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2024



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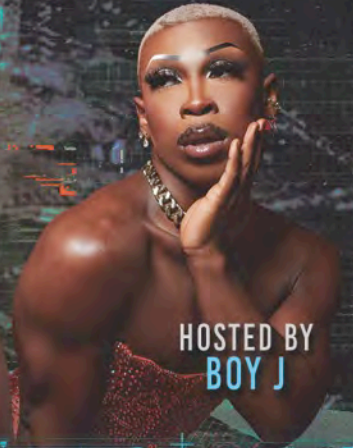
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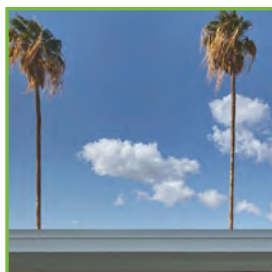


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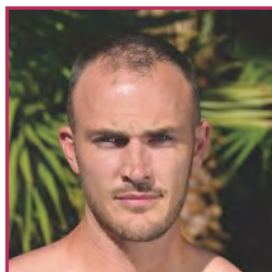
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GRAB RETT

“One” of a kind: an interview with queer singer/songwriter Rett Madison

By Gregg Shapiro

Every once in a while, a major-label debut album comes along to take you by surprise. Queer singer/songwriter Rett Madison’s “One for Jackie” (Warner/War Buddha) is one such album. First, the suits at Warner got it right by signing Madison to their roster. Second, Madison, still in her mid-20s, has the songwriting and performance chops to rise through the ranks and achieve the kind of celebrity enjoyed by Phoebe Bridgers, Angel Olsen, and others. It’s difficult to choose a standout on “One for Jackie,” but it’s safe to say that “Lipstick,” “How It All Began,” “Ballet,” “Kiki,” “Fortune Teller,” and “Mediums, Therapists, and Sheriffs,” will likely end up on multiple playlists. Rett was gracious enough to make time for an interview in the autumn of 2023.

Gregg Shapiro: Rett, we’re talking in late October, a few days before the release of your Warner Records debut album “One For Jackie.” What are you most looking forward to about the album coming out?

Rett Madison: I’m hoping the album causes a ripple effect of healing. If it can make waves within my own audience by inspiring them to feel the depths of their feelings and to speak candidly and without shame to their loved ones about their own struggles or pain, I’ll be content. I hope these songs inspire conversations among fans that’ll be healing.

GS: In terms of your influences, I hear old-school artists such as Carole King, Kate Bush, and Tori Amos, as well as queer contem-

poraries such as Becca Mancari and Angel Olsen. Am I on the right track?

RM: You are definitely on the right track! I loved listening to Carole King and Kate Bush as a teen! I also spent a lot of time listening to artists like Stevie Nicks, Joni Mitchell, Prince, and Jeff Buckley throughout my childhood and teens. There are countless artists that have moved me, but the through line is always a theme of timelessness and authenticity in their work. I’ve also admired Angel Olsen for years. I’m deeply flattered that her music came to mind as a possible influence after you listened to mine.

GS: One of the things that stands out for me in your music is the incredible power in your vocals. Do you remember when you discovered your range and how it made you feel to be in possession of such an exceptional gift?

RM: Thank you so much for the kind words about my voice!

GS: You’re most welcome!

RM: I began singing at a young age, and while the technical aspect of my vocal range took many years of studying to develop, I do remember discovering fairly young that I could express my emotions easier whenever I sang. When I was a child, singing was healing for me. It was a salve for much of the pain I felt as a little girl. So, at first,



Photo By Mikayla Miller

discovering my love of singing felt like a gift sent to me to heal my own wounds. As I got older, I realized I could share my singing with other people and help them feel catharsis or less alone in tough times. Once I understood that, it made me feel especially grateful to experience a lifetime where I can lean on music as an emotional outlet both for myself and to help others.

GS: Your album “One For Jackie” is a tribute to your late mother. Do you have a sense of what she would have thought of the songs you wrote for her?

RM: While my mom would likely appreciate the musicality on this album, I think she would be most proud of my storytelling, vulnerability, and honesty. My mother wasn’t given a roadmap of how to talk about her trauma, mental illness, or addiction. She was burdened by secrets and shame, a lot of those feelings that were no fault of her own. If my mother knew how healing writing this album about my grief and pain has been for me, I think she’d be immensely proud that I’ve broken out of a generational cycle of secrecy and shame.

GS: Making art can be cathartic following a traumatic experience, in the same way that seeing a psychic, a medium, or a

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therapist can be. “One for Jackie” includes the songs “Fortune Teller” and “Mediums, Therapists, and Sheriffs.” Please say a few words about the ways in which you seek catharsis.

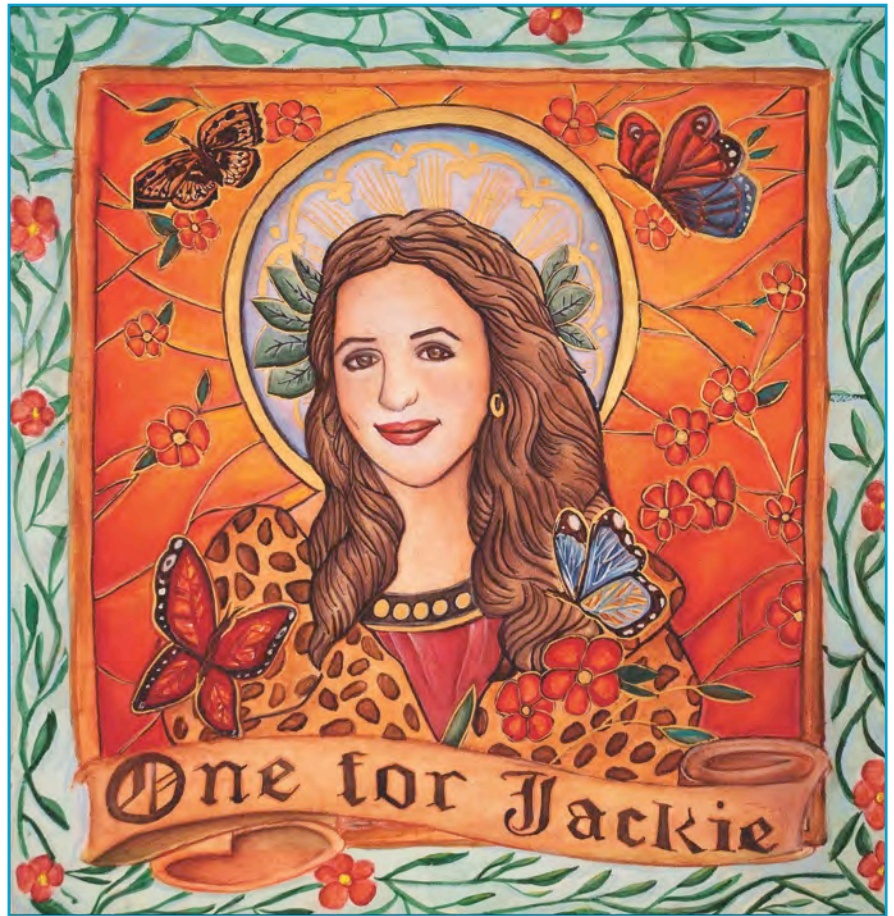
RM: Songwriting has always been therapeutic for me. I began writing songs as a tween and it was the easiest way I knew how to process complex emotions. I used to internalize a lot of my emotional pain, but writing songs was an outlet for me. I could say things in songs that I couldn’t always say to people in my life. Writing songs continues to be a therapeutic tool to carry me through the dark chapters in my life. Additionally, I’ve found that incorporating spirituality into my life again since I lost my mom has helped me greatly. Speaking with mediums and journaling about my dreams has infused my day-to-day life with a little magic and makes me feel more connected to my mother.

GS: I love the vintage R&B vibe of the aforementioned “Fortune Teller,” as well as the girl-group homage in the music video. Is it a conscious effort on your part to infuse your music with a timeless quality or does it just occur naturally?

RM: I’ve been influenced and deeply inspired by many songwriters and artists that seem to have mastered writing timeless songs. For me, if I write a song that sounds timeless to a listener, I think it’s subconscious and more of a testament to my musical diet. Once I have the bones of a song, the decision to reference timeless works of the past, both in the band arrangement and later, visually, is very much a conscious effort on my part. I’d say my songwriting often comes from an intuitive place, but everything else after that is an effort and a choice!

GS: Your music videos have a dramatic effect. Were you a theater kid when you were in school?

RM: [Laughs] Oh goodness, how could you tell? But yes, I was a theater kid! The first musical I



performed in was “The Wizard of Oz” at age five.

GS: “One for Jackie” closes with the song “Kiki,” on which you are joined by Iron & Wine. How did that collaboration come to be?

RM: First off, I have to say that I’m incredibly grateful to Iron & Wine for singing the vocals on “Kiki.” Even though I’d written the song, I felt like I was hearing it for the first time when I heard his interpretation of it. His performance brought me to tears. I haven’t met Sam (Beam) yet, but he’s good friends with Tyler Chester who produced “Kiki” and the entirety of my new album “One for Jackie.” Sam recorded this song as a favor to Tyler, and I’m just the lucky beneficiary of both Tyler and Sam’s generosity, talents, and Tyler’s good standing with authentic and awe-inspiring musicians like Sam.

GS: Speaking of guest artists, you rereleased your song “Pin-Up Daddy,” with new vocals by Katie Pruitt, during Pride Month 2023. To my ears, it sounds like a non-

binary anthem. What would it mean to you for the song to achieve that kind of status?

RM: Katie Pruitt is such a phenomenal storyteller and vocalist! I’m still so thrilled that she cut a vocal for the “Pin-Up Daddy” re-release. If “Pin-Up Daddy” was ever to be considered an anthem by non-binary folks, I’d be absolutely honored. Although I identify as a queer woman, I wrote that song about my own fluidity in gender expression, and I feel so honored anytime folks of various gender identities express a connection to the song.

GS: You are embarking on a concert tour. What are you most looking forward to about performing the songs on “One for Jackie” in front of a live audience?

RM: I’m really excited about (the) connection. I hope these songs bring audiences catharsis at the concerts. I also would like these performances to inspire folks to be candid about their own grief and needs with their loved ones and community.

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Important Facts About CABENUVA

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ABOUT CABENUVA

CABENUVA is a complete prescription regimen used to treat HIV-1 infection in adults and adolescents ≥ 12 years who weigh at least 77 lbs (35 kg) and are replacing their current HIV-1 treatment when their healthcare provider determines that they meet certain requirements.

HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

CABENUVA contains 2 different medicines:

- cabotegravir
- rilpivirine

It is not known if CABENUVA is safe and effective in children younger than 12 years of age or weighing less than 77 lbs (35 kg).

DO NOT RECEIVE CABENUVA IF YOU

- have ever had an allergic reaction to cabotegravir or rilpivirine.
- are taking the following medicines:
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 - rifampin
 - rifapentine
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Ask your doctor about CABENUVA

*Undetectable means the amount of HIV in the blood is below the level that can be measured by a lab test. Results may vary. Jayson has been compensated by ViiV Healthcare.

BEFORE RECEIVING CABENUVA

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you:

- have ever had a skin rash or an allergic reaction to medicines that contain cabotegravir or rilpivirine.
- have ever had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have ever had mental health problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if CABENUVA will harm your unborn baby. CABENUVA can remain in your body for up to 12 months or longer after the last injection.

Please see additional Important Facts About CABENUVA on the following page.



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Important Facts About CABENUVA (cont'd) BEFORE RECEIVING CABENUVA (cont'd)

Tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you: (cont'd)

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take CABENUVA.**
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby. It is not known if CABENUVA can pass to your baby in your breast milk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby during treatment with CABENUVA.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines interact with CABENUVA. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with CABENUVA.

Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take CABENUVA with other medicines.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CABENUVA

CABENUVA may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with CABENUVA. **Stop receiving CABENUVA and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms:**
 - fever
 - generally ill feeling
 - tiredness
 - muscle or joint aches
 - trouble breathing
 - blisters or sores in mouth
 - blisters
 - redness or swelling of the eyes
 - swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue
- **Post-injection reactions** have happened within minutes in some people after receiving their rilpivirine injection. Most symptoms resolved within minutes after the injection. Symptoms may include:
 - trouble breathing
 - narrowing of airways
 - stomach cramps
 - sweating
 - numbness of your mouth
 - pain (e.g., back and chest)
 - feeling anxious
 - feeling warm
 - rash
 - feeling light-headed or feeling like you are going to pass out (faint)
 - blood pressure changes

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF CABENUVA (cont'd)

CABENUVA may cause serious side effects, including: (cont'd)

- **Liver problems.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus or people who have certain liver function test changes may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during CABENUVA treatment. Liver problems have also happened in people without history of liver problems or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver function. **Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:**
 - your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice)
 - dark or "tea-colored" urine
 - light-colored stools (bowel movements)
 - nausea or vomiting
 - loss of appetite
 - pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area
 - itching
- **Depression or mood changes.** **Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical help right away if you have any of the following symptoms:**
 - feeling sad or hopeless
 - feeling anxious or restless
 - have thoughts of hurting yourself (suicide) or have tried to hurt yourself

The most common side effects of CABENUVA include:

- pain, tenderness, hardened mass or lump, swelling, redness, itching, bruising, and warmth at the injection site
- fever
- tiredness
- headache
- muscle or bone pain
- nausea
- sleep problems
- dizziness
- rash

These are not all the possible side effects of CABENUVA. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

GET MORE INFORMATION

- Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Go to CABENUVA.com or call 1-877-844-8872, where you can also get FDA-approved labeling.

March 2022 CBN:4PIL

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GRAB A PLANE



YOUR WINTER PALM SPRINGS GETAWAY:

NEW NATIVE AMERICAN MUSEUM AND SPA A HIT IN THIS GAY FRIENDLY OASIS OF THE WEST

By **Bill Malcolm**

There's always something new to do in Palm Springs, California and this trip was no exception. The Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza is the new museum downtown just opened and show cases the fascinating history and culture of the tribes in this area.

Palm Springs is the premier LGBTQ vacation destination and just received a 100 percent rating from the HRC. The city is part of eight cities in the Coachella Valley.

WHAT TO DO

Visit the new Agua Caliente Cultural Museum downtown to learn about the history and culture of the Agua Caliente band of the Cahuilla Native Americans. Learn about their history where each canyon had their own separate group. Learn about the Sec He, the mineral springs that the museum sits on top of. Learn about basketry. A 12-minute animated film describes how the Agua Caliente settled in the Coachella Valley. It celebrates their heritage with a gathering place and oasis trail along a stream with native plants. Their new Spa at Sec He is also a hit where you can get a private bath and luxury treatment in the hot mineral spring. All are part of

the Agua Caliente Hotel and Resort and Casino complex.

Visit Indian Canyon for a hike in an oasis with native palm trees.

Walk with the Front Runners and Walkers. They meet near the Mizel Center for a three-mile walk every day except Sunday at 8:00 a.m. It's a fantastic way to meet folks. They meet in the parking lot at 480 S. Sunrise.

Enjoy the LGBT stars on the Palm Springs Walk of the Stars downtown. Truman Capote, Rock Hudson, and other stars used Palm Springs as a retreat from Hollywood. Palm Springs has been a LGBTQ destination since the 1920s.

Take in Village Fest Thursday night downtown including visiting the Palm Springs Art Museum which is free at that time. The Village Fest has food vendors and stuff for sale including art. Pick up some dates. The Art Museum has food and music on the outdoor patio.

Swim at the Palm Springs Swim Center. The Olympic size pool has a stunning view of the mountains. You will find them at Pavilion Way.

Work out at the Steel Gym (formerly the World Gym). It's

extremely popular.

Hike on the Lykken Trail just west of downtown off Ramon Road. Enjoy the barrel cacti and other desert plants and the view of Palm Springs.

WHERE TO STAY

The Descanso Resort (288 E. Camino Monte Vista) is just north of downtown in the Uptown/Arts and Design District. The resort features free bikes, a pool and spa, continental breakfast, and a complimentary poolside lunch. Happy hour runs from 4 to 6 p.m. on weekends. Staff is very attentive. Guests enjoy a salt water pool and spa, a mist-cooling system, and outdoor shower. Every spot in Descanso's courtyard boasts views of Coachella Valley's San Jacinto mountains which rise straight up to 11,000 feet from the Valley floor. Other amenities include a 24-hour snack cantina. This was my second stay there and I loved it. Details at DescansoResort.com.

Another alternative is the new Twin Palms Resort at 1930 S. Camino Real. They have rooms facing a pool and hot tub plus free use of bikes (and helmets). Enjoy the



rest. relax. unwind.

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DESCANSO

288 E.Camino Monte Vista, Palm Springs, CA 760.320.1928

descansoresort.com



Twin Palms Resort

made to order continental breakfast and lunch delivered at 12:30 p.m. Under the gaze of the San Jacinto mountains, 20 guest rooms and suites open to a swimming pool, spa, and patio space. Take the bike over to the Smoke Tree Plaza to dine out at one of the restaurants like Native Foods or pick up some to go foods at Ralph's or Jensen's food stores. Continue on the many bike trails and bike lanes to explore the iconic Twin Palms neighborhood (the original Modernist style of homes are found here) nearby including a ride up to Indian Canyon. Details at TwinPalmsResort.com.

Several other inns for men can be found in the Warm Springs neighborhood. Traditional hotels include the Ace Hotel, a hipster hangout which is also in the Twin Palms neighborhood. The new Kimpton Rowan Hotel is also an upscale choice downtown. The Best Western La Brisas is also very handy. I have also stayed at the Saguaro Hotel, this year's host of the White Party. Always check for resort fees when comparing hotel room prices.

NIGHTLIFE

Most of the bars are on Arenas

Road downtown, a one block strip between Indian Canyon and Encilia. Hunters has a fun happy hour and outdoor patio with great drink specials. It's my favorite (and of the same owners as the one in Wilton Manors, Florida). Streetbar (224 E. Arenas) always has something going on. Go shopping at GayMart (305 E. Arenas). Other fun bars on Arenas Road include Blackbook, Chill Bar, and Dick's. All feature outdoor seating. Close by is the new hot novel dance bar, Reforma (check out its website for more info). It has large video screens as well.

Down the road in the Sunny Dunes area, you will find The Tool Shed (600 E. Sunny Dunes) has a fun leather crowd. Food available like tacos. They have a huge outdoor patio in the back and dancers inside. Nearby is the Club 541 which I hear is fun. You can also shop at Q Trading or Gear and have breakfast at a local favorite in this strip.

Over in Cat City (aka Cathedral City, another LGBTQ friendly city in the Coachella Valley) are several fun bars. The Barracks is known for its Sunday beer busts and Wednesday underwear night. The One Eleven is

good for talking and it also has drag and bingo crowds.

WHAT AND WHERE TO EAT

The Coachella Valley is known for its dates, olives, and oranges, and grapefruit. Try a date shake. The Nature's Health Food and Café features fresh juices and healthy options. Try the fresh squeezed carrot juice and order the quesadillas. You will find them at 555 S. Sunrise. Trio is an excellent choice at 707 N. Palm Canyon. The nearby 849 is particularly good. Both are in Uptown just north of downtown which features trendy shops like Shag.

Always remember you are in California and things are different here. You are not in Kansas anymore. The "traditional potato salad" at the LaQuinta Resort lunch buffet was purple. And delicious.

GETTING THERE/GETTING AROUND

I took Southwest Airlines through Denver each way without incident. Get a window seat for the flight into Palm Springs and you will see the Rockies and the Grand Canyon.

Southwest now allows you to take an earlier flight for free; a user

friendly airline despite their recent woes.

Once in Palm Springs, UBER and LYFT can get you around. However, both feature annoying surprise junk fee surcharges for this and that. LYFT went to surge pricing twice, so I took UBER instead. So shop around.

You can walk outside the airport and catch your UBER across the street (at City Hall) to avoid the airport surcharge.

Or better yet, take the #4 Sunline bus for \$1 just west of City Hall (across the street from the airport). The #4 takes you right downtown (which is just two miles west of the airport). Shame on Palm Springs for not having the bus stop inside the airport.

You do not need a rental car as they also feature junk surcharges. My friend waited 90 minutes at the counter to get one. If you absolutely must have one, get it for a few days at an off airport location to avoid the fees and the crowds.

And if you stay downtown or close to it as I did, you can walk or bike everywhere in the perfect weather of this desert oasis. But beware – you are in Southern California and the car is king. While Palm Springs has put in many new bike lanes and trails, they still have work to do despite having a perfect biking environment (flat with perfect weather).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming events include:

January 15-24, 2024:
International Film Festival

February 15-25: Modernism Week – Celebrates the midcentury architecture of the region. (Midcentury means homes from the '50s and '60s. Catch the butterfly style.)

March 29-31: White Party (this is the annual circuit party that needs to change its name).

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Twin Palms Resort

GED Magazine is your source for up to date information and happenings in Palm Springs. *The Coachella Valley Independent* is the free monthly. KGAY 106.5 is your radio station. *The KGAY Gay Desert Guide* has all you need to know about visiting the Coachella Valley. Visit them at GayDesertGuide.LGBTQ.

Rage Magazine out of San Diego is also distributed here and covers the Palm Springs Gay Scene.

I visit Palm Springs once or twice a year. It makes for a perfect winter getaway for the LGBTQ+ traveler. There is always something new to check out or revisit. And their cute little airport makes it so handy.

Bill Malcolm writes a syndicated LGBTQ travel column and is based in Indianapolis. He is a frequent visitor to the desert oasis of the Coachella Valley. He is a former resident of San Francisco.

GRAB STEVEN



Photo By Natalie Schille

Hot baritone: An interview with Steven LaBrie of Il Divo

By Gregg Shapiro

It's safe to say that not every queer person digs opera or classical music. But those who do border on being cultlike. In a way, the classical crossover genre, which has its roots in the 1980s (remember Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballe's "Barcelona" album), bridged that gap. Performers such as Charlotte Church, Jackie Evancho, Josh Groban, and Andrea Bocelli have found victory in the genre. All-male quartet Il Divo is also one of classical crossover's greatest success stories. An early 21st century creation of Simon Cowell, Il Divo is still going strong after 20 years. Having survived the loss of original member Carlos Marin to COVID, Il Divo is on the rebound with new, openly gay member Steven LaBrie. A baritone with a long history in the world of opera, LaBrie was kind enough to make time for an interview in advance of the group's concert tour.

Gregg Shapiro: I'd like to begin by congratulating you on officially becoming the fourth member of the male vocal group Il Divo. As fellow divo Sebastian has said, you are not a replacement, but more of a new member joining the group. What does such an honor mean to

you?

Steven LaBrie: Thank you Gregg! As you said, it is such an honor to be a part of such an iconic group that has shaped the world of classical crossover music for the last 20 years. When I first started singing in a serious way, I was about 15 years old and I remember walking through the CD section of a bookstore and seeing Il Divo's first album on the shelf. I gave it a listen on the headphones at the bookstore and thought, "Wow! What is this?!" Such beautiful music and with four good-looking classical singers! So, I have known about Il Divo my entire adult life and I met David (Miller) in person when we did a concert together about 10 years ago. He invited me to an Il Divo concert and introduced me to the rest of the guys backstage after the show. And when Carlos fell ill and sadly passed away, it was a huge privilege for me to have the opportunity to honor such an iconic artist. And now, as the new member of the band, it's an honor to carry on the legacy into the 20th year of Il Divo.

GS: How old were you when you discovered that you had a talent for singing?

SL: I have always loved to sing. I don't come from a very musical

family; it was just something innate within me. When I was 11 years old, my elementary school took us on a field trip to see the opera "La Bohème" at the Dallas Opera. I was completely enamored with the music, the singing, the story, everything. I just loved it. I was so moved and when I got back to class, I announced to everyone that I was going to be an opera singer! From then on, I would practice at home after school for hours when there was no one in the house. I loved to practice, and I still do, I would just sing whatever songs I knew at the time. When I got older, maybe around 15, I started taking voice lessons from a retired opera singer who lived in Dallas; he was also a baritone. I learned super quickly. When I started voice lessons, we didn't jump straight into classical music, we started with singing pop songs and mariachi; I'm half Mexican. It was through singing all the Mexican mariachi songs that I truly found my way into opera. They are full of passion and emotional outbursts, high notes, intimate moments. Mexican music is probably what has influenced me the most musically.

GS: At what age did your rich baritone voice develop?

SL: I was a really early bloomer.

When I was 12, my voice changed in two weeks! When I started taking lessons with my first teacher in Dallas, he helped me learn how to open my throat and expand my range. From then on, I have always had a deep, dark voice, pretty much the same one I have now. Of course, things have changed throughout the years. Singing has gotten easier and more natural, and I have a lot more skills than I did then. The thing that remains the same is that I still love singing.

GS: As you said, you grew up in Dallas. Did you participate in musical theater productions while in high school there?

SL: I did! I was in a few musicals in school and in community theater. I did “Damn Yankees,” “Oklahoma!,” “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,” and “Anything Goes.” I love musicals. In the summer of 2021, I sang Billy Bigelow in “Carousel” in Colorado. It was my first public appearance since the pandemic started and it was a magical experience. Such a great musical!

GS: Il Divo recorded its new album in Miami. I live in Fort Lauderdale, and I was wondering if you had a chance to explore the gay nightlife scene there and in Wilton Manors?

SL: Yeah, I did! I went to Wilton Manors with a few friends one night. It was super fun. I had a great time. I didn’t have the chance to go out in Miami this time because I was being disciplined so I could sing well in the recording studio, but I’ve been to Miami many times and it’s always a good time.

GS: What can you tell the readers about the song selection on the new Il Divo album?

SL: We have been working on this album for a long time! Before we even started this tour in February, we had chosen the songs that we wanted to record and then we started working with our amazing Grammy Award-winning producer Carlos Lopez in March. We actually had two separate recording sessions because we will be releasing a Christmas EP (“A Merry Little Christmas”) of four festive Christmas songs just in time for the holidays. So, we went down to Miami in April

to record those, and then the second session was to record the “Il Divo: XX” album. This new album is exploring some new and modern cinematic sounds, some contemporary songs, some epic classic pop songs, and one original song that was written by Carlos Lopez, Laura Lambuley, and our very own Divos, David Miller and Sebastien Izambard.

GS: Please say a few words about the new Il Divo Christmas EP.

SL: You’re going to love it! It’s festive, nostalgic, and powerful. There is even a new and interesting take that we have done on a classic Christmas song where we have given it a Latin flare. It is sexy!

GS: Beginning in October, Il Divo has a packed tour schedule through late December. Is your partner Adam able to join you on any of the tour dates?

SL: When we finish with our tour in Asia, we will be basing ourselves in New York for a few of the concerts that are in the surrounding states, so I will get to see him then and he will join me for some of the shows in Florida toward the end of the Christmas tour. We will be so far away for most of this tour overseas, and Adam has a super busy fall. He is a very accomplished pianist and works as the artistic director of the opera program at Juilliard and will be playing a show at the Metropolitan Opera on top of concerts that he will be playing this fall. So, he is very busy these next few months as well.

GS: As Il Divo’s openly gay member, do you feel like a sort of ambassador to the community?

SL: When I was growing up, I was taught by society that being gay was the absolute worst curse that could befall any individual. So, I was scared and ashamed and I wished



and wished that it wasn’t me. Years later, when I was coming out, a friend of mine who was gay told me that he used to feel that way too, but as he got older, he realized that being gay was a huge blessing from the universe. That completely changed my perspective and I think about that every day. I was bullied relentlessly growing up for being gay or for not being like the other boys, and now looking back, I’ve realized that all of those experiences have made me into a resilient person who is able to step into who I really am in a very public way and not allow criticism of any kind to break my spirit. I still get hate for being gay regularly. But, every time I do, there is an army of loving and accepting people that jump to my defense, and that is a beautiful thing to see. There are people out there who show me so much love for what I do with Il Divo, for my singing and it also happens that I’m gay. And I think that now being a part of so many people’s lives as an artist that maybe haven’t had so much exposure to gay people, and them witnessing the love that I have for my partner and the camaraderie that I have with my bandmates is impactful. In the end, we as humans are a lot more similar than we are different, we are just experiencing the world through different lenses.

GS: Do you have a sense that the other members of Il Divo have an awareness of the group’s LGBTQ+

following?

SL: I have definitely seen people from the LGBTQ+ community at concerts. From my opera career, I know that classical music has a large gay following. And Il Divo is a mix of classical singing with Whitney Houston and Celine Dion songs. How dreamy is that?



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A photograph of a shirtless man with dark hair and glasses, sitting on a bed and looking at a laptop. He is wearing blue jeans and has a beard. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

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Important Facts About DOVATO

This is only a brief summary of important information about DOVATO and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?

If you have both human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) infection and Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Resistant HBV.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV infection before you start treatment with DOVATO. If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the HBV can change (mutate) during your treatment with DOVATO and become harder to treat (resistant). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in people who have HIV-1 and HBV infection.
- **Worsening of HBV Infection.** If you have HBV infection and take DOVATO, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking DOVATO. A "flare-up" is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
 - Do not run out of DOVATO. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your DOVATO is all gone.

- Do not stop DOVATO without first talking to your healthcare provider.
- If you stop taking DOVATO, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your liver function and monitor your HBV infection. It may be necessary to give you a medicine to treat hepatitis B. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking DOVATO.

For more information about side effects, see "What are possible side effects of DOVATO?"

What is DOVATO?

DOVATO is a prescription medicine that is used without other HIV-1 medicines to treat human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) infection in adults: who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past, or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their healthcare provider determines that they meet certain requirements. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in children.

Please see additional Important Facts About DOVATO on the following page.

Ask your doctor about staying undetectable with fewer medicines in 1 pill.

Important Facts About DOVATO (cont'd)

Who should not take DOVATO?

Do not take DOVATO if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine that contains dolutegravir or lamivudine.
- take dofetilide. Taking DOVATO and dofetilide can cause side effects that may be serious or life-threatening.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using DOVATO?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have kidney problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. One of the medicines in DOVATO (dolutegravir) may harm your unborn baby.
 - Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different medicine than DOVATO if you are planning to become pregnant or if pregnancy is confirmed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
 - If you can become pregnant, your healthcare provider may perform a pregnancy test before you start treatment with DOVATO.
 - If you can become pregnant, you and your healthcare provider should talk about the use of effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with DOVATO.
 - Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are planning to become pregnant, you become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant during treatment with DOVATO.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take DOVATO.**
 - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
 - DOVATO passes to your baby in your breast milk.
 - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Some medicines interact with DOVATO. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with DOVATO.
- **Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take DOVATO with other medicines.

What are possible side effects of DOVATO?

DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- See "What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?"

What are possible side effects of DOVATO? (cont'd)

- **Allergic reactions. Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with DOVATO. Stop taking DOVATO and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms:** fever; generally ill feeling; tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in mouth; blisters or peeling of the skin; redness or swelling of the eyes; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; problems breathing.
- **Liver problems. People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with DOVATO. Liver problems, including liver failure, have also happened in people without a history of liver disease or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:** your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice); dark or "tea-colored" urine; light-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting; loss of appetite; and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
- **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis). Too much lactic acid is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms that could be signs of lactic acidosis:** feel very weak or tired; unusual (not normal) muscle pain; trouble breathing; stomach pain with nausea and vomiting; feel cold, especially in your arms and legs; feel dizzy or lightheaded; and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- **Lactic acidosis can also lead to severe liver problems, which can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the signs or symptoms of liver problems which are listed above under "Liver problems."**
- **You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female or very overweight (obese).**
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after you start taking DOVATO.**
- **The most common side effects of DOVATO include:** headache; nausea; diarrhea; trouble sleeping; tiredness; and anxiety.

These are not all the possible side effects of DOVATO. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Where can I find more information?

- Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
- Go to DOVATO.com or call 1-877-844-8872, where you can also get FDA-approved labeling.

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TUESDAY	<p>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. 12/26 Midnight contest for "The hottest Full Moon" in the House.</p>
WEDNESDAY	<p>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. Charlie's: 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.</p>
THURSDAY	<p>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: \$1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks. 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. Thanksgiving Open 8pm 70's & 80's Music.</p>

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 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-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. 12/22 Feliz Navidad Latin Leather 9pm-4am No Cover, No Dress Code. Santas Caliente Dancers DJ Lightning LuLu

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 Tallboys 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. 12/30 Ripe Party Deep Beats, Dim Lights, Hot Go-Go Dudes, DJ Harry T.

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 Bloody Mary's, \$1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And \$1 off all Revolution beers. **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, \$2 Sodas, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm. 12/26 Christmas Eve Party with Santa. Treats, Busts and Photos with the Big Guy! 12/31 Black & Blue New Years Eve Free Buffet, Party Favors, Champagne Toast & Midnight Blackout with DJ Harry T \$10 Cover.



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	Artist	Title
1	Allegra	Round & Round (Tiesto Remix)
2	Manyfew	Love You (One More Chance)
3	Riggi & Piros	Stuck On You Ft. Jen
4	RSCL x Repiet	Echo Julia Kleijn (Radio Mix)
5	Midnight Kids & Madison Watkins	One More Night (Original Mix)
6	Felix Jaehn & Jonas Blue	Past Life
7	Bingo Players X Goshfather	Be Mine
8	Sick Individuals & Madism	Waste My Time
9	Lucky Rose	Heaven ft. Jon Bryant (Radio Edit)
10	Twocolors & Safri Duo & Chris De Sarandy	Cynical (Radio Edit)
11	Julian Cross	All I Need Radio Ft. Afrojack
12	Troye Sivan	Rush
13	Telykast	You Got Me (With Georgia Ku)
14	Lawrent	When I'm With You
15	Karen Harding	Wrong Places
16	Niel Degas X Ricardo Geldres	LA Nights ft. Drew Tyler
17	Dom Dolla & Nelly Furtado	Eat Your Man
18	Icona Pop & Galantis	I Want You
19	Noizu	Vogue (Radio Edit)
20	Madelline	I'm Only Here For The Beat
21	The Magician & ATrak	Love On You Ft. Griff Clawson (Radio Edit)
22	Jess Glynne	What Do You Do
23	Loud Luxury & Two Friends	If Only I Ft. Bebe Rexha
24	Vassy	Krazy
25	Artbat	Coming Home ft. John Martin (Stream Edit)
26	Becky Hill & Lewis Thompson	Side Effects
27	San Holo	No Place Is Too Far
28	M22	The One (Radio Edit)
29	Switch Disco	React Ft. Ella Henderson
30	Danny Chris x Crooked Bangs	Don't Tell Me What Love Is



Photos By Anthony Meade



Charlie's



GRAB CHRISTIAN

Christian Wilde Makes His Directorial Debut on KinkMen.com

By Steven Boyce

Christian Wilde, the popular adult film star, is stepping behind the camera in 2024, and making his directorial debut with new films on **Kinkmen.com**.

As a performer, Wilde has captivated audiences with his magnetic presence and willingness to embrace unconventional narratives. He's known for pushing boundaries by bravely exploring diverse facets of his sexuality with any and all genders.

As he steps in the director's chair, Christian Wilde says his aim is to infuse his unique perspective of sensuality into every frame and maybe even redefine the adult film landscape. His collaboration with KinkMen.com is anticipated to yield a series of films that not only cater to the site's loyal audience but also attract new viewers seeking a fresh and nuanced approach to adult entertainment.

Steven Boyce: How would you describe the Christian Wilde brand?

Christian Wilde: Christian Wilde is the all-around daddy who will take care of all your needs! From mild to Wilde, I have the range to fill all sorts of fantasies.

SB: Have you always been Wilde? Growing up, were you a rule-breaker?

CW: Definitely. I enjoy the rush of a little trouble. I've always liked testing the limits of rules.

SB: You seem to authentically enjoy having sex on film.

CW: A vast majority of the time, yes, I do. There are times, however, when work is really work and that's when I have to rely on being a talented performer.

SB: Do you prefer the content you make to be fantasy-based or more reality-driven?

CW: It depends on the chemistry between me and the model I am working with. There are definitely fun aspects of both.

SB: How kinky can you get on set?

CW: Have you seen my work? My BDSM activities with KinkMen.com have led to some pretty intense scenes. I've also filmed scenes in public and some very hectic group scenes. It would be hard to pick the wildest scene I have made.

SB: Have you ever turned down doing a scene?

CW: I've turned them down from studios that I've heard have a less than stellar reputation. I know not everyone has the ability to, but I try to only work for companies that I trust and that my colleagues say good things about.

SB: What are the hard parts of porn?

CW: The impact it has on the body. Also, the stigma from the civilian population, and the multiple layers of work it takes to be a successful person in the industry.



SB: What are the aspects of adult film that you like best?

CW: A good deal of the time on set is often casual and relaxed. Similar to how I imagine it to be in an office setting, coworkers become friends. I just happen to also bang my coworkers.

SB: Do you like getting Wilde with coworkers off-set?

CW: Nowadays, I don't get as crazy. I simply enjoy having friends over to my house for backyard fires and hang outs. Anytime friends come from out of town or there's locals that want to do something, I always love to host.

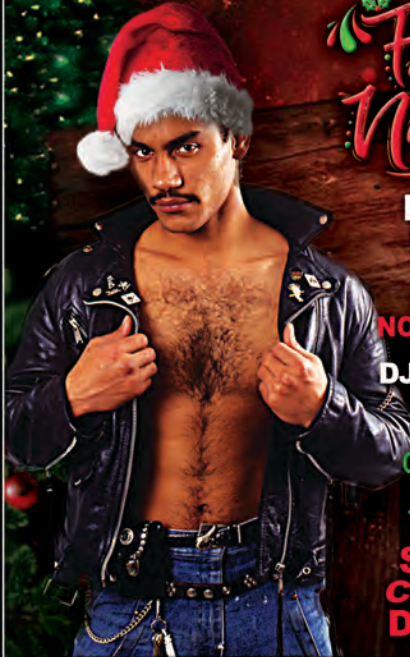
SB: Has being in front of the camera helped you in your new role as director?

CW: Immeasurably! I know what to ask for from models when looking for the best shot and more importantly, I

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know how to ask for it. I understand what is likely going through their head while filming because I've been in their position.

SB: You could have chosen to direct for any studio. Why did you choose to collaborate with KinkMen.com and their Bound Gods channel?

CW: It's the most unique experience in adult film. In real life, we never actually get to play out these scenarios. The activities we do in these films would land someone in jail for assault! On the KinkMen.com set, we get to explore the mind as well as the body and push limits and boundaries in a very specific and serious way.

SB: What is it about kink films that get you excited?

CW: The raw connection. I started learning about kink in 2009 and it has 100% shaped the person I am now. I love the deep connection I feel with someone after seeing them go through the experience.

SB: Do you connect with fans online?

CW: All the time! People ask me for strange things! Toenail clippings, old socks, things like that. But my favorite is when people ask if they can come be my personal slave forever! Awfully tempting.

SB: Are any of the Christian Wilde-directed films available yet?

CW: Yes! A few of my Bound Gods are already out and available to be watched! My scene with Colt Spence and Ethan Sinn where Colt plays a new hire and Ethan is the asshole boss is pretty incredible. Both guys really killed it.

SB: Who would you most like to direct in a film?

CW: Hard to say. I really just want to direct models who are passionate about what they're making and who



want to do a really great job creating something wonderful.

SB: What's your advice to young adult talent who hope to have the career longevity that you have enjoyed?

CW: Be professional! Take this as a job and be good at the basics. Also, stay true to yourself and don't do anything you are not comfortable with simply for clicks or followers.

SB: What would you be doing if you weren't Christian Wilde?

CW: Probably living in the woods somewhere, running around naked in nature and being a weird little mountain man.

For more visit [KinkMen.com](https://www.kinkmen.com)



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GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

"The Jolliest Bunch: Unhinged Holiday Stories" by Danny Pellegrino
c. 2023, Sourcebooks \$27.99
ci. 239 pages



It's a hard choice to make.

When someone asks you about your favorite holiday, you have to think. Do you pick a spring holiday with bunnies, hearts, or leprechauns? Or something grand with parades and flags? Then again, stuffing yourself with stuffing is pretty awesome and that whole Santa-reindeer-elf bit is pretty appealing. Do you have a favorite holiday or, as in "The Jolliest Bunch" by Danny Pellegrino, do you just pick them all?

We've all had 'em: legendary stories attached to holidays that are best forgotten – for at least a little while, until they become family lore. Take, for instance, the various stories Pellegrino tells, beginning with a shout-out to his mother, Linda.

Linda, controller of all holidays, who invites the family over for Christmas Eve at 6 o'clock and then, like clockwork, freaks out at 5:10 "for approximately forty-nine minutes." Linda, who rents chairs for the holiday from a local funeral home. Linda, who once fashioned a passable angel costume from a woman's white shirt.

For a holiday we love, we'll do almost anything to be home with family, including taking a cross-country ride with a half-drunk driver who's on her way to see a former lover with six kids. For a holiday we love, we hold onto Christmas Past by welcoming gay ghosts into our lives. We work retail and endure the same eight holiday songs on every store speaker, then go home and watch the same four holiday specials on TV. We hope we get the gift we didn't ask for. We celebrate with family and friends, "and sometimes we're surrounded by people we don't like all that much."

And then there are the traditions and the things that make the holiday a holiday: a string of beloved lights that a childhood pet nearly destroyed. Cookie cutters in the shape of the south end of a cat. Enjoying "Midwest comfort foods... that are incredibly

delectable and anything but healthy." Knowing that you've wrapped the 100% exact right gift for someone you adore, but also knowing "that even the most special presents are not as important as how you make them feel."

So, here's the brilliance of "The Jolliest Bunch": no matter who you are, man or woman, gay or straight, author Danny Pellegrino has a universal memory to share that's hilariously close to something you've experienced. Awkward relatives, check. Meals gone wrong, check. The gift you wanted more than anything, check. Bad holidays at a stranger's house, yep. Decorations that are older than you are, uh-huh. It's like he was at that same get-together.

This may make you cringe, but you'll also laugh because Pellegrino is a funny writer with a keen eye for a great (and relatable) story. Just beware, though: holidays also bring out nostalgia, longing, missing, and regrets, so watch your heart.

In his introduction, Pellegrino says this book is for holiday haters as well as for those who start singing Christmas carols in August. That means "The Jolliest Bunch" is for you, and reading it's an easy choice to make.

"Letter to My Transgender Daughter" by Carolyn Hays
c. 2023, Blair Publisher \$17.95
282 pages



The piece of cake you cut into did not have a pastel center.

There were no pretty balloons in a box, no colorful confetti, no "Team Pink" or "Team Blue" t-shirts or bracelets. You didn't have a gender-reveal party for your baby because you didn't want to know. As in the memoir "Letter to My Transgender Daughter" by Carolyn Hays, you'll let your child tell you in person.

She never expected another baby.

After seven years, Carolyn Hays thought she was done with diapers and late-night feedings but the pregnancy test didn't lie. This was good news. The whole family was excited to welcome another member

into the household!

The baby was a boy – but as soon as he could talk, he told everyone he was a girl.

No problem; Hays' other children rolled with it; they "saw" their sibling for who she was. Teachers were also nonplussed; they gave the girl a nickname, and extended family members quickly learned to use it.

Hays and her husband balked sometimes, though. They hoped it was a "phase." They gave their daughter "girly" things and allowed her to wear girls clothing, but they tried "boy on the outside / girl on the inside" wordage. Their daughter patiently corrected them each time until eventually, they, too, saw the truth. Their youngest child was a girl.

They were, at that time, "a big, loud East Coast family, new to the Bible Belt" but they'd found community in the south, and a support group so Hays could parent her trans daughter better. Everything seemed to work out – until the knock on the door.

The representative of the Department of Children and Families couldn't tell Hays who'd made a complaint about them, or when. They could only guess who was offended by their personal family matter, or their total acceptance of their daughter.

All they knew, she said, was "We could lose custody."

We could lose you."

If you are someone who loves a child – any child, even a cis child – be prepared to have your heart fall out of your chest. "Letter to My Transgender Daughter" is a nightmare, not because of the book itself but because of what very nearly happened to its author and her family.

Indeed, this "letter" in book form goes from mildly confessional to outright terrified, and author Carolyn Hays susses out all your emotions and turns them raw. Hers is an honest story, not only of a trans girl but of parents who walk through the steps of acceptance. Cue the ominous music, though: you know what's coming but foresight doesn't diminish the outrage and fear you'll feel, once you get there – although Hays doesn't completely let you roll in misery. Readers will be delighted by the precociousness and determination in her daughter's patient steadfastness, and by Hays' family memories.

Now out in paperback, "Letter to My Transgender Daughter" is an absolute read for parents and for trans adults. Read it – then check the headlines and see if it doesn't cut your heart to pieces.



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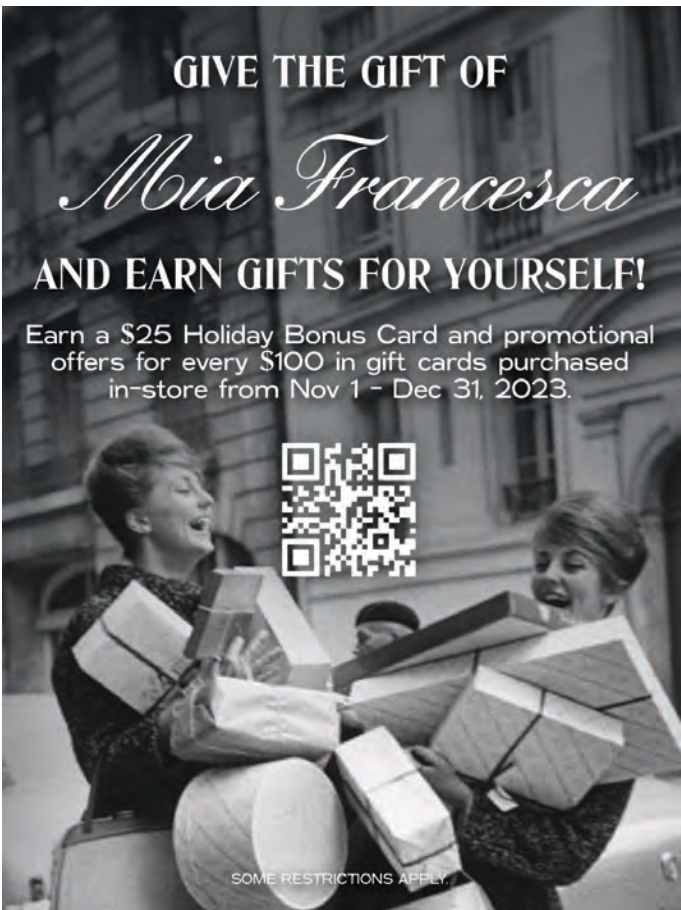
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GRAB ROGER

WHO PAYS THE BILLS WHEN SOMEONE DIES?

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Q: When my lover died, I discovered that he owed \$75,000 in charge card bills and \$110,000 in unpaid hospital bills. Everything that he owned (the house and the bank accounts) was held in joint tenancy with myself. He also had several life insurance policies and IRA accounts which named his children as beneficiaries of these accounts. Do I have to sell the house to pay my lover's bills? Do his children have to use the money from the life insurance and IRA accounts to pay their father's bills?

A: First, the law says that a person can't transfer their property to defraud their creditors or get out of paying their bills. If, however, you and your lover owned the house and bank accounts in joint tenancy before the debts arose then that property will pass to you as the surviving joint tenant owner without

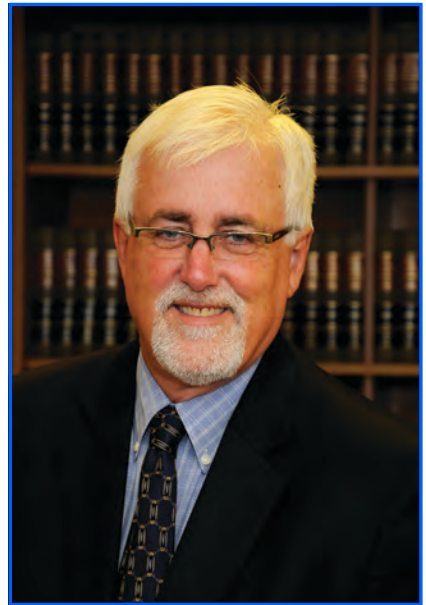
deduction for payment of your lover's bills.

Creditors of a deceased person may only go after property in the deceased person's probate estate, which means property your lover owned in his name alone, and does not include joint tenancy property. Also benefits paid under a life insurance policy or IRA account with a named beneficiary is not considered part of someone's probate estate and is not subject to the claims of creditors. Accordingly, the life insurance and IRA money would go to your lover's children and would not have to be used to pay creditors.

If you and your lover were married, my answer would change depending upon the nature of the debt. Illinois married spouses would be subject to several "Family statutes" 750 ILCS 65/5 and 750 ILCS 65/15 (also known as the Family Expense Act). They provide that spouses are not generally liable for one another's debt. The statute states also that your wages, earnings and separate property are not liable for the separate debts of your spouse.

However, 65/15 does hold both spouses jointly and separately liable for the "expenses of the family." The law defines such "expenses" to include medical and funeral expenses, as well as many other services and goods that benefit the family. Therefore, any medical bills, including those from a hospital, doctor, clinic, laboratory, etc. would be chargeable upon your property if your spouse should die and the creditors look to you for payment.

Q: My lover died last month and I haven't been able to find his original will, although I do have a carbon copy. I know he named me as his beneficiary. I called my lover's lawyer hoping that he would have the



original will and the lawyer told me that he used to have the original will but before my lover died he wrote the lawyer and told him to tear up the will. Now my lover's family tells me that because the will was destroyed, my lover died without a will and they get everything. What are my legal rights?

A: Even though your lover directed his lawyer (by letter) to tear up his will and throw it away, Illinois law does not consider that to be a valid revocation of his will. In order to revoke a will the destruction of the will (tearing it up) must be done by the person who made the will or by another person in the presence of the person who made the will. The law requires a revocation of a will to be performed according to the requirements of the law. Because the will was physically destroyed in a manner contrary to Illinois law, the family members will lose and the surviving lover will prevail. The surviving lover can file in court a petition to probate the will using the carbon copy of the original will.

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

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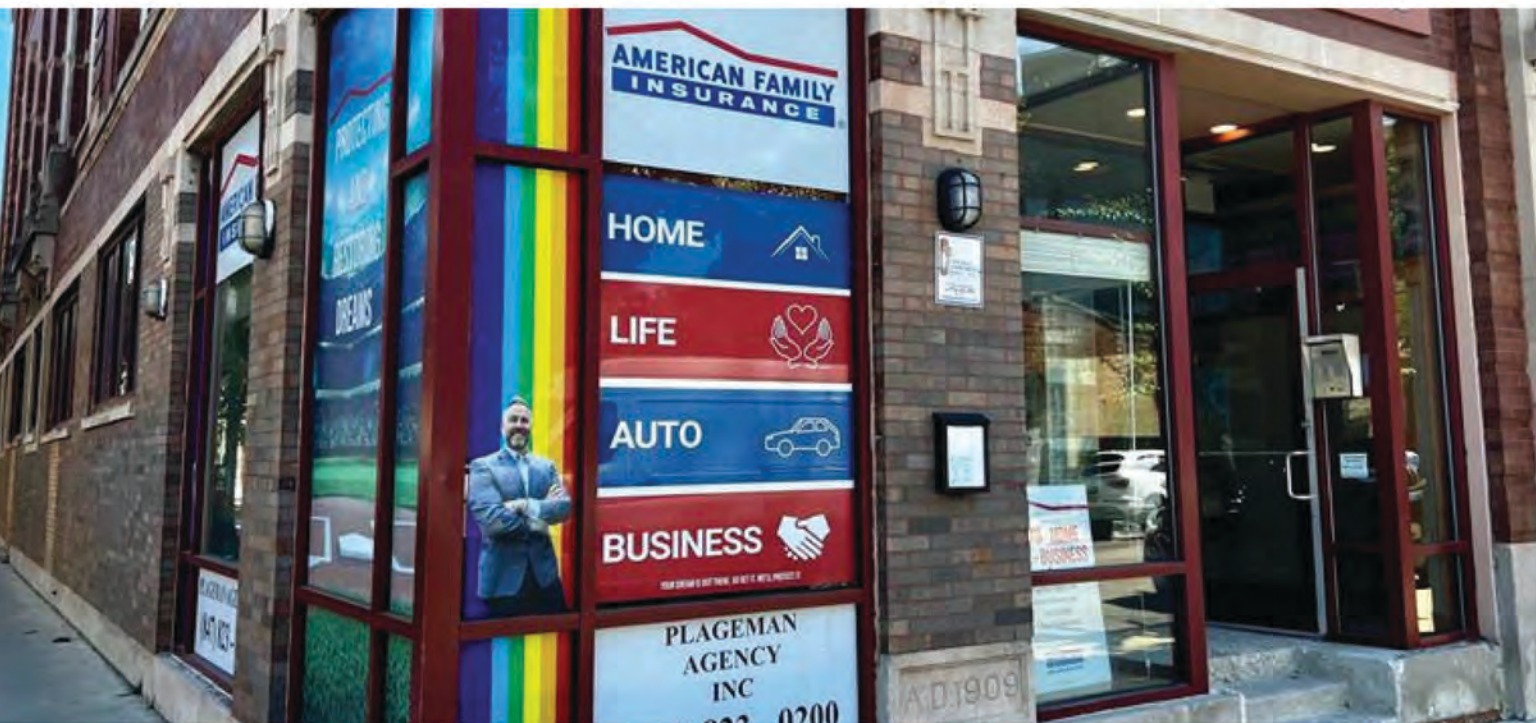
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GRAB HOLLY

Christmas Morning at Donut Time

By Holly Maholm

The “Christmas Season” – a holiday we have from deepest antiquity – is always and everywhere the same: A time of joyous celebration, of heartfelt generosity, of long-anticipated reconnection with friends and family, re-energizing our love for those who play supporting roles in the on-going drama (heroic, tragic or comedic though it be) we call our “life.”

But however much we might expect the Christmas Season to be both cast and performed as if of Shakespearean depth and dignity, we must admit that certain aspects of this holiday nevertheless often play out as if an episode of “The Real Housewives.” Thus, this Christmas Season, let us get our box of popcorn and settle into our couch to watch another episode of “The Real Trannies of Donut Time.”

The Scene: Early Christmas morning, the interior of Donut Time, before opening; close-up of the booth furthest from the kitchen. Present are Tuco, sitting innermost on one side of the booth, next to him Aly, then sitting outermost is Your Narrator (me, Holly). In the other side of the booth, first-in is Cindy, next to her Xandra, and outermost is Blair. Chairs have been pulled up to the booth, where are seated Martha, Recon and Fender. General pandemonium reigns.

Xandra pokes Blair to get her attention, then begs, “Please, I have to get out. I’ve got fritters in the oven, and I don’t want them to burn.” Blair good-naturedly stands to let Xandra out, then regains her seat. Aly speaks up. “Okay, so someone else has to open a present.” She grabs a present from the pile and hands it to Cindy. “This has your name on it. I’m sure you’ll love it!” she implores. Cindy looks down at the present as if a wolf patiently studying an injured rabbit, checking to be sure her prey is indeed dead before starting to feed.

Aside: Cindy is one of those who have had to labor so unceasingly to acquire what little she has in life that she cannot grasp the concept of a “gift freely given.” Thus, she is deeply suspicious of anyone’s motive in giving her this present, and accordingly, is unwilling to open it in public, lest this be seen as evidence of weakness on her part. She tears off the wrapping, but before she can open the box, Xandra returns.

Action: General confusion as Blair

has to stand to let Xandra back in the booth. Aly declares that since she is back, Xandra needs to open a present. Aly hands Xandra a gift from the pile. Xandra can see through the tissue wrapping that the gift is a fancy new oven thermometer. She exclaims, “Oh! I really need this! Aly, you and Tuco are so thoughtful! I’m going to get so much use out of this!” Xandra does not open her gift; accordingly, no one other than Aly knows what it is. Xandra announces, “Blair, sorry, but I’ve got to go back to the kitchen to put some cookies in.” Blair stands to let Xandra out; then looks imploringly at Fender, who rises to give Blair his seat. Fender remains standing.

Action: Aly checks and sees Tuco’s coffee is cold; gently prods me with her elbow and whispers, “Holly, I need to get out.” I stand and she exits the booth, soon returning with a cup of hot coffee and a donut in a napkin, which she places before Tuco. I regain my seat.

Aside: Aly is clearly competing to be “Girlfriend of the Year” in her unrelenting fixation upon Tuco’s every need – real or imagined. This is a source of quiet amusement to the rest of us, as we can all plainly see that Tuco is equally smitten with her and flattered (as he has never before dared to hope) with her affectionate attentions.

Action: Aly recoils with horror that she has shamefully forgotten to bring Tuco any cream for his coffee (which she knows he likes). She pokes me again in the ribs to let her out, which I do; I remain standing until she returns with the creamer. Xandra returns from the kitchen and inquires, “So what did I miss?” There is general consternation and cries of “No more interruptions! You need to open your present!” Xandra sits down and sheepishly finishes opening her present; expressing boundless joy at this gift which she promises “Is the best present, ever!”

Scene: Grandma Lily and Phyllis (who had been attending Sunrise Service) now return and enter through the front door; Grandma Lily speaks, “We hurried back from the service so we wouldn’t miss any presents being opened. So, what did we miss?”

Thunderous cacophony ensues. Shouts of “Nobody has opened anything!” and “We can’t get Xandra to sit down!” and finally “Grandma Lily! Please, make Xandra stay out of



the kitchen!”

Phyllis and Grandma Lily Save Christmas

If you – a student of History, and in particular 19th Century European history – had been observing this celebration of “Christmas Morning at Donut Time” (a comedic drama acted out by the resident trannies and their friends), you might have concluded that the ceremonial opening of presents, the expressions of happy gratitude by the recipients, and the honoring of the benevolent intentions of the givers, was handled with all the same “organizational efficiency” as Napoleon’s Retreat from Moscow in the Snow. Which is to say, Chaos Reigned.

It was at this moment that Grandma Lily and Phyllis returned from Sunrise Service, and pausing but two shakes of a lamb’s tail, each looked over at the other, the expression on Phyllis’s face saying “I didn’t teach high school for 20 years for nothing,” and Grandma Lily’s expression replying, “And I didn’t teach Vacation Bible School for 20 years for nothing, either.” They took charge.

Grandma Lily turned to Recon, “Do you think you could put on some Christmas music? Just not too loud.” He jumped up to comply. She then turned to Fender, “Could you bring out some more chairs?” He ran off to do so.

At the same time, Phyllis asked Blair to drag two chairs over close to the entrance to the kitchen. Once these were in place, she took Xandra by the arm – and motioned for Martha to join them at the chairs. She spoke, “Now, Xandra, I want you and Martha to sit in these seats, and Xandra, if there is something you need to get done in the kitchen, I want you to lean over and whisper it to Martha, and then Martha, if you can do what she

wants quickly, I want you to do it, but if you need help I want you to ask Holly, 'cause she's usually not doing anything productive, and it wouldn't hurt her to be useful for a change."

In a short time, the celebration was put in order. All the unopened gifts were piled up in one booth, and all the opened gifts set aside in another. Phyllis acted as hostess, first darting to one booth to find the next gift to be opened, then taking it to its recipient, then collecting it after opening and placing it with the other gifts received.

Aly was happy to turn over her hostess duties to Phyllis, as this allowed her to concentrate on Tuco's every need and desire. All the opening and thanking proceeded so much more naturally following the intervention of Grandma Lily and Phyllis, and the level of frustration and annoyance was much reduced. However, in all the hubbub of these new procedures, everyone (except for me) forgot that Cindy had never actually opened her gift. (I had bought that gift for her; and what it was I will share with you another time.) As for Phyllis and Grandma Lily, they got each other identical gifts, by which I mean they merely wished each other "Merry Christmas," inasmuch as each agreed that folks their age have received "all the damn, dumb presents anybody needs in one lifetime."

Presently, Dot arrived out front, riding one of the rescue horses and bringing along two others by their leads. She tied up all three so they wouldn't wander off (not actually anything that might occur, as these were Sassy Pants, Fletcher and Scallywag in disguise, and they being in close proximity to the Source of All Donuts in our little town, you could not have driven them off with sticks). Dot came in and announced. "Oh, I'm glad you're not done. I came to pick up the horse treats for the rescue horses, and I would love to see some presents opened, too."

Fender got a chair for Dot, and we all turned our attention to Grandma Lily, who had a present she wanted to see Xandra open. When all were quiet, she placed a good-sized box wrapped in tissue paper in Xandra's lap. In moments, Xandra removed the wrapping paper and found an antique metal box of the type people before the war used to keep their recipes. Grandma Lily

spoke.

"Anyway, Xandra, I have been trying to decide when was the time to give you this. First, I had to wait to see if you would take to baking and cooking and all that, but it was years ago you showed me that. Then I realized I only have just 'so many' Christmases left, so I decided now was the time to give you these recipes. These all belonged to me and my mammy and granny, and I trust you'll do any one of them proud. I just feel so blessed you have grown up to be the person you are."

And with that, "Christmas with the Real Trannies of Donut Time" came to a close.

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.

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America's favorite travel show, the Travel & Adventure Show, will open the 2024 season in Chicago Jan. 13-14, marking its 19th year at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. With travel demand surpassing pre-pandemic numbers, travel experts are advising consumers to start booking their 2024 vacation plans this winter. With special deals and promotional prices available right on the show floor, the Travel & Adventure Shows are an optimal opportunity for travel enthusiasts to discover and book their 2024 trips with insider access to over 400 local and international destinations, hotels, cruises and tour operators all at their fingertips.

New this year, the Chicago Travel & Adventure Show has teamed up with Questar Entertainment's GoTraveler Network for an exciting live pitch competition to discover and nurture the next big TV show idea for travel entertainment. The grand prize is a TV show development deal for the chosen travel star. Entries are open now through Dec. 8, with finalists invited to present their pitch ideas live at the Travel & Adventure Show on Sunday, Jan. 14. Judges include travel entertainment stars **Pamela Holt** and **Colleen Kelly**, as well as **Christine Drinan**, CEO of Galavante.

Following popular demand in 2023, the Dive and Water Sports and LGBTQ Pavilions return for a second year at the Chicago show. At the Dive Pavilion, destinations and tour operators will come together to promote the most exciting watersport activities and inspire a new generation of divers by showing them the world that awaits under the sea. The LGBTQ Pavilion will focus on LGBTQ-friendly destinations, tour operators and travel agencies. Attendees will be able to discover destinations that have up-and-coming LGBTQ scenes and speak to

representatives who can answer questions and personalize specialty itineraries.

Chicago Travel & Adventure Show attendees can also look forward to a variety of interactive and engaging programming offerings, including:

- Individual keynotes from personalities such as **Phil Rosenthal** from Netflix's *Somebody Feed Phil*, as well as a multitude of top travel experts including **Rick Steves**, Pauline Frommer, **Jennifer Broome** and more.

- Rides and appearances by *Peanuts*, the rescue camel, segway and trike rides and numerous giveaways and sweepstakes.

- Specialty pavilions, entertainment on the global beats stage and take-home mementos courtesy the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's green screen photo booth.

"As a major hub for domestic and international travel, Chicago travelers are well positioned for global exploration in 2024 and we know this year's lineup will inspire them to book their next big trip, and save some dollars while doing it," said **John Golicz**, CEO of Unicomm, LLC, the producer of the Travel & Adventure Show Series.

Event Sponsors include Rick Steves' Europe as the Supporting

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The LGBTQ Pavilion is supported by the Official Media Partner, Vacationer.Travel, as well as the Official Trade Partner, IGLTA. The Dive Pavilion's Official Industry Sponsor is DEMA.

For more information on the Chicago Travel & Adventure Shows or to purchase tickets visit <https://travelshows.com/shows/chicago/>





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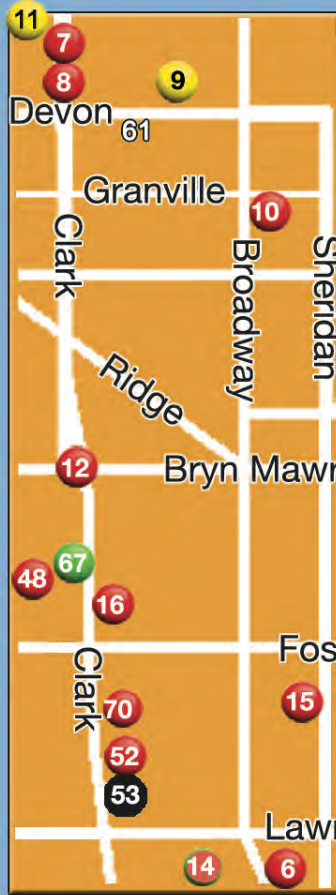
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