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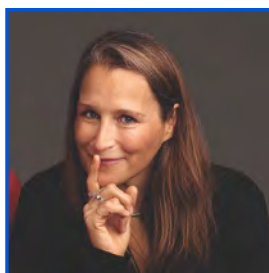
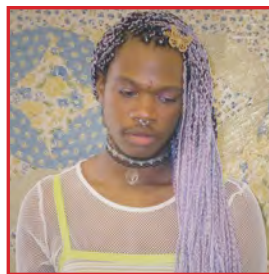
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 and Detox.**  
*Photo by Steven Koch*

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## GRAB JIM



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## A Different Side of Jim Parsons

### Boys in the Band actor on reviving the gay classic, his personal takeaway and playing bitchy queens

By Chris Azzopardi

A lot has happened this year, and that's aside from Jim Parsons dancing around in a bra. That bit, of course, graced screens across the world thanks to Netflix's *Hollywood*, the *Big Bang Theory* actor shedding his well-established onscreen TV persona to play a sleazy Hollywood agent in the flashy revisionist drama. The Ryan Murphy series garnered him an Emmy nomination, but best of all: It wouldn't be the only time in 2020 that Parsons would be taking on the role of a bitchy queen.

In Netflix's *The Boys in the Band*,

again produced by Murphy, Parsons is a standout among standouts in the remake of the pioneering 1970 gay-centric drama, directed by William Friedkin. Initially staged as an Off-Broadway play in 1968, the film is based on Mart Crowley's screenplay, written about a group of gay friends and frenemies living in New York City. An awkward birthday party for their friend Harold, a self-proclaimed "ugly, pockmarked Jew fairy," becomes the breeding ground for savage takedowns, as they tear into each other, exposing the kind of self-hatred familiar to gay

men trying to survive the oppressive state of pre-Stonewall America. Parsons plays seething party host Michael, a semi-lapsed Catholic whose aggressively nasty observations about his friends reveal more about him than it does about them.

In the remake, Parsons reprises his role alongside the original – and entirely openly gay – cast of the 2018 Broadway revival: Zachary Quinto, Matt Bomer, Andrew Rannells, Charlie Carver, Robin de Jesús, Brian Hutchison, Michael Benjamin Washington and Tuc Watkins. Parsons's





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out *Hollywood* co-star Joe Mantello, who directed the Broadway revival, once again directs.

On Zoom recently, Parsons talked about the revealing conversations he shared with Crowley about *The Boys in the Band* before his death in March and how working on the project led to a deeper understanding and questioning of his own self-worth.

**Chris Azzopardi: Being the bitchy queen doesn't seem like something that comes naturally to you.**

**Jim Parsons:** Apparently I have an affinity with it, or an interest in it. Or Ryan Murphy has an interest in forcing me to do it! I'm not sure which. Ha!

**CA: What has that experience been like for you?**

**JP:** It's been heaven. As an actor, I'll be honest with you: Both of these men are complicated characters, and the two roles this year in *Hollywood* and in *Boys in the Band* were very different in many ways, but they had a similar feeling to me. Going into the projects, there was a mystery and an unknown quality about the challenge that lied ahead. I felt confident that I would be able to get

there with both of them, but it was exciting to know it wasn't a done deal. I was going to work to get there, and I was going to have to, most importantly, get on set and start doing these scenes for both these characters and see what happened, and that was exciting.

**CA: Your role in *Hollywood* earned you an Emmy nomination, which must have felt validating after being uncertain about playing that role.**

**JP:** That was a great feeling.

**CA: Playing more challenging characters such as these, when do you know, "OK, I think I've got it"?**

**JP:** I feel like that specific feeling comes in little spots through the process, where you just feel good about something. But in general, everything I do, by the time it's all done and the months go by until it's released, suddenly I start having trouble remembering any of the good moments and I'm like, "Oh god, oh god. It's coming."

When I worked on *Hollywood* on the character Henry, that was a longer process than the film because it was episodes and it went on for about six

months. We were about midway through the process when I actually wrote Ryan Murphy an email just telling him how appreciative I was of the experience, and it was because I had crossed some bridge about working on that character. It had really clicked in me what a special opportunity this was, this character, that I just hadn't seen as clearly when I first started.

**CA: With Michael, the reasons for his ruthless disdain really reveal themselves at the end of the film. When you're playing characters as vicious as Michael and Henry, what's your process for exposing the layers of humanity beneath the surface of these characters' rough edges?**

**JP:** In the case of Michael, I think that's a big part of what you carry with you going into the beginning of the rehearsal process, knowing that you're dealing with a character who is compensating as much as he can. I always had this phrase in my head every time I was working with the character: He's just dancing as fast as he can in order to keep things afloat. But it's so superficial because there's this elemental part of himself that he is





Photo Courtesy of Netflix

completely unhappy with and so, as happens in this, just the right amount of things break the wrong way and he's cracked.

What's interesting about both characters is that Henry in *Hollywood* was based on a real man, Henry Wilson, the man who invented Rock Hudson, and so I had this beautiful book by Robert Hofler that is Henry's biography. Robert had done so much research about who he was and when he was young and when he got old, and we focus on one specific part of Henry – and invented so much around it too; it wasn't all pure truth – so to have all that information gave me a humane quality to Henry that I understood.

Michael was a little different. Even though I consciously knew that he was a rough stand-in for the writer, Mart Crowley, I didn't want to presume how much, nor did I want to put that responsibility on myself. At the time, both for the play and the movie, Mart was alive and I just thought, "Don't even think about it." But it kind of couldn't help creeping in, and the more chances I had to be around Mart and talk to Mart and exchange emails with Mart, one thing after another began to click and I was like, "The character of Michael is a writer just like Mart is."

From this distance, now that we've had this put to bed for so long, although it's just now being released, I see a version of it where this is partly the story of Mart before he was able to write *Boys in the Band*.

For me, the main magical thing about *Boys in the Band* comes from the fact that Mart was finally able to reveal himself and his situation and the people that he knew and loved with so much brutal honesty. I think that's why it connected with so many people. I think that's why it stood the test of time. I think that's why, as a piece of literature, it has stayed bubbling in our consciousness this long, and lo and behold has expanded to become something that's not just about gay men. It's become something that's about *all* people suffering under oppression and shame. And that's the way the world went, but I don't think, unless you're willing to open a vein the way that Mart was, that, going back to Michael, I believe that you can't create something that impactful and be that honest until you accept yourself for everything that you are. That's where we leave Michael, with Harold telling him, "You will always be a homosexual. There's nothing you can do to change it." And we don't see Michael transition

into a healthier, self-loving person, but the more I think about it, the more I think that if he's truly a stand-in for Mart, then that's where Michael goes. Maybe he goes off to write his *Boys in the Band*.

**CA: It's interesting to me to think that the film, when it was released in 1970, before the lexicon of LGBTQ identities expanded, resonated with an especially niche group of people. And that was, specifically, gay men. Now, that specific demographic seems almost antiquated because identity is far less restrictive.**

**JP:** One of the things I'm realizing – and please understand that so many things that I'm realizing I'm realizing them in the moment as we are now able to talk about the release of this film and the evolution that this story that Mart created has gone through – that no writer or anybody could predict because you don't know what's going to happen in the world.

Stonewall happened shortly after *Boys in the Band*. It was a moment that created a real backlash from the gay community against *Boys in the Band*, and for all the complaints, the main one was, "We don't want to be represented like this, as unhappy, self-hating, have-





Photo Courtesy of Netflix

to-hide at-home (people).” And I totally understand that. Especially in that infantile time, that embryo of this independence starting to form, you need all the nutrition you can get, ha!

But because of the efforts of so many, we have come far enough that we are more than OK to look at an honest portrayal of a real side of what it was to be gay. And even though it’s not as intense in this way, there’s residual (issues).

One of the things I discovered going through this and having the luxury to spend so much time with this part, both in the play and in the movie, was how much of those feelings that I thought I didn’t really have because of my age and the acceptance in the world. Bullshit. I do. *I do*. It’s not as intense. It’s a different world. But it’s not gone completely. And there is still a part of me that, as a gay person, I see more clearly having played Michael for so long. (I’m) still dealing with – and it’s *truly* OK, consciously I know this – but there’s that little voice inside sometimes that still goes, “Am I enough? Am I OK?”

**CA:** I recognize that, with my very good friends especially, there’s a language that we speak with each

**other that’s tart-tongued and lovingly bitchy. I’m wondering if the way these gay men talk to each other on-screen translated off-screen since you worked with a cast of all gay men.**

**JP:** (Smiles.) You know what? I don’t know if it was because of who we are or because of the time we’re living – ha! – or because we were actually working together: It was certainly not as biting; it’s a lot kinder, although Charlie, sweet thing, may disagree. He takes a beating from us! But you know what? That’s youth, and that’s what you get. Ha!

But no, definitely, it was one of the most profound things about going through this process, and I’m not even speaking about whether or not this is reflected in the final product on film. I’m really talking about my own personal experience of working on this: I feel we have the luxury now of not needing for safety and for personal comfort to be surrounded by your tribe of gay men. Many people have plenty of gay friends, and so many people solely, but it’s not for the same reasons in my opinion that it would’ve been in the late ’60s, early ’70s where it was like, “Truly, we have to stick together.” That’s wonderful. But what I realized working with these guys is there’s a language spoken. I don’t

know if it’s all gay men all over the planet. All gay people. I don’t know if it’s strictly specific to a gay American male. I will say it’s the only time I’ve gone to curtain call and repeatedly – and I don’t even know why because I hate saying this, but I’m like, “Hey *heney!*” I mean, I never talk like that. Ha! But every once in a while, I would grab Zach Quinto’s hand on stage before the bow and I’d go, “Hi *heney!*”

**CA:** Ryan Murphy has said we need more stories about the history of LGBTQ people. Aside from starring in *Boys in the Band* this year, you are producing the LGBTQ docudrama *Equal* for HBO Max. What are some other LGBTQ stories you would like to see revived for new generations of LGBTQ people to experience?

**JP:** That’s hard to say. You know what’s funny to me, and I don’t know what this says about me, exactly – well, it says that I’m a child of privilege, that I’m a gay man of privilege living in the world that I’ve grown up in. But I’ve been so fortunate that the people that I’ve worked with have called on me to be a part of these things, whether it was *Normal Heart* or *Boys in the Band*. Even *Equal* was something that was being created and thought of and they



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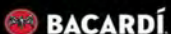
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included me in on it. So I have been blessed with this story lesson since I was, again, just too privileged and going about my own daily business in order to go research on my own.

But I guess my answer is twofold: I don't know what the next story is that

should be revived, and the second thing is that I do realize the importance because of the impact that it's had on me being exposed to these stories, and a strength and a well-roundness that I feel as a gay man by understanding more specifically the historical context

within which I walk as a gay man in 2020 now. It's crucial for making me the person I am.

And I get sweaty palms at the thought of, were it not for the sliding-door moments of these people asking me to do this, I might miss it, or not understand it, or feel it the way that I do now. So I hope that these projects go out to people and give a similar level of that. I don't want to say education because it's entertainment and I want people to watch it, for Christ's sake. Ha! But I hope that we've portrayed it in a way that is realistic and humanizing enough that you can't help but get the point.

*As editor of Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.*



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# GRAB A PAGEANT



Photo by Steven Koch

## Chicago's All-Star Spooktacular from CircuitMOM

On Friday, October 16, Chicago's own *CircuitMOM* and *CircuitSON* (**Matthew Harvat** and **Edwin Martinez**) put on an epic Halloween-themed live event at this year's hottest pop-up venue, Lake Shore Drive-IN just outside of the Adler Planetarium. "*The Drop Dead Drag Pageant*" was a beauty pageant parody featuring some of today's hottest drag artists from many different areas of the drag community. Hosted by Chicago's **Darby Lynn Cartwright** and *CircuitMOM* regular, **Aunty Chan**, the ladies were joined by the edgy commentary and performance style of the Netflix series "*Dragula*" reigning queen, **Biqtch Puddin**.

Other guest performers included Chicago favorites, **Denali Foxx**, **Miss Toto** and **Sheeza Woman**, who's alien spoof on "*Mars Attacks*" may have stolen the show. RuPaul alum and curator of the wildly popular "*Black Girl Magic*" tour, **The VIXEN** opened the

show performing her original track "*Tea Party*" (available on iTunes) and the current winner of "*Drag Race*," Season 12, **Jaida Essence Hall** did a spot on homage to "*Queen of the Damned*" **Aaliyah** for her show-stopping performance. Not to be outdone, another champion from "*Dragula*" was **Landon Cider**, who's mesmerizing drag king persona showed the Chicago audience why he was deemed the best of the best with his comedic "*Satan Medley*" complete with a flaming, spinning guitar.

"This was the only way we would be able to bring our level of production and performance art to the masses that would still keep everyone in the cast and crew to the attendees safe during Covid" said Harvat.

"This was the first and probably only actual 'stage' production for us in 2020. Like everyone else, we have done our fair share of virtual events, with three

more coming out soon, but really needed to be live just once this year. We wanted to bring as much dazzle and showmanship to our show as possible. Everyone really came together to make it an over-the-top show. To be back producing something, even for only one night, felt amazing" shared Martinez.

Harvat says "With the feedback we've received from guests and the cast, I think we may try to make this an annual event. It was so much fun to bring so many aspects of the drag community together, why not make it a yearly celebration? Besides, you gotta love a beauty pageant parody. Our new studio space has never felt so alive as it did while working on this show. But, before all of that can happen, we need to get back to some sort of normalcy inside our clubs, bars, theaters, restaurants and venue... Here's to better days very soon."





(L to R) Darby Lynn Cartwright, The Vixen, Landon Cider, Jaida Essence Hall, Denali Foxx, CircuitMOM (down front in black coat), Auntie Chan (behind mom in black), Sheeza Woman (Green Alien), Biqtch Puddin (kneeling next to mom), Miss Toto and Detox *Photo by Steven Koch*





*The Vixen*



*Photos by Steven Koch*



*Landon Cider*







*Sheeza Woman*



*Photos by Steven Koch*



*Jaida Essence Hall  
as "Queen Of The Damned"*

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*Denali*



*Photos by Steven Koch*



*Biqtch Puddin*







*Detox as Bride Of Frankenstein*



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*Miss Toto*

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## GRAB SHAMIR

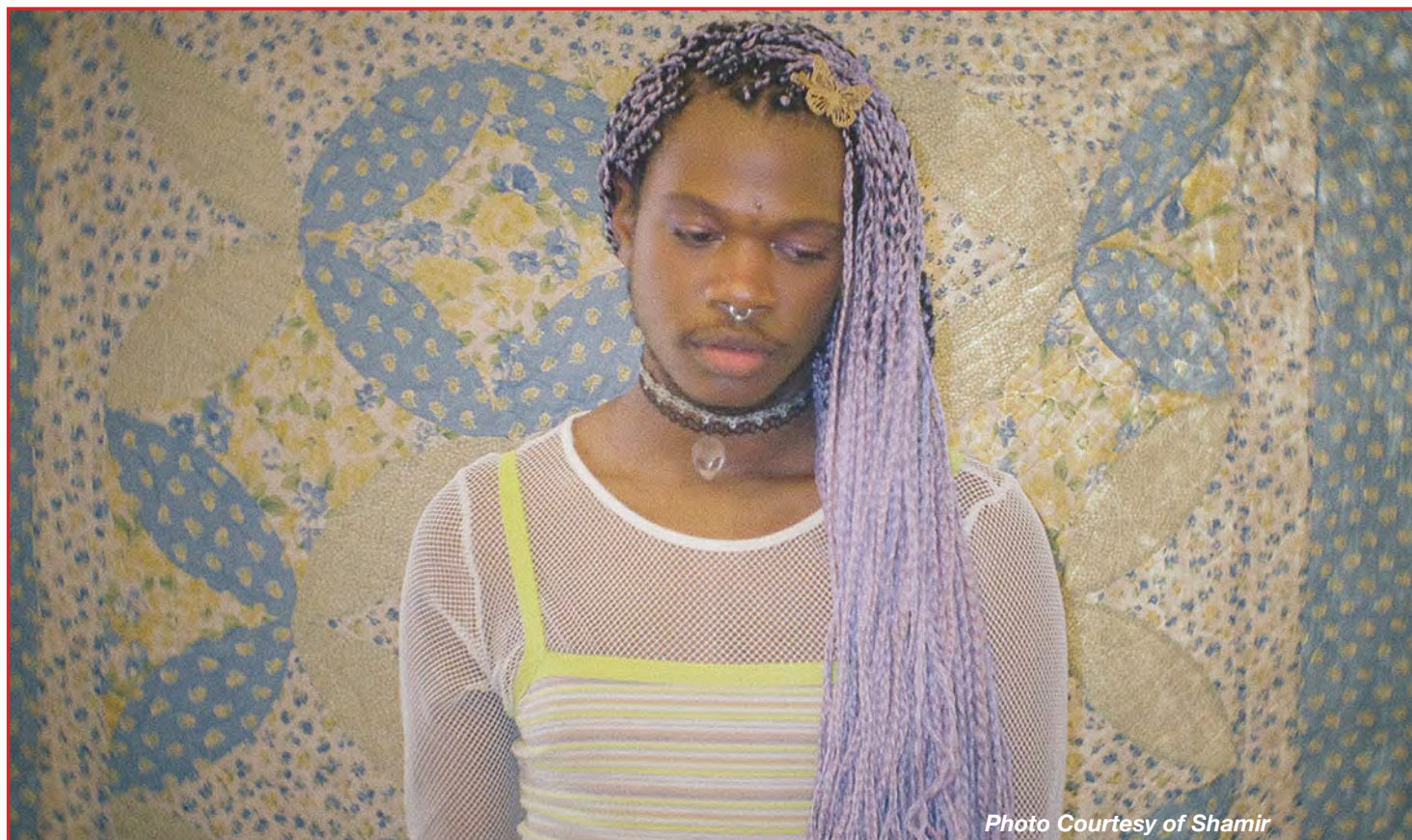


Photo Courtesy of Shamir

## For Shamir, Success During a Pandemic Is True to Form

The alt-rock artist on being creatively fertile during a health crisis, writing like a ‘crazy person’ and the Beyoncé conundrum for Black artists

By Chris Azzopardi

If you want to know how musical chameleon Shamir is right now, expect the 25-year-old to answer much like he approaches making music. In both cases, he doesn't like to repeat himself. “I’ve done a lot of interviews, so I’ve been trying to vary my answers,” he says, laughing.

On the day we connect by phone, he's not good, he's not bad. “I’m alive, you know.”

Considering his 2020, which has been one of his most successful years yet, that's a very good thing to be. In March, just as the United States shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Las Vegas-born, Philly-based musician, known for his exploratory DIY

style, released *Cataclysm*. It wouldn't be his only album of the year.

Six months later comes *Shamir*, his first self-titled album and, it's obviously worth noting, his seventh altogether, all released within the five years since his 2015 breakout *Ratchet* dropped on the same label as Adele and garnered him prestige in the pop music world. Shamir, who identifies as non-binary and is open to being addressed by any gender pronouns, went on to release two albums in 2017, *Hope* and *Revelations*. Then came 2018's *Resolution* and 2019's *Be the Yee, Here Comes the Haw*. Genre-wise, his outside-the-box work is whatever he wants it to be, from

pop to punk to country-inflected indie rock.

With *Shamir*, his second album of 2020 on his own label, he modernizes the lo-fi, women-led alt-pop-rock sound of the '90s. At this point, he finds a way to do what he wants, when he wants, with nothing stopping him. Not a label, not a producer. Not even a global pandemic.

**Chris Azzopardi: Is it a weird juxtaposition to be successful amid chaos and crisis?**

**Shamir:** Definitely. But knowing the way my life works, it makes total sense.

**CA:** In order words, for you, this is



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**just another year?**

**Shamir:** Well, success in the middle of a pandemic? That's who I am. Anytime anything great happens to me, there's always a catch. If you think of my most successful era, *Ratchet*, yeah, that was my most successful release *but* it was in a genre I didn't want to do, had no business doing, and didn't even fucking understand. (Laughs.)

**CA: Considering the artist you've evolved into, I wondered how you looked back at that era. Can you talk about the artistic journey you've been on?**

**Shamir:** It was just all natural. I completely removed myself from electronic-based pop music. I had to go back to being behind the guitar because before that record that's what I was doing. It was weird to see me sing without my guitar, and I think I kind of did the pop era as a way to prove to myself that I could step back from behind the guitar, and I did and I did it successfully. But I realize that it didn't make me happy. And I'm happiest behind the guitar. I enjoy songwriting more that way, and I realize that, well, this is my job now, and my life now. (Laughs.) I have to do it how I want, in a way that make me the most comfortable.

**CA: With this being your first self-titled album, I wondered if the significance of that is that this is you at your purest.**

**Shamir:** It's exactly that. Not even necessarily me at my purest, but it's how I always imagined myself. It applies to every element that I love, because I do like to listen to electronic pop music and I am inspired by it, but I love playing guitar and I love grunge and I love indie rock but I also love country and I also love punk. I think this record encapsulates all of that but also makes it digestible for anyone who likes any genre of music, really.

**CA: You seem more proud of this work than any albums you've done in the past. Is the feeling that you have now about this title different from, say, the feeling you had during the *Ratchet* release?**

**Shamir:** Yeah. I feel different after every release. I think I only make records when I'm in a fairly transformative time in my life, and with every record, I can pinpoint what I was doing in that section of my life, what I was feeling, and where I was mentally and physically. I think it just varies with each release. Obviously this release is so different. Even if I wanted to kind of treat it like every other

release, I can't just by virtue of releasing it in the middle of a pandemic (laughs). Everything I release is so different, and I'm in such a different mindset. I just got through this year relatively very sober – the most sober I've ever been. I mean, not necessarily on purpose but kind of. And also last month was a year since I last had a cigarette and quit smoking, so yeah, pandemic aside, I feel like a completely different person just from those two things.

**CA: It sounds like you are finding personal fulfillment by controlling what you can even if the world is falling down around you.**

**Shamir:** Yeah. This is the first record where I was *not* having a cigarette break between each vocal take. (Laughs.)

**CA: That's progress.**

**Shamir:** My last engineer would joke because I'd do maybe a few vocal takes and then be like, "OK, I need to take a break and have a cigarette." He'd call it my "vocal warm-ups." I hear a difference in my voice. I'm sure other people can't, but there's a certain clarity that I've never heard.

**CA: When it comes to making music, how did you learn to do so much on your own?**

**Shamir:** I kind of have this jack-of-all-trades personality trait, and I don't care to find out how something is made unless I feel like I can do it myself.

**CA: Did you learn anything new while**

**making this album?**

**Shamir:** No, not necessarily. I'm such a jack of so many trades now at this point. (Laughs.)

**CA: There's nothing more to learn!**

**Shamir:** There really is nothing more to learn, (laughs) and if anything, it just kind of makes things more efficient. We made this record in only two weeks.

**CA: You've really cultivated a space for yourself in the underground pop music world, and I'm not sure the best way to ask this question, but do you feel like your white gay contemporaries get more credit?**

**Shamir:** People love to ask me that. I will say this: No one can deny that if I was white my career wouldn't look different. A perfect example is how (British musician) Scott Walker died not too long ago and I did not know about him until he died, and I felt such kinship because his career trajectory was very similar to mine in the sense that he started off as a teen pop singer who

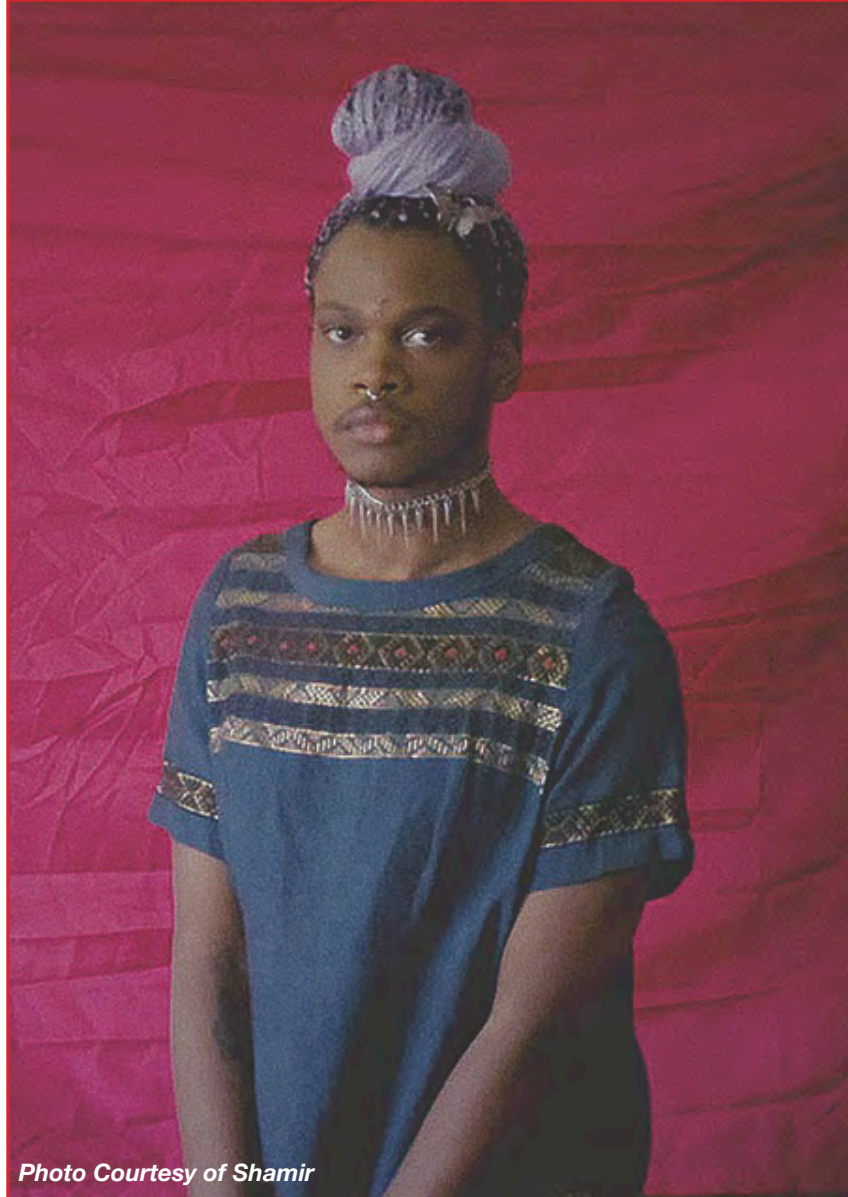


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kind of had a hit but then that wasn't his vibe so he started to do more avant-garde stuff. No time throughout my career did anyone compare me to Scott Walker, but yet a lot of people who knew Scott Walker compared me to Prince. Why were you comparing me to Prince? (Sarcastically.) I wonder why! You really have to think about that. I would be looked at completely differently if I was a white artist just in general, straight or gay or anything. Also, Black people are just expected to be exceptional because to make it anywhere as a Black person you have to be exceptional. It's kind of just expected of us. That's why sometimes ... I'm gonna say this on the record, but if you take this quote out of context, I'm gonna fight you. (Laughs.)

**CA: There will be no fight, I promise you.**

**Shamir:** I don't need the Beyhive comin' for me. But I love Beyoncé. Beyoncé is honestly one of the greatest performers of all time. It is not her fault that she is one of the greatest performers of all time. I'm not trying to chastise her for being as great as she is. But a lot of people think all Black people need to be on the level of Beyoncé or they're not shit. And that's not her fault; that's structural racism. So we gotta be on the level of Beyoncé to be seen as exceptional. Beyoncé is just un-human-level exceptional. For anyone. But because she's a Black woman and because she's Black, if Black people aren't touching that, then it's just like, "Why should we care?"

**CA: It seems Beyoncé has become the go-to name for Black artists in the sense that white people I think go, "Is it really a race problem? Because look at Beyoncé. She's made it."**

**Shamir:** And in a way, it's kind of ridiculous that she's had to get to this level to get to the level of success that she's had when someone like ... I love Britney Spears. Britney Spears is great, right? But Britney Spears did not work as hard as Beyoncé. But they're seen on the same level. Yes, Britney worked a lot and everything, but the way that Beyoncé ... Beyoncé never lip synced! The mic is always on!

**CA: What other challenges have you faced in the music industry because of who you are as a non-binary Black artist?**

**Shamir:** Producers undermining my taste or what I want, just in general. Not listening to me. That's obviously really hard.

**CA: Is that one of the reasons why you sought autonomy?**

**Shamir:** That's definitely one reason. Because I really don't like confrontation. I'm the type of person who, a lot of times, would rather put my white flag up than really fight for something that feels frivolous in the grand scheme of things. One of the main reasons why I didn't work with any producers (on past albums) is because every producer that would be willing to work with me already because of *Ratchet* had a preconceived notion of the type of artist I was and really couldn't see past that. So I had to

go and create this whole new world for myself to show the world and the industry what I'm becoming and kind of give them the picture of what I am doing. So I had to self-produce those records myself, and I was hoping that out of that a producer will hear that and eventually come to me. That's what happened with Kyle (Pulley) who produced five tracks, and I recorded most of it at his studio. He liked my artistry and what I was doing as opposed to being, "This person has a cool, unique voice. I want to basically use it to further my ideas."

**CA: It's a shame it took so long to find a producer to honor your vision.**

**Shamir:** Yeah, it is a shame. But, honestly, that's my life. It's sad. But I can be sad about it or I can just pick myself up by the bootstraps and just do everything. Again, the jack-of-all-trades thing, it also comes from it being kind of a necessity at this point. I would get nothing done if I waited on people to help.

There were so many times in the recording process where I would override a decision and Kyle would just be like, "OK." There was not a back and forth. I did not have to fight someone. I used to get in spats with the producer of *\_Ratchet\_*, honestly, to the point where at the end of the day of recording, I just gave up. I just didn't care. I was like, "This is not my record anymore."

**CA: What was the motivation behind the aesthetics for this project?**



**Shamir:** This was the first time where I kind of really felt like everything artistically did come with intent. I knew I wanted to have purple hair for this run (laughs). That came to me just in a vision. And I have spent all of last fall perfecting the very digital vintage look with the covers and the videos and the "On My Own" video. That video is very straightforward. It's simple but it relies a lot on aesthetics, which I really loved. That was really fun for me, just styling and makeup wise. "I Wonder" was inspired by Keith Haring. So I think this of all eras was the most thought out artistic-wise.

**CA: How did you land on the blue nightgown for the "On My Own" video?**

**Shamir:** I got that last summer in Seattle at a thrift sale at a pop-up shop. I just literally had it lying around, and I'm glad I got to immortalize it.

**CA: You've released seven albums in five years. How do you do it?**

**Shamir:** I write like a crazy person.

**CA: Do you write like a crazy person for any particular reason?**

**Shamir:** Because I *am* a crazy person. (Laughs.) I work so fast. It doesn't actually take up a lot of my time, and that's why I'm like, "Oh, I'm gonna start a label and work with other artists and do 50,000 other things."

**CA: How do you create so prolifically without repeating yourself?**

**Shamir:** Because I approach every record completely differently. *Ratchet* was made in a basement with one other dude, and then *Hope* was made in the middle of a manic episode in a weekend, and then *Revelations* was made after I got out of the mental hospital and had nothing to do but stay in my aunt's house because I wasn't allowed to do anything else. I just approach everyone differently. I don't produce the same way each time or try to figure out what worked, what didn't. I just want to make something that sounds good and feels cohesive.

**CA: You leave a lot up to where you're at during that moment, both physically and mentally.**

**Shamir:** The outside elements, basically. Which is how life is. I think art should flow in that

way too.

**CA: But you could've just made *On the Regular* over and over.**

**Shamir:** I could have, but it wouldn't fulfill me. That would've fulfilled my bank account, sure. (Laughs). And that's really important for me. I'm not a materialistic person at all, unfortunately. I wish I were because I'd be rich by now. I wish I were a materialistic, capitalistic-ass person, I really do. I don't like being this queer communist fool. Honestly, I've been bamboozled most of the time, but I can't help it. I was just raised like that, and this goes back to my jack-of-all-trades personality, but I've always felt more wealthy with the knowledge that I have, and (with) what I can do.

*As editor of Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.*


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2	For King & Country ft. Tori Kelly & Kirk Franklin	Together (R3HAB Radio Mix)
3	Embodiment & Love Harder	Fall In My Arms
4	Becky Hill	Better Off Without You ft. Shift K3Y
5	Martin Jensen x RANI	At Least I Had Fun
6	Young Bombs	High Road ft. Robinson (Radio Mix)
7	Disclosure	Birthday ft. Kehlani & Syd (Disclosure VIP Remix)
8	DASCO ft Twan Ray & EV Palmer	Magik
9	Dipha Barus & CADE	DOWN
10	SG Lewis	Impact ft. Robyn & Channel Tres
11	Shift K3Y	Do Me No Good (Original Mix)
12	Jerome Price	Chasing Feelings ft. Cally Rhodes
13	Alaina Castillo	Tonight (Clean)
14	Anabel Englund x MK	Underwater
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# GRAB CATHERINE

## The Aggie and the ecstasy: An Interview with Filmmaker Catherine Gund

By Gregg Shapiro

Lesbian documentary filmmaker Catherine Gund has an exceptional eye for subject matter when it comes to her movie projects. Of course, it helps that she was already familiar with the people, including gay performance artist Ron Athey, the late lesbian Mexican singer Chavela Vargas, and choreographer Elizabeth Streb, who is also a lesbian. However, she probably wasn't as well acquainted with them as she is with the subject of her new doc *Aggie* (Strand Releasing/Aubin Pictures), which is about her mother; art collector and philanthropist Agnes Gund. Agnes' name may be familiar to some readers from her tenure as president of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Others may recall her incredible 2017 act of generosity when, after selling a piece of art from her private collection – Roy Lichtenstein's "Masterpiece" – for an estimated \$165 million dollars, she donated \$100 million dollars from the sale to establish Art for Justice, a grant-making organization "focused on safely reducing the prison population, promoting justice reinvestment and creating art that changes the narrative around mass incarceration." Can you

even imagine a subject more worthy of a documentary? Of course, that was director Catherine's greatest challenge, because her mother Agnes preferred to stay out of the limelight. Nevertheless, she prevailed, and you'll be glad she did because *Aggie* is a truly delightful and eye-opening work of art. Catherine Gund was kind enough to answer a few questions before the film's release.

**Gregg Shapiro: Catherine, you have a history of making docs about undeniably fascinating people including Chavela Vargas, Ron Athey and Elizabeth Streb. What is involved in your decision-making process when it comes to the subjects for your films?**  
**Catherine Gund:** I love this question about how to identify fascinating people, because I never have set out to profile someone or make a movie about someone. It's always been somebody who's already in my life and then it sort of develops into this story that I feel like is always much bigger than that person. You're absolutely right, Ron Athey was the first feature length film documentary



that I made. That was another scenario where we were friends. I was friends with most of the people in the film already before I made the film. This art, and this living, for me; it's experience. It's let's make food, let's make a movie, let's make love, let's make happiness, let's make something together. A lot of these relationships have already been established in that vein and then we move on and making a movie just becomes an obvious outlet. Each case was something like that.

(L) Agnes Gund and (R) Catherine Gund



Photo by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

**GS: *Aggie*, your new doc about your mother Agnes Gund, is different from your others in that it is an especially personal project. Why was now the time to make a movie about her?**

**CG:** As a documentary filmmaker, many people in her world have said to me, "Your mom's great! When are you going to make a movie about her?" I've always said, "Never, never, never [laughs]." I was very clear about that. But then she did this incredible thing. She didn't talk about it, she didn't say she should do it, she just did it! In the French Revolution, they called it "the propaganda of the deed." I just needed to add to that, to amplify that as something to encourage, inspire, and for all of us to aspire to. Nobody can do exactly what she did. Nobody can do what you do. In this way, I was saying everyone can do



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*Rio Hope-Gund, Agnes Gund and Catherine Gund*

Photo Courtesy of Aubin Pictures

something and we don't have to be constrained by the mainstream media or advertising or tradition. We can actually use our imagination, which is where she honed this skill. Use our imagination to do something different, that responds to our gut instincts, that responds to our intuition. We can follow our intuition to places that the mainstream media, advertising, the education system, other things won't lead us. Art, to me, is what can lead us there. I want to share. I want everyone to feel like I do about art. I feel like art is our salvation as individuals, as a community, as a society that needs to find a path forward, both to heal past wrongs and current wrongs as we experience right now in our government. The legacy of slavery, the history of anti-Black racism and the violence with which this society was founded. It is such a violent society. We need to be able to heal and then to move to something that's more just and beautiful.

**GS:** Fairly early in the movie, you ask your mother if she wants to see a rough cut of the documentary. Has she seen it and, if so, what does she think of it?

**CG:** *[Laughs]* (as in) does she still not want anyone to see it?

**GS:** It was very funny when she said that to you in the car.

**CG:** It's absolutely what she said! I think she understands this part. I think there are moments when I speak about or other people speak about it, where they can talk about the bigger picture. She obviously is an exceedingly humble and shy person who shuns the spotlight. That's just a fact. It made making a film about her extremely difficult. Because here I was saying, "You're good person, you should have a film made about them," but the reason you're good is that you don't want the film made about you. So that was a challenge. I feel like I tried to foreground in the film and make it clear that she doesn't want the film made. But she deeply believes in the end of mass incarceration, that this time requires a reckoning and that she can speak to that. To anyone who is listening, even if it's a small group, even if it's just me, even if it's a few friends, and we all know it's bigger than that. She does have a voice and she can use that voice to create a world that would benefit everyone.

**GS:** Throughout the film, you have other people interviewing Aggie, including her grandchildren, as well as artists and others. How did you come up with that idea and was that a way of making it easier for her to talk about herself?

**CG:** Aggie agreed to do a few interviews with me, not even for the movie. I just said, "Look, we haven't sat down and had interviews. When you

talk to your friends and you talk to me and you talk to your kids, it's always so beautiful. Let's just do a couple interviews. I'll ask some questions." Frankly, Gregg, I think that everybody should be interviewing everyone. I think we should ask each other questions that we don't ask. We ask, "How are you?", but we don't really care about the answer. Instead we could ask, "Where is your family from? How do you think you became similar or different from people you were raised with? What's been the most fascinating experience you had in your life and explain something that you do and believe in now? She said yes and we started the interview and we were awful! It was so boring. We had agreed to do five to ten of these and I said, "Forget it, we're never doing that again." Two of my kids were heading off to college and I said, "I'll tell them they can ask you anything they want for an hour and I'll film it." It was so great. I said we must do my other two (kids) and so we did those. We realized that the prism of her life is full through her social connections. Maybe that is true for many people. I've seen some talking head interviews that work well with some people. That's never going to work with Aggie. She can't even look you in the eye when there's no camera between you. She doesn't look at the camera. She's much more comfortable talking to her friends and her colleagues and people who inspire her and who



# How A \$165 Million Painting Is Funding Criminal Justice Reform



Art collector and Museum of Modern Art President Emerita Agnes Gund recently sold a multimillion-dollar painting to benefit social justice, and she's

Agnes Gund featured in June 14, 2017 news story alongside image of Roy Lichtenstein's "Masterpiece,"

(Photo Courtesy of Aubin Pictures)

educate her. It was an opportunity to have all these different facets sort of reflected and refracted out into this. It was after about 10 of them that I realized I should actually make a movie [laughs]. People don't realize that we didn't start making the movie based on conversations, we started the conversations and then I was like, "OK, now I have a way to tell her story that's really about how someone came to a place from where she was. It was in the Midwest 80 years ago. She was in this very sheltered, super wealthy family that lived out in the country. They just had each other; they didn't spend time with a lot of other people. She came from this incredibly segregated place to where she's this woman who lives in New York City, has a multi-racial family, has these deep beliefs that are honed from being surrounded by and prizing art and artists, realizing and believing her life is worth living because artists exist.

**GS: The movie is full of examples of your mother's delightful sense of humor. The interview scene with John Waters, for example.**

**CG:** [Laughs] that was the best, the very best!

**GS: Do you share her wit, or would you consider yourself to be more serious?**

**CG:** I think we have very different senses of humor. I definitely think hers is much drier and wittier. I laugh freely and I crack jokes constantly. You wouldn't believe how many of those little clips in the back seat of the car there are. In a way, her priorities are right, but that means that they're not always the same priorities as yours. Here I am trying to get her to speak and

be interviewed, tell me about XY and Z. She spent so much time in the conversations with people asking them questions.

**GS: Were you aware, when you were growing up, of what exactly your mother had hanging on her walls?**

**CG:** I was and I wasn't. When she moved to New York City, I was out of the house. I will say that is when it became clearer, certainly to me. Maybe because I was older. I think her being in New York, she was freer to do it. There are certain pieces that I know were in the house when I was little. They're just burned into my psyche. There's sort of an indelible mark. The Mark Rothko piece been in our house my whole life. I knew it was there and I loved it. I felt a connection to it. Also the Hans Hofmann, which is in the Museum of Modern Art show. It's a very colorful block color piece. That was always there while I was growing up. There was art around, for sure. We moved several times, but I can remember where the Rothko piece was in every single house. This was when things didn't change as much as they do in her house now where art is being loaned out constantly and new art is being hung. It's just a beautiful living gallery. Growing up, there were fewer pieces and the thing that changed would be the Christmas tree. A Christmas tree would come and some furniture had to be moved. We would decorate the Christmas tree and I would always think of that in relation to the art that was still on the walls.

**GS: Equal to Aggie's talent for art collecting is her philanthropy and activism. Did you inherit your mother's activist spirit?**

**CG:** I certainly am an activist and have been from a young age. It's hard to know when and why those things happen. I'm sort of a 50/50 person. You're 50% nurture, 50% nature. I think that's just the default when we don't know the answer. I was raised with three siblings and they're not like me. Did I inherit a gene that they didn't necessarily inherit? I think a lot of it came from being queer. That you are always having to understand the language of the mainstream as well as your own perspective and your own view of things and experiences which you know to be different from the

mainstream story you're being told. I think that allowed me, right away, to know that there was something else. I think art is a portal as well. I did inherit from my mother, whether it was nature or nurture, to see the world through art. That is a way towards understanding, a portal towards seeing a different path forward. And then to understand injustice. She was always a feminist, although she wouldn't use that term [laughs]. I still don't think she would, even though I've argued with her probably once every 10 years, "Go ahead, say you're a feminist." "But why?" Even this action of Art For Justice. She wasn't going to talk about it, she just wanted it to change. She wanted to get funding and support to the people who are doing the work, who knew what was wrong, and systemically how to solve it and to always prioritize. Art For Justice is so different as a funding mechanism because it prioritizes art and activism together. That's my sweet spot, that's where I live, where art and activism are the same thing.

**GS: Because this is such a personal film, what are you hoping that audience members take away from it?**

**CG:** It is a really personal film and for that reason I feel like I partly had to make myself vulnerable. But I also feel like there's not really an argument with inspiring people to think about their community and their relationships within their family and in their country and in the world. I think that's what I want people to take away. To talk to people, like these conversations show, to people who you don't know everything about or who you don't





Photos By Anthony Meade



**SIDETRACK**





agree with about everything. Also, the way she sees the world through art. People have said to me, "I thought artists were just old dead white guys. That was the definition I was given." It's horrifying to realize that that's still what people are taught. If you go to museums, you're still going to see Picasso and Matisse and Renoir and Rembrandt. All these old dead white guys. These are the names that will come up if you say "artist." People aren't thinking of Faith Ringgold, Hank Willis Thomas, Glenn Ligon or Teresita Fernández. So many older, younger and established artists. Some are performance artists and some are sculptors and some are painters and some are abstract. Julie Mehretu's artwork is very abstract, although she will say each piece is about an experience that is very concrete to her. Mark Bradford's work hangs on gallery walls. It's incredibly

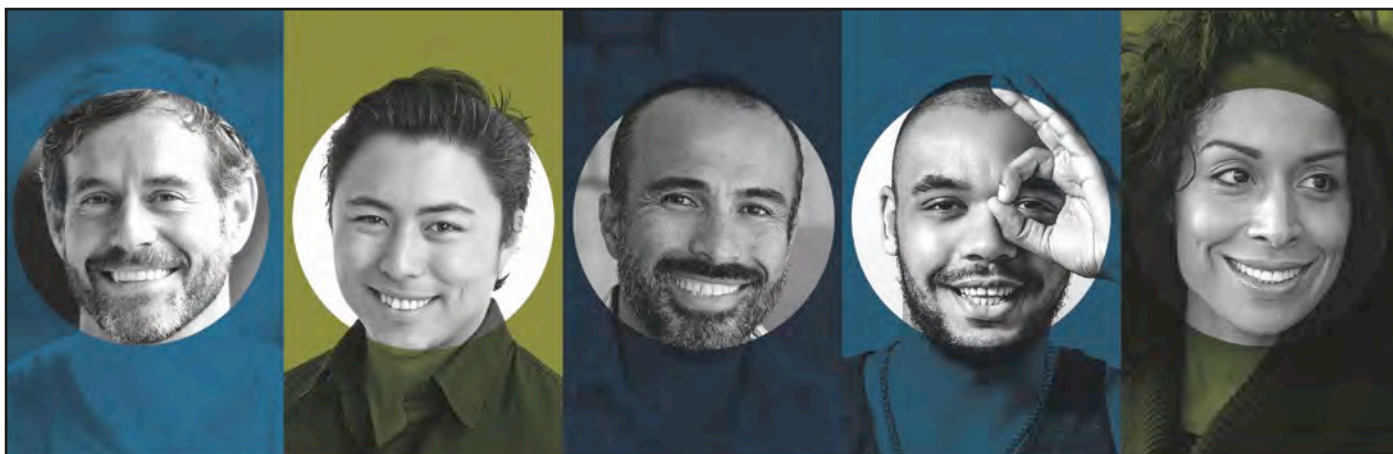


*Xaviera Simmons and Agnes Gund in Simmons' Studio*

Photo Courtesy of Aubin Pictures

powerful but it's also because there's an energy that goes into it and reflects and that spirit comes right back out at you. It's not about what the pieces are. I'm looking around the room I'm sitting in now and I see all these different pieces that mean so much to me. One is made by my daughter, one is made by a friend, one is an image that

everybody really loves and connects to in our family. The piece doesn't matter. It's the idea of having that energy in the room and having that as a part of our language. Our ability to communicate is based on a language of seeing. What do we see and that dictates then what do we know? It's a cycle. I would love people to think of art more that way.



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# GRAB DYLAN

## American Homo Story

By Dylan Seitz

Given the time of the year, we are surrounded by the influence of Halloween. When I think of Halloween, I think of murder mysteries, haunted houses, and the reminder of my horror stories dealing with the dating apps and bathhouses. I'm sure many other people can share similar experiences whether they be about getting catfished, bad hookups, or being placed in awkward circumstances like being intimate with someone only to have their husband come home in the middle of it that you didn't even know existed. I think we have all had at least one bad experience, but today I'm going to go over my first ever experience at the bath house Steamworks here in Chicago.

Picture it, Chicago 2014. I was new to city life having moved there just recently. Things were less political and when global warming wasn't as intense. I was a month or so away from graduating college and lived with two roommates that were in an open polyamorous relationship. As a new Chicagoan, one of my roommates wanted to give me a new experience to the city that I could enjoy as a way to celebrate a surgery I had recently had and to celebrate my soon to be graduation from college. The destination: Steamworks.

My roommate at the time kept asking me to go with him. It took me multiple times of him asking before I eventually warmed up to the idea as I was a 21-year-old prude and that he desperately wanted to get with me. Against my better judgment, I finally decided to go with him. My first ever experience at Steamworks I will never forget. The time of year I went was, of course, around Halloween. I remember walking into the entrance with him which kind of reminded me of a ticketing booth you'd see at a movie theater. We had gone up and requested a locker to lock up our personal belongings and had gotten towels. On the way to locker the halls echoed with eerie and spooky music and most of

the lights were off. I later learned that this particular evening was a night known as "Lights Out Night." This mixed in with the creepy music in the background gave me haunted house vibes and I wasn't quite living for it. Alas, however, we found our locker amidst the group of nude men and stripped for our adventure in nothing but towels.

Our first stop was the hot tub on the first floor near the lockers. We had gotten in shortly after dropping off our stuff in the lockers. I remember my roommate and I discussing how I felt uncomfortable because I was still recovering from surgery, but he assured me everything would be fine. Moments later, someone at least twice my age, maybe three, began to approach me. He was looking at me like Cookie Monster looks at cookies and he wanted a bite. I wanted to sit down and relax for a minute, but it looks like that wasn't going to happen. I told my roommate again that I was uncomfortable and he decided we would migrate to the steamroom instead where we weren't surrounded by old men making out. On the way out one, the old man that was staring me down tried getting close to me attempted to grab me. I politely said I was not interested, but he proceeded to grab my butt anyway. I immediately smacked him away as he grabbed me near where I had my surgery and was not having a good time.

We walked over to the steamroom where it was less crowded. As I was finally trying to get settled in my roommate asked to give me a blowjob. I immediately thought to myself "really dude?" I declined, saying that I did not want one. The couple of guys in the nearby vicinity must've gotten him in the mood to try enjoying my meat popsicle. I pretty much ignored anyone who made a pass at me and focused on just enjoying the sauna since it had been quite some time since I had enjoyed one. Dear god, this was turning into a disaster.

After growing bored of sitting around, I wanted to explore the second and third floors. Me and my roommate split up to look around and explore. This is where things got



worse. The second floor was like a fun house with a maze of small rooms and an area filled with mirrors, basically a funhouse. This paired with the lights being out and the horror music really ruined the mood for me. Everywhere I looked, everyone were performing all sorts of sex acts. I had never seen anything like it before. It was like a bunch of kids at a candy store, but the candy were people's genitals. Lord Jesus, take the wheel.

At this point, I decided I had enough and was ready to leave this unholy place, I was not ready. Not before though was I chased by old men down the corridors who wouldn't leave me alone. I finally made it to the third floor which was just a regular gym except everyone being naked working out. I got a drink of water, went to the roof to get a moment to calm my nerves, and summoned the strength to go back into the war zone of butts and penises. Thankfully, I found my roommate fairly quickly and we both decided to leave. Unfortunately, by the time we were getting ready to go, that's when the younger guys came in, but I was traumatized enough and just wanted out. We got to the locker and I had never gotten dressed so quickly. We finally left; I couldn't have been more relieved.

Needless to say, my first experience as Steamworks certainly was memorable. Maybe not the best memories, but certainly a story to tell. Since then, I have been there a handful of times where my experience has incrementally gotten better. Looking back on it, it's actually funnier now than it was back then and grew a little bit from the experience. Every Halloween season, it dawns across my mind, but I'm sure others have even spookier stories to tell. Stay safe everyone!

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# GRAB HOLLY

## Chariots of the Sacred Band

By Holly Maholm

A week after my previous conversation with Chris, I returned to the high school to see what progress the LGBT students had made on their class project. I entered the back door to the shop and saw Chris, Brian and two other students gathered around a computer screen. Seeing me, Chris spoke up. "Oh, good, you're here, Holly. We're ready to show you our current thinking." The students made room for me to sit in front of the screen.

Chris began. "Previously, our objective was to design a 'technologically-advanced' Roman war chariot. Such a chariot would have carried one warrior, pulled by one horse. That is what the Romans used in battle. But now, after the research I did on the Sacred Band – the Lions of Chaeronea – we decided to change our focus.

"According to the history books, the Sacred Band fought on foot. But then we wondered, 'What sort of chariots would the Lions have wanted to ride into battle – considering that the Sacred Band was made up of pairs of committed gay partners?' So now, our plan is to design and build a modern-day chariot for a crew

of two: Two gay partners, fighting – and we hope winning – shoulder to shoulder."

Brian took over. "So... big picture. With a crew of two plus weapons and armor, we realized we needed a team of two horses. One man does the driving while the other is free to concentrate on deploying their weapons. Using today's carbon-fiber, epoxy and synthetic materials, we are able to keep the weight of the chariot under control, so the horses won't tire too quickly. Here, take a look."

Brian pointed to the schematic design on the computer screen. "The driver sits down in the front of the chariot, where he's got Kevlar panels surrounding him on three sides. Then, the chariot has a raised platform running all the way across the back just behind the wheels. That's where the 'warrior' – the man using the weapons – is positioned. He can fight from either end of the platform, and there are hand-holds for him grasp to steady himself, enabling him to reach out with a sword in this other hand to strike the enemy.

"The raised platform keeps him elevated – giving him a position to 'strike down' on an attacker if one get too close from the side or behind. The platform, too, has Kevlar panels all around it, which will deflect arrows."

Chris took over. "As far as weapons are concerned, we have to limit ourselves. We talked to Dave, and he said he doesn't want us using bow and arrow as weapons: Too dangerous for high school. So we decided to arm our war chariots with two primary weapons.

"First is a copy of the sword Roman soldiers used – called a 'gladius.' The blade is 24 inches, with cutting edges along the top and bottom and a guard to protect the warrior's hand. Dave wants us to make ours with a bronze core – for weight and power – but surround that core with wood, so it won't develop sharp edges. Plus the tip is rounded off – so nobody loses an eye."

There was a lull in the conversation, and another of the Legionnaires spoke up.



This was D'Marcus, a black guy, and one of the few LGBT students who was also a member of the football team. (He was already in exile with the Legionnaires when Josh and his teammates were permitted to join the others camping out behind the school.)

D'Marcus took hold of the mouse and moved the pointer to the chariot wheel in the design. "Here's one design feature I bet the Roman charioteers wished they had. We know that Roman chariot wheels had spokes – but that was a big vulnerability! If an enemy foot soldier could jab his spear into the spokes of the wheel, the whole chariot would come to a sudden stop, and maybe even flip over. That's why we've designed the wheels to be supported by thick, shatter-proof discs cut out of polycarbonate. There's no spokes; so no gap where anyone can stick a spear."

D'Marcus (whom I knew to be the left guard on the team; the reason why, when the team really, really needed three yards for a first down, they always sent the fullback over left guard) continued. "One more thing. The warrior on this chariot is not armed with just a sword. That's probably enough if your enemy isn't wearing armor or doesn't have a strong and protective shield, but if he does, you need to put aside your sword and use this." He moved the pointer to a space on the rear platform of the chariot and explained.

"This is where the warrior keeps his 'War Hammer.' If he's strong enough to lift it, that is."

(To be continued)

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

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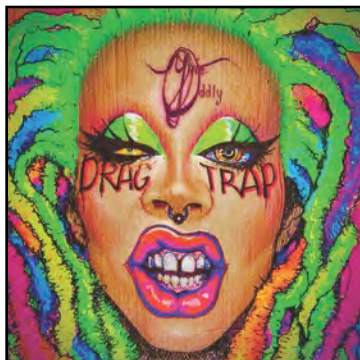
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# RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE SEASON 11 WINNER MISS YVIE ODDLY RELEASES ALBUM 'DRAG TRAP'



RuPaul's Drag Race Season 11 winner, **Miss Yvie Oddly**, released her debut album *Drag Trap* last week. The 10-track album is available across

streaming services including Spotify, Apple Music, and more.

Known for her avant-garde looks and killer lip-sync battles, as well as someone who is constantly pushing the boundaries of drag performance art, Yvie displays exactly that in the videos that *Drag Trap* is home to – "*Gigging*," "*Hype feat. Vanessa Vanjie Mateo*" as well as the title track "*Drag Trap*."

On the album, Yvie shares, "My inspiration for *Drag Trap* comes from all sorts of places. When Season 11 aired and my life changed drastically I began writing raps to help me navigate my emotions. So the songs range from the pressures of fame, to my health, sex, and being a queer Black American ... and just everything I needed to get off my chest."

Yvie Oddly is an (r)evolutionary drag queen performer, rapper, and fine artist from Denver, Colorado. Yvie captured the attention of the world when she won

the eleventh season of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. *New York Magazine* named Oddly one of the most powerful drag queens in June 2019 because of her ability to push the boundaries of drag performance art. Yvie's creative, outrageous and unconventional looks – which range from gorgeous fashion model to terrifying alien creature – combined with her signature loud cackle make her instantly recognizable. Yvie's flexibility, strength, long limbs, and charismatic personality always give the audience something they've never seen before, an energetic other-worldly performance. This up and coming fierce artist force is a social justice warrior and elevates drag performance, music and fine art to new heights with captivating narratives, impeccable skills, and a presence unmatched by anyone.

*Drag Trap* is out now. For more information, please visit <https://oddiyyvie.com/>.

## WAYSIDE DROPS NEW SINGLE "Cherophobia"



Australian rock duo **Wayside** have dropped their brand new single "*Cherophobia*". Inspired by elements of indie, 90's rock & alternative genres, the duo made up of Vocalist **Thomas Davenport** and Guitarist **Josh Ehmer** have created a single with huge

emotional spirit, driving guitar melodies and even pop sensibilities creating a sound that is fresh, young and exciting to a new generation of alternative music fans.

"It's about believing that I'm the best version of myself when I'm alone. I typically go a little insane when I care a lot for a person, and I don't like myself when that happens. When I'm alone, no one's thoughts, words nor actions can influence my mind; There's also an element of choosing to be alone, rather than settling for something that is mediocre / I'm not certain about," shares Davenport on the release.

"I guess the message I'm trying to deliver is that it's okay to choose yourself, not to settle for something that you're not certain of. As someone whose feelings can fluctuate a lot, I like the certainty and consistency of just looking after myself."

"*Cherophobia*" was recorded & engineered with renowned

producer **Lachlan Mitchell** (The Vines, The Jezabels) at Parliament Studios in Sydney while **Callan Orr** (Dream on Dreamer/Agnes Manners) mixed and mastered the track.

Ehmer continues on sharing "When I was writing the guitar for the song, I think one of the main things I wanted to do was to focus on and play with dynamics between sections of the song. So, we went for a loud and driving sound in the verse and a more quiet open chorus. I remember at one point thinking we'd tried to do a 'reverse Nirvana' in that sense."

After a two-year break **Wayside** are back and committed to the cause having released their new single 'Shine (Onto Me)' that amassed over 100,000 plays within months of its release. Support from the likes of Vogue & NME magazine and charting in the Triple J Unearthed charts has the band gaining momentum here and abroad.

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

## TAYLA PARX UNVEILS THE LIVE PERFORMANCE FOR NEW SINGLE "RESIDUE"



Multiple GRAMMY® Award-nominated recording artist **Tayla Parx** has released the live performance for

new single "*Residue*".

"It's about one of those moments when you try to get somebody off your brain or heart," Parx says of "*Residue*." "You're confessing, 'I'm trying to get rid of you,' which is another one of my unhealthy coping mechanisms. In certain cases, you're being avoidant and acting like it was never there versus finding solutions to the problem head-on."

As her profile rose, Parx served up an unforgettable live show night after night on tour with the likes of *Lizzo* and *Anderson.Paak*. Concurrently, she established herself as a history-making force behind-the-scenes with a discography streamed over 1 billion times and counting. Christened a 2019 "*Hitmaker*" by *Billboard*, Tayla made history as the first female songwriter to log three simultaneous Top 10 entries on *Billboard*'s "Hot 100" since 2014 for penning *Ariana Grande*'s "*7 Rings*" and

"*thank u, next*" and *Panic!* At The Disco's "*High Hopes*." Tayla's GRAMMY® Award-nominated catalog also comprises Janelle Monáe's *DIRTY COMPUTER*, Christina Aguilera's "*Like I Do* (Feat. GoldLink)," The Internet's "*Ego Death*," and *Hairspray*.

Along the way, Parx also worked on Tayla. Rather than let a breakup break her, she took action, parlaying healthy coping mechanisms into bold bops. By doing so, she strengthened herself and her art as evidenced on her long awaited second full-length album, *COPING MECHANISMS*.

"*Residue*" is available now via Tayla Made/Atlantic at all DSPs and streaming services. "*Residue*" precedes Parx's eagerly-anticipated new album, *Coping Mechanisms*, due to arrive at long last on November 20th.

For more information visit [www.taylaparx.com](http://www.taylaparx.com)





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## LGBTQ Groups Condemn Biphobic Attacks on Christy Holstege; Demand Her Opponents End Anti-LGBTQ Tactics



**PALM SPRINGS, CA** – Desert Stonewall Democrats, Equality California and LGBTQ Victory Fund jointly condemned an onslaught of biphobic and sexist attacks against Palm Springs City Councilwoman **Christy Holstege** and demanded her opponents denounce and end them. Holstege's opponents and their supporters are relentlessly questioning and attacking her sexual orientation in public forums and on social media, claiming she identifies as bisexual to "gain votes" in Palm Springs, which has a significant LGBTQ population.

Her opponents, their staff and supporters have actively encouraged the attacks and both candidates refuse to denounce them. A staff member for **Mike McCulloch**, an opponent of Holstege, wrote "I highly doubt Christy belongs to the LGBTQ community" in one of a series of biphobic attacks online. A supporter said Holstege "lied about being a member [of the LGBTQ community] to gain votes" and another asked "how is a nursing mother going to bond with her child and be on council and committees?" Holstege gave birth six days ago.

**Dian Torres**, another opponent, frequently interacted with and shared

the biphobic posts from the McCulloch staffer on her campaign's Facebook page, including one that said Holstege had an "alleged husband." In a Facebook comment from the campaign, Torres identified herself as a "gay Mexican American" and again implied Holstege was not part of the LGBTQ community. When asked about the attacks and anti-LGBTQ comments, Torres refused to denounce them and said Holstege was claiming to be bisexual "for personal gain and to manipulate people."

"These shameful sexist and biphobic attacks underscore the fact that Christy is the only candidate for District 4 fighting for our Palm Springs values of diversity, respect and inclusion," said Equality California Executive Director **Rick Chavez Zbur**.

"Christy Holstege has a proven track record of getting results for Palm Springs residents, supporting our small businesses and keeping our communities safe and healthy. Her opponents can't win on the issues, so they've resorted to baseless lies and divisive attacks. We're confident that voters want an experienced leader like Christy, who unites our communities, not more Washington-style name calling and political games."

"The coordinated attacks on Christy are biphobic, plain and simple, and it is especially horrific that she faces them just days after giving birth," said Mayor **Annis Parker**, President & CEO of LGBTQ Victory Fund. "Christy's opponents are deploying outdated purity tests long used to intimidate and silence bi candidates and it is imperative they are denounced by both of her opponents. These attacks are no different than the homophobic and transphobic tactics used against LGBTQ candidates

across the country and it is disheartening to see it play out in such a welcoming city. Holstege's opponents must live up to the values of inclusion Palm Springs embraces by condemning this vitriolic behavior and ending these biphobic and sexist attacks."

"The countless attacks on Councilmember Christy Holstege do not reflect the values of diversity, equality and inclusion that we hold as a LGBTQ+ Democratic Club and community," said **Miguel Navarro**, Chair of Desert Stonewall Democrats. "The smear campaign against Christy is disgusting, unacceptable and will not be ignored. It is up to every single one of us to call out and condemn biphobia, misogyny and sexism on all levels. No one should ever have to defend their sexuality and it infuriates me that Christy is constantly being questioned about hers. Councilmember Holstege has an outstanding record of service and engagement with the residents in our community. This is why she is the best qualified leader to represent the residents in District 4."

### Desert Stonewall Democrats

The Desert Stonewall Democrats is your LGBTQ+ Democratic organization in the Coachella Valley. Since 1999, our mission is to elect LGBTQ+ and pro-LGBTQ candidates to public office at all levels of government and advocate for policies that protect and expand equality.

<http://desert-stonewall.org>

### LGBTQ Victory Fund

LGBTQ Victory Fund works to change the face and voice of America's politics and achieve equality for LGBTQ Americans by increasing the number of openly LGBTQ elected officials at all levels of government.

<http://www.victoryfund.org>

## Chicago Filmmakers Announce Upcoming Editions of Masterwork: Industry Conversations



Chicago Filmmakers is pleased to announce two new editions of Masterwork: Industry Conversations, a series of virtual interviews with long established and award-winning filmmakers followed by a Q&A session with the audience. On Thursday, October 29 at 6:30PM CST, Chicago filmmaking duo **Bob Hercules** and **Keith Walker** from Media Process Group (MPG) will be joining us to discuss their 3-decade career as creative partners and their secrets to success. Following that, **Steven Poster**, ASC will join us on Wednesday,

November 18 at 7:00PM CST to discuss his career as a cinematographer in Hollywood.

Media Process Group is known for filming Obama's momentous "homecoming" in Kenya and his diplomatic stops in South Africa, Ethiopia and Chad resulting in the documentary, *Senator Obama Goes to Africa*. Their documentary *Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and went on to win 17 awards on three continents including a Peabody Award. In 2019, *Flannery*, a film executive-produced by Bob Hercules, won the prestigious Ken Burns/Library of Congress Award and their newest documentary, *Mikva: Democracy is a Verb*, is slated to run on WTTW on October 29 at 8:00 PM CST.

Steven Poster is a prolific and award-winning Director of Photography, shooting landmark films like the 2001 cult classic *Donnie Dark* and iconic music videos like Madonna's *Like a Prayer*. The Chicago native joins Chicago Filmmakers in this edition of Masterwork, taking viewers through his more than sixty cinematography credits,

as well as his tireless advocacy for inclusivity and diversity in the film industry.

Masterwork: Industry Conversations is an opportunity for local artists to learn from established filmmakers and industry decision-makers who are from Chicago or started their careers in the city. Each interview is followed by a Q&A session for attendees to ask questions specific to their interests and gain more knowledge from the interviewees. Previous guests include award-winning cinematographer **Jeff Jur** (*Dirty Dancing*, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*); camera operator, International Cinematographers Guild board member, and activist **Michelle Crenshaw** (*Bob Hearts*, *Abishola*); and **Sarah Clark**, casting director at Compass Casting in Chicago, Emmy-nominated producer, and award-winning director.

Tickets for Masterwork: Industry Conversation are a suggested donation of \$10-25 and can be reserved by visiting <https://chicagofilmmakers.org>





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27	<b>CHARLIES • 773-871-8887</b> 3726 N. Broadway
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71	<b>LIPS • 312-815-2662</b> 2229 S. Michigan Ave
44	<b>LUCKY HORSESHOE</b> 773-404-3169 • 3169 N. Halsted
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52	<b>SOFO Tap • 773-784-7636</b> 4923 N. Clark
69	<b>SPLASH • 773-904-7338</b> 3339 N. Halsted
12	<b>THE CALL • 773-334-2525</b> 1547 W. Bryn Mawr
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9	<b>LEATHER ARCHIVES &amp; MUSEUM • 6418 N. Greenview</b> 773-761-9200

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53	<b>BANANA VIDEO 773-561-8322</b> 4923 N. Clark
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**The Club Indianapolis-317-635-5796**  
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### MICHIGAN

**Dunes Resort - 269-857-1401**  
333 Blue Star Highway, Douglas  
**FIVE 15 - 248-515-2551**  
515 S. Washington, Royal Oak (Bar)

### MISSOURI (ST LOUIS)

**Club St. Louis - 314-533-3666**  
2625 Samuel Shepard Dr (Bathhouse)  
**Rehab Bar & Grill - 314-652-3700**  
4054 Choteau Ave (Bar)

### OHIO

**The Club Columbus- 614-291-0049**  
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### WASHINGTON DC

**DIK Bar - 202-328-0100**  
1637 17th Street NW  
**Annie's Paramount Steakhouse -**  
202-232-0395 1609 17th Street NW





# GRAB MAPS

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



# GRAB CLASSIFIEDS

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