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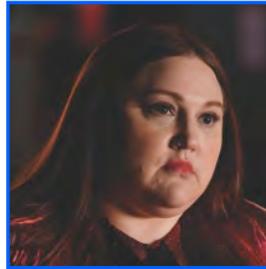
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GRAB YOUR REMOTE

It's Time for a Queer Host on *'The Daily Show'* 5 LGBTQ+ comedians qualified to take Trevor Noah's seat

By Sarah Bricker Hunt

Trevor Noah, longtime host of *"The Daily Show with Trevor Noah,"* says he will leave the show after seven years, opening up an opportunity for a fresh voice to fill that influential role.

In a tumultuous political climate where LGBTQ+ issues are the hot potato that terrible politicians love to bat back and forth, who better to provide pithy commentary than a queer comedian? We nominate these five rising stars and veteran funny people.

Patti Harrison

Jon Stewart laid the groundwork, Noah carried the torch and Patti Harrison, the whip-smart, take-no-shit comedian (who got kicked off Twitter for hilariously impersonating Sia as Nilla Wafers — yes the cookies) will bring it home for a new generation.

At 31, Harrison is a vocal member of the young millennial and Gen Z generation and an out transwoman, which means she understands what's at stake for her generation's future and can speak powerfully against the recent alarming national political and social backslide into the 1950s. She is also the comedian most likely to take the audience on Andy Kaufman-esque rides to unexpected places, something we can get behind.

Kate McKinnon

Lesbian heroine McKinnon is a no-brainer to replace Noah. The veteran "SNL" actor left the show this year after a decade playing a laundry list of audience favorites, but her tenure there might be most linked to her earnest, deeply funny impersonation of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. We'd love to see her drop some Ginsburns on some well-deserving political figures.

There's more to McKinnon than her epic RBG portrayal, too. Remember when she channeled what every non-Trump voting American was feeling when Hillary Clinton lost in 2016? Her

post-election cold open, as Clinton singing Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" was as cathartic as it was powerful — a reminder to cherish what we had and a call to gather strength for the battles yet to come at an unprecedented moment in history (no matter what Rob Schneider thinks). Add McKinnon's universal likability and she's a candidate for the job who would be

uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge between constantly warring political factions.

Wanda Sykes

Wanda Sykes' trademark nonsense takes on current events (and takedowns of current idiots) would liven up the "Daily Show" desk. She's been at this for a while, too. Take her "Daily



Photo Courtesy of Netflix

Show with Jon Stewart” appearance way back in 2001, where she took down then president George W. Bush, remarking, “I pray for the man every day... and I advise everybody else to do the same. We in trouble, Jon! We are in trouble. It’s the foreign policy — the man has only left the country twice, and that was to Mexico. I have traveled more than the president. That’s a problem.”

Twenty years later, Sykes has remained relevant (and side-splittingly funny) and has been an active political rabble rouser. There’s no doubt a Sykes-led “Daily Show” would be well-written, pithy, pointedly sassy and devoid of fluff. Sykes would just get the job done while casually annihilating people who casually support stances like eliminating queer rights.

Bowen Yang

Another “SNL” standout, Yang has been coming into his own over the past year, as evidenced by runaway Hulu hit “Fire Island.” But it’s his off-the-cuff takes in interviews that reveal why he’d make an excellent “Daily Show” host. When Q Syndicate editorial director Chris Azzopardi interviewed Yang this summer, he discussed the “SNL” sketch “Pride Month Song,” a fresh look at a queer culture staple. Ever down-to-earth, Yang said, “...Pride is kind of exhausting. And it’s kind of not what you expect it to be: You think it’s gonna be this amazing thing and it actually ends up being really stressful and logistically a nightmare and someone has a meltdown at some point.”

It’s that kind of Midwestern-via-New-York authenticity that contributes to Yang’s cross-cultural appeal. It would be compelling to see Bowen breaking down complicated news events in a way we can all understand and identify with. Yang is a master at keeping it real.

Randy Rainbow

Maybe it’s time for “The Daily Show” to become a variety show. Randy Rainbow’s snarky political musical theater might just be magical in the way it lures listeners in with familiar

Broadway intros and then whacks them over the head with laser-targeted observations about terrible people. Sometimes, a spoonful of sugar really does help the medicine go down. And at a time when we can all agree that real world news is almost too much to comprehend some days, we could use a little sugar, especially when it’s spice in disguise.

It would be interesting to see Rainbow approach the “Daily Show” anchor desk with a Colbert-esque approach, where we’re never quite sure if he’s serious, but we’re definitely sure he’s killing fascists with every expertly crafted lyrical delight.

Photo Courtesy of ABC



GRAB GERARD

Religious experience: an interview with gay writer Gerard Cabrera

By Gregg Shapiro

In his eagerly anticipated debut novel, "Homo Novus" (Rattling Good Yarns Press, 2022), gay writer Gerard Cabrera takes us back to the late 1980s. A time when AIDS was still a death sentence and the pedophile priest scandal that shook the foundation of the Catholic Church in Massachusetts hadn't yet become front page news. The main characters in "Homo Novus," Linus (a reprehensible priest) and Orlando (a young and likeable seminarian), two men at very different stages in their lives, become entangled as they navigate the lethal and tragic times. Gerard was kind enough to answer a few questions about his book in advance of the October 2022 publication date.

Gregg Shapiro: Gerard, "Homo Novus" is your debut novel. How long did it take you to complete it?

Gerard Cabrera: I began working on "Homo Novus" in 2009, during the Great Recession. I became unemployed and was out of work for the first time in my life. I had always identified with having a job, and so I had to ask myself a lot of uncomfortable questions, including, who am I? It was an identity crisis!

GS: You've had short fiction published in a variety of literary journals. Did any part of "Homo Novus" begin as a short story?

GC: "Homo Novus" went through different stages. First, it was a caper with lots of characters and a sort of comedy centered around the kidnapping and re-education of a closeted gay priest by former students...still a good idea, I think. But when I workshopped it at Bread Loaf, the feedback I got was to pare down the number of characters and focus on one relationship, and that is what I did, or tried to do, with "Homo Novus."

GS: Like the character of seminarian Orlando, you are from Springfield, Massachusetts. How much of Gerard is in Orlando?

GC: Well, in as much as any gay boy thinks it would be fun to dress up like that and be onstage with all that music and theater and magic and attention [laughs]! Seriously though, very little of me is in Orlando. There are overlaps, of course, in things such as places in Massachusetts and Puerto Rico, and the experience of going through an intense Catholic gay adolescence in an all-boys high school. But Orlando is Orlando.

GS: "Homo Novus" is the second book I've recently read, including John

D'Emilio's "Memories of a Gay Catholic Boyhood," in which being gay and Catholic are central. Do you think the Catholic Church will ever come to terms with its gay parishioners and what is your current religious status?

GC: I am looking forward to reading his book. It sounds great. But to answer your question, unfortunately, no, I do not think the institution at this time can come to terms with any kind of human diversity outside of its traditional definitions. It has boxed itself into a corner ideologically and even those who would want to be more flexible find the weight of change too heavy.

Let's take someone like the current pope, who is considered progressive or liberal. Even he can't seem to do it. For example, his encyclical on the environment was a genuinely important piece of advocacy. There is so much discussion about non-exploitation of resources and respect for the natural diversity of our world, and everyone's obligation to protect and nurture this diversity. And yet, the argument does not get extended to its logical next step – human diversity as it is expressed by the LGBTQ+ community.

GS: Had you considered the priesthood?



GC: Yes, I went to a minor seminary, a high school for boys who want to become priests. These kinds of schools exist less today, for good reason, although I'm pretty sure the fantasy of becoming a priest, which is not unique to gay boys, still exists. Any boy who experiences adolescent awkwardness probably thinks about it at least once as a way to explain and escape from their own normal growing pains. But a sex-segregated religious environment is probably not the best place to work those things out! This is something I tried to bring to life in my novel. In "Homo Novus," Orlando and the other boys feel the allure, are drawn to a feeling of mystery, and of being gifted somehow. All children are gifted, of course, but they are easily exploited. Adults are another story.

GS: Linus, another character in "Homo Novus," is an older priest with AIDS. Am I correct in saying that this is not a subject that has been written about that much before?

GC: Yes, you are correct. There is some writing on this, but not that much, as you say. I do think there has been more memoir and journalism on clergy with HIV/AIDS. Some of it is quite good and some is sensationalistic, and there are studies and surveys about gay priests.



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This certainly overlaps with AIDS. And if you ask around you can always hear stories about gay priests, priests with AIDS, and predator priests. I heard a story myself about one of my favorite teachers in high school – that he died of AIDS. I can't confirm it. As in "Homo Novus," there is a lot of secrecy around both gay priests and AIDS, disguised often as protecting privacy, but really it is about shame. By way of example, even the characters in "Homo Novus" can only speculate and gossip about the private lives of other priests.

GS: In addition to being addressed in "Homo Novus," AIDS has been a popular subject in gay fiction in 2022, appearing in new books by John Weir, Andrew Holleran, Bill Konigsberg, and K.M. Soehnlein. Why do you think that is the case, and what do you think it means?

GC: I've got all those books on my list and am looking forward to reading them! I wasn't aware that AIDS had stopped being a popular subject in gay fiction. It seems to me a foundational event, like Stonewall, and even if it is not explicit, I always feel its presence. One reason it might be having a resurgence is that writers of a certain generation are looking back, some maybe for the first time, and trying to reckon with that history. But I think COVID, too, has brought AIDS/HIV back to the surface, especially for those who lived through that pandemic in the '80s and '90s. There are so many uncanny parallels, all frightening, especially the disproportionate effect on marginalized people, and the negligent preparation and response of government. I lost an aunt to COVID in the early days, before the vaccine. No one knew what to do. Orlando, in "Homo Novus," wonders what to do if he tests positive.

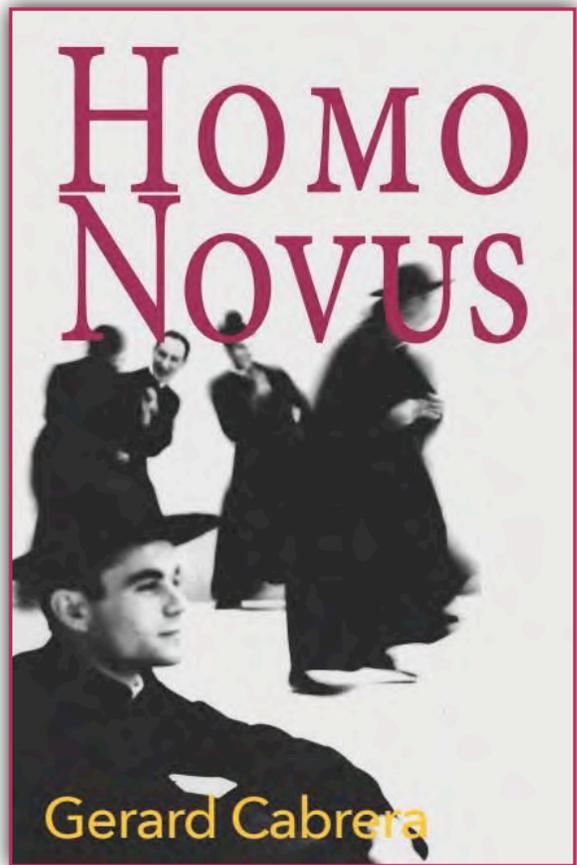
GS: "Homo Novus" also deals with the issue of ephebophilia, in other words, pedophile priests, a crisis that had its epicenter in the Boston-area. The Catholic Church somehow survived, but do you think it was changed in any way, or is it still business as usual?

GC: I'm not an expert in any way, but I think, ultimately, the problem remains. There have been attempts at reforms, but fundamentally, it is stuck in the same rut. This abuse is a symptom of the Church's deeper issues. As long as the Catholic Church remains hostile to human sexual, gender, and affective diversity, this problem is going to continue. Attacks on transgender people is good evidence of this.

GS: Early in the book, there is a reference to Rock Hudson's death, which puts the book in 1987. Additionally, there are mentions of gay bars popular in Boston in the '80s, including Buddies, Chaps, the 1270, Sporters, and Haymarket. As I recall, you were living in Boston during this time. Please say a few words about what you recall Boston being like for queer people at that time.

GC: Looking back, I think it was an exciting, but dangerous time. Ronald Reagan was president. AIDS, homophobia, apartheid in South Africa, war in Central America, sodomy laws, discrimination, but also lots of protest and community organizing. I came out in my junior year of college and helped run the lesbian and gay group on campus group my senior year. We hadn't added the B or the T or the Q yet. I'm old [laughs]! I volunteered at "Gay Community News" on Thursday nights, mailing out that week's copy when plain brown envelopes were a real thing, not just a joke about receiving "adult material." In 1985 I organized a protest against Eddie Murphy's AIDS jokes. We got coverage on "Entertainment Tonight," if you can imagine. And I received death threats. I learned a lot from that experience. Coming from western Massachusetts, Boston was the big city to me. I loved it. There were so many bookstores and movie houses. I could take the commuter train and get off in Cambridge. My favorite places to go were Harvard Square and Central Square. I could also take the T and go in to Boston. There were lots of bars and clubs and places to hang out. Glad Day Bookstore was a great place, and when I could find a ride with friends, the 1270 had a college night and Haymarket was great for Saturdays. The Napoleon Club was a special place because a classmate of mine played at the piano bar and I could bask in his celebrity. And they had a disco named Josephine's, naturally!

GS: If there was a movie version of "Homo Novus," who would you like to play Linus, Orlando, and Eric?



GC: That's a tough one. Hmmm. Linus: Kevin Spacey. Orlando: Bad Bunny. Eric: Harry Styles.

GS: You currently live in New York and work as a lawyer. What do you like best about where you live?

GC: I moved to New York City in 1989 during a telephone strike and during the election that finally toppled Ed Koch. There were subway tokens and pay phones on the corner. I miss the pay phones a lot. I had no job, no apartment, and no money. So far so good – I'm still here! I've worked all over the city, but these days, I work downtown, and I love being able to walk over the Brooklyn Bridge every day. And it's still a treat to eat my lunch in the park, on my bench, and watch my beautiful fellow New Yorkers. I work in New York City's family court. It's fast-paced, stressful, and overwhelming sometimes, but incredibly rewarding. And the folks who do this kind of work are heroes to me.

GS: Have you started working on or thinking about your next book project?

GC: Yes, I have been working on a collection of short stories for a while, which I started during the pandemic lockdown period here in New York City. It's roughly based on V.S. Naipaul's "Miguel Street." I also have some other ideas.



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GRAB BETH



Photo Courtesy Fox.

Country Goes Queer

'Monarch' star Beth Ditto on why LGBTQ+ representation matters to kids everywhere, but especially in the South

By Chris Azzopardi

All this talk of authentic representation and, finally, we're seeing it. In fact, we're seeing a lot of it in the extremely dramatic new Fox soapesque series "Monarch." Here, Gossip frontwoman Beth Ditto, who is proudly fat and queer (and a musician herself), plays Gigi, one of Dottie and Albie's three children. If this show was a documentary about country music royalty, you'd know Dottie (Susan Sarandon) and Albie (Trace Adkins) by name — they're the country music superstars behind some of the biggest hits in the genre (the show has fun with this, pretending that they made songs like "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!" famous). All the kids are overshadowed by their famous parents, but it's Gigi's struggle that is most relatable to queer people who've put their dreams on the shelf because of who they are.

In conversation recently, Ditto spoke

about the personal parallels between her and Gigi, the importance of accessible queer representation and what's next for her own music career.

Chris Azzopardi: What about the show jumped out at you immediately when you read the script?

Beth Ditto: Well, it was more like the description of the characters that they were looking for. "A fat country singer who was a lesbian" was the description. I think they used the word plus-size, but I would say the word fat. So, "a plus-size, lesbian country singer." I was like, "What?" And being from Arkansas and growing up where I did and growing up how I did and being a Southerner in real life, I was just like, "They're crazy if they don't pick me. Who else is going to do it? They're going to get Brandi Carlile. Good luck. There's not that many of us." I was like, "You have very few choices. And this

could be your moment to right the wrongs."

CA: Is that what you said during your audition?

BD: Yeah. I would say I was always half joking, but I was actually pretty serious. I was like, "You should hire someone gay. So if you don't hire me, it should be someone [gay]."

CA: The show is full of country queens, like Tanya Tucker, Shania Twain and Martina McBride. I imagine these are artists that you admired when you were a kid in Arkansas who loved music.

BD: Yes, absolutely. My mom was very much a rock 'n' roll, cool mom. But my dad was more into country music and was always surrounded by it. There was this huge crossover where all of a

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sudden it was as big as rock 'n' roll and pop music. So you had Garth Brooks, Lorrie Morgan and Tanya Tucker. You had Reba, who was killing it with "Fancy."

But the thing was, I had met Tanya Tucker before, and I had met her in Seattle. And because the MoPOP Museum in Seattle was honoring Brandi Carlile. She had asked certain people to perform, and Tanya Tucker was one of them because she had just produced her record that won the Grammy.

When I saw Tanya Tucker, I didn't realize that I was going to have the response that I did, but I was weepy. My mother grew up on "Delta Dawn," but I grew up with "Your last teardrop, my last teardrop" [lyrics from Tucker's song "Down to My Last Teardrop"]. I was really moved to meet her the first time. So when she was on "Monarch," it didn't matter because she did not remember me from shit. I was like, "I met you." She was like, "Bitch." She's like, "You did?"

CA: I hope she called you bitch.

BD: She's like, "Who, bitch?" She did not. She's feisty but really funny and very friendly. I grew up knowing those kinds of women. Those Southern women who smoked; it was a part of their identity, like, "I smoke."

CA:Your first scene in the first episode when you get to kiss your wife — it's such a casual statement. As a queer person who loves country music, which is considered a more conservative genre and culture, what did doing that scene mean to you?

BD:I really was like, "This is going to be a thing that queer kids are going to see. And you don't have to have cable." You don't have to have cable! Does anybody have cable? I still do, I won't lie. Because that's the thing, that those people _do_ exist. And I don't think that's something people think about. When you think about rural towns, really, really rural... the example of this is my nephew who's with me up here in New York visiting and still lives in Arkansas with all my family that still lives there. He lives in the oldest town in Arkansas. Eighty people. Out in the middle of nowhere. And they just got internet. They just got it. And it's not even good enough to stream sometimes. So you have to think about that. Those things are real. But we're not talking about just little kids that need it, but older people aren't necessarily streaming. Even though my mom did blow my mind a couple months ago because she was like,

"Yeah, I got Redbox." I was like, "What?" I guess she's got to get that BBC.

CA:What kind of response have you been getting from the queer community about your portrayal of Gigi?

BD:I have mostly heard from people I already know that are really excited about it. And a lot of it's also about size too. A lot of fat girls are like, "Yes, finally." A lot of it's been about that, honestly. Because I think both of those things are a big part of the representation.

CA: Regarding your own music — what's on the horizon for Gossip?

BD: We started writing a record in 2019, the pandemic happened, and it's just now finished.

CA:Is it pandemic-influenced?

BD: No, because it was written before the pandemic. So what we were working on during the pandemic was the production of it, because that took forever because of the pandemic. I want to start writing a new record immediately, just to reflect on what's going on right now. Even just inside of me and how everything fucking is insane and crazy and frightening. Then

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just a lot of empowerment and a lot of love and encouragement. And so I really want to write a new record, and I think we're going to start that as soon as we can. We've been talking about it.

CA: Gigi's sexuality has affected the way she feels about her musical career. It's held her back. As a musician yourself, did that part of her story resonate with you?

BD: Yeah. I know exactly how she feels. Down from having a big sister who was this idea of ideal talent-show beauty versus what I was. She was an academic; I was a creative. She was a blonde; I was a dirty blonde. And then being queer in the Bible belt in a dry county. Email was new. It was like, "Oh my god, I can talk to my friend in Boston? That's crazy."

CA: Did you find queer connection through the internet?

BD: You know what, I was really lucky. And I'm not a spiritual person, but fate somehow intervened because I was so lucky to grow up in the town that I did. There were, like, 1,900 people and my good friend was a queer boy. He was a radical feminist. I knew I was gay really young, but I also knew that I couldn't talk about it. I had conflicted feelings, and that didn't come from my mother. That's the thing. That came from outside the house. And the internet

came along and, of course, you had more access to stuff. But I got so lucky. I mean we were the weird kids in town, though. My friends got bullied a lot. I kind of got to escape a little bit because they lived in a bigger town, so their school was a lot bigger. And I went to a really small school where literally I graduated the class with, like, 60 kids. I was probably cousins with five people in my class

But yeah, the internet was great later. Then my little sister, who's 11 years younger than me, when she was coming up, I was always so happy that she had access to things I didn't have. Now it's my little niece. Just knowing that how she identifies as pansexual and she has access to this language and has access to different ideas and meeting different people. And just from her bedroom. It's so empowering.

CA: Regarding the intersection between queerness and country music: I don't think a character like yours could exist in a show like this years ago.

BD: I was surprised that this was a role that they were going to have. And honestly, I'm a little surprised that they actually picked someone like me to do it. And not [just] gay, but somebody who just will say anything. Like, I identify as queer. And I will talk about that.

CA: And then to boot, you get to sing a Lizzo song.

BD: That's so crazy. I'm so happy with this song. Because I really love her. But you want to hear something insane? Her stylist is from Bald Knob, Arkansas, which is literally the town over from where I grew up. It's a white county. So there's this group of gay [people]. This is a connection, too, to the gayness: Her stylist's boyfriend came to a Gossip show in Chicago in probably 2007 or something. I'm not sure of the time. But he was a lot younger. And he was holding a sign that said, "I'm from Judsonia." And that's where I'm from. I lost my shit. Lost my shit! So we stay connected over social media. He's still in Arkansas. Starts this incredible night. Starts running the house. It's just a group of queer kids in Little Rock living together. [The house] is called the House of Avalon. They started a queer night called Glitter Rock and moved to L.A. together, just like Gossip did. We moved to the Pacific Northwest together from Arkansas. They start House of Avalon out there. They're doing all this shit. I mean, they're killing it. And then one of those kids goes on to become Lizzo's stylist.

CA: I'm glad you shared that story because, back to your point, I hope some kid in small-town Arkansas sees this and reads that story and it inspires them to believe that they too can make something of their life.

And that's it. People got really comfortable. We had Obama, things were good. We had to fight for the rights and protections of our trans brothers and sisters, all these things. And so we got comfortable and now we're seeing the backlash of that. You forget how it's still important. Because what Gossip did, as small as a thing as we were, especially in America, that one kid in Bald Knob, Arkansas, in Judsonia, that I didn't know, who's like 10 years younger than me, sees this and then they hold onto that. So just when we get comfortable, when you think you know everything, is when you should start opening your mind even more.

Chris Azzopardi is the Editorial Director of Pride Source Media Group and Q Syndicate, the national LGBTQ+ wire service. He has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.

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My HIV Cure Trial

Tom Perrault

“Oh, I have a study that you’re going to join,” my doctor, Lisa Sterman, MD, MPH, said to me almost flippantly. It was August 27, 2020, and I had gone to see her in San Francisco for my regular checkup.

What I didn’t fully understand then was that this HIV cure trial was the first of its kind. In fact, according to Rowena Johnston, PhD, vice president and director of research at amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, it’s the most complex cure trial to date.

Sterman knew that I was a good candidate for the study. When I tested HIV positive in 2004, I immediately got effective treatment, which had become widely available in 1996.

Because the side effects of the early drugs were potentially severe, many people delayed going on them until absolutely necessary. This was a source of legitimate medical debate in 2004, with many doctors encouraging patients to delay.

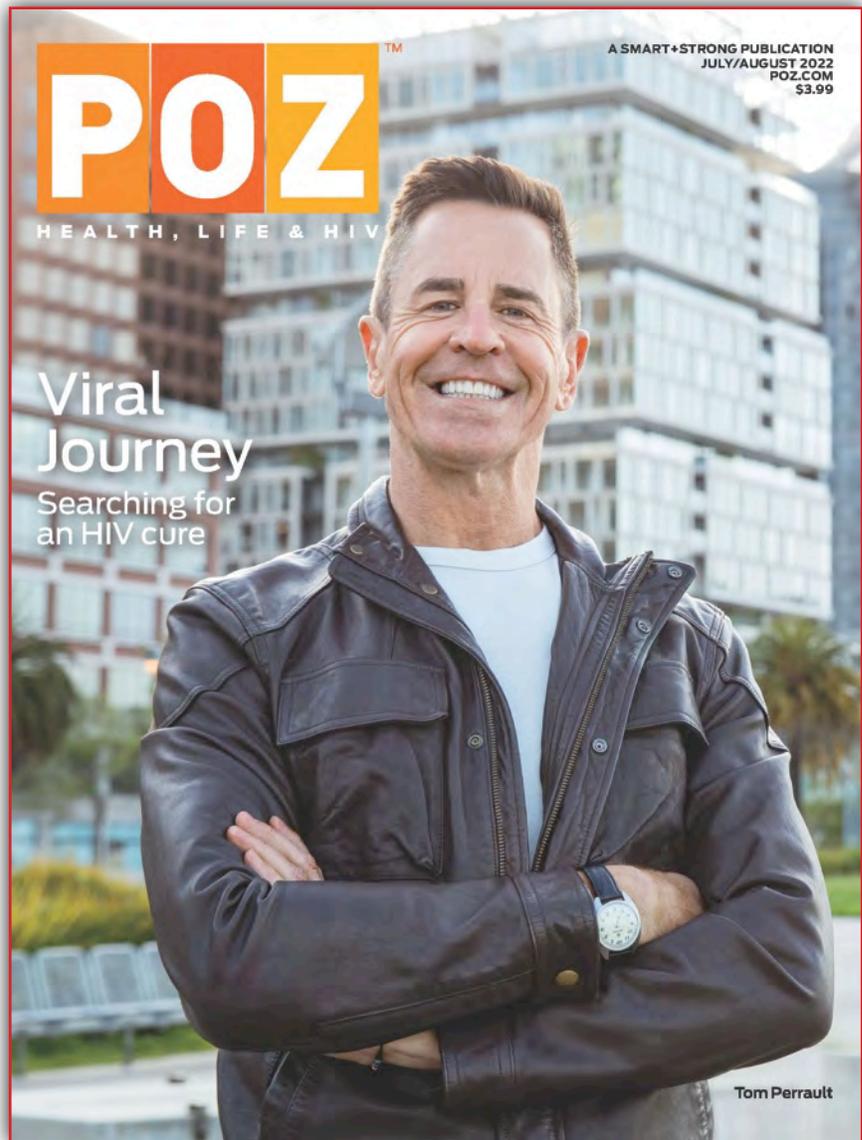
But I was anxious to get started, potential side effects be damned. And that decision made me eligible for this cure study. The researchers wanted candidates who had started treatment for the virus early in the infection, before it had time to do some lasting harm or damage.

Sterman was aware that I had participated in HIV trials previously. When someone asks me to participate in science, I always say yes.

But I never get my hopes up for these trials. Most of the time, I’m simply donating some tissue, or researchers are administering tests. I rarely ever think I’ll accrue any personal benefit from them. I see them instead as being beneficial to my community in the long term.

As a gay man coming of age in the late ‘80s in San Francisco, I saw a whole generation before me quickly disappearing. I stand on the shoulders of all the people who participated in early clinical trials so that I could take a daily pill to keep my HIV in check. It’s the tiniest of paybacks for all their sacrifices.

It wasn’t until I went to Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital a week later to get screened for this new trial that I really tuned in to just how groundbreaking it would be. And with



37.7 million people living with HIV and more than 1.5 million new cases each year, we desperately need groundbreaking.

The trial is a joint collaboration between amfAR and the University of California San Francisco dating back to 2016, and its goal is to train the body to control HIV without the use of any medicines.

While not a cure per se (some HIV is expected to remain undetectable somewhere in the body), it’s a functional cure, meaning that, if the trial works, I would no longer have to take any medication and would be unable to transmit HIV. (See “A Complex Cure Trial” on POZ.com for more details.)

For the first time, I started to get excited. But, like any good medical professionals, the study doctors downplayed expectations. Still, a cure? I had only ever known the specter of HIV/AIDS as a constant nagging companion.

The treatment would be a series of injections and transfusions over the course of months, after which I would go off my HIV meds and let my body work its supposed new magic. Fingers crossed it would actually work or even get close.

When I first started treatment, I began posting about the process on Instagram and Facebook to let my friends and acquaintances know what I

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was about to undertake. But I hesitated for a few weeks before saying anything because, while I've been out as a gay man since the early '90s, I'd never come out on such a large scale as a man living with HIV.

While definitely a bit apprehensive, I was also excited to be participating. If others couldn't share my joy, then that was their issue. I was going to focus on the people who were willing to join me for the ride and share my experience.

What I hadn't expected, however, were the myriad strangers who also followed along via my social media posts. Although I wasn't actively seeking new followers for this experience, I would one day see a number of people from Turkey begin to comment or send me direct messages seeking more information. A few days later, it was folks from the Philippines. Then Nigeria. Then the Middle East. And so on.

Not only were people desperately seeking information on HIV treatment, but many also confessed secrets that they hadn't shared with anyone else before.

They spoke to me about the loneliness and stigma of being HIV positive with no one to support them. About being gay but scared to come out or even act upon it. About the abuse they had suffered that led to their diagnosis. And about their suicidal ideations.

I began setting aside time after each post to reply to each person's questions or comments. Some just needed to share their feelings and know that they had been heard. Some wanted more information. And some wanted to be my ongoing pen pal because, even though a stranger, I was all they had. I was good with that.

The doctors set July 3, 2021, as the date I would go off my HIV medication to see what my body could do on its own. This was nearly a year after I had first heard of the study. I was anxious to finally see what would happen.

My doctors told me that they expected my HIV to rebound by the end of August or early September. With my expectations firmly in check, I went in every week for a blood draw, per the protocol. Each week, the blood work showed that I was undetectable for HIV. This continued for months. Every week felt like a gift.

I had an agreement with the nurse practitioner in charge of my weekly blood draws that she would call me when (if?) the virus ever reappeared in

my body before sending her usual notification email.

As I sat on a plane ready for takeoff to Washington, D.C., to spend Thanksgiving with family in Virginia, I saw that someone had left me a voice mail. It was the nurse practitioner letting me know that my virus had been detected at 34 copies per milliliter.

Later that night, when I was alone, an intense grief hit me. Unexpected tears sprang to my face. I didn't realize just how invested I had become in remaining undetectable. Which, of course, was foolish because the entire point of the experiment was to have the virus return so that the body could handle it on its own. When you live for so long without hope, it's hard not to latch onto anything that might be a silver bullet.

I soon shared the news with my family. However, I did take a few weeks to share it on social media. I felt like I was letting everyone down. I also wanted to get more blood work done to see whether this was a mere blip or the start of the virus coming back in full force.

My doctors had warned me that once the virus returned, they expected to see a sharp increase in my viral load (the amount of virus in my blood). A high viral load is generally considered above 100,000 copies, but you could have 1 million or more.

The next week my viral load had gone from 34 copies to 363. The experimental protocol didn't begin an "official" tracking of the virus until I crossed 400 copies, which it did the following week when it jumped up to 1,377 in early December. The following week, I dipped to 1,031 copies. Where was this sharp spike they were predicting?

The week before Christmas, my viral load went back up, to 1,430. Unfortunately, no one could tell me what any of this meant because a cutting-edge experiment like this means no one could possibly know.

I was looking for a pattern or meaning in a set of numbers that didn't exist. All I could do was hope that my viral load would return to being considered undetectable once again.

The week between Christmas and New Year's Eve was a hard one for me, and I had to skip my blood work. I flew home from New York on Sunday, December 26, and awoke on Monday feeling terrible and felt ill all week. I stayed in bed for multiple days. It had been a long time since I'd felt so sick.

Many at-home tests and later a PCR test demonstrated that it wasn't

COVID-19. So I feared the worst: that the long-awaited spike had come and was wreaking havoc on my body.

I nervously went in the first week of January prepared for the bad news. To my surprise, my viral load had dropped to 863. My body wasn't being pummeled by the virus after all. Rather, it seemed that my body was pummeling the virus, and I was laid up because it apparently takes a lot out of a body to beat HIV.

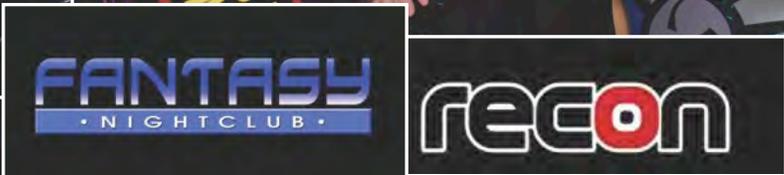
The next week, my viral load dropped to 478 copies, and my body felt great. I called the lead doctor to help me make sense of these results. The answer he gave me is one that is familiar to me by now: Who knows? I'm doing better than they expected, and the researchers are also trying to make sense of it all. They won't be able to say anything more definitive for a long time, but they cautioned me that the virus is crafty — it's a fighter and knows how to survive.

So while my immune system currently has the upper hand, I can't let my hope get too far ahead of reality. I've fallen prey to magical thinking before, and I'm not going back there again.

This is a science experiment, for sure. But for me, it's also so much more. It's a lesson in patience, perseverance, resilience, being comfortable with the unknown and, yes, optimism.

I know that whatever happens, though, we've already won. Science has won. The experiment may succeed or fail in my body, but with the information my doctors have gained, we've already made extraordinary progress in the fight against HIV.

Tom Perrault is a consultant, a human resources executive and an attorney. He was board chair of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) and also served as chair of SFAF's \$15 million capital campaign. This column is a project of TheBody, Plus, Positively Aware, POZ and Q Syndicate, the LGBTQ+ 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.



Photos By Anthony Meade

GRAB AMY

Riding the joy train with Amy Ray

By Gregg Shapiro

Whether out singer/songwriter **Amy Ray** is performing with longtime musical partner Emily Saliers as one half of the Indigo Girls, as she has since the mid-1980s, or going solo as she did with her solo debut “Stag” in 2001, you can recognize her instantly. Her distinctive vocal style, which suits whatever genre she’s performing – folk, punk, Americana, or gospel – has become as much her trademark as the outspokenness of her lyrics. “If It All Goes South” (Daemon), Ray’s exceptional seventh solo album is a welcome addition to her singular output, touching on themes of queerness and social issues, all performed in her warm and welcoming manner. Amy was gracious enough to make time to talk about the new album around the time of its release. **[Indigo Girls (Amy Ray and Emily Saliers) perform on Nov. 20 at Cahn Auditorium in Evanston.]**

Gregg Shapiro: Before we get to your new album “If It All Goes South,” I wanted to go back in time a little bit. Your 2001 solo debut album “Stag” and its 2005 follow-up “Prom” are firmly rooted in a punk rock/riot grrrl aesthetic. While the Indigo Girls are more than capable of rocking out, did you feel that the songs on those albums wouldn’t have been a good fit for what you do with Emily (Saliers)?

Amy Ray: Yes. I think it was because of two things. One was the collaborators. Those were people I’m a fan of, most of them are people that Daemon Records (Ray’s record label) had an association with, in some way or another. It was kind of like this other camp of people that were different from the collaborators that the Indigos would typically play with. It tended to be more studio accurate, in some ways. As opposed to that punk rock ethic which is music being from a different place, and accuracy maybe being less important than technical prowess.

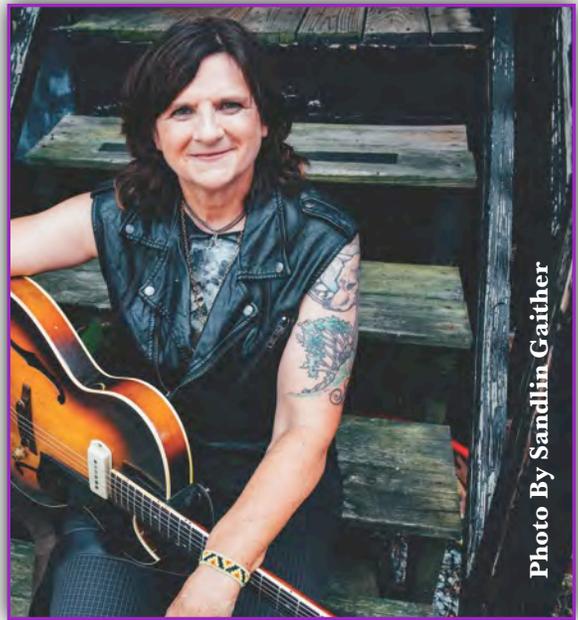
GS: A little more DIY.

AR: Yeah! And I also think the subject matter, the songs were just a little more singular in a way that was hard to do

them as the Indigo Girls and not dilute the message. As soon as you get us together, we really shift the other person’s song, it becomes a duet. The subject matter to me was so specific and gender queer and punk rock edge, that it didn’t feel like it would work. At that time, when I wrote (the song) “Lucy Stoners,” Emily wasn’t interested in doing some of those songs. She wasn’t down with the attitude. Now, she would say, I’m sure just knowing her, that [laughs] she’d do it now. Because her attitude has changed. I was hanging out with and influenced by people that were from that DIY movement, and there was lots of gender queer conversation. It was a different place than Emily was in as a gay person. Emily can play any song [laughs] and I know. Now, I look back on all of it and I think I was, all the time, reaching around to different collaborations because I love collaborating with different kinds of people. It always teaches me something. It’s also a different itch that I get scratch.

GS: In terms of trajectory, to my ear, your most recent three solo albums – 2014’s “Goodnight Tender,” 2018’s “Holler,” and the new one, “If It All Goes South” (Daemon) – in addition to being alphabetically titled, feel like an Americana trilogy. Do you consider them to be linked?

AR: Yeah. I mean I didn’t say to myself, “This is the third one and then I’ll stop.” But “If It All Goes South” was definitely a record where there was a thread from the other ones and some things that I wanted to achieve that I didn’t feel like I was able to do on the other ones. I think I didn’t even know that until we started making this one. This is more successful at combining a few of my punk-abilly influences into an Americana world. Also, some of that spontaneity we were starting to get on



“Holler.” Now that we’ve played together as long as we have as a band, it was at its peak on this record. I think we just needed to make a couple of records to get to that place. I like them all, but for different reasons. They do different things for me. This one gathers up all the loose ends of “Holler” and “Goodnight Tender” musically and ties them up and puts them in a different context, and almost raises the bar. Lyrically, I wanted to have songs that were about healing, a “you’re not alone” kind of vibe, because of the time period that we had just been through. It’s also the same producer (Brian Speiser) on all three, and we’ve worked together on projects. It started off casually – “Hey, I’ve been wanting to do this country record with these songs. Let’s do this together.” We also had Bobby Tis, who had engineered the last one, and mixed this one. That made the whole experience like a closed loop in a good way. Because he engineered and mixed it, he got to bring his own sounds to fruition. We also went full-tilt on the tape, where the last two records we had, for budget reasons, had to transfer everything to Pro Tools and then mix in a Pro Tools session, and then transfer it back to half-inch tape. Trina (Shoemaker) did that. But this time we mixed to tape.

GS: Am I reading too much into the album’s title “If It All Goes South,” or is it a play on words, as in “goes south” as a direction and as deterioration?



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Photo By Sandlin Gaither

AR: You're not reading too much into it. There's even more you can read into it, politically. When I was writing (the song) "Chuck Will's Widow," Georgia was the epicenter of some big political movement. When Warnock got elected and Abrams declared running for governor again, I was like, "Oh man, I'm in the right place for once." But we knew it wasn't always going to be easy. My perspective in that song was a couple things. "If it all goes South, count it as a blessing, that's where you are." Yes, it's directional, and also like, if things get really shitty, try to make the best of it, of course, it's what you tell your kids all the time.

GS: As any Indigo Girls fan or follower of your solo output knows, you have a history of playing well with others, in addition to Emily (Saliers), "If It All Goes South" is no exception with guest vocalists including Brandi Carlile ("Subway"), H.C. McEntire ("Muscadine"), Allison Russell ("Tear It Down"), Natalie Hemby ("From This Room"), and the trio I'm With Her ("Chuck Witt's Widow"). When you begin the recording process for an album do

you have a wish list of musical guests or how does that work?

AR: I usually have a wish list when I'm writing the song. Alison Brown, she's part of the band, so I always think about her banjo playing when I'm writing. She doesn't tour with us, but she's in the band. I started writing "From This Room" a long time ago, and I started writing it as a duet. I didn't have anybody in mind at that point, but I hadn't finished it yet. When I was finishing it for the record, I had just seen Natalie Hemby with The Highwomen and had also just had met her and Emily writes with her sometimes. So, I knew her and I was thinking about her voice. When I wrote "Subway," in part, in tribute to (the late DJ) Rita Houston, who had been so crucial. She and Brandi Carlile were super close. She really helped develop Brandi's career in being such an indicator station, getting other people on board. So, I was thinking about Brandi and the chorus vocals that would be there because I was writing kind of an ambitious chorus for me [laughs]. I'm like, "I'm gonna have to have Brandi in here!" For "North Star,"

that kind of gospel song at the end, when I wrote it and Jeff Fielder, the guitar player, and I were demoing it, I was like, "This is not right. There's another ingredient. I don't know enough about the kind of music I'm trying to write to do it." I got Phil Cook to come in, as a co-writer really, to finish the song musically. Fill out the chords and make it the gospel song I was trying to write. The only person I wanted to do this was Phil Cook. I am just very specific. Like Sarah Jarosz – on this record in particular I wanted to get a mandolin player and I wanted Sarah to play mandolin. We're always covering the parts ourselves. Jeff's a great mandolin player, but Sarah Jarosz is a fucking prodigy [laughs]. Jeff's a prodigy on the guitar. He could play any instrument, including a great mandolin, but he'll say he's no Sarah Jarosz. It's like I envisioned who would be this group of people that would be together live. It's never like a wish list of, "Who's famous? Who can we get?" It's more a case of who are these songs geared towards, so that when they come into the studio, you don't tell them anything, really. They just do what they do great, and it works.

GS: You mentioned the late, queer, influential WFUV DJ Rita Houston, and I was wondering what you think the loss of Houston means for new artists?

AR: It's a huge hole in the universe of people that would take a new artist and sort of help develop them, take chances at radio, and give people that space. She also was a mentor to artists. She wasn't ever judging your art by whether you were gay or not, or what color your skin was. If the song wasn't a fit for the station, she would tell you why. It wouldn't have anything to do with whether you're this or that. If it was a fit, it also didn't have anything to do with this or that. She was a mentor in shared musicality. Being able to trust her and understanding how that taught you about the terrain that you're in and who you can and can't trust in that way. The people that one day build you up and the next day cut you down because of your politics or who your audience is; those are not the people to look to for advice. Someone like Rita, who you can trust, was a very important barometer for the other kind of people you should be looking for. All of a sudden you find this human and you're like, "Oh, that's the way it's

supposed to be. I'm going to make sure that when I'm moving through this musical ecosystem, the people that I try to be around and get to know and trust and look up to are like Rita Houston. Without that, the younger musicians have one less person in that arena who was a huge influence on so many people, and so many people in the radio and journalism worlds. You can't fill her shoes. You have to hope that there's enough other people out there that were influenced by her, that came up through the ranks that can do what she did and share that mantle.

GS: "Subway" ends with the line "This Georgia girl has got it bad for New York." With that in mind, could there be an Amy Ray or Indigo Girls musical on Broadway at some point in the future?

AR: [Big laugh] That's Emily's territory. She's working on some things. A couple of different musicals, and I'm not working on them with her. She's developing two different ones, and I think one of them has actually gotten some traction and some workshopping that's pretty important. There is a musical that a friend of mine from high school has been writing that's really

interesting and it's gotten a lot of workshops. It's still in the early stages. It uses Michelle Malone's music and my solo music. Then there's a movie coming out called "Glitter and Doom" which is a movie musical that's just Indigo Girls music. It's coming out next year, I think. We're still working on the final credits song.

GS: After the current Indigo Girls tour wraps up, is there a possibility of an Amy Ray solo tour?

AR: Yeah. We're booking dates in February for the South. I've tried touring in cold places in February, and it's hard [laughs]. We'll head up to the North in May.



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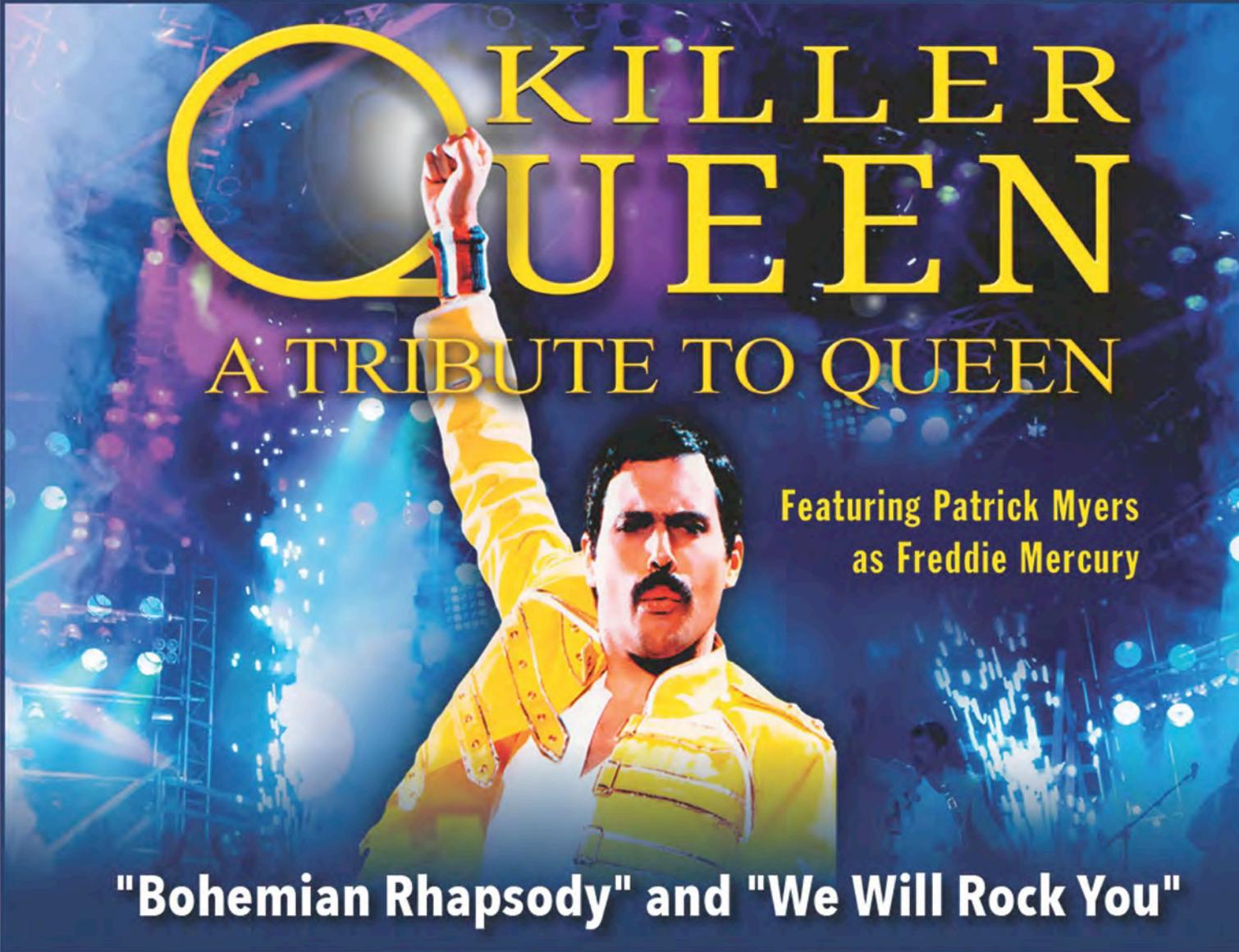
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Tuesday	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: TuneUp Tuesday Karaoke 7 – 11PM, Tag Team Tuesdays 11p – 2am, Dancing until close. Houndstooth: \$2 Tacos, ½ Off Bottles of Wine, \$5 Red or White Sangria, \$5 Chambongs, \$3 Fireball, \$22 Bud Light Seltzer Buckets, \$22 Mexican Beer Buckets. Hydrate: TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lark: 50% Off Bottles of Wine with any Entree Purchase, Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm 50%off Bottles of Wine with purchase of an Entree. Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$6 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$3 House Shots, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm.Shakers on Clark: Game Night, Free Pool, \$3 Domestic Bud, Bud Light, Michelob Ultra, Miller Lite, Miller High Life and PBR. 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: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails, \$4 Tallboys,5Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts.Touche:Hardcore Cruisin' Sponsored by Leather64Ten No Cell Phones/Wifi</p>
Wednesd ay	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's),. \$4 Premium Well Cocktails. @mosphere: \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. Cell Block: Open 4pm-2am. Charlie's: Country Line Dancing 7 – 10pm, Sapphire's Secret Shadows 10pm – 1 am, Dancing until close.Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis Lark: Free Bingo, 50% Off Nachos & Totchos, \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks, Traditional Flavor only. Bud Light \$5, Select Wine \$5, Well Cocktails \$6 5-7pm.Lark: Happy Hour5-7pm \$4 Dud Light Drafts \$6 Well Cocktails. Buy One Pizza Get one half offDie In OnlyLucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 Miller Lite Drafts, \$4 Stolis (All Flavors), \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm 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, \$4 Titos Coctails,\$6Big Miller Lite Drafts. \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. Touche:Jockstrap Night Sponsored by Full Kit GearFree Clothing Check.</p>
Thursday	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Whiskey, Rye & Bourbon.@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. Hydrate: Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: Happy Hour5-7pm \$4 Dud Light Drafts \$6 Well Cocktails . 7pm Extreme Bingwith Vian Dejour. 50%off Nachos or Tatchos \$8 Villa One Margaritas Frozen or on the Rocks Tradional Flavor Only.Lucky Horseshoe: Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 You Call It's, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Open 2pm-2am, \$5 Drafts & Cans, \$6 Stoli Vodka Cocktails, \$7 Glasses of Wine, \$8 Larceny Old Fashioneds, \$5 Bud Lights 4-6pm. Shakers on Clark: Darts Night \$1 off Fireball, Jager, Malort and Well Shots, \$2.50 PBR Cans. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursdays with Alex Kay & Friends 9pm-2am. Steamworks: Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. The Sofo Tap: \$4 Premium Well Cocktails \$4 TallBoys, \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. Touche: Throwback Thursdays70's& 80's Music & Porn by BijouVideo.</p>

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials

<p>Friday</p>	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. @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. grabbyAwards.com,Hydrate: Fresh Faces A New Drag Competition Second and Forth Friday of the Month. Kit Kat Lounge: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. Lark: Happy Hour 5-7pm \$4 Dud Light Drafts \$6 Well Cocktails .Every Friday from Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Tito's, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 4-7pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) Shakers: \$4 Domestic Bottles \$5 Well Mixed Drinks, \$10 Giant 23oz Long Islands in 22 flavors. Sidetrack: Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am.. The Sofo Tap: \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: 11/11WTNB Leather Social 8pm Harvest of Hope food drive kick off 11/18 Cowboy RoundUp.</p>
<p>Saturday</p>	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Lagunitas IPADrafts \$5 Premium Well Cocktails \$12 mimosa Carafes. @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. Lark: Lakeviews #1 Free flowing Brunch 11am-3pm Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.). 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 Sofo Tap: \$4 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$4 Tallboys, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: 11/12 Dungeon Master Night S&M Demo @ Midnight. CWB 5pm. 11/19 GearNight with BLUF/Chicago dress code in ClubRoom BNC 6pm.</p>
<p>Sunday Funday</p>	<p>2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), \$5 Signature Margaritas \$12 Mimosa Carafes. @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: Queeriod! Every other Sunday 5pm – 7pm, Singational Sunday Karaoke 7pm – 11pm Mas Leche 11pm – 1am, Dancing until close. Hydrate: Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. Kit Kat Lounge: Divalicious brunch with Madam X 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis . Lark: Lakeviews #1 Free flowing Brunch 11am-3pm Lucky Horseshoe: Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. Meeting House Tavern: \$3 House Shots, \$5 Premium Well Cocktails, \$12 Mimosa Carafes, \$5 Frozens, \$5 Jäger, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tallboy Beers. North End: Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm Replay Beer & Bourbon Lakeview: \$10 Champagne Bottles, \$5 Juice Kits, \$3 Bud Lights 12-2pm, Weekend Buckets \$25 All Day, Miller Lite, Corona Extra, Truly Punch Variety, Truly Wild Berry Seltzer, Freshie Tequila Seltzer (5 Cans per Bucket - Cannot mix and match.) Sidetrack: Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am The Sofo Tap: \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts, \$6 Chicago Handshake, \$5 Prairie Vodka Cocktails, \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. Touche: . 11/13 Bears AS Lions @ Noon Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, 11/20 Bears vs Falcons @ Noon...Movie Night 7pm.</p>

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	Artist	Title
1	TELYkast	Body To Body
2	Francis Mercier x Like Mike	Speed Of Light ft. Darla Jade
3	Jonasu & Karen Harding	True
4	Lucas & Steve x 4 Strings	If It Ain't Love ft. Lagique
5	Betty Who	She Can Dance ft. Pablo Vittar (Brabo Remix)
6	Swedish House Mafia	Heaven Takes You Home
7	John Summit & GUZ ft. Stevie Appleton	What A Life
8	Bombs Away	Around the World
9	ARTY ft. Annie Schindel	Where Have You Been
10	Manuel Riva & Alexandra Stan	Heal Your Soul
11	Autograf ft. Tiina	High On That New Love
12	Elton John & Britney Spears	Hold Me Closer
13	Sunnery James & Ryan Marciano	Run
14	ILLENIUM & Teddy Swims	All That Really Matters
15	Agnes	Love and Appreciation
16	Paige x Nihil Young x Lauren L'aimant	River (Radio Edit)
17	Tom Ferry & Anasa	Summer Of Love
18	JES	All Or Nothing (Original Mix)
19	Becky Hill & Galantis	Run (Galantis & Misha K VIP Mix)
20	Blasterjaxx X Henri PFR X Jay Mason	Summer Jams
21	Lucas & Steve x CRCLE	Every Day
22	Mahalo x Captain Cuts ft. Dan Caplen	Are U With Me
23	OneRepublic	I Ain't Worried (Liam Keegan Radio Edit)
24	Eats Everything x Shermanology	Tell You What It Is (Radio Edit)
25	RAYE	Black Mascara
26	Tove Lo	2 Die 4
27	David Guetta & Bebe Rexha	I'm Good (Blue)
28	Karen Harding	Other Side Of Love (Radio Edit)
29	Brooks ft. Isabel Usher	Someday
30	KREAM x Camden Cox x IDEMI	Chemistry
31	RUDY	No Touchin
32	Sigala & Talia Mar	Stay The Night
33	Mabel x Jax Jones x Galantis	Good Luck
34	LP Giobbi	Forever And A Day ft. Caroline Byrne
35	M22 & Ella Henderson	Heartstrings
36	Win and Woo	All This Motion ft. Louis The Child
37	Lucas & Steve x DubVision	Feel My Love ft. Joe Taylor (Festival Mix)
38	Zedd x Maren Morris x Beauz	Make You Say
39	Anrii Wilde	Treading Dawn
40	D.O.D & Raphaella	Like You Do



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GRAB HOLLY

The Tyranny of the Mean Girls

By Holly Maholm

My heart was racing. Mike and Dave had retained me to serve as Dave's defense counsel in connection with the complaint filed against him by a student at the high school. Dave had rejected that student's request to join the Legionnaires, which he felt he had to do after the student declared his pronouns to be "they/them." I knew, of course, that Queen Penelope had little patience with the efforts of lawyers, and she might even command me to decline this representation, when she learns of it. I was in a tizzy.

Inasmuch as this matter will be heard by the local school board, who will decide whether or not to fire Dave for his decision, I went to consult with Larry, the vice-principal. I found him in his office, where he greeted me warmly.

"Holly!" he began. "I'm happy to see you! I have a legal matter to deal with, and I could use your advice." I replied that I had heard all about it, and that I had already agreed to defend Dave. Larry was not surprised, and went on, "No problem. I'm glad Dave will be well-represented. I would hate to lose him as a teacher in this school."

I asked Larry for his account of how the dispute arose.

"I have been a vice-principal here for nearly 20 years, and there is one big change I have observed. Which is: Years ago, any student, teacher or administrator could have told you who were the 'mean girls' at the school. Now, this group would change from year-to-year, but we always had them. They were always the prettiest, best-dressed and most 'socially sophisticated' girls at the school. They had the best hair and make-up, the latest, most fashionable clothing, and the most athletic and desirable boyfriends. At lunch, you would find them sitting together at that one table where all the popular kinds sat. You couldn't miss who they were.

"Why were they called 'mean girls?' Because they maintained their unchallengeable status by spreading hurtful gossip about anyone who fell short of their perfection. Did another girl - 'Tina' - wear last year's styles or carry a few extra pounds of weight? Then they would repeatedly point out those defects to Tina until they made her cry. They were the worst of bullies, constantly on the lookout for anyone with conspicuous insecurities; then - having found such a person (which, honestly, could have been anyone) - they would mercilessly attack until boredom set in, after which they would seek out a new victim."

Larry went on. "Those were the old days. Today, the young teachers we have - many of whom majored in Gender Studies - have raised up a new species of 'mean girl.' No longer does any girl have to be pretty, or have money for the latest fashions, or a car. No. Today, all a girl has to do to become a powerful 'mean girl' is to adopt some made-up identity like 'non-binary' or 'pan-gender,' and then attach some absurd pronouns to it... like 'they/them.'

"Such a woke 'mean girl' - a 'Wokie' - will search out some innocent girl at the school who hasn't yet adopted a new gender or pronouns, and then, just like the old days, will backstab and ridicule that girl for being 'a tool of the patriarchy' or maybe 'racist' or 'transphobic.' In this way, the Wokie can elevate her own power and status by bullying any girl who hasn't yet 'transitioned' to some



fraudulent, imaginary gender. "Years ago, what Dave brought to this school was brave. He was 'out' to the whole community, and because of his example, it became acceptable to be LGBT. Before that, young men who were gay - but who were not out - were often bullied by the mean girls and other popular kids. One of them would start a rumor that 'Billy' was gay, and Billy would soon find himself sitting alone in the lunchroom.

"Today, thanks to Dave's example, Billy doesn't suffer that gossip. Nevertheless, we now have the problem that every student has to pretend to be something they're not. Are there really 56 different genders at the school? No way! It's the Tyranny of the Mean Girls that forces kids to claim to be something made-up. I'm in danger of losing my best teacher to this Reign of Tyranny by the Wokies - who are aided and abetted by their Gender Studies mentors - whom no one has the power to resist."

Larry exclaimed. "I refuse to lose Dave! You're a tranny, Holly, and I know you've got a bunch of tranny friends over at Donut Time. So... I'm begging you. Help!"

His heartfelt plea reminded me of one of my tranny friends, a person whose personal motto is "Don't fuck with me, bitch!" and I decided there might be hope, after all.

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly's book Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly's adventures involving both magical unicorns and her LGBTQ friends. Send a message to Holly at www.hollymaholm.com.

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PHOTOS BY ANTHONY MEADE



GRAB A GETAWAY



A weekend in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

By Bill Malcolm

Champaign, Illinois (home to the University of Illinois) is perfect for a weekend visit. Just two to three hours by train from Chicago, the twin cities of Champaign-Urbana will surprise you. Champaign is the college town and consists of Campustown (near the campus) and downtown Champaign. Don't miss the University of Illinois Arboretum as well as the Krannert Art Museum on campus. You can even stay at the hotel at the Student Union. A walk around the beautiful campus is a must.

WHERE TO STAY

The TownePlace Suites (605 S. 6th Street) in Campustown cannot be beat. Your extended stay room includes completely ready to use kitchen. But you won't use it as it is surrounded by every international restaurant you would want: sushi, Korean, Japanese, Mediterranean, Mexican, natural foods, Italian, Thai, Zambian, Cambodian, Caribbean, Farm to Table, Creole, Vegan and more. There must be 30 restaurants/fast casual outlets with two blocks of the hotel. I've never seen so many Bubble Tea joints. The University of Illinois is #2 in having the most international students. Try Paris Super

for great crepes. Brewlab Coffee has your morning brew. Jipbap has great Korean food. Oozu is the place for ramen bar. Pho Noodle Station has great Vietnamese food. Poke Lab has the best poke.

GETTING THERE

Amtrak has three to four trains a day from Chicago and can take as little as two hours. The campus area is very walkable so you won't need a car once here. Hop on the #50 Bus from the Amtrak Station to your hotel.

WHAT TO DO

A walk around the University of Illinois campus is a must. The University of Illinois Arboretum is also nice. The Illini Union Art Gallery on campus has a new show, Illini Past and Present, features alumni art work. Other ideas:

Krannert Art Museum | kam.illinois.edu Fine art comes to life in this University of Illinois campus museum through engaging events and exhibits putting a spotlight on issues that impact our daily lives. Current and upcoming exhibits include: Black on Black on Black on Black (through December 10); Fake News & Lying Pictures: Political Prints in the Dutch Republic (through December 17); Well-Designed Beauty: Trade, Technology, and Decorative Arts (Nov 15–May 13).

Krannert Center for the Performing Arts | krannertcenter.com

Imagine access to the symphony, opera, folk music, ballet, modern dance, theatre, and national bands all under one roof. That's Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, a hub of creative activity for all with over 400 performances throughout the year.

Allerton Park & Retreat Center allerton.illinois.edu

Get away for a few hours or a few days at this European-inspired estate in nearby Monticello. Fourteen miles of hiking trails and fourteen formal gardens await you along the Sangamon River. During the winter months, walk the gardens for Holiday GLOW, featuring a one-mile lighted walk with new art included. Details about Mr. Allerton: "Robert Allerton was born to one of the preeminent families of Gilded Age Chicago. He embarked on a career as an artist, living and studying in Berlin and Paris before settling in downstate Illinois, near Monticello, on a piece of property known as "The Farms." From the 1920s until Gregg's death in 1986, Robert and John referred to each other as father and son, they even made it legally official, with Robert's adoption of John in 1960, a few years before the elder man's death. But their relationship was not confined to those traditional

bounds. It was, in fact, visibly queer at a time when the perception and reception of homosexuality in American society were undergoing a transformation. All of this is explored in the book *An Open Secret: The Family Story of Robert and John Gregg Allerton*, which was published last year." Details at <https://will.illinois.edu/21stshow/story/the-contrasting-history-of-robert-and-john-gregg-allerton>"

LGBTQ+ EVENTS

Check out <https://www.unitingpride.org/event-calendar> for events in the area. Quality is your LGBTQ+ friendly bar and there are events throughout the year.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

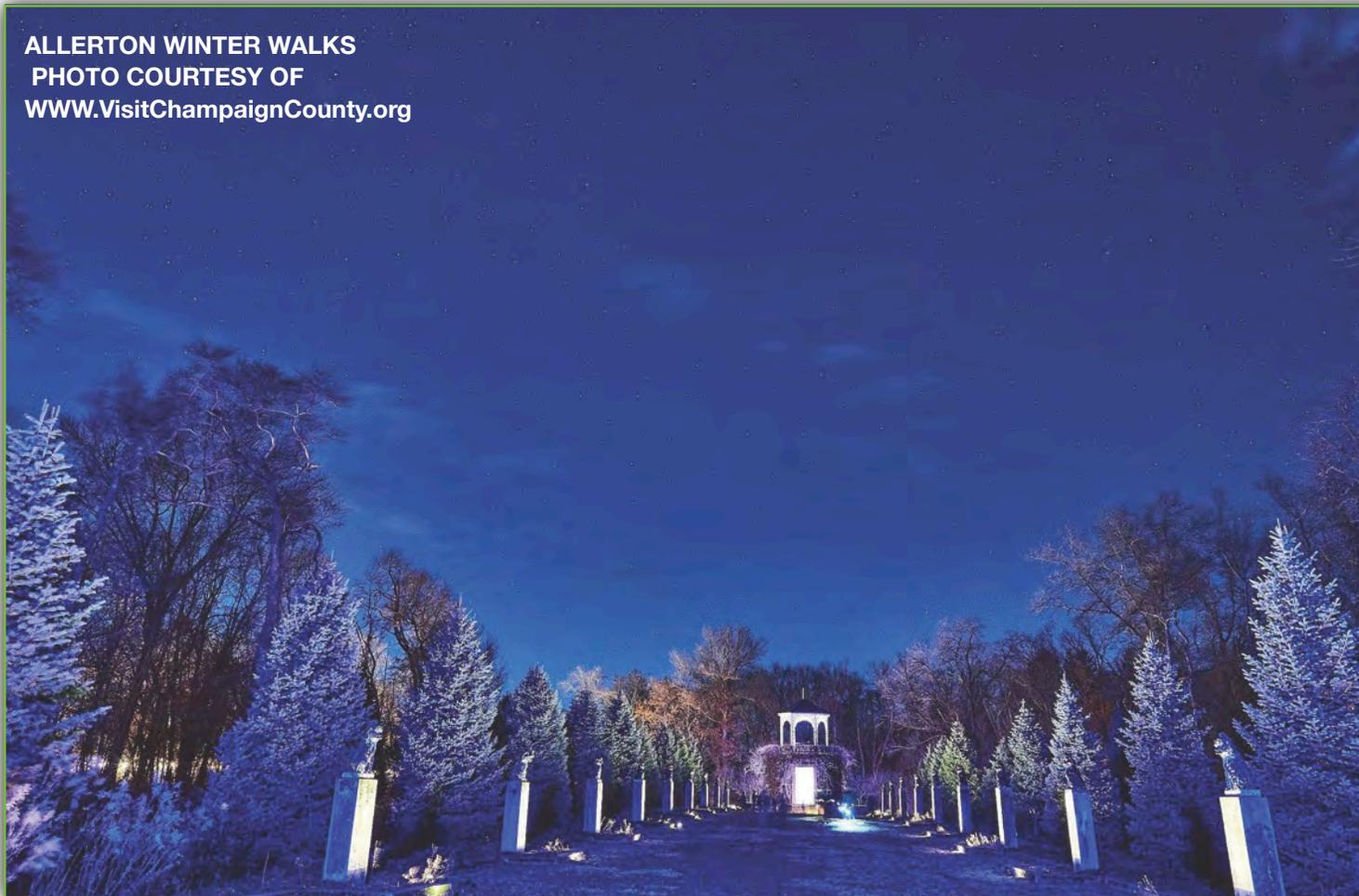
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Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated LGBTQ+ value travel columnist. His column runs in publications in Seattle, DC, LA, Toronto, Dallas, Florida, Atlanta and Chicago.



KRANNERT ART MUSEUM
Photo Courtesy of VisitChampaignCounty.org

ALLERTON WINTER WALKS
PHOTO COURTESY OF
WWW.VisitChampaignCounty.org





PROGRESSBAR

Photos By Anthony Meade





BERLIN

Photos Courtesy of Berlin Nightclub





HAUNTED HALSTED

HALLOWEEN PARADE

Photos By Anthony Meade





Photos By AnthonyMeade



**HAUNTED
HALSTED**
HALLOWEEN
PARADE



**HOLIDAYS IN THE LOOP
NOVEMBER 18- DECEMBER 18
FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS AND
SUNDAYS**



The State Street Holiday Market is an evolution of Sundays on State and realizes part of the mission of Chicago Loop Alliance's Everyone's Neighborhood initiative. Beloved vendors from local small businesses are invited to set up shop on one of Chicago's busiest retail corridors during the holiday season. The State Street Holiday Market will be filled with over 70 vendors, holiday focused programming, and educational forums for small business owners. The market is located at 35 S. State and will be open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., beginning Friday, Nov. 18 through Sunday, Dec. 18. 92 percent of the vendors at Sundays on State were from underrepresented business owners (largely Woman-owned, Black-owned, and Latinx-owned businesses), and a similar representation is expected for the State Street Holiday Market.

The State Street Holiday Market is made possible through a Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Small Business Storefront Activation Program grant, and all vendors are Chicago businesses who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

"The State Street Holiday Market is an opportunity for local small business owners from across the City to connect with consumers along one of Chicago's iconic retail corridors," said BACP Commissioner **Kenneth J. Meyer**. "The Small Business Storefront Activation Program allows for the transformation of vacant storefronts to unique shopping an art experiences during the holiday season."

In an effort to create an advantageous environment for small business owners that do not typically have access to opportunities in the central business district, Chicago Loop Alliance is partnering with YWCA Breedlove for free educational forums for small business owners on Saturdays throughout the duration of the market series. More details can be found at LoopChicago.com/Market

**THE ONE OF A KIND HOLIDAY
SHOW TO EXHIBIT 500 ARTISTS'
WORKS FROM ACROSS THE US
AND CANADA Thursday
December 1 thru Sunday,
December 4**



Shop Til' You Drop! *The One of a Kind Show and Sale*®, Chicago's not-to-miss annual shopping extravaganza, will return to THE MART, 222 W. Merchandise Mart Plaza, Thursday, December 1 through Sunday, December 4, 2022. Celebrating 21 years of pure magic, the One of a Kind Holiday Show will bring together 500 talented artists, artisans, and makers to offer the best in everything from fine art and handmade goods to gourmet cafes, bar areas, live entertainment and activities fun for all ages. Tickets to the holiday show (\$15 for all four days) are now available online at oneofakindshowchicago.com. To make things even more cheery, a portion of all ticket sales will benefit the *Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago*.

"We couldn't be more thrilled to once again connect the show's enormously gifted artists and makers with such a loyal community that values and supports hand-crafted work," said **Kathleen Hogan**, Sales Director of the One of a Kind Show "Year after year, the show really defines the spirit of the holiday season."

Unlike traditional shopping, the show provides the opportunity to shop directly from the makers of goods spanning a variety of categories including accessories, gourmet, painting, bath & body, holiday, paper, ceramics, home goods, pet products, fashion, jewelry, photography, fiber art, kids, sculpture, furniture, metal, wood, glass, mixed media, and more. An artist locator is live online so shoppers can browse the artists and sort by name, location, category, BIPOC-Owned, LGBTQ-Owned, Woman-Owned and new to One of Kind, allowing shoppers to plan their perfect experience beforehand. Exhibiting artists will be on-site throughout the run of the show to engage with attendees, sharing their inspiration behind-the-scenes insights along the way.

**SANTA SPEEDO RUN
NORTHALSTED RETURNS THIS
YEAR FOR A HO HO HOLLY
JOLLY GOOD TIME!
Saturday, Dec 3**



The Santa Speedo Run Northalsted is back with a full afternoon of events that

begin at noon on Saturday, Dec 3. Proceeds from the annual event benefit Center on Halsted, Chicago's LGBTQ community center. This year's funds will support the Center's youth housing initiative which provides a place to call home and crucial services to LGBTQ youth.

The run was created more than a decade ago by husbands **Karl Sponholtz** and **Jeffrey Colgan**, starting with a small group of friends. It has grown into one of the largest fun-runs in Chicago while also raising more than \$500,000 to support services and programs benefiting the LGBTQ community of Chicagoland.

"The Santa Speedo Run Northalsted has been dear to our hearts since we created it. It has been so rewarding to watch it grow each year, raising vital funds to support the health and well-being of LGBTQ people across Chicagoland," said Colgan and Sponholtz.

More than three hundred participants are expected to gather at noon starting from **Sidetrack**, 3349 N. Halsted, with the charity run stepping off at 2 p.m. Overall, more than 1,000 people take part in a day spent cheering on and celebrating participants who brave frigid temperatures in typically nothing more than a swimsuit.

Registration to be a part of the event as an individual or as part of a team is now open.

Fundraising by participants runs through event day with all details on the day provided at the event's website. Spectators are encouraged to give donations in advance at the same website. Donations also will be accepted at Sidetrack on event day. Last year alone, through participant and donor support, the run raised almost \$100,000 for the Center.

"Our youth housing program has grown over the years, and we have big plans to add even more capacity for the Center to serve even more Chicago youth. This year's event will be a major help in our funding toward future growth," said Center on Halsted CEO Modesto **Tico Valle**, noting that the youth housing initiative is more important now than ever given the continuing impact of COVID and rising housing costs.

The event, hosted by renowned drag entertainer **Debbie Fox**, doesn't end at the finish line. It continues with an afterparty at Sidetrack with **Zamora Love & Sasha**. The party will also feature prizes and games, including an awards ceremony for top individual and team fundraising. The party extends into the evening for runners, supporters, and spectators as Sidetrack remains open until 3 a.m.

To register or for more information visit <https://santaspeedorun.centeronhalsted.org/register>

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**THE DEN THEATRE
PRESENTS COMEDIAN PETE
HOLMES**
*Pete Holmes Live: Where
Were We*
November 10 – 12, 2022 on
The Heath Mainstage



Due to popular demand, The Den Theatre has added a fourth performance of comedian Pete Holmes' upcoming stand-up tour on Saturday, November 12 at 9:45 pm. *Pete Holmes Live: Where Were We* plays November 10 – 12, 2022 on The Den's Heath Mainstage, 1331 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Chicago's Wicker Park neighborhood.

Pete Holmes is a nationally touring standup comedian, actor, "Christ-leaning spiritual seeker," improviser, writer, cartoonist and late-night host.

He is currently the host of the wildly popular podcast, "*You Made It Weird*," which is a comedic exploration of the meaning of life with guests ranging from **Deepak Chopra** and **Elizabeth Gilbert** to **Seth Rogen** and **Garry Shandling**. With more than 600 episodes, "*You Made It Weird*" has been downloaded over 39 million times and is recognized annually as a top podcast.

This year, Pete starred in the primetime CBS bowling sitcom, *How We Roll*, that is based on the life story of **Tom Smallwood** (Holmes), a stoic Midwest husband and dad who gets laid off from a car assembly line and makes the unique decision to pursue his dream of becoming a professional bowler as a means to provide for his family.

Since 2011, Pete has starred in CollegeHumor's hilarious web series, "*Badman*." "*Badman*" parodies the Christopher Nolan Batman films, with Pete playing the Caped Crusader as oblivious and incompetent, much to the annoyance of friends and foes alike. Pete also provided the voice for the talking baby in the award-winning E*TRADE ad-campaign.

In March 2019, Pete's semi-autobiographical HBO comedy series, *Crashing*, that he created, starred in and executive-produced, alongside **Judd Apatow**, celebrated its third and final season. *Crashing* was critically-acclaimed and followed a stand-up comic (Pete Holmes) who reevaluates his life and enters the New York comedy scene after discovering his wife's infidelity.

Pete has written for several television series, including, FOX'S *The Simpsons* and NBC'S *Outsourced*.

For Tickets or additional information, visit www.thedentheatre.com.

**WIRTZ CENTER FOR THE
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A MUSICAL ADAPTATION OF
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Named one of *The New York Times'* best shows of 2017, this ravishing new musical adaptation of Shakespeare's play is an immersive dream-like tale of faithful friends, feuding families, and lovers in disguise. Forced from their homes, Orlando, Duke Senior, his daughter Rosalind, and niece Celia, are banished to the Forest of Arden, a fantastical place full of chance encounters and self-discovery where all are welcomed and embraced. Lost amidst the trees, the refugees find acceptance under the stars in this open-hearted celebration of the healing power of community.

For Tickets and more information visit <https://wirtz.northwestern.edu/as-you-like-it/>

**WORLD PREMIERE! HELL IN
A HANDBAG PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS THE GOLDEN GIRLS:
THE LOST EPISODES
NOVEMBER 26 – DECEMBER
30, AT THE CENTER ON
HALSTED**



Hell in a Handbag Productions is ringing in the holiday season with the return of its favorite seniors in *The Golden Girls: The Lost Episodes*, The Obligatory Holiday Special, playing November 26 – December 30, at The Hoover-Leppen Theatre at The Center on Halsted. Dorothy, Rose, Blanche, Sophia and their whacky friends and relatives return in all new episodes written by Artistic Director **David Cerda** and directed by **Spenser Davis**.

The holidays take an unexpected turn for the gals when they find out that the infamous Shady Pines Retirement Community is on the verge of closing leaving most of Sophia's friends homeless for the holidays. Can the girls step in and save the day in time for Christmas? Will

Rose be able to make it to St. Olaf in time for the ever-popular Herring Bowl Parade? These questions, and many more you never asked will be answered in this newest installment of *The Golden Girls: The Lost Episodes*.

The production features the show stars original cast members **David Cerda**, **Grant Drager**, **Ed Jones** and **Ryan Oates** as the Geriatric Fab Four, joined by **Lori Lee**, **Terry McCarthy**, **Michael Miller**, **Michael Rashid**, **Coco Sho-Nell**, **Jamie Smith** and **Danne W. Taylor**.

Tickets are now on sale at handbagproductions.org

**ENJOY THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH
MUSIC THEATER WORKS LATEST
PRODUCTION, IRVING BERLIN'S
WHITE CHRISTMAS, DECEMBER 15 -
JANUARY 1, AT THE NORTH SHORE
CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING
ARTS**



Music Theater Works has announced the cast and creative team for Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* in the Center Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, December 15, 2022 - January 1, 2023.

Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* is the fifth and final production in MusicTheater Works 2022 Season with book by **David Ives** and **Paul Blake**, with music and lyrics by **Irving Berlin**, directed by **Sasha Gerritson**, music directed by **Roger Bingaman**.

Based on the heartwarming classic film, *Irving Berlin's White Christmas* is a holiday favorite for the whole family. With a sparkling new book by David Ives and Paul Blake, the musical delight features such classic Berlin songs as "*Blue Skies*," "*I Love a Piano*," "*How*

Deep is the Ocean" and of course the perennial holiday favorite, "*White Christmas*."

Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* follows World War II veterans **Bob Wallace** and **Phil Davis**, who have a successful song-and-dance act. They follow a duo of beautiful singing sisters enroute to a Christmas stage show, and end up at the Vermont inn owned by their former army commander, General Waverly. When Bob and Phil discover the General's inn has fallen on hard times, they decide to put on a big show to draw in business. But will romance and misunderstandings stop the performance?

Tickets are now on sale at MusicTheaterWorks.com.

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**A THEATER IN THE DARK'S
RECORDED AUDIO PLAYA
CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK IS
AVAILABLE TO STREAM DURING
THE 2022 HOLIDAY SEASON**



A recording of A Theater in the Dark's hit streamable audio play A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK, originally presented live in 2020, is available to stream throughout the 2022 holiday season. In A Theater in the Dark's signature audio style, A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK is performed entirely without visuals, telling the story through the human voice, original music, recorded sound, and Foley effects. A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK will be perfect for those who love the spookier elements of Dickens' story and is suitable for holiday with close friends or loved ones. Listeners may want to create dark, cozy spaces for themselves within their own homes, perhaps with ones' favorite holiday beverage and snacks at their side.

AROUND THE TOWN CHICAGO called A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK "a masterful and compelling adaptation of Dicken's classic" and gave it 5 STARS, adding "Highly recommended... could not have been done any better." RESCRIPTED's Lonnae Hickman said, "I was whisked away into the inhospitable world of Ebenezer Scrooge, guided by only my imagination and a team of talented actors and audio engineers." WCGO Radio's Lainie Petersen said "My highest recommendation. The performances were astonishing."

A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK is available through January 1 and streams for \$15, but listeners can use discount code CAROL22 at checkout for 20% off. Additionally, listeners can receive a free stream of A CHRISTMAS CAROL IN THE DARK by purchasing a '22-'23 Season Pass for \$30 before January 1, which gives listeners access to three more full-length, original audio plays from this season. After purchasing any audio play on ATITD's website, listeners receive an email with unique login access. More information and purchases are available at www.atheaterinthedark.com.

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**STATE CHAMPS RELEASE
"Act Like That" (Acoustic)**



New York powerhouses State Champs have shared an acoustic version of their track "Act Like That", out now via Pure Noise Records. The new version of the song takes the energetic, bouncing original track – found on the recently released Kings Of The New Age – and trades it in for a more mellowed-out feel that allows vocals from frontman Derek DiScanio and bassist Ryan Scott Graham to shine through.

Kings Of The New Age is available to buy and stream now at <https://lnk.to/StateChamps>

**MOXY THE BAND SHARE
NEW SINGLE & MUSIC VIDEO
"The Feeling Of Letting Go"**



80s-esque indie pop trio Moxy The Band have shared their latest single, "The Feeling Of Letting Go." The track comes from the band's forthcoming debut album, Dream Feeling, which is set to be released November 11, 2022.

The band shares: "This song transports me back to a simpler time, watching my mother press play on her 80's jazzercise VHS, curled up near the speaker dreaming of what kind of music I would make when I was older."

Moxy The Band will be celebrating Dream Feeling with a special show on release day. Join the band in Sacramento at Bottle and Barlow on November 11th to hear songs from the new album live. More info available at <https://moxytheband.bigcartel.com/>.

**JAGWAR TWIN SHARES
VIDEO OF REIMAGINED
"ONLINE"**



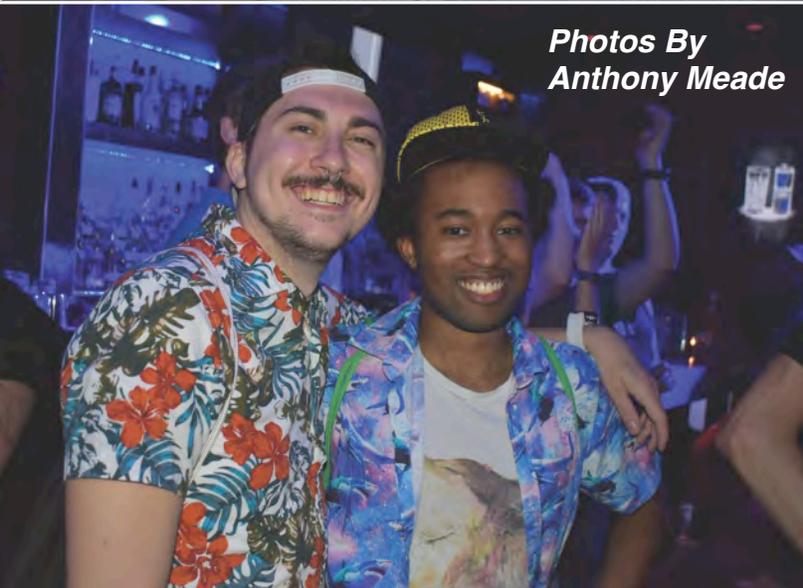
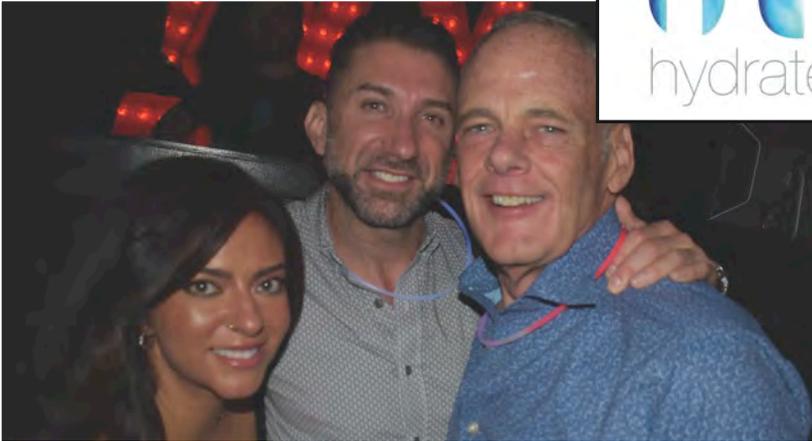
Genre-defying artist **Jagwar Twin** has shared a stripped-down version of their track "Online", out now via Big Loud Rock. Pulsing beats and choral echoes of the original rock opera track (available to watch here, which has already garnered over 500K+ views) are traded in for a simple, delicate guitar backing, allowing Jagwar Twin's voice to take the spotlight, even against the iconic backdrop of Joshua Tree National Park.

Earlier this year, Jagwar Twin released their sophomore album 33 via Big Loud Rock. Produced by long-time collaborator Grammy-nominated **Matthew Pauling** (Twenty One Pilots, 5 Seconds of Summer), 33 encourages listeners to truly see, accept, value, and trust who they truly are. The album contains previous singles "It's Your Time", "I Like To Party", "Down To You", and smash hit "Happy Face", which has reached over 66 million streams, and is continuing to climb the alternative radio charts.

"I've been thinking a lot about why we tell stories, why every civilization had myths and tales that were told and how those stories came to represent cultures," explains Roy English, the brains behind Jagwar Twin, "how these stories have shifted in an ever more digitally-connected world and yet an ever decreasingly human-connected world. We are the stories we tell ourselves and share with the world. These stories ultimately shape how we live and can add more meaning and purpose in being shared. I wanted to pass along some stories that are true to who I am and in a lot of ways who I think we all are. May we all find strength, spirit and most importantly ourselves in each other. Reclaim your crown!"

Empathy, community, and creative expression collide with **Jagwar Twin**, the near-supernatural alter-ego of singer, songwriter, producer, and storyteller **Roy English**. The songs are captivating and confessional in equal measure. **Jagwar Twin** provokes and inspires, adapting to rapidly evolving changes in culture with the speed and agility of the enduring "big cat" of the Americas, the jaguar.

33 is available to stream now at <https://jagwartwin.lnk.to/33album>.



*Photos By
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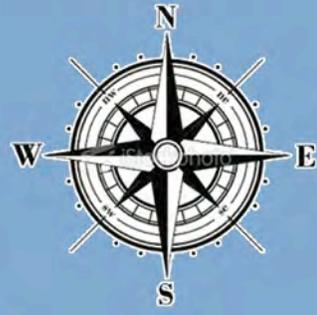
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