

GRAB MAGAZINE

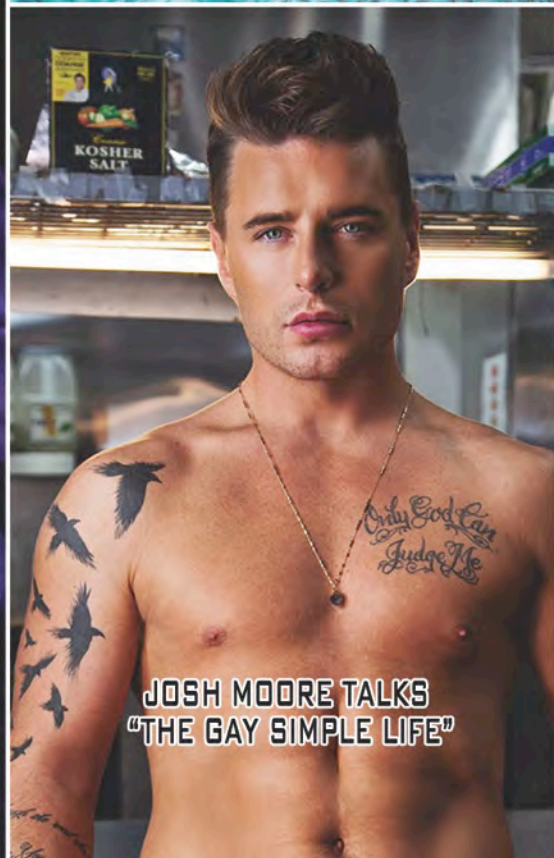
CHICAGO'S BIWEEKLY LGBTQ PUBLICATION

FEBRUARY 18, 2020 • VOL XI ISSUE #4 WWW.GRABCHICAGO.COM

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TRACY YOUNG



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CONTENTS

THIS ISSUE

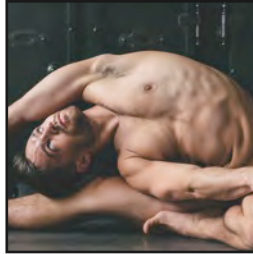
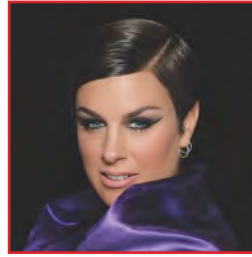
DRINK SPECIALS	28
NEXUS DANCE CHART	30
GRAB LEE	32
GRAB HOLLY	34
GRAB EVENTS	38
GRAB THEATRE	40
GRAB NEWS	42
GRAB MUSIC	44
Bar/Restaurant/ Directory/	46 & 48
MAP	49
CLASSIFIEDS	50

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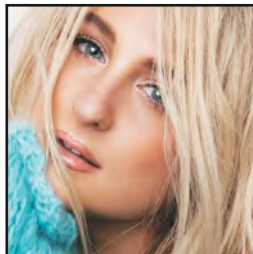
MAGAZINE

TRACY
YOUNG
6



NAKED
YOGA
10

GRAB A
PLANE
PV
14



MEGHAN
TRAINOR
18

ERIK
SOSA-KIBBY
24



JOSH
MOORE
36

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GRAB TRACY



Forever Young: an interview with Grammy Award winner Tracy Young

By Gregg Shapiro

If you've been dancing in a club any time in the last 20 or so years, chances are very good that you've hit the crowded dancefloor to a remix by Grammy Award-winning lesbian DJ and producer Tracy Young. The mid-Atlantic native and Miami resident has left her distinctive mark on songs by Pet Shop Boys, Cyndi Lauper, P!nk, Shakira, Lady Gaga, Gloria Estefan, Cher, Beyoncé, Demi Lovato, Stevie Nicks, Katy Perry, Chaka Khan, Christina Aguilera, and most significantly, Madonna. In fact, it was a Madonna tune, "I Rise" from 2019's *Madame X*, that earned Young her Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical Grammy Award in January 2020, making her the first female producer to ever win the category. Busier than ever, Young was

gracious enough to answer a few questions shortly after the Grammys.

Gregg Shapiro: *Tracy, I'd like to begin by congratulating you on your January 2020 Grammy Award win for Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical. What does being the recipient of such an award mean to you?*

Tracy Young: Thank you so much, Gregg! I am still on a cloud from last Sunday's historical Grammy win. I was just starting to feel comfortable with being nominated after 25-years in the business...and then I won!! It means everything to me.

GS: *Please say something about the significance of being the first woman*

to win the Grammy Award for Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical.

TY: Despite being eligible in previous years, the "Best Remixed Recording, Non-Classical" category was just introduced to the Recording Academy in 1998 and it's taken this long for a woman to be nominated. Now in 2020, both the industry and my peers are starting to see the hard work that goes into this business regardless of gender. My hope is that my Grammy win will create a dialogue and platform in the industry to recognize more female producers who have been overlooked for so long.

GS: *Do you have a special place picked out to display your Grammy Award?*



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Photo By Marco Ovando

TY: I do but it's top secret and only my dog Lucca knows [laughs].

GS: Did you hear from Madonna, whose song "I Rise" was the one you remixed, after you won?

TY: Well, of course I texted Madonna, because she's been somebody that I've not only aspired to be like as far as being an artist – she's always pushing the envelope and growing and learning. She texted back right away saying, "Congratulations!" with a bunch of emojis. She's happy. She's super proud. She's been an amazing support and has given me a lot of opportunities over many years.

GS: I first interviewed you in 2000 for Next Magazine. The title of the piece was "If Madonna Calls..." Here we are 20 years later, and you still have a significant working relationship with Madonna. What makes it such a long-lasting creative partnership?

TY: Trust is paramount whenever you are collaborating and that is the one thing that Madonna has always given me. She trusts the creative process and is very instrumental in guiding me forward. Our "I Rise" collaboration marks a high point in our long working relationship and I couldn't be prouder to share this award with Madonna.

GS: The first time we spoke 20 years ago I was living in Chicago, birthplace of house music, and you said you hadn't spun there yet. Have you had a chance to spin in Chicago since then, and if so, what do you like best about the Chicago club scene?

TY: I love Chicago! I've played at Hydrate over the years and know that the boys there love their music, so I'm always prepared.

GS: From the very early days of disco to the present day, dance music has been a central component of LGBTQ+ culture. As an out person, can you please say something about how you see your place in LGBTQ+ history?

TY: Beyond the music that I've either produced or created, I hope to be remembered for my philanthropic support and fundraising efforts that give back to various LGBTQ+ charities such as GLAAD, GMHC, Elton John AIDS Foundation, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, The Trevor Project, It Gets Better, Diversity Honors and amfAR.

GS: With the 2020 election front and center on everyone's minds, if you are asked to spin at a candidate's fundraiser or, ultimately a

candidate's victory celebration, is that something you would do or do you prefer to stay out of politics?

TY: I don't like to discuss politics, but I did remix the campaign song for Hillary Clinton's run for the Presidency of the United States of America in 2016. The song titled "Stronger Together" features recording artist Jessica Sanchez. I also had the opportunity to play at Hillary's fundraising rallies in Washington, DC.

GS: You are known for being incredibly busy with DJ and remix projects. Are there any on which you are currently working that you are particularly excited about and want to share with the readers?

TY: My focus is always music first, whether it's original productions for my own label Ferosh Records or expanding my discography with fresh remixes for other artists and labels. I am currently in development with a fun new project but will not reveal any details until the time is right.

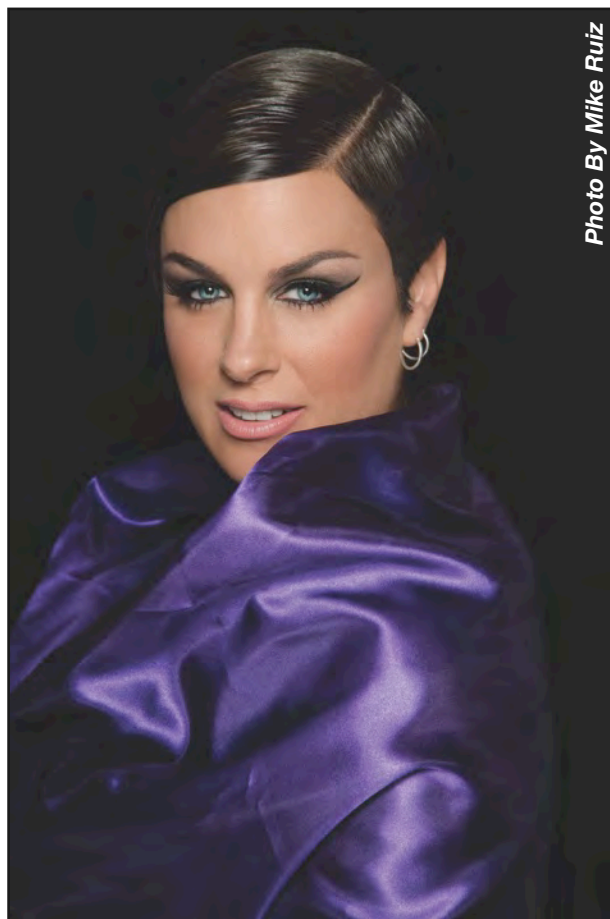


Photo By Mike Ruiz



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GRAB A MAT



Getting Nude to Feel Renewed Dan Carter Leads the Trend in Naked Yoga

By Matt Sunderland

Dan Carter has been teaching naked yoga classes in Washington DC for the past three years. As the founder of Danimal (a combination of Dan and animal - get it?) yoga, he's built the largest and most social nude yoga group in DC, with over 1,000 members!

Now, he's ready to go national. This May, he is inviting guys to join him

in Palm Springs for a long weekend of uninhibited camaraderie under the hot desert sun.

His Self Renewal: A Naked Health & Fitness Retreat will take place May 14-18 at InnDulge (601 S Grenfall Rd, Palm Springs, CA), one of the cities' top gay resorts, and will feature Dan leading classes such as "Yoga for Sexual

Health" and "Drum Up Your Bum. All sessions will have an emphasis on strengthening, stretching and encouraging men to connect and fall in love with their bodies.

"All classes are non-sexual however intimacy and touch will be important bonding components to the weekend," Dan explains. "A huge part of the experience will be building a real sense of family between the two dozen men in attendance."

Matt Sunderland: We spoke with the naked Yogi to learn more. Let's start with the most important question.

How long does it take to be able to do a split?

Daniel Carter: I get asked this all the time! I don't remember a time I wasn't able to do a split but I have many students whose hips are shaped in a way that they'll never do one. I can teach a student to do a split variation that increases hip mobility and provides a cathartic release within five classes. I think that's what really important.

MS: Why should guys consider taking up yoga?

DC: Yoga is a mind-body practice. In addition to toning up muscles,



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improving breath and lubricating joints, yoga also hones the nervous system and the bodies response to the world's stressors.

MS: Is there a benefit to doing yoga in the nude?

DC: There are huge benefits! We talk about the experience as an un-shielding. Yoga is a very vulnerable practice with all the precarious shapes we bend into, by removing clothes, our last sheath, we make ourselves even more vulnerable and we grow from it. It also helps me, as the instructor, see your lungs, muscles and joints at work so I can give smarter cues and better hands-on adjusts.

MS: What exactly did you do to achieve that badonkadonk?

DC: I've always had a bit of a butt, but I got it to be bigger through a combination of yoga, pilates and regular squatting. Unfortunately, it has made shopping for jeans more difficult, but I feel much healthier and happier.



MS: Does yoga increase the libido?

DC: All fitness, in healthy moderation, contributes to libido. What's really nice about yoga is we not only focus on energizing the body, we focus on relaxation. To have incredible sex, you need to be able to get into that blissful rest space before things really start to heat up.

MS: What are the biggest misconceptions about yoga?

DC: That it's only for one kind of person. Yoga is for everybody: every shape, color, age... In fact, the word yoga literally translates to "bring together".

MS: What's your advice to someone who is new to yoga?

DC: Take a private yoga class with a teacher who instructs beginners. If that's not in your budget, take a beginner class, arrive early, and introduce yourself to the instructor.

MS: What's your advice to guys who may be on the fence about dropping trou with strangers?

DC: The grass is truly

greener on this side of the fence! I have had a shocking amount of guys take a risk on one of my retreats as their first yoga experience and they've never been dissatisfied. If you've got anxiety around social nudity, your yoga practice or anything else, email me through my website and let's talk about it.

MS: Why did you choose to do the retreat in Palm Springs?

DC: Palm Springs is my happy place! There is something so breathtaking about the palms set against the mountain and desert. Then there is the gorgeous mid-century architecture that transports you to Hollywood's golden era. But most importantly, there are the handsome boys, sunning their tan, rippling skin by the crystal blue swimming pools. I chose to do the retreat specifically at the INNduge resort because it is the perfect encapsulation of all three of those visuals! In addition to being a beautiful space in which to hold a retreat, I am a huge fan of their salt water pool, which is so kind on the skin.

MS: We all head into a vacation with expectations. What can we expect from the Self Renewal: A Naked Health and Fitness Retreat?

DC: This will be an absolutely transformative weekend. Men leave these retreats with a renewed sense of purpose and love of self.

For tickets and more information on the SELF RENEWAL: A NAKED HEALTH AND FITNESS RETREAT, visit <http://www.danimalyoga.com/retreat>.





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GRAB A PLANE

Gay Tropical Bargain - Your PV Vacation

By Bill Malcolm

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico is the premiere LGBT resort in North America and winter is a perfect time to visit. It's the dry season and temperatures are in the low to mid-80s every day. Your cost would be half what you would pay for a similar vacation in Florida. It's on the Pacific Ocean on the largest Bay in Mexico and is a steal. The food is excellent with lots of seafood and Mexican dishes. And did I forget to mention that Tequila comes from a small town nearby of the same name?

Nestled in the Zona Romantica (old town) is the LGBTQ district with its many charming hotels, bars, and restaurants which are all steps from each other on cobblestone streets. Don't miss the farmers' market on Saturdays and Art Walk Wednesday nights. The Malecon, a sculpture lined beach walkway leads you to the Playa de los Muertos beach and pier. South of the pier you will find the gay beach.

WHAT TO DO

Sailing on Banderas Bay with Vallarta Adventures is a great way to see wildlife like the whale sharks, sting rays (which the locals call manta rays), pelicans, blue footed booby birds (which dive for fish), and dolphins. Our sailing adventure stopped to paddle board, snorkel, and swim on a great beach on the northern part of Banderas Bay. The trip leaves from the Marina Nuevo Vallarta. Book your adventure at Vallarta-adventures.com.

The Vallarta Botanical Gardens is a 50-minute bus ride down the coast and up into the mountains at 1,500 feet. It is a "dry season tropical forest" with lots of unique plants and trees. They feature tropical plants like the sun burn tree (the Gumbo Limbo) as well as swimming in the bottom of the canyon in the Rio Sendero. Have lunch at the fabulous Rooftop Restaurant featuring local fare. Don't miss the Orchid Conservatory as well as the Vanilla Plantation walks. To get to the gardens, catch the El Tuito bus at Carraza at Aguacate Streets. The fare is around 40 pesos.

There are several beach clubs on the beach catering to the community including the Blue Chairs and the



Green Chairs (Ritmos). It's never a dull moment as peddlers stop by try to sell you souvenirs. You can order lunch under the beach umbrellas as well as drinks. It makes for a great day.

You can work out daily at The Fit Club which features day passes as well as longer term pricing options.

NIGHTLIFE

I saw the fabulous Kim Kuzma at the Palms Cabaret who did her British Invasion show featuring songs from Annie Lennox, Adele, and British singers and groups. You can see the show Tuesdays and Saturdays at 7: 30 p.m. The cabaret is at 508 Olas Altas, the main street in the Zona Romantica (Old Town). Tickets at www.thepalmscabaret.com.

Many of the bars are on Lazaro Cardenas Street including Mr. Flamingo

(347 Lazaro Cardenas on Vallarta) and CC Slaughters. The others are down the street in the Zona Olas Altas including the Anonimo, a video bar which has three floors and great views of the street scene. Catch the nightly drink specials including the 50-peso Cosmos on Sunday. Then grab a slushie drink at the nearby Blondies Bar.

Swedes Restaurant and Bar features Cosmos for 40 pesos all night Wednesday and also serves excellent food. Show your Palm Cabaret ticket for 15 percent off.

Up the hill are two rooftop bars located in condos but open to the public which feature great views of the sunset. They are the Pinnacle Rooftop Bar and The Signature Lounge both which feature great happy hours.

Old Town has 32 LGBT bars with something for everyone.

GETTING THERE

I took Southwest Airlines via Houston on the way down and via Denver on the way back. American Airlines and Alaska Airlines also has service to PVR as does United.

From the airport, catch the city bus for just 10 pesos (50 cents US) to town (look for the sign on the window saying Centro or Tunnel). You will find the stop just to the left as you exit the airport.

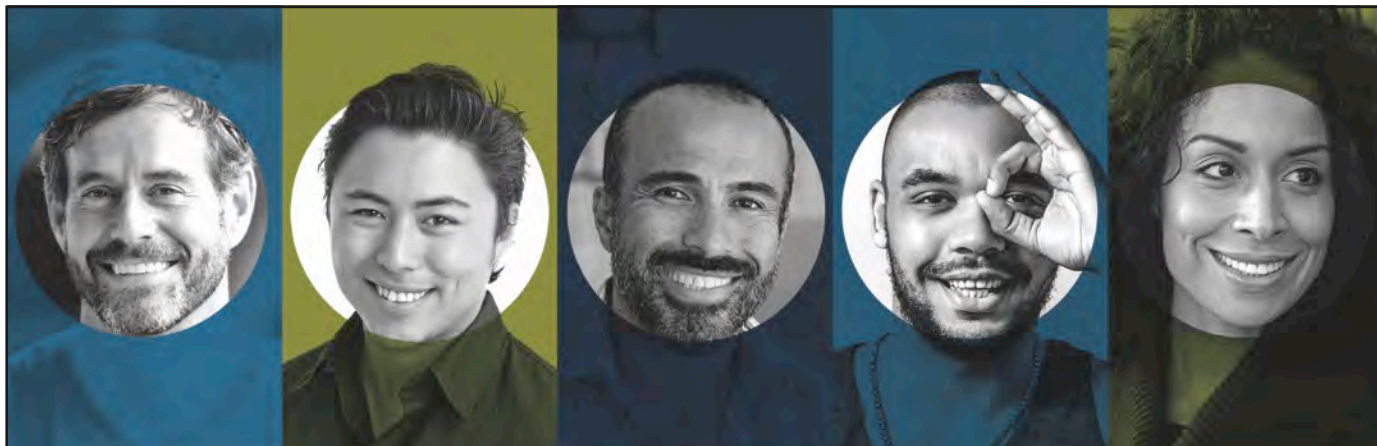
WHERE TO STAY

I stayed at the Hotel Mercurio in the heart of Old Town. The rates are very reasonable and the rooms surround the pool which has a great bar and restaurant. Sundays is the beer bust (Beer, Boys, and Burgers) which also features a drag and a strip show from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Happy Hour starts daily at 3 p.m. Book your room at www.hotel-mercurio.com. They also have a swim suit store. Even if you can't stay there, stop by for a meal or drink or to buy a swim suit. You will find them and Francisco Rodriugez #168.



I have also stayed at the 50 Callejon del Amendro condos (book at www.pvrpv.com which also offers other condos such as the V399 where my friends stayed).

Other options include the La Terraza Inn and The Almar Hotel although the latter apparently now has a \$8 resort fee. (I boycott hotels which such surcharges.)



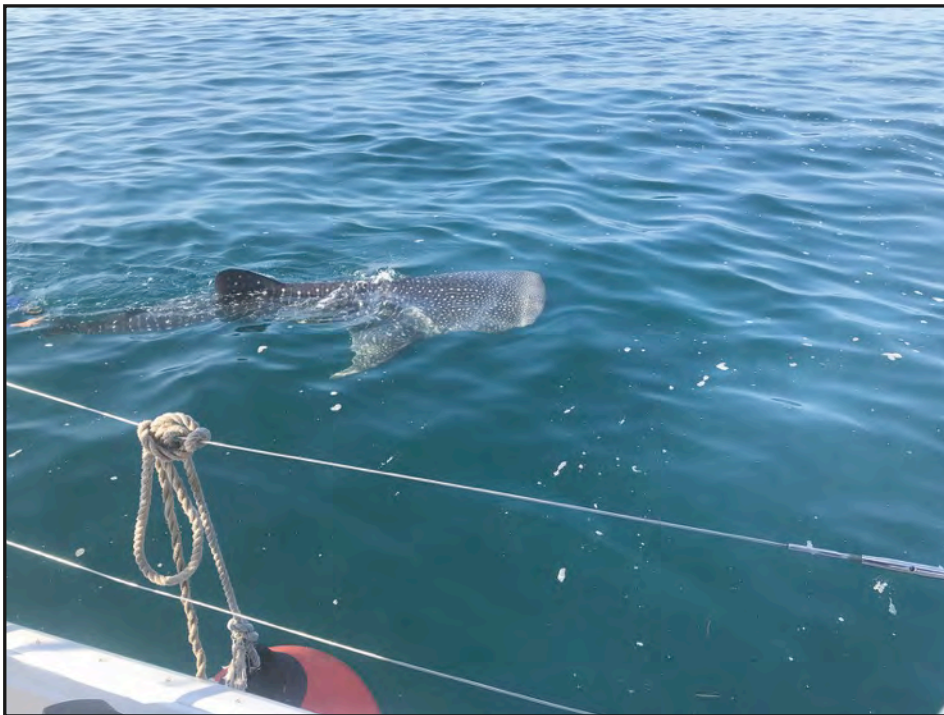
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WHERE TO EAT

Daiquiri Dick's has great views of the beach as well as excellent Mexican and American Food.

Barra Light features great salads and fresh carrot juice.

Dee's Coffee near the Pier and Vallarta Coffee Roasters both have excellent coffee drinks.

The Hotel Mercurio has the best breakfast in town. The selection varies daily but is authentic local fare. My

favorite was the beef picadillo, a beef hash with vegetables and lots of spices. Plus, the fresh fruit which included papaya.

TRAVEL TIPS

Puerto Vallarta is a bargain. Food and drinks are about half what you would pay at home and the hotels are much cheaper than other warm weather destinations. There are around 18 Mexican pesos to the dollar. 100 pesos equals around 5 dollars. (Drop the 0 and divide by 2 to go from pesos to dollars).

Your ATM card will work in Mexico. Use it at the banks for the best rates.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Pick up a copy of Gay PV or read it online (www.gaypv.com). They also have a Gay Guide (www.gayguidevallarta.com). Out and About Puerto Vallarta (O&APV) is the monthly magazine filled with adventure ideas.

This was my third trip to Puerto Vallarta and it won't be my last.

Bill Malcolm's LGBTQ syndicated value travel column is run by publications around the U.S.

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GRAB MEGHAN



Meghan Trainor Is Living Her Best 'Yaaas, B*tch' Life

Pop star on her generous lesbian fans and tipping drag queens with Sam Smith's money

By Chris Azzopardi

It's not necessarily all about that bass. It's also all about that time Sam Smith – yes, that Sam Smith – slipped Meghan Trainor some singles so she could tip some Meghan Trainor drag queens.

Because even before Trainor captured adoration from the Grammy voting academy, who named her Best New Artist in 2016, the 26-year-old pop star had arguably already won an artist's most valuable asset: the LGBTQ community's enduring affection.

Before dropping her third full-length, *Treat Myself*, Trainor rang to talk about the LGBTQ community's influence on her new body-positive mentality, lesbians who want to go down on her for a very specific amount of time, and finally being old enough to go to the gay bars that play her songs. In fact, she got so much off her chest during our phone calls that at the end of

our second one she raved, "Such great therapy!"

Chris Azzopardi: When were you first aware of your LGBTQ fanbase?

Meghan Trainor: Oh, early in the beginning. "Bass" had just come out. (That Pride) Atlanta show (in 2014), I'll never forget it. I had no fans, I was so new, and they made me feel like a superstar. It was, like, 9,000 people on this big lawn and just the coolest thing ever. I did that and a gay club in Florida, I think, in the early, early days and I remember that was the night this father yelled out, "You saved my daughter's life," and that has been with me ever since, because that's not something you hear every day. I was so new and so not famous.

CA: Did you have this many queer fans as a kid growing up in Nantucket, Massachusetts?

MT: Not really, no. (Laughs.) A lot of people weren't coming out in high school back in Nantucket that I knew of. I knew one friend that came out, but he came out when I moved away, so I never got to celebrate it with him. Now he dresses like a girl sometimes and he's the prettiest woman ever. (The LGBTQ community) wasn't as big as it is in Los Angeles, obviously. I love it though. I love being in a place where it's fully accepted, and I keep saying this in every interview, but my entire team is gay.

CA: How did headlining L.A. Pride last year during the 50th anniversary of Stonewall standout from other Prides you've performed at?

MT: This one was really special on many different levels. It felt like a birthday that I'll never forget. It was just so magical because my setlist was one of the best I've ever had: I threw in

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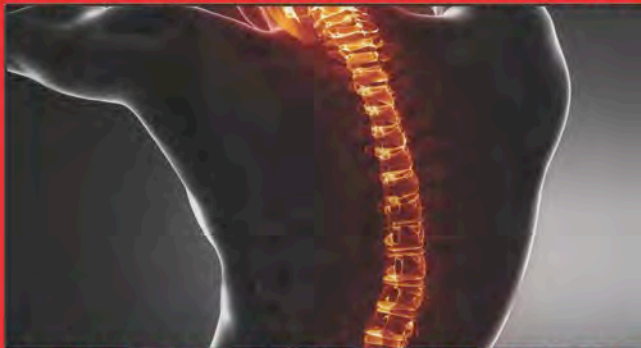
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"Dancing Queen" by ABBA, and that really got the crowd going, and I performed "Can't Dance" for the first time and did this amazing dance with it (laughs).

And the big reveal was my booty! My butt was out and about, and the only audience I would be comfortable showing off my body and my ass for is my LGBTQ community because they accept and love me for who I am. I've never had more screams! It made me feel so confident, and like a queen. That opened up a whole world of: I'm gonna wear more form-fitting outfits because I do love myself and my body. And I have been. I don't know if you got a chance to see me on *The Voice* but I'm feelin' my legs, and my butt was out.

CA: But there are times when you're not as confident as your music makes you seem?

MT: I mean, I'm way more confident than I was. This career has actually helped me so much in that way, like feeling beautiful and seeing pictures of myself that I actually like. Being on camera and being on TV, I'm like, "Wow, guys, I'm pretty!" I say that way more. Everyone I think just works on it every day. But I definitely have learned a lot of lessons with this career; some good ones, like saying out loud how beautiful you are and saying you're going to really believe it. If you just talk negative about yourself, that's what your brain's hearing and that's what it'll learn. So I try to stay positive.

CA: Did you ever struggle with seeing yourself on TV?

MT: I was worried with (hosting reality-TV music competition) *The Four* because I had never done a TV show before. But I can't stop watching that show, man! (Laughs.) I watched it and everything that I did – I was a fan of myself watching myself. I'm so lame! I was just like, "Yaaas, bitch. Say what you feel." And I was like, "Look how

cute she is." Just talkin' as if I were a different person.

CA: I hope everybody can someday feel as confident as you do.

MT: I never thought I'd be there, so it's great.

CA: How much has the LGBTQ community influenced the empowerment sensibility in your music?

MT: So much. I remember I had a show in Atlanta, a gay Pride event, in my early career and I never had so many screams before. I've never had so many people just wanting to make love to me.



These women were screaming at me: "I'll go down on you for 45 minutes!" And I was like, "Wow! That sounds like a treat." Nobody's ever said that to me, you know? I was like, "Wow, you'd do that for me?! You really love me!" That was just the best compliment I ever had.

CA: 'Treat Myself' was originally supposed to be released in 2018, but then got shelved because you went back into the studio and basically gutted the album and restarted. Where was your headspace when you originally recorded the album versus when you re-recorded it?

MT: I think I was just like so in love. I mean, obviously: I was getting married. I'm still so in love. But I was just so live, breathe, sleep just Daryl (Sabara, Trainor's husband). Like, this is my world. So when I was doing the songwriting I was like, "Guys, I'm really boring. I'm just madly in love and everything's so great for me and I don't have anything fun to write about (laughs)."

Then I started writing songs with my older brother because he would just videotape every session, and from that he learned, "Oh, I could be a songwriter." He actually wrote on every single song pretty much, and his love

life is way more interesting than mine, so I started asking him about his life (laughs) and we've been writing amazing songs together. I was like, "This is fun and relatable and not everyone is madly in love." I gotta write for my sweet single souls out there!

CA: Were you happy with the first recording of 'Treat Myself'?

MT: Yeah, I love all my songs. It just feels I'm writing too much about one topic, and then pop music was drowning. It was fading away; it's because hip-hop and urban was having and is still having a moment, and I love that because I'm a fan and it's magical and so cool to watch. But it's like, where's pop? Where'd pop go?

We sent "Waves" to radio because I was like, "I'm putting my foot down; this is my favorite song I've ever written, and I think the production is powerful." It was my favorite music video I've ever done. This one I had no complaints about. And we heard, I guess, from radio, and they're like, "It's just so different; we're trying to wrap our heads around it." Like, what?

CA: Growing up, who were the artists who instilled confidence in you?

MT: Christina Aguilera, Britney Spears, Pussycat Dolls and Rihanna. I love Pussycat Dolls!



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CA: Why the Pussycat Dolls?

MT: Their lyrics – which is funny, 'cause they're like the best dancers ever. But their lyrics, "Don't cha wish your girlfriend was hot like me," like man, I used to roll around in middle school with that and high school and just be like, "This is my song!"

CA: Which song on 'Treat Myself' are you most looking forward to your LGBTQ fans hearing?

MT: "Genetics." It was the first song I wrote with Mike Sabath and Justin Tranter, who are like gods at writing pop music. I went in, actually, with this chorus and I was like, "Everyone keeps wanting me to write another 'All About That Bass' and I wanna just flip 'em off (laughs)." So I found another way of saying I love myself and what I got is: My genetics are pretty dope, and I do have great genetics from my parents. Their skin and their body shapes are just spot on. Like, I was blessed with an hourglass body, which doesn't happen all the time, you know. So I was like, "Fine. Let's give them a genetics song."

So I thought it was sassy and sexy and fun, and something everyone could sing. I wanted grandparents to hear this and be like, "You're welcome, kids." And then when I heard it I was like, "This is so Pussycat Dolls," so then I called Nicole (Scherzinger). She was like, "We should have a sing-off." And I was like, "Excuuuse me?!" She was like, "We should have a battle moment where we both sing our hearts out." And I was like, "Da fuck – OK!" At the end, before the last chorus, you'll hear two vocalists just ripping, and it's me and her back and forth. And she wins.

CA: What was it like to have your manager, Tommy Bruce, who's gay, officiate your wedding?

MT: It was everything because he knows me better than anyone. He delivered the opening words, and I always joke that I want them to let me have my Britney Spears microphone, like attached to my ear, and my team is like, "No, they're gonna hear how winded you get sometimes." And I understand that. But he showed up to my wedding with one of those, and he also knows how much I love T-Pain



music, so he had it on full Auto-Tune and was like, "We're all gathered here todaaaa-yyy-yyy." It was so everything. It was the best.

CA: What is the most impressive drag performance you've seen of a Meghan Trainor song?

MT: Oh, man, I went to The Abbey in L.A. and I was there with Sam Smith and it was one of the cool points in my

life. (Sam) gave me dollar bills because it was my second drag show ever and I was like, "I don't have the dollar bills! I didn't bring 'em!" And (Sam) handed me a stack. They did a few of my songs and it was just the best time of my life being like, "Sam, that's my song!" and throwing all the money on them!

CA: What's the story behind you wearing a unicorn onesie when you guest judged 'RuPaul's Drag Race' in 2017?

MT: (Laughs.) Well, I was in the middle of a tour and had that onesie because I was wearing onesies for our meet-and-greets. Instead of doing what everyone does when they dress up fully and do the glam, I was like, "Let me show my unicorn pride, let me show what I bring around my tour." I thought it'd be cute. Now when I watch it I'm like, "Oh, why *didn't* you dress up?"

CA: What was your first time at a gay club like?

MT: Well, I remember the gay club called Play (in Nashville) was playing "All About That Bass" and I was 19 or 20. I was like, "Let me in, you're playin' my song!" And they denied me. I was like, "Man!" I couldn't show proof. It was just released and I was like, "You (put) my song on but you don't know my face." Later, I went back and I was like, "Now I'm back and in the VIP."

CA: And surely you've sung that song at Play by now.

MT: No! But I did dance to "Lips Are Movin'" with a drag queen! And I remember they had a

razor and they made me shave this guy's hair off. Do you remember that, mom? That was the craziest time in my life. I was like, "Um, are you sure?"

CA: Hi mom!

MT: She says hi!

This interview has been edited and condensed from two conversations.

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GRAB ERIK

2020 is not only a new year, but a new decade

By Erik Sosa-Kibby

Today, is one of those days, where I can't seem to think straight because tensions are on high. So, instead of stressing out about what I can and can't manage and accomplish, going gaily forward with flair is what I must contend with in order to put another one in the basket. "Swish Swish Bish." Because in reality, when the Big D is staring you in the face, everything else seems really frivolous. So many balls to catch, so little time, can be quite hairy at times! And, just for clarification purposes, by the D, I mean Divorce. Sorry to disappoint those of you who thought otherwise. Same boat. No judgment. Just sayin'. "Swish Swish Bish. Another one in the casket."

Now, although mediation seems to be a better alternative to the courts, from a familial perspective, anxiety and stress still abound when emotional/physical separation/dissolution is at play. But alas, pushing forward with a smile and mostly grace is what I must do. After much contemplation and growth, with a mending heart I can say, maybe my partner is not the enemy. Instead, maybe we are both willing

participants in the game of life. Neither good or evil, it's these events and experiences we manifest that thrust us to move beyond, remain in the status quo, or repel one to a state where history repeats. Divorce is not kicking my ass, but it is sure a pain in one. However, through much reflection and introspection, I am understanding that sometimes, a good pain in the ass is what one needs to reach greater heights. But, I'm pretty sure the lot of you already knew that. Swish Swish Bish.

If marriage can be seen as the kiss of death at times, then maybe divorce can be its resurrection. Throughout the years, I had managed to lose my sense of self and it has been through mediation that I have started to create boundaries. In order to have successful and meaningful relationships with anyone, much C.A.R.E is dependent upon me as well as those around. Communication. Accountability. Respect. Evolution. Divorce is not always about losing a love, but setting it free in the hopes that if paths are ever



crossed, you'll be happy you didn't burn that bridge.

Although today may seem a bit heightened, 2020, so far, has been pretty spectacular and it seems to be superseding my expectations. I mean, in all honesty, you really can't go anywhere but up after ringing in the new year alone, in bed crying, wishing the pity party of one would just reach 3, 2, 1, already. I think what made the self-induced isolation the hardest, in a bittersweet kind of way, was hearing the abundance of laughter and ruckus emanating from above as my boys and their friends were having the best of times. And it's not that I couldn't join them, it's that I love and respect my boys enough to give them their space. Oh, and did I mention that while I wallowed in the misery of my own company due to the woes of love and relationships, right above me, quite the opposite was flourishing. I swear, it was as if the torch of irony had made it to my house, just in time say, "BOOyah Bitch, wake the fuck up and start caring for yourself. "Swish Swish Bish. Can't touch this!"

Having just turned 45, it's amazing that my confidence lays on the foundation that there is still much for me to experience, learn, process and share. Yes, the mother of all reset buttons is staring me straight in the face, telling me this year things will be different. Welcome to the year of the awakening.

Erik Sosa-Kibby is a Chicago based artist. Paintings printed through this column will be displayed and available at his end of the year show "20/20 Vision."

(Artwork by Erik Sosa-Kibby)





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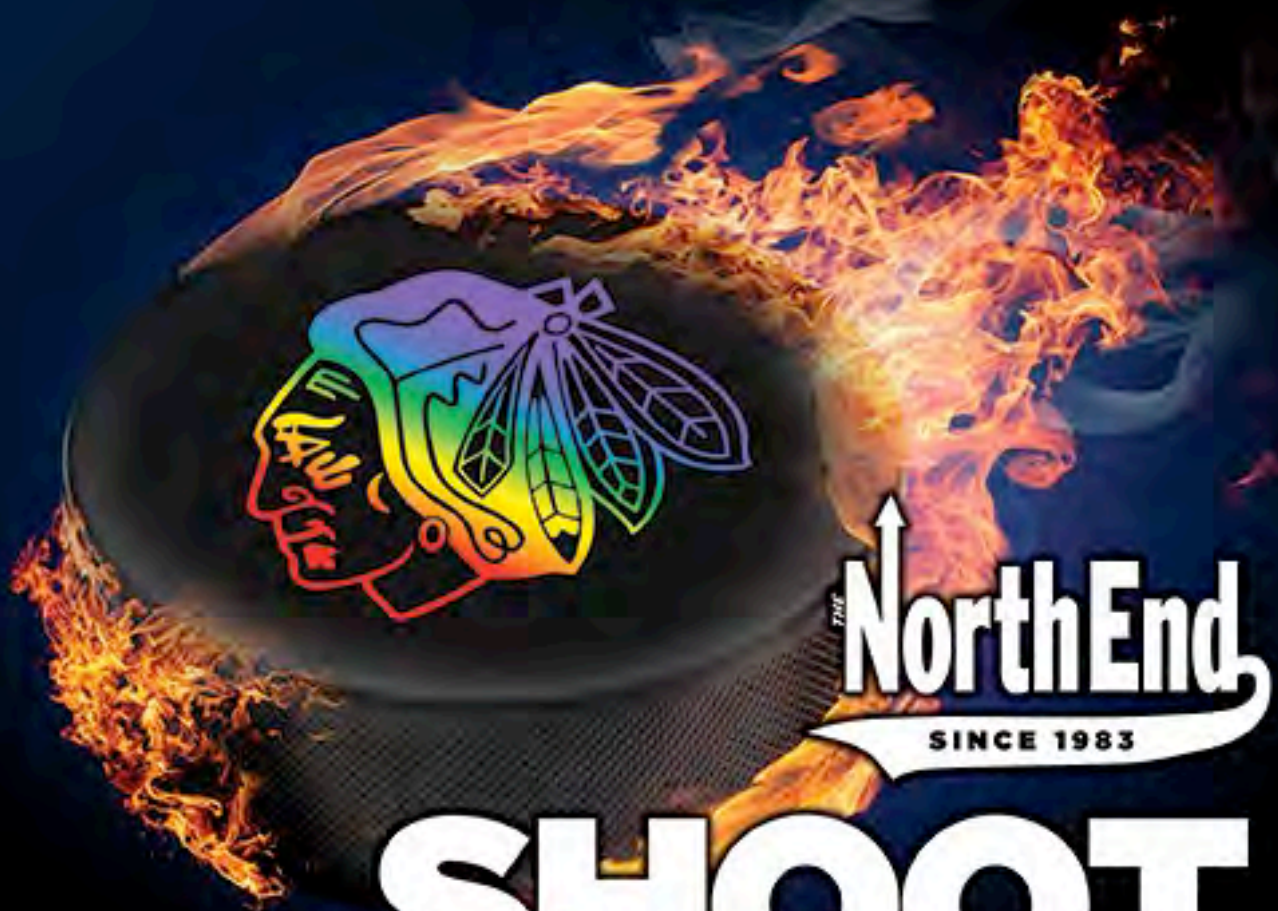
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Monday	<p>@mosphere: Open 6pm - Midnight - Industry Night \$5 call drinks, \$2 house shots. Cell Block: Free pool \$4.50 Draft Beer \$5 Fireball or Jager Shots. Charlies: Open 3pm- 4am, 9pm - 1am, Double 'D' Bingo hosted by Darla Dae and Bella DeBalle --- \$3 Well Drinks, \$2 Draft Pints, \$3 Apple Pie Moonshine Shots \$4 Bacardi Bombs and \$17 Deep Eddy Vodka Pitchers, 3rd Monday of the Month is Birthday Bingo with prizes sponsored by the SUGAR FACTORY in River North. Hydrate: \$2 Drinks, \$5 Cover after Midnight, DJ Laura B. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm, Bottles of Wine 50% off with dinner entree purchase. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 4pm, Dancers 7pm. North End: Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, \$5 Draft Beers.</p> <p>Progress Bar: VAMP Drag Show hosted by Mercedes Tyler featuring Mimi Marks and DJ X-tasy \$5 ABSOLUT Flavored Vodka, \$5 Jameson Irish Whiskey, \$3 Blue Moon Drafts. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Z Report (Industry Night): \$3 Bud Lights, \$4 Wells, \$5 Drafts Shakers: \$3 Domestic Bottles, \$4 Well Mixed Drinks, \$4 Fireball and Jager shots. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm. Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. Steamworks: \$5 off w/Student ID, Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. Touche: Euchre Night Come out & Play 7-10pm, Sports on our screens, Club Room Open.</p>
Tuesday	<p>@mosphere: Open 6pm - Midnight. 90s Night, \$7 Signature Drinks, \$6 Beer & Whiskey shot, \$5 Absolute Vodka \$4 Sexy shots. Big Jim's: Freeballer Night \$3 Drafts. Cell Block: Free Pool \$2.50 Old Style or High Life Cans. Charlie's: Open 3pm- 4am, 7pm - 11pm, Tune-Up Tuesday Karaoke hosted by Bella DeBalle, 11pm - 2am, Tag-Team Tuesday hosted by Alexandra Diamond and Sapphire Feliciano --- \$4 You-Call-It Cocktails and Beer all night long. Kit Kat Lounge: Half priced martinis & 1/3 off small plates; Tarot Card Readings by Therese Murphy. "Burger, Beer, Bitch!" \$14.95 Burger & Beer. \$12.95 Chicken & Waffles w/ champagne. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm Pizza BOGO Buy One Get One at 50% off. Lucky Horseshoe: Open Auditions for male dancers 7pm. Open at 4pm, Dancers 7pm. North End: Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, \$3 Deep Eddy Cocktails.</p> <p>Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$6 Bombs, \$7 Deep Eddy Vodka Red Bulls, \$8 Beer+Shot Combos, Free Tattoo Raffle Giveaways! Shakers: \$3 Domestic Bottles, \$4 Well Mixed Drinks, \$4 Fireball and Jager shots. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, OUTspoken LGBTQ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of month from 7-9pm, TRL Tuesday: Mix of 90's, 00's & Today's Music Videos 9pm-2am, Schitt's Creek Viewing Party 8pm. Steamworks: Come Back Tuesdays Use your weekend receipt to get \$4 off anytime Tuesday or Wednesday, 4p-7p-Howard Brown Open Testing To the Public. \$5 off w/Student ID. Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. Touche: 2/25 Mardi Gras Party! Drink Specials, Beads, Prizes. Hardcore Cruisin', Sponsored by Leather 64Ten, Club Room Open \$1 off drinks for those in Leather, No Cell Phones/WiFi.</p>
Wednesday	<p>@mosphere: Open 6pm-Midnight American Horror Story Viewing Party 9pm-10pm (Starting in October) Stripper Bingo 10pm-12pm, \$8 Martinis, \$7 Margaritas, \$6 Mojitos, \$5 Wines. Baton Show Lounge: Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm & 12:30am. Cell Block: Vodka Wednesday \$5 Top Shelf Vodka Drinks. Charlie's: Open 3pm - 4am, First Wednesday 11pm - 2am Strip Factor hosted by Alexandra Diamond and Jalen, Remaining Wednesday's 11pm - 2am, Teases and Tucks hosted by Sapphire Feliciano --- \$3 Well Drinks, \$2 Pint Draft Beer. Kit Kat Lounge: \$7 Martinis, Half-price Cocktails & Martinis, Buy one entree get one free. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm 50% off Nachos and Totchos with purchase of beverage. LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace: 7pm Twisted Broadway Hosted By NYC'S Delilah J Brooks. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 4pm, Dancers 7pm. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 ALL whiskey & tequila shots, \$3 Miller Lite drafts & \$3 Coors Light tall boys on special all day & night. North End: Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, \$5 Lagunitas Drafts & Cans. Progress Bar: \$6 Crystal Head Vodka \$4 el Jimador Shots. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Karaoke Wednesdays \$5 You-Call-Its. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Men's Room Chicago Wednesday 1st Wed of the Month, monthly All Things Beyoncé and Syndt! Parties other Wed.'s 9pm-2am. Steamworks: Come Back Wednesdays Use your weekend receipt to get \$4 off anytime Tuesday or Wednesday, \$5 off w/Student ID. Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. Touche: Jockstrap Party Sponsored by Full Kit Gear Show your jock for \$1 Off drinks, Free clothing check.</p>
Thursday	<p>@mosphere: Throwback Nights Hours: 6pm - 2am, \$7 Long Islands, \$6 Stoli, \$5 Jose Cuervo, \$5 IPAs. Baton Show Lounge: Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm & 12:30am. Cell Block: Cheap drinks \$4 Well, \$5 Domestic Beers. Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. Charlie's: Open 3pm- 4am, First and Third Thursday 9pm - 11pm Boylesque Hosted by Ben D. Mann and Coco Shonel, Every Thursday 11pm - 2am Drag Survivor Hosted by Alexandra Diamond --- \$4 You-Call-It Cocktails and Beer all night long. Hydrate: \$5 Effen Cocktails & Bombs. Kit Kat Lounge: \$7 Martinis, \$5 mojitos, Daiquiries & Pina Coldas. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm, All Mule Drinks 50% off. LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace: 7pm Divas Show Hosted by Angel Lebare. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 4pm, Dancers 5pm. Meeting House Tavern: 9pm Thirsty Thursday Karaoke, \$5 You Call Its on special all day & night. North End: Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month \$5 White Claws. Progress Bar: The Gig with Host Debbie Fox. \$6 Grey Goose Flavored Vodka \$5 Avión Tequila \$4 Fireball Shots. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: #TRULY Thursdays: \$5 Truly Cans and \$5 Stoli Vodkas, Rotating DJs and Drag Shows Shakers: \$3 Domestic Bottles, \$4 Well Mixed Drinks, \$4 Fireball and Jager shots. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, POP ROCKS 9pm-2am Dance to Pop Songs, Slay to Drag & get on stage to Win with Dixie Lynn. Steamworks: \$5 off w/Student ID. Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers. Touche: Throwback Thursdays 70's & 80's Music & Porn by Bijou Video.</p>

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Daily Specials

Friday

@mosphere: 6pm - 2am 1st Friday - Spice (a Spanish theme night), 2nd Friday - Soul (an Urban Jam theme night) 3rd Friday - Dance Party, 4th Friday - Ladies & Lads (Dancers & drags perform). **Baton Show Lounge:** Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm & 12:30am. **Cell Block:** Budweiser Friday \$4.50 Bud or Bud Light, \$5 Tequila Shots Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. **Charlie's:** Open 3pm - 4am, Every Friday Country Line Dancing Hosted by the Second City Country Dance Association from 8pm - 11pm, First and Third Friday 11:30pm - 2am Charles Angels hosted by Bella DeBalle, Alexandra Diamond, Sapphire Feliciano, and Luna La Catrina, Second Friday 11:30pm - 2am Strut Party hosted by Bella DeBalle, Fourth Friday 11:30 - 2am Glow with the Flow Neon Party hosted by Alexandra Diamond and Luna La Catrina, Fifth Friday 11:30pm - 2am Bella's Blackout hosted by Bella DeBalle, \$4 Stillhouse Whiskey, \$3 Apple Pie Shot. **Hydrate:** \$4 Jameson Shots. **Kit Kat Lounge:** \$32 three course prix-fixe menu includes a martini, salad and entree. Happy Hour 5:30-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. **LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:** 7pm & 9:30pm Glitz and Glam Hosted by Shovonna B Brooks. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 4pm, Dancers 5pm. **North End:** Open at 1pm, \$4 Shot of the Month, Happy Hour 4pm-7pm (\$3 Coors Light and Miller Lite). **Progress Bar:** Power Hour \$2 Smirnoff Vodka Cocktails from 9-10pm. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Shot Power Hour 9p-10p \$3 Fireball, Jameson, Dobel Tequila, Coldspell Mint Whiskey / DJs spinning live starting at 10p. **Shakers:** \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, T.G.I.F. Show Tunes 5-9pm, Friday Night Fun after till 2am.. **Steamworks:** Quick Trix 6am-1pm \$10 lockers., 9p-12a TPAN HIV Rapid Test. **The Office:** DJ's @ 10pm. **Touche:** 2/21 Mardi Gras 2020 Party Weekend Kick Off! 2/28 ONYX Club Night.

Saturday

@mosphere: Theme Nights & Dancers, Hours: 6pm - 3am, \$7 1800 Tequila, \$6 Bacardi Run, \$5 Heineken, \$4 Rumble Shots. **Baton Show Lounge:** Shows at 8:30pm, 10:30pm & 12:30am. **Cell Block:** Beer and a Shot \$5 Jager/Fireball/Malort Shots \$5 Domestic Pints of beer. Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. **Charlie's:** Open 3pm - 5am, 10pm - 12am The Balle hosted by Bella DeBalle, 12am - 2pm The Dollhouse Hosted by Alexandra Diamond — \$3 Apple Pie Shots, \$5 Draft Pitchers. **Hydrate:** \$5 Effen Bombs. **Lark:** 10 am — 3 pm Disco Brunch Featuring cool dance tracks and videos from the 70s and 80s Mimosa, Bellini and Bloody Mary Specials. **LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:** 7pm & 9:30pm Glitz and Glam Hosted by Shovonna B Brooks. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 2pm, Dancers at 3pm. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$4 Shot of the Month Happy Hour 11am-3pm (\$3 Coors Light and Miller Lite). **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Supersonic Saturdays: \$3 Rotating Beer Special, \$10 Super Power Pitchers, rotating DJs. **Shakers:** \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. Happy Hour 1pm-5pm \$3 Bud Light and Miller Lite Bottles \$3 Well Mixed Drinks \$3 Svedka Grapefruit Jalapeño shots Free Pool Table and Darts. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Dog Day Afternoon 1st Saturday of the month from 1-5pm, Sidetrack Video Mix 1-9 pm, High Energy 9pm- 3am. **The Office:** DJ's @ 10pm. **Touche:** 2/22 Mardi Gras Ripe Party Dim lights, hot go-go dudes. 2/29 Bottoms Up! A Leap Day Party.

Sunday Funday

@mosphere: Doggy Days (every other Sunday) Hours: 2pm - Midnight, \$6 Bloody Marys, \$5 Sangria, \$4 Mimosas \$4 Domestic Beer **Baton Show Lounge:** Shows at 7pm, 9pm & 11pm. **Cell Block:** \$5 Bloody Mary's w/Effen Cucumber, \$4 Miller Lite Bottle or 16oz Drafts. Back Bar and Exercise Yard Open. **Charlie's:** Open 3pm- 4am, 3pm - 7pm Line Dancing Hosted by the Second City Country Dance Association, 7pm - 11pm Singsational Sunday Karaoke hosted by Bella DeBalle, 11pm - 2am Mas Leche Hosted by Alexandra Diamond — Happy Hour from 5pm- 8pm \$2 Well Cocktails and \$3 Domestic Draft Pitchers, ALL DAY: \$2 Tecate, \$3 Fireball, \$4 Cazadores Tequila, \$5 Draft Pitchers, \$17 You-Call-It Pitchers. **Hydrate:** \$3 Bud Light, \$12 Bottles of Champagne, \$15 Fish Bowls. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Divalicious Brunch starring Madam X, 11am-4pm; \$29.95 prix-fixe; \$14.95 "Build your own" cocktail package. Happy Hour 4-7pm \$4 Martinis 1/2 Off Small Plates. **Lark:** Happy Hour 3-6:30pm Drink and Appetizer Specials. **LIPS Drag Queen Show Palace:** Gospel Brunch at Noon Hosted by Chicago's Ms. Ruff-N-Stuff. 7pm Showstoppers Hosted by The Chicago Legend Ms. Mimi Marks. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 2pm, Dancers at 3pm. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$4 Shot of the Month Happy Hour 7pm-10pm (\$3 Coors Light and Miller Lite). **Progress Bar:** \$7 Crown Royale, Crown Apple and Crown Vanilla, \$10 Pitchers of Miller/Coors lite, \$10 Bottles of J. Roget Champagne and at 9pm SAUCY with DJ BrianX and DJ Chaco. **Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview:** Tailgate Sundays: \$2 Bud Lights, \$3 Fireball Shots, \$4 Coors Light cans, \$5 Tres Generaciones Tequilas, DJ Gavin at 2pm, Complimentary BBQ. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-10pm, Sing & Dance to the Best of Sidetrack 10pm-2am. **SoFo Tap:** \$5 PBR and a Shot of Jameson, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 SoFo Marys, \$4 Skinny Lemonades. **Steamworks:** DJ Jim Belanger 10pm-6am. **Touche:** 2/23 Mardi Gras Beer Bust \$1 Bud, Bud Light Drafts & Sodas all day & night, Movie Night 7pm.



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3	Bonka	All Your Love ft. The Romantic Era
4	DJ Licious	Young Blood ft. Bright Sparks
5	Sam Feldt & Sigma	2 Hearts (feat. Gia Koka)
6	Michael Calfan	Could Be You ft. Danny Dearden
7	MOGUAI	ACIID (Kryder x Benny Benassi Remix Edit)
8	Lucas & Steve	Perfect
9	Meghan Trainor	Wave ft. Mike Sabath (ARKADI Remix)
10	M 22	Eyes Off You ft. Arlissa & Kiana Lede (Radio Edit)
11	Xanti x Tim Bell & Elenoir	Queen Of Love
12	No Mana	Strangers ft. Jantine
13	Trobi	Looking For Somebody
14	Braaten & Chrit Leaf	Burn
15	Disciples x Eyelar	All Mine (Radio Edit)



Sukie de la Croix and Owen Keehnen need your assistance once again!

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS/PARTICIPANTS: TELL ME ABOUT IT 3

THE TWO WRITERS/HISTORIANS ARE NOW COLLABORATING ON A THIRD VOLUME OF THE POPULAR TELL ME ABOUT IT SERIES AND ARE LOOKING FOR FOLKS TO ANSWER UP TO 15 QUESTIONS.

SHARING OUR STORIES IS A KEY COMPONENT IN BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS IN THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY. HELP US TO COLLECT AND CELEBRATE THE DIVERSITY AND REALITY OF LGBTQ EXPERIENCE BY TELLING A LITTLE BIT OF YOUR STORY. PARTICIPANTS MAY SHARE AS THEMSELVES, USING A NICKNAME, A FIRST NAME, AN ALIAS, OR ANONYMOUSLY.

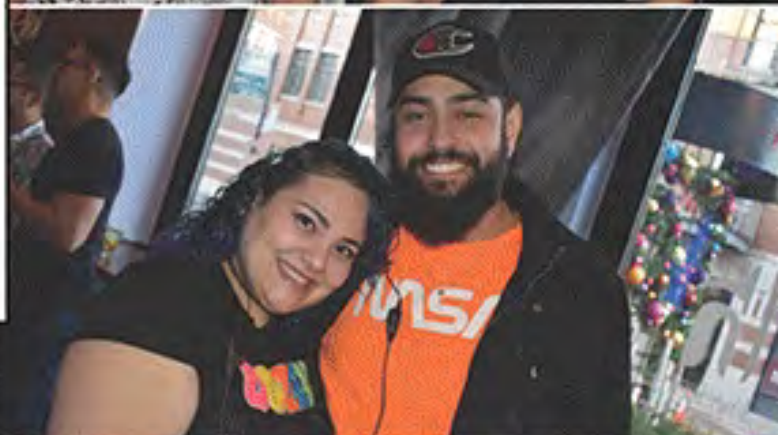
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN TAKING PART IN TELL ME ABOUT IT 3, PLEASE EMAIL US FOR BRIEF INSTRUCTIONS AND THE 15 QUESTIONS.

SUKIE@CHICAGOWHISPERS.COM OR OWENKEEHNEN@YAHOO.COM





Photos By Anthony Meade



GRAB LEE

Healthy Self : Heal thy Self... The Problem With the Body Positive Movement

In the past couple of years, the body positivity movement has taken on a whole new agenda. Originally, the movement was designed to lift the spirits and self-confidence of individuals with body "abnormalities." Soldiers who unfortunately lost limbs due to war, burn victims and people with skin diseases were urged to be proud of who they are and what they've overcome. Modeling campaigns and other forms of media were used to push this narrative of self-love. This was a powerful and emotional stance that society, including myself, fully supported and loved. But now the movement has swiftly changed.

Corporations, like with all agendas, found a way to pull on the emotional strings of people who struggle with weight, and cash in. Promoting an unhealthy lifestyle by tagging it "self-love and acceptance" in the vein of body positivity, is what they've been able to create. I have to admit this is a pretty genius way to make money. Not only do corporations make billions off this, the medical industry cashes in as well. When people continue to live an unhealthy lifestyle, they are prone to medical problems, keeping everyone across the spectrum in business. Of course marketing is key in all of this. Pop stars, body positive activist and social media influencers are all paid/promoted/used for unhealthy propaganda.

I grew up constantly teased for the way I looked. I was extremely underweight compared to most boys. A family member once told me that I "could be a poster child for Ethiopians" (shout out and much love to all the Ethiopians in the world). My self-confidence was terrible growing up, and my environment played a part in my health, however it's helped me understand the psyche of people struggling. It's easy to just give up and say, "This is me and I love myself," however, is it truly you? Do you really love yourself this way? There are three categories I tackle with myself, clients and friends

when dealing with becoming a truly body positive person. These three categories work with each other to help you become a fully rounded healthy homosapien.

Category one:

Nutrition. Basic knowledge of nutrition is lacking in today's society. Readily available meals via fast food chains, pre packaged chemically preserved dinners and sugary food items, help lend to the health problems society has including obesity. Human cattle are constantly told they're too busy to cook at home and they should stock on up on certain brands of food for quick easy meals and snacks. This has to stop if you want to live the healthiest you can. Taking time to cook, meal prep and organize "snacks" for the week is a great way to be assured you're going to have a successful healthy diet. Healthy snacks can include apples, hard-boiled eggs, nuts/grains etc. If you have sweet tooth, you can drizzle some honey on them. Most fast food chains sell fries for a dollar, or you can choose to carry a banana with you instead for around .67 cents. Eating healthy tastes great, makes you feel amazing and is truly body positive.

Category two: Physical

Fitness. The body positivity movement frowns upon fitness specialist like myself. I've seen some of these "positivity gurus" claim working out is a superficial motive and doesn't have much benefits. I'm someone who will listen to anyone's point of view, no matter how wrong they are. Physical fitness is equally important as much as healthy eating. Building a stronger heart, bones, muscle and burning fat are only some examples on how physical fitness affects the one and only body you will ever have. Creating a workout program for clients is one of my favorite things to do. Watching people reach their goals and seeing how happy they become, is one of the best feelings in the world for me. Working out properly and often will help transform you and is truly body



positive.

Category three: Mental

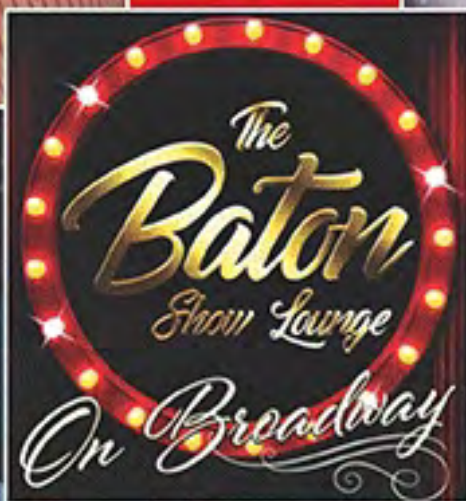
Health. This is crucial, and one of the most overlooked parts in the trilogy of body positivity. When I train clients, I can also act as their momentary unofficial therapist. I like to know how they're doing mentally, how their stress is, and what problems they have in daily life. These issues can contribute to them acting out and not having healthy behavior/choices. The people you hang with, the TV you watch, the music you listen to, the food you eat and the alcohol you drink all play key factors in mental health. It's important to recognize how you're feeling and how to make changes to help make yourself mentally strong enough to handle everything. Take time to read more instead of watching TV. Take time to meditate/pray instead of having mainstream news/music constantly blasting in your ear. I like to take time to walk the lake and just clear my head with nature. Mental health in conjunction with nutrition and physical fitness is truly body positive.

There's so much more I can say, but I feel I've given you a great blueprint for understanding what body positivity truly is, what it's not and how to incorporate behaviors into your daily life. Tune out of mainstream ideas of body positivity and tune into reality. Healthy Self: Heal thy Self.

Note: Lee Gonzalez is not a doctor. If you have any questions about your health, exercise or these tips please consult your physician. Lee Gonzalez Illinois A/P Diploma, Obsessed Fitness Owner. To Contact Lee Email: TheLeeGonzalez@Gmail.com



Photos By
Anthony Meade



GRAB HOLLY

A Gift of the Goddess

By Holly Maholm

The punishment handed down by Phyllis, High Priestess of the Goddess Athena, struck the LGBT students like a thunderbolt. Instantly, they realized this "punishment" was more like a "divine blessing" bestowed by the hand of a Goddess. They were to be allowed to camp out – as a group – in the field behind the school, away from meddlesome parents and annoying siblings. And this being styled an "exile," it would not be recorded on their "permanent records" as an expulsion (which might have hurt their chances for getting into the college of their choice).

The students soon collected their tents and pitched them in the formation of a Roman Army encampment you might have seen near the border with Gaul in 39 BCE. Further, the Goddess Athena being well-acquainted with the hearts of mothers everywhere (of whatever age and place), the students soon understood that meals would be provided by their mothers, who quickly met and established a sign-up sheet for supplying their offspring with "a meat dish, a vegetable, fruit, dessert and a

healthy beverage" for each meal for the entire month of exile. Thus, it dawned on the students that, "We get to eat, but we never have to help with the dishes!" What could be better?

There was only one dark cloud which rained upon this month-long "outdoor, correctional sleep-over." The students were expected to keep up with their schoolwork, including homework, quizzes and tests. As Phyllis pronounced, "Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, will not permit these young people to interrupt their studies for any reason. Accordingly, I have asked Mrs. White to assign extra reading, in this case from Plato's Republic, upon the subject of "Justice."

Now assuming, as I do, that you, gentle reader, attended high school (even if you didn't stick around for graduation), I likewise assume that you can easily imagine the intense feelings of "envy" (not to say "outrage") regarding this appalling injustice experienced by the other students at the school. Why, they asked, did the Legion get to camp-out behind the school, where they could avoid both chores and insufferable little sisters for an entire month? How is that "punishment?" And could they get punished, too?

Prominent among those students who bewailed this injustice were the members of the football team. And chief among their number was Josh – the

senior quarterback – who was also the captain and acknowledged leader of the squad. Characteristically, it was Josh who took action against the injustice which so many felt.

I was in the shop looking over the design for the chariots when Josh came in and called me aside. "So, Ms. Maholm, I hear you're a lawyer?" "I am," I replied. "So anything I tell you, you have to keep it secret?" "Yes," I agreed, "if you seek me out for my advice as a lawyer, I will keep your secrets." "Okay," he responded, "can we go somewhere and talk in private?"

We walked out in back, and Josh began. "You've got to keep this secret. If it gets out, I'm dead." He paused a long time, gathering his strength to go on. "So the fact is... I'm gay. But no one knows, and if this gets out, my



parents will disown me, I will lose my place on the team, and I'll probably get beat up. I should be out there already, with the LGBT students, but I'm too afraid to come out at this point in my life. I will do it after I get to college, but right now, I have too much to lose."

He came to what he wanted to ask. "There's only one person in the school who knows my secret: The shop teacher – Dave. He knows, and he's keeping my secret. So want I wanted to ask is... is there any way I could join the other LGBT students in their camp? I was thinking I would ask some of my friends on the team to camp out with me. It would be a good way for all of us to get to know the gay guys in the camp, and I would make sure everybody is respectful. So that's what I was hoping."

Following this "attorney/client consultation," I discussed the matter with Dave (who confirmed he already knew Josh's secret), and following further discussion with Larry, the vice principal (who only needed to know that the school's star quarterback really, really wanted to camp out), a solution was found.

Later that same day, Larry happened to check on the contents of Josh's student locker, and finding therein a football which had taped to its side a slip of paper on which was written the word GUN, the Judgment of Athena was soon extended to Josh and six of his teammates, each of whom confessed that he, too, had helped Josh overstep the bounds of "Zero Tolerance."

(To be continued)

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

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Photos By Anthony Meade

@MOSPHERE

an upscale dive



GRAB JOSH

Josh Moore Lives *The Gay Simple Life*

By Jerry Nunn

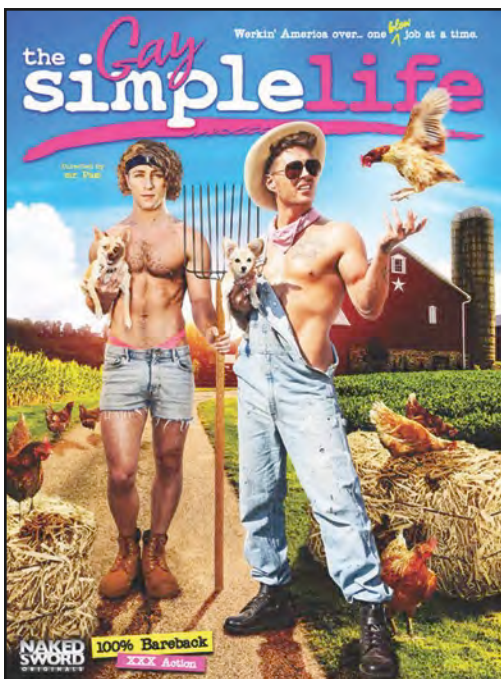
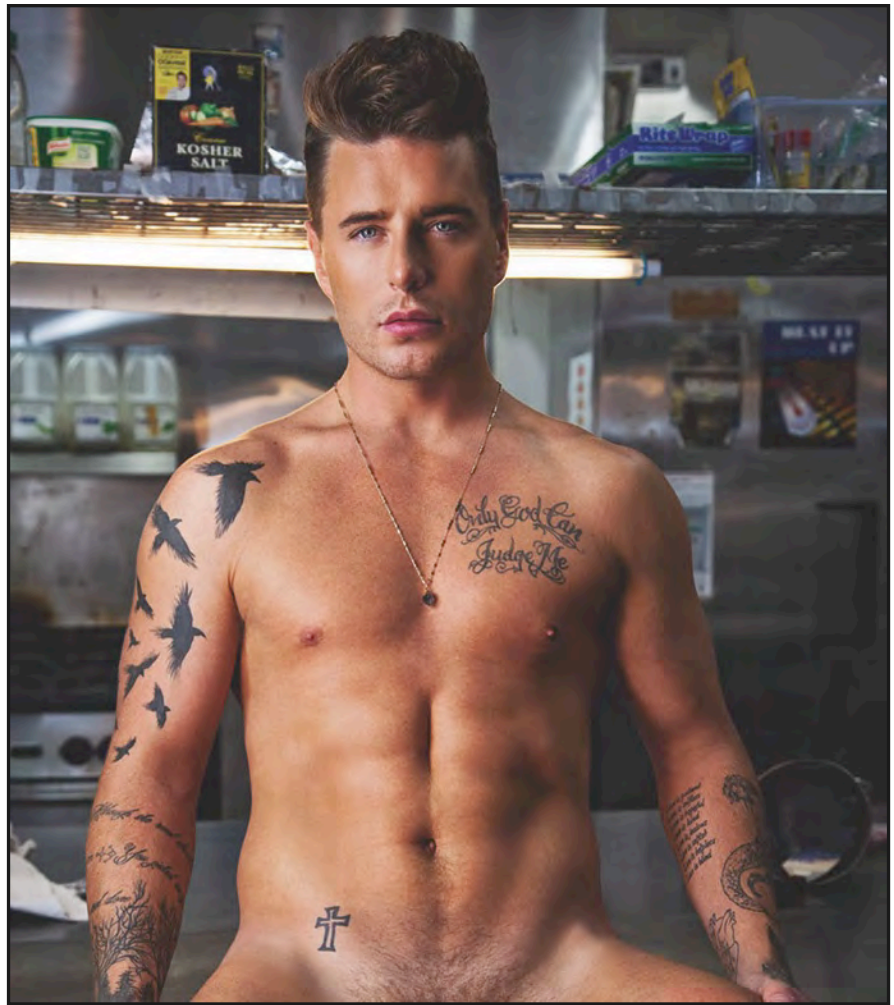
NakedSword Originals presents their latest adult feature *The Gay Simple Life* about two big city boys who set out to explore the country. Award winning director mr. Pam brings the story to life, while the cast and crew visits Tulsa, Oklahoma to film the very adult adventure.

British Falcon exclusive performer Josh Moore and Calvin Banks play themselves with a flair that would make the original reality show proud. Many will remember *The Simple Life* television series where Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie struggled with farm work and low-paying jobs.

Moore took the time to answer some questions about the new film and his simple gay porn star life.

Jerry Nunn: Start off by talking about your background. Did you grow up in England?

Josh Moore: I grew up in the very small town of Dover, an extremely quaint little seaside town. I absolutely love to spend time there! It is home to



the famous White Cliffs of Dover and Dover Castle built by Henry II.

JN: Talk about coming out and getting into porn.

JM: Well, I was kind of pushed out of the closet. I was dating a guy who had a boyfriend and this guy's boyfriend told my brother and sister. So, that was fun, but my whole family and everyone in our small little town have always been so accepting. I've really been very lucky!

Porn, for me, was a natural progression. I've always been on stage in school in musicals; I was always an exhibitionist. I just loved it, and I've always been very sexual. I started camming and, when I realized how much I loved it on front of the camera, I then went into porn.

JN: What are the pluses and

minuses of being in the adult industry and how does that affect your dating life or relationships?

JM: Well, for me personally I can't think of any down sides to being in the industry.

When it comes to relationships, I've always dated within the industry. I've been with my beautiful boyfriend Ricky Roman for almost three years now.

JN: Was *The Gay Simple Life* actually filmed in Tulsa, Oklahoma? I have very religious relatives living there!

JM: Yes, it was actually filmed there and, surprisingly, everyone we met there was very friendly and welcoming.

JN: Where were the dogs in the film from?

JM: One of the dogs was from our director mr. Pam and his name is Poop. The other is Ricky Larkin's dog Molly.

JN: Are you more of a Paris Hilton or

a Nicole Richie in real life?

JM: I'm definitely more Nicole

JN: How much of the movie was improv and how much scripted?

JM: This movie was one of the first movies I've worked on that we didn't have a script at all, every word was just me and Calvin Banks.

JN: What was the funniest moment on the set?

JM: Well, the funniest moment for me was when I actually caught a real fish. No one on set was expecting me to catch anything.

JN: Had you done drag before this Tulsa drag bar challenge?

JM: No, that was my first ever time in drag.



JN: Did you watch RuPaul's Drag Race UK?

JM: I don't think it will be season two for me unfortunately. Nicole Bitchy only comes out once a year now!

JN: You are in the kitchen in *The Gay Simple Life* on a cupcake challenge. Do you cook off camera?

JM: I do actually cook a lot in real life, yes. I am vegan, so I have to cook a lot at home.

JN: What is your favorite tattoo and story behind it?

JM: My fave tattoo is the diamond heart on my palm. Ricky and I have the same one. It's a reference to the Lady Gaga lyric, "I'm not flawless, but I got a diamond heart."

JN: What's a common misconception about porn stars?

JM: That we are all extremely outgoing and extremely sexual.

JN: What are the perks of being an exclusive model?

JM: Well, I can say that being exclusive with Falcon especially is wonderful. They have been the best company I have worked for so far.

Exclusivity always gives you that sense of security in the industry, which I like.

JN: Recently, porn performer Armand Rizzo stated publicly that bottoms are often paid less and refused a job over it. Being a versatile performer, what are your thoughts on that? He said that bottoms work harder than tops. Do you feel this is true?

JM: I don't think bottoms necessarily work harder than tops, but they certainly work harder to prepare for a scene, yes.

JN: What was the AVN Awards experience like?

JM: They call it the "Oscars of gay porn" for a reason; it was absolutely spectacular! Along with the Str8UpGayPorn Awards, they are two of the best and biggest nights in the industry.

JN: Are you coming to Chicago for the annual Grabby Awards show?

JM: Yeah, sure!

JN: What is your next project?

JM: Not sure I'm allowed to say, but it might just be filmed over on my side of the pond.

JN: Will there be a *Gay Simple Life 2*?

JM: Oh I will make sure of it!

To see more of Josh visit
www.Nakedsword.com or
www.FalconStudios.com



**LOUISVILLE'S HIT CABARET
"DIVAS DUETS LIVE" COMES
TO CHICAGO!
FEBRUARY 21 & 22**



The Pinup of Boystown, **Debbie Fox** and Kentucky sweetheart, **Gilda Wabbit** (along with director, **Tony Lewis**), created this dynamic cabaret for production at Play Dance Bar Louisville in the fall of 2019. After a smash run in Louisville, they are taking this show on the road and getting cozy with you this Winter, with a Boystown cabaret treat!

Join the Divas as they take you on a naughty and hilarious journey of duets, ranging from Broadway daddies to Pop Princess parodies. With naughty jokes and lyrics that will leave you giggling right into your night in Boystown, don't miss this two-night extravaganza!

Presented by **DRAG DADDY Productions** (Snow White and the Seven Drag Queens) and Hydrate Nightclub, these live-singing will have two Chicago showings of the cabaret February 21st and 22nd at Hydrate Nightclub (3458 N. Halsted).

Each show will have a special guest Diva! 2/21 Special Guest: **Sofonda Booz** Chicago's premier Bingo Bearded Lady joins the Divas! 2/22 Special Guest: **Danika Bone't** The belting Boystown phenom sings alongside Debbie and Gilda!

For tickets and more information visit www.hydratechicago.com

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
DAY EDGEWATER CRAWL
RETURNS FOR ITS 4TH YEAR
SUNDAY MARCH 8**



The Edgewater Chamber of Commerce will host its annual International Women's Day Crawl throughout various women-owned businesses along Broadway's northern corridor between Granville and

Thorndale on Sunday, March 8, 2020 from 11:00am to 2:00pm. This event proudly supports women's rights by celebrating Women's Day with Edgewater's many women-owned businesses within the community.

This fundraising event will donate portion of its tickets sales to the local nonprofit, Loom Chicago in spirit of the global movement's message of #EachforEqual. Loom Chicago is a fiber arts social enterprise with Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program. They offer studio space, materials and workshops to women within the Chicago refugee community who knit, crochet, weave and sew to create beautiful handmade products that are for sale.

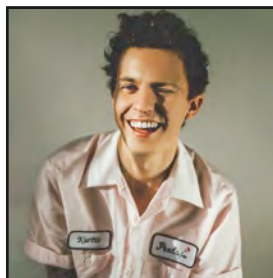
This year, the following businesses will participate as crawl stops along the route and provide samples and fun, interactive experiences to the crawl's participants. More businesses will be added closer to the event date:

Farm Bar, Chicago Mosaic School, Edge of Sweetness, Bark Bark Club, Ethiopian Diamond.

Other women-run businesses providing hands-on activities this year the crawl stops are: SmackDab, Greenstar Brewery, Work + Shelter, Loom Chicago.

For more information visit <https://www.edgewater.org>

**ONE NIGHT ONLY!
THE DEN THEATRE PRESENTS
COMEDIAN KURTIS CONNER
FRIDAY APRIL 3RD**



Comedian **Kurtis Conner** brings his stand-up tour to The Den Theatre for one night only, Friday, April 3, 2020 at 8 pm on The Den's Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago.

Kurtis Conner started performing stand-up comedy in 2013, and later attended the "Comedy: Writing & Performance" program at Humber College in Toronto. He amassed a following of over 300,000 on the social media app, Vine, while continuing to perform all over Canada, including several sold out headlining shows in Toronto. Kurtis independently released his debut comedy album "Cuppla Jokes" in 2016, and it reached #1 on the iTunes comedy charts and #6 on Billboard comedy. When Vine shut down in early 2017, Kurtis began focusing on his weekly podcast, "Very Really Good", and his YouTube channel. He began creating commentary-style videos on strange

subcultures and online trends, and has now amassed over one million subscribers on his YouTube channel, and his podcast is currently in the top 100 comedy podcasts on iTunes.

Tickets are currently available at www.thedentheatre.com, in person at The Den box office or by calling **773-697-3830**. Ages 21+.

**ABOUT FACE THEATRE
ANNOUNCES
WONKA BALL: SILVER &
GOLD
SATURDAY, MAY 30**



Dress up to get down at Wonka Ball, About Face Theatre's annual benefit gala and Chicago's most glamorous party. Kicking off Pride Month 2020 with a celebration of its milestone 25th anniversary, About Face presents **WONKA BALL: SILVER & GOLD** on Saturday, May 30, 2020, at 7:00pm at Venue West, 221 N. Paulina Street in Chicago.

Donning your most debonair evening wear is never a drag at **WONKA BALL: SILVER & GOLD!** Recognized by BizBash as one of Chicago's top events for seven years running, join About Face Theatre in toasting to 25 years of theatre dedicated to elevating LGBTQ+ voices with joy, creativity, and innovation. The evening will feature theatrical artistry from About Face Theatre's Artistic Associates and Youth Ensemble, and will honor the achievements and leadership of local organizations and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Chicago's LGBTQ+ community. Enjoy great food, cocktails, silent auctions, raffles, and end the evening by dominating the dance floor with music from the last 25 years! Pose out and about in your most glamorous formalwear, or just come as you are, for **WONKA BALL: SILVER & GOLD** with About Face Theatre, Chicago's most-celebrated gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer theatre.

Proceeds from **WONKA BALL: SILVER & GOLD** support About Face Theatre's award-winning mainstage programming and nationally-recognized youth education and outreach program. Since 1995, About Face has created exceptional, innovative and adventurous theatre and educational programming that advances the national dialogue on sexual and gender identity while challenging and entertaining audiences in Chicago and beyond. Support from Wonka Ball enables About Face to thrive as Chicago's celebrated home for LGBTQ+ theatre.

Tickets are currently available at aboutfacetheatre.com or by calling **773-784-8565**.



THE **NorthEnd**
EST. 1983



**Raven Theatre Presents
A DOLL'S HOUSE
Now Through March 22**



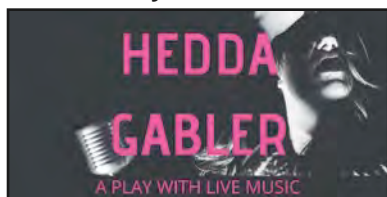
Raven Theatre continues its 2019-20 season with a revival of Henrik Ibsen's masterpiece *A Doll's House*, in a vibrant and progressive new adaptation making its Chicago premiere. Directed by **Lauren Shouse**, the new work features translation by **Anne-Charlotte Hanes Harvey** and adaptation by **Hanes Harvey** and **Kirsten Brandt**. *A Doll's House* playing now through March 22, 2020 on Raven's 85-seat East Stage, 6157 N. Clark St. (at Granville) in Chicago.

The cast includes **Amira Danan, Mike Dailey, Carmen Liao, Shadana Patterson, Nelson Rodriguez, Kelli Walker** and **Gage Wallace**.

Nora, a spirited young housewife, is a radical thinker trapped in the patriarchal world of 1870s Norway. Life with her husband, Torvald, is comfortable, if uninteresting. But when an old acquaintance reappears, threatening to bring Nora's secrets to light, everything changes. As her marriage, her relationships and her world crumble, she begins to speak her mind and question what she really wants for herself.

Tickets are currently available at raventheatre.com or by calling 773-338-2177.

**TUTA Theatre Presents
HEDDA GABLER: A Play with
Live Music
February 25 – March 29**



TUTA Theatre presents the world premiere adaptation of *Hedda Gabler: A Play with Live Music*, adapted and directed by Artistic Director **Jacqueline Stone**, with original music and music direction by **Wain Parham**, based on the play by **Henrik Ibsen**. *Hedda Gabler* will play February 25 – March 29, 2020 at Strawdog Theatre Company, 1802 W. Berenice Ave. in Chicago.

The cast includes **Tom Dacey Carr, Lauren Demerath, Amy Gorelow, Eric Loughlin, Aziza Macklin, Joan Merlo, Huy Nguyen,**

Wain Parham and **Kevin V. Smith**. Understudy: **Shea Lee**.

In TUTA Theatre's *Hedda Gabler*, the past and present collide, modern music and classical text intersect, in ways that reinvent the tale we think we know. In a time of rapidly shifting social and sexual paradigms, no work rings with more unflinching insight than that of the great Norwegian writer. Ibsen rose to prominence in large part through his refusal to follow the rules; writing plays for thinkers, for citizens, for people willing to question the moral compass of the universe.

In this new adaptation, Stone explores a reimagined take on Hedda's point of view – backing Hedda with a three-piece live band. Using TUTA's unique approach to ensemble, music and design, this reinvented *Hedda Gabler* brings Ibsen into conversation with our own era of secrets, corruption and the fight for freedom without compromise, and all the while the band plays on.

Tickets are currently available at www.tutatheatre.org.

**Interrobang Theatre Project
Presents HERE LIES HENRY
February 28 – March 28**



Interrobang Theatre Project continues its tenth anniversary season, exploring the theme of "No Man's Land," with a revival of its very first production: Daniel MacIvor's one-man drama *Here Lies Henry*, newly staged by Artistic Producer **Elana Elyce** and featuring **Scott Sawa**. *Here Lies Henry* will play February 28 – March 28, 2020 at ITP's resident home, Rivendell Theatre, 5779 N. Ridge Ave. in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood.

Henry's got a lot he has to tell you, he just can't guarantee that it's all true. In the spotlight, with only the audience as his witness, Henry grapples with his choices and failures in a scramble to make sense of his life before it's too late. Daniel MacIvor's gripping one-man play offers a provocative take on love, death, beauty, truth, and of course, good old-fashioned lying.

Comments Director **Elana Elyce**, "Daniel MacIvor's brand of meta-theatrical theatre has the power to transform the lives of audiences, who come into dark rooms with their minds and their hearts open, who are filled with questions, and who find a moment of peace in the presence of something innately familiar. The play

hopefully can touch people, and open people to thinking about their own humanity and their purpose in life."

Tickets are currently available at interrobangtheatreproject.org or by calling 312-219-4140.

**Kokandy Productions
Presents
HUNDRED DAYS
March 6 – April 12**



Kokandy Productions announces the Chicago premiere of the bold new musical *Hundred Days*, featuring music and lyrics by **The Bengsons**, and book by **The Bengsons** and **Sarah Gancher**. Making its Chicago debut after successful runs at La Jolla Playhouse and New York Theatre Workshop, *Hundred Days* will be helmed by director/performer **Lucky Stiff** with music direction by **Matthew Muñiz** and choreography by **Collin Quinn Rice**. *Hundred Days* will play March 6 – April 12, 2020 at The Chopin Theatre, 1543 W Division St. in Chicago.

The cast will be led by **Royen Kent** and **Emilie Modaff** as Shaun and Abigail Bengson, with **Chris Farrell, Jr., Lucas Looch Johnson, Abigail Cline** and **Melanie Vitaterna**.

Hundred Days is an uncensored, exhilarating and heartrending true story about embracing uncertainty, taking a leap and loving as if you only had 100 days to live. With magnetic chemistry and anthemic folk-punk music, creators Abigail and Shaun Bengson explore a fundamental question: how do we make the most of the time that we have?

Comments Producing Artistic Director **Derek Van Barham**, "The question of time is at the heart of every relationship, every project, every gig. 'Is this worth the time I'm putting into it?' In *Hundred Days*, a couple reckons with an actual expiration date. But what is so beautiful about The Bengsons' creation is that the question spills off the stage into the process and production. It offers reflection for all artists and audiences involved – including the amazingly talented performer/musicians we are beginning to assemble."

Tickets are currently available at www.kokandyproductions.com, or in person at The Chopin Theatre box office.



Photos By Anthony Meade

Missouri Lawmakers File 15th Anti-LGBTQ Bill



Last week Missouri lawmakers filed their fifteenth bill targeting LGBTQ Missourians, and specifically rearing an aggressive agenda to restrict the rights and dignity of transgender youth. From banning life-saving medical care, the fair chance to be part of a team, creating defining parameters for gender, and suggesting state funding should be used to discriminate, the Missouri legislature is sending a clear message that they believe transgender youth do not belong.

Transgender youth are some of the most at risk in our community. The 2016 Williams Institute Report estimates that there are 150,000 transgender American youth (ages 13-17), and roughly 25,000 transgender Missourians. Five bills ((HB 1721 (Schnelting), HB 2051 (Pollock), HB 2210 (Moon), SB 842 (Emery), SB 848 (Eigel)) look at criminalizing life-saving medical care for transgender youth by combining professional penalties for medical care providers with penalties for parents or guardians, including a requirement that they should be reported to Child Services. These bills overlook best practices backed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other mainstream medical associations, and penalizes healthcare professionals and parents for providing affirming, life-saving care to some of our most vulnerable young people.

Denying best-practice medical care and support to transgender youth can be life-threatening. Research shows that transgender youth whose families support their gender identity have a 52% decrease in suicidal thoughts, a 48% decrease in suicide attempts, and significant increases in self-esteem and general health.

Shira Berkowitz, PROMO's Communications Manager, says, "Medical professionals, not politicians, should decide what medical care is in the best interest of a patient. Our leadership should be creating opportunities for Missouri children to succeed, not threatening their health and safety. So we must remember what this is really about: whether LGBTQ people should be treated fairly across all areas of life—or whether they can be unfairly fired, kicked out of a restaurant, denied an apartment, or denied the health care

they need, just because of who they are."

Additionally, two joint resolutions, SJR50 (O'Laughlin R-18) and HJR 82 (Ross R-142) call for the placement of a ballot measure at the November 2020 election to amend the state constitution to require student athletes to participate in sports according to their sex assigned at birth. Playing sports provides student athletes with important lessons about leadership, self-discipline, teamwork, success, and failure—as well as the joy and shared excitement of being part of a team. Denying transgender students the opportunity to participate in sports denies them invaluable physical, social, and emotional well-being.

This year, PROMO urges lawmakers to pass MONA, a state law that would add sexual orientation and gender identity to Missouri's Human Rights Statute, which currently prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations for other protected categories, including race, sex, and national origin. According to the Williams Institute, more than 160,000 LGBTQ adults in Missouri would benefit from an expanded state nondiscrimination law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

PROMO is Missouri's statewide advocacy organization promoting equal treatment under the law for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBTQ) community.

For more information visit www.PROMOonline.org

District Court Holds Public University Professor Does Not Have a Constitutional Right to Discriminate Against Transgender Students



U.S. District Judge **Susan J. Dlott** dismissed a federal lawsuit filed by Professor **Nicholas Meriwether** against Shawnee State University. Meriwether claimed that Shawnee State violated his alleged First Amendment rights by enforcing a policy requiring equal treatment of transgender students after the university disciplined him for repeatedly referring to Jane Doe, a transgender female student, by a male honorific and pronouns, despite using the correct gendered honorifics and pronouns for all other students in the class.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), along with **Adam Unikowsky** of Jenner & Block LLP

and Jennifer Branch of Gerhardtstein & Branch Co., LPA, intervened in the lawsuit on behalf of Jane Doe and Sexuality and Gender Acceptance (SAGA), Shawnee State's LGBTQ student group. After being granted permission to intervene, Doe and SAGA moved to dismiss the complaint.

Adopting the recommendation of Magistrate Judge **Karen Litkovitz**, Judge Dlott found that "[Meriwether's] speech – the manner by which he addressed a transgender student – was not protected under the First Amendment." Judge Dlott also found no evidence that Shawnee State discriminated against Meriwether based on his religious beliefs or because of religious animus.

"We are pleased the Court affirmed that schools can ensure that all students are able to learn and the access educational opportunities available to all students without fear of discrimination," said **Asaf Orr**, Senior Staff Attorney and Director of the Transgender Youth Project at the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

"Since this lawsuit began, transgender students have been worried that they would have to start skipping classes or avoid particular professors because Shawnee State would no longer be able to effectively address bullying, harassment, and mistreatment of transgender students. SAGA and its members are relieved that the Court recognized the importance of Shawnee State's antidiscrimination and anti-harassment policies to transgender people on campus. This is a big step towards progress for all transgender people on Shawnee State's campus," said **Jae Keniston**, President of SAGA.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) is a national legal organization committed to advancing the human and civil rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community through litigation, public policy advocacy, and public education. Since its founding, NCLR has maintained a longstanding commitment to racial and economic justice and the LGBTQ community's most vulnerable.

www.NCLRrights.org

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Photos By Anthony Meado



PROGRESSBAR



Independent Artist BRETTELLO Releases follow up EP "Stay"



Independent Music Producer and Songwriter **Brettello** is back with a follow up collection of music after his album release of *'Taboo'* back in October. His EP titled *'Stay'*, is a collection of love songs that are sure to provide a 'techno-pop' soundtrack for any hopeful romantic! Brettello is a Los Angeles based music producer, who's music would be described as Synth-Pop/Electro-Pop, drawing influences from Euro-House/Techno Music, and Commercial Pop songs.

He is a Harold Washington College 'Music Technology Program' Alumni who has set out to do what he loves most; Creating music!

"With this collection of songs I wanted to showcase a different lyrical approach than my last album, all love oriented songs that I thought would be great to share on Valentine's Day, but can be enjoyed any day of the year if you're romantically inclined and ready to dance!"

As a sound engineer and music producer, Brettello executively creates all of his music. It is musical thumbprint of a queer artist who grew up inspired by "pop queens" along the likes of *Madonna*, *Gwen Stefani*, and *Lady Gaga*, who he sites as major influences to his music. His follow-up effort includes eight songs, three of them being "EP Remixes".

"All of the songs are in a major key, so they even have a different tonality this time around, as my last album was primarily all minor keys. I still stuck to my electronic production of the songs, but there is slightly a more lighthearted pop approach. I included a country-esque tune, which was really fun for me to showcase, and even a song in Spanish, to keep it

interesting, which I hope I've achieved."

Brettello is set to perform in East Tennessee during his hometown's 2020 Pride festival 'Tri-Pride' in August, an anticipated experience he describes as "full circle".

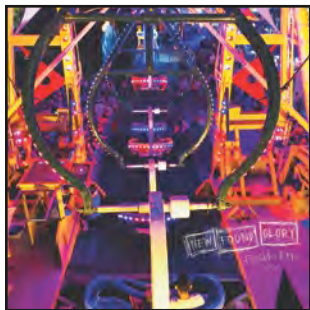
"I was really excited when asked. It's really is an honor to be noticed as a musician and songwriter by the local LGBTQ community where I grew up. This is the third year they've celebrated pride ever, so it has been liberating to see that progress happening back home, because it wasn't always that way."

"Growing up in the Bible-Belt initially caused some setbacks with how comfortable I was with my sexuality during my coming-of-age years, so I'm so glad to know that despite it being an overall conservative region, everyone in the community has the freedom to come out and celebrate ourselves and lift up our amazing community. I'll be singing my pop country song too, so I think it'll be a nice touch and a great way to pay homage to my southern roots"

Brettello's EP *'Stay'* was released on all streaming platforms February 14th, and at www.brettello.com

NEW FOUND GLORY Announces Tenth Studio Album

"Forever + Ever x Infinity"



New Found Glory has officially announced their tenth studio album

Forever + Ever x Infinity. The band has put together a quintessential NFG record, supremely catchy with sing-along anthems, trademark breakdowns, and sweetly poignant lyrics. "This is the record our fans have been waiting for us to make," guitarist **Chad Gilbert** shares, "The old now feels new and fresh. It was a blast finding ourselves again."

Combining punk, hardcore, and post-hardcore with emotional lyrics and melody is nothing new for the band that epitomizes heartfelt optimism with DIY work-ethic and spirit. But never has this been more evident than this 15-song barn burner of a record. Set at a blistering pace, songs like *"Shook By Your Shaved Head"* and *"Nothing To Say"* rip the listener out of their

monotonous day-to-day and drain away all the pressure and self-doubt that manifests inside. When singer, Jordan Pundik, sings, *"You've gotta take your life back. You've got so much more to give. That's what I say to myself when I feel like giving into the shame I feel. Won't let it keep me standing still,"* you can't help jumping up, throwing a fist in the air, and singing the words out at the top of your lungs. This is what New Found Glory has always been about - inspiring people to not be afraid of the odds, to lift each other up, and get up again.

Forever + Ever x Infinity is due out May 29, 2020 via Hopeless Records and is available for pre-order now at <http://smarturl.it/NFGForeverAndEver>.

INTROVERT Announce New EP "Mending Breaking"



Following the release of their infectious singles *"Somewhere Else"* and *"Dreamers"* late last year, Newcastle punks Introvert are announcing their highly-anticipated EP *Mending Breaking*. The full EP will

drop on Friday, February 21st via UNFD.

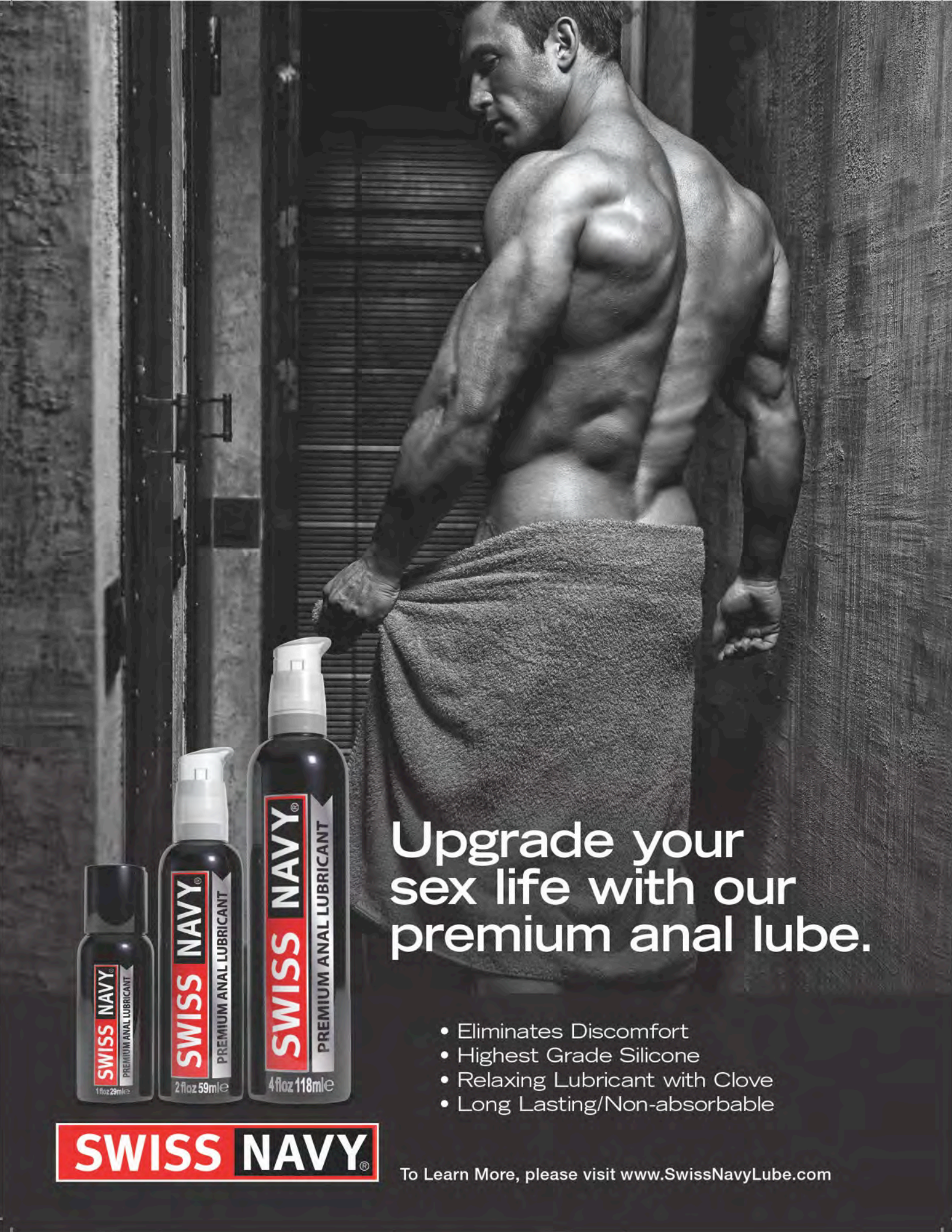
Capturing the rollercoaster of emotions that comes with trying to deal with your demons, *Mending Breaking* spans six tracks of alt-rock, punk and heavy. Introvert vocalist **Audie Franks** explains that the release hones in on the idea of self-loathing, and the feeling of knowing you're in a rut and need to get out.

"Sometimes you get in those spaces and you want others to help you, but you also want to be able to do it yourself," he says. "The title came about because of the idea of someone trying to fix themselves and going through cycles of mending and then breaking again. If you listen to the EP from start to finish it actually goes around in that circle of mending and breaking."

Arguably capturing the idea of this roller coaster in full is the EP's title track *"Mending Breaking."* Franks explains that it stands on the heavier side of all their work, and that searing heaviness seizes the aggravation of trying over and over to piece yourself together (hear the line: "I'm struggling with everything, I always let myself down with this self-doubt, I have to pull myself out of this self doubt").

The EP was recorded close to home at Newcastle's Tommirock Studios, with the band's close friend and collaborator **Mitta Norath** (Endless Heights, Eat Your Heart Out) at the helm of engineering duties. A diverse yet seamless set of songs, Introvert seize an anthemic and heartfelt brand of rock on this release.

For more information visit: www.introvertpunx.bandcamp.com



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