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GRAB LESLIE

A Viral Star Is Reborn Thanks to Leslie Jordan's quarantine videos, the world now knows him for exactly who he is

By Chris Azzopardi

"Where should I be looking? There? Or there?"

His face smothering the camera as he wonders where his eyes should be, Leslie Jordan is settling into our video interview like it could be a comic routine about somebody trying to use Zoom for the first time. Puckered together in a kind of duck-face pout are his elastic lips. A delicate smile curls into formation.

Then Jordan scoots so low that only his forehead is visible. More duck face. A big eyes-squished grin. A peculiar sound that may or may not be a fart. And finally a tickled laugh when I tell him I recognize that he's in the same room that made him a viral sensation.

"It's the only room I've got!" he chuckles, noting that he's on video from his bedroom in West Hollywood. "I've got everything set up. And there's my bed!"

Sure enough, that is his bed. Throughout the pandemic as he's documented his quarantine experiences, that same bed has been seen all over his Instagram feed. There, as a COVID respite, Jordan has delivered lighthearted frivolity and cheeky humor to those he calls his "fellow hunker-downers," in, of course, his signature Southern drawl. In one clip, he listens to a Katy Perry song that is "so lit," while another finds him curious about Lizzo's definition of "her juice." Internet virality might be new for Jordan, but, at least in the LGBTQ+community, he's always been a star.

Jordan's three-decade career has, most iconically, seen the 65-year-old actor in the Emmy-winning role of Beverley Leslie, a rival of Megan Mullally's Karen Walker, in "Will & Grace." But his career in TV and film goes back to the '80s, in guest appearances in a variety of major shows: "Murphy Brown," "Star Trek: Voyager," "Pee-wee's Playhouse," "Reba" and "Caroline in the City." More recently, Jordan starred in several

seasons of Ryan Murphy's "American Horror Story," and this year he stars alongside Mayim Bialik and fellow out actor Cheyenne Jackson in the Fox sitcom "Call Me Kat."

When a friend told him he had gone viral while Jordan was guarantining with his mom in Tennessee in mid-March of last year, Jordan told that friend that, no, he was fine. He didn't have coronavirus. But the kind of "viral" his friend was referring to was related to Instagram, where he has gone from just thousands of followers to. currently, around 5.6 million. He's been called the "Quarantine Comedian" and "Social Media Mister Rogers." To all his new fans and even those who

know him from "Will & Grace" and in other bit parts, though, he's most thrilled to be known now as simply Leslie Jordan.

Chris Azzopardi: Congratulations, first of all, on surviving and thriving in a pandemic.

Leslie Jordan: Give me a good pandemic — I just flourish! Ha! I don't know why that is or how that happened, but I think people were looking for just some laughter. I started

that Instagram — I was in Tennessee with my mom, and I didn't have a lot to do. So I just started being funny. I had three rules that I realized I had and didn't know I had: nothing about religion, nothing about politics, and no products. I'm kind of wanting to rethink that "no products" part. Ha!

CA: You could really be making some bank right now.

LJ: Ha! I'd be set for life!





CA: I mean, all the free swag!

LJ: Well, I get that. That comes in the mail. It's weird. It scares me. 'Cause they have my home address. I don't know how. But things come every day.

CA: What's the coolest thing you got recently?

LJ: I got these shoes that you tap. You tap and roller skates come out. I don't know where I'll wear them.

CA: I see you're back in your place after the meltdown you had the other day in your car, which you sat in until the cleaning lady was done. I'm glad to see you're back in a comfortable place. Are you OK?

LJ: I am! I don't know if I said cleaning lady; it's not even a cleaning lady. I have a friend that started working for me a long, long time ago named Bart Stevens. He's a great, big, beautiful muscle boy. He's huge. We're just friends. We've always just been friends. But he's huge. Besides lifting weights and running and everything, he loves to clean. And also iron! He irons everything in the house. It's so funny to see him — he'll put that ironing board up and iron my sheets.

CA: What is he wearing during all this? I mean, if anything.

LJ: He just wears his gym clothes. I make him put on a little French maid costume — no, ha!

CA: I had a conversation with my housemate recently about being aging gays and how I look to you as inspiration because you are 65 and in your prime, I would say. And so people telling me that, for gay people who get older, there's nothing left for us after a certain age, you have completely turned that upside down.

LJ: Oh, that's so kind to say. Because I remember my 50s were tough. As you get older, you walk down the street and people don't even look at you. It's weird the way we treat people that are older, and especially in West Hollywood, where everybody wants to be young and beautiful.

I think we're past that as a gay community. I hope. You know, I think that also had a lot to do with the bar scene, which has been curtailed. But even before that, back in my day — I got here (to California) in '82 — all you had were the bars; you'd go to the bars. That's just where you went to see other gay people and meet other gay



people. Now I think, "My gosh, we have everything. We have choirs. And we have gay camping. We have gay this, we have gay that." There's a lot of ways, plus the internet, where you can meet people.

My generation, we went through so much. I remember I walked up to these young kids holding hands in Kitchen 24 (in West Hollywood) and I just said, "You have no idea what we went through so you guys could..." — and then all of a sudden it hit me: Oh my god, I don't want to be that, like your granddad who would say, "You kids have no idea what we went through!" I thought, "Oh my god! It's the same thing!" They were like, "Yeah, uh-huh, go on, Pop-Pop."

CA: Does it feel like right now is kind of a new beginning for you? Or just the beginning in a lot of ways?

LJ: As you said, I'm 65. I have achieved everything I came to Hollywood to achieve. I've done Broadway, I've done film, I've done a lot of television. And I have this series now on the air ("Call Me Kat") and it looks like it's pulling some numbers. It may stay around for a little while, which is a wonderful thing to know as an actor. I have a job!

CA: People think that you're rich, you've said.

LJ: And I'm not. Listen, she works hard for the money! I think what it feels like



is that I have achieved everything. And also, I'm more comfortable with myself. I'm perfectly comfortable. I got sober 22 years ago. I had a little drinking problem, and I might've done a tiny bit of crystal meth. I got clean and sober and realized that I was just riddled with internal homophobia.

(I was) 42 years old and here I was the life of the party, this and that, but all of a sudden I'm faced with that. And my journey into my sobriety, which has been the last 22 years, has also been a real good journey into my queerdom. It was a lot of therapy. You go to your meetings, and then I had to go to a recovery program because I had too many meetings. I was going to so many meetings, I thought, "I'm addicted to meetings!" Ha! No, I'm teasing.

I sit here (now) so comfortable with myself, with who I am and what I am. And that's a wonderful place to be. So everything from here on out is just gravy. It really is just living life one day at a time and having a really good time.

CA: And you can say that now because you have finally met Dolly Parton.

LJ: That's it. Now all I ask myself is, "What would Dolly do?" She's a sterling human being. Oh my gosh.

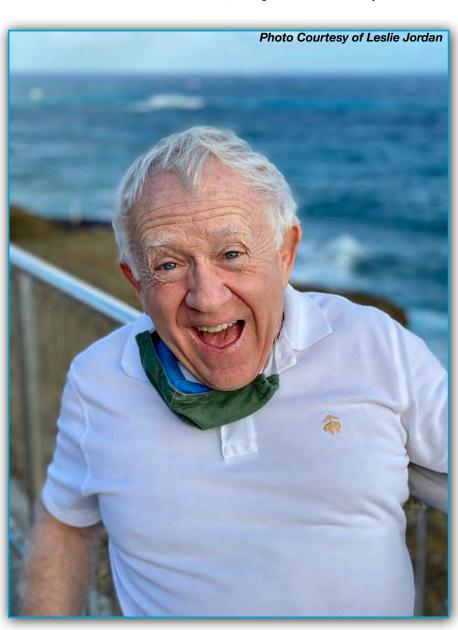
CA: What was the first thing that you said to Dolly when you met her last year?

LJ: I was in Nashville recording. I have a gospel album coming out that I'm not gonna talk a whole lot about because everybody's not set. But anyway, we

were recording and she was at a studio near us and she said, "Drop by." I just felt like I'd known her forever.

CA: What can you say about the song that you have in the works? LJ: It's an old, old, old hymn. It's one that she said to me, "I sang that in

so popular on Instagram and people said, "You should do an album." I thought, "Well, I'm not a singer, really. I've got the kind of voice that's good for a hymn, but I'm not a singer." The response was just unbelievable (from) people who said, "I'll be on that album with you."



CA: What's your earliest memory of singing?
LJ: Church, of course. We'd sing, "Who's come to Sunday school? Leslie, Leslie! Who's come to Sunday school? Le-e-e-slie!"

CA: You also have a book called "How Y'all Doing?" coming out in April. What are we going to learn about vou from the book that we don't already know? LJ: I don't know that vou'll really learn anything because I want to make sure that it wasn't you know, in "My Trip Down the Pink Carpet," I covered everything. (For this), what I decided to do was to take all my best dinner party stories. So I've got 12 stories that are just fun, just things that have happened to me, lessons that I have learned. A

little bit but not much about me, just life in general.

My favorite of all of them is when I got to throw the first pitch out for the Washington Nationals, having never thrown a baseball in my life. And it's the craziest story, and it involved Pulse nightclub. Because it was part of my one-man show, I got to tell it to Mrs. Obama. She was in the audience. Michelle Obama came to see me! I got to tell that story. It's in the book. It ends

church growing up, I sang that hymn over and over and over again." When I hear her singing this song with me, I'll wet my pants.

CA: How did the gospel album come about?

LJ: My friend Travis Howard and his producing partner in Nashville, Danny Myrick, we would record Sunday hymns and just put them on the internet, just the two of us, and it was

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the book.

CA: Will any tea be spilled?

LJ: Well, I don't think so. Certainly not about anybody else. I made sure. I don't like that, when people talk ugly about other people. That's my New Year's resolution: to be really, really sweet and nice and not ever talk ugly. I'm gonna try to stop cussing. I don't know how I'm gonna do that. Ha! I cuss — not a lot, but I just don't want to cuss at all.

CA: What's gonna be the hardest cuss word for you to give up?

LJ: Probably the "f" word. I say that a lot. Ha! Also, shit. I use that so much: "Well shiiiit, how y'all doin'?" That's not really a bad word. I guess it is. I'll say, "Well, shoot!"

CA: Or: "Well, crap!"

LJ: I read the other day ... you're not going to believe this: You know where "crap" came from? The toilet was invented by Mr. Crapper. It's a true story! Thomas Crapper. And that's how it started. The crapper to sit, to take a crap. It was his name! He invented the first flushing toilet or somethin'.

CA: With "Call Me Kat," there's an episode where the cake shop is misperceived as homophobic. Because of that, you gay it up, of

course, with flags and rainbow balloons, and there's even a cat named Neil "Catrick" Harris. That seems like a pretty gay day on set.

LJ: Ha! The show is so gay friendly. It's a job in which I really look forward to coming to work. I love the people, I love the writing. Darlene Hunt, our writer, is just hilarious. She's from Louisville, Kentucky, so I'm kind of the real Southern voice. I'm the one who really puts out, "Hey, hey, hey, we're in Louisville."

And so she loves writing for me. She loves to write me monologues, and they came to me the other day and she said, "Are you having trouble memorizing these?" I said, "Yes! I'm having big trouble!" "Would you like cue cards?" I said, "Well, no, it hadn't reached that yet."

CA: Do you have any tricks for memorizing your lines?

LJ: Someone told me a long time ago that if you do it right before you fall asleep — if you read those lines right when you're just about to fall asleep — you'll remember them. And I said, "Bull hockey! That ain't workin' at all!"

CA: For this new generation of fans you have who've discovered you on Instagram, what is something about your career you would like them to know?

LJ: My first job ever was (the '80s TV series) "The Fall Guy" with Lee Majors and I played a killer. I did six episodes. "Murphy Brown" came around about that time. What interests me (about) my Instagram, which has just jumped to about 5.6 million, is how many people discovered me there that didn't know me. I think: "I've been around forever! Foreveeeer I've been doing this!"

But I like the fact that I mistakenly thought that people would know me from my roles. So they would think, "Oh, Beverley Leslie on 'Will & Grace' and, you know, (my line) 'Well, well, well. Karen Walker.'" But my new fans know me as me. I think that's kind of nice that people are responding to *me*, not some character that I play.

CA: Some actors end up regretting a role they played that became the only thing they were known for.

LJ: Like Tanya Roberts who just died. I thought, "My god, bless her heart. To go to your grave with Sheena: Queen of the (Jungle)." Ha! And she did other things, but you're exactly right: You're remembered for whatever that was. I can't think of anything I'm ashamed of, or something I wish I hadn't done.

CA: What do you want to be remembered for?

LJ: I want to be remembered like a Dolly Parton — that nobody had a bad

word (about). "He was a nice guy." And the fact that I'm fairly talented in this and that, that's OK. But I just want people to know he was good. He was a nice guy. He was a good guy. I think that's most important. And that I was raised right. I want to say to these kids now: "Who raised you? Who raised you!"

CA: Was your Southern accent and what you've called your "gay voice" always embraced like it is now?

LJ: I got to Hollywood and there was a casting director that told me, "You're such a character actor already, and if you could lose your Southern accent...." And I tried, and I couldn't. The day that I decided, "Well, this is just a marketable package here" was the day that I started working. But I worried more, I think, because of my internal homophobia about my gay accent. I would listen to myself and think, "Oh,

girl, you've gotta calm down a little bit."
I don't think that I ever lost a job
(because of it). I was on "Star Trek" and
they hired a linguist to teach me how to
say the words and she got so
exasperated she said, "Mr. Jordan,
'feather' doesn't have four syllables!" I
don't think I'll ever be like Robert De
Niro or Meryl Streep. I'll never just
disappear into a role. I just do what I do

and various forms of it and it's worked thus far, and kept me afloat.

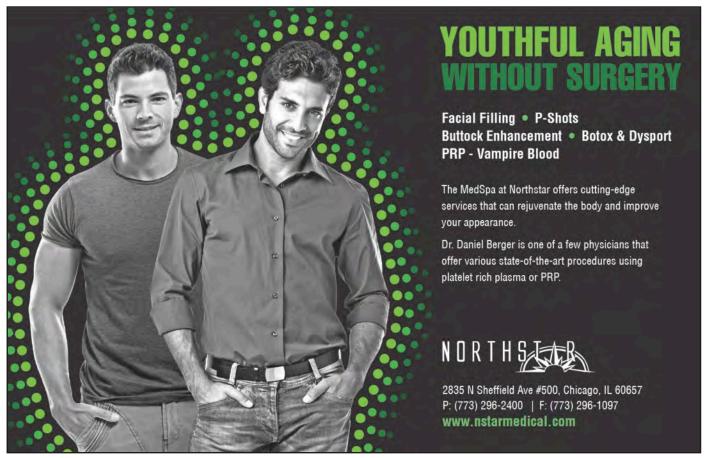
CA: I think next for you is a pony farm. LJ: That's it. I'm not looking yet. I want a four-stall barn. Probably somewhere near Nashville. That to me would just be heaven. I'm riding already. I go out to the L.A. Equestrian Center. I'm doing pretty

good! I fell off the other day. Everybody freaked out. It was not the horse's fault. The watering truck went by and Jeb was just as steady as could be — just freaked — and he ducked sideways. I landed on my feet but everybody said, "You be careful!"

CA: We gotta protect you at all costs. **LJ:** Wrap me in bubble wrap!



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



GRAB HOWE

Modern music man:

An interview with Howie Klein

By Gregg Shapiro

Are you the kind of person who pays close attention to album liner notes? If so, then you have most certainly come across the name of gay music legend and activist Howie Klein. A talent-booker and promoter, journalist, and radio DJ, Klein cofounded the legendary 415 Records label. 415 was home to important San Francisco bands that went on to national recognition, including Romeo Void, Wire Train, Translator, The Nuns, Pop-O-Pies, and Pearl Harbor and the Explosions, to name a few. While living in Los Angeles, Klein worked for major label conglomerate Warner Brothers/ Reprise/Sire where he supervised artists including Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Depeche Mode, The Pretenders, The Smiths, Talking Heads, Green Day and others. I had the privilege of speaking with Klein about record label Liberation Hall's series of reissues of albums by 415 Records acts including the Readymades, the Uptones and SVT, as well as his work as aprogressive political activist.

Gregg Shapiro: You and Chris Knab named your San Franciscobased indie record label 415 Records. 415 is both the police code for disturbing the peace, as well as the San Francisco area code. Was that coincidental or intentional?

Howie Klein: We had both in mind when we named the label. We thought it was cute and we liked it. We didn't think it was deep, we just thought it was cute.

GS: I lived in Boston in the early 1980s while attending Emerson College as a writing major. HK: WERS!

GS: That's right. If I remember correctly, Romeo Void, a band on 415 Records even came to Boston to record its *Never Say Never* EP at Ric Ocasek's Synchro Sound Studio.



HK: It was even more wonderful than that. They came to Boston because we were selling significant numbers of records there. That was because of all the airplay, basically because of (WBCN DJ) Oedipus who loved Romeo Voice.

GS: I loved Oedipus! He was the best DJ ever!

HK: Yes, Oedipus was wonderful. He was very supportive of the 415 stuff including the Romeo Void music before "Never Say Never." In any case, they came there to play a show and Ric Ocasek was at the show and he was

blown away. He went up to the band and said, "I have my own studio. If you have any songs, I'd be happy to record them with you." There was nothing planned ahead. The band had a song that they hadn't recorded yet, which was "Never Say Never," and they went into the studio with Ric and recorded it. It changed their lives, changed my life, changed Chris' life, all our lives.

GS: Being that you had a background in radio, how significant was it that you, as the head of a label, had that kind of attention being paid to your



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artists on the radio?

HK: It makes all the difference in the world. For one thing, it's no longer true, but at that time, in the late '70s and early '80s, radio was basically almost the only way to get a band known outside of the immediate circle of its hometown where it could play live all the time. The reason that Romeo Void broke out of a few cities around the country, Boston being one of them, was because there were cool radio stations. The college stations, BCN, and FNX suddenly turned Romeo Void into something real that then sold and was on charts. Then people from other record labels would see that; bigger labels that were then interested in working with the band.

GS: Currently, record label Liberation Hall is reissuing titles by 415 Records artists. What does it mean to you to be able to have bands that you championed back then being rediscovered or discovered for the first time by listeners?

HK: Oh, I love it. I'm so happy about it. There's not any real business between Liberation Hall and 415. It's not really a money situation. In order for me to license the music to them, I just asked them to donate some money to Bernie Sanders' campaign. That's the only money involved. If they suddenly start selling millions of records, which I don't expect and no one else does either, then all the bands would start making some money and I'd even make a little bit of money. But that isn't what this is about. This is about exactly what you said: pride in the music and getting that music out to people. Remember, when 415 was putting out records, there were no CDs. A lot of this music has never been available on a CD before. I'm saying this at a time when people don't even know what a CD is anymore. What I'm saying is that the music was never before available digitally.

GS: Following your experience with 415 Records, you were at Sire, Warner Brothers, and Reprise. In addition to your work there with both cutting edge and classic rock bands, you also brought Joni Mitchell and Neil Young back to the fold at Reprise. Would you consider that to be among your most significant acts while in the Warner family or is there something else that has more importance to you?

HK: That's like asking a parent which of their children is more important to them. I worship people like Joni Mitchell and Neil Young. On top of that, I also personally love Joni Mitchell. I

love Neil, too. It's iust that I was personally closer to Joni just because more than anything else she lived here [laughs] in LA. I was able to grab a meal with her every now and then. But I love both of those people. When I was in college. many years before I worked at a record company, I booked both of them to play at my school. That's how far I go back with both of those artists. On the other hand, where I'm standing right now in my house, I'm looking at a painting that was done by Dave Gahan.

GS: From
Depeche Mode.
HK: That's right.
Dave had some
problems, and he
was in a rehab
center for a while.

The doctor who was taking care of him in rehab encouraged him to exorcise his demons by doing a painting. He did the painting and literally the minute he got out [laughs] he had the limo take him to my house and handed me the painting, which I am looking at as we speak right now. It would be hard for me to say that any one artist is more important to me than any other artist. I knew all the artists I worked with and, on one level or another, had a meaningful and important relationship with them and with their music, especially. Whether they were on 415, by the way, or they were on Sire or Warner Brothers or Reprise, they were all really important to me.

GS: In addition to your lengthy career in music, you are renowned for your political activism, particularly progressive causes. How much of that do you ascribe to your connection to the punk rock scene and how much of it can be attributed to having lived in San Francisco and being gay, or are they all connected? HK: I could spend an hour talking with you about a very close old friend of

mine named Harvey Milk but let's not go down that road. There is something important about the question that you asked me. What it has to do with is the connectivity between the kind of music that I like and what music does to people, and the political feelings that I have. Let's go back to when I was in college. The kind of artists that I was I was playing on the radio and that I was booking to play at my school were all cutting edge artists. In those days, that was a hippie time. The very first band I ever booked was a band from New York called The Fugs. I was like I was a freshman class president at the time and I booked them to play the freshman class dance. At that dance, which was packed, you couldn't move, it was in a small lobby. Bob O'Connor, the captain of the basketball team, who was the opposite of me in every way, came up to me. You could see the vein on his neck was pulsing, his very white face was very red. He looked like he wanted to tear my head off. He started screaming in my face that his girlfriend was so offended by this smut that I brought to the school and she couldn't get out of this place because there was no room to get out; it was too crowded.



At that moment I realized if music can do this, get someone so emotional like this, this is something I have to look into further [laughs]. It wasn't the decisive factor, but it was one of the things that helped me decide to be in the music industry. I could spend hours talking about the connection between cutting edge music and progressive politics, and there always has been.

GS: If you haven't done so yet, have you thought about writing a memoir? **HK:** Funny you should mention that. Of course, I've thought about writing a memoir. I do write a blog and I sometimes write about my stories in the blog. I lived overseas for almost seven years. Spent a lot of time in Afghanistan, India, Nepal. I lived in Amsterdam for four years. There's been a lot to my life. My Harvey Milk part would be a chapter in and of itself. My favorite writer in the world is Dostoevsky and I felt like I wasn't entitled to write an autobiography until I had written a book as good as The Brothers Karamazov, which was never going to happen. The reason your question is interesting now is that an author recently approached me and asked me if she could write my biography. I'm spending a lot of time now thinking about it. At first, I was very excited, and I told her yes. The more I thought about it, the more I thought I don't know. There are going to be a lot of things that are very hard to deal with. Things that I don't know should be brought up. A lot of my life has been very public. The way people interpret what happens or what happened is different for everyone. Experience and truth are sometimes at variance with each other. Some of those things were very public. Like what happened what really happened on the night of the San Francisco riots, for example, after the death of Harvey Milk. Or what actually happened to Dan White. I don't know that I want to tell that story publicly. Maybe if this came out after I was dead that would be a better way to handle it. But I don't think that the author is interested in spending a year writing a book for it to come out after I died[laughs].

GS: Finally, is there one band that you are currently loving and want to share with the readers?

HK: When you say right now, you could be talking about in the last week, in the last day, in the last hour. That's how it is for me. When I go on YouTube now, immediately every song by a band called Las Cafeteras pops up. The reason for that is because I've been



listening to Las Cafeteras so much[laughs] that YouTube keeps feeding me that. That's a band from East LA. I've never seen them play live. Someone turned me on to them because they did a really wonderful version in Spanglish of "Georgia On My Mind." They did the song for one reason, which was the election. I loved it so much that I went to see what else they've done in the past. They've been around a long time. I found so much music that I love that I can't stop listening to them. I want to turn everybody onto Las Cafeteras.



GRAB A PLANE



Taliesin West

Top 5 Things to Do in Phoenix, Arizona in 2021

By Joey Amato

Phoenix, Arizona is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. With a population topping 4.5 million people, the desert oasis provides a sprawling landscape complete with fabulous dining, retail, cultural attractions, and natural wonders that will surely please almost anyone. My last visit to Phoenix was highlighted by Phoenix Pride, which is tentatively scheduled for April 10-11, 2021. This year is the 40th Anniversary of the organization and one can only hope that ample amounts of vaccines are available to ensure the parade and festival go forward as planned.

As a travel journalist, I take it upon myself to not only promote destinations, but also promote safe travel. I would not travel anywhere or do anything that would put myself or my readers in

danger, so on this trip, I abided by all COVID-19 protocols as well as dined outdoors for my entire stay. I typically visit a gay bar or two when I visit destinations but opted not to on this trip since cases were on the rise.

Here are some things you can do on your next visit to Phoenix:

Take a Hike in the Desert –
Outdoor adventure company REI
organizes numerous guided hiking tours
in the desert. There is no better way to
remain socially distant than by taking a
2-hour hike through the Sonoran Desert.
I was able to get up close and personal
with numerous desert plants including
Arizona's state tree, the Palo Verde as
well as the saguaro cactus, which is
protected under law. Depending on the
time of year you visit, as well as the time
of day, you may get to see some desert

wildlife, but don't worry, your guide knows how to deal with rattlesnakes should you have a close encounter.

OdySea Aquarium/Butterfly
Wonderland – Both attractions are
located in Scottsdale, about a 20minute commute from downtown
Phoenix and are part of a large complex
of attractions known as Arizona
Boardwalk. Some highlights of OdySea
include touch pools containing Russian
Sturgeon, and various types of stingrays
as well as SeaTREK, a once-in-alifetime experience where guests can
suit up and go in the water for a 25minute dive with zebra shark as well as
hundreds of other tropical fish.

Adjacent to OdySea is **Butterfly Wonderland**, one of the largest butterfly conservatories in North America. The conservatory contains over 70 different



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species of butterflies and is also home to dozens of colorful Koi fish, tropical finches, two chickens, and tree frogs.

Taliesin West - Frank Lloyd Wright was one of the most talented architects of all time. His winter home and studio. Taliesin West is truly a site to be seen. Even the drive up to Taliesin West is testament to Wright's creativity and eye for beauty. The

home blends seamlessly into the surroundings and is a true masterpiece, worthy of being named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Guests can take a self-guided audio tour of the sprawling



grounds to see where Wright and his students created unique masterpieces.

Hot Air Ballooning – Every since I was young, I've wanted to ride in a hot air balloon and although I have been to Phoenix before, I just didn't find the time

to check this item off my bucket list. On this visit, I decided to take a sunset ride with **Rainbow** Ryders, but I was quite nervous being a mile up in a balloon. I was comforted after I discovered that Rainbow Ryders was founded in 1983 and has forty balloons in their fleet. This isn't a small operation, and I knew safety was one of the highest priorities. As guests gather in basket, I began to panic a bit. I have become increasingly anxious about any sort of flying. As the balloon slowly ascended, I began to become more comfortable and enjoyed the panoramic view of the desert and surrounding mountains. After about an hour traveling wherever the wind blew us, we landed safely and enjoyed a

champagne toast as

we watched the sun set over the mountains. The experience was one I won't soon forget.

ARRIVE Hotel – One of Phoenix's newest hotels, **ARRIVE** is a retro-chic property containing luxurious rooms, an ice-pop stand, swim club complete with fire pits galore, as well as an on-site coffee shop. Some of the rooms at the 79-room hotel contain private fire pits, in-room record players, luxury linens and large walk-in showers.

Lylo Swim Club is a destination in and of itself. The super trendy restaurant/pool contains a delicious menu of classics with a twist as well as some swanky cocktails. One item that really stood out on the menu were the Togarashi Fries prepared with crispy garlic, lemon mayo, jalapeño, and cilantro. I was a bit hesitant to try these at first, but after one bite, I knew I was in heaven. Chef Simon took an American classic, gave it a modern twist, and kicked it up about ten notches. Emeril Lagasse would be proud.

A visit to Phoenix is exactly what I needed; a bit of a mental escape from our COVID-19 world. The city will surely see an influx of visitors over the next few months, mostly those from colder locations looking for a warmer locale. If you travel in the near future, be sure to research local restrictions and travel safely.

Enjoy the Journey!

Joey Amato is the founder and publisher of Pride Journeys, an LGBTQ travel website and syndicated column. For more LGBTQ travel ideas, visit www.pridejourneys.com.





GRAB JACK

Jack Tracy's Roaring 20s He and Sherry Vine Bring Back the Nightlife in "Love Yah"

By Shane Gallagher

Jack Tracy paints a fantasy of postpandemic nightlife with the help of New York drag icon Sherry Vine in the video for his new song, "Love Yah."

The dance track with its funk vibe was penned by Tracy while he was feeling isolated and alone from months spent in quarantine. "I imagined myself finally going out, letting loose and blowing some steam," he explains. "I'm currently single but for the song, I gave myself a man who worries I'd get caught up in the nightlife and not come back home. He needn't be concerned. I'm very considerate to my fictional boyfriends."

The single is the title track from his soon-to-be released Love Yah EP.

Shane Gallagher: You've been busy since the pandemic!

Jack Tracy: I have recorded nearly

thirty new songs during quarantine. Love Yah is meant to give a sample of the types of songs I've put toaether. "Love Yah" and the next single, "Don't Compare," lead the album as the dance tracks. The

EP then slides into anthemic Prince



before moving to some moody vibes and then concluding with my 90s-style pop ballad.

SG: The "Love Yah" music video imagines a post-pandemic NYC. JT: I wanted to portray the first day of a new roaring 20s.

SG: You also squeeze in a message about the need for vaccination. JT: I've heard a lot of talk from people

JT: I've heard a lot of talk from people who don't trust the vaccine; even healthcare workers declining to take the vaccine despite it being available to them. It sends a terrible message to the rest of us. I wanted to combat that selfish thinking and do something that would encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as legally available so that we can get out of this nightmare sooner rather than later.

SG: NYC's favorite drag Sherry Vine stars in the video with you.

JT: Sherry and I met when we were paired as partners in a cardio-boxing class a few years ago. She has been a sounding board and mentor to me since I began making music. We were



always looking for a way to work together and when she reached out to say how much she enjoyed my pandemic-era web series, "Dying Alone, Together", I thought of writing a similar scenario for her. In the video, Sherry serves as the host of Drag News, announcing that 80% of the US has finally been vaccinated and nightlife has reopened.

SG: The video also features lots of merchandise from popular podcasts.

JT: I've spent most of my pandemic listening to podcasts like Trixie & Katya's "Bald and the Beautiful" and Alaska and Willam's "RaceChaser." This is my shout-out to them!

SG: And as always, Janet Jackson references are sprinkled throughout.

JT: A Jack Tracy video wouldn't be a Jack Tracy video without a nod to Ms. Jackson.

All proceeds from "Love Yah" will go to the funding of Season 4 of Jack Tracy's popular History web series. Visit https:// www.jacktracy.lgbt. Follow on Instagram @ jacktracyofficial







Top 40 Dance Chart this week Visit nexusradio.fm

VISIT IICAUSI ACIO.IIII		
	Artist	Title
1	Jonas Blue x AWA	Something Stupid (Radio Mix)
2	Gorgon City x Drama	You've Done Enough (Radio Mix)
3	Ellipso x Lucky Luke x Candace Sosa	Raw
4	Felix Cartal x Kiiara	Happy Hour
5	Marc Benjamin x Afrojack x Vula	Start Over Again
6	Martin Garrix x Tove Lo	Pressure
7	3LAU	Everything ft. Frawley
8	OneUpDuo	Trn It Up (StoneBridge & Lil' Joey VIP Mix)
9	Robin Schulz	All We Got ft. Kiddo (Joel Corry Radio Edit)
10	Fenix	Bring You Back ft. Chris Willis (Original Radio)
11	KREAM	Water ft. Zohara
12	Vintage Culture x Fancy Inc x The Beach	Cali Dreams
13	David Solomon	Cross Your Mind (Clean Original Mix)
14	Rony Rex	Fabric
15	JLV	There For Me ft. Aaron Pfeiffer
16	Chantel Jeffries ft. Shaylen	Come Back To Me (Clean)
17	Ofenbach x Lagique	Wasted Love
18	M22	Think About Us (90's Club Mix)
19	Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano	What If ft. Hannah Ellis
20	ATB & Topic X A7S	Your Love (9PM) (Original Mix)
21	Josh Cumbee	Sound Of Your Name (Zonderling Remix)
22	Nathan Evans	Wellerman (Club Remix Edit)
23	DLMT x Mahalo	Destination
24	Diplo & Sonny Fodera	Turn Back Time
25	Steff Da Campo	Saving Your Soul (Radio Edit)
26	Karen Harding x Shift K3Y	Morning
27	Lucky Rose x Jason Walker	Help
28	Nathan Dawe x Little Mix	No Time For Tears
29	Riton x Nightcrawlers	Friday ft. Mufasa & Hypeman (Dopamine Re
30	Sonny Noto	Forever (Sonny Noto)
31	Topic X A7S	Why Do You Lie To Me ft. Lil Baby (Twocolors Remix)
32	NOTD & Catello	Nobody
33	Justin Caruso	Highs & Lows
34	Gryffin & Audrey Mika	Safe With Me
35	Allegra	Do What I Want (Alex Gaudino & Dyson Kellerman Remix)
36	David Guetta x MORTEN	Dreams ft. Lanie Gardner
37	Drove	Places ft. Dillon Francis
38	Keanu Silva X YouNotUs X Sam Gray	Say Hello (Riddler Radio Edit)
39	DJ Shaan & Londin Thompson	By Heart
40	Moodshift	What About My Love
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POSITIVE THOUGHTS

Concrete Steps The Biden-Harris administration must make the first 100 days count to end the HIV epidemic

By AIDS United

The first 100 days of the Biden-Harris administration mark a unique opportunity to revitalize efforts to end the HIV epidemic in the United States. This new administration begins as our country is in the midst of devastating political and public health crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all sectors of American life, widening inequalities and threatening to undo years of progress toward ending the HIV epidemic. At the same time, attacks on the U.S. Capitol by domestic terrorists urged on by members of our own government have left the nation in a state of shock.

In order to end the HIV epidemic by 2025, the Biden-Harris administration must commit to undoing the harmful policies of the Trump administration and to creating a public health system that protects the well-being of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, people of color, transgender, low-income, uninsured and underinsured peoples across the United States in the first 100 days in office.

Dismantling the multitude of harmful executive orders and rules put in place by the Trump administration must be a priority to address the rampant discrimination they have allowed in the health care system. These orders have barred people living with HIV and transgender identifying people from participating in the military.

They have also prevented HIV service organizations from engaging in racial sensitivity training and providing culturally competent care. Ending these policies on day one is critical to ensure that populations most vulnerable to harm are protected and HIV service organizations can continue their work to end the HIV epidemic.

The new administration must also work harder to uplift communities most impacted by

HIV. These communities include Black people, people of color, sex workers, people who use drugs, trans people, immigrants and people experiencing homelessness.

Concrete steps the administration should take include:

Declaring that racism is a public

health issue.

- Preventing evictions and providing significant relief for those who are financially struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reestablishing the Office of National AIDS Policy and making sure it is led by someone who is living with HIV and who has significant experience working with the HIV community.
- Protect LGBTQ+ populations from discrimination by undoing harmful policies and regulations instituted by the Trump administration and working with Congress to pass the Equality Act.
- Dedicate substantial new federal funding to support syringe services programs and other harm reduction providers.

The Biden-Harris administration should also make sure that people living with HIV and those that are most vulnerable to HIV are directly represented in the administration and throughout the federal government's

HIV-related programs.

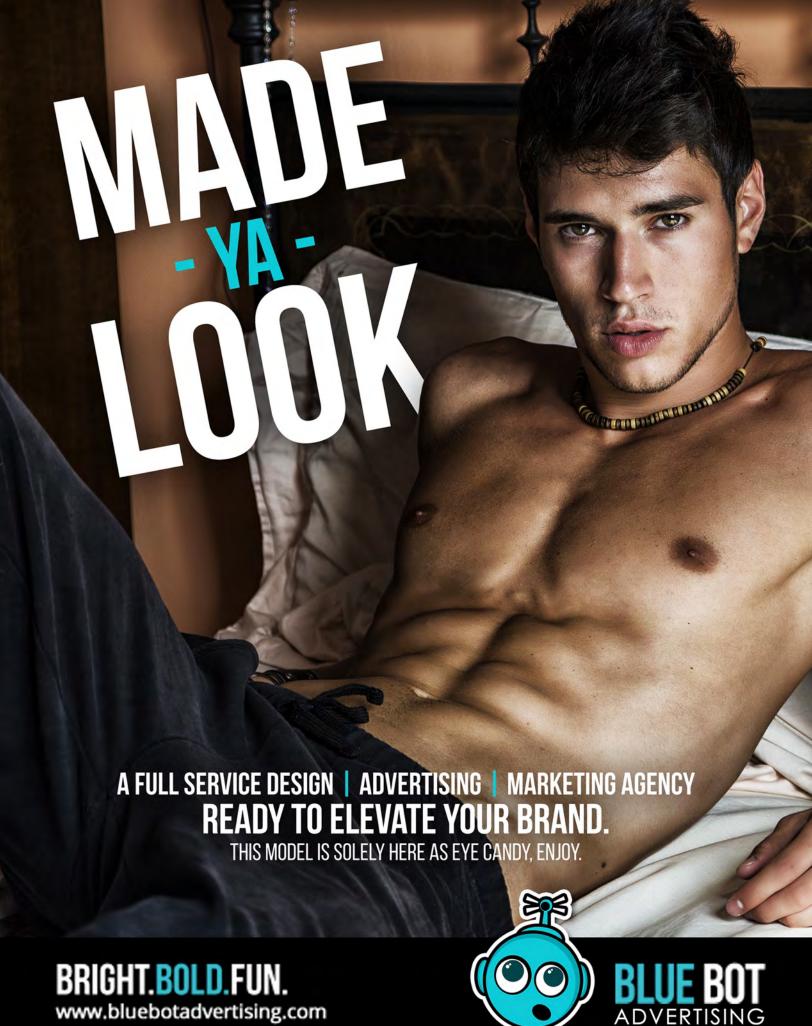
Further, the Biden-Harris administration should adopt a national strategy to ensure broad and equitable access to effective HIV prevention, care and treatment. The administration should enhance the Ryan White HIV/ AIDS funding program for communities most impacted by HIV and continue to fund access to essential services (transportation, food, nutrition, linguistic services, case management, housing services, etc.) for program recipients. Also, they must fund and scale up PrEP, PEP and treatment-as-prevention services and messaging for priority HIV populations.

Lastly, they must make sustained multi-year increases for HIV/AIDS research funding. This is not only important to develop innovative solutions to ending the HIV epidemic by 2025 but also because HIV research has been critical in the country's efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ending the HIV epidemic in the United States is within our grasp. AIDS United looks forward to the opportunity to work with the Biden-Harris administration to bring an end to the epidemic by 2025.

This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBT wire service. Visit their websites – http://thebody.com, http://hivplusmag.com, http://positivelyaware.com and http://poz.com – for the latest updates on HIV/AIDS.







GRAB ROGER

Tenancy By the Entirety vs. Joint Tenancy

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Q: My lover and I bought our house together and hold title in joint tenancy. After many years together we got married two years ago. Our lawyer said that in case one of us should die the house would go to the survivor with or without a will. I put up all the money for the down payment for the house and am concerned that I will be protected. My partner is in business for himself and is struggling due to COVID's effect on the economy. I am worried he will have creditors that may try to take away the house. Does owning the house in joint tenancy give me the protection I need?

A: Many couples own title to their homes as "joint tenants with right of survivorship" to ensure that title to the house will pass to the surviving partner if one should die. When one joint tenant dies, the remaining joint tenant automatically owns the entire property, without the necessity of probate court proceedings. Even if the deceased

partner had a will, title to the property transfers to the survivor, regardless of the terms of the will.

When a joint tenant dies, all that is usually required to clear the title of the deceased joint tenant's interest is to submit to the title insurance company, which examines the status of title, an affidavit of survivorship and a certified copy of the deceased joint tenant's death certificate.

Ownership as tenants in common, means that upon the death of either owner, their interest in the real estate transfers to their heirs (or if they have a will to the person named in the will) and the survivor only owns onehalf of the real estate along with the heirs of the deceased lover.

With the passage of Illinois
Marriage and Illinois Civil Unions, there is now a third way LGBT couples can own real estate together. Since 1990, married couples in Illinois have enjoyed the option of owning their Illinois marital home as tenants by the entirety. Now,

LGBT couples who enter into a civil union or get married will have the same right to hold title to real estate as tenants by the entirety.

Tenancy by he entirety combines the survivorship attributes of joint tenancy with the bonus of limited protection against creditors. That is, a iudament creditor of just one of the homeowners cannot enforce its lien against the residence of the homeowners owned as tenants by the entirety. Tenancy by the entirety has often been touted as ideal for people who are married, in business for themselves, or whose work leaves them vulnerable to the lawsuits of



disgruntled clients, patients or customers.

This means that if you enter into a Civil Union in Illinois or get married and sign and record, a new deed conveying the title of your house, which has to be your residence, to yourselves, as tenants by the entirety, the creditors of one of you cannot take away the house. This is asset protection in its greatest form.

There are some rules, however, a creditor may tear down the tenancy by the entirety protection when the property is conveyed with the sole intent to avoid the payment of debts existing at the time of the transfer. There is no protection if both owners are liable to the creditor for the debt. And the protection only applies to your main residence, homestead, and not to a vacation house or vacant real estate such as farmland.

It is a common misconception, however, that joint tenancy is the best answer for all couples who want protection from all the problems that can arise when real estate is involved. There are many ways to purchase and hold title to real estate in order to achieve each couple's ownership and estate planning goals. As this subject involves considerable legal and tax consequences, one should first consult with their own attorney.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a gradute 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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GRAB HOLLY

A Fistful of Donuts

By Holly Maholm

I was stunned. What Josh had mentioned so casually left me speechless. At last, I gathered my wits and inquired, "So, Josh, you said there was some student flying a drone? Who was it, and what was he using it for?"

Josh explained. "His name is Roger. His father is a Deacon at the Baptist Church in town, and his mother teaches a Sunday school class there. So Pastor Potter's wife - Mrs. Potter, who is a real estate agent - decided she wanted a drone, so she could check out farms and houses she could try to sell. Then Roger who likes video games and stuff like that volunteered that if Mrs. Potter decided to buy one for her business, he would learn how to fly it for her. And that's what they did. Mrs. Potter owns the drone, but Roger keeps it and flies it pretty much all the time. So when Mrs. Potter asks, he will fly it to places she wants to inspect from the air.

"When Roger isn't playing video games, he's flying his drone, and I tell you, when the principal decided to shut down our encampment, Roger was about to be kicked out, anyway. He wasn't studying or joining in on the design of our War Chariots. He never fit in with the rest of

us."

I thanked Josh for providing this insight on the inner workings of the Legionnaires, and he grabbed his stuff and left. I returned to the stable, intent upon telling my Queen what I had learned about the drone that had spied on us. but before I could do so, I was shanghaied into assisting Cindy with a booking for her Rent-A-Unicorn business. Seems there was a little girl's birthday party that was expecting a visit from a Real Live Unicorn (or, in this case, a Real Live Unicorn disguised as "a Horse Poorly Disguised as a Unicorn").

Cindy declared she was urgently needed elsewhere, so I agreed to help. Accordingly, I went to the back of the stable, where I found Victor backed into the corner of a stall. "Absolutely not!" he spit out. "I'm not going to wear any make-up for this assignment! Just forget it."

This was simply the latest instance of Victor's refusal to allow his natural pink coat and jet black mane to be sullied with cheap tempera paint and dime-store hair coloring. Time was growing short, so I agreed – this one time only – that he could retain his authentic colors, provided he agreed to wear a cone made of rolled up cardboard (painted white and covered with glitter) over his authentic horn. Crisis

averted, we departed for the birthday party.

It was several hours later when festivities were concluded and we were free to leave. The birthday-girl's mother had gifted us a Going-Away Goody Bag in which were to be found a dozen donuts, every one of which I knew Victor would claim as his reward. However... when we got within a block of the stable, we were ambushed!

We heard an angry buzzing sound, and from a place above us a scarylooking mechanical device swooped in, making an aggressive assault on Victor's forelegs. This was so unexpected that neither of us knew how to react. Nevertheless, Victor's natural instincts soon took over, and he lashed out with one of his hooves, striking the device mid-air. It was knocked to the ground, where Victor quickly placed his hoof on it, pinning it motionless to



the ground.

At that moment, three high-school-age males made their appearance, one of them holding what I surmised to be the controller for the drone. That young man (I assumed this was "Roger") spoke up. "Is that your unicorn? Did he get scared?"

I put aside my anger and – after a momentary pause – responded, "See, that's something I want to talk to you about." I glanced over at Victor, who shared a sly smile with me. Then I went on, "He's feeling real bad."

Their only reply was..."Huh?" I continued, "My unicorn... you see, he got all riled up when you went and flew that drone at his feet."

Roger was defiant, "Hey, you making some kind of joke?" "No," I resumed. "See, I understand that you guys were just playing around. But the unicorn, he just doesn't get it." (The three began to smirk.) "So if you were to all just apologize." The three laughed out loud.

I reached over – resting my hand on Victor's withers – and deadpanned, "I don't think it's nice you laughing. You see, my unicorn don't like people laughing. He gets the crazy idea you're laughing at him." The three young men stopped laughing, and their smiles evaporated.

"Now if you'll apologize, like I know you're going to, I might convince him you really didn't mean it."

(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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GayVN Stars and GRABBY'S ANNOUNCE 2ND YEAR AS PRESENTING SPONSOR AS GRABBYS GOES GLOBAL

The annual GRABBY Awards, highlighting top productions, talent and performances in the gay adult film industry, will take place on Saturday, May 29 and streamed live on *GayVnStars.com*. New this year, the GRABBY Awards will come from Chicago, USA, and Manchester, England, as we proudly announce our partnership with the GRABBY Awards Europe (formerly The Prowler Awards). GRABBY AWARDS EUROPE show starts 9 pm GMT GRABBY AWARDS AMERICA show starts 9 pm CDT

"We are thrilled to announce the gay porn industry's first joint-international awards ceremony with the GRABBY Awards Europe," said show producer *Stacy Bridges*. "Streamed live wherever fans like to watch their favorite adult movies and stars, it will be a must-see global event!"

The nominations for the 2021 GRABBY Awards will open from Saturday, February 27 through Saturday, March 27. During this



month-long period, fans can nominate their favorite gay adult movies and stars at

www.GrabbyAwards.com. Voting for the winners will open on Saturday, April 10 through Saturday, May 1. To announce all the American winners, ChiChi LaRue and Honey West will once again host the livestream from Chicago as viewers watch who walks away with the winning trophy in categories such as Hottest Cock, Hottest Daddy and the coveted International Pornstar of the Year.

"The moment the idea of a partnership with the Grabby Awards was mentioned, we instinctively knew this would be a powerful partnership and great for the industry on both sides of the Atlantic". Said Co-

founder *Benjamin Willis*. "Formerly known as the Prowler Awards, we could not be prouder to now be known as Grabby Awards Europe and to be working with the worlds most beloved gay industry event."

For the second year, GayVN Stars is the presenting sponsor. "We are delighted to be the presenting sponsor of this historic edition of the Grabby Awards and equally excited to stream both of these incredible events on the GayVN Stars platform," said **Tony Rios**, CEO of AVN Media Network. "The Grabbys have become part of the fabric of our industry and it is our great honor to help them continue this tradition of excellence."

For more information and updates visit: www.GrabbyAwards.com

NYC Pride Unveils 2021 Theme: "The Fight Continues"

NYC Pride announces the official theme for 2021, "The Fight Continues," as the kick-off to this year's events and programming. In a time of tremendous adversity for the community on many fronts, "The Fight Continues" reflects the multitude of battles we've been fighting as a country and as a city. With the coronavirus pandemic still ongoing, issues of police brutality, the alarming murder rate for trans POC, economic hardship, climate disasters, violent efforts to disenfranchise voters, our rights as a community being questioned at the level of the Supreme Court, and more, we are in the midst of many different fights.

"Within this acknowledgement of what we're fighting for and the challenges we face, we also must find the strength – together – to continue the fight," said *André Thomas*, NYC Pride Co-Chair. "We're fighting for ourselves, fighting for the BIPOC and trans members of our community, and fighting for future generations. By making this the 2021 theme for NYC Pride, we acknowledge all that we've accomplished and look towards what still needs to be done. NYC Pride events offer an opportunity to gather in community and highlight the diversity, resilience, and power of the LGBTQIA+ community, giving us the

energy and spirit we need to continue the fight."

NYC Pride is also unveiling its 2021 visual campaign. Captured by photographer *Cait Oppermann*, this year's campaign features a multitude of queer, trans, and BIPOC members and allies of the LGBTQIA+community, including *Gia Love, José Thomas, G Xtravaganza, Krishna Stone*, and *Reid Jefferson*.

The NYC Pride 2021 roster of events will take place during Pride Month this June. Among this year's major events are the NYC Pride March on June 27th, which will be presented in a virtual format as well as to-be-determined in-person elements, and The Rally on June 25th which will feature a diverse array of speakers and activists in a virtual format. PrideFest and Pride Island will also return on June 27th, with further details to be revealed at a

later time. Other key events include Pride Presents, the Human Rights Conference. and Family Movie Night, all of which will be featured in virtual formats for

2021. Our series of Savor Pride events kicked off this year in January, with a new chef each month from January through June. Rounding out the calendar will be our second annual Black Queer Town Hall.

"We're pleased to continue to be able to offer a diverse roster of programming this year," said *David A. Correa*, Interim Executive Director of NYC Pride. "In 2020 our world dramatically changed very quickly and in a matter of weeks we were forced to pivot to virtual programming and cancel many of our events. With much more time to prepare in 2021, we're bringing back many of the events we were forced to cancel last year, most notably Youth Pride which will engage LGBTQIA+ youth, many of whom are grappling with the absence of in-person connection."

For more information about NYC Pride 2021 visit: www.nycpride.org.





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girlfriends INVITES FANS TO JOIN MUSIC VIDEO FOR "WHERE WERE YOU"



girlfriends, the pop-punk duo comprised of *Travis Mills* (musical artist, Beats 1 Host, actor) and *Nick Gross* (Big Noise, Gross Labs, Find Your Grind), have shared a new music video for their song "Where Were You". This new heartfelt video encompasses the trials and turbulations of this past year by featuring footage sent in from fans showing what they struggled with and overcame during the year of 2020. This emotional video, full of videos and images submitted from fans, helps show support for anyone who may be struggling with mental health along with various other obstacles.

"This video would not exist without every single person who supports girlfriends. The fact that they trusted us enough to share the experiences that so many of us go through is a huge responsibility and one we did not take lightly," shares Mills. "This video is a testament to the things that were supposed to tear us apart and how instead we persevere. It is a calling card to anybody out there that is struggling to know they are not alone. This is an honest and vulnerable representation of the people around the world who listen and relate to the music we make and we are so grateful to tell their stories."

girlfriends has previously dropped music videos for singles "Jessica", "Eyes Wide Shut" and "California", heralding praise from from MTV's Friday Livestream, Loudwire, Alternative Press, PopCrush, idobi Radio, Noctis Magazine and more. The tracks received adds to coveted playlists including Spotify's New Noise and California Rock State playlists as well as Apple Music's New Music Daily and Breaking Alternative playlists. Fans can look into the writing of "Eyes Wide Shut" through

a recent Beat x Beat feature with Beats by Dre.

Gross and Mills first walked right up to the edge of rock stardom before either of them had even left their teens. The brash and catchy hip-hop Travis made in his Riverside, California bedroom and posted on MySpace as "T. Mills" led to a major label deal, a spot on the Warped Tour, and an electric buzz, presaging the era of SoundCloud emo-rap and laptop hooks that was to come. At 17, Gross found himself in New York's Times Square playing MTV's TRL, in a pop-punk band featured prominently on Laguna Beach: The Real Orange County, with a major label contract of their own.

Like the punk rock music that first inspired him as a teenager, Mills sees girlfriends as an outlet for soulful expression and emotional catharsis, a means to process his feelings of grief, uncertainty, and renewed vigor for life, in a way that's likely to connect with others who struggle. Nick is equally enthusiastic to have another crack at pop-punk, the genre that first set him on his career path.

Fans can watch the music video for "Where Were You" here: https://youtu.be/jp6tCwi9cyQ

LESIBU GRAND SHARES NEW VIDEO FOR ELECTRONICA / HYPERPOP "HOT GLUE GUN (PLS PLS RMX)"



Atlanta based new wave punk band *Lesibu Grand* is excited to share a new video for their latest electronica / hyperpop release "Hot Glue Gun (PLS PLS RMX)"-premiering now with Under The Radar. The new single, produced by PLS PLS, the moniker of Atlanta music man *Dan Dixon* (Curtis Harding, Constellations, CRX), is a reimagined version of their recent hit "Hot Glue Gun" which was released late last year. "Hot Glue Gun' is about

"'Hot Glue Gun' is about becoming the superhero you always wanted to be to fix a broken and corrupted world," says Lesibu Grand frontwoman *Tyler-Simone*. "In the original video, I portray a cosplayer who takes on and brings down a fascist leader within the setting of a vintage video game. With the PLS PLS RMX, we wanted to explore the darker side of taking action against powerful forces. In the remix video, my character appears to be struggling with memory loss, or PTSD, and is having flashbacks about being hunted down by a Secret Service agent, played by bassist *John Renaud*. There is a price to pay for pursuing your dreams, we can now see, but it's still worth doing."

"With the remix, we felt the 80s new wave/punk sound would translate well into the electronica/ hyperpop style, which we also really dig," says bassist and song co-writer, John Renaud. "It also gave us an opportunity to put the chorus first, stretch it out, and really let Tyler-Simone's lead vocal soar."

"Hot Glue Gun" was originally released back in December following

a video premiere with BrooklynVegan, and received further praise from sites like *AFROPUNK* and *Punk Black*. "We wrote 'Hot Glue Gun' as a follow up response to our prior song 'We Fucking Suck' (WFS) which lists out some of the numerous social justice problems with our government and society but doesn't offer much hope for a solution." Lesibu Grand frontwoman Tyler-Simone Molton shares. "With 'Hot Glue Gun', we wanted to harness the same 80s punk rock energy but direct it in a more positive direction, one that empowered people to rise up to the challenges they face. The hot glue gun is a symbol of the DIY ethic and a reminder that we, as members of a democracy, already have the tools we need to fix our government activism, community engagement, and of course, the vote. On another level, the hot glue gun is commonly used in cosplay culture to build costumes. In the right hands it

Lesibu Grand (pronounced Le-SEE-boo Grand) is an indie-punk band from Atlanta that grew out of a songwriting partnership between singer Tyler-Simone Molton and bassist John Renaud. The band takes its influences from the NYC new wave scene, particularly Blondie and Talking Heads, and from 90s rock bands like Pixies and Green Day. Distinguished by Tyler-Simone's warmer, ethereal vocal style, Lesibu Grand fuses these two strains into a refreshingly modern sound in songs that explore the unexpected joys, sharp anxieties, and beguiling mysteries that abound us all.

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