien, X, and Caleb. Are these real people and do they know they are namechecked in the song, and if so, how do they feel about that?

CR: One of them, X, knows that he's name-checked in the song. He wanted to hear it and he told me that he teared up listening to it. I was very honored about that. It's true, except that Caleb's

technically based on a real person, but I took some creative liberties. He's mixed with some other facts of real people.

GS: I really love the pop song energy of "Another Life." It's the kind of song that would sound good in rotation on SiriusXMU, a station that has a history of regularly playing queer artists including Katy Kirby, Phoebe Bridgers, Angel Olsen, and Lucy Dacus. What would it mean to you to have that song embraced by those listeners?

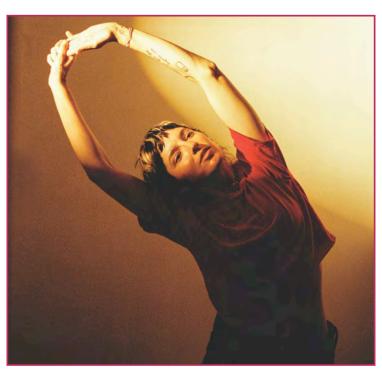
CR: I would love it. I've been an outwardly queer artist for so long now, I can't fathom that not being part of my musical identity. I would

be honored and so happy because a lot of my music is openly queer.

#### GS: Have you played any Pride Fests?

CR: I have! It's been a while, though. I've actually only deejayed a Pride event. I've never performed as an artist, but I'm definitely open to it.

GS: On your current tour, you are performing in intimate independent venues. Why did you choose to approach the tour in this way?



CR: Like other musicians in a similar place as me, I'm really frustrated with the bullshit that's happening in the touring industry. It's not getting any easier to tour. A lot of people iust don't know what's happening in these small-to-medium-to-mediumlarge-sized venues where a lot of the developing bands are coming up. These are all venues and clubs that I started in. A lot of people don't know that they're just getting bought up by Live Nation and AEG or just closing entirely. I think over the course of the last five years I've watched all these little venues that I've played, and loved, just dying out. The whole swath of it. It's hard to watch because you see these corporations getting richer and richer and not really giving a shit about anyone

else.

GS: Certainly not about the artists. *CR:* Yeah! They're not really contributing to the rest of the ecosystem in the music industry. The same goes for the streaming services, too. They're not contributing to the rest of ecosystem that allows it to function, and that includes the working class of the music industry: the people running the venues, the people promoting the shows that are independent, and the musicians. We are the backbone:

along with all the other workers. There's no foundation in the industry if no one is supporting us. We have to look out for each other. There's no other option.

GS: I saw a few memorable shows by performers in intimate settings early in their careers, including Suzanne Vega at Passim in Cambridge, Shawn Colvin at Orphan's in Chicago, and Jewel at the Urbis Orbis coffeehouse in Chicago, Is there a show you saw in such a venue that stands out to you to this day?

CR: I just saw a show, maybe it was

last year, it was a Surfbort show in a warehouse venue and it was a perfect venue for them. It was the first time they played together in years. It was the perfect vibe. That's kind of what I'm talking about. If these types of places that are either DIY spaces or independent in that they're running everything themselves, they don't have the money behind a giant promotion team or a rich lawyer to handle all their liability and stuff, that's what I mean when I'm talking about independent venues. We can't just be relying on corporate-owned clubs and promotion companies doing all the work. Otherwise, it's gonna be a monopoly.

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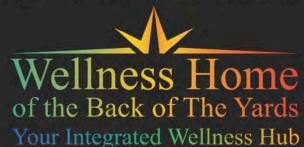
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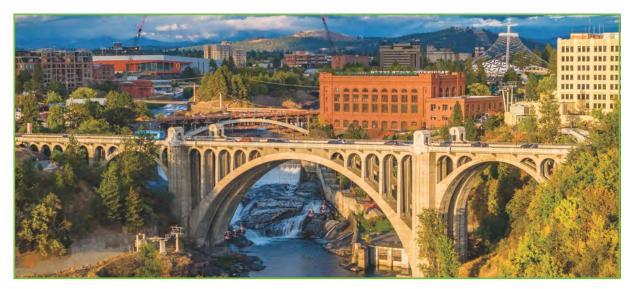
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# GRAB A PLANE



#### Spokane, Washington

## Waterfalls and More in the Biggest City in the Inland Northwest

#### By Bill Malcolm

Spokane is an amazing historic city in far eastern Washington. The Riverfront Park features stunning huge waterfalls. The downtown is very walkable. Towering ponderosa pines give it a feel more of the Rocky Mountains than the Cascades. The basalt lined Spokane River features a lengthy bike and hike trail. It combines an urban feel with thebest of the outdoors. The new 40-mile Centennial Trail starts in Riverside State Park and runs all the way to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

#### THINGS TO DO

Make your first stop Riverfront Park downtown. The 1909 Looff Carrousel in Riverfront Park is nice as is a Sky Ride gondola ride over roaring Spokane Falls. The huge waterfalls plunge along basalt lined banks and converge as three rivers in a spectacular finish. I've never seen anything like it, much less in a city downtown. It's what makes Spokane unique.

Dinner at Sarnac Public House was great. Try the blackened salmon sandwich. Across the street, you can grab a salad to go at the salad bar at the Market, 44 West Main. It's a health foods grocery store with a

broad selection of local beer and wine.

The Steam Plant Restaurant and Brew Pub at 1159 South Lincoln was good. The restaurant is in an old steam plant built in 1916 that has been carefully repurposed. The salmon was excellent and served with a spicy sauce.

Visit Browne's Addition, Spokane's oldest neighborhood. It is accessible on the new Spokane City Line rapid express bus which runs every 10 minutes and makes limited stops.

The Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture is a must. Check out the new exhibits on fire in the Northwest and the West, Fire: Rebirth and Resilience. Check out the evolution of the Japanese Sword Exhibit along with Samurai Sunrise. Also on now is Andrea Joyce Heimer: No Name That I Know Of. Heimer was a Washington-based artist who "reconstructs tangled memories of her upbringing in rural Montana. Check out the current exhibits at NorthwestMuseum.org.

Next door is the historic Campbell House which is included with the museum admission. Built in 1898, it was designed by architect Kirtland Cutter. After your visit, walk around to check out the historic homes in this historic neighborhood.

Enjoy Best of Broadway Productions like Hamilton. The theater is across the street from the Grand Hotel along the Riverfront Park.

#### **PLACES TO STAY**

I stayed at the Davenport Grand Hotel, one of the many Davenport brand hotels. The Grand Hotel overlooks Riverfront Park. I had a room with a magnificent view of the river and points north. Everything was perfect including the lobby bar. However, the amenity fee of \$20 per night (which was subject to tax) and an unknown TPA fee of \$5 per night (a city tourism fee) were both annoying. The Ruby River Hotel is another option. There is also a Doubletree right along the Riverfront Park.

#### **NIGHTLIFE**

The nYne Bar at 232 W. Sprague was fun and is a historic building. It has a display on the history of LGBTQ activity in Spokane. Friday night featured a great drag show. The food is good – especially the burgers. It's a fun local crowd.

Next door is the new Q Lounge

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and is really fun. Local women own both.

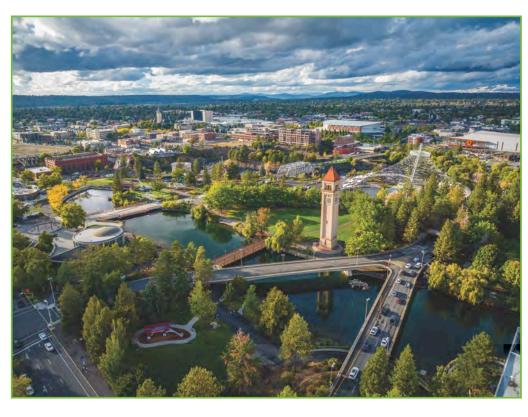
The Blind Buck/Globe Night Club at 204 N. Division is another fun option. All these bars are close by in the downtown area and walkable from the downtown hotels.

#### **GETTING THERE**

I took Delta through their Salt Lake City hub. Delta offers great service, free WiFi, and a great new terminal in SLC. From Seattle, you can take Alaska or Delta. It is just over a four-hour drive and there is even an Amtrak option although the return hours

from Spokane are bad (3 a.m.).

I took the #60 Spokane Transit bus for \$2 from the airport to downtown. The line runs every 30 minutes and takes 20 minutes.



#### **INSIDER TIPS/MORE** <u>INFORMATION</u>

Try the local microbrews and Washington State wines. Salmon is on the menu everywhere in the

Northwest and Spokane is no exception.

You can find SGN in the bars. The weekly alternative paper is full of fresh local news, The Inlander. It is in print and on line at inlander.com. The

Spokesman Review just went to a nonprofit business model but covers the local news.

#### VisitSpokane.com

is your source for traveler information.

I really enjoyed my trip to Spokane and plan to return to explore nearby Coeur d'Alene (Idaho) and other attractions.

Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated LGBTQ+ travel columnist who focuses on value travel and local experiences. He is based in Indianapolis.





**MAY 24** 

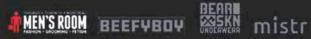
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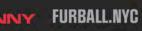














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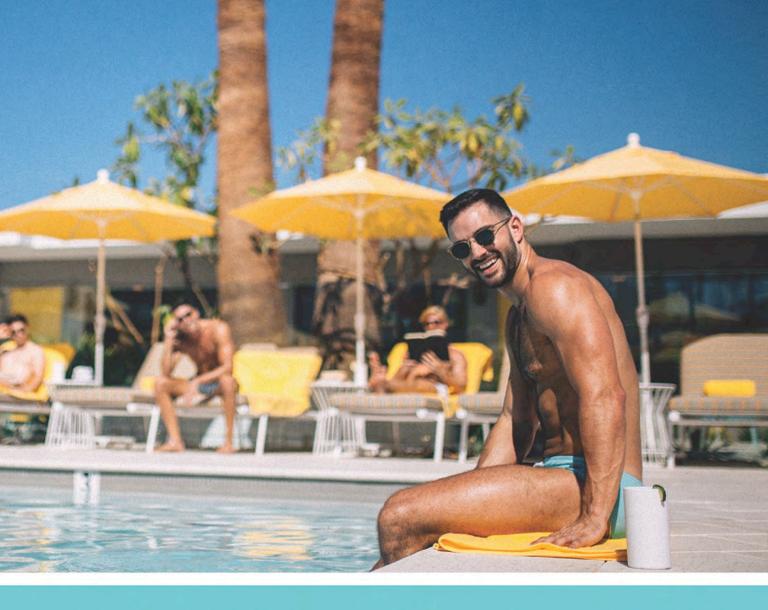
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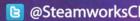
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2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. Charlie's: 1st & 3rd Thursday of the month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm Mother Rebirth, 10pm - Power up Reloaded. 2nd Thursday of the Month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm the Pop Ball, 10pm Scissor Sisters. 4th Thursday of the Month: \$4 You Call it's 5pm - 9pm, 8pm - 10pm the Pop Ball, 10pm Vinyl. Jackhammer: \$3 House Shots, \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis.. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. Shakers on Clark: \$1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks, Karaoke 10pm-1am. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursday! Pop Music Videos in Glass/Side Bars 9pm-2am, Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month in Main Bar, All Things K-Pop other Thursdays in Main Bar. **Steamworks:** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. *The Sofo Tap:* \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Stoli Mules (All Flavors), EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts Touche: Open 5pm - 4am.5/22 Bear Corruption. 5/30 Porn Poker Party, 6/5, 6/12 & 619; Throwback Thursdays 70's & 80's Music & Porn By Bijou Video.

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2 Bears Tavern Uptown: HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Chicago Handshakes, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: 1st Friday of the Month 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Glow Up. 3rd Friday 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars, 11pm Thirst Trap. 4th Friday 8pm - 11pm Cage Fight Allstars

11pm Haus of Charlie's. **Jackhammer:** \$8 New Amsterdam & Red Bulls, \$8 WYNK THC, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **Meeting House Tavern:** HAPPY HOUR (5-8 PM): \$5 Chicago Handshakes, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$6 Tito's Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. **The Sofo Tap:** HAPPY HOUR (3-6 PM): \$4 Signature Margaritas, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. 5/23 Ray Dalton Presents Forplay, 5/30 Porn Poker Party, 6/6 Man 'Nipple'ate Nipple Fetish Play Night, 6/13 Frriday Funder caring for our community.

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): 1/2 Off All Draft Beers, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 2pm-3am. Charlie's: 7pm - 11pm SCCDA Country Dancing, 11pm Under the boots tonight. Jackhammer: \$3 House Shots, \$8 New Amsterdam & Red Bulls, \$8 WYNK THC, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. *Lucky Horseshoe:* Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: HAPPY HOUR (2-5 PM): \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat Drafts, \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$8 WYNK THC, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. *Sidetrack:* Open at 1pm, Post-Brunch SaturGay Fun 1pm-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. *The Sofo Tap:* HAPPY HOUR: (12-3 PM): 1/2 Off All Draft Beers. ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Signature Margaritas. EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts Touche: Open 2pm - 5am. 5/24 IMsL Leather Women Social 7pm Submit to your dark fantasies 10pm, CWB 4pm 5/31 Pride Month KickOff Party, 6/7 Bear Night. 6/14 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @ Midnight CWB 5pm. 6/21 Gear Night with BLUF/Chicago Barber & Bootblack on duty Dress Code in Clubroom BNC 6pm

**UNDAY FUNDAY** 

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$6 Chicago Handshakes, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pinball & Darts. @mosphere: \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. Baton Show Lounge: Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 2pm-2am Charlie's: 1st and 3rd Sunday of the Month5pm - 7pm Queeriod, 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo, y Perreo. 2nd Sunday 5pm - 7pm Queeriod Presents Drag U 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. 4th Sunday 5pm - 7pm Queeriod Presents Boyfriend Material, 7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm (Strellas, Ritmo y Perreo. Hydrate: Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch

7pm - 11pm Starlight Karaoke, 11pm Estrellas, Ritmo y Perreo. *Hydrate:* Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. *Jackhammer:* HAPPY HOUR (3-7 PM): \$3 House Shots, \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$7 Jackhammered Long Islands, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Pool & Darts. *Kit Kat Lounge:* Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis . *Lucky Horseshoe:* Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. *Meeting House Tavern:* \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$3 House Shots, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts & Pool. *North End:* Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm *Shakers on Clark:* \$1 off Bloody Mary's, \$1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And \$1 off all Revolution beers. *Sidetrack:* Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. *The Sofo Tap:* HAPPY HOUR (1-3 PM): \$3 House Shots, FREE Hotdogs (while supplies last) ALL DAY SPECIALS: \$6 New Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Miller Lite Drafts, EVERYDAY SPECIALS: \$4 Tallboy Beers (Old Style, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Jägermeister, Fireball & Malört Shots, FREE Darts. *Touche:* Open 2pm - 4am. 5/25 Super Ripe hot go-go dudes & DJ Harry T.

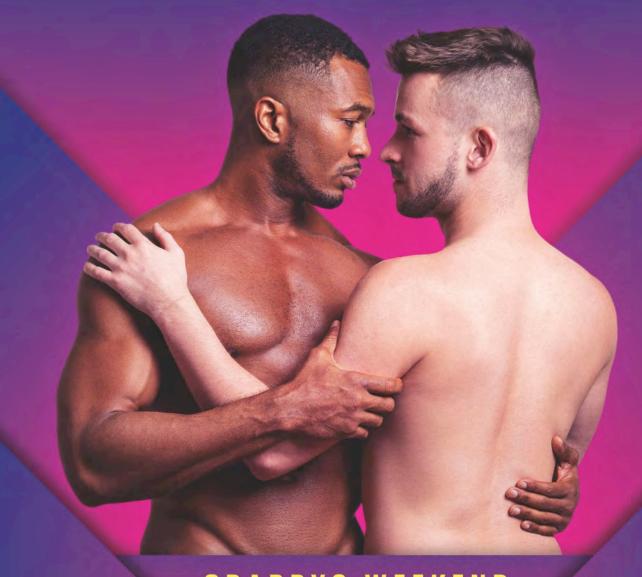
The Next Issue of GRAB hits the streets and online Tuesday June 17th (Pride Issue) reserve your space

# Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of May 2025



### Visit nexusradio.fm

	Artist	Title
1	Ron Carroll X Soleil Carrillo X Kellari	Same Vibration (Radio Mix)
2	Kastra & Dani King	I Can't Stop
3	Nathan Dawe X Abi Flynn	Here In Your Arms
4	James Mac	Breathe
5	22bullets X Martin Jensen	Pharmacy
6	Afrojack	Never Forget You
7	Jade	Angel Of My Dreams (The Blessed Madonna Remix)
8	Joe Bermudez & Jenna Drey	Halley's Comet (Zillionaire Remix)
9	Kaskade X Punctual	Heaven Knows Ft. Poppy Baskcomb (Andrea Botez & Biskuwi Remix)
10	Kouss	The Moment Ft. Josh Nichols
11	Wizthemc X Bees & Honey	Show Me Love (Radio Edit)
12	Jared Lee	Back 2 Life (Radio VIP)
13	Lavern	Where Did You Go Ft. Lilly Ahlberg
14	Leondis & Butler x Z3lla	Sierra
15	Alesso X Becky Hill	Surrender
16	Alon & Lowen	Everything (Radio Edit)
17	Kshmr & Izzy Bizu	Diamond In The Rough (Short Radio Mix)
18	Tate Mcrae	Sports Car (Telykast Remix)
19	Jorden Dux	Summer In My Heart
20	Cosmic Gate & James French	I'm On Fire
21	Blond Ish	Self Love
22	Alok & Alan Fitzpatrick	Friday I'm In Luv Ft. Bbyclose
23	Jisoo	Earthquake (Sam Feldt Remix Radio Edit)
24	Jason Ross x Telykast x Ekko	Destiny
25	Giuseppe D & Devina M	Running Through The Night
26	Lucas & Steve	Heart First ft. Jordan Shaw
27	Livvy Lauren	Losing It Again (Original Mix)
28	Boris Way X Jaimes	I Will Wait
29	Cheat Codes	Don't Leave
30	Butch Feat Life On Planets	Get High With You (Radio Edit)



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# GRAB A THROUPLE



### Throuple a funny new comedy

### By Jamie Booth

Throuple is a fresh and funny new comedy about a lonely gay man who unexpectedly falls for both members of a married couple and is thrusted into an unconventional three-way relationship. As he navigates the complexities of this new dynamic, he's forced to confront what he truly wants—and needs—from love.

Loosely inspired by Michael Doshier's own experiences, the film is a heartfelt exploration of chosen family, nontraditional relationships, and the unexpected paths desire can take. "One thing I'm really proud of with Throuple is that it celebrates the beauty of being queer," Doshier says. "It shows that queer people are valuable, vibrant members of society. There's no antagonist in Throuple—it's a manversus-self story. All of the queer characters are just doing their best to live full, authentic lives and treat each other with care."

Michael Doshier explains more about his new film from his home in Los Angeles.

Jamie Booth: You wrote and star in Throuple. What inspired you to bring this story to life—both on the page and on screen?

Michael Doshier: I've never been in a romantic throuple before. Many of my friends have tried it, however, and I certainly would be open to it! I'm very inspired by the people in my life that are open to making their relationships work by thinking outside the box as to what coupling means and looks like. I think that's the energy that I brought to the script, and I definitely sought the advice and insight from friends who were in open relationships. I think the script is unafraid to imagine new realities and structures for what works for people. That's what I would say is one of the takeaways from Throuple—you can make your life work for you.

## JB: How did you prepare for both your roles as the screenwriter and as the lead character?

MD: I took Natalie Portman's MasterClass on acting. She taught me a few skills, but ultimately, I'm playing a version of myself in the film, so I just tried to be present with my scene partners and answer honestly to what was happening in the scene. There's a lot of great improv in Throuple. The actors in the film are all professional. I relied on them to give each scene some gravitas.

JB: Filmed and set in New York City, Throuple joins a legacy of influential LGBTQ+ cinema based in the city—films like Trick, Jeffrey, Cruising, and Dog Day Afternoon.

May 20, 2025

MD: New York and its indie cinema, music and art scenes have been my main community and source of inspiration since I became an adult. I moved to New York when I was 18 and stayed there for 14 years. I think that one thing that I'm really proud about is that the film shows the indie world in these bright, beautiful colors, and it really takes indie bands and indie filmmakers and locations and the sort of underground of New York, and puts it on a pedestal. To the me in New York, it was. I've been seeing indie movies at The Quad for as long as I can remember, and The Quad is where Throuple premiered. It was a full circle moment!

### JB: What are some of your all-time favorite LGBTQ+ films?

MD: I remember being a kid, and watching Transamerica—that was a big one for me. Also, Rent. I became such a massive Renthead after I saw the movie. And, I know it's kind of stereotypical, but I remember being in line at Blockbuster, holding a DVD of Brokeback Mountain and being really nervous they were going to card me. It was rated R and I was only 16! Hedwig was another big film for me. Any movie that entered my orbit that taught me an alternative way of looking at being queer—as opposed to just being



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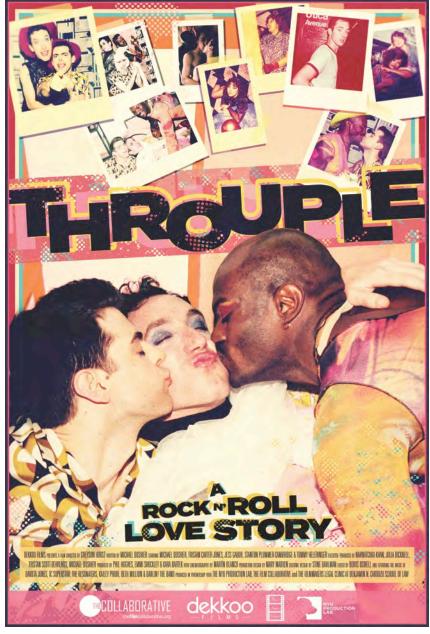
sinful-was really huge for me.

JB: Given today's charged social and political climate, how do you see your role as a queer artist evolving? MD: I'm really interested in queer joy at this moment-in both the art that I consume and the art that I want to makebecause I feel like we're in a heightened political moment, and queer people are being demonized. That's why I'm really glad that Throuple portrays queer people in a positive way, and I'm looking forward to engaging in more of that.

JB: What's next for you?

MD: I want to make a queer
movie in the South because I'm
from Arkansas and I feel like we
queer Southerners are
underrepresented. It's a whole
other way of being queer when
you're in a red state. It's time we
celebrate Southern queerness!

Throuple begins streaming on all major platforms, including Amazon, iTunes, Google, InDemand, and Dekkoo, on June 6. Follow on Instagram @throuplethemovie



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### Adoption – Parenting for LGBT Couples

By Roger V. McCaffre-Boss, Esq.

There have always been LGBT parents. Some who have maintained custody of their children from previous heterosexual marriages. Others have been able to adopt, raise foster children or enter into arrangements with surrogate mothers or sperm donors to have their own children.

There are growing numbers of workshops for LGBT couples thinking of having their own children. Informal networks have been created to help lesbians find sperm donors. And lawyers are beginning to become involved in formulating written agreements to try to insure the legal rights of everyone concerned.

It used to be that the major legal problem for a LGBT couples raising a child was that only one member of the couple had legal rights as parent. Fortunately, the law in Illinois has been changed to allow the nonbiological parent or non-adoptive parent to co-adopt the child that their partner has born or adopted.

Now, the major problem with adoption is the number of children available for adoption has decreased. Birth control has reduced the number of illegitimate children and the stigma of having children outside of marriage has decreased increasing the number of unmarried persons who keep their children.

Adoption is the most permanent, binding way of becoming a nonbiological parent. As part of the process, there is a court proceeding to terminate the biological parent's rights and responsibilities and an investigation by a government agency into the qualifications of the adoptive parent. No one knows the number of LGBT parent adoptions, however, single people are adopting in larger numbers. And Illinois law specifically allows single people the right to adopt.

Also, most adoption agencies favor married couples over single people. Before you pay an agency fee or start the expense for a home study, have a candid conversation with the agency to make sure they will actually place a child with you for adoption. Another option is to be a foster parent. Many times the parental rights of the child placed in foster care are terminated and then

> the child may be adopted by the foster parents.

Another kind of adoption is called a private placement. This can be accomplished directly by the parents or through an intermediary and without an adoption agency. The parents in a private placement, however, cannot receive any compensation for placing their child. And the intermediary cannot receive any compensation for placing their child. Except that reasonable and actual medical fees or hospital charges for services rendered in connection with the birth of the child may be paid by an adoptive parent.

Paying any other "fee" can constitute an illegal placement which is a Class 4 felony in Illinois. And



hospitals and persons connected with hospitals are prohibited from placing children for adoption.

Once a child is located you will need the consent to the adoption of the biological mother and the biological father, if his identity is known and he hasn't otherwise forfeited his parental rights.

The consent of the mother in Illinois may not be taken during the 72 hours immediately following the birth of the child. The consent of the father may be taken prior to the birth of the child but he may revoke it within 72 hours after the birth of the child

Once a child is found and the consents obtained a court action must be started. The court terminates the biological parents rights, allows the adoption to occur, issues an order declaring the child adopted and states that you are the legal parent.

A prerequisite for completion of the court action is an investigation into the home and life of the proposed adoptive parent. In Cook County the Department of Supportive Services conducts the investigation in all private placement cases. Further, the adoptive parent must be seen for an initial interview by Supportive Services as part of the judicial process in determining the "best interests of the child."

I strongly recommend that as part of the adoption process that proposed parents use the services of an attorney familiar with adoption

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



LIFELINE

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# GRAB HOLLY

### Time to Pay the Paperboy...

### By Holly Maholm

When you were young, did you ever have a part-time job as a paperboy? But wait! Before you accuse me of sexism, let me acknowledge that – historically – a substantial number of girls and young women have pursued that profession, and I only use the term "paperboy" because I cannot bring myself to use the term "paperperson." Thus, as you read below, be advised that the term "paperboy" subsumes all genders (including those 127 genders so recently discovered) of whatever source or description.

Now... let me pick up my story involving Tracy, the Publisher of the local newspaper, the Wellington Bee. I arrived at Donut Time early, ready for my shift as waitress to serve any and all customers of Wellington who (1) craved coffee and/or donuts, (2) were possessed of sufficient funds to pay for such consumables, and (3) were capable of so much "mental math" that they could calculate a 20 percent tip for their waitress (which I expect).

I found Tracy sitting by himself in a booth, sipping his coffee and studying one of those spiral bound notebooks that are favored by both journalists and homicide detectives. I waved to Aly to indicate where I would be sitting. She reached out to Grab an empty cup and in moments brought me my coffee. I slid into the booth across from Tracy.

I have previously described Tracy's cheerful, upbeat personality, so I was surprised to see he was visibly under a deep, dark cloud of foreboding gloom. He looked up and spoke, "Morning, Holly, how are you?" I replied, "I'm doing okay, but you don't look yourself. What's the problem?" He took another sip of coffee and started in.

"Honestly, there's an aspect of my job that's got me down, and it will help if you let me tell you what it is. You see, every profession that has 'responsibility' to it, has one thing in common: For example, anyone might think that Gary, who manages the local bank, is a Big-Shot who earns a big salary and leads a worry-free life, but you and I know different. In fact, you being a lawyer, you know that Gary's job is burdensome and causes him no end of anxiety. He has to deal with customers who can't make their mortgage payment, or pay back their credit card debt, and it's his job to go out and hire a lawyer - maybe like yourself - to take that customer to court.

"But then, Gary knows that customer, and his wife and kids. Maybe one of those kids is in the same class with one of his own kids. So whenever one of the bank's customers falls on hard times, it makes Gary sad to see his friend suffer. But still, he's got to do his job.

"And the same with Chet, over at the feed store. You know, now, that Chet is sort of the Head Honcho of our town's All-Powerful Patriarchy, that people think runs things from behind a dark curtain. But the fact is, when a local farmer can't pay his feed bill, or his crops fail, Chet is the one who has to do what he can for that farmer and his family, and for the ranch hands, and for the



stock (who have to eat)."

Tracy continued. "So, what I'm getting at is, I'm no different from them. When Mark and I founded the Bee years ago, we thought we would be telling an endless series of positive, upbeat stories focused on our readers. But, as you know, my co-founder passed away a few years ago, and I thought that was plenty enough sadness to suffer through, but then I found out I'm no better than Gary or Chet or you, I guess. The people around me, who I want to see succeed and flourish and be happy... well, they hit roadblocks, and many of them can't seem to get back on track.

"The toughest part of my job as the Publisher of the Bee is this: Sometimes, I have to go to one of my advertisers and have a 'Come to Jesus' conversation. Which I try to leave religion out of it, so I call it my 'Time to Pay the Paperboy' moment. I have to tell them it's time to pay, and they can't advertise in the Bee any more until they get their account current." Tracy, I could see, was getting emotional, and just then Xandra came out of the kitchen and motioned for him to join her there.

But in a few minutes he came back out of the kitchen and exited the front door of Donut Time. Xandra likewise emerged from the kitchen and, seeing me, rushed over and sat down where Tracy had been. She was visibly upset, and whispered, "Holly, Tracy just told me. 'It's time to pay the paperboy.' What are we going to do?"

(To be continued)

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

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



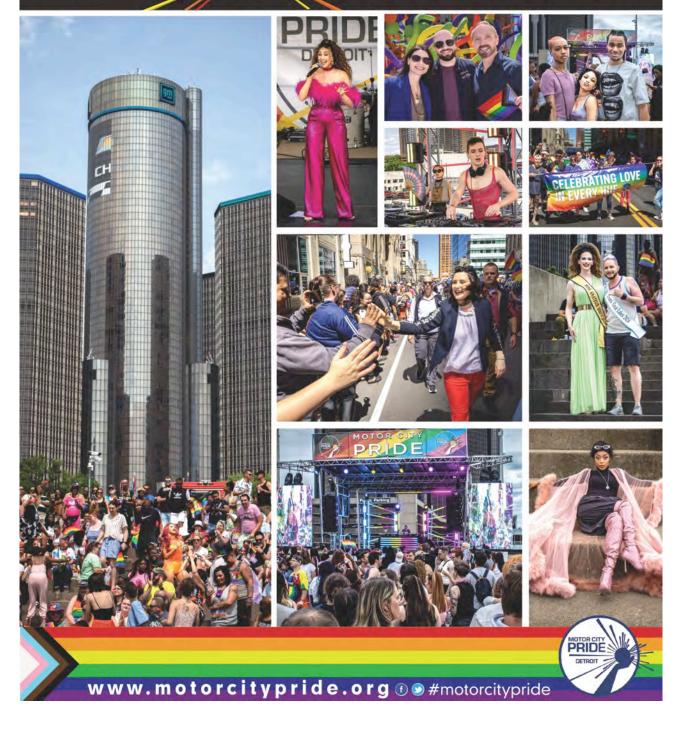
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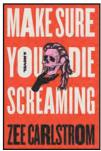
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# MOTOR CITY PRIDE HART PLAZA JUNE 7 & 8, 2025



# GRAB A BOOK

"Make Sure You Die Screaming" by Zee Carlstrom c.2025, Flatiron Books \$26.99 224 pages



Sometimes, you just want to shut the door and forget what's on the other side.

You could just wipe it from your memory, like it didn't occur. Or create an alternate universe where bad things never happen to you and where, as in the new novel "Make Sure You Die Screaming" by Zee Carlstromn, you can pretend not to care.

Their mother called them "Holden," but they'd stopped using that name and they hadn't decided what to use now. What do you call an alcoholic, queer, pessimistic former ad executive who's also "The World's First Honest White Man," although they no longer identify as a man? It's a conundrum that they'll have to figure out soon because a cop's been following them almost since they left Chicago with Yivi, their psychic new best friend.

Until yesterday, they'd been sleeping on a futon in some lady's basement, drinking whatever Yivi mixed, and trying not to think about Jenny. They killed Jenny, they're sure of it. And that's one reason why it's prudent to freak out about the cop.

The other reason is that the car they're driving was stolen from their ex-boyfriend who probably doesn't know it's gone yet.

This road trip wasn't exactly well-planned. Their mother called, saying they were needed in Arkansas to find their father, who'd gone missing so, against their better judgment, they packed as much alcohol as Yivi could find and headed south. Their dad had always been unique, a cruel man, abusive, intractable; he suffered from PTSD, and probably another half-dozen acronyms, the doctors were never sure. They didn't want to find him, but their mother called...

It was probably for the best; Yivi claimed that a drug dealer was chasing her, and leaving Chicago seemed like a good thing.

They wanted a drink more than

anything. Except maybe not more than they wanted to escape thoughts of their old life, of Jenny and her death. And the more miles that passed, the closer they came to the end of the road.

If you think there's a real possibility that "Make Sure You Die Screaming" might run off the rails a time or three, you're right. It's really out there, but not always in a bad way. Reading it, in fact, is like squatting down in a wet, stinky alley just after the trash collector has come: it's filthy, dank, and profanity-filled. Then again, it's also absurd and dark and philosophical, highly enjoyable but also satisfying and a little disturbing; Palahniuk-like but less metaphoric.

That's a stew that works and author Zee Carlstrom stirs it well, with characters who are sardonic and witty while fighting the feeling that they're unredeemable losers – which they're not, and that becomes obvious.

You'll see that all the way to one of the weirdest endings ever.

Readers who can withstand this book's utter confusion by remembering that chaos is half the point will enjoy taking the road trip inside "Make Sure You Die Screaming."

Just buckle up tight. Then shut the door, and read.

"When the Harvest Comes" by Denne Michele Norris c.2025, Random House \$28.00 304 pages



Happy is the bride the sun shines on.

Of all the cliches that exist about weddings, that's the one that seems to make you smile the most. Just invoking good weather and bright sunshine feels like a cosmic blessing on the newlyweds and their future. It's a happy omen for bride and groom or, as in the new book "When the Harvest Comes" by Denne Michele Norris, for groom and groom.

Davis Freeman never thought he could love or be loved like this.

He was wildly, wholeheartedly, mind-and-soul smitten with Everett

### By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Caldwell, and life was everything that Davis ever wanted. He was a successful symphony musician in New York. They had an apartment they enjoyed and friends they cherished. Now it was their wedding day, a day Davis had planned with the man he adored, the details almost down to the stitches in their attire. He'd even purchased a gorgeous wedding gown that he'd never risk wearing.

He knew that Everett's family loved him a lot, but Davis didn't dare tickle the fates with a white dress on their big day. Everett's dad, just like Davis's own father, had considerable reservations about his son marrying another man - although Everett's father seemed to have come to terms with his son's bisexuality. Davis's father, whom Davis called the Reverend, never would. Years ago, father and son had a falling-out that destroyed any chance of peace between Davis and his dad; in fact, the door slammed shut to any reconciliation.

But Davis tried not to think about that. Not on his wedding day. Not, unbeknownst to him, as the Reverend was rushing toward the wedding venue, uninvited but not unrepentant. Not when there was an accident and the Reverent was killed, miles away and during the nuptials.

Davis didn't know that, of course, as he was marrying the love of his life. Neither did Everett, who had familial problems of his own, including homophobic family members who tried (but failed) to pretend otherwise.

Happy is the groom the sun shines on. But when the storm comes, it can be impossible to remain sunny.

What can be said about "When the Harvest Comes"? It's a romance with a bit of ghost-pepper-like heat that's not there for the mere sake of titillation. It's filled with drama, intrigue, hate, characters you want to just slap, and some in bad need of a hug.

In short, this book is quite stunning.

Author Denne Michele Norris offers a love story that's everything you want in this genre, including partners you genuinely want to get to know, in situations that are real. This is done by putting readers inside the characters' minds, letting Davis and Everett themselves explain why they acted as they did, mistakes and all. Don't be surprised if you have to read the last few pages twice to best enjoy how things end. You won't be sorry.

If you want a complicated, boymeets-boy, family-mess kind of book with occasional heat, "When the Harvest Comes" is your book. Truly,

this novel shines.





### PRIDFEST MILWAUKEE RETURNS TO HENRY MAIER FESTIVAL PARK JUNE 5-7, 2025



Milwaukee, WI - Monday, February 3, 2025 - Milwaukee Pride, Inc. - parent organization of PrideFest, Wisconsin's largest LGBTQ+ event announced PrideFest will return to Henry Maier Festival Park June 5-7, 2025. The long-standing June festival continued its run of record-breaking attendance numbers as the 2024 festival came to a close; festival organizers are anticipating another impressive turnout later this year. 2025 marks the 37th edition of Pridefest; the event moved to the park in 1996. This year's festival will maintain the Thursday-Saturday format kicking off on Thursday, June 5, 2025.

"The 2022-2024 festival seasons were incredible for PrideFest, and that's important to note because, essentially five years ago, we were unsure if festivals would ever really\* come back to their former glory" said Wes Shaver, President & CEO, Milwaukee Pride, Inc. He added, "Well, I'm here to tell you: they're back! And better, bigger, and more beautiful than ever. PrideFest is a great example of what I refer to 'a triumphant return' to festival grandeur."

Coming off the heels of a successful 2024 festival, PrideFest leadership couldn't be more excited for what's in store for this year's event. An expanded footprint to the south will create more usable and walkable space for festival goers. Utilizing more food buildings and available square footage, vendor accommodations will increase to allow even more attractive marketplace participants as well as local food options. Festival organizers will also bring back the "Red Light District," an activation that transitions from daytime programming featuring panel presentations and workshops to an active stage featuring performances such as cabaret acts, acoustic local musicians, comedy, and more in the evening.

New for 2025 will be expanded VIP and a tiered ticketing experience allowing festival goers the opportunity to enjoy more of the park's amenities. Utilizing the lofted hospitality area at the Miller Oasis, guests will find themselves in an above ground lounge featuring complimentary food

& beverage, soft seating areas, shade, private restrooms, and entertainment. The Other two included access points will be at the Dance Pavilion and SKYYLine Mainstage.

Both of these stage related spaces offer a unique viewing experience paired with a relaxed and accommodating setting to relax or socialize with friends.

Festival goers will have much to look forward to with an ever-growing lineup of diverse entertainment with a hyper focus on local and regional acts. The festival's six stages seek to include well over 500 entertainers throughout the weekend. The festival's SKYYLine Mainstage returns along with the Dance Pavilion, home to Wisconsin's largest outdoor dance party that includes thousands of festival attendees. The Intersection Stage, History Exhibit, Children's area, also return.

Technology and the use of device friendly tools are becoming helpful assets for event producers as they seek communicate with guests and provide updates in real time. PrideFest is teaming up with Map King, a leading SaaS platform transforming how venues and events connect with their audiences. This cutting-edge, location-aware digital guide will empower PrideFest guests with curated, real-time information, creating seamless and engaging experiences from arrival to departure. Utilizing Map King's technology, festival guests will be able to start planning their PrideFest experience as early as March 2025. PrideFest's interactive map will feature full stage schedules, vendors, and other attractions allowing guests to start building their personal itinerary of "must see" happenings at the festival.

"We're thrilled to partner with PrideFest Milwaukee to bring a cutting-edge digital experience to one of the nation's premier Pride celebrations," said *Max Hanratty*, founder of Map King. "Our interactive maps, curated guides, and real-time event schedules will ensure attendees can seamlessly plan their festival experience and navigate the grounds with ease—all from their mobile browser in seconds."

Milwaukee Pride Inc. is working diligently on festival programming and planning and folks are encouraged to follow on social media for daily updates as well as pridefest.com for ticket information, show schedules and more as they're announced.

Organizers will announce acts, programming, and online ticket sales in the weeks to come.

For more information visit http://www.milwaukeepride.org

### OUTFRONT KALAMAZOO ANNOUNCES KALAMAZOO PRIDE JUNE 6 AND 7TH



KALAMAZOO, MI – OutFront Kalamazoo is excited to announce the information for Kalamazoo Pride 2025, which is scheduled to take place at Arcadia Creek Festival Place from 6:00 p.m. to midnight on Friday, June 6 and from 2:00 p.m. to midnight on Saturday, June 7.

OutFront Kalamazoo is one of Michigan's LGBTQIA+ resource centers, providing vital programs and services to the LGBTQIA+ community of Kalamazoo County and surrounding areas in Southwest Michigan. Kalamazoo Pride is the organization's largest fundraising event each year, accounting for 15% of their annual budget. The event is the second largest Pride event in Michigan and has also been the largest festival held in Downtown Kalamazoo each year for the last several years, bringing an influx of tourist dollars to downtown businesses.

"In recent years, we have grown our services tremendously to address health disparities impacting our local LGBTQIA+ community, especially housing," said Executive Director *Christopher Terkos* (he/him). "Every sponsorship and ticket sale is an investment in our ability to continue that work."

Tickets can now be purchased at the OutFront Kalamazoo office during regular business hours or online. Tickets can be picked up at the OutFront Kalamazoo office until June 4, or at will-call. The "early bird" twoday pass is priced at \$15; single-day tickets are \$8 each. Admission is free for those age 12 and under.

A new "pay what you can" tier is also available this year, allowing attendees to choose their own price point as low as zero dollars.

"We do not turn anyone away from Pride for lack of ability to pay," said Terkos. "While Kalamazoo Pride is a fundraiser, it is also a community event. This new ticket tier allows you to give an amount that feels fair and accessible to you, no matter your situation."

Ticket purchasing, sponsorship information, and vendor registration are available now at https://www.outfrontkzoo.org/pride2025. Volunteer information will be available soon.

### OTTAWA, IL FAMILY PRIDE FEST SATURDAY JUNE 14th



The Ottawa Family Pride Fest on Saturday, June 14th is promising to be the most spectacular celebration that the Fund has put on so far. Having started in 2022, the Fest takes place in Downtown Ottawa, Illinois, just minutes outside of Starved Rock State Park, and runs from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

The Ottawa Family Pride Fest is a nonprofit festival, with proceeds raised going to benefit the Youth Outlook Ottawa Drop In Center, as well as toward the creation of the LaSalle County LGBTQ Community Center.

For more information, visit www.ottawafamilypridefest.org

JESSES MCCARTHY, DEBORAH COX, ALUNA, CONFIDENCE MAN AND THE ACES TO HEADLINE 24TH ANNUAL CHICAGO PRIDEFEST JUNE 21-22



Jesse McCartney, Deborah Cox, Aluna, Confidence Man and The Aces are headlining the 24th annual Chicago Pride Fest 2025 taking place June 21-22, 2025 in the iconic Northalsted neighborhood. Other artists appearing include Hayla, Chrissy Chlapecka, Snow Wife, Black Girl Magic hosted by The Vixen with very special guest TBA and local favorites Dancing Queen: An ABBA Salute, Too Much Molly Band and Sixteen Candles plus many more!

The two-day street festival is a vibrant celebration of LGBTQ+ life, culture, and community. It is located on Halsted Street between Addison + Grace, in Chicago's historic LGBTQ+ business district. The festival runs 11 a.m.- 10 p.m. daily and features live music on three stages, Chicago's finest drag artists, dance exhibitions, guest speakers, food, drinks, and over 150 art, merchandise and service vendors.

Returning this year, Pride Fest will have a dedicated Teen Pride Space for LGBTQ+ teens and allies aged 12-18, located near the Waveland + Broadway entrance. The space is being created in cooperation with the Center on Halsted and will be open from 12 – 5p.m. on both days, offering performances, food and drinks, DJ sessions, dancing, games, giveaways, and counseling and support resources.

"We are thrilled to come together to celebrate community and uplift each other in the struggle for equality and human rights," said Mark *Liberson*, Northalsted Business Alliance Vice-President and Festival Committee Chairperson. "Despite decades of progress, the need for Pride has not lessened, as prejudicerooted legislation, demonization of our community, and lethal violence, especially against our transgender and BIPOC community members, are on the rise." For more information visit https://northalsted.com/news/ chicago-pride-fest-2025/

FIERTÉ MONTRÉAL FESTIVAL. YOUR PRIDE IS WELCOME HERE FROM JULY 31 UNTIL AUGUST 10



From July 31 until August 10, 2025, hundreds of thousands of festival goers are expected at the Fierté Montréal Festival, the largest 2SLGBTQIA+ gathering in the Frenchspeaking world. The Fierté Montreal Festival offers eleven days of dance, shows, performances, conferences, and community events along three hubs: Urban, Village, and Olympic. **Urban Hub.** The first weekend (Thursday, July 31 to Sunday, Aug 3,) do not miss the free concerts taking place in the Esplanade Tranquille, in Downtown Montréal, with evenings showcasing Two-Spirits, trans, and women identified artists (FeminiX), as well as a celebration of Disco music (Mundo Disko), and French-speaking

well known singers sharing the stage with newcomers (ImmiX). Every night, enjoy the famous Montréal nightlife with our official parties (Supernature Vol. II, L'After FeminiX, L'After Mundo Disko, and KinX). The week follows with a film program (CinéQueer, Aug 4 & 5), and more official parties (Louche XXL, Pleasuredome Vol. III, Bear Playground Vol. III: Lost in Space, TeQCno, and L'After T-Dance). Olympic Hub. From Thursday, Aug 7 until Sunday, Aug 10, experience the Festival's main stage at the iconic Olympic Park's Esplanade. The longawaited Soirée 100% Drag opens the show on Thursday, with Drag queens and kings from the RuPaul's Drag Race franchise and from the local scene. On Friday, the show DistinXion brings a once-in-a-lifetime lineup where the power of women takes center stage. On Saturday, Excellence will take the public into a dazzling, high-energy celebration of queer brilliance, boldness, and joy. On Sunday, Aug 10, the legendary Mega T-Dance makes a powerful comeback for 8 hours of dancing and celebration! Village Hub. A third stage brings the celebration to the heart of the Gay Village with a series of free concerts and DJ sets for the duration of the Festival, A Rainbow Market will showcase queer artists, artisans and creative entrepreneurs from Friday, Aug 1 to Sunday, Aug 3. Do not miss the Community Days on August 8 and 9, and join the colorful Pride Parade on Sunday, August 10. Under the theme "Blossom here, now," the Pride Parade will celebrate the progress in

Mark your
calendars
Chicago Pride
Parade Sunday
June 29th 11am
PRIDEChicago.org

2SLGBTQIA+ struggles and highlight our communities' demands. Show your colors and join the celebration! Festival Fierté Montréal, where the grass is always queerer! For more information visit https://www.fiertemontreal.com

# FRIDAY JUNE 20TH

9PM-4AM

CERMAK HALL

### MUSIC

KEVIN AVIANCE DJ MINX THE CARRY NATION JANKY

HOST

KHLOE COULEE' SHAI. SATIVA DIAMOND CHAMILA FOXX MAT & CLAY CHARLIE CLAVIN MATS D'WICIOUS



GET TICKETS!





### OUT AND AMPLIFIED: NIGHT OF QUEER MUSIC FRIDAY JUNE 20TH AT RIVIERA THEATER



Moats Entertainment presents Out and Amplified: Night of Queer Music, a dynamic showcase of queer talent and resilience, set to take place on Friday, June 20, 2025, at the Riviera Theatre. This event aims to highlight the diverse voices of LGBTQ+ artists while fostering a sense of inclusivity and connection within the community.

Featuring this unforgettable evening are three groundbreaking artists-VINCINT, Parson James, and John Duff-each bringing their distinctive styles and powerful messages to the stage. Audiences will be treated to John Duff's infectious pop anthems, Parson James' soulful ballads, and VINCINT's electrifying fusion of pop and R&B. In addition to these incredible performances, the night will feature sets from local Chicago DJs, including the city's own bodybuilding drag queen, Miss Toto an international DJ and powerhouse performer-and Icey Bby, whose fusion of house, disco, techno, and rock creates a deep bass-driven, melodic sound that captivates audiences.

More than just a concert, Out and Amplified is a platform where inclusivity flourishes, shared experiences are celebrated, and meaningful connections are made. The event is set to entertain, inspire, and empower, ensuring attendees feel a deep sense of belonging and joy as they kick off Pride Fest weekend.

"This event is about more than just music—it's about visibility, representation, and creating a safe space where everyone can be their authentic selves, which is more important than ever in today's climate," said Ricky Moats, Lead Producer and Owner of Moats Entertainment. "We're thrilled to unite such a talented lineup with a vibrant audience for a night of unforgettable performances and community spirit."

Founded in 2024, Moats
Entertainment is a dynamic and
forward-thinking entertainment
company committed to crafting
unique and impactful experiences that
highlight the deep connection
between Chicago-based and
international artists while celebrating
diversity and artistic expression. With

its first fully self-produced show in the Chicagoland area, Moats

Entertainment is thrilled to bring its vision to life, creating an inclusive and electrifying space for both artists and audiences to connect and thrive.

Tickets are available now at: http://www.moatsevents.live/tickets

### VERY PRIDE! CERMAK HALL AT RADIUS FRIDAY JUNE 20TH



Last year, Very Pride! was a love letter to Chicago—this year, we're turning up the volume, turning up the heat, and moving to Cermak Hall at Radius, turning one of the country's premier venues into the ultimate Pride celebration.

On June 20th, we're bringing the beats, the energy, and the community together for a night of pure queer joy, music, and unapologetic self-expression.

And this year? We're doing it with purpose. We're proud to announce that Very Pride! is an official Partner in Pride with @ChicagoPrideParade, making this night not just a party, but a movement.

Expect an unforgettable lineup featuring LEGENDS Kevin Aviance – Ballroom icon and dance music royalty DJ Minx – Detroit's house music powerhouse The Carry Nation – NYC's favorite underground dancefloor disruptors Janky – Bringing the sound, the energy, and the unexpected

From the moment you step inside Cermak Hall, you'll be immersed in a night where the music is loud, the dance floor is packed, and the vibes are electric. This is more than a party—it's a celebration of queerness, culture, and community like no other.

Are you ready for Very Pride 2025? Because we're bringing it all.

Tickets are ON ŠAĽE NOW at Http://www.Very-Pride.com

CIRCUITMOM, CIRCUITSON AND DREAMBRITE PRESENT "LOVE REVOLUTION" SATURDAY JUNE 21ST



Get Ready for the biggest Pridefest afterparty yet! circuitMOM, circuitSON and Dreambrite Present "Love Revolution" featuring DJ's Alex Lo (Miami) and Ty Sunderland (NY/LA) who will both be making their debuts at our return to the historic House Of Blues Chicago on Saturday, June 21, 2025. The excitement continues after the street festival shuts down for the night, so come get your early pride on from 10PM to 5AM!

"Our afterparties are where the real connections happen," said *Matthew Harvat* (circuitMOM). "We're thrilled to partner with Dreambrite to create an amazing space for the entire community to come dance and celebrate our spectacular and diverse chosen family. Come with your friends, come make new friends and live your best life with the best music and visuals. Plus, there will be a special performance or three..."

Tickets always available for purchase at **www.circuitmom.com**Get your tickets now because prices increase at the door. For more information visit

www.circuitmom.com or www.dreambritepresents.com

The next Issue of GRAB hits the streets and online Tuesday June 17 (Pride Issue) reserve your ad space today 773-707-2660

### GRABBY AWARDS AND **EVENTS THURSDAY MAY 22-SATURDAY MAY 24, 2025**



THE 26th Annual Grabby Awards (The Gay Porn Awards) hosted by ChiChi-LaRue, Morgan McMichaels (from season 2 of RuPauls Drag Race), Jake Waters and Braxton Stone will take place Saturday May 24th at the Metro Theater, 3730 N Clark Street in Chicago. Doors open at 6pm show starts at 7pm tickets Available online at arabbvAwards.com.

Thursday May 22nd kicks off Grabby weekend with Legendary DJ Chi-Chi LaRue's Skin Trade Party at Hydrate Nightclub 3458 N. Halsted Party Starts at 9pm \$10 Cover.

Friday Night May 23rd Meet the Men of Carnal+ at Lark 3441 N. Halsted 9-11pm No Cover.

Saturday Night May 24th Grabby After Party sponsored by ASGMAX AND SQUIRT bringing porn stars & go-go dancers to Charlies Chicago 3726 N Broadway, Party starts at 10pm \$10 Cover if tickets are purchased online at grabbyawards.com or \$15 at the door.

### INTERNATIONAL MR. MAY 21-26, 2025



Thursday May 22 - IML Opening Ceremonies Florentine -Congress Hotel 7:00pm - 8:30pm

Friday May 23rd - IML Physique and Stage Presence The Vic Theatre 2145 N Sheffield Ave 8:00pm -11:00pm.

Saturday May 24th -

Open Shine Vendor Market 2nd Floor Congress Plaza Hotel 11:00am - 7:00pm -9:00 PM.

Bator Bash:Leather Lust and Lube Columbia Room 3rrd Floor Congress Plaza Hotel 1pm - 3pm.

Mufasa's Pride Productions presents LeatherU @ IML Session 1: "Open and Poly" with TJ, Slade, Amanda & Aries Oxford Room, 1st Floor Congress Plaza Hotel 1:30pm-2:30pm

People of Color Leather Caucus @IML Florentine Room, 3rd floor

Congress Plaza Hotel 1:30pm-3:30pm

Mufasa's Pride Productions presents Leather U @ IML Session 2: "Rope Bondage"with Okie Nawa ONYX Oxford Room, 1st Floor Congress Plaza Hotel 2:45pm-3:45pm

Sunday May 25th -6:00pm - 9:00pm. International Mr. **Leather Contest** The Vic Theater 3145 N Sheffield Ave 9:00 PM - 4:00AM IML Victory Celebration House Of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn Strett 9pm-4am

Monday May 26th -9:00 PM - 4:00 AMBlack and Blue Ball- Jackhammer 6406 N Clark St.

Leather Recovery Meetings 12step recovery meeting that welcomes all programs and people seeking support in a sober environment during all IML festivities.Oxford Room 1st floor Congress Plaza Hotel.

- •Thursday 11:00 PM 12:00 AM, •Friday 11:00 AM - Noon, •Saturday
- 11:00 AM- Noon, •Sunday 11:00 am-Noon.
- •Monday 4:00 PM 5:00 PM

For a more up-to-date Schedule and information or to Purchase Tickets Visit www.imrl.com



FRIDAY

**JUNE 27TH** 

CHICAGO

# DISCLOSURES JAMES BLAKES CHANNEL TRES TROPITECA RAE CHARDONNAY



PRIDE WEEKEND

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GRANT PARK

SATURDAY

JUNE 28TH



**CHICAGO** 

# ARGASH GOBRAH SLAYYYTER PATRICK MASON DJ HOLOGRAPHIC MISS TOTO JAXX



PRIDE WEEKEND



auris (1) dreambrite

**GRANT PARK** 

# CAST AND PRODUCTION TEAM ANNOUNCED FOR OPEN SPACE ARTS SCANDALOUS BOY, PLAYING MAY 23- JUNE 8TH



Cast and creative team were announced today for Open Space Arts' season-closing production of SCANDALOUS BOY, by David Atfield. This will be the "International Premiere" of the play, which had its 2014 world premiere in Atfield's native Australia. The play is the story of the love between the emperor Hadrian and Antinous in pre-Christian Rome but framed in a twenty-first century setting, with the statue of Antinous coming to life in modern Australia to tell his story. SCANDALOUS BOY will be directed by Benjamin Mills and will open on Friday, May 23 at 7:30 pm. It will play through June 8. All performances are at Open Space Arts' hyper-intimate 20-seat theater at 1411 W Wilson, in Chicago.

Atfield's play explains the context of the relationship between Hadrian and the much younger Antinous. In First Century, AD Rome, young men were often aroomed by their mothers to become an "eronemos" (sexual companion) of wealthy male protectors. The relationship depicted in SCANDALOUS BOY thus has resonances for powerimbalanced couplings of any type not just gay male relationships. Mills' cast will be led by Jordan Gleaves, as the Emperor Hadrian. Gleaves recently played the leading role of Floyd "Schoolboy" Barton in City Lit's Jeff Award-winning production of August Wilson's SEVEN GUITARS. Jose Alexander Martinez, who has served as Scenic Painter for such theatre companies as Timeline, Albany Park Theatre, and Theo Ubique, will make his Chicago acting debut in the title role of the "scandalous" Antinous. Jinyue "Yuna" Hu, seen recently in TUTA Theatre's THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER, will play Antinous' mother, Sabina.

Antonio Cruz (BEYOND THE GARDEN GATE with The Imposters) will be Lucius, Hadrian's trusted advisor and former lover. Emiliano Flores has been cast as Marcellus, Antinous' contemporary and boyfriend.

Tickets are now on sale at www.openspacearts.org.

STEPPENWOLF THEATRE
PRESENTS THE CHICAGO
PREMIERE OF
YOU WILL GET SICK
By Noah Diaz
JUNE 5 – JULY 13



Steppenwolf Theatre
Company, the nation's premier
ensemble theater company, is
pleased to present Noah
Diaz's whimsical, wild,
unpredictable and deeply moving
Chicago premiere of You Will Get
Sick, directed by Artistic
Director Audrey Francis (Noises
Off, POTUS-Director), playing June
5 – July 13, 2025 in
Steppenwolf's Downstairs Theater,
1650 N. Halsted St. in Chicago.

Renowned ensemble member *Amy Morton*, a Tony Award nominee for August: Osage County and Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, returns to the Steppenwolf stage for the first time in nearly a decade, joined by fellow ensemble members *Cliff Chamberlain* (The Minutes, Superior Donuts)

Minutes, Superior Donuts) and Namir Smallwood (Pass Over, True West, Bug). Rounding out the cast are Jordan Arredondo (Steppenwolf debut) and Sadieh Rifai (First Look Repertory of New Work).

A young man with a secret. An older woman who will listen. A predatory flock of birds. An upcoming audition for The Wizard of Oz. Welcome to You Will Get Sick, a wildly imaginative new play

that traces the hilarious and deeply moving saga of one man's illness and his unlikely caretaker's pursuit of her dreams. Admired as "lively, surreal and surprising" by the New York Times, Noah Diaz's Chicago debut is equal parts buddy-comedy, form-bending experiment and sober meditation on mortality.

Tickets are now on sale at **steppenwolf.org** and the Box Office at **(312) 335-1650.** 

HELL IN A HANDBAG
PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS
WORLD PREMIERE OF
QUEEN FOR A DAY
JULY 9 – AUGUST 3, 2025 AT
BRAMBLE ARTS LOFT

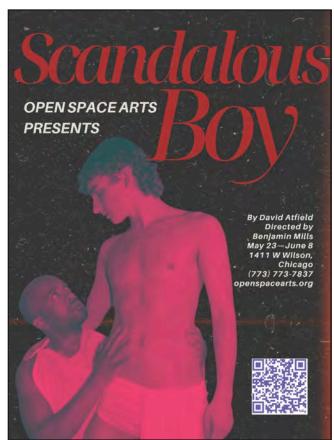


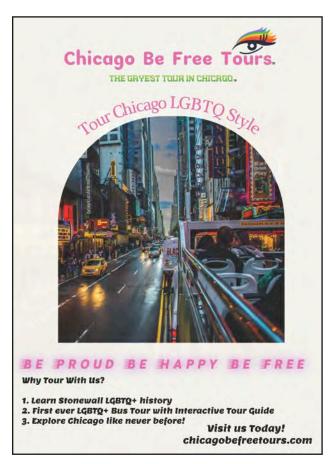
Hell in a Handbag Productions is pleased to conclude its 2024/25 Season with the world premiere of QUEEN FOR A DAY written by ensemble member *Tyler Anthony* Smith and directed by Stephanie **Shaw**. This gay fantasia on national themes... wait, wrong play. This one-act comedy/drama/cry for help about a diva (Queen Elizabeth I, previously played by Cate Blanchett), another diva (America's first superstar designer Halston) and a very sane normal person (Liza Minnelli) will play July 9 - August 3, 2025 at the Bramble Arts Loft – The Berry, 5545 N. Clark St. in Chicago's Andersonville neighborhood.

Tickets on sale at www.handbagproductions.org

THE NEXT ISSUE OF
GRAB HITS THE
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(PRIDE ISSUE)
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**JUNE 21** 

## JESSE MCCARTNEY - CONFIDENCE MAN HAYLA - CHRISSY CHLAPECKA

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ASHLEY PAUL • BEV RAGE & THE DRINKS • DJ XTASY • BOY J • DOGGPOUND
MIMI MARKS • CHICAGO SPIRIT BRIGADE • ZAMORA LOVE • VJ BRYAN
HAUS OF LÉOPARD • SERVIN' FYSH DANCE COMPANY • MARK LOVE • DJ LAURA B
UNFRIENDLY BLACK HOTTIES • GAY MEN'S CHORUS • KERI TRADE • SECRET QUEEN
MZ RUFF N STUFF • HELVETIKAH BLAK • SATIVA DIAMOND • BELLA DE BALLE
SAPPHIRE FELICIANO • LUNA LA CATRINA • PERSEPHONE BROOKLYN • PIXEL

**JUNE 22** 

## DEBORAH COX · ALUNA · THE ACES SNOW WIFE · THE VIXEN ·

TOO MUCH MOLLY BAND • FIREBRAND • DANCING QUEEN: AN ABBA SALUTE
JULES LIESL • MICAH • CREATION CHICAGO • DJ CA\$H ERA • VIRAGO
DJ XTASY • AVI SIC • SASHA LOVE • CHICAGO SPIRIT BRIGADE • DJ LAURA B
IAMBRANDON • MARTIN • JANESITA • HOUSE OF FIIERCE • COBRA B
ANDREW SA • B.BLYSS! • MISS FOOZIE'S PROUD PET PARADE • OPAL
DIDA RITZ • OLAYSIA • STYLIN' OUT NETWORK • SERENA FIIERCE • ARI GATO
GINA BELLE • LILA STAR • SORRAYA DASH • BATTY DAVIS • RACHEL SLURRZ
KARA MEL D'VILLE • PEEPER JOHNSON • JOURDIN K LARUE
KHLOE COULEÉ • KITTY BANKS • HAUS OF AMI
KINLEY PRESTON • SHANTELL D'MARCO

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773-549-5943 Oak Park - 217 Harrison Street 708-445-0612

CRAM FASHION • 773-477-1737 3331 N. Broadway

EGOIST • 773-857-0882 3739 N. Halsted

FK - FULL KIT GEAR • 773-657-8000 - 5021 N. Clark

LEATHER 6410 ● 773-508-0900 - 6410 N. Clark

MEN'S ROOM •

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ReAlign MED 773-665-4400 - 916 W Belmont www.ReAlignmed.com

CHICAGO MALE CLINIC Holistic Men's Sexual Health and wellness 773-414-9900 -4801 W. Peterson Ave., Suite 506

#### **GRAB A HAIRCUT**

MEN'S ROOM Barbershop 773-857-0907 - 3343 N Halsted

SLADES BARBER SHOP 773-880-9858 • 3314 N. Halsted

#### **GRAB HELP**

AIDS HOTLINE (ILLINOIS) -800-AID-AIDS (800-243-2437)

ASIANS/FRIENDS OF CHICAGO - 312-409-1573

BROADWAY YOUTH CENTER - 773-388-1600

CENTER ON HALSTED 3653 N. Halsted - 773-472-6469

CHICAGO ANTI-BASHING NETWORK - 888-471-0874

CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS -312-744-4111

CHICAGO HOUSE 2229 S. Michigan Ave -773-248-5200

CHICAGO MALE CLINIC FREE SEXUAL HEATH EXAM & CONSULTATION 773-414-9900 ChicagoMaleClinic.com

773-857-0907 - 3343 N Halsted St | CHICAGO PRIMETIMERS An intergenerational social group of gay, bi, and trans men chicagoprimetimers.com

CHICAGO WOMEN'S AIDS PROJECT-North Office: 6363 N. Broadway -773-262-5566 South Office: 2317 E 71st St. 773-955-8709

CITY OF CHICAGO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE -877-863-6338

CONGREGATION Or CHADASH - 773-271-2148

DIGNITY CHICAGO -312-458-9438

EQUALITY ILLINOIS - 773-477-7173

GLSEN - 312-409-1835

HEARTLAND ALLIANCE 773-907-0367

HOWARD BROWN HEALTH CENTER - 773-388-1600

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN - 312-252-0012

LAKEVIEW EAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - 773-348-8608

#### **GRAB HELP**

LAMBA LEGAL - 312-663-4413

LESBIAN COMMUNITY CANCER PROJECT (LCCP) 773-561-4662

OAK PARK AREA LESBIAN AND GAY ASSOCIATION • Oak Park, IL 708-557-3003

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF GAYS & LESBIANS (PFLAG) -630-415-0622

PRIDE CHICAGO (Pride Parade Organizers) - 773-348-8243

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## Get ready to shine with The Pride Squad at the Elgin Pride Parade on June 7!

Show your LGBTQ+ pride, celebrate love in all its forms, and march with a vibrant community of allies and advocates.

Pride Squad, lets all wear the new tees, black + pink are the main colors for our squad!

Meet at 10:30 am - parade starts at 11 am! Details on website tba.

Get Your Pride Squad Shirt at www.thepridesquad.com
Use code *prideparade* to get the shirt for only \$5\*

## show your pride.

#### Take note of these Pride events across Illinois and join in spreading love, inclusivity, and pride in every corner of the state!

May 31 Jacksonville Pride

May 31 Waukegan Pride - Parade + Festival

June 1 Buffalo Grove Pride

June 1 Crystal Lake Pride

June 1 Evanston Pride Car Parade

June 1 Lombard Pride Fest

June 5 Pride in Park Ridge

June 6 Highwood Pride

June 6-8 Pride Metal Fest

June 6+7 Quad Cities Pride Festival

June 7 All My Relations Pride Fest

June 6+7 Pride Metal Fest

June 7 Aurora Pride at the Plaza

June 7 Danville Pride Fest

June 7 Des Plaines Community Pride Celebration

June 7 Downers Grove Pride Fest

June 7 Elgin Pride Parade & Festival

June 7 Logan County Pridefest

June 7 Out in the Burbs Oak Park

June 7 Rockford Pride Parade

June 7+8 NWI Pride

June 8 Aurora Pride

June 8 Interfaith Family Pride Festival

June 8 SW Pride

June S Kankakee Area Pride

June S Grayslake Pride Parade

June 13+14 Vandalia Love is Love Pride Party

June 13-15 Andersonville Midsommarfest

June 14 Bloomington-Normal Mobile Pride Parade

June 14 Dixon Pride

June 14 Pridefest Oak Park

June 14 Wheaton Pride

June 14 Ottawa Family Pride Festival

June 14+15 Woodstock Pride

June 19 Carol Stream Pride Night Concert

June 21 DeKalb Pride Fest

June 21 Elmhurst Family Pride Fest

June 21 Hawthorne Pr.ide Vernon Hills

June 21 Macomb Pride Picnic

June 21 Niles Pride

June 21 Skokie Pride

June 21 South Side Family Pride

June 21 Whiting Pride

June 21+22 Chicago Pride Fest

June 22 Prairie Pride Coalition Picnic

June 28 Elk Grove Village Pride

June 29 Chicago Pride Parade

July 3-6 Chicago Black Pride

July 5 Pride South Side

July 12 Pride in the Park - Wheeler Park. Geneva

July 19 Peoria River City Pride Festival

July 26 Evanston Pride Community Picnic

August 8+9 Northalsted Market Days

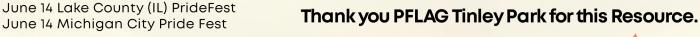
September 13 Decatur Pride Fest

September 13 Naper Pride Fest

September 20 Joliet Pride

October 4 Metro East Pride Fest

October 12 Plainfield Pride







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