

JULY 4 2023 • VOL XIV • ISSUE#14

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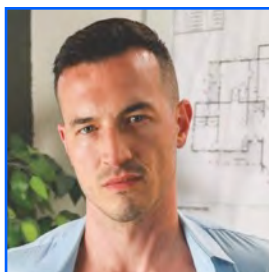
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# GRAB DEREK

## Into the Kage Fans Can't Get Enough of KinkMen's Derek Kage

By Mark Dawson

Growing up in conservative Huntsville, Alabama was not an enjoyable experience for Derek Kage, one of the leading men at KinkMen.com. He was different: a very curious and precocious child who loved reading, art, and alternative music, and began exploring with drugs, alcohol, and sex much earlier than anyone else he knew.

Kage is much happier now, living in Salt Lake City. But you know what they say... you can take the boy out of Alabama, but you can't take the Alabama out the boy. Derek Kage remains quite the outdoorsman. He loves to hike, backpack, camp, and fish. He is a deep-voiced Southern gentleman in the streets and whatever the occasion calls for in the sheets.

We sat down with him to learn more.

**Mark Dawson: When was your first experience with a guy?**

**Derek Kage:** It was back in the days of AOL chatrooms. I met a guy in Alabama M4M chat room. He came over and I gave him a blowjob and that was it; nothing truly memorable. I tried again and another guy came over and I bottomed for the first time and, I have to say, it was really hot and I loved how it felt. It was a much better experience than my first time with a guy. This was how I went about hooking up with guys for the next few years.

**MD: Were you still in the closet?**

**DK:** I didn't fully come out until I was 23. I'm not one for fanfare, so I finally told my mother I'd fallen in love with someone and that it was a guy. She was very supportive and so



was the rest of my family as it wasn't that big of a surprise to anyone.

**MD: What led to your pursuing a career in adult film?**

**DK:** I've always been a hyper sexual guy and I loved the idea of being in porn and performing. Grant Ducati asked me if I wanted to do a Trailer Trash Boys scene with him. I said yes and honestly, it was the best decision. I had such a great time and was asked back for another scene for Gentleman's Closet. It was one of those eureka moments where I found my calling and I have pursued it with a passion.

**MD: What are the best parts of the**

**job?**

**DK:** I cannot say enough positive things about the adult film industry. It literally saved my life. The people I meet, the places I get to go, the camaraderie on set, the satisfaction of seeing a completed scene... are all the things I love about the industry.

**MD: How has being a porn star impacted your dating life?**

**DK:** I imagine this question gets asked a lot because people that are not in the industry may have difficulty dating someone in the industry, but I haven't had that experience. I'm very open and honest about what I do. If someone

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*Photo Courtesy of courtesy KinkMen.com*

doesn't want to date me because of my job, then I didn't need them in my life to begin with.

**MD: Your genre of adult film is pretty extreme, Derek. When did you first discover kink?**

**DK:** I honestly don't know. I think Tumblr and Twitter helped me to discover new kinks and then connect with people to talk to about them. These days, my kinks are often discovered on the Kinkmen.com studio set where I get to explore them with some of the most experienced and sexiest performers around.

**MD: Do you like pain?**

**DK:** I wouldn't say I like pain. I know some performers that genuinely love to be pushed over the edge with it—so I know that I don't enjoy the pain like they do.

**MD: Do you find pleasure in being disciplined?**

**DK:** I wouldn't say that either. I enjoy the power exchange in a dominant and submissive relationship. There is a heightened sense of mental and sexual pleasure through discipline and pain.

**MD: The scene in KinkMen's Silent Hill Delirium when Davin Strong is literally beating your balls... that had to hurt!**

**DK:** That scene was so intense and I absolutely loved it. There is hardly a situation where I would not enjoy whatever Davin Strong was doing to me. In that scene everything was consensual and discussed before going into it. I felt completely safe and I enjoyed it immensely.

**MD: Were those screams real?**

**DK:** The ball-busting was real and those screams, grunts, and groans were all genuine. When I'm put in those kinds of situations, I go into such a submissive headspace that I am able to totally let go and feel everything that is happening in the most sexual way possible.

**MD: How does the director keep things from getting out of hand on set?**

**DK:** Every kink set I have been on has been extremely cognizant of the safety and well-being of their models. If things start to get past comfort zones, we generally use two words: "mercy" if we want whatever is happening to be reduced in severity and "red" if we want it to completely stop.

**MD: What if a performer is gagged?**

**DK:** If a performer can't speak, they're told to look at the camera or anyone on set and shake their head

back and forth to signal they want to stop.

**MD: Do you prefer being the dom or sub?**

**DK:** My sexuality is very fluid. It's all about mood, chemistry, and ability. I have mostly been a submissive in the KinkMen world. I think it has to do with how much I am able to take with regard to pain, humiliation, being tied up, and zapped.

**MD: In KinkMen's House Dom on Edge, you dominate Christian Wilde.**

**DK:** I have to say that Christian Wilde is one of the greatest performers that I have ever worked with. Our chemistry is extremely palpable and I always have the most intense orgasms when we are performing together. House Dom on Edge was quite the switch up in our dynamic as he is usually the Dom. I have to admit I really enjoyed watching him squirm.

**MD: What is something fans would be surprised to know about you?**

**DK:** I'm actually quite introverted. I tend to be a loner. I have a social battery that needs to recharge pretty regularly.

**MD: Do you have a secret talent?**

**DK:** I am a great cook and a decent



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**MD: What makes you smile?**

**DK:** Good food, knowing I'm about to travel, finishing a great scene, and when someone can banter back and forth with me. Also, relaxing is nice.

**MD: What makes you angry?**

**DK:** People that don't treat others with respect and empathy.

**MD: You find a magic genie bottle. What are your three wishes?**

**DK:** First, pay off all my debt. My second wish would be for meaningful gun control legislation. Third wish: free the genie.

**MD: Which celebrity would you most like to slide into your DMs?**

**DK:** Just one? I need like a top three here. 1) Michael B. Jordan 2) Megan Fox 3) Maluma. Or all three at once.

**MD: You're about to be hit by a truck (sorry). What flashes before your eyes?**

**DK:** The headlights?

**MD: What does your gravestone read?**

**DK:** I hope it reads, "He lived and died on his own terms".

**MD: What is the biggest misconception about Derek Kage that you would like to clear up once and for all?**

**DK:** My sexuality has been questioned recently for collaborating with a cisgender female, but I don't feel it's necessary to clear anything up. I am a very hyper sexual man and I love to explore my sexuality in every way my filthy little mind can imagine—and I am very imaginative.

*For more on Derek visit:*  
**[KinkMen.com](http://KinkMen.com)**



*Photo Courtesy of Derek Kage*

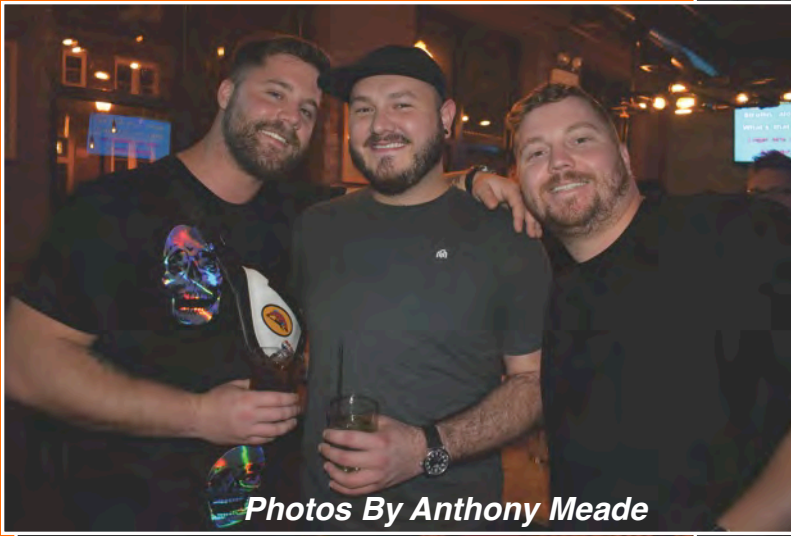
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# GRAB MUSIC



## Q-Music: Cher and share alike

By Gregg Shapiro

**Cher** is a gay icon, but, no, Cher isn't queer. However, the expanded deluxe edition reissue of her underrated 1986 album "It's A Man's World" (Warner Records), available on vinyl and CD, certainly is. "... Man's World was originally released between her late 1980s/early 1990s Geffen Records rocker chick period and her second disco diva era (following the late 1970s on Casablanca) driven by "Believe" and "Song For The Lonely" in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It's a singer/songwriter record on which Cher covers songs by Marc Cohn ("Walking in Memphis"), Don Henley ("Not Enough Love In the World"), Eric Kaz ("I'm Blowin' Away"), Prefab Sprout's Paddy McAloon ("The Gunman"), and even James Brown (the title track). More significantly, Cher covered songs by two extraordinary lesbian singer/songwriters, Patty Larkin ("Angels Running") and Maia Sharp ("Don't Come Around Tonite"). The reissue is also significant in that it not only features the three tracks from the Japanese import edition – "Don't Come Around Tonite," "The Shape of Things To Come," and "I Wouldn't Treat A Dog (The Way You Treated Me)" – cut from the previous domestic version, but also reorders the song sequence to that of the import. But wait, there's more! As if to hint at what was coming down the pike, the "It's A Man's World" reissue includes a second disc of dance

remixes, including four remixes of "One By One," four of "Paradise Is Here," two of "Walking in Memphis," and one of "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore." The only complaint, if there could possibly be one, is that the disc doesn't include the hologram found on some of the original CD releases.

Just a few years shy of the 40th anniversary of the release of its 1986 debut album "Please," which peaked at number seven (!) on the US album charts, **Pet Shop Boys** are feted with a long overdue box

set, "Smash: The Singles 1985-2020" (Parlophone/Rhino). Already the subject of decent hits collections, including 1991's "Discography" and 2003's "PopArt," the three-disc (or six LP) and two Blu-rays (of videos and video extras) "Smash" compilation (also available on cassette and digital download) covers all the bases. Even more importantly, it's presented in chronological order, giving listeners an opportunity to (re)experience the



duo's extraordinary creative trajectory.

From the first distinctive ticking beats and subtle synths of "West End Girls" to the fat beats and buzzing keyboards of "I Don't Wanna," Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe established themselves as creators of irresistible queer dance pop, paving the way for Erasure and countless others. Equally important as that Pet Shop Boys achieved both commercial and critical, releasing almost a dozen major-label albums before starting its own indie label. Also of value is the way PSB never shied away from queer subject matter on songs such as "Being Boring," "It's A Sin," and "New York City Boy." In addition to numerous originals, "Smash" includes PSB covers of "Always On My Mind," the "Where The Streets Have No Name/I Can't Take My Eyes Off You," the



Pet Shop Boys -Photo By Magda Campagne

Village People's "Go West," and "Somewhere" from "West Side Story." Guest artists include Dusty Springfield ("What Have I Done To Deserve This?" and Olly Alexander's Years & Years ("Dreamland"). And

"Love Is A Bourgeois Construct" is one of the greatest dance songs ever written. A must-have!

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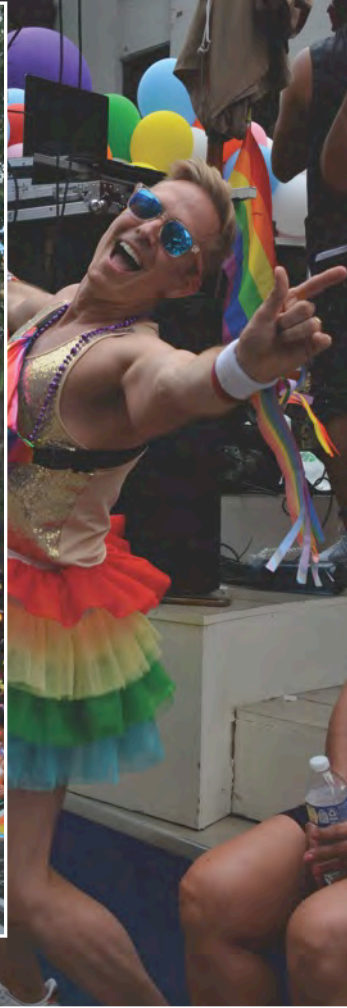


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# CHICAGO'S 52<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL PRIDE PARADE





Photos by Ken Brown





# GRAB BRIAN

## A tree grows in Brian Selznick's imagination

By Gregg Shapiro

By the time gay writer Brian Selznick's 2007 novel "The Invention of Hugo Cabret" was published, he already had three other books to his name. But this fourth book would be a turning point for Selznick, as Martin Scorsese bought the film rights and adapted the book into the 2011 Oscar-winning movie "Hugo." Selznick's next book, 2011's "Wonderstruck," was also made into a movie, this time by gay filmmaker Todd Haynes in 2017. His new novel, "Big Tree" (Scholastic, 2023), was also intended for the big screen in a Steven Spielberg movie, but the pandemic disrupted those plans. The good news is that readers can still enjoy the story in book form. Brian was kind enough to make time to answer a few questions about his work.

**Gregg Shapiro: Brian, would you describe yourself as a visual artist who writes or a writer who creates visual art?**

**Brian Selznick:** I generally describe myself as a bookmaker, or a storyteller, with a particular interest in how words and pictures work together to form a narrative. But I'm willing to give up one or the other if the story demands it. Much of what I think about in regard to words and pictures was inspired by the work of my friend and mentor, the great Maurice Sendak, whose books are masterworks in showing you what should be illustrated and what should not be illustrated. Think of the last spread of his "Where the Wild Things Are," where the text, referring to the soup Max's mother has left for him after his adventures, says "and it was still hot." There is no illustration on this page, just an otherwise white spread, which for me indicates Maurice wanted the reader to imagine what it meant without being "told" by an image. For me, it means his mom still loves

him, even after his temper tantrums and outbursts. Maurice also said that poetry should not be illustrated, as the words of a poem are generally meant to say something directly to the

imagination of the reader. He thought pictures might get in the way. Pictures should only exist when absolutely necessary to the story.

**GS: Because the images advance the narrative, do you consider yourself to be a graphic novelist?**

**BS:** I love graphic novels, though structurally I usually think of them as coming from the history of comic books, as opposed to the history of children's illustrated books. Multiple panels per page allows for an infinite number of combinations as the reader's eye moves from the upper left of a spread to the lower right, before it's time to turn the page again. For my books "The Invention of Hugo Cabret," "Wonderstruck," and "The Marvels," and for sections of "Big Tree," I essentially blow up each of the separate panels you'd find in a graphic novel or comic book so they take up an entire spread, one drawing, one spread (a spread is two pages with the "gutter" of the book in the middle). Instead of your eye traveling from

one panel to the next to advance the story, you physically have to turn the page in these books of mine. This turning of the page interests me a lot and was also in many ways inspired by Sendak. When I was making "The Invention of Hugo Cabret," I thought about the "wild rumpus" sequence in "Where the Wild Things Are," where the white borders and text go away, leaving only a single drawing per spread. You have to move through this wordless sequence yourself as the reader. I thought to myself, "If one wild rumpus with four spreads is exciting in a 32-page book, what would happen if there were dozens of "wild rumpuses," some up to twenty spreads or more, in a five-hundred-and-forty-four-page book?" But essentially, my books are telling a narrative with visuals, and that wouldn't be possible without the history of comic books or graphic novels, as well as the history of children's illustrated literature.

**GS: In your creative process,**

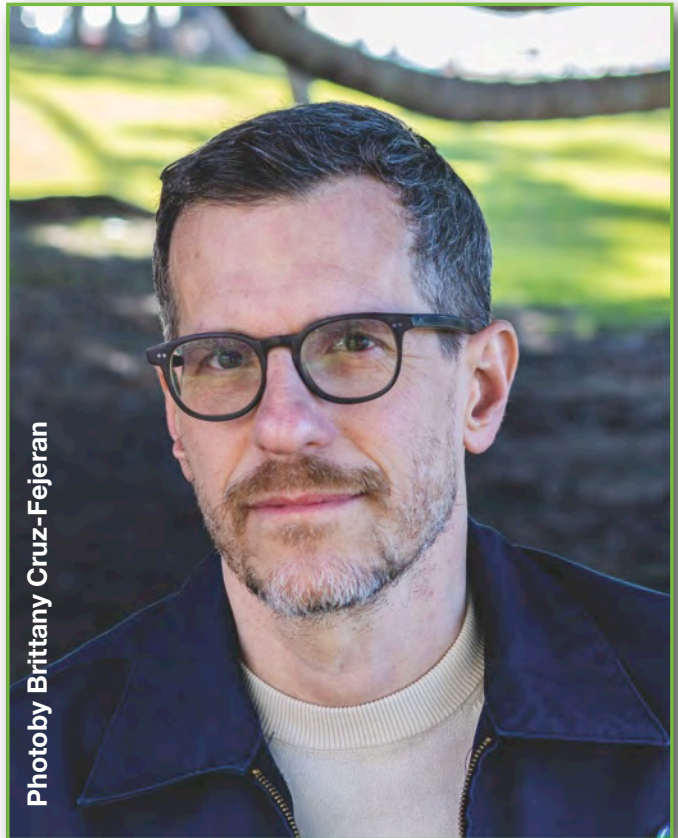
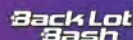


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**which comes first – images or text?**

**BS:** Always the text. I think visually so I may "see" what I want to draw in my mind, but I never draw first. Instead, I'll write lists of what I want the drawings to be, and only after I've worked out most of the narrative will I go back and actually start trying to sketch the images I've seen in my head.

**GS: In the afterword for your new book "Big Tree," you write about the inspiration, including your meeting with Steven Spielberg and producer Chris Meledandri. Do you think if you had not met with them that you would have had a book like "Big Tree" in you anyway?**

**BS:** This is a really interesting question and I think it's impossible to answer. In fact, after Spielberg and Meledandri read the book for the first time, I asked them why they had thought of me for this project in the first place, as it's so different from anything I'd ever done before. At first, Spielberg said some very nice things about the way I tell stories. This was lovely to hear, but what I meant was that for the first year of working on the project, I didn't think I was actually capable of doing it. The scope and the heart of it seemed too distant from anything I'd done before (it was originally meant to be a movie, but when the pandemic hit the project halted, so I proposed I make the screenplay into an illustrated book). Spielberg laughed and said that actors say this sort of thing to him all the time: "Why did you hire me for this role? I never would have cast myself as this character." Spielberg said, "That's my job. To see the potential in you."

**GS: One of the most powerful messages in "Big Tree" is about community and how as a community, we have the potential to save the planet. How much did climate change influence the book?**

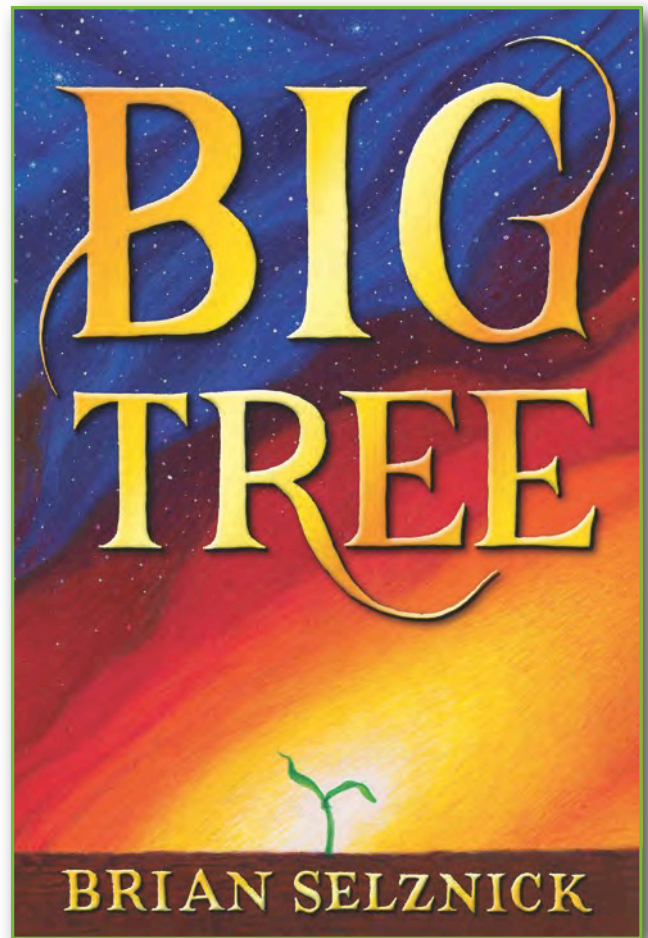
**BS:** I don't remember having a specific conversation with Spielberg or Meledandri about climate change, but from our very first meeting, it was clear to me that the entire reason Spielberg wanted to make this movie was to bring attention to the state of the planet. This meant

the movie would celebrate the wonder and awe of the earth, but also focus on the danger it faced. That's why I proposed setting the story at the end of the Cretaceous era. The meteorite that hits the planet would be the perfect metaphor for the existential crisis we are now facing with the climate.

**GS: Early in "Big Tree" reference is made to "roots and wings," which not only applies to sycamore seeds Louise and Merwin but can also refer to parents and their hopes for their children. Please say something about that.**

**BS:** For as long as I've known her, my friend Deborah Hallen-Zelinsky has said to me that good parents give their children "roots and wings." The roots are so the children feel stable and know that they come from somewhere safe and loving, and wings allow the children to fly away from that very home, to start their own lives. I don't have any children myself but know many parents and kids, and I'd always thought that phrase was very beautiful. When I was working on Big Tree and realized there would be a character who was a Mama Tree, I realized this phrase would be particularly perfect for her to say to her children, who could take the phrase a bit more literally than human children.

**GS: The seed Merwin is named for**



**the late poet W. S. Merwin. What role, if any, does poetry play in your daily life?**

**BS:** I can't say that poetry has ever played a role in my daily life. I don't read poetry every day or even think about it regularly. Yet as I look back, I can see that poetry keeps "stopping by," tapping me on the shoulder and demanding I pay attention before disappearing again for a while, sort of like an old friend I suppose. On the last day of first grade, my beloved teacher Miss Sharkey gave all her students a book of poetry she'd hand bound. I don't remember what poems were in the book, but I remember treasuring it deeply. Later, in high school, I was obsessed with the musical "Cats" (long story), and through it, I discovered the poetry of T.S. Eliot. I found a copy of the book on which the musical is based, "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats," illustrated by Edward Gorey, and from there fell into Eliot's "The Waste Land," and "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." I can still quote the opening from

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memory: "Let us go then, you and I, with the evening spread out against the sky like a patient etherized upon a table." I discovered the poetry of Walt Whitman when I illustrated a children's biography of him in 2004. After finishing this book, I met Maurice Sendak for the first time, and he told me about a series of twelve secret poems Whitman had written about his love for another man. Eventually, I illustrated those poems in an adult book I dedicated to Maurice's memory called "Live Oak, With Moss." I discovered the work of W. S. Merwin through my friend Cathy St. Germans who knew him. His love of nature inspired me to name one of the main characters in "Big Tree" after him.

**GS: The moon figures prominently in "Big Tree," as well as in your first book "The Invention of Hugo Cabret." Please say something about your connection to the moon.**

**BS:** I really don't know why I have always loved the moon, though I do have a memory of watching the moon landing with my parents in 1968. My father gathered us around the television and explained what was happening. Maybe my love of the moon comes from this, or maybe it's because as a kid, I watched a lot of old black and white monster movies where the moon always played some kind of pivotal role, like in "Dracula" or "The Wolf Man." There's a mystery to the moon, and of course, it's the central focus of Georges Melies's short film, "A Trip to the Moon," which I'd seen some time as a young person. An image of the moon conjures so many feelings all at once. There's magic and science and poetry and all I know is it keeps showing up in my books. I'm sure it'll show up again in the future, just like the moon itself.

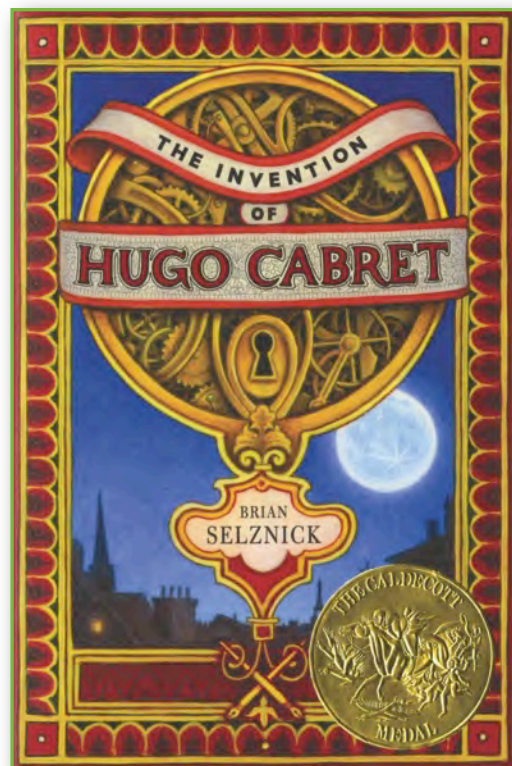
**GS: Your novels "The Invention of Hugo Cabret" (2007) and "Wonderstruck" (2011) were both adapted as films. What was the experience of seeing your characters brought to life onscreen like for you?**

**BS:** I remember having dinner with the brilliant actress Helen McCrory who played Mrs. Melies in the movie of "Hugo." It's a small but pivotal role and she wanted to know more about the backstory of her character.

Why would this woman who has spent so long protecting her husband from memories of his own past suddenly relent and let a screening of "A Trip to the Moon" happen in their living room? Besides the fact that that's what the plot needed, I wasn't sure how exactly to answer, as I generally put everything I know about a character on the page. So, I turned the question around and asked her what she thought. Helen's response was extraordinary. She spoke about how Mrs. Melies had been an actress in her husband's movies, and she imagined what it would be like for this woman to be cut away from her own past as she tried to help her husband. She thought it might have been very painful for Mrs. Melies to have stopped acting, to give it all up to help her husband. Then Helen spoke about the vanity that might still have been lurking in Mrs. Melies's heart all that time, the joy and curiosity she might feel at having the chance to see herself again on screen, to suddenly have all those old thoughts and loves reawakened in herself. Now, if you watch this scene in the movie, all those emotions are flittering across the character's face as she makes her fateful decision. It's extraordinary, and it made me feel like I hadn't really known the character at all until I'd seen her brought to life by Helen McCrory. I've had this feeling again and again with actors playing characters I'd made up, whether it was finding the brilliant young Deaf actress Millicent Simmonds and seeing her embody Rose in "Wonderstruck," or listening to Meryl Streep portray everyone in the audiobook version of "Big Tree." Oh! I keep thinking to myself, Now I really understand these characters.

**GS: Do you have a sense of how much of your readership is made up of adults?**

**BS:** I just finished a country-wide tour for the publication of "Big Tree"



and was delighted by the number of adults who came to my readings. So many told me that they'd read my books when they were kids, or they'd studied them in college. I love when adults tell me they read my books. I've had grown-ups say to me that "Hugo Cabret" or one of my other big novels is the first five-hundred-page book they ever read, or that they learned English from reading my books when they came here from other countries. I very much want my books to appeal to adults, even though I am very conscious and proud of the fact that my primary audience, and the people for whom I'm really working, are kids.

**GS: As a gay man writing Y/A books, are you at all concerned about book banning?**

**BS:** Everyone should be concerned about book banning. Limiting knowledge and removing books from libraries and bookshelves is a dangerous step toward fascism that we've seen again and again throughout history. We've made so much progress as gay and trans people since I was a kid. Growing up in the '70s, I remember no books or TV shows with positive gay role models. It would've been so valuable



to have been able to see myself reflected positively in popular culture, but I still managed to survive and shed the shame I felt as a young person around my queerness. Age-appropriate books about queer lives don't harm children. In fact, they do exactly the opposite. They save lives by helping young queer people understand who they are themselves, and they help young straight people understand who their neighbors might be. Queerness is not about sex, it's about love, and that's something a child of any age can understand. In the musical "South Pacific" by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II, a character sings "You've got to be taught to hate and fear." I think about this a lot. No child is born hating themselves or others. They have to learn to do that from adults. Books can ease the way, open up the world, and help us make sense of who we are. Beware of people who are afraid of this idea.



Photo by Brittany Cruz-Fejeran

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MONDAY

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TUESDAY

**2 Bears Tavern Uptown:** . \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** Tune Up Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. **D.S.Tequila Co:** . 50cent Wing Night 5pm-10pm, Must Purchase a drink for special. Dine in Only. **Hydrate:** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts. Happy Hour Specials 5pm-8pm: \$5 Stoli Mules (all flavors). Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. **Shakers on Clark:** \$3 Domestic Beers. **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:** \$5 Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Tallboys Everyday Specials, \$5Jager, \$5 Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am.Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi.

WEDNESDAY

**2 Bears Tavern Uptown:** \$ New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Tallboy Beers Specials: Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlies:** Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close. **Jackhammer:** \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$4Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Stolis (All Flavors). Happy Hour Specials 7pm-10pm: \$6 Any BIG drafts Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. **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, \$5 Tito's Cocktails, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)FreeDarts **Touche:**Open 5pm - 4am.Jockstrap Night. Free Clothing Check.

THURSDAY

**2 Bears Tavern Uptown:** \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons . Everyday Specials:\$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@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. **D.S.Tequila Co:** Bottomless Tacos! \$23.95 5pm-10pm , Must purchase a beverage for special. Dine in Only. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Miller Lit Tallboys Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$6 Tito Cocktails, Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. **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:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails\$5 Tallboy Beers Everyday Specials: , \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am.Throwback Thursdays70's& 80's Music & Porn by BijouVideo.

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY

**2 Bears Tavern Uptown:** \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. Happy Hour Specials: 3pm-6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** 1st 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. **D.S. Tequila Co:** TGIF Special \$5 Effen Cocktails and \$4 Hornitos Shots. **Hydrate:** Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. **Jackhammer:** \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys \$8 New Amsterdam & Redbull Happy Hour Specials 5-9pm: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons \$5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$6 Tito's Cocktails \$7.50 Big Miller Lites. Happy Hour Specials 5pm-8pm: \$5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 3-7pm, RuPaul's Drag Race Viewing Party 7-9:30pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9:30pm-2am. **The Sofa Tap:** \$3 House Shots, \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 3pm-6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tall Boys Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm-4am. 6/2 Pride Month Kick Off Party, 7/7 Pom Party Poker, 7/14 Fetish Connection Black Hanky Party.

SATURDAY

**2 Bears Tavern Uptown:** \$6 Lagunitas IPADrafts. Happy Hour Specials: 1/2 Off All Drafts \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-3am. **Charlie's:** Country Line Dancing 7-10pm, The Main Event 10pm-1am Dancing until Close. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys Happy Hour Specials 5-9pm: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons \$5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 Miller Lite Tall Boys Happy Hour Specials: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons. Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$5 Signature Margaritas Happy Hour Specials 2pm-5pm: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$12 Mimosa Carafes, Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. **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 Sofa Tap:** \$5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, \$5 Signature Margaritas, Happy Hour Specials: 12pm-3pm: 1/2 Off All Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm-5am. 7/8 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @Midnight CWB 5pm. 7/15 Gear Night with Bluf/Chicago Barber & Bootblack on duty Dress Code in Club Room BNC 6pm.

SUNDAY

**2 Bears Tavern Uptown:** \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$6 Chicago Handshakes Happy Hour Specials 2pm-5pm \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-2am **Charlie's:** Queerid! Every other Sunday 5pm-7pm, Singational Sunday Karaoke 7pm-11pm Mas Leche 11pm-1am, Dancing until close. **D.S. Tequila Co:** Coyote Ugly Drag Brunch \$50 all inclusive food and beverage package plus Drag Show. **Hydrate:** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. **Jackhammer:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$7 Jackhammered Long Islands Happy Hour Specials: 1st Sunday: \$7 Planter's Punch 2nd Sunday: \$5 Dog Bowls (Premium Well) 3rd Sunday: \$3 Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's Tallboy Beers 4th Sunday: \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor) 5th Sunday: \$6 New Amsterdam & Red Bull Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$12 Mimosa Carafes. Happy Hour Specials: 7pm-10pm: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 Off Any Bloody Mary, Milagro Tequila Mixed Drinks, or Tito's Vodka Mixed Drinks. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am **The Sofa Tap:** \$6 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 12pm-2pm: \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 1pm-3pm: \$3 House Shots FREE Chicago-style hot-dogs (while supplies last) Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm-4am. Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm.

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	Artist	Title
1	Calvin Harris	Miracle Ft. Ellie Goulding
2	Collin Oliver	54 (Radio Edit)
3	DubDogz x Bruno Be x Ghostt	Sleepwalking ft. The Chain Gang of 1974
4	Sam Smith & Kim Petras	Unholy (David Guetta Acid Remix)
5	Audien & Codeko	Antidote Ft. Jt Roach
6	Oliver Heldens x Kylie Minogue	10 Out Of 10
7	James Chris	Summer Again (Radio Mix)
8	Taylor Swift	Lavender Haze (Felix Jaehn Remix)
9	Niko The Kid	Only One ft. MAYLYN
10	ARTY x Jonathan Mendelson	Lightning Strikes
11	Kylie Minogue	Padam Padam
12	Marvel Riot	Need You Tonight
13	Landis	Hypno Eyes (Radio Edit)
14	Anabel Englund	Need Me Right
15	Lucas & Steve x Yves V	After Midnight ft. Xoro
16	Sick Individuals & Alle Farben	My Life ft. The Runaway Club
17	Zack Martino	Kill My Heart
18	Morgan Page & Telykast	Dancing All Alone
19	Telykast	You Got Me (With Georgia Ku)
20	Duke & Jones X Marlhy	Call Me
21	Leftwing Kody X Robot Collective	Love Like This (Radio Edit)
22	Ames & Nalestar	Loving You More (Radio Edit)
23	Paul Woolford X Lewis Thompson X Mnek	16 Again (Radio Edit)
24	Toby Romeo x YouNotUs	What It Feels Like
25	Allegra	Round & Round (Tiesto Remix)
26	Joe Bermudez & Amanda Brigham	Cinderella (Club Mix Radio Edit)
27	Icona Pop & Yaeger	We Do For Love (Clean)
28	3LAU	Too Late For Love
29	TELYKast With Francis Karel	Better Now
30	Sick Individuals	You Ft. Dotter



# REPLAY

beer & bourbon



Andersonville



Photos By Anthony Meade



# GRAB HOLLY

## *The Patriarchy Unmasked*

By Holly Maholm



All my powers of logic and reasoning (output of my brain made up entirely of XY chromosomes) informed me that the rout of the Gender Studies crowd in the Battle of Wellington Green could be interpreted in only one way: That the Pink Hair Army having been prevented from “crushing the Patriarchy,” no further evidence was needed to prove that there is – in fact – no such thing as “the Patriarchy.” But how wrong I was!

Yes. In mere hours the veil was lifted from my eyes: I was brought before that shadowy, legendary leadership of the anonymous, all-powerful elite, where I was interrogated and forced to confront the undeniable fact that “The Patriarchy” most certainly exists. Thus, although Kaylyn suffered defeat in battle, she did, after all, “win the war” by providing indisputable proof of the existence of a dark and ghostly, ruthless and tyrannical Patriarchy at work in our modest little village.

Early the morning following the battle, the cleanup of the battlefield commenced. The Outlaws collected the empty plastic bags (still reeking of unicorn shit) which had formed the manure-missiles fired by the trebuchets. The men likewise brought out hoses and washed any remaining unicorn shit into the gutter. Dave instructed his Legionnaires to return the trebuchets to storage, and Donut

Time opened early, knowing as we did that the male Retirees would want to re-fight the battle over coffee and donuts.

I was standing in front of Donut Time, calculating how long it would take to replace the two benches destroyed by the attackers, when Gary (manager at the local bank) rushed up to me and spoke. “Holly, Chet wants you to attend the meeting he’s calling for this afternoon. He has to make some big changes at the high school, and he wants your input.”

My reply was that I didn’t reply. I was struggling to decide whether (a) I had misheard what Gary had said, or (b) this was only a temporary “glitch in the matrix” that would soon correct itself, or (c) the Secret Cabal of the Patriarchy that exists in countless conspiracy theories of the Illuminati had been revealed to me.

And the reason was simple. I knew only one “Chet” in our little town, and no one who has ever met him could suspect him of wielding any sort of power or influence. Chet was the owner and sole-proprietor of Erickson’s Feed & Seed, the feed store where local farmers came to purchase what they needed to operate their farms. Chet was a cheerful, taciturn, but kind-hearted older man who was habitually attired in bib overalls and a long-sleeve flannel shirt (which he wore even during summer months, so as to avoid being pricked by hay bales he threw off the loading dock behind his store).

Chet was a particular friend of Dot’s. Indeed, when I went looking for her out at the Horse Rescue, it often happened that one of the unicorns would redirect me to the feed store, where she and Chet passed many companionable hours discussing issues related to market gardening (strawberries, apples and peaches), dairy farming (milk cows) and horses (working teams). Chet had once been close friends with Dot and her partner, Molly, and he had been a big admirer of Molly’s work with the rescue horses. Now that Molly had passed away, Chet and Dot were that much closer.

Gary spoke. “From that blank look on your face, Holly, I’m guessing no one has ever explained to you who it is that makes all the important decisions around here.”


He motioned for us to go into Donut Time, where we found a booth and two cups of coffee.

“Here’s the story. Most people don’t know this, but Chet is the owner of the bank where I work. Also, Chet owns about 90 percent of all the undeveloped land within six miles of where we sit. Plus, he owns more than half the commercial buildings and apartment houses in the city. He holds the mortgage on Mike and Dave’s church, Tuco and Ali’s ice cream parlor, and – don’t be shocked – the Donut Time building, itself. Chet’s family has run the feed store for almost a hundred years, and they’ve extended credit and bought up many a local farmer’s crops when no one else would. Without support from the Erickson’s over the years, this town would be a sad and poorer place.

“So, you see, it’s Chet who makes all the important decisions on the local school board, and it’s him who approves who gets hired for every teaching job or administrative position at every one of our local schools. In short, if anybody – any teacher or administrator at the high school – is going to lose his job due to what happened last night, Chet will be the one who makes that call. (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](http://www.hollymaholm.com).*

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Photos By Ken Brown



# PrideFest

MILWAUKEE 2023



# GRAB A PLANE



## Torrey Pines Reserve, Liberty Station Public Market, and Hillcrest Highlights of Latest Trip to Fabulous San Diego

By Bill Malcolm

You cannot beat a vacation in San Diego. And there is always something fun and new going on in the City including the vibrant Hillcrest gayborhood ([fabulouhillcrest.com](http://fabulouhillcrest.com)). The city of 1.4 million borders Mexico and is built on mesas surrounded by canyons on the Pacific Ocean. Interesting neighborhoods and parks will keep you busy. The climate is mild, so any month is perfect for a visit given the mild climate. The city combines the best of Southern California combined with a strong Mexican influence, given the proximity of Tijuana.

### WHAT TO DO

Don't miss the Farmers Market Sundays in Hillcrest Sundays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Enjoy the Southern California strawberries and dates. I had salmon for lunch. There are a lot of local vendors; you will find them on Normal Avenue between Lincoln and University Avenue near the Rainbow flag.

On Saturdays, the city's other large farmers market in Little Italy is also very popular. Little Italy is a cute neighborhood near downtown

with lots of trendy restaurants and shops. (Details at [littleitalysd.com](http://littleitalysd.com)). Hike up Maple Canyon and enjoy the native vegetation on Bankers Hill.

See the rarest pine in the world, the Torrey Pine, and enjoy the wildflowers and views from bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean at the Torrey Pine Natural Reserve just north of La Jolla. You will also see the beaver tail prickly pear cacti, yuccas, cholla cactus, manzanitas, and native wildflowers. To get there without a car (and to avoid the \$25 parking charge), take the Blue Line MTS trolley (light rail) to La Jolla (Noble Drive Station) and then catch the 110 North County Coaster bus to Torrey Pines Beach. The bus ride goes through the UCSD campus and is interesting. (See [SDMTS.com](http://SDMTS.com))

Once at the beach, walk up the hill going south into the preserve and enjoy the Guy Fleming loop trail which features stunning views of the ocean and the rare and unusual Torrey pines which are found only here and on Catalina Island. These rare and endangered pines are found nowhere else on earth except

these two small locations. Plan your trip at [torreypines.org](http://torreypines.org).

Then enjoy the Torrey Pines or Black's Beach. You can catch the 101 bus back to La Jolla and enjoy fish tacos at Rubio's Coastal Grill (Nobel and La Jolla Drive) and fresh carrot juice at the Nektre Juice Bar (8855 Villa La Jolla Drive).

Walk along the bay at the trails on Harbor Island near the Sheraton. It's just over a mile to the Liberty Public Market, a new food hall which had been a Navy Mess Hall at the former Navy training facility. It also features museums and an arts district. Try the craft beer at Bottlecraft or craft cocktails at Mess Hall. Check out the local clothing, soap and jewelry vendors as well. Pick up some homemade soap at the Old Town Soap Company. You will find Liberty Station at 2820 Historic Decatur Road ([libertypublicmarketsd.com](http://libertypublicmarketsd.com)). They are celebrating 100 years. On the way back, stop at Spanish Landing, the site where California was discovered in the 1500s by Cabrillo, a Spanish explorer.

Visit the North Park neighborhood. Take in a drag and

dinner show at Lips on El Cajon Boulevard. Stop by the Eagle Bar.

Balboa Park includes museums as well the San Diego Zoo. It is a must for first-time visitors.

For more ideas, visit [www.sdmmts.com/escapes](http://www.sdmmts.com/escapes) (the Metropolitan Transit System website). Enjoy a car free, carefree stay.

### **NIGHTLIFE**

You cannot beat the selection of bars, restaurants and shops in Hillcrest, one of the best gayborhoods in the world.

I stumbled on a fun Saturday night show featuring drag, strippers and burlesque at Urban Mos in Hillcrest. The strippers and bottomless Mimosas on Sunday were a hit. They also have great food. I loved the fries.

Rich's is always fun, as is Flicks, the latter of which has an all-day happy hour on Tuesday.

Number One has a DJ on Sunday afternoons. You can dance on the patio.

The Loft is a fun neighborhood bar.

### **WHERE TO STAY**

This was my second stay at the Sheraton Hotel and Suites on the marina near the airport on Harbor Island. It's a quick Uber to Hillcrest or take the 922 MTS Bus downtown, Union Station and the attractions. Get a room in the main tower facing downtown and the bay. Check Trip Advisor for other hotel ideas. However, there are few lodging options in the Hillcrest.

### **GETTING THERE**

I took Southwest nonstop from Indianapolis. You don't need a rental car as San Diego has great transit. MTS runs the trolley system (aka light rail). Plus you can walk everywhere in this fairly compact city if you stay around Hillcrest, Downton, Old Town and the Gaslight

District.

### **OTHER INFORMATION**

San Diego

has a bad homeless problem, and many are mentally ill. I was attacked at 8th Avenue and Hillcrest while walking down the sidewalk at 5 p.m. on a Sunday. The psychotic looking shirtless man tried to steal my day pack and then pulled me. Fortunately, Mayor Todd Garcia pushed through a new ordinance banning public camping by the homeless to deal with the problem.

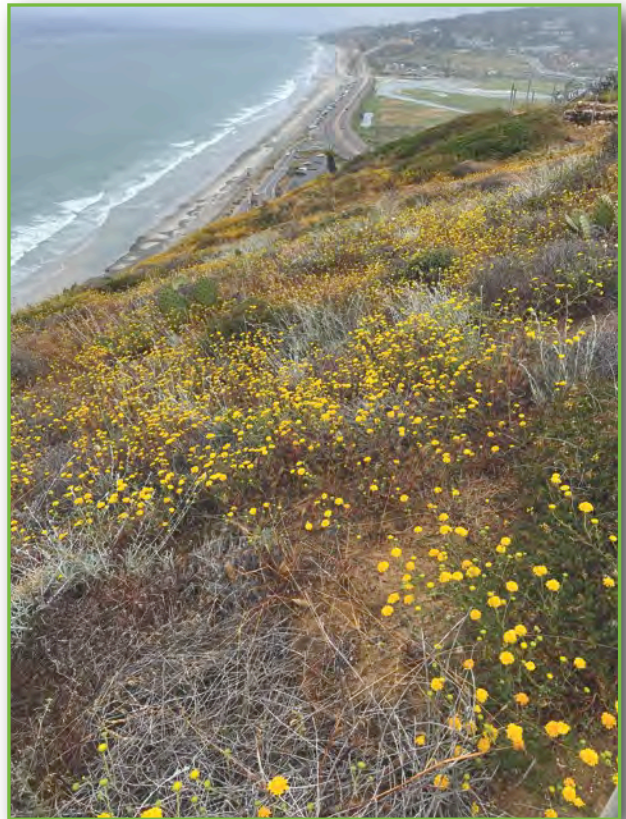
San Diego has prohibitive costs including hotel rates. Book your hotel *before* you book your air. You may want to avoid the peak summer season where folks from Phoenix flee here to escape the summer heat. And beware of annoying resort fees.

Although you are close to Tijuana, Mexico, it is unsafe to visit at this time.

There are four publications you can find at the bars or on line to help you plan your trip: *LGBTQ San Diego County News (LGBTQSD.news)* is a newspaper covering the community.

*RAGE Monthly* covers all of San Diego ([rage.lgbtq](http://rage.lgbtq)).

*GedMag.com* (GED Magazine) is a Palm Springs magazine distributed in San Diego. *Metro Magazine* is a New York publication which publishes a Los Angeles



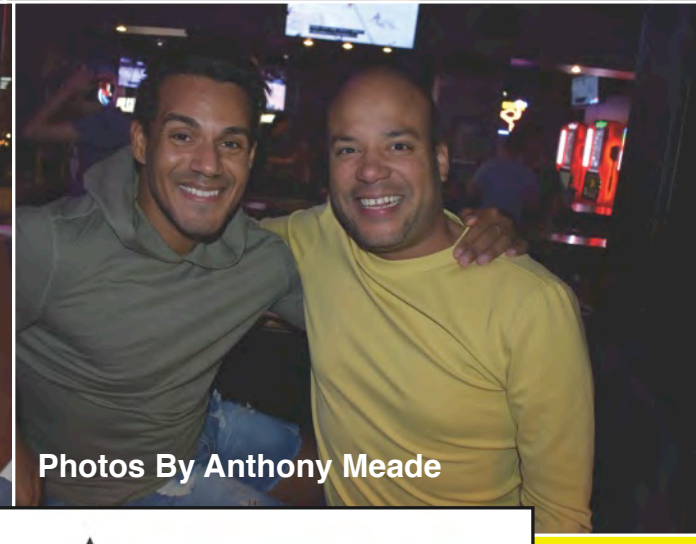
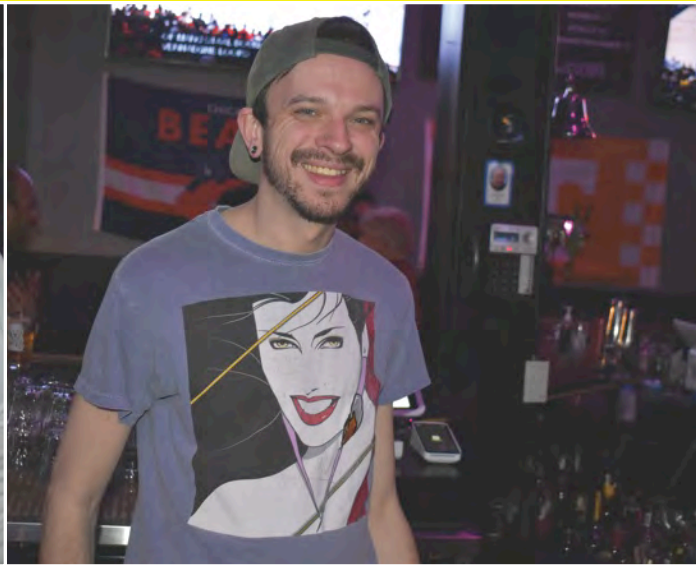
edition.

You cannot beat a trip to San Diego, with a perfect climate and set on mesas above canyons. There is always something new to do. And it has something for everyone.

*Bill Malcolm* is a syndicated LGBTQ+ value travel columnist. His column is now carried in LGBTQ publications in Toronto, Seattle, Chicago and Washington, D.C., as well as in Dallas Voice.



  
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Photos By Anthony Meade





Photos By Anthony Meade



# GRAB TOM

## Tom Goss Reflects on Living, Loving and Losing in His Ninth Studio Album, *Remember What It Feels Like* Includes New Single, “Enemy of Good”



Tom Goss' ninth studio album, *Remember What It Feels Like*, is a clear-eyed look at where he has come from and where he finds himself today: a 42-year-old living in Los Angeles who has lived and loved and lost—and who cherishes all of his memories, both sweet and bitter, as essential parts of his story and identity. The album is an expansive 15-track collection of fast, fun, summery pop songs punctuated by beautiful ballads and raucous rock. Featured artists include comedian and musician Deven Green, hip hop diva Maya La Maya, wry chanteuse Anne Reburn, and Goss's longtime collaborator de ROCHE. The album drops July 7 and will be available on iTunes, Spotify, and all major digital platforms, along with its new single, “Enemy of Good.” Goss will support the release of the album and single with a concert in Washington DC featuring de ROCHE and charting pop star Bright Light Bright Light, followed by shows in New York City, Provincetown, and other cities to be announced.

“The truth is, most things in life happen for no reason at all, and are completely out of our control,” says Goss from his LA home. “The only thing we can control is how we feel in the moment. There will be sweet times and sad times, highs and lows; I embrace them all. I want to remember what every experience felt like, even those that weren't pleasant, because ultimately, I am happy with who I am today. I've been shaped by every experience and so therefore, all of them have been

good.”

Goss has been singing his truth for more than 15 years, creating a large and varied body of work (9 albums, 5 EPs, 39 music videos) that tracks his development both as a man and as an artist. He has transformed the facts of his life—a troubled teen and college wrestler; a student studying to become a priest; touring the country as a gay singer-songwriter; falling in love and getting married; the heartbreak of infidelity and the challenges of an open marriage; being conned by a lover with a secret life—into songs of remarkable range, strength, and beauty. His songs have been featured on ABC, HBO, Disney+, and in several films. His music videos (including “Son of a Preacher Man,” “Breath and Sound,” and “Bears”) have been viewed more than 18 million times.

In “Enemy of Good,” Goss sings about perfectionism, a vice that often masquerades as a virtue. “I'm very self-critical,” he admits. “Even as a kid, I would get frustrated when I felt I fell short on a goal, and my mother would say, ‘Tom, the perfect is the enemy of the good.’ It struck me as powerful, and I continue to notice that my need to achieve perfection does little in the way of producing art, or happiness. Joy and creativity flow when I allow myself to be flawed.”

The song is an uplifting pop track, as reflected in its music video.

“The video's co-director, Catalin Stelian-Shanks, and I said right from the beginning that we didn't want to overthink the visuals. ‘Enemy of Good’ needed to exuberant and cheerful, like the song. Our goal was to make people smile, laugh, think, and bob their head along.”

The single and album are a departure from Goss's previous work, the searingly honest *Territories*, whose dramatic singles and music videos (“La Bufadora,” “Berlin,” “Amsterdam,” and “Québec”) captured his tumultuous few years dealing with infidelity, a newly open marriage, and falling in love with a charming Englishman who was not all who he appeared to be.

With *Remember What It Feels Like*, Tom Goss says he is at a place of reconciliation. “Forgiveness is easy,” he reflects. “It's understanding the ‘why?’ that's hard. But I'm letting it go and focusing on the present, because the now is packed with goodness.”

For more on tom visit <http://tomgossmusic.com>



*Photos By Chris K.*

OTTAWA  FAMILY  
**PRIDE**  
FESTIVAL



# GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

**"Big Gay Wedding"** By Byron Lane. c.2023, Holt \$26.99 336 pages



Few things are cast in stone. Which means that you've usually got time to change your mind. Do a little research, listen to other voices, get educated, think about things, and pivot. No one will criticize; you may, in fact, be commended for your new open-mindedness. As in the new book, "Big Gay Wedding" by Byron Lane, you might like the new outlook, too. Chrissy Durang, "Farmer Mom" and owner of the Polite Society Ranch near New Orleans, checked two things off a list in her notebook. The school bus filled with noisy children arrived for their tour of the ranch, check. Barnett should be arriving later, check. Thirty-four-year-old Barnett was the light in Chrissy's world, her son, her only child, the near-exact image of his late father. She was excited for his homecoming; surely, Barnett was flying from California to tell her he was ready to take over the ranch now, take care of the animals, take care of her. Instead, not long after he arrived, Barnett dropped a bombshell about "The Big Thing" that they never discussed: he was engaged. To be married. To another man. And he wanted to do it there in Mader, at Polite Society Ranch. Chrissy could think of a million things she didn't like about Barnett's intended, Ezra, and they all went into her notebook. Hair a mess, check. Controlling, check. Butt-kisser, check. Dream-killer, check. And yet, Barnett loved Ezra. It'd been a long time since Chrissy'd seen her son this happy. She talked to her priest about the situation, but he disappointed her in a terrible way. It was clear that her father-in-law, Paw-Paw, was supportive of Barnett and Ezra, which was no surprise; Barnett was always Paw-Paw's favorite. Chrissy didn't have many friends in her small Louisiana town, but she was absolutely sure of three things: nobody would approve of any sort of gay nuptials, Ezra's family was downright weird, and everybody in

Mader would blame her for what was about to happen...

At face value, the story inside "Big Gay Wedding" seems awfully familiar: homophobic mom, gay son, wedding, Kumbaya moment, the end. Keep thinking that, though, and you'll miss one truly wonderful novel. From the parapsodikian sentences to the Misfit Toys cast of characters, author Byron Lane takes readers from a deep dive into a box of tissues to a good snorting belly laugh, often in the same paragraph. So many unexpected, delightful things occur inside this story, in fact, that you may become disappointed when something conventional occurs.

Which it does, often enough. Gay bashing, protesters, haters, misunderstanding, it's-a-phase thinking, all the bad old tropes show up in this story, alas. Still, readers will be happy to know that they're dealt with properly, just as you'd expect from a prissy mother, an alcoholic society matron, two men wild in love, a light-fingered grandfather, and a dying sheep named Elaine. Summer is always a time for weddings, and it's a great time to enjoy this sweet, funny, excellent novel. Simply, "Big Gay Wedding" rocks. o Tell You" will be a good experience.

**"The Celebrants"** by Steven Rowley c.2023, Putnam \$28.00 308 pages



Everybody will say nice things about you when you're lying in a box in front of them.

They'll say you were everyone's friend, you were funny and wise, even when you weren't. You were the greatest person ever, just the best – and don't you wish they'd say those things now, while you're alive to hear them? As in the new book "The Celebrants" by Steven Rowley, those sentiments might completely surprise you.

Jordan Vargas felt like a time-traveler.

It had been almost three decades since he, Naomi, Alec, Marielle, Craig, and Jordy were thrown together by a

student-transfer algorithm, which turned out to be a lucky accident. More than twenty-five years since they'd lived together in the same dorm. Over half a lifetime ago since Marielle found Alec on the dorm's common-room floor, dead of an overdose that marked the lives of his best friends.

Time flies. So much had happened since then.

Just before graduation, Jordy and Jordan had realized their attraction to one another. After trying a long-distance relationship, they came out to their friends, moved in together, got married, and "The Jordans" were now business partners.

All her life, Naomi had struggled with her straight-laced, unaffectionate parents and their expectations. As the only heir to their business and a high-level national record executive, she never wanted for money. Love, well, that was another thing.

Never one to buck the rules or ignore instructions, nerdy Craig's upright adherence to detail got him the nickname "Nana," a lot of teasing, and a months-long stint in prison for fraud. And sweet Marielle was a caretaker-type who gave and gave of herself until there was nothing left and she needed her friends.

Sooner or later, they all did: years ago, stunned by Alec's death, the Jordans, Marielle, Naomi, and Craig made a pact that each could ask for a "funeral" for themselves, just once, to reaffirm their lives. Naomi had hers. Marielle had hers. Craig had his.

And now it was Jordan's turn, before it was too late...

It seems unfair, in a way, that your life isn't celebrated until it's over. What would people say about you when you're gone – and why don't we say those things now? "The Celebrants" tips that question on its side and leaves an answer hanging.

Though it sometimes lags a bit and though the plot can occasionally dip into silliness, this book is good: a little *The Big Chill*, a little *St. Elmo's Fire*, the kind of buddy-book you want for the summer. The timeline is perfectly crafted, and author Steven Rowley packs a lot of characters inside it while still leaving the tale uncomplicated, which makes it one of those easy stopping-and-starting books you know you often need on a busy vacation. Still, bookmarks are optional; reading it all at once on a happy staycation isn't inadvisable.

Try to predict the ending of this book and you'll be somewhat wrong. Instead, just relax, let yourself imagine what-if-when, and enjoy "The Celebrants." You'll say nice things about it.





Photos By Anthony Meade



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Closing the 2022 – 2023 Season at Metropolis is the cult movie classic turned musical comedy Xanadu. **Kevin Wiczer** directs the glitter explosion with choreography by Kristine Burdi and musical direction by **Kenneth McMullen**. at The MMetropolis Performing Arts Centre located at 111W Campbell Street Arlington Heights, IL.

Xanadu follows the journey of a mythological muse, Kira, who descends from Mt. Olympus (complete with Greek chorus) to inspire a struggling artist, Sonny, to achieve the most incredible artistic creation of all time – a 1980s roller

disco!

When Kira falls into forbidden love with the mortal Sonny, her jealous sisters take advantage of the situation and chaos abounds. With a score of pop gems and a script that celebrates musical theatre satire, Xanadu is a moving,

An Electrifying tale of endless fun that will keep audiences in stitches while the original legendary, chart-topping tunes lift them out of their seats.

Tickets are available now at **MetropolisArts.com** or by phone at **(847) 577-2121**.

**RENAISSANCE FAIRE  
SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS &  
LABOR DAY JULY 8TH THRU  
SEPTEMBER 4**

It wouldn't be summer without the Bristol Renaissance Faire! The iconic, award-winning event will open Saturday, July 8, for nine weekends closing on Labor Day Monday, September 4. The Faire offers an exciting, eclectic mix of fun and frivolity to be discovered on thirty-plus acres just a short drive from either

Chicago or Milwaukee. Hundreds of costumed performers await you as you enter the gates into the Faire's magical village replete with pubs, shops, demonstrations, games, fantastic food and immersive entertainment. Play along and join us as your alter ego be it King, Queen,

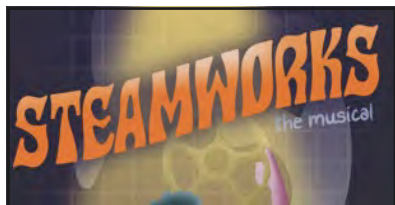
pirate, sorcerer or anything you want to be for the day. Or don't come in costume at all. For many, people

watching is one of their favorite past times at the Faire. It's your day. Enjoy it your way.

All the fun details may be found at **RenFair.com/Bristol**.



**THE ANNOYANCE GETS  
STEAMY WITH STEAMWORKS  
THE MUSICAL!**



Steamworks the Musical is back at The Annoyance for the first time since

2018, and it's gayer than ever!

Featuring new music, a new cast, and some very informative PowerPoints, the latest production takes on the ever changing hook up culture of the bathhouse with cheeky humor and butt cheeks. Fall into the hole with this very sexy and very talented cast every Friday at 8pm until August 11.

Director and writer, **Mary Catherine Curran** originated the role of Carroll. "Being a part of creating and performing in the 2017 production of Steamworks the Musical truly

changed my life," Curran says "and I am so happy and grateful that I was able to bring new life to this show once again.

Every Friday at 8pm through August 11th, get steaming at the Annoyance Theatre & Bar just east of the Belmont Red, Brown, & Purple stops with Steamworks the Musical. "Everyone gets a happy ending.

For tickets or more information visit **<https://www.theannoyance.com/>**

**LATIN XOXO AT CENTER  
ON HALSTED MAIN STAGE  
FROM July 20th thru the 22nd.**

The International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago (ILCC) and the Center on Halsted Have announced that Venezuelan actor and transdisciplinary artist **Miguel Anggelo** will bring his outrageously queer and gender-bending theatrical experience, LatinXoxo, to the Center's main stage, 3656 N. Halsted St. from July 20th thru the 22nd.

A queer, artful mashup of theater, humor, physical movement, and sumptuous song selections – spanning

decades of pop hits, his own compositions, and the Spanish boleros – **Miguel Anggelo** literally peels back an onion layer of personas, strip teasing "Latin lover" clichés, and reckoning with the tragic death of his homophobic and disapproving father. With indelible precision, weaving in and out of the audience, the artist connects past and present while unraveling the stereotypes that would otherwise constrain him. With equal doses of sensitivity and sensationalism, Miguel Anggelo reminds us that our own self-worth is right there in the mirror. LatinXoxo was designed to immerse an audience in a highly personal story.

For tickets, visit **[latinoculturalcenter.org](http://latinoculturalcenter.org)**.



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DIRECTED BY:  
MARY CATHERINE CURRAN

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International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago

Co-Present

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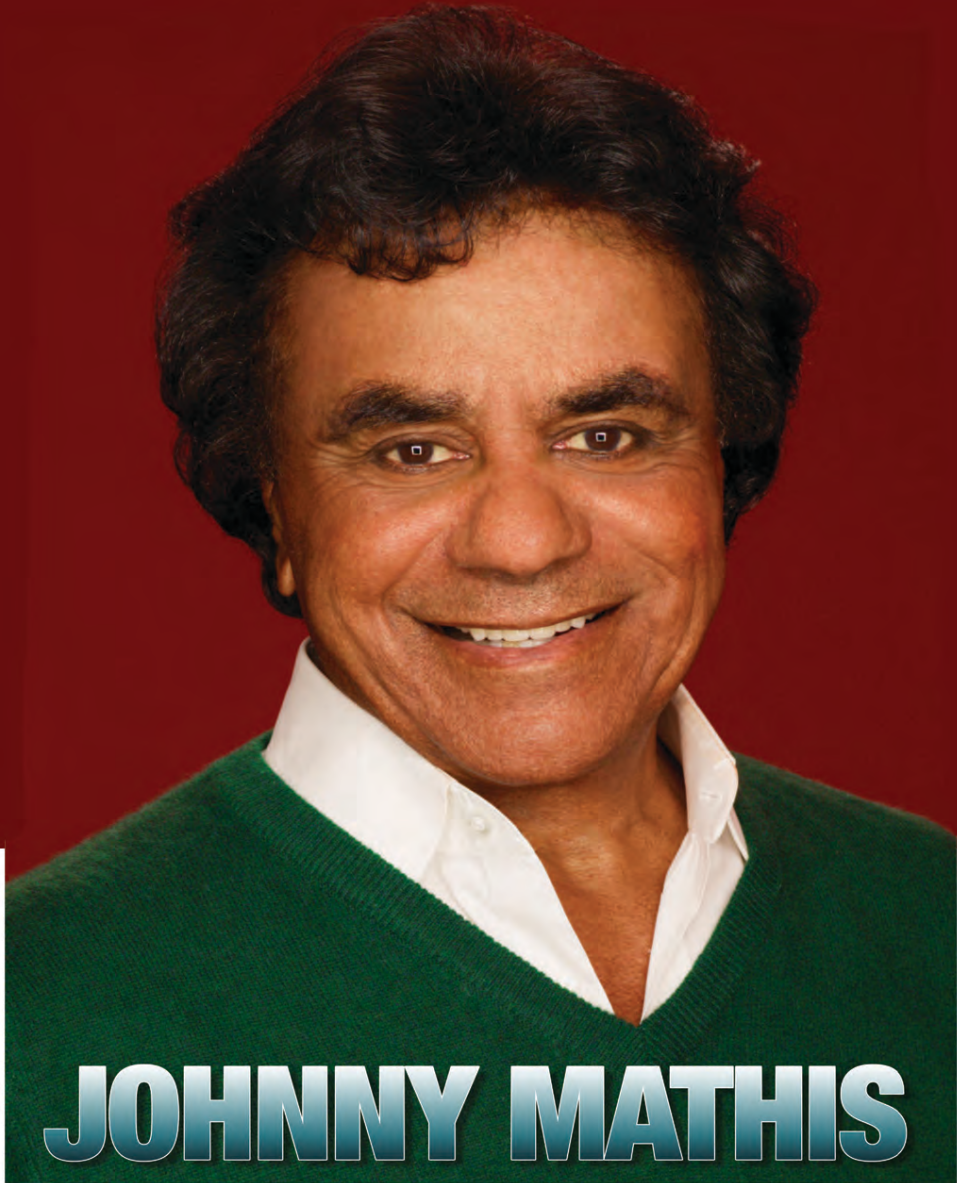
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