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FLAMING OUT, FLAMING OVER

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Angelica Ross
talks cis actors playing
trans + the lasting legacy
of her 'Pose' role

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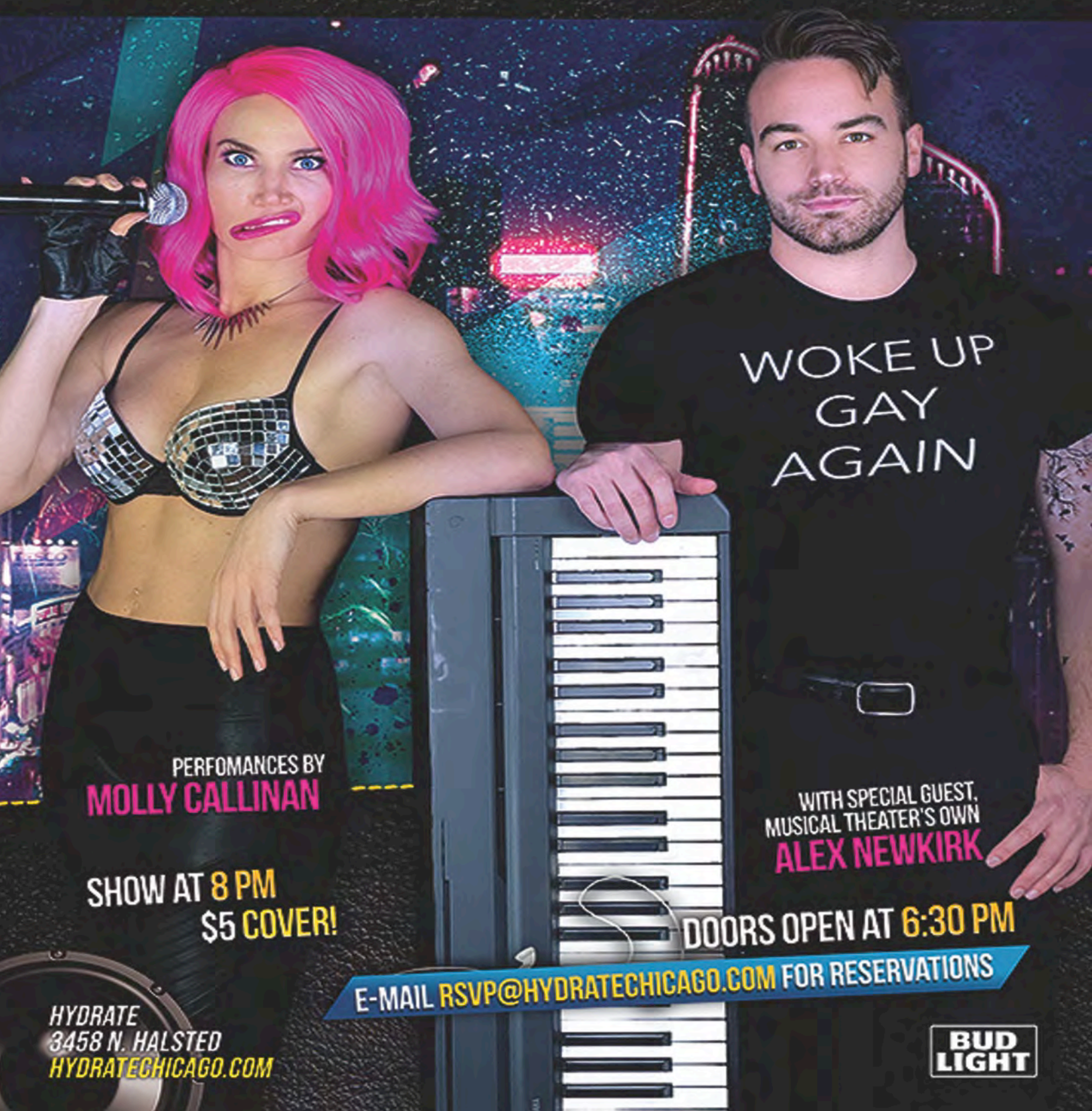
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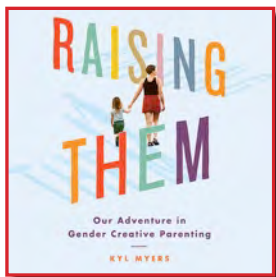
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GRAB ANGELICA

Flaming Out, Flaming Over Activist-actress Angelica Ross on celebrating trans women during Women's History Month and her new *'Fierce'* single

By Chris Azzopardi

For Angelica Ross, her short time on "Pose" wasn't an end — it was a beginning.

After famously portraying Candy Ferocity on the FX series, which depicts New York City ball culture, Ross starred in another Ryan Murphy production, "American Horror Story: 1984," making her the first trans woman to have two series-regular roles.

Today one of the most prominent trans names in Hollywood, Ross uses her spotlight to bring attention to pressing issues that affect the trans community. Last year, she signed a TV development deal with the production company Pigeon to develop and co-produce scripted and non-scripted content. She also serves as a consultant who has a hand in shaping trans narratives. And since 2014, she's been running her own business, TransTech Social Enterprises, which helps trans people secure jobs in the workforce. In 2019, Ross became the first trans person to host a presidential forum when she moderated the first-of-its-kind event, with candidates Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren debating LGBTQ+ issues.

Now on a new song with dance pop diva Ultra Naté and trans activist and performer Mila Jam, Ross brings her signature sense of empowerment and resilience to help put an end to the epidemic of violence against trans women of color. "Fierce" is an electro-pop anthem that also serves as a charitable release with the mission of enlightening, educating and celebrating the trans community. The proceeds benefit the GLAAD Transgender Media

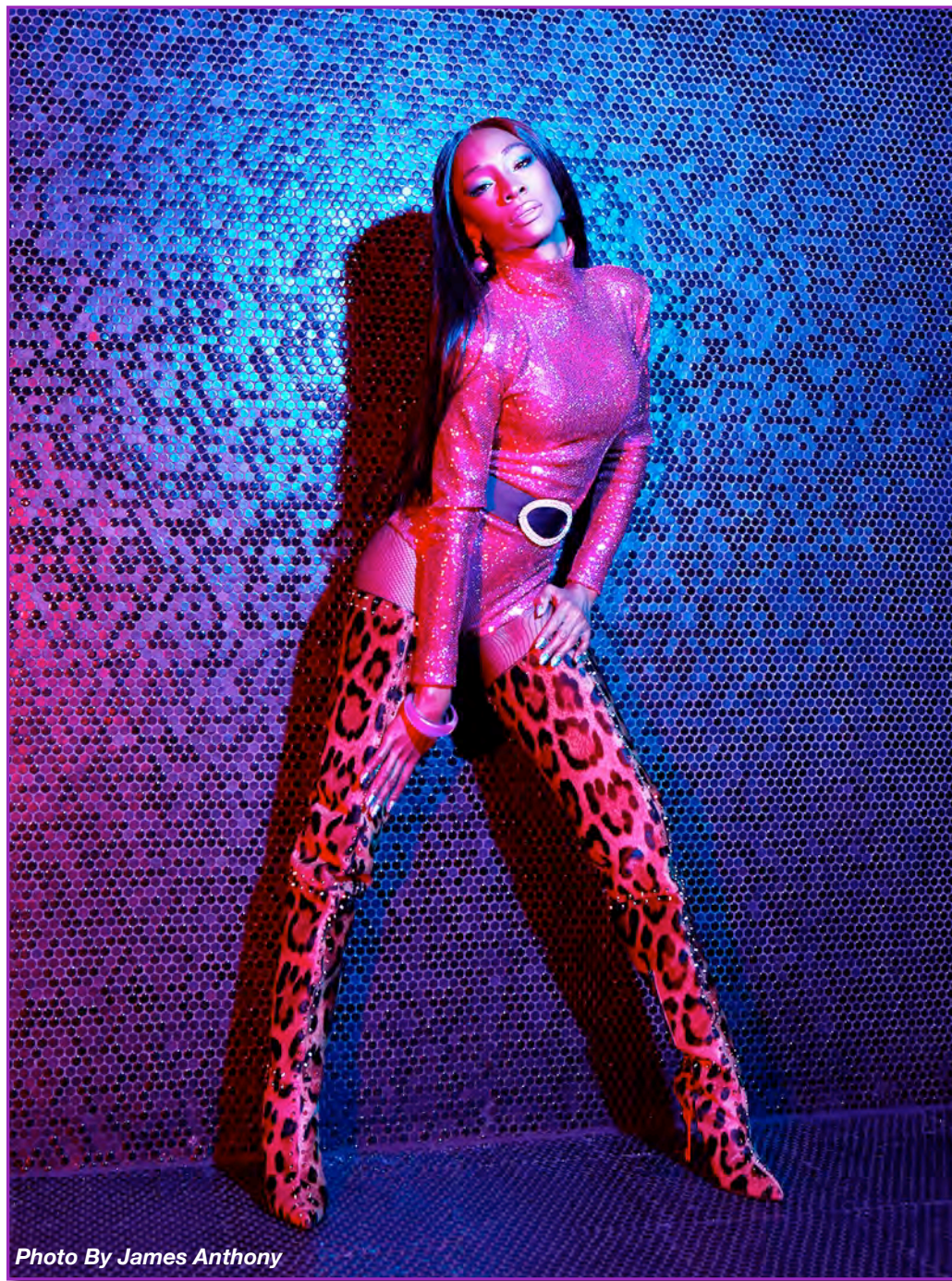


Photo By James Anthony

Program, The Sylvia Rivera Law Project and The Marsha P. Johnson Institute.

During a recent Zoom interview, Ross talked about the single's origins, celebrating our trans foremothers during Women's History Month and what _else_ needs to be talked about when it comes to trans women in Hollywood.

Chris Azzopardi: I was gonna ask how fierce you feel. Because you look

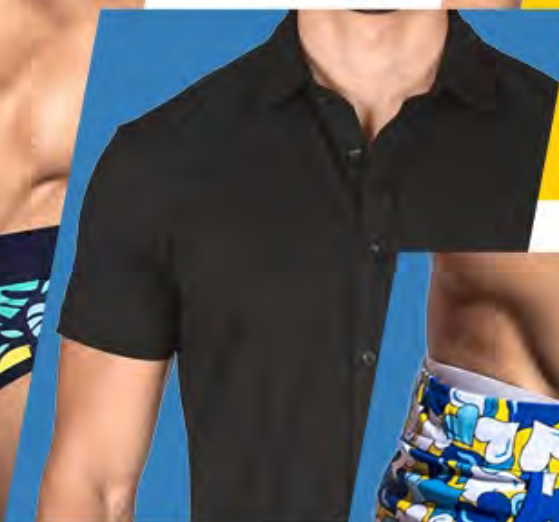
fierce.

Angelica Ross: Thank you! I feel very, very fierce today. I had some great makeup done today. I'm feeling great. Lately things have been kicking into high gear because I'm promoting a song, I'm going back to work on "American Horror Story." There's just a lot. I'm producing television shows. Like, there's a lot on my plate right now. If I can put on a face at the beginning of the day, then it can take me throughout

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CA: How did “Fierce” come together?

AR: It’s pretty amazing: Anthony Preston, from A2 (Productions), contacted me. He had this song he had been working on with Ultra Naté, and she has been on the dance charts for just a while rocking the dance charts as a Black woman. Anthony being a Black queer man, her being someone in the dance genre who’s been around LGBTQ folks and who’s been an ally for so long — they wanted this to be like a rally cry, an inclusive one, to not just include all women but also bring light to the issues that trans women (are) facing. So they brought on Mila Jam; she ended up singing the second verse to the song. And so (Anthony) played the song for me and I was like, “Um, Anthony, I need to be on this song. You need to put me on this song.” So I ended up singing the hook to the song: “Be legendary, be necessary, be extraordinary.” And I guess the rest is history from there. But now it’s got two trans women and a cis woman standing in solidarity, really calling everyone to the dance floor to celebrate themselves.

CA: I’m curious what the word “fierce” means to you and when in your life you first felt fierce.

AR: I have been a fierce queen for a very *long* time. And for me, fierce comes out of this resistance and this resilience that really bucks up against the system that would rather have you cower down or dim your light for people, but instead I’m gonna burn brighter than I ever have and I’m gonna be fierce about everything that I do.

And I think I’ve been doing that since, you know, probably grade school. So to finally have an opportunity at this level to have an accumulation of fierceness — at this point, I’m flaming out. I’m flaming over. I’m boiling out. It’s just so much fierceness going on it can’t even be contained. So we had to put it in a song, so you can put it on repeat and put it in rotation and play it again, and again, and again.

CA: If ever there was a moment to feel fierce, I feel like it’s now, right?

AR: You have to. Right now is a time where there’s so much being thrown at us and so much trying to take our energy and to get us to give up, or to want to *not* fight back against the system. But again, now more than ever we need to be fierce about who we are.



Photo By Joseph Rivera

CA: The proceeds from “Fierce” are being donated to a variety of trans organizations working to end violence against trans women. What else can those who want to get involved do?

AR: Well, here’s the deal: I want to encourage folks to realize that we are in the year 2021 and that most of us who are a little older thought that we’d be flying on skateboards by now or doing a lot of things by now. But actually we’re still fighting for some of the same rights that we were fighting for during the ’60s and the ’50s, and even before.

So what I want folks to realize is that when we talk about trans equality or

racial equality none of these conversations are new. They are just new to *you*. Which means there’s so much information out there for you to get on your own. There’s no need to use the labor of a Black trans woman who’s already burdened by society. There’s no need to ask a Black woman to give you the inside on Black Lives Matter when you can hit play on so many of the accounts from organizations to individual activists who are telling you exactly what the issues are.

So what I would say is easily open up the Google browser and just say, “Trans rights.” Go there. “LGBTQ rights.” “Racial justice.” These are just

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keywords that you can Google. But then understand that I don't care whether you are white, Black, Latino, Asian — I don't care what ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation (you are). Whoever you are, I want you to recognize that you have power to change the world, which means you have power to change the things that are going on right now.

The violence against trans women — how? By learning how to speak up from your own perspective, in your own circles and in your own workplaces and in your own homes. Know that there is always an opportunity. And from my Buddhist practice, I learned this acronym “NOW.” When you want to know when is the time I should speak up or say something: NOW. No Opportunity Wasted. Even if you don't feel that person can fully take on what you are going to say, you can at least drop a seed now that will blossom later.

CA: While we're on the topic of shedding light on the danger trans men and women experience on a daily basis, your role on “Pose” did just that. When you look back at your time on “Pose,” what do you hope is the lasting legacy of your role?

AR: You know for me it was never about the awards, although it would have been nice to be recognized for the performance and the contribution you're giving. But also, there's always been this conversation around trans actors and saying that folks like Jared Leto or these cis men are more qualified to play trans women when I just played Candy Ferocity and the world listened and the world cried.

I know this because they tagged me in all of their videos. And I don't mean that in a light way. I mean that I felt the wave of love from the audience because they tagged me in it on Twitter,

on Facebook, on TikTok, on Instagram, on every platform to let me know that they get it now and that they watched it with their family and their family gets it now. So, for me, that's all the reward that I need: knowing that the world is changing from something that I helped put out into the world.

CA: You're the first trans woman to have two series regular roles, with

of us who are on the feminist vibe, we still say “actor” because an actor is an actor. And at the end of the day, I can play a trans woman if I'm the best person for the part. And I can play a cis person or not — just a person in the script — if I'm the best person for the part. But you (are) not going to tell me that Ving Rhames is going to play a better trans woman than myself. I mean, that was cute in “Holiday Heart.” That

was fine for the time and he did his best with that, let me tell you.

But you know, now you can see these pieces of art will stand next to each other when you compare the performances of (Mj Rodriguez as) Blanca (on “Pose”) and Indya Moore and Hailie Sahar and Dominique (Jackson) and Shakina (Nayfack) from “Difficult People,” Alexandra Grey, Alexandra Billings, Laverne Cox, Trace Lysette. There are so many trans actors out there who are proving the point that we can represent ourselves better than anybody else can but also we can play everyday roles. Because why? Trans people exist in everyday society.

CA: I was thinking of “Disclosure,” the Netflix documentary about trans depiction in the media that you were a part of. There have been many conversations around what it's like being trans in Hollywood. But what is not talked about when it comes to being trans in this business that needs to be talked about?

AR: I love that “Disclosure” talked a lot about how trans

representation in media has been throughout our history, but I'm now a consulting producer on a show that is coming up — can I say something? I think so (laughs). But I'm a consulting producer for something for network television that is going to be coming out that is going to talk about what it's like as actors, actually, in the industry. So I think we haven't actually talked about



Photo By Joseph Rivera

“Pose” and “American Horror Story.” On “American Horror Story,” your character didn't identify as trans, though Candy does. Is it important to you that trans actors are not just seen as people who can only play trans characters?

AR: I think we're finally getting to the point here. The point is: an actor is an actor. Sometimes people want to say actress, but in reality most



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what our experience is in the casting room: dealing with casting directors, being on set as a trans person and the challenges that we face.

So definitely look forward to that conversation during Pride Month in June on network television on E! But yeah, honestly, as someone who works in front of the camera as well as behind the camera, I'm going to continue to look to how we can tell these stories from different angles and be even more inclusive.

CA: As a trans woman, what does it mean to you to be the face of Louis Vuitton?

AR: As a Black trans woman, to be in my second Louis Vuitton campaign — the first one where I was able to wear my natural afro and just my natural hair and everybody was on board for it — and cut my hair completely off and wear it natural and still be able to give an amazing vibe that is at the same time female and feminine and also non-binary, it's all of the things. So I was just able to just be myself, and that's what I love about Louis Vuitton is that however I come to the table, they just recognize my beauty as a Black trans woman and that's amazing.

CA: You are the CEO and founder of TransTech Social Enterprises, which provides job training and professional support for transgender men and women, as well as non-binary and gender non-conforming people. What has been its impact since it launched in 2014?

AR: Well, listen, think about this: When I was younger, I went to places like Discovery Zone or the science museum in Chicago, or for some people it's the Apple Store. And going into the Apple Store — for me, 10 years ago, I used to actually work for the Apple Store — and that's why I even mention it because I understand what it's like to be wowed by technology and all of a sudden discover you can do and be creative and do something beyond what you're currently doing.

For me, that is the essence that I brought to TransTech because I realized technology was actually in the hands of people who were helping to oppress me, meaning other folks had gotten the whim of technology to create adult websites and things that were sort of exploiting trans women. And being in the sex industry, what I realized from myself being marginalized into that space was that I didn't have to take my clothes off, I didn't have to be exploited, but I could work behind the website on graphic design or on retouching photos or on coding, CSS, HTML.

So I discovered there was such a

Black women, that includes Black trans women, Latinx women, women who have been struggling with fertility in this world. So many times when we talk about racial justice movements, women are just left out of the narrative when it's many times women who are leading that narrative. And many times trans women who are in those spaces (are) leading that narrative. And I will go forward even to say when we talk about men's issues that we talk and include trans men as well because trans men are men.

CA: It sounds so simple and yet for so many people it's not, so I think it's important to still talk about it.

AR: It's important to talk about it until we understand that we're still in a situation (where) if I go to certain rallies in certain places and I say "Black Lives Matter" and somebody recognizes that I am trans I might be in danger. So in these moments they're saying, "Black Lives Matter, except for you, tranny; except for you, you homo." So that's why I say Black Trans Lives Matter. I wouldn't have to say it if I didn't have to say it.

CA: Who is the most influential trans woman you know?

AR: For me, I feel like Marsha P. Johnson is one of the most influential trans women because her name is finally echoing

throughout this movement to understand who we should be focusing on. But also voices like Janet Mock, who, even though she's younger than I am, is someone who is really pioneering this industry and opening up many doors for many of us to walk through, including myself.

This interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

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.



ULTRA NATÉ & ANGELICA ROSS
FEAT. MILA JAM

Fierce

spectrum in technology. So now in 2021, with TransTech, when I say tech I also mean people who have podcasts, folks working in sound engineering or working in film or lighting. There are so many things that trans can now have access to if they can just have access to training that involves technology because that's what this new environment is driven by.

CA: In honor of March being Women's History Month, why is it important that, when we celebrate Women's History Month, we also make sure we celebrate trans women?

AR: It's just as simple as this: trans women are women. So if we're going to celebrate — truly celebrate — the beautiful, diverse spectrum of womanhood then we need to celebrate



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A Stritch in time: An interview with Billy Stritch

By Gregg Shapiro

Sugar Land, Texas-native **Billy Stritch** is a gay man as comfortable in the limelight as he is in the background. Known for his creative collaborations with Liza Minnelli, Linda Lavin, Christine Ebersole and others, Stritch has been making the most of the pandemic lockdown with his *Billy's Place* live streaming performances. On his new album, also titled *Billy's Place* (Club44 Records/Provident Entertainment), Stritch performs songs from the Great American Songbook, as well as more contemporary fare and even some originals. At a time when travel is restricted, tunes such as Peter Allen and Carole Bayer Sager's "Planes," John Wallowitch's "My Love Went to London" and Stritch's own "Since You Left New York," take on even greater meaning. Billy was kind enough to answer a few questions in January 2021.

Gregg Shapiro: Your *Billy's Place* live streams on Facebook Live, which shares its name with your new album, began during the pandemic. Can you please say something about what it means to you to still be able to reach your audience at a time when audiences are forced to social distance?

Billy Stritch: It really means everything to me, and it certainly wasn't something I was anticipating when this all started. I started doing the live streams in late March with my friend Linda Lavin, the actress. We started doing live streams from her apartment. She lives three floors above me here in my building. We just thought we would do things on Wednesday afternoon and just kind of put some stuff out there. Then a few weeks in, I started to realize that there were people that I knew or people

that knew me from all over the country that don't necessarily have much chance to see me live or come to New York and see me on my regular gigs. All of a sudden, the light went on. "Oh, I'm reaching so many more people than I ever had a chance to before." That's the great gift that's come out of this. I always try to be a glass half-full kind of guy anyway. It was the lovely surprise that has come out of being able to live stream, being something I'd never ever consider before. I'm sure most people that I know that are doing this never thought about it before. Even after we're all able to go out and work again, I don't think this livestream is going to go away. It's a wonderful way to reach people.

GS: The *Billy's Place* album opens with your cover of Barry Manilow's "Meet Me, Midnight" – would you



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describe yourself as a night owl or did you have to become one as an entertainer?

BS: I like the nightlife. That's always been the attraction for me. Even when I was a little kid. I didn't want to go to bed. Everything fun happened at night as far as I was concerned. I wasn't athletic. I wasn't a sports kid. I wasn't an outdoors kid. My world was television and movies and music. I would see nightclubs represented on TV and that's always what I wanted to do. Even before I came to New York, I had this dream that I would work in these glamorous nightclubs. As I get older, it's like, "Oh, God, that's so late." When I was starting out, I had a vocal group and we worked at the Algonquin Hotel in the '80s. We had shows at 8:45 and 10:45. That was kind of normal; two shows a night. Now you do a show at 7:00 or 8:00, something like that. It definitely has skewed to earlier. I don't know why that is.

GS: Do you think it's because the audience is aging along with you?

BS: [Laughs] I don't know. That could be part of it. I'm sure the younger kids are probably out later and doing whatever they do. I do co-host an open mic night at Birdland on Mondays. We always go until about 12:30. We start at 9:30, so that's kind of a late night. When I work at Bemelmans Bar at the Carlyle it's nine to midnight. So, I'm a night owl. To answer your question, I like the night life.

GS: The album features a pair of Alan & Marilyn Bergman co-compositions – "It Might Be You" and "Ordinary Miracles." What is appealing to you about a Bergman song as a performer?

BS: They always have such great imagery in their lyrics, and there's such great emotion in the lyrics. Certainly, the older I get and the more life experience I have, it gives you something to really dig into and act. When I started to sing, I never thought of this as an acting thing at all. But the more I performed and the more I was in front of audiences, I realized that it is about the interpretation of telling a story. They just give you great stories to tell. It's never so specific that the listener can't put themselves into the situation. It's a beautiful mix of emotions and feelings that everybody, I think, can relate to in one way or another. There's a lot of rich material to mine, for sure.

GS: I'm happy that you included "My

Love Went to London," a tune by John Wallowitch of Wallowitch and Ross fame, on Billy's Place. Have you ever performed any of his racier or humorous songs, such as "Bruce"?

BS: I knew John. We became friends back in the '80s. I had this vocal group called Montgomery, Plant and Stritch. It was me and two girls. We came from Texas. We were vocal trio. No one was doing the mix of tight jazz harmony and humorous and theatrical material, so we really kind of took the town by storm at that time. We met so many great people. John and Bert (Ross) were the two people that I remember so fondly. We had great evenings at their house.

He lived on Beekman Place. A wonderful home and just unforgettable nights. I'm very familiar with a lot of his material. His material is really more specific. Almost anybody can sing "Bruce." They could sing "I'm 27," and "Come A Little Closer" is one that I've sung before. But so much of it was so specifically his kind of material. I have him on my iPhone, and I listen to him

quite a lot. He loved New York and he loved performing and he was so open.

He was just so unique. There will never be anybody like him. But that song "My Love Went to London," I first heard by Tony Bennett. Then I heard Blossom Dearie's recording of it. I was putting together a show back in August for (the) Billy's Place (live stream) and it was Tony's birthday. So I did an hour of his material. I pulled that one out. Boy, especially when you can't travel, some of these songs kind of hark to that a little bit. I would love to go to London! There's an added layer to it when you sing it now in the midst of being stuck at home. It's musically so satisfying to sing.

GS: I'm glad you mentioned Linda Lavin earlier, because I had the pleasure of interviewing her last year. That made me think about your long history of collaboration – from your early trio Montgomery, Plant and Stritch (which you mentioned) to Christine Ebersole and Klea



Photo by Bill Westmoreland

Blackhurst to, of course, Liza Minnelli. What is it about you that makes you so good at playing well with others?

BS: I've always loved collaborating. The first time I saw a great connection like that was years ago when I was still living in Houston and I discovered Marilyn Maye. I knew who she was, and I remember being young and seeing her on Johnny Carson, but just kind of fuzzy memories of that. I guess I was about 17 or 18 and I was already going out and listening to music and making friends with musicians. Everybody was like, "Oh, you've got to go see Marilyn Maye." Of course, no one my age was interested in that kind of music, but I went. I had never really seen a nightclub entertainer. She was with a trio. The connection between the accompanist and her was something I picked up on right away. I just thought it would be so much fun to be on stage with somebody else. I have been so lucky in that the singers that I've accompanied have also been people who I just adore personally, and I get along with great. We share humor and a love for the same kind of material. To me, there's nothing more satisfying than supporting a singer singing with somebody in collaboration.

I think the reason I'm pretty good at it is because I'm a singer. I can totally understand where the singer phrases and how they breathe, and I watch them like a hawk. People always remark about the way I watch the singer. To me, that's the job; you have to watch them. I always joke that a lot of it is psychology, too, because you have to have that kind of connection and really be able to get into their head, too. I feel like that's the most satisfying thing that I do is collaborating and accompanying. It's because I love sharing stage, I really do love that. I love the camaraderie and what comes out of the interplay.

GS: "Does He Love You," the Grammy

Award-winning song you co-wrote with Sandy Knox has been covered by Reba McEntire, Patti LaBelle and in a duet version by Liza Minnelli and Donna Summer. Is there anyone else you would love to have record the song?

BS: Kelly Clarkson and Reba sang it on an awards show a few years ago. I think it was the CMAs. I always thought they should record it. I'd love to hear Reba do it again with somebody else. There's loads and loads of singers but honestly, Gregg, I think the time might be right for two men to sing it perhaps.



Photo by Bill Westmoreland

GS: If you haven't already done so, have you ever considered recording a version of "Does He Love You" yourself?

BS: I've thought about it. It's kind of in the back of my head. It's not really the kind of song that I perform when I'm doing my own performances. That song came out of when I had this vocal group. It was (me and) two women. We were working a lot in gay bars and cabarets down in Texas and elsewhere.

But it really appealed to that sensibility because it was so dramatic, it was such a great song to watch the interplay. At the end of the song, they would turn, and they would really sing it to each other and point. It was thrilling!

We always did it at the very end of the night. It's funny, because if the guys couldn't remember what the name of the song was, they would say, "Are you guys going to do the bitchfight?" They called it "the bitchfight." But that's not a bad idea. I would certainly entertain the idea of recording it with somebody. Why not? I think it's definitely time for it to get covered again, one way or another.

GS: "Since You Left New York," another song you co-wrote with Sandy, is on the Billy's Place album. What makes Sandy a good songwriting partner?

BS: Again, it's collaborating. It's finding someone who you could laugh with and you can have an easy rapport with; you kind of get each other. Sandy and I have been friends since back in Houston. She used to come hear me when I was first starting out. I've known her for 40 years now. We have so much of a great frame of reference together in that sort of background. We did a lot of writing together back in the '80s. That's when we wrote "Does He Love You." Then Sandy went to Nashville and pursued a career as a full-time songwriter. I would make regular trips down there to write with her. This song, "Since You Left New

York," was written all that time ago. We demoed. We sent it out. Nothing really happened with it. I had forgotten about it, it's been so long. When this pandemic started, just a few weeks into it, Sandy emailed me and asked, "What do you think about "Since You Left New York," and I said, "Remind me" [laughs].

I kind of remembered the title. She sent me an MP3 of the song and I was like, "Holy cow, that song is perfect for now." The way it starts, "They turned off the lights on old Broadway." That's

exactly what's happened. People tend to think it's something we wrote this year, and it's not. It's a great example of how sometimes a song has to find its time. It may not be right when you write it, but if it hangs out long enough, and luckily Sandy did remember it, so hopefully it's going to get a new life. Now, that's a song I would love to get somebody big to record, for sure.

GS: What did it mean to you when the Sugar Land Auditorium in your hometown christened the "Billy Stritch Stage" in your honor in 2014?

BS: It was the most incredible thing. Sugar Land, Texas, the town I grew up in, was 3,000 people, small. It was an industry town. It had a sugar refinery, the Imperial Sugar Company. There were a lot of old-time families that worked for that industry. It's close to Houston, so my family moved out there, because it was the suburbs, and built a house when I was a baby. But in the intervening years, the town has boomed. It's almost 90,000 people now.

It's become a big medium-sized city with a big City Hall and a big historical society. This guy, Chad Muska, was heading up the Historical Society and he floated this idea because I was a small-town boy who's made good, I guess. It's this great old auditorium that was built

in 1918. It's been landmarked by the state of Texas, so it's not going anywhere. I remember it from when I was in elementary school and there was no air conditioning and horrible seats. I remember kindergarten graduation was at that place. It was very rundown. They have done a magnificent job restoring it.

One of the last things they did was to dedicate the stage, with a big plaque, in my honor. It was so wonderful to come back. I did a concert on a Sunday afternoon of the dedication day. It was like *This Is Your Life* Billy Stritch, because there was my kindergarten teacher and my fifth-grade teacher. I knew all these people. My dad also was on the school board and later became a teacher, so they all knew me. A lot of those people were still around. My band director from high school was there.

People I hadn't seen in years. We had about 300 people that showed up that day for it. It's really one of the most thrilling honors that's ever happened to me. I always joke that kids who are little

kids now are going to look at that plaque and they're going to go, "Who's Billy Stritch?" They're not going to have any idea who I am, but there it is anyway.

GS: And well deserved!



Photo by Bill Westmoreland

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PHOTO: ED NEGRON PHOTOGRAPHY



GRAB UNDERWEAR

The Legend Continues

ES Collection Celebrates 15 Years with Steamy Spring Collection

By Tyler Wynn

ES Collection celebrates its 15-year anniversary with the unveiling of its Legend collection.

The range varies from shiny party wear to exquisite perfect-fitting casual and underwear featuring sophisticated designs and sexy patterns. Additionally, the line premieres ES Collection's new ECOwave fabric with threads recycled from plastic residues found in the Mediterranean. Production is done in one factory, eliminating unnecessary emissions from travel and digital prints are made by solar energy, incorporating a 'dry' print that allows for a 100% reduction of water use.

Photographer **Alain Bearinz** and models **Gael Jacob**, **King Vincene**, **Jess Vill** and **Aqua God** shot the campaign for Legend in the exotic Saint-Cyprien-Plage region of France. The entire collection is available now at <http://www.ESCollectionUSA.com>.



King and Jess get intimate in ESCollectionUSA's Blue Diamonds jocks 45% polyamide, 45% polyester, 10% elastane Pouch side in cobalt diamonds fabric. Side panels in super soft heather grey fabric. Push-Up technology \$54 at <https://escollectionusa.com>

Three's company as Gael and Jess wear ESCollectionUSA's Shiny Rib Jock in black while King wears the same jock in white 90% polyamide & 10% spandex \$54 at <https://escollectionusa.com>

Aqua God gets a little cheeky in the Matt Snake Jock by ESCollectionUSA 95% Polyester - 5% Elastane Snake laminated print on the pouch with shiny rib on the sides Push Up technology for best enhancement \$40 at <https://escollectionusa.com>



Gael and Jess step into the hot tub in their sport swim briefs by ESCollectionUSA 90% polyamide 10% elastane Removable Pack-up technology \$94 at <https://escollectionusa.com>



King take a dip in the tub in ESCollectionUSA's Skagen swim brief 80% Polyamide and 20% Spandex Square, low cut includes Pack up System \$94 at <https://escollectionusa.com>

Gael waits his turn patiently in the 80's Classic Thong by ESCollectionUSA 45% polyester, 45% polyamide, 10% elastane \$34 at <https://escollectionusa.com>



Jess is served as King and Gael, in their Second Skin briefs by ESCollectionUSA, prepare to dig in Basic brief with two stripes 90% viscose & 10% spandex Perfect fit and extremely comfortable Designed and made in Barcelona \$34 at <https://escollectionusa.com>



Jess is front and center with Gael and Aqua God backing him up, all wearing ESCollectionUSA's Elliot Camo Swim short 67% polyamide & 33% polyester Featuring a metallic camo pattern; available in blue, green and brown \$101 at <https://escollectionusa.com>



GRAB A HIT

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	Artist	Title
1	L.L.A.M.A x NEYO x Carmen DeLeon	Shake (Main Mix)
2	Cheat Codes x Danny Quest & Ina Wroldsen	I Feel Ya (Clean)
3	Toby Romeo x Felix Jaehn x Faulhaber	Where The Lights Are Low (Radio Edit)
4	David Solomon	Cross Your Mind (Clean Original Mix)
5	Ben Hazlewood	Lay Me Down (NERVO Remix)
6	Sleepwalkrs	More Than Words ft. MNEK (Clean)
7	Ellipso x Lucky Luke x Candace Sosa	Raw
8	Shane Codd	Get Out My Head (Swarmz & S1mba Mix)
9	Jonas Blue x AWA	Something Stupid (Radio Mix)
10	Ofenbach x Lagique	Wasted Love
11	Ultra Nate & Angelica Ross x Mila Jam	Fierce (Radio Mix)
12	SAY SAY x ASDIS	Stories
13	Tyron Hapi x If Found	Could've Been Us ft. Emily Falvey
14	Gaullin x Katy Tiz	So We Go (Martin Jensen Edit)
15	Silk City x Ellie Goudling	New Love ft. Diplo & Mark Ronson
16	Felix Cartal x Kiiara	Happy Hour
17	Noizu	Summer 91 (Looking Back)
18	Marc Benjamin x Afrojack x Vula	Start Over Again
19	Oliver Heldens	Never Look Back ft. Syd Silairi (Radio Edit)
20	Lodato & Bright Sparks	Good Thing
21	Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano	What If ft. Hannah Ellis
22	Martin Garrix x Tove Lo	Pressure
23	Rony Rex	Fabric
24	Gorgon City x Drama	You've Done Enough (Radio Mix)
25	Riton x Nightcrawlers	Friday ft. Mufasa & Hypeman (Dopamine Re
26	Chantel Jeffries ft. Shaylen	Come Back To Me (Clean)
27	Diplo & Sonny Fodera	Turn Back Time
28	Cat Dealers & Guz Zanotto	Save Me Now ft. Moore
29	KREAM	Water ft. Zohara
30	Josh Cumbee	Sound Of Your Name (Zonderling Remix)
31	Karen Harding x Shift K3Y	Morning
32	Imanbek & Goodboys	Goodbye (Main Mix)
33	Rene Rodrigezz ft. Sophia May	The Moment (Intro Edit Mix)
34	JLV	There For Me ft. Aaron Pfeiffer
35	NOTD & Catello	Nobody
36	M22	Think About Us (90's Club Mix)
37	Lucky Rose x Jason Walker	Help
38	Vintage Culture x Fancy Inc x The Beach	Cali Dreams
39	Nathan Evans	Wellerman (Club Remix Edit)
40	Sonny Noto	Forever (Sonny Noto)

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GRAB ERIE

A Culturally-Conscious Approach to HIV in the Black Community

By Jami Morada

HIV is a virus that disproportionately affects our Black communities, and Chicago is no exception. One in two Black MSM (men who have sex with men) will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime compared to one in four Latino MSM and one in eleven White MSM (CDC). In addition, another group disproportionately impacted by HIV is Black transwomen; an estimated 44 percent of Black transwomen are living with HIV (CDC).

Recognizing these racial disparities, Erie Family Health Centers treats the HIV epidemic as a social issue, as well as a healthcare issue, providing culturally-conscious HIV/AIDS care to Chicagoans. I had the privilege to connect with the wonderful team at Erie and interview Bridget Magner, Associate Director of Patient Programs & Health Equity, to learn more about their nationally-recognized Lending Hands for Life HIV/AIDS program and what it really means to offer culturally-conscious care and support.

Jami Morada: One of the terms used to describe the Lending Hands for Life program at Erie is “culturally-conscious.” What does that buzzword mean exactly, and why is it so

important to apply it to the services you and your team provide to Chicagoans?

Bridget Magner: A culturally-conscious approach is one that acknowledges that there are many cultural and socioeconomic factors we must consider when caring for and supporting individuals; it is not one-size-fits-all. Culturally-conscious care has historically been overlooked in our healthcare system, and we see the devastating, long-lasting effects in our communities. We find it extremely important at Erie to provide safe, inclusive and culturally-conscious HIV/AIDS services for this very reason; everybody has different healthcare experiences that are dependent on their unique lived experiences, and these experiences need to be taken into consideration to offer the best care and treatment options for each individual.

JM: What does culturally-conscious care look like for HIV/AIDS patients at Erie?

BM: A really great example is that we are sometimes met with a lack of trust from our patients from the Black community due to a general and valid mistrust of the medical system. In response, we have allowed Erie to be a space where skepticism is welcome, and questions are strongly encouraged. We understand the flaws within the medical system and have compassion for these valid concerns. We allow each individual to take their time to be comfortable their health status and treatment and support options, and we spend a lot of time talking with our patients and ensuring they are a partner and a leader in the decision-making around their care.

Understanding the impacts of stigma also plays a major role in our culturally-conscious

approach to care. Stigma from within certain communities may deter individuals from seeking out or continuing treatment. Knowing this, we never consider a patient as “inactive” unless we know that they are receiving treatment elsewhere. We will never give up on a patient and will continue to reach out to be their support and help them receive the care they need.

Additionally, we recognize that some patients have other concerns, such as housing, employment or food accessibility, that take priority over their healthcare needs. Knowing this, our case managers work directly with our patients to connect them to any resources they may need, which in turn helps our patients get to a place where they can engage more in their treatment and live their healthiest lives.

JM: How does Erie help patients with potential systemic barriers to quality treatment such as cost and accessibility?

BM: Erie cares for everyone, regardless of their insurance status, immigration status, or ability to pay. We work closely with our patients and connect them to services that can help cover the cost of HIV treatment. For patients interested in HIV prevention, we can also help connect patients to assistance programs to cover the cost of the PrEP.

Erie offers free HIV testing for everybody – you do not need to be a patient to take advantage of this service. We have at-home HIV test kits that we can mail directly to your home. These are available on our website.

JM: I’m sure diversity also plays a major role in culturally-conscious care. How does your team address this?

BM: We know how much representation matters, especially in healthcare and in support systems in general. Therefore, we have assembled a diverse team to ensure that all our patients are able to connect with our staff and have authentic and honest relationships that help them lead a healthy life.

At Erie, we strive to have a diverse staff, fostering an inclusive culture where everyone feels they belong and will receive high-quality healthcare.

JM: If people are interested in learning more and connecting with your team, where should they go?

BM: People can visit our website at <http://www.Erie.Health/LHL> or call us at 312-432-2699 (English) or 312-432-7220 (Spanish). Interpretation services are available for all other languages.



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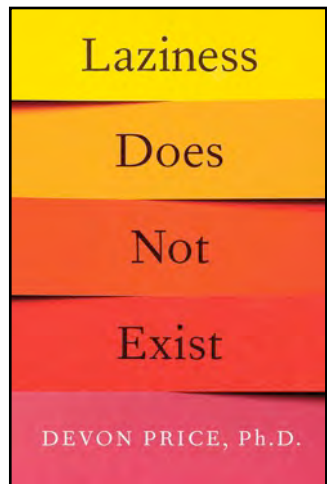
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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"Laziness Does Not Exist" by Devon Price, PhD
c.2021, Atria \$27.00 / \$36.00
Canada 247 pages.



Assume this position. Feet up, head back, fingers laced over your belly. Eyes shut. Teeth unclenched. And there you are: ready for a nap – if you dare, if you have your work finished, if you can ignore the nagging feeling that there are things left undone, if you can stop feeling judged. Impossible? Not so, if you've read "Laziness Does Not Exist" by Devon Price, PhD.

A 9-to-5 job sure would be great, wouldn't it? You're snorting now, aren't you? Because you get to the office early, sprint all day, say "yes" to everything lobbed at you, leave work by the moon, stagger home, and fall into bed the second you get there.

Price was that way, too, for most of their life. They say that their childhood was spent achieving more than most kids because both their parents insisted on it. That was happily do-able although after awhile, Price noticed that some of their classmates were labeled as "lazy" and "[l]azy kids didn't have futures."

For centuries – in business, movies, and pop culture – we've quietly been led to believe "The Laziness Lie," which has three main facets: we are only worth what we can accomplish; our feelings and limits can't be trusted; and we can't ever do enough. These beliefs, once absorbed, can cause health problems, burn-out, relationship problems, and more through overwork and under-confidence. In their job as a teacher, Price sees it all the time.

In combatting The Laziness Lie, Price says to realize that overwork doesn't deserve a badge of honor. Re-frame your idea of "lazy" through compassion; they point out, for instance, that surviving homelessness is hard work. Listen to your body: taking care of yourself is absolutely not "lazy," and taking time off is essential to your health. Remember that "you can

work only so much," physically and mentally. Get off social media and turn the news off sometimes. And "stop fearing [your] inner 'laziness,'" Price says. Do it, and you can "build [a] healthy, happy, well-balanced" life.

Weekends are good.
Binge-watching your favorite TV show: good.

Naps: very good.
"Laziness Does Not Exist": likewise good.

With a clarion call tailor-made for new work-at-homers who can no longer leave work at work, author and social psychologist Devon Price gives readers plenty of reason to kick back and put their feet up sometimes, showing that doing so can actually enhance productivity. There's an abundance of illustrative stories here with compassion featured strongly, for self and for women, marginalized workers, BIPOC, and LGBTQ workers; in that, Price shows how deep the word "lazy" goes and why it's so wrong. Readers are then offered ideas, including exercises, that can help undo the damage of the word and its associated meanings – it'll take work, no pun intended – and hidden reasons why waiting really isn't an option.

Not just for the overachiever, this book should sit on the desk next to every home printer and cubicle keyboard. Find "Laziness Does No Exist," stretch, take a comfortable seat, and you're in a good position to enjoy.

"Raising Them: Our Adventure in Gender Creative Parenting" by Kyl Myers

c.2020, Brilliance Audio \$34.99 / \$51.99 Canada 6 discs, 7:18 in length.



Pink or blue?

When you're pregnant, everybody asks that question. What kind of clothing or toys will you require: dolls or trucks, pink or blue? They'll want to know about the gender reveal party, and what kind of names you're considering. Do you want a boy or girl or, as in the new audiobook

"Raising Them" by Kyl Myers, do you mind not knowing for a few years?

Long before she ever became a mother, even before she met and married her husband, Brent, Kyl Myers had thought about what she calls "gender creative parenting."

Myers identifies as queer and she was somewhat of an activist, so she was pretty well-versed on a subject that asks why we, as a society, place emphasis on the chromosomes of an infant when physical, often intimate, body parts have nothing to do with simply being a child. Once Myers was pregnant, this became more than just something to think about, and she and her husband decided to raise their child gender-free.

They weren't the first to do so: in years past, other parents around the world went public with successful gender creative parenting. Still, it took plenty of determined pre-planning: Myers would deny knowledge of the baby's gender to anyone who didn't absolutely, genuinely need to know. That meant restricting diaper-duty, and it meant four grandparents who wouldn't know their grandchild's gender until the child was several months old.

Once Zoomer Coyote entered the world, there would be no pink or blue bassinet cards in the hospital nursery. Myers had to learn to find non-gendered infant and toddler clothing for her child, gender-neutral-hued toys for them to play with, and items that didn't scream "Boy!" or "Girl!". Later, Zoomer's daycare was "cool" with the neutrality, but strangers and even other parents were a challenge, and were nonetheless challenged to open their minds.

"Raising Them" will bring out a lot of emotions that will likely be dependent on which side of parenting you stand. It's intriguing, but exhausting, too chirpy, and too, too sunny. It's also too precious by half, and the cute-Zoomer tales wear thin after a (very, very short) while. And yet, the idea of giving your child time to know themselves is intriguing. Still, author Kyl Myers should be commended for not throwing in the towel with hurricane force.

Indeed, her struggles were exactly what you might expect.

Although... particularly if you're expecting a baby, Myers may inspire you. Clearly, gender creative parenting involves work, vigilance, and forethought, and while it's not for everyone, it's a compelling enough idea to stick in your mind like glue. You'll be convinced that it's worth a try, even if only sometimes.

And this: if you can't rest without knowing, Myers drops hints to soothe your boy-or-girl curiosity, but that's not the end of this story. No, this is a website-supported, mind-opening, ongoing tale for parents-to-be, or for anyone who wishes they'd been reared in a similar kind of household. That you? Read "Raising Them," or you'll be blue.



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GRAB HOLLY

For a Few Donuts More

By Holly Maholm

Victor and I found ourselves trapped in a Mexican Standoff. Or so it seemed, depending on the definition of a "Mexican Standoff," and how we chose to evaluate our situation. Wikipedia defines a "Mexican Standoff" as "A confrontation in which no strategy exists that would allow any party to escape without injury. Any party initiating action may trigger his own demise, and no party can extricate himself without suffering a loss."

Having this definition in mind, Victor and I evaluated the situation as follows: Roger (who controls the drone) had already assaulted Victor, leaving him feeling agitated and upset. That is our loss. On the other hand, Victor is uninjured, as am I. So, has Roger really "won" anything? Looked at from Roger's POV, his precious drone is now in a most precarious and vulnerable position – pinned to the ground under one of Victor's fore hooves, wholly prevented from flying away to safety.

Victor and I felt trapped in a drama that threatened us with traumatic injury. And seeing the expression on Roger's face, you would have concluded he felt the same. But there was more.

Present, also, were two friends of

Roger who were likewise part of this Mexican Standoff (which, occurring, as it did, in our little town – which is nowhere in Mexico – demonstrates without doubt that all of us were guilty of "Cultural Appropriation"). Nevertheless, those friends of Roger were profoundly indifferent to the drama being played out before them. Instead, each held his iPhone up to his face and seemed totally absorbed in whatever texts or images he had called up to his screen.

Now, both Victor and I found this indifference from what should have been two additional antagonists to be... unnerving. "How," we asked ourselves, "can they be ignoring what is happening right in front of them? Are we of so little importance that even Victor's capture of their drone causes them no distress?" But soon all was clarified.

Roger's friends turned their phones so as to get a better angle from which to record videos of the confrontation. What was – to Roger – a confrontation that might soon turn violent was – to his friends – merely an opportunity to acquire dramatic video that might receive "Likes" on FB. Instantly, Victor and I knew we had

nothing to fear from Roger's friends.

Roger spoke up. "Okay, I'm sorry I scared your horse. But I want my drone back. Don't let him break it." Since Victor and I already had the "upper hand" (or perhaps I should say "upper hoof") in this standoff, I decided to play a little joke. I responded, "I know you've been camping out with the LGBT students, so I think you should know better than to refer to my friend, here, using a discriminatory term. You should use a word which affirms his 'preferred species.'"

Roger was puzzled by what I had said, but at last corrected himself. "Oh, I'm sorry, he's a unicorn. I don't mean to be 'transphobic' about his species – he's not a horse, he's a unicorn. Does he have any 'preferred pronouns?' Cause I'll use those, too, if he has any."

I took pity upon Roger for his discomfort at the



realization that not only did he need to tread lightly where pronouns were concerned, but that the very species of the creature he addressed might also be "preferred" (and, as such, deserving of his "affirmation").

Roger renewed his demand. "I'm not part of that Roman-army BS any more. I won't use bad language about the other guys in the camp, but I'm glad to be away from that 'ancient-army' stuff. This is modern times, now. We have drones and smart-bombs and all sorts of technology, and it's foolish not to learn modern weapons. Why, when I'm playing Fortnite or games like that, I'm learning modern military tactics just as well as that Roman stuff."

"Is that what you think?" I responded. "You know the LGBT guys in the camp are learning to build and drive war chariots, and they have to become proficient in the use of swords, spears and war hammers. Even you must have seen more than a few of them get injured or drop to the ground from exhaustion. Plus, every one of them is learning the value of leadership, teamwork and loyalty. Do you think you can learn those things by holding a game controller in your hands?"

Roger replied, disdainfully, "Seems to me... when a man with a drone meets a tranny with a unicorn, the tranny with the unicorn will suffer." No one spoke, but Victor adjusted his hoof holding down the drone, following which he began to piss on the drone, not relenting until he had emptied his rather commodious bladder, thereby permanently frying the drone's motherboard, battery and transistors.

(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.

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FIRST-EVER 'UNLEASHED LGBTQ' VIRTUAL EVENT BRINGS TOGETHER A WORLDWIDE LGBTQ AUDIENCE IN A FUN AND INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT'S BOTH EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING - MARCH 25-27, 2021



Unleashed LGBTQ (UnleashedLGBTQ.com), an interactive virtual event tailored to the powerful and connected LGBTQ community of industry professionals and hopefuls, debuts March 25-27,

2021, in what promises to be an annual gathering presenting the best in entertainment and consumer tech for those game-changers who identify as LGBTQ.

The three-day event, open to adults 18 years and older, provides a platform for brands, entertainers, and LGBTQ professionals to connect and learn about the latest products, services, and campaigns in apps, fashion, travel, media, entertainment, and more from some of the largest names in the LGBTQ business and entertainment.

The event will be edgy, fun, and filled with surprises. Unleashed LGBTQ will feature keynote speakers, tutorials, discussion panels, virtual fashion shows, and performances from some of the biggest names in LGBTQ film, television, and music. The run of the show will begin with virtual events pertaining to business, marketing, and non-profits. Leading into the evening hours, the trajectory of content will shift with the Unleashed LGBTQ Happy Hour, where

attendees can learn to make craft cocktails with their favorite LGBTQ celebrities and dish over a topic of the host's choice.

Following LGBTQ Happy Hour each day, expect the vibe to shift from educational informational topics to more entertaining content including interviews, musical performances, tutorials, virtual fashion shows and more.

And because this inaugural event will be virtual, with no geographic limitations, guests and experts from around the globe will be featured.

Additionally, Unleashed LGBTQ will give attendees the ability to remain safe and healthy by tuning in from their homes, as attendance will not be limited to building capacity. This is a great opportunity for any and all who want to attend!

The entire 3-day event will take place March 25-27, 2021 through the event website, <http://www.UnleashedLGBTQ.com>, and will broadcast through the live-video sharing platform, WebinarJam- no app download necessary!

MISSOURI LAWMAKERS ATTEMPT TO BAN TRANSGENDER KIDS FROM SPORTS



Missouri lawmakers will take up two bills targeting the health and well-being of transgender kids in Missouri. Combined with roughly a dozen more, these bills make up a continued assault on the rights and dignity of transgender kids.

This comes less than a week after the US House of Representatives passed the Equality Act on a bipartisan vote, sending a clear message to the American people that all LGBTQ people belong. In stark contrast, Missouri lawmakers continue to single out transgender youth - as they hear bills that seek to ban them from participating in sports with their peers, stripping them of the opportunity to learn the important life lessons of teamwork, leadership and self-confidence. A second bill in committee on Wednesday seeks to criminalize medical care providers and parents who provide best practice care to transgender kids. "Kids learn a lot of important life lessons in sports: leadership,

confidence, self-respect, and what it means to be part of a team. Our leadership should be creating opportunities for Missouri children to succeed, not threatening their health and well-being," said **Shira Berkowitz**, Communications Director with PROMO.

"So we must remember what this is really about: whether LGBTQ people should be treated fairly across all areas of life—or whether they can be unfairly fired, kicked out of a restaurant, denied an apartment, or denied the health care they need, just because of who they are."

Transgender youth are some of the most at risk in our community. The 2016 Williams Institute Report estimates that there are 150,000 transgender American youth (ages 13-17), and roughly 25,000 transgender Missourians. Currently ten bills are filed attacking transgender youth in Missouri. HJR 53 is a joint resolution calling for the placement of a ballot measure to amend the state constitution at the November 2022 election to require student athletes to participate in sports according to their sex assigned at birth. A ban on transgender students would strip them of the opportunity to participate in sports and deny them invaluable physical, social, and emotional well-being.

Placing bans like this on transgender youth can be life-threatening. Research shows that transgender youth whose families support their gender identity have a 52% decrease in suicidal thoughts, a 48% decrease in suicide attempts, and significant increases in self-esteem and general health.

Additionally, HB 33 criminalizes life-saving medical care for transgender youth by combining professional penalties for medical care providers with penalties for parents or guardians, including a requirement that they should be reported to Child Services. These bills overlook best practices backed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other mainstream medical associations, and penalizes health care professionals and parents for providing affirming, life-saving care to some of our most vulnerable young people.

This year, PROMO urges lawmakers to pass MONA, a state law that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to Missouri's Human Rights Statute, which currently prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations for other protected categories, including race, sex, and national origin. According to the Williams Institute, more than 200,000 LGBTQ adults in Missouri would benefit from an expanded state nondiscrimination law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

For more information, visit www.PROMOonline.org

The Next Issue of GRAB will be online Tuesday March 30th

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**It's Love in the Time of COVID
for LGBTQIA Artist JOSHUA
SADE JAMES In New Single "I'll
Wait For You"**



It's love in the time of quar for Canadian artist **Joshua Sade James** and his yearning new single, *"I'll Wait For You"*.

"I originally wrote this song about four months into quarantine," James recalls. "It took me less than two hours; all of those feelings were incredibly raw at the time, so I wasn't surprised at how quickly it flowed."

"I'm in a long-distance relationship," he explains, "and once the borders closed, it became virtually impossible for us to meet — the only way was with the power of FaceTime."

"In a way, 'I'll Wait For You' was written almost as a 'swan song' to my relationship since we didn't — and still don't — know when we will be able to see each other again."

"I hope people can find solace in this song, and know they are not alone during this pandemic. I want them to know that many of us are separated from our loved ones, and are doing all we can to stay safe and sane. To anyone listening, I want you to know you are not alone: You are worthy, you are loved, and you are perfectly you. Just because the distance, the closed borders — or whatever else kind of obstacle leaves you separated — just know that love and hope are the strongest things we can hold onto right now."

"Don't give up, don't give in — just give love."

It's a generous and genuine sentiment from the multi-talented artist as he himself paces through this next lap of the pandemic by pouring focus even further into his craft; with streams reaching ~ 2 Million across all platforms, he released his previous singles and videos, "All Fall Down" and "Closer" in 2020 and early 2021 respectively, as well as a six-track EP, *Mirrors And Smoke*. He's also applying the finishing touches to another forthcoming EP, *JSJ*, (Joshua Sade James).

"I'll Wait For You" was penned with his grandfather's acoustic guitar on-hand, but ultimately James knew

the background vocals and overall vibe needed to level-up their impact, one way or another. "I just knew I wanted a grand experience to match the feelings I put into the song," he shares. "Once I started revisiting it, I knew I wanted a choir background which... Checked out. If you ask any of my producers, I am one who is prone to wanting grand embellishments on my tracks!"

"Since we were under lockdown, however, I had to improvise. My producer, Mike Tompa, turned my voice into an army of 30!! I cried the first time I heard the song in its full form, and had an 'a-ha' moment: when I perform this song live, it's gonna be epic."

"The concept for the music video wasn't some sort of elaborate meaning or trying to get some sort of point across — other than 'wear your damn mask!'" he continues, half-laughing. "I asked my friend Jake Chapman at One2One Photography if he would do the honours of capturing the essence of the song and my life."

"We wanted to capture the two sides of me: the one who is JSJ, who wears extravagant outfits and SLAYYYYYS, and the Joshua who loves being lazy and hanging out in his velour tracksuit. We also wanted to capture the essence of the song: being in love, and separated by factors outside of your control."

"So, naturally, I chose to wear a fancy outfit and sing while lost in the wintry woods, while also in my sweats in a studio on FaceTime. It represents the before and after, the behind the scenes vs the final product, and the stage performance vs the crushing reality."

"Overall, I wanted this tune and video to represent the professional, heartfelt performer and the goofy, lovestruck swooner that I am."

That these inventive visions for videos accompany James' songwriting artistry is of little surprise; a Sheridan College alum for Musical Theatre Performance — and winning the Sheridan: Pop Award for Outstanding Performance — James also co-choreographed, co-directed and starred in the College's PREP Production original, *Revue Diva Dynasty*.

Hailing from the tri-city Kitchener/Waterloo area — with country artist Jamie Warren for a dad — he's been featured coast to coast, including Newfoundland to play 'Pepper' in *Mamma Mia!*, The Calgary Stampede's Talent Search, Ontario's Western Fair's Rise2Fame, PEI's Charlottetown Festival, and more.

In addition to his extensive performing and recording work, Joshua Sade James is an active advocate for mental health rights and proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community.

"I'll Wait For You" is available now. Visit <https://joshuasadejames.com/>

**VISIONARY ARTIST J GRGRY
ANNOUNCES GROUNDBREAKING
PERFORMANCE AT SEATTLE'S
HISTORIC MOORE THEATRE
MARCH 20TH**



On March 20, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. PST/6:00 p.m. EST, Queer artist **J GRGRY** will return to his hometown of Seattle, Washington's legendary Moore Theatre, where he will perform a first-of-its-kind, interactive, visually-electrifying live concert, streamed exclusively on Amazon streaming platform Twitch.

GRGRY will be accompanied by a slew of music industry all-stars including, drummer **Ben Smith** (HEART and Roadcase Royale); guitarist **CJ Stout** (A Pile of Pedals and Vendetta Red); keys, bass and vocalist **Emily Vicker** (Twitch partner and solo artist); lighting director **Tim Semakula** (Earth, Wind & Fire, Sheryl Crow and K Fly); and visual artist and projectionist **Amy Billharz**.

The live-stream event will mark the start of a new direction for J GRGRY, after recently deciding to remove his entire, extensive music catalogue from all popular streaming services. GRGRY has shifted focus to music production streams and performing live on Twitch to retain autonomy, cultivate active, engaged community members, and have unadulterated access to consistent revenue streams. "Twitch has built-in models to compensate artists in real-time and the connections made with fans and audience members is unparalleled," says J GRGRY. "Throughout all my years of touring, doing press and radio campaigns, and chasing the illusion of income from streaming royalties - I truly believe Twitch is the foundational piece to creating a larger, healthier middle class for musicians from all walks of life."

The live-stream will begin at 3:00 p.m. PST/6:00 p.m. EST sharp 11. Fans of J GRGRY will be able to access the March 20th concert at no cost by visiting [twitch.tv/jgrgry](https://www.twitch.tv/jgrgry).

For more information on J Grgry visit <https://www.jgrgrymusic.com>

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