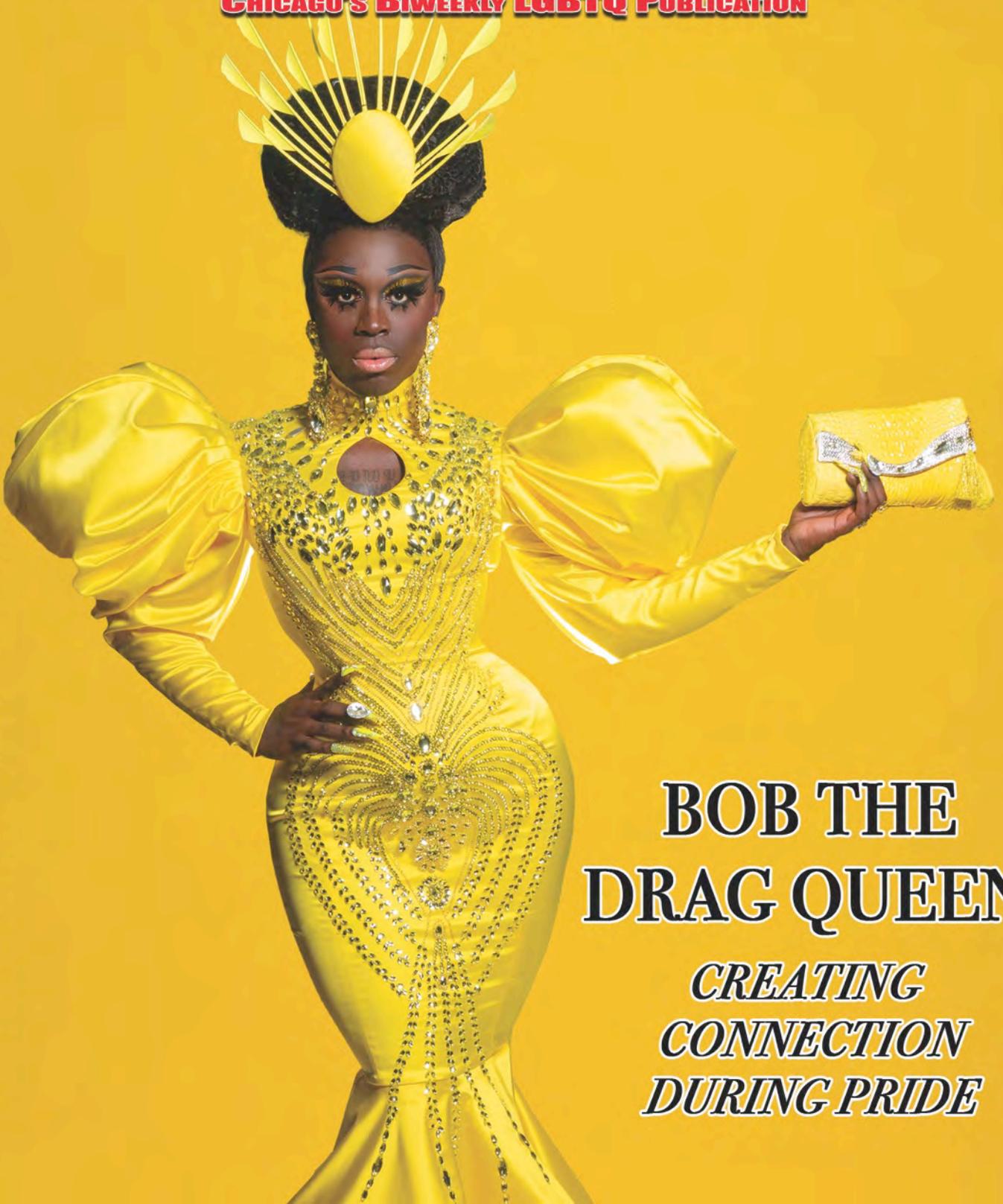


# GRAB MAGAZINE

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# GRAB BOB

## 'Pride is the People'

### Bob the Drag Queen on creating connection during Pride in era of COVID-19

By Eve Kucharski

Maintaining a packed schedule can be tricky for drag queens at the best of times, but for Bob the Drag Queen, even a global pandemic can't keep her down. Despite heading into a Pride season filled with nearly across-the-board event cancellations and postponements due to the novel coronavirus, the season eight winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race* is regularly making appearances across the virtual stage everywhere. Fans can catch Bob in the HBO series "We're Here," a brand-new comedy special *Bob the Drag Queen: Live at Caroline's*, MTV's *Drag My Dad*, on her *Sibling Rivalry* podcast with fellow *Drag Race* winner Monét X Change and across YouTube.

But as much as this June showcases Bob's wide range as a performer, she's also using some of her platforms as an opportunity to make note of, and show support to, the nationwide police brutality protests. In the midst of a packed-despite-the-odds schedule, we caught up with Bob to get a feel for drag in the age of COVID-19, the importance of increased visibility for black queer performers and the deep personal connections people create through drag.

**Eve Kucharski: What does it feel like to be a drag queen going into a summer that celebrates Pride virtually this year?**

**Bob The Drag Queen:** Well, I mean, I'm not saddened by it. I think that it is going to be different. I also think that Pride is going to be different not only because of COVID-19 but because of the Black Lives Matter Movement, and I'm excited that the world is going to be focusing on black queer stories.

**EK: A lot of Prides are certainly taking a similar approach. New York**

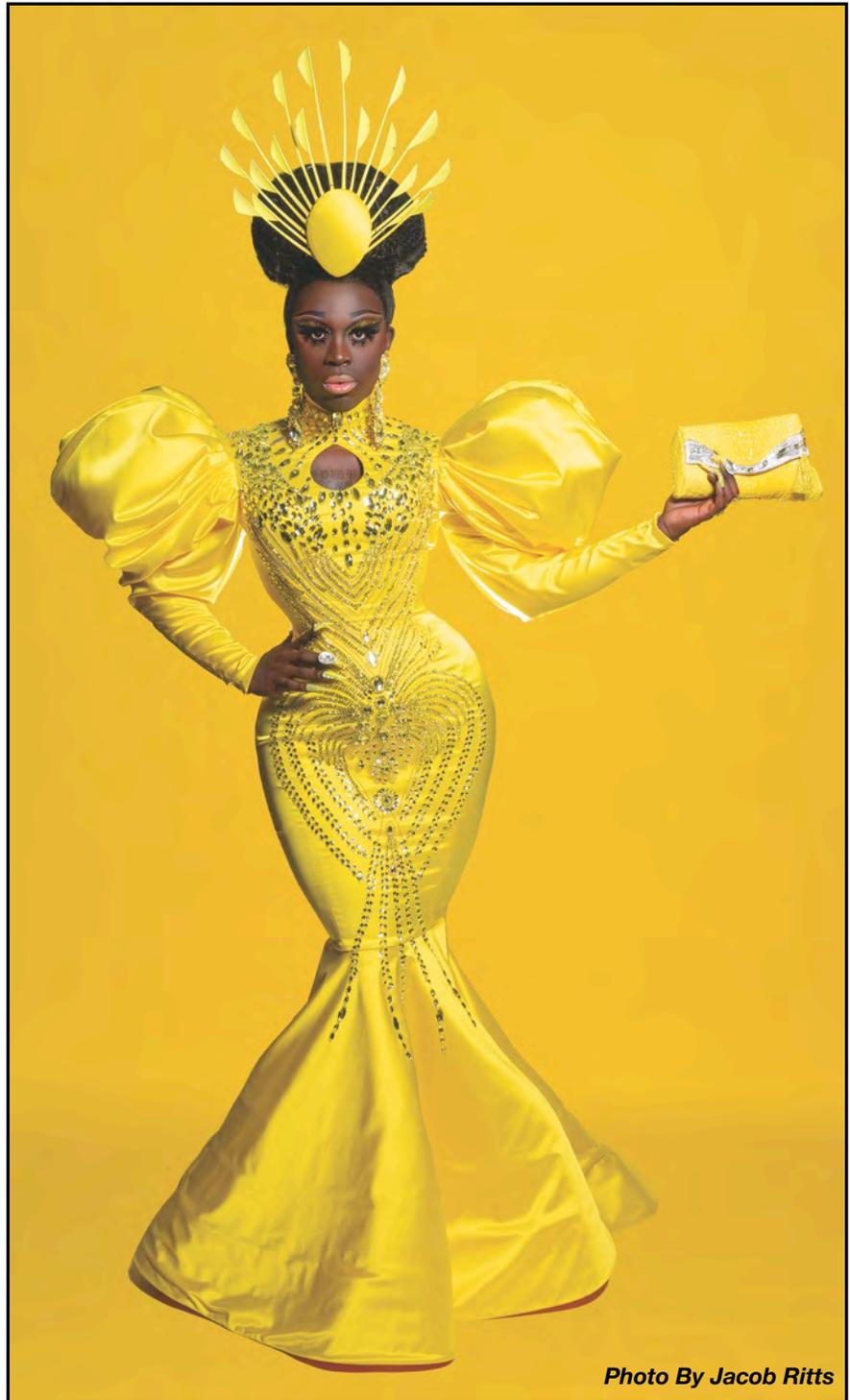


Photo By Jacob Ritts

**City Pride is using its platform to protest police brutality, and there's a lot of talk about how the first Pride was a riot and really going back to Stonewall's beginnings. Do you think, given the roots of drag and gay culture stemming from people like Marsha P. Johnson, that it's the**

**responsibility of fans and performers of drag to really educate themselves on the culture?**

**BTDQ:** I mean, I think it would give you a more fruitful experience in terms of celebrating Pride. Of course, it's not my job to tell anyone what their job is. But I think if you want to have a fruitful



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experience with *Pride*, a fully well-rounded experience to know what it is you're celebrating, then yeah, you're gonna wanna do your research, which, by the way, is not even hard. Like, it's not like this is 1999 where you have to go down to the library or get an Encyclopedia Britannica or something. There's tons of documentaries and movies, articles (and) entire Instagram accounts dedicated to this stuff.

**EK: I was looking at your YouTube channel and you've had conversations with fellow *Drag Race* performer Peppermint about racism in the drag community. How do you confront conversations about race in drag, whether it be face-to-face or online?**

**BTDQ:** Well, every once in a while, I will have to confront things face-to-face if I experience a micro-aggression or an "aggression" aggression against myself or my tribe. And online it happens a lot. People feel bold online to say potentially whatever they want to say because they don't actually have to see your face. And if I think there's a moment for growth, then I'll address it. And if not, then, especially if it's online, I'll just let it fly over my head because, you know, some people online are just trolling. You know, looking to elicit a response.

**EK: Now more than ever it seems that performers have to be aware of what's socially and politically going on. Does being "on" all the time in that way get exhausting?**

**BTDQ:** I felt exhausted kind of as a person in general and I haven't done

drag in over a week, and I just didn't feel up to it. I canceled a couple of things, quite frankly, because I just felt so affected. But then again, I would also say as a black queer artist I do think that it is important for me to share my success stories and let people know that there are – you know, I know how much it means for me to see those



Photo By Jacob Ritts

things from black queer artists. So I'm definitely picking myself up by the wig straps and getting back in there because I think it's important for people out there to see a successful black queer artist, quite frankly.

**EK: Moving onto your HBO show *We're Here*, what was your reaction when you heard the pitch that you're going to go to small-town America and do drag?**

**BTDQ:** Well, at first I was nervous that it was going to be a show where I go from town to town and just go and put

a bunch of straight people into drag, and that I didn't want to do. But when I found out that wasn't the pitch I was really excited. There's no shade or nothing against any show that does do that – *Drag My Dad* is a show where we put straight people in drag – but I just felt like I would like to have a different impact on a different show. And I'm so

proud of their show; I'm so happy with the way it turned out and the fact that we're telling diverse stories. That I'm probably the most proud of.

**EK: You're from the South originally. Did doing the show actually make you confront some of your issues with small-town America or go face-to-face with that?**

**BTDQ:** I moved all around the South a lot as a kid, and I did have this feeling of, "I have no community here," especially once I was out of college. Once I got out of college I was like, "Once I'm out of college all the other theater department people leave and I'm going to have no one." And what I'm realizing now is that there almost certainly was a community in probably all of

those towns – they're maybe small, they probably were reflective of the population, and maybe I would have not have felt so compelled to leave. I didn't necessarily leave the South with a great case of, "I'm out for the South," you know?

**EK: You've said that HBO really respected the craft when they approached you.**

**BTDQ:** Yes.

**EK: Do you think that sometimes**

**drag is not thought of as high of an art form as it could be?**

**BTDQ:** Well, I think it depends on who you're talking to. I mean, in my circles it's regarded as an extremely high art form (laughs), but I'm sure there's someone out there who doesn't see the value in it. But, I mean, in my experience my craft has been respected. And when I say respected, I mean, like, sometimes you're doing a TV show or movie and they want you to do drag and you're like, "OK, but this is all the things that go with being in drag." Like, if we tell you that we need to do drag at a really elevated level, a lot of people don't realize that it's really not just going to your local Halloween costume store and buying a couple of costumes. It is a lot of work to craft a really beautiful drag queen from custom garments to custom hair – everything that goes into it. And HBO really, really rose to the occasion.

**EK: In many of your projects, it seems like you're connecting with people when you put them in drag. What do you think is so disarming about that process?**

**BTDQ:** Well, I think it's disarming because someone is completely out of their element. They have to trust you because they don't know what they're

doing at all. So they're in your hands, like, "I have to trust you because I'm so clueless." And I not only want to take advantage of that trust but utilize it to the best of my ability.

**EK: Was there a drag moment in one of the projects that you've done where there was a connection that occurred that caught you off guard?**

**BTDQ:** Well, I really loved the conversation that I had with Nate, Darren and Lady Shug in Shiprock, New Mexico. That was really beautiful, to hear them talk about what it means to be indigenous and the intersectionality between being queer and indigenous. That's probably one of my favorite moments, and I also really loved the moment that I had with Tanner in Branson, where I basically told them my story with, you know, Christianity and homosexuality and helping come to a conclusion on that.

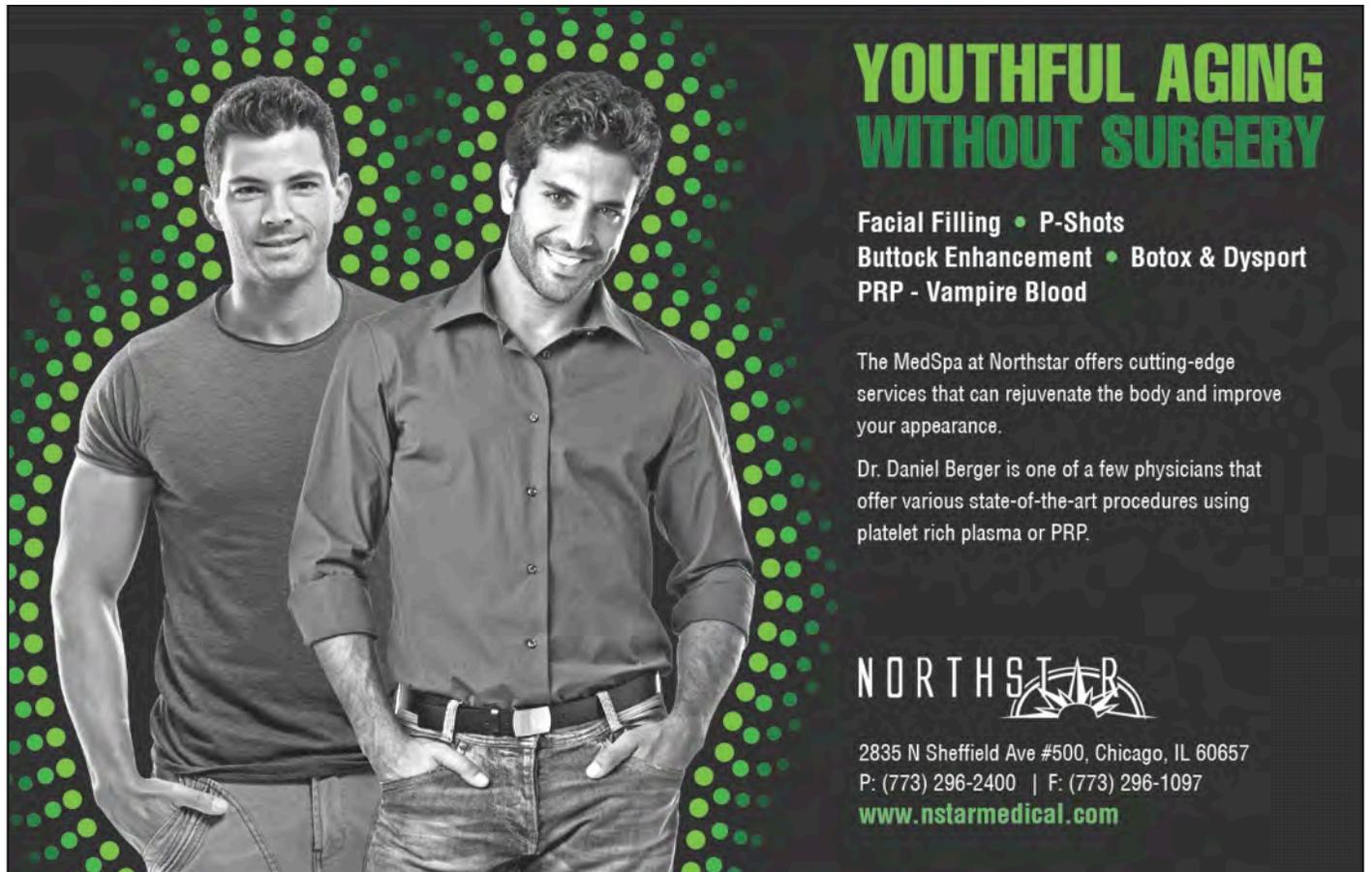
**EK: Do you think COVID-19 will impact the way people do drag not only in the near future but permanently?**

**BTDQ:** As I was navigating the land of the internet and drag shows in quarantine, I realized how many folks were saying, "I've never gotten a chance

to see you before because I can't leave the house for a list of reasons." Some people have anxiety, some people are disabled, some people just don't have enough money, some people live in an area where they don't have access, some people are in the closet. And they finally got to see some of their favorite drag queens perform, and I was like, "Maybe I should continue with this." I would like to be able to keep this going for people who, you know – I mean, maybe not as much as I'm doing now during lockdown – but maybe I can continue these kind of performances for people who can't get out of the house.

**EK: Do you have a message for people who might be feeling especially vulnerable during this Pride season?**

**BTDQ:** Just think about it like this – this is something I'm pulling from the church, and I'm not religious, but I did go to church for quite some while: Church isn't the building, it's the people. And Pride isn't the parade. Pride isn't the parties. It's the people. It's what we bring to Pride. So, you can still have Pride without having to be surrounded by thousands of people. Pride is a feeling you have deep inside yourself. That's why we call it Pride.



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# GRAB JASON

MUSIC

## Where Does the Good Go? Jason Mraz Knows.

### The musician opens up about coming out as bisexual and talks Pride, protesting and our current uprising

By Chris Azzopardi

The coronavirus pandemic has forced Pride events around the world to go virtual this year. For Jason Mraz, that means he can, for the first time, take part in the annual summer festivities. After all, thanks to the virus, the “I’m Yours” singer-songwriter can’t tour in support of his latest album *Look for the Good*. Usually, he says, he’s on the road during Pride season.

“I’ve got friends and neighbors who invite me every year, but my schedule never allowed it,” Mraz says during our recent Zoom call. This summer, he says, he’s “probably gonna hole up with my friends and neighbors and do the virtual Pride event and go hard.”

From his home studio in San Diego, Mraz, 43, discussed his side hustle – food agriculture – as a metaphor for the fight for racial and LGBTQ justice, how Mister Rogers inspired his latest album, why he’s thanking his childhood bullies who used to call him a “fag,” and his journey to being openly bisexual.

**Chris Azzopardi:** Jason, how are you and your family doing? And the avocado farm?

**Jason Mraz:** I’m fine. I’m a bit of an empath, so yeah (gets choked up) ... feeling pretty terrible about what’s going on. I’ve tried to use my superpowers for good. I’ve tried to sing songs of hope and positivity and peace and joy. So, you know, thinking about how I’m going to keep singing and breathing life into a better future. We have a little apricot tree, which for the first time is producing fruits. It really is a pleasure and a privilege to work in food production and to work with the Earth and to have that level of peace, and

that interaction with nature.

**CA:** I once read that one of the best things to do is to go outside and just lay on the ground. Just feel the Earth underneath you.

**JM:** So nice. I think one of the best things to do is just lay down in general, which I always forget. I’m always on my feet. I’m always going, going, going. A cool thing I like to do when I lay down on the Earth, especially at night, is remember that we’re not necessarily sitting on top of the globe; we’re kind of stuck to perhaps the side of it, or depending on how it’s photographed, maybe we’re on the bottom of it. Who’s to say the poles are really on top and bottom? We’re floating in a vacuum of space. There’s really no up or down. So when I’m laying on the side of the Earth, I like to imagine I’m on the side of it, just dangling. And if you put your feet up, you’re really dangling out into the universe, which is this big vast ball of confusion. It’s a good thing.

I know right now is not really the time to lay down and be quiet and look at the stars, but let’s talk about food for

just one second. You can’t grow food overnight. It takes time and it takes rest, it takes daylight and it takes darkness; it takes the earth to regenerate and renew itself. That said, everyone who’s out there fighting for justice right now, also remember to stay hydrated and get good sleep and stay rested so that a season of this can continue and real transformation and regeneration can occur.

**CA:** They say that if you’re not taking care of yourself, you can’t take care of other people.

**JM:** That’s right. The flight attendants tried to teach us well. Secure your oxygen mask first before securing others. But, nowadays, careful how you even say that, because there’s been plenty of people who never even had an oxygen mask to begin with. So here we



Photo By Jen Rosenstein

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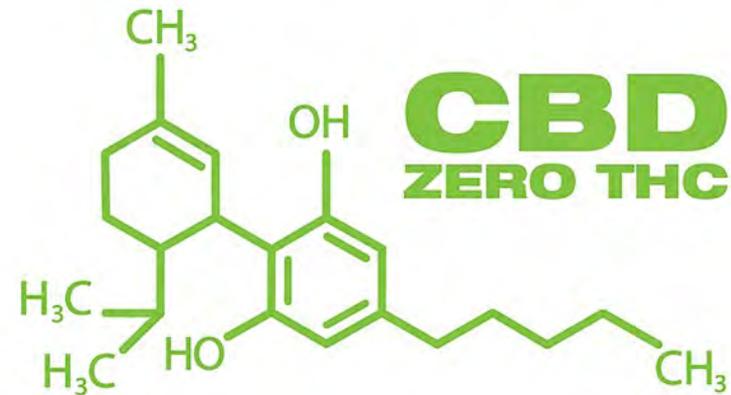
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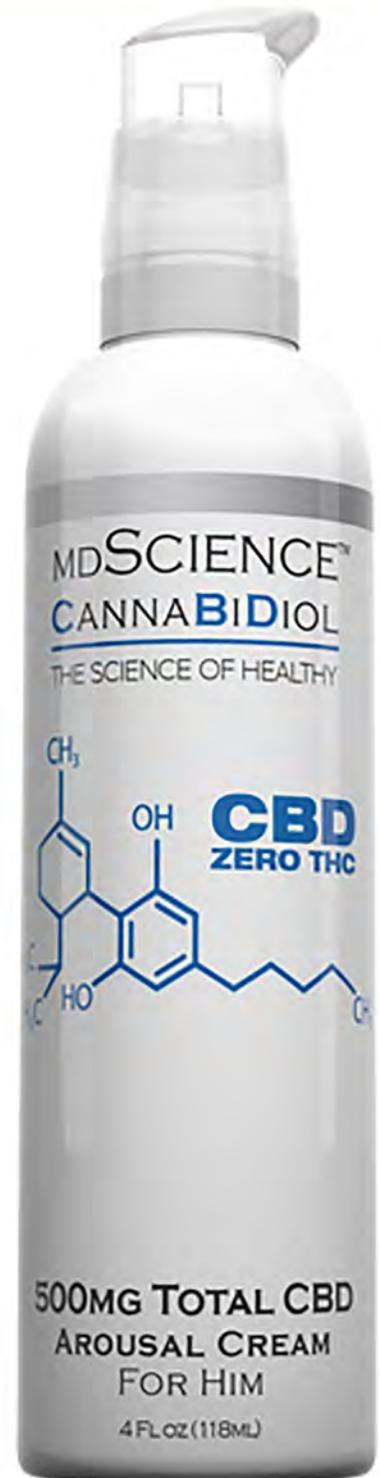
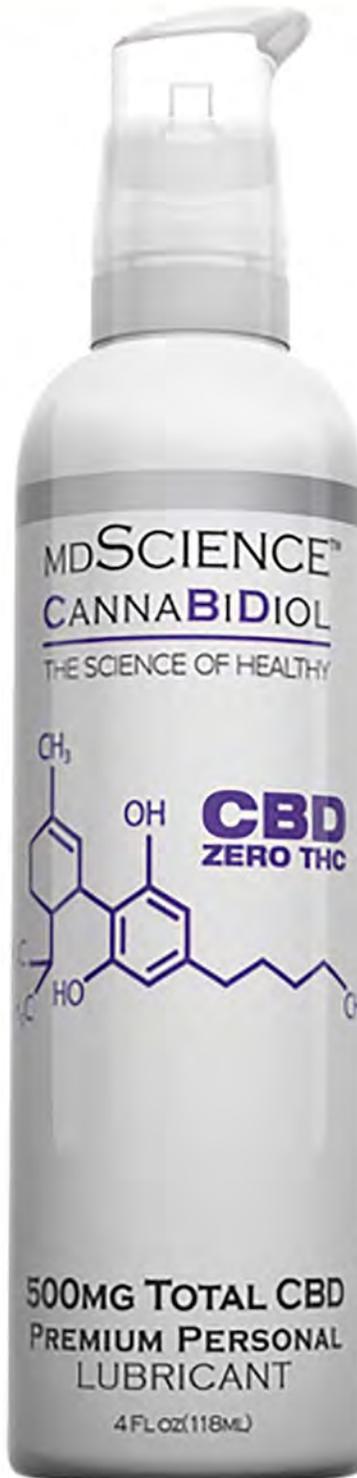
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**CA:** There really couldn't be a better time for this album. You couldn't have predicted that this is where we would be, and yet it feels like this album could have come out of this very moment. Can you talk about your headspace when you decided to write this music and how relevant it is to what we're going through right now?

**JM:** In 2016, after the election that year, my heart exploded and I started writing different kinds of songs. I knew that 2020 was going to be another engaged election year, so last year I just started putting all this together. I teamed up with Michael Goldwasser of (reggae collective) All-Stars – he's a phenomenal reggae producer – and we put a phenomenal band together. We thought, "The sound of reggae and all the different genres inside of it are so danceable and also beloved around the world; let's make a full album of reggae tracks and at the same time let's try to breathe life into some issues we care about through these songs and lyrics and offer it to the world in 2020

because we know it's gonna be heated, we know there's gonna be debates, we know there needs to be radical change and recognition for many." We, of course, didn't predict this level of radical change. But I'm glad to see an uprising. I really am.

I'm not an anarchist, but I am glad to see America getting its education and an invitation for new ways to mobilize, strategize, react, use our resources, use our powers. So *Look for the Good* was intended to be that. It was intended to be this little album of songs that are easy to dance or march to, to remember to stay positive while you're out there using your voice or your time for the greater good.

**CA:** With everything feeling so heavy right now, where do you find the good?

**JM:** Well, if I'm not on the internet (laughs), I'm at my piano, usually. And it's kind of a new instrument for me. It has a different voice, it has a different weight. So that's been my peace. That's been my little church.

And then on the internet, I go for peace. I follow (civil rights activist) Shaun King and the NAACP and I just

want to educate myself more on how I can better use my internet resources. I feel like the battlefield for a more equal and just America is not (only) on the streets, it's also on the internet. Because we've clearly seen propaganda come our way to heighten our president and those initiatives, but we also need the propaganda or the internet content and bravery and songs and sharing to heighten the injustices and to advance equality.

Here's something interesting: about 10 years ago I took a trip to Ghana and I got to visit "the door of no return," which is what they would call the door that slaves were passed through; if they went through that door they were going to be boarded onto a slave ship and exported out of Africa to either London or the United States. It was an intense place. But the thing that helped abolish slavery was the printing press. This blew my mind. A printing press. Because suddenly now we've got newspapers and we can make more people aware of what a slave ship looked like, what humans look like stacked in a boat, and how harsh the conditions are. And it started to touch people's hearts. And eventually people

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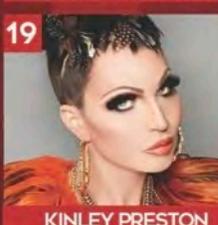
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said, "Enough is enough. Why are we doing this to other human beings?"

So we are experiencing the same thing right now with the level of communication that we have, the many cameras and eyeballs and engaged people we have. We have all these microprinting presses all over the planet exposing the harsh realities and brutalities that people of color and (the) LGBT community as well have experienced. This type of hatred and bigotry. So I feel like this is a huge awakening. There's a huge new printing press. Sorry. Your original question: What am I doing to look for the good...

**CA: Yeah, you said you're at the piano, making some music and writing some songs.**

**JM:** That's really where my best spirit is enjoyed is at the piano because I can transmute my fear and my pain into something more pleasant. Our life experience is going to be the result of our thoughts and our speech, our beliefs and our actions and our attitudes. I feel that music – and art in general – is such a great way to access and get all five under control: your thoughts, your speech, beliefs, your actions, your attitude. Then your life experience gets completely transformed and gets basically connected to that big planet that we're dangling on, and that universe that we're praying to and wondering, "What the eff is this all about?" Beliefs that we can truly live in a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, peaceful world. All of that can come together through music.

**CA: I think music has the power to get through to people when other means of communication cannot. Do you recognize that as a musician?**

**JM:** It's not as easy to memorize a quote, but what is it about a melody that allows it to sink and stay with us? I don't know the science behind it, but I've been experimenting with it since I was a little kid and it's a magical phenomenon that we as humans get to experience. It's a language that transcends the words even. And it's a human phenomenon. And I'm so thankful that it exists. Imagine if we only had to deal with speeches. That would be a miserable existence.

**CA: What does the rainbow on the cover of *Look for the Good* represent?**

**JM:** I got this idea from a Mister Rogers album cover. He has an album that says "Mister Rogers knows you're special" and it has a little mirror on the cover and also a little rainbow around it. I was

really touched by that, and I was really touched by his work. And even the song "Look for the Good" is a bit of a reference to an interview I saw with him. I guess it was his mother who told him, when watching the news, if something bad is on the news, look for the heroes. Look for what's good on the news. And that inspired the songs. That inspired the album cover. Really it inspired who I am as an entertainer. So the album cover was really meant to be a reflection back on the viewer to see the good in themselves.

**CA: We've had some phone interviews in the past, and I've sort of seen you come fully into yourself.**

**JM:** (Smiles.) Getting there.

**CA: The journey of you being an out public figure took some time. I was looking back at some of our conversations and you dropped a couple of hints. In 2010, you told me you didn't like feeling another man's facial hair on your skin. And then in 2012, you said you'd been asked to join in on a threesome with a couple but it wasn't a reality at that point.**

**And then, in 2018, we got the news that you were bisexual (via a Pride Month poem Mraz wrote for Billboard). Why, at that moment, did it seem like the right time to come out as bisexual?**

**JM:** I wanted to be careful (because of my family, which is probably a struggle a lot of people have. And when I say this, it's not because they wouldn't love me for who I am. I was afraid to say who I was when I was younger. I was

Photo By Jen Rosenstein



afraid to explore it because I thought exploring it was the wrong thing to do because of things I heard when I was growing up and because of how I saw society react to the LGBT community. So I thought if I go down this lane, I was taught that it was not a good path. And so for me to come out and say I was taught that that's not a good path is potentially causing harm to my mother who raised me well, so I never wanted to put her in a position that made her feel or look like a bad parent.



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Same to my stepfather or my stepmother or my father. I had four parents. They're not all to blame. I'm not going to throw any of them under the bus.

So it was just growing up in a kind of community where I didn't feel safe to go down that path and explore some intuitions that I had. So I closeted it. I suppressed it. I put it aside. And as I go through life, and as I started having experiences, it's in my programming, it's the systemic issues of going through life and thinking, "This is not healthy." But the more I went through life and the more I became supported and *supportive* of the LGBT (community), I realized I was safe, I was home, and enough is enough.

Silence doesn't do anybody any good. And it wasn't doing *me* any good. It wasn't giving me the opportunity to have more of the experiences I wanted to have in my life. And as I was getting older, I thought, "Jesus, am I gonna waste my whole life on fear? Or can I step into this and be proud of who I am and see where this takes me, see where this journey takes me, see what kind of new friendships I form, see the level of love that I'm capable of that I've not given myself permission for?" That was my journey.

Honestly, I thought, "I'm gonna have to wait until my parents leave the planet before I get to be who I am." I didn't want that. I wanted them to see who I am while they're still alive and I want to be who I am while I'm still alive. It gave me even more empathy and more compassion for those who are taking that journey every day, and for the out community who just lives bravely in this world every day. So it was time for me to come out. If I was really going to use my superpower for good, it was time for me to start addressing who I am, because authenticity is the new reality.

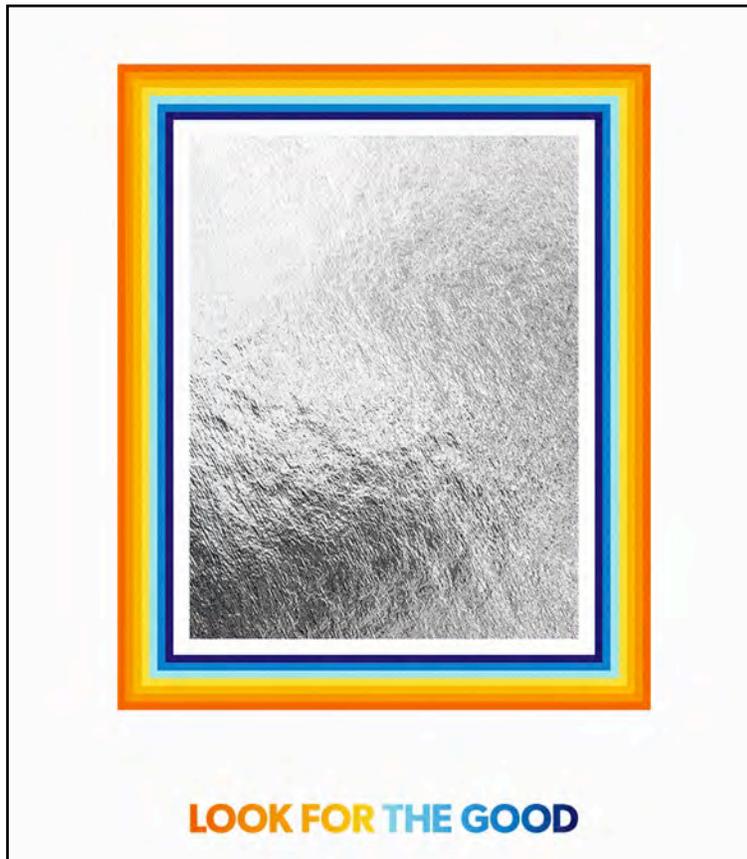
**CA: Thank you for sharing that. It takes me to the last song on the**

**album, "Gratitude." I don't think I've ever thought to give gratitude to the bullies who called me a faggot when I was a kid, which you do on the song. Can you talk about how that song came about and how you were able to get to a place where you could show gratitude to the people who ridiculed and put you down as a kid?**

**JM:** I can't fight violence with violence, and I can't just call names back to the people who've called me names. So rather than name-calling, I tried to look for the good in the situations that I experienced in high school.

especially on Sundays, I was able to weave some of my gospel influences into this song "Gratitude" and do my best to try to look for the good.

That's what this album project was. How can I look for the good in this? How can I look for the good in 2020? How can I look for the good in my past? And I knew I needed to figure out: How can I look for the good in the trauma of my high school bullies? And if I can, it's that drive; they gave me that drive. And I hope that they're embarrassed or sorry or feel like total failures because their bullying did nothing but help me change the world.



**CA: My last question is Pride-related. What message do you want to send out to the LGBTQ community? Because Pride is different this year. We're going virtual. A lot has changed.**

**JM:** Just because it's going virtual does not mean that Pride is still not a protest. And the battlefield is not just on the streets, it's on the internet; it's amplified when our voices come together. So my message to people this year is to keep going and go harder than ever. I honestly feel like what's going on in the world is getting closer to the Equal Rights Amendment and that's been a long time coming. The last time the Constitution was amended and ratified was in the '90s and it had to do with Congress' salaries. Who gives a fuck about that? So I think what's really heating up is going to get us closer to the Equal Rights Amendment. So my

I didn't want to go back and attack that person. I just wanted to demonstrate that I was better than that person and that all that energy they put into tearing me down was a waste of their energy because all I've done is build myself up to be a bigger, better, stronger, more active person. I've known that for a long time I did want to put that in song, so I started this song back in 2010. I played it live a few times, but it never really found its home on an album.

So finally on this album, working with this phenomenal reggae band and having 10 years to really build the song, (and) I listened to a lot of gospel music,

message to Pride is, even though we may not be in the streets, go harder than ever. And who knows? This thing might spill over into the streets anyway because the internet can't hold us. It can't.

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

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## GRAB SCOTT

## Talking about a revolution: an interview with gay singer/songwriter Scott Free

By Gregg Shapiro

**Scott Free's** impressive and admirable list of professional accomplishments keeps growing all the time. Homolatte, his Chicago-based LGBT live performance series, is in its 20th year. He has had two theatrical musicals produced. He was inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2010. In 2005 and 2009 he was named by the OUTMusic Awards as Out Musician of the Year. He runs Alt Q Radio, an indie queer radio station on Live365. Since 1996, Free has released five studio albums under his own name with 2020's *The Last Revolution* (Leather/Western Records) being the latest. Scott was kind enough to answer a few questions in advance of the release of his new album.

**Gregg Shapiro:** In prepping for this interview about your new album *The Last Revolution*, I went back and relistened to your four previous solo albums. *Getting Off*, *The Living Dead*, *They Call Me Mr. Free* and *The Pink Album* incorporated a vast array of influences including punk, hip-hop, folk, industrial, pop, house and jazz. Looking back on your musical evolution, what gives you the most satisfaction as an artist?

**Scott Free:** It's funny that you bring up genre. This is my first solo album in 12 years, and in-between I did two musicals and a children's album, so I wasn't paying much attention to the online popular music world. Now



everything is tagged by genre, and I struggled to fit what this album is into a genre. The two closest I found were folk punk and alternative rap; but I'm not sure if that's right either. A lot of what I do on this album is really rhythmic spoken word; there's no real attempt to sound like rap. Also, the subject matters of the songs are the reason for the album, so in my head, the "genre" is protest, or social justice; but that just doesn't fit into this current system. I don't think I have a preference for genre. I'm working on two different live music sets for when we can get back to that; one is acoustic punk and the other is piano cabaret.

**GS:** If there is one constant in your music, it's your political voice, which comes through loud and clear on *The Last Revolution*. How do you see your role as a musical activist?

**SF:** I have a tendency to do concept albums. The Diesel Tykes (children's) album was an LGBT family album. *The Pink Album* was a song cycle about a time period of the 1960's through today; growing up gay through the formation of the current LGBT community. The concept for this one was to do an album of all social justice songs. Also, it was to pull myself out of the lyrics. The word "I" is not on the album. I really wanted to contribute to the body of work of protest music, but also, it is where I am personally at this time in my life. I am active in direct action/social justice work with my involvement in Gay Liberation Network in Chicago, and I've been protesting at a number of the Black Lives Matter/Defund The Police protests.

**GS:** *The Last Revolution* opens with "The Beginning of the End (Climate

**Change)”. Climate change is also addressed in “Shut ‘Em Down”. In what ways have you reduced your carbon footprint?**

**SF:** I drive a lot less than I used to, and haven’t been on a plane in many years. I’d say I’m 95 percent vegan; of course, hardcore vegans would say that means I’m not vegan *[laughs]*! So, however that is supposed to be expressed – almost, or wanna-be vegan or something *[laughs]*! But the best way for all of us to reduce the carbon footprint is to get out there and protest to defund the military, and stop government subsidies and the bailing out of oil and coal companies and meat factories. Only 100 companies create 70 percent of all global emissions. That’s what the song “Shut ‘Em Down” is all about.

**GS: Songs such as “Republicans and Democrats” and “This Is Not Our Government” express your dissatisfaction with the government and the two-party system. Have you ever considered running for office, and if so, would your platform include what you sing about in “Every Freedom”?**

**SF:** With politics, I’m more of a behind-the-scenes person. Most of my work recently has been on Ranked Choice Voting, which would be its own kind of revolution in elections. I’ve also done work for Dario Hunter, who’s running for the Green Party’s presidential nomination. My stance for 2020 is that voting Green Party in the non-swing states is a good thing – it helps them get federal funding and better state ballot access. But in the swing states – sorry Greens, but hell no – we’ve got to get this ass out of office! But past 2020, we absolutely need to get Ranked Choice Voting in 50 states. It’s in Maine already, so 49 to go! As far as “Every Freedom”, that song is my attempt to write a universal folk song, to write something that someday, might become a standard. And yes, in my politics, absolutely, human rights of all kinds are the priority!

**GS: As a resident of the deep South for more than six years, I tried not to take offense at the message of “Split the Thing in Two”. Do you think there will ever be a time when the North and South will be able to see eye to eye?**

**SF:** I hesitated on putting this song on the album, for obvious reasons. This is one of those Randy Newman-ish sarcastic songs that I can get in trouble for. In fact, the song wasn’t working at all musically until I came up with the silly Civil War fife and drum thing to start it off. Then I felt it had the right

tone. But realistically, no, I’m not actively working on state secessions *[laughs]*! But the song does come out of the aggravation of what America truly is: two countries. To answer your question, no, I don’t think there will ever be an agreement between the two ideologies that we label as North and South. I wrote it because I’m amazed at how the ideological split is so complete, so absolute. But of course, those two ideologies are not conveniently divided along some actual geographic line. But with all the statues coming down right now, the song is timely. I’ll give it that!

**GS: The Last Revolution is being released during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it sounds like the songs were written before we found ourselves in this deadly and terrifying situation. Have you written any new songs that address the pandemic?**

**SF:** Actually “This Is Not Our Government” was written during the pandemic; it was a last-minute addition to the album. It is referencing the federal government’s CARES Act,

where the government gave the vast majority of the money to corporations and big business. That’s the thing about our supposed “two party” system; when it comes to the big money, they seem to agree that the rich are the priority. The Democrats talk as if they don’t, but the final bills always end up that way.

**GS: We began the interview by talking about your early work. Your song “Meet You At The Church” includes the “will you marry me, Morrissey?” chorus. Knowing what we now know about Morrissey’s political leanings, how do you feel about that song?**

**SF:** That was another one of those sarcastic songs. I was actually really angry at Morrissey for not coming out of the closet, at a time when it would have been so helpful to do so. So, I was kind of “outing” him in song. But no, not only wouldn’t I marry him, I wouldn’t go to his shows, or buy or listen to his albums. I’m so glad to see Johnny Marr is out there doing his own versions of Smiths songs!

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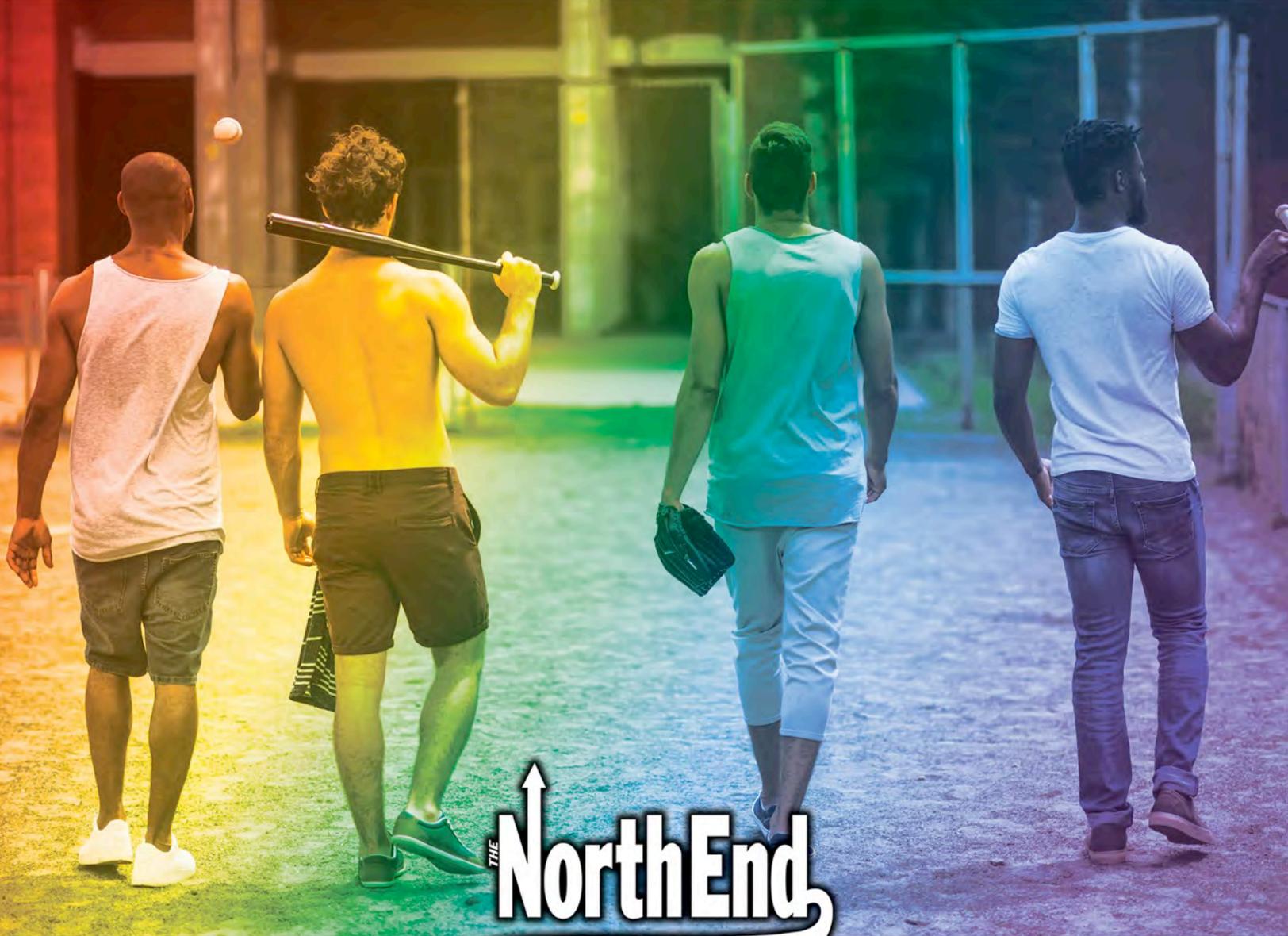


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2	Alyx Ander	Can't You See
3	Rat City x Kiesza	Naked (ZIDA Remix)
4	OMI	I Want You
5	Tritonal & Man Cub	Worth It All
6	Jax Jones & Martin Solveig Present Europa	TEQUILA ft. RAYE
7	Karen Harding x Digital Farm Animals	Undo My Heart
8	Doja Cat	Say So (Jax Jones Midnight Snack Remix)
9	OLWIK x Willemijn May	In My Head
10	Netta	Cuckoo (Danny Verde Radio Mix)
11	Michael Calfan & Martin Solveig	No Lie (Radio Edit)
12	Mako x Elephante	Chameleon (Radio Edit)
13	Michael Calfan	Could Be You ft. Danny Dearden
14	Tritonal x Haliene x Schala x Jorza	Long Way Home (Original Mix)
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# GRAB ERIK

## S-O-C-K-S

By Erik Sosa-Kibby

My life is about to change, drastically! And, as if finalizing a divorce isn't tumultuous enough as it is, why not throw in an international relocation for shits and giggles. I mean, seriously though, if I have the chance to start anew, I've learn to either go big or go home! Which, by the way, if anyone is in the market for a 6-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom home, with a full walkout basement and jaw-dropping patio, please let me know. Also, while I'm at it, I'd like to give a shout out to the Coronas (19 if you will) for helping me and my family encapsulate, solidify and debouch some of the entrepreneurial dreams we have been evaluating for the past three years. Yes Bitches, the Sosa-Kibby family is moving permanently to Bahia Principe, Akumal before the 20-21 school year begins.

Let me explain.

Not long before Cole and Parker were old enough to formulate proper sentences, we spent many years vacationing in Hawaii and California. However, it wasn't until the boys reached middle school when Mark and I decided

a change of scenery was much needed for the boys' personal growth, development and love of all things culturally diverse. So, after taking one memorable Disney Cruise down the Baja Peninsula to the Mexican Riviera and docking in picturesque seaside towns, we were hooked on phonics!

Originally known as the Cancun-Tulum corridor until 1999, the Riviera Maya is a tourism and resort district south of Cancun. And this is where my story actually begins. For the past five years, starting in Cancun, our family has been traveling south every spring break, while soaking up the rays of the Mexican Quintana Roo coastline. As we became more and more familiar with the land, its people and its culture, in time, we have left the comforts of a resort/hotel lifestyle and now opt for the more flexible AirBnB experience. The ability and flexibility to experience a more local way of life, has allowed me and the children to envision a sun-filled future that seems less chaotic and much less stressful than the "world" we live in today.

Will we miss me the comforts of home and the love of friends who we have come to call family? *Most definitely.* But, on the flipside, you never really lose true friends and home is where the heart is. Grindr not included. Yes, we will have



tough times ahead, but isn't that life in general? It's time for me to stretch my limbs by mentally and physically making a drastic move in my life, and the time just feels right. Mark is on board. My mom is on board. The children are on board. My support system seems to be on a full-steam course ahead and I can't be more happy and scared to see what adventures tomorrow has in store for us.

For now, just remember this, if you can spell out socks; S-O-C-K-S, you're on your way to learning Spanish made easy. And amigos, to you, I say S-O-C-K-S; "That's what it is," or Yeah, that is right." Need I say more?

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# GRAB HOLLY

## Are You Liberally Lubricated?

By Holly Maholm

Donut Time's new business venture (home delivery of donuts by horse-drawn chariots) had launched, and it was an unqualified success. As the weeks wore on, we increased our customer base, and sales stayed strong. Xandra found she needed help in the kitchen, and – in addition to taking on Phyllis and Grandma Lily part-time – she hired away one of the Lunch Ladies (Martha) from the high school cafeteria.

I was happy to see our new revenue, as we had many workers to support. There were Xandra, Cindy and Aly, as well as Recon, Fender and Tuco (the drivers), plus Xandra's three new kitchen helpers. What I had not foreseen were the challenges we faced resulting from our employment of the rescue horses.

Now, do not imagine that the rescue horses lacked for attentive oversight, or that their needs were ever ignored. No. Xandra and Cindy were unceasingly vigilant concerning the welfare of the horses. Having once witnessed the mistreatment which Blossom and Biscuit suffered at the hands of the former carriage-owner, they watched with eagle eyes to ensure that the rescue horses

were well taken care of.

And standing behind them in that ever-observant assembly were Glitter, and behind her, Dot. Glitter served either in the stable or at the Horse Rescue, where it was her responsibility to decide which horses needed a break, and which were sufficiently recovered that they could go back into service. Behind her stood Dot, who – consulting daily with Queen Penelope – spoke up whenever she thought one of the horses “just didn't look right” and needed more rest.

And in all honesty, I stood behind them all, where I did what I could to make the lives of the horses easier. I went on the internet and found what I can only describe as “rubber horse booties,” which, when strapped onto each hoof, provided both the sure footing and shock-absorption necessary for pulling a chariot over hard and slippery pavement. Yes, if our rescue horses were in any danger, it was only of being so pampered and overfed that – despite their labor pulling the chariots – they could soon gain weight.

All that I have just explained to you might have been easily foreseen by someone more familiar with horses than I, but what I tell you next is but a “truth universally acknowledged” in our modern world. To wit: No business in America today can operate smoothly unless liberally lubricated with the labor of interns.

At the end of each working day, after some eight hours driving the chariots and dropping off orders, the drivers (Recon, Fender and Tuco) were too exhausted to provide the daily care required by the horses.

The daily needs of the horses were several: Their rubber boots had to be removed, as well as their harnesses, halters, knee-braces, leg wraps and tie-backs. They needed to be washed, dried and watered; and have their hooves checked for injury or wear. These jobs – being dirty, repetitious and monotonous, and being of primary importance to the horses (but not to upper-management) – it naturally follows that these were just the sort of tasks to be delegated to interns.

Thus, Cindy and I asked ourselves: Where could we find interns to work at Donut Time? They had to be young, energetic and (honestly) naïve. Unsurprisingly, we thought of Dave's LGBT



students at the high school.

“But, wait,” you ask, “didn't Cindy and I recognize that this proposal would unavoidably result in our taking unfair advantage of Dave's students?” Does horse manure make good fertilizer? Consequently, Dave – negotiating on behalf of his students – exacted two concessions in return for their labor.

First, Dave insisted that his students would serve as interns only as part of a larger and authentically “educational” program; one that would fit within the Roman Army curriculum they were pursuing. Accordingly, I prevailed upon our local large-animal vet – Jeff – (who attended to the rescue horses, when necessary) to develop and teach a course on the Biology and Physiology of the Horse. Three times a week I walked one of the rescue horses over to the high school, where Jeff taught a hands-on seminar focused on the equine species.

He lectured upon topics he had studied in vet school, as well as secrets he had learned during his long career with thoroughbreds. The course was soon so popular among the LGBT-interns that many ordinary students clamored to join the class.

There was a second concession I had to make in order to obtain the commitment of the LGBT-interns. This I readily agreed to arrange, but – as is so often the case with interns – we “Executives” (even the greatest among us) sometimes fail to foresee what scandalous results may be aroused, stiffen and explode all over us, thereby bringing about impeachment of our reputation.

*(To be continued)*

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

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# GRAB A GETAWAY

TRAVEL



## Saugatuck/Douglas is open and better than ever

### Artsy Midwest resort area has something for everyone

By Bill Malcom

The Midwest's gay resort area, Saugatuck-Douglas, Michigan, is open and better than ever. The sandy beaches, two gay resorts, sand dunes, and blueberries beckon the LGBTQ traveler. The Southwest Michigan area is easily accessible by car from many cities and flying into Grand Rapids is another option.

Safety is a priority in the area and COVID 19 protection plans are in place and include:

- employees wearing masks at bars, restaurants, and stores
- restaurants have spaced out tables and are operating at reduced capacity
- the number of campsites has been reduced at CampIt
- reduced capacity and spread out bar area at the Dunes Resort
- masks are required to enter grocery stores
- and more

The area features two great LGBTQ resorts. **The Dunes Resort** features many lodging options (motel, cabins, and more), a pool with bar (never a cover or admission fee), a great indoors bar, two dance floors, and more. It is the Midwest's largest gay resort.

Weekly events including piano bar Monday, Karaoke on Thursdays, Gogo boys from Perfect 10 Men Fridays, and a T Dance (with Barbeque) Sunday afternoons. The Dunes Divas also appear with shows on the Tea Deck weekend nights. Enjoy the pool scene which is great for people watching. The T Dance is another must. There is something special going on every weekend including:

- July 9-12 Underwear Party
- July 16-19 Christmas in July
- July 23-27 Venetian Weekend
- July 30-August 2 Mardi Gras
- August 6-9 Wonderland Weekend
- August 13-16 White Party Weekend
- August 20-23 Furball Weekend
- August 27-30 End of Summer Blues

Book your stay or get more information at <http://www.dunesresort.com> or call **269-857-1401**. They also handle bookings for the Northern Lights condominiums across the street.

(Please note: While the indoor bar and dance floor are closed again, the expanded party is outside now with 15,000 square feet of additional bar space in the parking lot plus the outdoor

bar and dance floor. Bring your mask. They will be taking your temperature.)

Value oriented travelers will especially like like the camping and other options like small cabins and a bunkhouse over at **Camp It Resort**, Saugatuck's Outdoor Resort in Fennville just south of Saugatuck. They have a great pool scene, too. Upcoming events include:

- July 10-12 Trailer Trash Weekend
- July 17-19 Drag fest
- July 24-26 Christmas in July
- July 31-August 2 Bear weekend
- August 7-9 Toga weekend
- August 14-16 Wild West weekend
- August 21-23 Mardi Gras (complete with parade)—this is always a sell out so book early

August 28-30 Wine and Dine weekend

DC DJ Steve Henderson spins the tunes by the pool. Henderson was the DJ and part owner of the now defunct Ziegfried/Secrets bar in Washington, D.C. The resort has been going strong since 1982. I love that you can camp for just \$20 a night on the weekends. It's a friendly crowd and they even have a food truck (opening soon) for those that don't like to cook.

# egoist

A photograph of two shirtless men embracing and smiling at each other. They are positioned in front of a large, circular rainbow gradient. The man on the left has his arm around the man on the right. Both are wearing black athletic shorts with a small logo on the side. The background is dark with a subtle pattern.

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**Get out and explore**

Make your first stop beautiful Oval Beach on Lake Michigan. One of the best shorelines around. However, they do charge \$10 until 8 pm. so save money and just go for the sunset. Other beaches (which are free) include the Laketown Beach and West Side County Park. My favorite is the Wau-Ke-Na Preserve which features great hiking and a wonderful (and free beach) less affected by this year's high Lake Michigan water levels.

Take a hike to the beach at Saugatuck Dunes State Park. You walk through a beech/maple forest to the dunes and then down to the beach, although the high water levels leave little beach left right now. The non-resident

fee is \$9. The huge forest covered dunes are amazing.

Explore the arts community in downtown Saugatuck with its shops and restaurants. Uncommon Ground is the LGBTQ oriented coffee shop. It is a very walkable small town. Rent a bike at Big Lake Outfitters and ride on the new Blue Star bike and hike trail.

Pick or just buy the local grown blueberries at Blue Star farms. The peaches grown in the area are also very good. Go wine tasting at the Fenn Valley Vineyards. There is so much to do in this beautiful area on the shores of Lake Michigan.

**Where to Eat**  
The What Not in Fennville is open at 50% of capacity. The

salmon, perch, and taco salad are all excellent plus it is very LGBTQ friendly. You will find the restaurant just south of Douglas on Blue Star Highway.

Enjoy fresh made juices, sandwiches, and salads with local ingredients at The Farmhouse Deli (100 Blue Star Highway). Try the carrot or beet juice blends.

Have a slice of pizza or homemade sandwich at Lakeshore Convenience, 655 Blue Star Highway.

Grab a coffee drink at Uncommon Coffee in Saugatuck. It's the LGBTQ friendly hang out in town with micro roasted coffee beans to take home.

Forget something? The LakeVista Supervalu in Douglas has everything you need.

You will not run out of things to do in the Saugatuck area. However, hurry--the season ends just after Labor Day.

For more information, visit <http://www.Saugatuck.com>, <http://www.dunesresort.com>, or <http://campit.com>.

*Bill Malcolm is America's only syndicated LGBTQ value travel columnist. His column appears or has appeared in GRAB Chicago, Q Notes Charlotte, HOTSpots! Florida, the Washington Blade, the L.A. Blade and other publications. He is based in Indianapolis. All or part of this column may appear in other publications.*





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CUT.COM HONOR LGBTQ  
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WITH LOVE IN TRANSITION**



Legacy Recordings, the catalog division of Sony Music Entertainment and digital studio Cut.com have partnered to release *Love In Transition*, an inspirational video celebrating the beauty of transgender love set to Elvis Presley's timeless romantic classic "Can't Help Falling In Love."

*Love In Transition*, released in celebration of Pride Month, shares the stories of six couples who describe falling in love while a trans partner discovers and embraces their true self. Through each couple's honesty, warmth and humor, the video showcases how each couple's love transforms, deepening as they learn more about each other's truth and resilience.

For its appropriately moving soundtrack, Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling In Love" was selected to underscore the simple beauty and endurance of love. First released in 1961 and featured in Elvis' blockbuster film *Blue Hawaii*, "Can't Help Falling In Love" spent four weeks at No. 1 on the U.K. charts and peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100, earning a Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) Platinum award in 1992 for certified sales of more than 1 million units. It is one of Elvis' most-listened to tracks, and has been covered by artists from *UB40* and *Andy Williams* to *Twenty One Pilots*, *Ingrid Michaelson* and *Haley Reinhart*.

To view visit <https://youtu.be/NgVHr5jf5t4>

**FOREST GREEN  
RELEASE NEW SONG "IVORY"**



Forest Green have released another new song from their new album *In Waves*.

The title, "In Waves" is sort of

about everything in life being temporary, but it's mainly about four friends wanting to make music together," says Guitarist Duhaime. "This album and songs wouldn't be a thing if we didn't all love each other. While the songs don't always have the most fun content, lyrically, we absolutely have fun creating them."

Forest Green is a four-piece rock outfit hailing from Saginaw, Michigan. With a unique blend of alternative and post-hardcore roots, they've etched their way into the scene with a sound of their own. Displaying a raw, intense and emotion-filled sound, they've proven to bring nothing but energy and passion to their music and live performances. The band is composed of vocalist and guitarist **Mark Duhaime**, drummer **Nathan Urband**, bassist **Dan Horn** and guitarist **Chris Bloom**.

For more info visit [www.forestgreenband.com](http://www.forestgreenband.com)

**GRAMMY AWARD-WINNING,  
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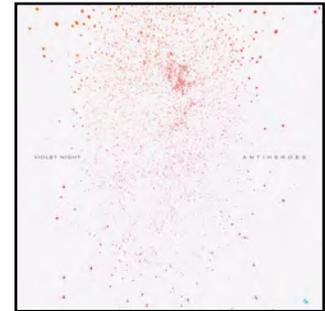
Multimillion-selling R&B/pop pioneer and seven-time GRAMMY Award-winner, Toni Braxton is joined by the legendary Missy Elliott for a remix of "Do It." On the track, Braxton pulls inspiration from her own experiences and shares advice for anyone struggling with the decision to end an unhealthy relationship. The original version of "Do It" is a Top 10 iTunes R&B single and is Top 5 on the Adult R&B Chart. Produced by Missy Elliott with co-production by Hannon Lane, they bring a fast-paced tempo to the remix while reiterating Braxton's encouragement to leave a toxic relationship by rapping "let him know I gotta do it, 'cause he already done and blew it."

"Do It" with Missy Elliott is the latest single from Braxton following her multi-Grammy nominated album *Sex & Cigarettes*. Released in 2018, the album features hit single "Long As I Live" which shot to #1 on the Billboard Adult R&B chart and top 10 on the R&B charts. Last year, Braxton embarked on her "Long As I Live" tour visiting 21 cities in addition

to South Africa and for the first time in 22 years, the United Kingdom. In late 2019, Braxton graced the stage at the American Music Awards for a breathtaking performance of her iconic song, "Un-Break My Heart," which marked the 25th anniversary of her first appearance on the show which become one of the most talked about moments from the evening.

To download "Do it" visit <https://tonibraxton.lnk.to/Dolt-MissyElliotRmx>

**VIOLET NIGHT ANNOUNCES  
FORTHCOMING ALBUM  
ANTIHEROES  
OUT SEPTEMBER 25TH**



Alternative band Violet Night is thrilled to announce their forthcoming album *ANTIHEROES*, set to be released on September 25th, 2020. The album serves as a follow up to 2018's *Colours Of You*, and features the previously released "Freak Me Up."

On the new album, vocalist/guitarist **Connor Pohl** shares: "With *ANTIHEROES*, we broke the band down into its smallest parts, and wiped the slate clean. We wrote this album with the mindset that it was our very first record, and there was no preconceived notion or expectation of what we were supposed to sound like."

Violet Night don't just play their instruments; they use them as tools to carefully construct emotion. Hailing from Toronto, ON vocalist/guitarist **Connor Pohl**, keyboardist **T.J. Rounthwaite**, and drummer **Tay Ewart** aim to traverse soundscapes as diverse as their province's landscapes. From the soaring heights of mountains to the tranquil beauty of a forest, the sky's the limit with this alternative trio's sound and potential.

What else were they going to do, though, other than write? Initially formed as a duo, the band spent their formative years honing their craft in rural British Columbia. With distance standing in the way of shows, they doubled down on taking the band to new heights and relocated to Toronto, where they scouted drummer Tay Ewart (Like Pacific, Modern Space).

*ANTIHEROES* will be released on September 25th, 2020. To pre-save visit: [Smarturl.it/ANTIHEROES](https://Smarturl.it/ANTIHEROES).

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## Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame Selection Committee to Meet



The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, now entering its 30th year, announced earlier this year that it would resume inducting new members. After putting out a call to the community for nominations it now has a slate of possible inductees. A selection committee, comprised of Individuals inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, was scheduled to meet in March, but that meeting was canceled due to restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The selection committee will now review the slate of candidates and select the candidates in a virtual meeting on August 1. Anyone inducted into the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame as an Individual is entitled to serve on the selection committee. Those interested

in participating should send an e-mail to [outreach@LGBTHallofFame.org](mailto:outreach@LGBTHallofFame.org) by July 17, 2020. A virtual ceremony for inductees will be held in October 2020 in honor of LGBT History Month.

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame was founded in 1991 as the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame. Its purpose then, as now, is to honor people and entities, nominated by the community, who have made significant contributions to the quality of life or well-being of the LGBT community in Chicago. It is the first city-sponsored hall of fame dedicated to LGBT people, organizations, and community in the United States.

From its founding in 1991 until 2016 the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame relied on support from the City of Chicago. The city ceased funding the Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame in 2016 as part of then mayor *Rahm Emmanuel's* cost-cutting programs. At that time, it was rechristened the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame and has since been supported and maintained by the Friends of the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame, a 501c3 not-for-profit organization, with approval from the City of Chicago.

The Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame inducted new members, from a slate submitted by Chicago's LGBT community, in 2016 and 2017. At that point, the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame decided to take time to restructure, selecting new board members and bringing on new volunteers, as well as re-establishing itself as a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.

The first Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame ceremony took place during Pride Week and was held at Chicago City Hall. Mayor *Richard M. Daley* hosted the ceremony and afterwards, photos of the inductees were displayed in City Hall. The Hall of Fame has no physical facility but maintains a website, which allows anyone to visit the Hall of Fame at any time. Traditionally, the City of Chicago has displayed the Hall of Fame materials during induction periods.

For more information, visit the organization's web site <http://www.chicagolgbthalloffame.org/> or its Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/56108152083/> or on Twitter @LGBTHallofFame.

## Justin Sayre's 8th Annual Night of a Thousand Judys to benefit The Ali Forney Center



The eighth annual "Night of A Thousand Judys" – the Pride concert to benefit *The Ali Forney Center* written and hosted by *Justin Sayre* – will be presented as a streaming online event on Tuesday, July 14 at 8:00 PM Eastern. Performers will include *Lena Hall* (Tony winner for *Hedwig*), *Natalie Douglas* (12x MAC Winner), *Eva Noblezada* (*Hadestown*), *Nathan Lee Graham*

(*Zoolander*, "LA to Vegas"), *Adam Pascal* (*Rent*), *Beth Malone* (*Fun Home*), *Alice Ripley* (*Next to Normal*), *George Salazar* (*Be More Chill*), *Ann Harada* (*Avenue Q*), *T. Oliver Reid* (*Hadestown*), *Jessica Vosk* (*Wicked*), *Spencer Day* (#1 Billboard artist), *Bright Light Bright Light* (Elton John, Cher), with others to be added. The Ali Forney Center is the nation's largest agency dedicated to helping LGBTQ homeless youth.

"Night of a Thousand Judys" will honor the iconic Judy Garland with tributes and songs from her legendary career as movie star, recording artist and stage performer. The virtual event is written and hosted by *Justin Sayre*, featuring *Tracy Stark* as music director. "Night of a Thousand Judys" is produced by *Dan Fortune* and *Adam J. Rosen*, with Dan Fortune serving as executive producer.

"We are in a historical moment," says Justin. "A moment when people too

long unheard, undervalued and underrepresented are demanding justice. We are speaking out for justice, and while our ire and our disgust at the abuses of the police is reaching a fevered pitch, we must remember that the fight for justice is a fight on multiple fronts. We must never forget that in New York, homeless LGBTQ youth are deeply at risk, and many of these brave young people are people of color. We are here to support this community at risk."

The Ali Forney Center is the nation's largest and most comprehensive agency dedicated to LGBTQ homeless youths—assisting nearly 1,400 youths per year through a 24-hour Drop-In Center which provides over 65,000 meals annually, medical and mental health services through an on-site clinic, and a scattered site housing program.

Watch the concert at donate to the cause at <http://www.ThousandJudys.com>.

## Statement by the National Fair Housing Alliance on SCOTUS Ruling to Protect LGBTQ Individuals from Employment Discrimination

In July 2019, the *National Fair Housing Alliance* (NFHA) was among almost 60 civil rights organizations that filed a joint amicus brief urging the U.S. Supreme Court to ensure anti-discrimination workplace protections apply to LGBTQ individuals. We applaud the Court's recent decision to do exactly that.

In its ruling, the Court stated that, in conjunction with prohibiting employment discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion and national origin, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. NFHA is encouraged by the Court's landmark

decision, but we know that discrimination against LGBTQ individuals does not end when they leave work. Those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer routinely face discrimination in other areas of life including housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service. We also know that many LGBTQ individuals are people of color and are therefore doubly vulnerable to acts of prejudice.

The SCOTUS ruling, while a key milestone, only opens the door to equality in one facet of life. What we hope is that this moment spurs the much-needed expansion of protection on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Court's interpretation of Title VII will influence lower court decisions on Title VIII/Fair Housing cases dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity

discrimination; these fair housing claims should be enforced accordingly.

Another avenue through which LGBTQ protections could be expanded is the Equality Act. The bill, passed by a bipartisan vote in the House in May 2019, would prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in a wide variety of areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, employment, housing, credit, and the jury system. We urge the Senate to swiftly follow the House's lead and pass this vital piece of legislation.

As an organization dedicated to ending systemic discrimination, NFHA remains fiercely committed to ensuring that LGBTQ Americans are able to make a living without fear of discrimination and that they are also granted fair access to housing and other important resources.

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# What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

## Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes, COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic>.

## Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

## What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

## How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

## If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

## Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

## Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



[cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

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