

DECEMBER 6, 2022 • VOL XIII • ISSUE #23

GRAB MAGAZINE

CHICAGO'S BIWEEKLY
LGBTQ+ PUBLICATION



2022 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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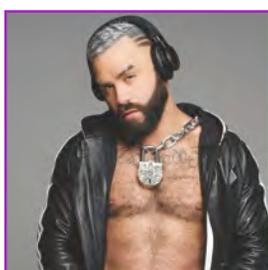
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31 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY			
4	FELIZ DIAMANTES	5	BINGO FOOD DRIVE & CHARLIE'S LIVE	6	TAG TEAM HOLI-SLAY	7	NAUGHTY ELVES	1	SHIP WRECKED	2	FIERCE FRIDAY	3	MAIN EVENT
11	NOCHE LATINA: POSADA	12	BINGO TOY DRIVE & CHARLIE'S LIVE	13	ELF ON THE SHELF	14	SECRET SHADOWS	8	TWISTED FAIRIES	9	CHARLIE'S JINGLE BASH	10	BOYZ AND BOOZE: NAUGHTY OR NICE
18	NOCHE LATINA: PAN Y LECHE	19	BINGO SEX TOY DRIVE & CHARLIE'S LIVE	20	C: CHARLIE'S CHICAGO CHRISTMAS	21	SECRET SHADOWS: SEXXXY SANTA	15	VMA RED CARPET	16	FIERCE FRIDAY HOLI-SLAY	17	MAIN EVENT: NAUGHTY OR NICE
25	NOCHE LATINA: RECALENTADO	26	CHARLIE'S LIVE: X-MAS AFTERMATH	27	ONESIE KARAOKE	28	SECRET SHADOWS: SLUMBER PARTY	22	COMEDY/PROM NIGHT	23	HO, HO, HOST TAKEOVER	24	BOYZ AND BOOZE XXX-MAS
								29	SURVIVOR HOLI-SLAY EXTRAVAGANZA	30	CHARLIE'S WINTER WONDER BALL	31	NEW YEAR'S EVE

ENTERTAINMENT & SPECIALS SUBJECT TO CHANGE FOR HOLIDAYS AND/OR SPECIAL EVENTS.

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GRAB TOM



Photo by Dusti Cunningham

Tom Goss' Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas

By Brian Hug

Tom Goss' new album is Christmas-themed, but with songs like "Santa Slay," "Put that Ass in Christmass," "Sassy Santa," and "Ho Ho Homo," it's not traditional holiday fair. "I wanted to make something that was big, fun, unapologetic, body positive, and queer as f**k," Tom Goss says of his first holiday EP, *Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas*. "I want people to laugh and smile, then strip down to their undies and dance. That's the Christmas I'm most looking forward to this year!"

Joining Tom on *Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas* are some of the biggest names in gay hip hop, gay rock-and-roll and gay country music including Big Daddy Karsten, Keith Lawrence, de ROCHE, and Tom's biggest crush, Benjamin Koll. "They are all a part of my queer family," Tom reflects. "We may sing in different music genres but we are the same in that we live our lives joyfully, exuberantly, and as authentically as

possible."

Living authentically is what Tom Goss wishes for everyone this year. We spoke with the Santa bear-loving cutie from his Los Angeles home.

Brian Hug: Has Tom Goss gone Josh Groban on us?

Tom Goss: Umm, just press play on *Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas*. It'll take about three seconds to realize this is not Josh Groban.

BH: Is it true that you don't like traditional Christmas songs?

Tom Goss: I guess I just don't understand liking something for six weeks of the year. If Christmas music was so great, we'd listen to it year-round. I feel the same way about pumpkin spice.

BH: So, Tom Goss is a Grinch?

Tom Goss: Now, to be fair, maybe I'm spoiled. My grandmother used to give me oranges in my Christmas stocking. It never made sense to me, I wanted candy, not oranges. It wasn't until I was an adult that I realized that getting an orange in winter in 1920's rural Illinois was special for her. She wanted to share that with me and I was too childish to realize the

specialness of that gesture. So, maybe I should learn to love things that only come seasonally.

BH: How would you classify the songs in *Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas*?

Tom Goss: Unapologetic-ly queer. That would be the theme throughout.

BH: You titled it *Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas*?

Tom Goss: It seemed fun to me! I'm so grateful to have a big, fat, gay, ass family and I want to celebrate them whenever possible.

BH: How did you start the ep?

Tom Goss: It started with the name. I was home for five days between tour legs, and if I was going to pull this off, time was of the essence. The first song I wrote was "Sassy Santa." I couldn't dream of a big fat Christmas EP without Benjamin Koll so I wrote a song that could feature his big sassy Santa voice and belly. Thankfully, he loved the song and hopped on board, and we were off to the races.



Holiday 2022

4923 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL

**09
DEC**

**GRRR: BEARY MERRY
ONESIE PARTY: 9PM-2AM**

**10
DEC**

**DOGGY DAYS WITH SANTA
PICTURES WITH SANTA: 12-3PM**

**11
DEC**

**JOLLY OL' BEARAOKE
WITH PAT DA' BEAR: 9PM-1AM**

**17
DEC**

**LUMBERSEXUAL PRESENTS:
SLOPPY OTTER XMAS: 9PM-3AM**

**21
DEC**

**POLAR BEAR TRIVIA
WITH BEARTENDER THOMAS 8-10PM**



**OPEN CHRISTMAS EVE
12PM-3AM**



**OPEN CHRISTMAS DAY
12PM-2AM**

**31
DEC**

**NEW YEAR'S EVE COUNTDOWN
WITH DJ BEARBIE: 9PM-3AM**

www.SoFoTap.com

BH: Lots of guys would like to find Benjamin Koll wrapped underneath their Christmas tree this year!

Tom Goss: He's sexy and so sweet! Honestly, I am a big sucker for sweetness. It is by far the most important thing to me. Sexy is nothing without sweetness, kindness, and compassion. I love the positivity he puts into his music, his videos, and the community at large. There is nothing sexier.

BH: How did you connect with the other queer talent featured on Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas?

Tom Goss: They are all friends or friends of friends. I am a big fan of everyone on the EP and I am so grateful to be working with them.

BH: Can you share one memorable experience from recording the ep?

Tom Goss: Everything happened so quickly, it's all a blur! I wrote, recorded and demoed every track in five days. I even wrote my own rap verses for "Put That Ass in Christmass" so it'd make sense when sending the demo out. Then, while on tour in Florida and Scotland, Ned (Douglas) and I reached out to collaborators, and managed sessions and files remotely. I feel so grateful to be living in a time when a global release is possible. What a whirlwind!

BH: What are your holiday plans this year?

Tom Goss: I am not sure. The holidays haven't been easy for me in



Photo by Dusti Cunningham



a long while. I released a single called "Gay Christmas" in 2017 and six years later, some in my family are still not talking to me. Part of writing this EP was owning the holiday spirit that I want in my life. There's no sense in being sad about what you don't have. I have the capacity to create the holiday experience I want, so I'm working on doing that.

BH: What is your

Christmas wish to the world?

Tom Goss: I want people to be authentically themselves, and in turn, be unconditionally loved for being just that. I want people to ask for and receive what their heart truly needs. I want people to love themselves and bask in the joy of loving those who are, or have become, their family.

Tom Goss' Big Fat Gay Ass Christmas is available on Apple Music, Spotify and all major digital platforms. Visit <http://tomgossmusic.com>



Photo by Dusti Cunningham

GRAB A GIFT

Mikey Rox's Ultimate Guide to Gay Gift Giving 2022

By Mikey Rox

Drawing a blank on what to gift the gays and feys on your holiday shopping list? Consider these thoughtful presents picked exclusively for your LGBTQ+ friends and fam.

Mr. & Mrs. Claus Mugs

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America the Beautiful Annual Pass

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Cantilever Toolbox

Utilitarianism is a hallmark of Japanese design, and Toyo's handcrafted cantilever steel storage and tools boxes are no exception with two handy adjustable upper trays and eight removable dividers housed in a handsome, spacious shell deserving of double-takes. **Placewares.com**, \$129





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StroudSimplySouthernCo.com, \$24-\$79



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Yves Durif didn't reinvent the Italian-made, natural rubber resin petite brush and comb that bears his synonymous-with-style name, but he did make these luxury tools sexy AF so you can feel like a million bucks.

YvesDurif.com, \$105



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Acacia platters. Hickory Farms could never. **Boarderie.com**, \$129-\$239



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Rotate Watchmaking Kit

Challenge your better-half gadget geek over holiday break with customizable Rotate watchmaking kits – available in easy, medium and hard configurations – that come complete with parts, tools, and a user-friendly guide to keep the cursing at a Christian minimum.

RotateWatches.com, \$195-\$225





HOLIDAY 2022

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**13
DEC**

BIG GAY HOLIDAY GAME SHOW

WITH SOFONDA BOOZ: 7-10PM

**14
DEC**

**WIL'S WINTER WORKSHOP:
ORNAMENT DECORATING**

8-11PM

**17
DEC**

**BIG GUY HOLIDAY SWEATER
COMPETITION PARTY CONTEST**

WITH SOFONDA BOOZ: 3-6PM

**18
DEC**

SUNDAY SOCIAL: NO NO NEAUX

DRAG, BURLESQUE & VARIETY REVUE: 2-6PM

**22
DEC**

**THIRSTY THURSDAY KARAOKE:
BRADLEY K'S XXX-MAS MIRACLE**

KARAOKE & "DON YOUR GAY APPAREL" CONTEST: 9PM-1AM

**24
DEC**

OPEN

2PM-3AM



**25
DEC**

CLOSED

CHRISTMAS

**29
DEC**

**THIRSTY THURSDAY KARAOKE:
BRADLEY K'S BIG FINISH**

PRE-NYE PARTY: 9PM-1AM

**31
DEC**

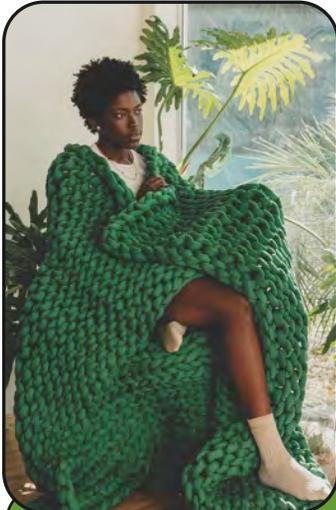
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8PM-3AM

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Happy Hanukkah Tea Gift Set + Subarzsweets

VAHDAM India's Hannukah-special assortment of luscious herbal, chai and black teas – paired with Subarzsweets' handmade, small-batch biscotti-cookie hybrids (the lemon-thyme flavor is what the chef's kiss emoji was meant for) – is the treat-yo'self pick-me-up you'll crave after eight crazy nights. Vahdam.com, \$24; Subarzsweets.com, \$45



Coravin x Keith Haring Wine Opener

Art and wine go together like Saint Nick and snickerdoodles, which is why the Coravin x Keith Haring Timeless Six+ Artist Edition bottle opener – featuring the late artist's iconic dancing figures in black and white – will look just as good on your dinner-party table as it will on display. Coravin.com, \$350



Habibi Santal Journey

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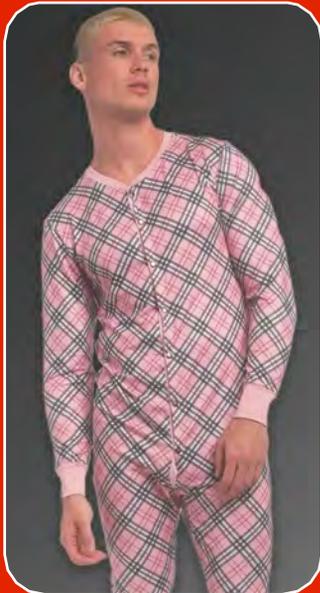
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Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @mikeyroxtravels

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GRAB MUSIC

Q-Music: The gift of music 2022

By Gregg Shapiro

With the winter holidays rapidly approaching, everyone wants to get a head start on buying the right gifts. Music is always a popular and appreciated gift, and with some recent exciting reissues from which to choose there's virtually something for everybody on your list.

People are still talking about Joni Mitchell's surprise appearance at the 2022 Newport Folk Festival, performing with Brandi Carlile and others. In her first public appearance in 20 years, following years of serious health problems, Mitchell stole the show and demonstrated why she is the ultimate diva goddess. Further reminders of that fact can be found in the latest "The Definitive Albums" box set reissue **"The Asylum Albums (1972-1975)" (Rhino/Asylum).**



Featuring a note by Neil Young, remastering by Bernie Grundman, and a cover painting by Joni, the set includes "For the Roses" (1972), "Court and Spark" (1974), the live album "Miles of Aisles" (1974), and "The Hissing of Summer Lawns" (1975). The significance of the three studio albums can't be emphasized enough. In addition to being audio illustrations of Mitchell's growth as a singer/songwriter, these records also featured commercial breakthroughs including hit singles "You Turn Me on I'm A Radio" (from "For the Roses") and "Help

Me" (from "Court and Spark"). Mitchell also won her second Grammy for "Court and Spark." Also worth noting is Mitchell's turn toward jazz arrangements which reached its fruition on "The Hissing of Summer Lawns." Mitchell fans are also sure to love the way the CD box set recreates some of the distinctive aspects of the original artwork, including the matte finish of "Court and Spark" and the raised graphics of "The Hissing of Summer Lawns."

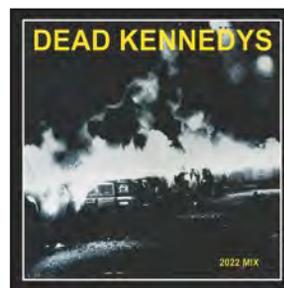
Before we get to the musical creatures on the delayed 2022 reissue of the 2018 James Guthrie remix of prog rock deity Pink Floyd's 1977 album **"Animals" (Pink Floyd Music/Sony),**



it's best to address the elephant in the room. Roger Waters is a damaged genius. Who else could have helped create dark masterworks such as "The Wall," "Wish You Were Here," and "Dark Side of the Moon?" As of this writing, Waters is once again in, well, hot water for saying something inappropriate. This time it was pro-Russia/anti-Ukraine comments that forced him to cancel concerts in Poland. Of course, anyone the least bit familiar with "Animals" in particular, is well-aware of Waters' political leanings. A concept album based loosely on George Orwell's "Animal Farm," the five songs, with three clocking in between 10:20 and 17:04 a piece, are serious indictments of capitalism (which is humorous considering how well-off the members of Pink Floyd were by 1977). Nevertheless, the album, available in a variety of formats, holds up well 45 years after its release, with the band's members at peak musicianship. It's also worth noting that, at the time that "Animals" initially came out, prog

rock had fallen out of favor and the first-wave of punk rock was the rage. While there may not be much punk in Pink Floyd's music, the angry messages could clearly be seen as such. Additionally, there are a few funky moments on the album that can be read as nods to the disco sound of the period.

San Francisco punk band **Dead Kennedys** formed in 1978 (a year after PF's "Animals" was released).



Led by Jello Biafra, Dead Kennedys released its debut album "Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables" (Manifesto), newly reissued with a Chris Lord-Alge remix and a new 28-page booklet. Propelled by political outrage shared by their British brethren, nothing was sacred to the DKs as you can hear on songs such as "Kill the Poor," "Let's Lynch the Landlord," "Stealing People's Mail," and of course "California Über Alles," all of which earned them a subversive reputation, as well as gaining them a large following. Dead Kennedys even had something of a hit single with "Holiday in Cambodia." You can hear the DKs influence on a cross-section of bands, from Rage Against the Machine to Pansy Division.

It's hard to believe that this Christmas, **George Michael** will be gone six years. Almost as hard to fathom is that Michael only released four studio albums of original material during a solo career that began in 1987. "Older" (Epic/



Legacy/EGEAN), the latest in the ongoing series of George Michael reissues that began in 2010 with "Faith" and continued in 2017 with "Listen Without Prejudice Vol. 1/MTV Unplugged," shines a spotlight on the 1996 album available in various expanded formats. The original album, for which Michael kept fans waiting six years (due to a legal battle with a record label), opens with the ballad (and first single) "Jesus to a Child." The song was a good indication of the direction in which Michael was moving, as much of the album moves at a slower place, including the dance tunes (second single "Fast Love" is a good example). Jazz and Brazilian influences dominate, but that doesn't mean it's not a George Michael. On the contrary, his voice remains the impressive instrument it always was, it's just that "Older" requires a little more patience, which was fittingly the name of his next album, released in 2004.

If ever there was a perfect example of the idiocy and ignorance of the "suits" who run major record

labels, it would have to be the bungling of "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot" (Nonesuch) by Wilco.



Rising from the ashes of alt-country band Uncle Tupelo, Wilco stuck with that genre's sound on its 1995 major label debut "A.M." But on the albums that followed, especially 1999's poppy "Summerteeth," it was obvious that Jeff Tweedy and company were interested in greatly expanding their musical horizons. The stunning "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot," succeeded in doing that, earning a Wilco a 10 out 10 from prickly Pitchfork, and garnering the band

almost universal acclaim. But this also resulted in the band leaving Reprise, which was in flux and being run by fools, for the more welcoming Nonesuch. Now available in a super deluxe edition featuring the remastered original album and including 82 previously unreleased tracks, such as alternates, outtakes, and demos, as well as a deep dive into the making of the record. "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot" stands the test of time, from the stunning album opener "I Am Trying to Break Your Heart" to the radio-friendly pop of "War on War" and "Heavy Metal Drummer" to the retro rock of "I'm the Man Who Loves You."

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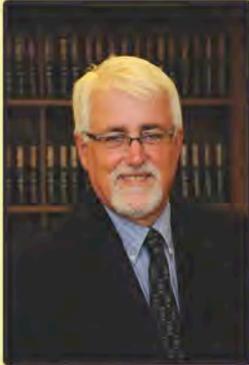
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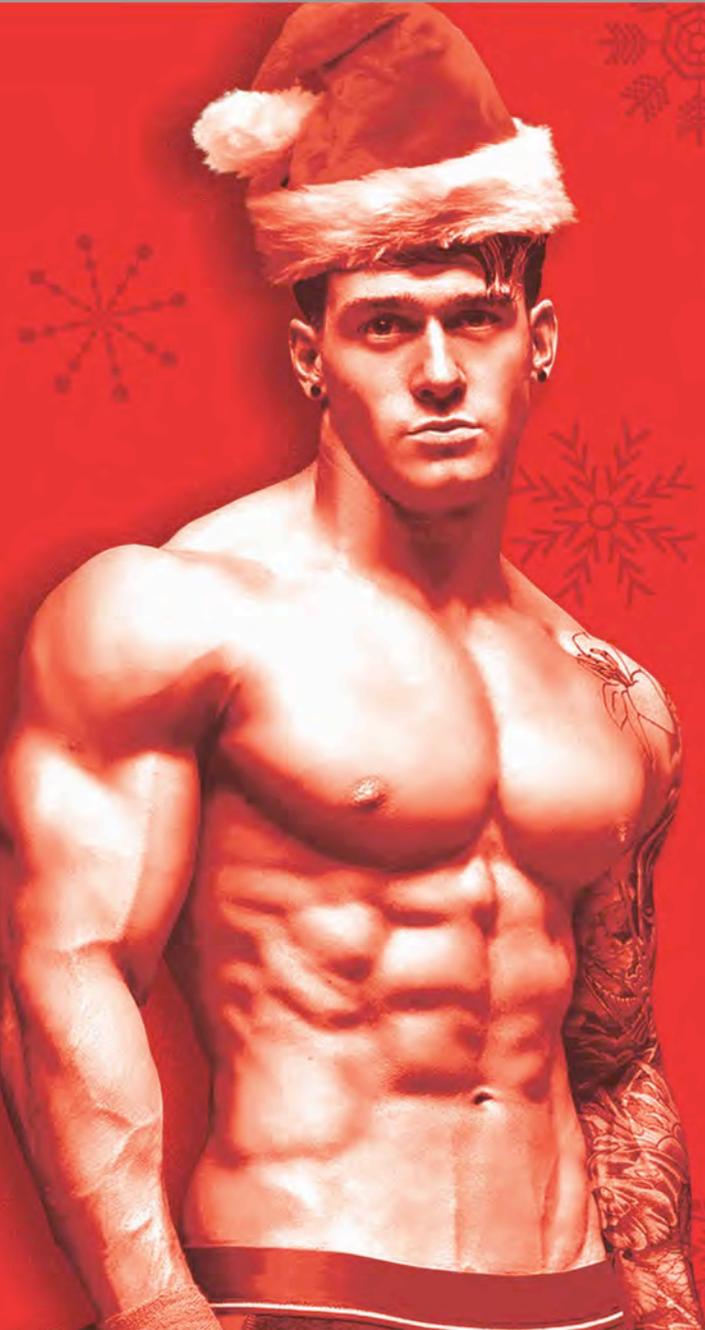
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The Actor and Activist Merge

The acting icon on her new role as a lesbian abortion activist in *'Call Jane'* and our country's backslide on human rights

By Chris Azzopardi

Urgent, timely, crucial. As we find ourselves thrust into the post-Roe era, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in June to overturn the constitutional right to abortion established by the 1972 *Roe v. Wade* ruling, it's impossible not to use those words when describing "Call Jane." One of the movie's stars, Sigourney Weaver, was, mostly, just as gobsmacked as the rest of us. But the movie, made before the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision sent shivers down the backs of anyone in favor of letting people have full ownership of their bodies, has even more real-world relevance.

Directed by Phyllis Nagy (who wrote "Carol"), the film is about the Chicago-based sisterhood known as the Jane Collective, a group of women who offered support and abortion care to each other in the 1960s, before *Roe v. Wade* legally protected pregnant people who sought abortions. It only seems natural, given how Weaver paved the way for women action heroes thanks to her queer-coded role as Ripley in "Alien," that the acting icon portray Virginia, the principled, tough-love leader of the Janes.

Virginia just happens to be a lesbian, a decision Weaver made herself. That actually makes sense, not just because of Virginia's core as a character but also given the actress' longtime LGBTQ+ allyship.



Photo By Denis Makarenko

Among her queerer credits: a role in the 1995 gay romantic-comedy "Jeffrey" and, of course, the heartbreaking call-to-action movie "Prayers for Bobby," when she stepped into the shoes of Mary Griffiths. To this day, the 2009 film, about Mary's real-life journey to becoming an LGBTQ+ activist after her son commits suicide because he's gay, resonates deeply when it comes to caring for queer youth.

During our recent interview, Weaver said "Prayers for Bobby" offered her a revelation that led her to "Call Jane" — that her work as an actress could intersect with her belief in human rights.

Chris Azzopardi: You told me last year that Virginia was a lesbian, but you did not tell me that she carried a lot of fierce, no-bullshit lesbian energy.

Sigourney Weaver: I mean, to me, Virginia's just a force of nature. She, I think, was sidelined by men during the anti-war protests, and once she found Call Jane and started gathering this sisterhood, she just wanted to be unstoppable.

CA: I like to think that Virginia and Ripley have a lot in common when

it comes to fierceness. And I feel like those two need to get together and take on the Supreme Court.

SW: Virginia's funnier, may I just say. She's a bit drier. And I think that Virginia's a great leader, because she's very instinctive about people. She's sort of honed that. I think that's very important in the field of human rights: Who's going to go all the way with you? And we all need to go all the way on November 8th and vote for a Congress that's going to restore this fundamental human right to us.

CA: Seeing as though you could not have imagined *Roe v. Wade* being overturned when you shot this movie, what does it feel like promoting this movie now?

SW: Well, there were states [that] were real deserts of abortion care. So in a sense, in certain states, it had already been not formally banned, but it was very, very difficult for women to access healthcare of any kind, including the abortion service. So I think that I was shocked by the *Dobbs*' decision. I feel better now, because I feel like, as the movie says, you are not

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alone. I feel like I am not alone. I feel that women coming from many different points of view about this experience are saying, "Excuse me, but this is none of your business. These are very important personal decisions, and you need to let us make them."

CA: Is Virginia based on a real-life lesbian activist, or is she simply representing how involved lesbian women have been in the fight for women's reproductive rights?

SW: I didn't base her... I certainly was inspired by reading about The Janes, and I think the lesbian part of her, just to me, came from the script. It just made sense to me. The more I thought about Virginia, I felt like she made so many decisions leading her to the point at which we meet her. And I love that Joy [Elizabeth Banks], who's kind of conservative and straight, and Virginia strike up this friendship where they really see each other and they really start to inspire each other. It's cool.

CA: So it seems like Virginia's sexual orientation had something to do with your input, based on what you're telling me. Is that right?

SW: Yeah. I think that I just had this instinct that she had kind of had it with men for a long time, and it was something she embraced. And I love that The Janes include so many people, so many different preferences, so many different pronouns probably, although they didn't say them back in that day. And to me, that's what the country needs — women from all over the country, different walks of life, and different neighborhoods. We all share this challenge, and we need to share our response for it and speak up.

CA: I love that you had something to do with Virginia's sexual orientation, and it reminds me of something that I recently discovered about you: International Lesbian Day is October 8th...

SW: Oh my god, my birthday! I didn't know that. That's so cool. How could I not know that?

CA: "How could she not know that," is what Twitter's going to say.

SW: Yeah. Well, I agree with them!

CA: Well, you are a lesbian icon. When was the moment in your career when you were aware of that?

SW: Certainly by doing the last one ("Alien:

Resurrection"), I had embraced that I think that Ripley was almost too busy to have a sexual orientation, but I know it would make Virginia really happy to think that my birthday was on International Lesbian Day. And I just loved that about our community — that it was so inclusive and it was so respectful to each person. And to me, that's a great message of the movie, that you are not alone and that all kinds of women are here with you and ready to help you when you need it.

I think there are so many divisions in this country for so many reasons, and I think it's all great for people to have their specific choices, but I think there are things going on that [mean] we need to think bigger and just think about protecting all of our rights. I worry where we will go next if we don't fight back for this. And I think I have a lot of friends who are very worried about it too. And I just think all personal choices need to be protected by an amendment. They are to a certain extent, but now that we know the Supreme Court can just snatch these things away, it's really a political awakening for me. It's so arbitrary and ignorant. I'm still in shock about it.



CA: I think the same is true for LGBTQ+ rights, and it sounds like you're referring to the marriage equality decision, Obergefell, and what could possibly happen there. How are you feeling about the state of the country for the queer community?

SW: Again, I'm so surprised they could do this. And we have no recourse. We can't go to the International Criminal Court and say, "This bad decision was handed down." To me, it's so unjusticial to make a sweeping blanket change like that. All kinds of women were liberated by this decision, Roe v. Wade, and they planned careers and families, or no families. And to just take that away is so shocking. But as the movie shows, there's a lot we can do. And I think that, for me, I need to concentrate on what we can do and not what we've lost.

CA: As we see "Don't Say Gay" bills advance across the country and books with queer characters being banned in school libraries, I'm wondering what you think "Prayers for Bobby" can teach these homophobic conservatives who think that the answer to helping LGBTQ+ youth is to

pretend that homosexuality doesn't exist?

SW: Well, Mary's story, which is based on her own life, is, to me, such a revelation about that very thing: that here is someone who sits in judgment about a choice that her son has made, fights it at every turn, denies him his self-expression and, ultimately, he takes his life. And I'm so proud of the movie. I feel like it awakened in me a different part of the talent that I use to do what I do. I'm very grateful to "Prayers for Bobby" for opening me up to all the different aspects of what's going on in this [LGBTQ+] community. I would say that so often, out of the blue, a young man will come up to me and thank me for this movie. I just wish we had more of them. And again, it's so frustrating to keep fighting the same battle again and to not be able to stand on progress and go, "This is secure. I'm safe, I'm free. I can do what I want with my life and with whom I want." These are such basic human rights. I just can't believe that we're in a country that suddenly just said, "No, no, no, no,



Photo Courtesy Focus Features

no. We've never really been for that. We take it back." It's crazy.

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.

Chris Azzopardi is the Editorial Director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ+ wire service. He has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl



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TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. **Houndstooth:** \$2 Tacos, ½ Off Bottles of Wine, \$5 Red or White Sangria, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. **Hydrate:** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lark:** 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm 50%off Bottles of Wine with purchase of an Entree. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm.**Shakers on Clark:** Game Night, Free Pool, \$3 Domestic Bud, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Miller Lite, Miller High Life and PBR. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. **Steamworks:** Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). **The Sofo Tap:** \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$4 Tallboys,5Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts.**Touche:**Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$4 Premium Well Cocktails. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close.**Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lark:** Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos & Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm.**Lark:** Happy Hour5-7pm \$4 Dud Light Drafts \$6 Well Cocktails. Buy One Pizza Get one half offDie In Only**Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm **Shakers on Clark:** Karaoke Night \$1 Off Long Islands. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor & Ariana 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Britney & Rihanna last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. **The Sofo Tap:** \$3 House Shots, \$4 Titos Coctails,\$6Big Miller Lite Drafts. \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:**Jockstrap Night. Free Clothing Check.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Whiskey, Rye & Bourbon.**@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. **Charlie's:** Survivor 10 pm – 1 am, Dancing Until Close. **Hydrate:** **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lark:** Happy Hour5-7pm \$4 Dud Light Drafts \$6 Well Cocktails . 7pm Extreme Bingwith Vian Dejour. 50%off Nachos or Tatchos \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks Tradional Flavor Only.**Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. **Shakers on Clark:** Darts Night \$1 off Fireball, Jager, Malort and Well Shots, \$2.50 PBR Cans. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursdays with Alex Kay & Friends 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. **The Sofo Tap:** \$4 Premium Well Cocktails \$4 TallBoys, \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Throwback Thursdays70's& 80's Music & Porn by BijouVideo.

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FRIDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am.</p> <p>Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: 1st and 3rd Fierce Fridays 10p – 1am, 2nd Fierce Fridays - Traffic Light Party 10p – 1am, 4th Fierce Fridays - Glow Up Party 10p – 1am, 5th Fierce Fridays – Strut 10p – 1am, Dancing until close. grabbyAwards.com, Hydrate: Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$4 Dud Light Drafts \$6 Well Cocktails .Every Friday from Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Tito's, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) Shakers: \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am.. The Sofu Tap: \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: 12/9 All I Want for Christmas A. A Hot Daddy, B. A Sexy Boy Whats Your Choice? 12/16 Cowboy Round Up "Christmas on the Range"</p>
SATURDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Lagunitas IPA Drafts \$5 Premium Well Cocktails \$12 mimosa Carafes. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm -1am. Baton Show Lounge: Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 2pm-3am. Charlie's: Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, The Main Event 10pm – 1am Dancing until Close. Lark: Lakeviews #1 Free flowing Brunch 11am-3pm Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.). Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, SaturGay Drag & Games with Sasha & Zamora Love 3-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. The Sofu Tap: \$4 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$4 Tallboys, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: 12/10 Dungeon Master Night S & M Demo @ Midnight CWB 5pm. 12/17 GEAR Night Dress Code in ClubRoom free Buzz cuts BNC 6pm</p>
SUNDAY	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Signature Margaritas \$12 Mimosa Carafes. @mosphere: \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. Baton Show Lounge: Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. Cell Block: Open 2pm-2am Charlie's: Queerid! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singasational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. Hydrate: Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. Kit Kat Lounge: Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis . Lark: Lakeviews #1 Free flowing Brunch 11am-3pm Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Frozen's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am The Sofu Tap: \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$6 Chicago Handshake, \$5 Prairie Vodka Cocktails, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts Movie Night 7pm.</p>



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	Artist	Title
1	Armin Van Buuren	Roll The Dice ft. Philip Strand (Intro Radio Edit)
2	Loud Luxury ft. KIDDO	These Nights
3	Young Bombs	Kinda Funny ft. Audrey Mika
4	D.O.D & Raphaella	Like You Do
5	ARTY	So Good To Me
6	Manuel Riva & Alexandra Stan	Heal Your Soul
7	Fedde Le Grand & 22Bullets	Down
8	Lucas & Steve x DubVision	Feel My Love ft. Joe Taylor (Festival Mix)
9	John Summit & GUZ ft. Stevie Appleton	What A Life
10	Autograf ft. Tiina	High On That New Love
11	ARTY ft. Annie Schindel	Where Have You Been
12	GTOoffice	Never Together
13	INNA	Magical Love
14	INNA	Wherever You Go
15	Tove Lo	2 Die 4
16	Coco & Breezy	Just Say ft. Tara Carosielli
17	Neptunica x Martin Trevy x Paul Schulze ft. Katy Alex	Under The Night
18	KSHMR	Anywhere's Home (Chill Mix)
19	VASSY x Bingo Players x Disco Fries	Pieces
20	Afrojack & Black V Neck ft. Muni Long	Day N Night
21	Shane Codd & Bryn Christopher	Feels So Good (Radio Edit)
22	Joel Corry x David Guetta x Bryson Tiller	What Would You Do
23	Swedish House Mafia	Heaven Takes You Home
24	Reve	Whitney
25	Galantis x David Guetta & MNEK	Damn (You've Got Me Saying)
26	Mahalo x Captain Cuts ft. Dan Caplen	Are U With Me
27	Mabel x Jax Jones x Galantis	Good Luck
28	Aviella & Conro	Way Back
29	Bombs Away	Around the World
30	MK & BURNS	Better ft. Teddy Swims



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GRAB RAWBB



Party animal: An interview with dance music artist RAWBB

By Gregg Shapiro

Gay dance music artist RAWBB (the stage name of Rob Racine) got it right when he titled his new album “Sex Party.” A bump, bump, bumping collection of hot tracks made for dancing vertically or horizontally, the album earns its “Parental Advisory/Explicit Content” label. Sex, drugs, and techno pulse continuously through songs such as “DTF,” “Set Me Free,” “Baile Mi Gente,” “I Need Another Top,” “Lose Control,” the queer rap of “Money on the Nightstand,” and, of course, “Bump Bump Bump.” RAWBB was kind enough to answer a few questions shortly after the release of his album.

Gregg Shapiro: For those not in the know, please say something about the genesis of your stage name RAWBB.

RAWBB: I’ve been writing, performing, and producing music for over 10 years. When we started curating the sounds and style for the album, we had no idea the album

would take on a life of its own. Our unique and familiar sound combinations really helped support the character who is responsible for guiding you on your auditory journey. Since this album only represents a fraction of who I am as an artist, I decided to have fun with it and created a persona and a name I thought would amuse my audience.

GS: You’re currently based in Austin, Texas and you lived in Chicago before that. What precipitated the relocation?

R: I moved out to Austin for a six-month music-based recovery program where they utilize music as the basis for therapy to work through traumas and addictions.

GS: While you were living in Chicago, were you active in the city’s renowned queer music scene? If so, in what ways?

R: I actually was spending most of my time producing, emceeing, and singing in the queer performance art scene. I did a weekly male burlesque

and variety show called “The Naughty Little Cabaret.” I sang and performed with the Chicago Cabaret Project and was one of the first members of the all-male queer cabaret troupe “The (Feathered) Beaus.” I spent a lot of my free time dancing in queer spaces like Berlin or going to queer parties like Queen.

GS: How do you think the queer music scene in Austin compares to that of Chicago?

R: Because I have been traveling so much for work on this album, I actually haven’t really discovered the queer music scene in Austin – yet. From what I’ve experienced, most of the music scene here in Austin is live rock music or country music.

GS: What do you miss the most about Chicago?

R: What I miss most about Chicago is the cold nights. Being able to crack open my window and curl up with a giant pile of blankets. I also really miss my friends. Since we

were always getting off work at ridiculous hours it was a normal thing to have someone show up at your house at 2:30 a.m. and ask if you wanted to go out for a drink or go to a club.

GS: What do you miss the least?

R: I definitely don't miss having to travel to gigs through the winters in "Chi-Beria" without a car. It would be so cold that your nostrils would freeze as you inhale the air while trying to carry a bunch of costumes and props traveling downtown on the Red Line.

GS: What can you tell the readers about your ink?

R: All the tattoos on my body represent a memory of someone who has changed my life, or they represent a lesson from my life I never want to forget. The "Resilience" tattoo across my back gets the most attention. I wear it as a badge to remind myself, and our community, how much strength we all have to be able to overcome and recover from anything that tries to break us down.

GS: "Sex Party" is the perfect name for your new album, with songs such as "Lose Control," "DTF," "Baile Mi Gente," and "I Don't Wanna Be Your Boyfriend," being good examples of what's in store for the listener. Please say a few words about the inspiration

for the songs on the record.

R: I was really inspired by Kim Petra's album "Slut Pop." After listening to that album, I felt like I was given permission to write and produce music regarding the gay party and hook-up culture without having to apologize for it.

GS: What can you tell us about your songwriting process – for example, do you begin with the lyrics or the melody?

R: My process usually starts with a single hook. I'll hear a friend say something that sticks, and I will spend time writing lyrics around the hook. After I lock in lyrics, I'll talk with my producer and explain the idea and sounds I hear in my head. I

try to sprinkle in sounds that mean something as well. In "I Need Anotha Top" we used sounds from hook-up apps to help create the vibe. We also had some guys from the pup community record woof and howl sounds for "Baile Mi Gente" as a nod to that part of our community being such an important part of the identity of queer nightlife. I feel like a party isn't queer enough unless there is at least one person

dancing around in a pup hood.

GS: Have you ever had occasion to walk into a club where a DJ is spinning one of your tracks?

R: The first time I heard my music played, I was in the middle of the ocean on a cruise ship where 4,000 people were all dancing to "Set Me Free." It was an unreal experience considering the album wasn't even set to drop yet.

GS: Do you have live performance dates lined up for the release of "Sex Party?"

R: I am currently in talks with a few different venues in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Austin, and Chicago. Dates are to be announced.

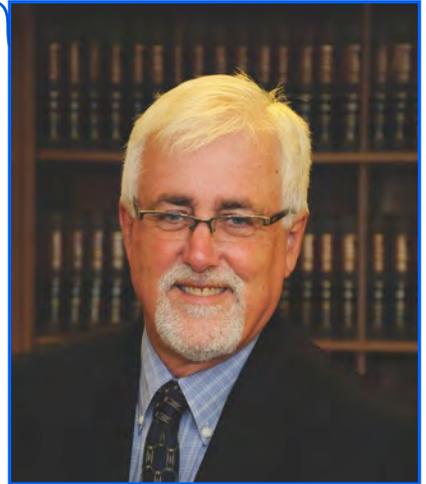
GS: What's next for you?

R: I'm hoping to get on the road and start performing my original music for our community all over the country. In the meantime, I'm working on creating and building the visual album for my first musical project, "Lost Boy," and simultaneously working on my next album which will showcase a much softer side to who I am as an artist.



GRAB ROGER

BURIED IN DEBT – PART I



Q: I was laid off from my job more than two years ago and used my credit cards to pay my bills and groceries. I haven't been able to find a job since. Last month, I started collecting my Social Security to get by. The stress of worrying about my credit card bills is keeping me awake at night. What should I do?

A: To the individual in the question, the answer maybe to do nothing. Many individuals who worry about debts are, in fact, judgment-proof. If someone is unemployed and owns only personal property such as household furnishings, a car with a low market value and a small amount of money in the bank they are probably judgment-proof. Same applies if they are receiving social security and social security disability benefits.

Judgment-proof means that even if a creditor sues you in court and obtains a judgment, the creditor will be unable to collect on the debt because your assets are exempt from seizure under state law. In

Illinois the following personal property is exempt from attachment or judgment (which means no one can take the following property no matter how many lawsuits or judgments there are):

Your clothing, schoolbooks and family pictures;

Wages (exempt in part) 85 percent of an individual debtor's wages are exempt. Creditors may seek satisfaction of a debt from the remaining 15 percent. This wage exemption is automatic, so the debtor need not assert it.

Certain retirement funds – Pension and individual retirement account (IRA) funds and individual retirement annuities are fully exempt from collections.

Certain real property (exempt in part) – A debtor may exempt up to \$15,000 in equity on their individually owned residence or farmland. The exemption doubles to \$30,000 if the eligible property is jointly owned.

Motor vehicle (exempt in part) – A debtor may exempt up to \$2,400 in equity in a single motor vehicle.

Life Insurance and annuities – Certain insurance benefits, endowments, annuities and disability payments are exempt if the debtor's spouse is the loss payee, or if the loss payee is a non-spouse dependent upon the debtor.

Wild card exemption – A debtor may exempt up to \$4,000 in value on any type of property owned. This means that if someone obtained a judgment against you and you only had \$2,000 in the bank, furniture with a value of \$2,000 and a car with equity of \$2,400 or less, your creditor would obtain nothing because the value of what you own is within the exemptions created by Illinois law. Your property is exempt and you are

judgment-proof.

Although a creditor may turn your debt over to a collection agency the agency will usually write off the debt if you are judgment-proof. You will need to tell the collection agency of this fact and may need assistance from a lawyer who will so advise the collection agency. Taxes and secured debts (house mortgage or car loan) cause special problems which may lead to forfeiture of your property even if you are otherwise judgment-proof. You may require the remedies that bankruptcy affords

A creditor may challenge the validity of an exemption that appears questionable and to obtain court orders to compel the debtor to deliver up any nonexempt assets. An experienced debtor and creditor attorney can be invaluable in helping creditors enforce their rights.

Creditors and collection agents must also navigate a multitude of federal laws governing debt collections. Creditors must comply with the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, which restricts debt collectors' actions to enforce consumer debts. Non-compliance with applicable laws can expose the creditor and/or its agents to sanctions and other potential liability.

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

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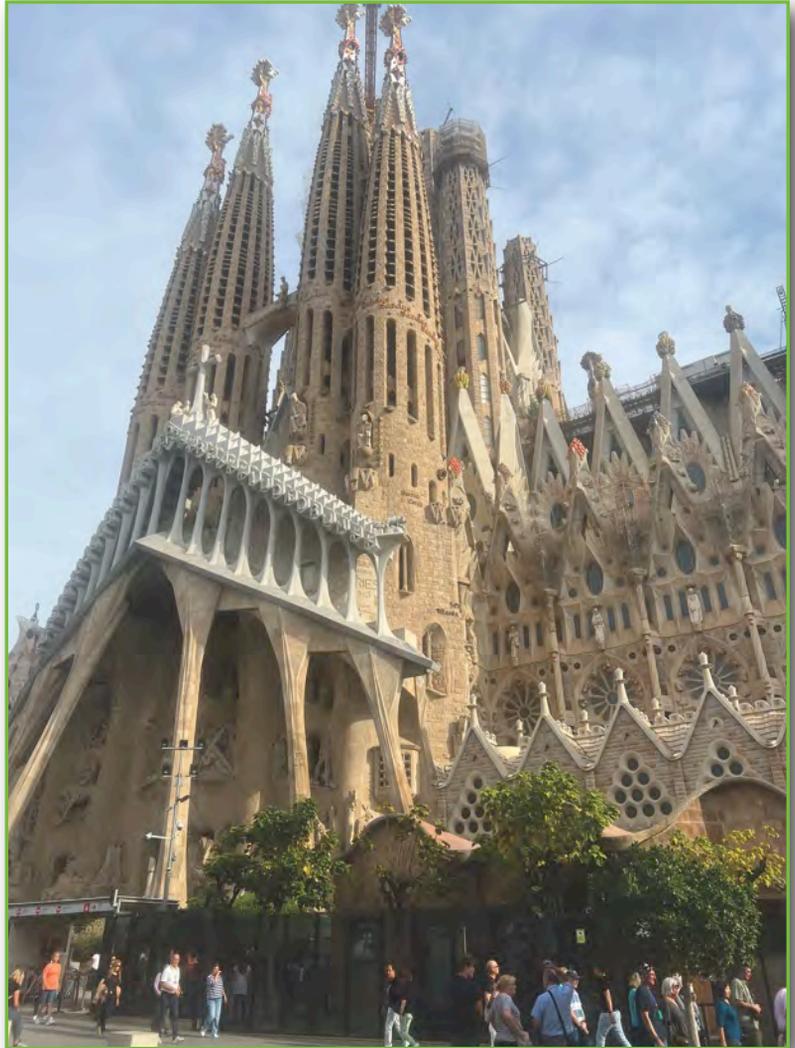
YOUR BARCELONA HOLIDAY: Great food and nightlife and a vibrant gay neighborhood

By Bill Malcolm

Barcelona, Spain (and specifically the Eixample gay neighborhood) are perfect for a vacation. Restaurants, bars, transit, and more are within steps of each other and you can even walk to some of the main attractions. Stay at the Axel Hotel Barcelona and enjoy the nightly events at the Sky Bar, make new friends at breakfast, work out at the huge gym, and more. Axel is a LGBTQ hotel chain with hotels all over Europe and in Miami Beach. However, everyone (gay or straight) is welcome there. Their motto is “we are hetero-friendly.” Staff is very helpful with travel tips and things to do. Barcelona is a tropical city LGBTQ+ paradise at bargain prices. Its architecture is stunning. The people are well dressed with interesting hair cuts (very short on the side).

With the euro at par with the U.S. dollar, drinks at a bar are just 5 euros. Enjoy a fancy meal with wine for under \$25. Get the special five-day transit pass for just \$20 (including from the airport). Barcelona reminded me of a big city version of Puerto Vallarta or LA with better transit.

The people are friendly but you will have to adjust to their odd hours. Nothing is open before 9 a.m. on weekends – even for coffee. Take a nap between 2 and 5p.m. Enjoy dinner at 8 or later. The food is great and of all types. Lots of empanadas. And the bars don't close until 3 a.m. or later. They are indeed night owls.



WHAT TO DO

Enjoy the historic but still unfinished church, La Sagrada Família. You can walk from the hotel and stop at the Gaudi house (Casa Batllo Gaudi) along the way. Grab lunch at the St. Joseph's marketplace also known as La Boqueria. It has 300 food stands and is located in the historic Las Ramblas. The market dates to 1840 and its origins date back to the 13th century. Try the fresh fruit juices. Head up to the city mountain park (Parc Montjuic) for city views and enjoy the botanical garden which features Mediterranean plants from around the world. Barcelona has a Mediterranean climate similar to California, Chile and Australia.

Walk around the Arc de Triomphe and nearby park, Parc de la Ciutadella. Go to the clothing optional (and very gay) beach, Playa de la Mar Bella.

NIGHTLIFE

There are lots of clubs and bars in L'Eixample just steps from the hotel. Try the nearby Dmen's, Gin Bar, the Boxer Café, and more. Dance the night away at the Safari. The bar on the seventh floor of the Axel Hotel (Sky Bar) has a rooftop balcony and events almost every night. Try the cava for just 5 euros (Champagne). They also have a bar next to the rooftop pool on the 8th floor during the day. Both are a lot of fun.

WHAT TO EAT

I enjoyed the empanadas which are seemingly everywhere. The Cava (champagne) is very refreshing not to mention the sangria. And of course, Barcelona is famous for its tapas. The Spanish Omelet at La Cova de La Mari (across the street from the hotel) is very good. Ask for a café colletta (coffee with milk) or have a Café Americano or a double espresso. There is no such thing as a 12-ounce cup of coffee in Spain.

GETTING THERE

American Airlines rerouted me onto Iberia Airlines by Level, a low cost budget carrier that has great food (Indian beef stew) and great service but uncomfortable seats. I spread out to sleep in the nearby unoccupied seats as the plane was not that full. Fares are very low too. The way home I took American Airlines which had great



service and offered free wine and beer, a delicious lunch (choice of meat balls or pasta dish) followed by British ice cream and then a pizza type sandwich. Service was great and the plane was on time. Its terminal 8 at JFK in NYC is new and very nice. However, Kennedy suffers from long TSA lines so leave plenty of time for your connection.

9 Sud (South) from the airport and buy a 5 day pass for just \$20 (including from airport). Then take a short bus ride to the hotel. They also have street cars and buses. The pass is good on all of them.

TRAVEL TIPS

Pick up a copy of the LGBTI Barcelona official gay map published by the city at the airport metro station or read it on line at visitbarcelona.com. It even includes listings “bars fetish” and “cruising/ dark rooms”. This is one LGBTQ+ friendly city.

Pick up some Gazpacho soup or snacks at the nearby Jespac Market. They also have an Aldi close by the hotel. You can get great local food to go (cheeses, yogurt, fruit, and more) for a quick and affordable bite.

Buy a converter for your cell phone charger as Europe is on a different electric voltage. Just 5 Euros. Get Euros out of an ATM. Banks don't convert U.S. dollars. Or use your credit card for everything.

You will want to return to Barcelona and this is only a sampling of the many things to do in this great city. It's arguably the most gay-friendly city in the world; it's very walkable and affordable for all.

Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated value LGBTQ+ syndicated travel columnist whose column appears or has appeared in publications in Chicago, Washington, Los Angeles, Seattle, Toronto, Fort Lauderdale, Charlotte, Atlanta, Dallas, and other cities.

I also took EZJet from Barcelona to Milan. EZJet is Europe's equivalent to Southwest Airlines or Spirit Airlines. Fares are cheap but they charge for everything and service was so so. We waited for 20 minutes in the jet way to board and then faced a one-hour delay due to a staffing snafu.

GETTING AROUND
Take the Metro (line



GRAB HOLLY

And a Crypto-Christmas to All

By Holly Maholm



Who could have predicted that this particular Christmas Season – out of all the long history of that Joyous Holiday – would ever-after be known among the unicorns as the “Crypto-Christmas?” Even in this, our “intersectional age,” so rich in unexpected coming-togethers of heretofore unrelated genders, sexualities and identities, who could have foreseen the “convergence,” if not the actual “collision,” of “supernatural unicorns” with “crypto-currencies?” No one, I am sure. Nevertheless, we did arrive at that intersection, and how we got there is a story in itself.

And who better to tell that story than Sassy Pants, who was so instrumental in launching our little frolic of unicorns upon that odyssey which brought us to “crypto-land.”

I was eating my breakfast of bacon-and-egg fritters in my room at the stable when Sassy pranced in. She instantly spied the two glazed donuts I was saving for later, following which – dipping her head down in a clever feint designed to make me think she was nodding a greeting – she deftly grabbed both of them in her lips, then tossed them back in a well-executed “snarf.” She spoke.

“Holly, we need to start making arrangements for all the presents – meaning donuts – you are going to give to your unicorn friends in the frolic. We can’t have a repeat of last year; that was so disorganized and chaotic!”

I interrupted. “Yes! I’m well aware what a mess Christmas morning was for the frolic, but try to see it from my perspective. First, every unicorn wants donuts for Christmas, but it’s hard to keep everybody’s Wish List straight. Victor wants Glazed and Chocolate Cake, but he doesn’t want Peach Fritters. And you want Strawberry Icing but never Cherry Filled. And most important, Our Queen wants Chocolate Eclairs and Bavarian Cream-Filled Paczkis – but she won’t eat Blueberry Paczkis!

“How am I supposed to get all those special orders baked at Donut Time – during our busiest time of the

year – and then box them up in separate boxes with the correct name on top? I can’t do it! Plus, there’s the sheer volume of donuts I need. Remember, there are roughly two dozen unicorns in our frolic, and every unicorn gets multiple dozen donuts.”

Sassy, I could see, recognized my problem, and in response, she began to pace up and down the corridor in the stable as she struggled to find a solution. At last, she ceased pacing and returned to my room, the glow of discovery illuminating her features.

“Holly,” she began, “if I am to explain my solution to your Christmas Donut Conundrum, I have to give you a little lecture about what the world used to be like – and what world it is we have today.

“Ages ago, the ‘money’ which you humans used consisted of gold and silver coins; and each coin – representing, for example, ‘Twenty Dollars’ of gold or ‘Ten Dollars’ of silver – was a thing of value. The face value of the coin might vary – and if there was inflation, the purchasing power of that coin might shrink – but the weight of so much gold or silver would retain its value. Thus, your whole economy depended on a form of ‘money’ which had intrinsic worth.

“But then, some group of humans (in control of the government... and printing presses) decided they would issue ‘tokens’ of money printed on ordinary pieces of paper. These had the same – or greater – face value as the coins, but being merely paper, they had no intrinsic worth.

“What is important,” she continued, “is this: That in ancient times, ‘money’ was a ‘store of value’ in which you humans could have trust. Each coin having its own intrinsic worth – based on the valuable metal of which it was made – you could use that coin secure in the knowledge that its value did not depend upon the consent or approval of the government.

“Today, however, your modern paper currency is no more than what we call ‘fiat money.’ Meaning: It’s

considered ‘money’ only because the government declares: ‘This piece of paper is money.’ And the government having an army of policemen, prosecutors, jails and prisons, it is unwise to argue with them when they declare those fragile bits of paper to be ‘money.’

“No, Holly, you humans have forgotten that the ‘money’ which you earn, save and spend so freely today is nothing other than the ‘wages of terrorism.’ A ‘means of exchange’ founded upon a fraud and sustained by threats of violence. Such currency is not so much a ‘Promise to Pay the Bearer the Value of (So Much) Gold or Silver,’ as it is a ‘Threat to Inflict Upon the Uncooperative a Beating, Imprisonment or Death.’”

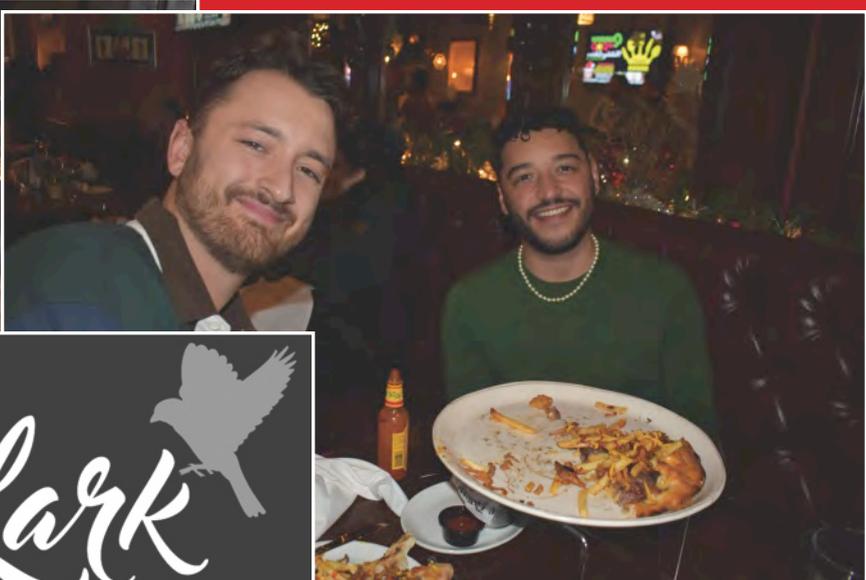
Sassy continued. “Now, my idea is a little different, but if it works the way I think it will, we’ll have a Happy Crypto-Christmas after all!”

(To be continued)

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



Photos By Anthony Meade



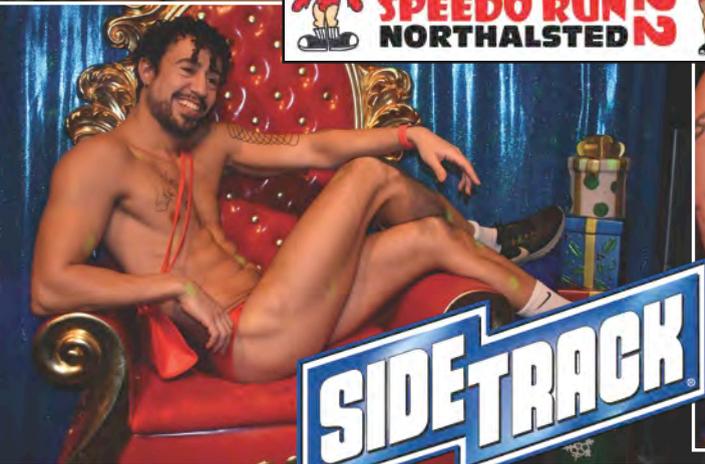


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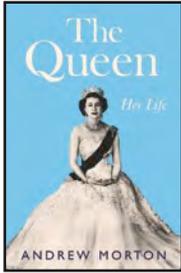
Photos By Anthony Meade



GRAB A BOOK

"The Queen: Her Life"

by Andrew Morton
c.2022, Grand Central Publishing
\$30.00
448 pages



You couldn't hide, even if you wanted to.

There'd be nowhere to go – and besides, everyone knows who you are. Your entire life has been catalogued, from the moment you were born until probably just a few seconds ago, and it will be until you're dead, plus a week or two. As in the new book, "The Queen: Her Life" by Andrew Morton, it reigns on your parade every day.

Ten-year-old Princess Elizabeth was not a fan of her uncle's ladyfriend.

Even at that tender age, she was aware that Mrs. Simpson had turned everyone's life upside down, including that of her beloved uncle. David was once full of pranks and play, a favorite in the York household nursery, but with that woman around, everything changed. Even Elizabeth's little sister, Margaret, could understand the significance of Uncle David's decision regarding that woman. It meant, of course, that Elizabeth would one day be Queen.

It was a responsibility she was never supposed to have, but she assumed it with an astounding maturity and no complaints. For the rest of her childhood, her growing-up, when she was a young bride, a mother, and a negotiator of prickly family issues, Elizabeth never wavered in her solemn promise to give herself to her country.

And yet, as Morton shows, there was a side of the Queen that peeked out beneath the edge of those colorful hats on a delightfully regular basis. She was "obsessed" with horses, adored her dogs, and was able to pivot cleanly whenever there was a problem; in fact, she and Prince Philip "loved" when things went wrong at events they attended. At a young age, Elizabeth had a keen sense of the absurd, and she was able to make fun out of even the biggest annoyances, at home and abroad.

Sadly, however, because of her position, her role as the leader of the Church of England, politics, and British culture, that roll-with-the-

punches ability didn't necessarily extend to her family...

Considering all the coverage that was available when Queen Elizabeth II died recently, you might think you know everything there ever was to know about Her Majesty.

Betcha don't. Bet you need to read "The Queen: Her Life."

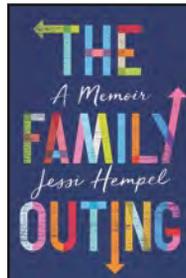
Opening with his lively introduction, author Andrew Morton surprises readers with all kinds of tidbits and tales and a humorous anecdote of an angry and vindictive 10-year-old princess and a perfectly Upper-Crust snit.

It's this kind of humanness that Morton brings to the Queen's biography, to show that she was Royal by birth but Everyman at heart – although sometimes, in many places inside this book, readers might question such a sentiment. On that, Morton shows a metamorphosis that begins with resigned acceptance, continued with steely-strict rule-keeping, and culminates in the softer Monarch we came to love.

Surely, this is something historians will enjoy and the most avid Anglophile should pounce on this book which, despite its heft, is a quick read. "The Queen: Her Life" will make you smile; enjoyment like you'll get here is hard to hide.

"The Family Outing: A Memoir"

by Jessi Hempel
c.2022, HarperOne
\$27.99
320 pages



Don't tell the children.

For most families in America in the last century, that was the maxim to live by: the kids are on a need-to-know basis and since they're kids, they don't need to know. And so what did you miss? Did you know about familial philanthropy, rebellion, embarrassment, poverty? As in the new memoir, "The Family Outing" by Jessi Hempel, did secrets between parent and child run both ways?

"What happened to me?"

That's the big question Jessi Hempel had after many therapy sessions to rid herself of a recurring

nightmare. She had plenty of good memories. Her recollection of growing up in a secure family with two siblings was sharp, wasn't it?

She thought so – until she started what she called "The Project."

With permission from her parents and siblings, Hempel set up Skype and Zoom sessions and did one-on-one interviews with her family, to try to understand why her parents divorced, why her brother kept mostly to himself, how the family dynamics went awry, why her sister kept her distance, and how secrets messed everything up.

Hempel's father had an inkling as a young man that he was gay, but his own father counseled him to hide it. When he met the woman who would eventually be his wife, he was delighted to become a husband and father, as long as he could sustain it.

Years before, Hempel's mother was your typical 1960s teenager with a job at a local store, a crush on a slightly-older co-worker and, coincidentally, a serial killer loose near her Michigan neighborhood. Just after the killer was caught, she realized that the co-worker she'd innocently flirted with might've been the killer's accomplice.

For nearly the rest of her life, she watched her back.

One secret, one we-don't-discuss-it, and a young-adult Hempel was holding something close herself. What else didn't she know? Why did she and her siblings feel the need for distance? She was trying to figure things out when the family imploded...

Ever had a dream that won't stop visiting every night? That's where author Jessi Hempel starts this memoir, and it's the perfect launching point for "The Family Outing."

Just prepare yourself. The next step has Hempel telling her mother's tale for which, at the risk of being a spoiler, you'll want to leave the lights on. This account will leave readers good and well hooked, and ready for the rest of what turns out to be quite a detective story.

And yet, it's a ways away from the Sherlockian. Readers know what's ahead, we know the score before we get there, but the entwining of five separate lives in a fact-finding mission makes this book feel as though it has a surprise at every turn.

Sometimes, it's a good surprise. Sometimes, it's a bad one.

A happily minimized amount of profanity and a total lack of overtness make "The Family Outing" a book you can share with almost anyone, adult, or ally. Read it, and you'll be wanting to tell everyone.



Photos By Anthony Meade



**BOHO
THEATRE ANNOUNCES
TICK, TICK...BOOM!
JANUARY 12 –
FEBRUARY 5, 2023**



Before RENT, there was TICK, TICK...BOOM!

Written by the late **Jonathan Larson** and directed by BoHo Artistic Associate **Bo Frazier**, *TICK, TICK... BOOM!* tells the autobiographical story of Jonathan, a struggling New York composer entering his 30s. The year is 1990, the AIDS crisis is escalating, and Jonathan is growing increasingly desperate to leave his dead-end job and write the next great American musical. Jonathan's girlfriend Susan and his best friend Michael announce major life changes, and Jonathan begins to wonder if the ticking clock is running out on his Broadway dreams. In BoHo Theatre's groundbreaking production, Director Bo Frazier reimagines this gripping rock musical as a celebration of trans joy, love, and creativity.

Direction by **Bo Frazier**, Music Direction by **Harper Caruso**, Choreography by **Jamal Howard**,

BoHo's production will play January 12 – February 5, 2023 at The Edge Theater, 5451 N Broadway, Chicago.

General Tickets on sale now at www.bohotheatre.com.



**THE DEN THEATRE
PRESETS COMEDIAN
CAMERON ESPOSITO
DECEMBER 30 & 31, ON
THE HEATH MAINSTAGE**



The Den Theatre welcomes back comedian Cameron Esposito, performing two stand-up shows December 30 & 31, 2022 on The Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood. Following Cameron's December 31 performance, ring in 2023 at The Den's New Year's Laughin' Eve, featuring additional comedy performances by Chicago favorites Lucia Whalen and Nate Armbruster, music from DJ Thee David Davis and a midnight toast with a surprise drag queen! Admission (\$47 including fees) includes two cocktails and a midnight champagne toast! Purchase a ticket to Cameron's NYE show and check your email confirmation for a code that unlocks a 50% discount on tickets to the party.

Cameron Esposito is an award-winning standup comic, actor, podcaster and bestselling author.

Cameron most recently appeared in HBO Max's *Moonshot* and ABC's *A Million Little Things*. Cameron's new hour is about divorce, self-acceptance and butthole surgery.

Tickets are currently available at www.theden theatre.com or by calling 773-697-3830.

**THE GIFT THEATRE
ANNOUNCES 2023 SEASON:
THE CHICAGO PREMIERE!
MOTHERS & THE RISE AND
FALL OF LITTLE VOICE**



The Gift Theatre has announced its 2023 season, featuring the Chicago premiere of **Anna Ouyang Moench's** dark comedy *Mothers*, directed by **Lili-Anne Brown** and a revival of **Jim Cartwright's** powerful, award-winning drama *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*, directed by **Devo de Mayo**. The full season will be presented at Filament Theatre (4040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago) as part of an innovative resource-sharing residency beginning in January 2023.

"As we were dreaming about our first season announcement as a trio, we went on a listening tour of sorts and chatted with our Ensemble to see what dreams they had for the future of Gift," comment Co-Artistic Directors **Brittany Burch**, **Emjoy Gavino** and **Jennifer Glasse**. "Similar themes were echoed throughout the conversations – an excitement for taking risks, exploring out of the box, dark comedies and working with directors who meet us where we are and challenge where our ensemble and audience can go. We are thrilled to announce our 2023 Season!"

Co-Artistic Director **Jennifer Glasse** adds, "We have been fans of Lili-Anne Brown and Devon de Mayo for YEARS. Both of them are incredible forces of nature as directors and women. Lili-Anne understands the Gift and the uniqueness of our Ensemble. We truly admire the stories she tells that always speak to the heart of voicing and affirming underrepresented people. Devon is masterful at sharing ensemble stories while transporting audiences through her work. Both Lili-Anne and Devon pitched this season to us because they specifically wanted to work on these shows with the Gift. We are so honored and beyond thrilled to bring their work to life."

Season subscriptions are currently available at thegifttheatre.org or by calling 773-283-7071.

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The Golden Girls

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A Handbag Parody

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This show is a parody and contains adult humor

by **David Cerdas** directed by **Spenser Davis**

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HIGHLY RECOMMENDED! I loved this show!
— Chicago Reader

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—Chicago Tribune

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