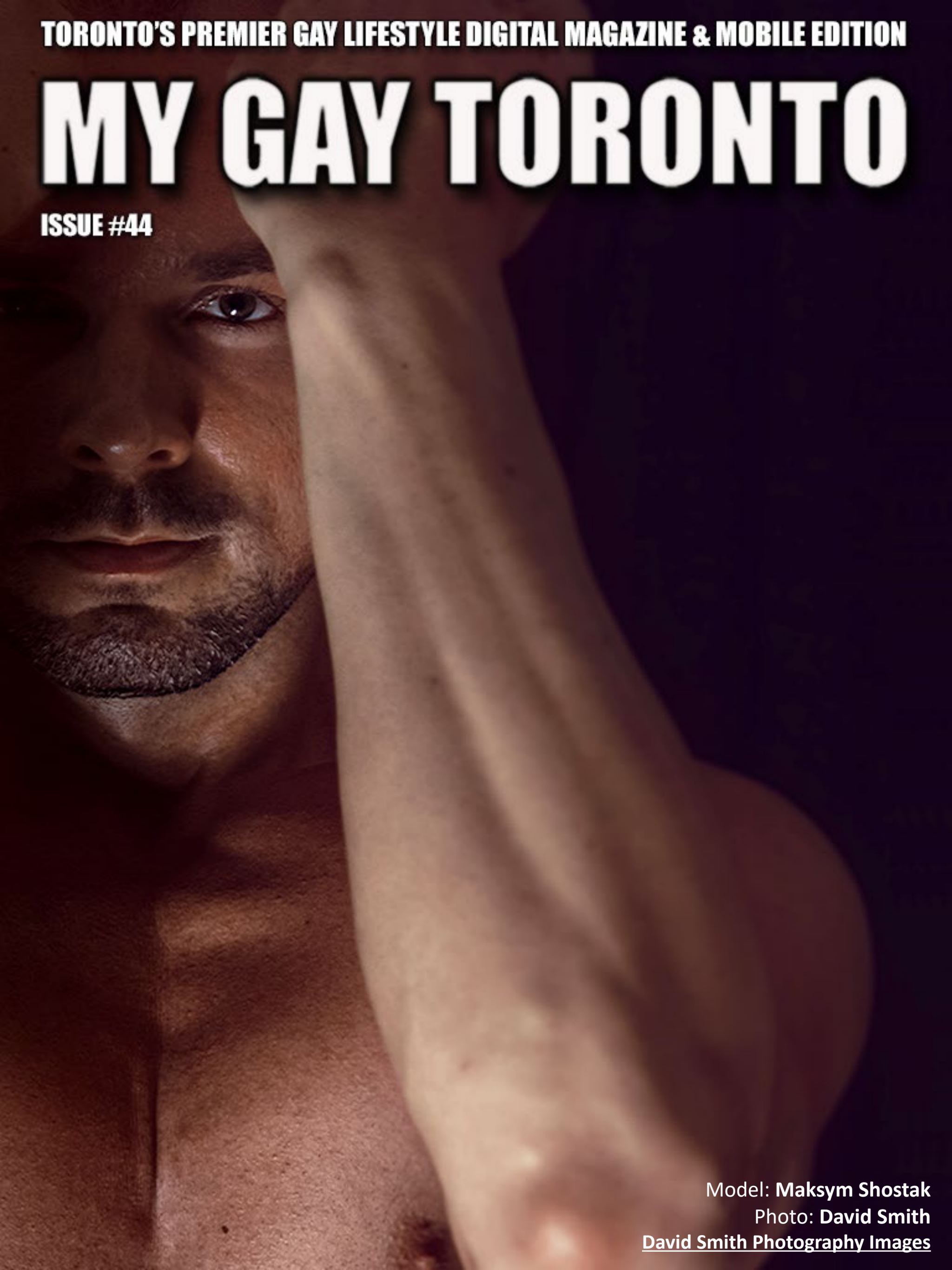


TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE & MOBILE EDITION

MY GAY TORONTO

ISSUE #44



Model: Maksym Shostak

Photo: David Smith

[David Smith Photography Images](#)

Hamlet

IN A HOT TUB

the movie

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SUMMER 2017

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When Feud Rises

PAUL BELLINI



At the beginning of March, ABC televised the eight-hour LGBTQ+ miniseries *When We Rise*. At that length, it would have been a commitment even if it was good. But it was not good.

I love gay history. In the '90s, I couldn't get enough of Eric Marcus, Martin Duberman, Randy Shilts, or Allan Berube, so I know all the stories and characters in *When We Rise*. It charts the progress of gay activism through the lives of Cleve Jones, Roma Guy and Ken Jones, three fairly dull characters played by six fairly dull actors. Every scene is devised to MAKE A POINT. There is much victimhood, shouting, and gnashing of teeth. If I couldn't stand it, then what would your average mid-Western heterosexual TV viewer make of it? *When We Rise* was made by the same people who made the movie *Milk*, which was an excellent film, but *When We Rise* is so full of itself that it's as tedious as an actual activist.

So thank God for *Feud*, Ryan Murphy's new miniseries about the legendary acrimony between screen goddesses Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. Both women were big stars in the early '30s. They fought over men, roles, awards, and backstabbed each other even as their careers dwindled in the '50s. Then in 1962 they made a gothic horror film called *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* that revived both of their sagging careers. *Feud* features Jessica Lange as Crawford and Susan Sarandon as Davis. It was created by Murphy along with Michael Zam and Jaffe Cohen. I've known Cohen since the early '90s when he used to tour with Bob Smith and Danny McWilliams as *The Funny Gay Males*. Jaffe's like a male Joan Rivers, and just as witty. His memoir, *The King of Kings and I*, is still one of the funniest books I've ever read. Now he's helping to revive one of the greatest actress battles of all time. Go, Jaffe.

There is more gay energy in the first episode of *Feud* than in all of *When We Rise*. There is more joy and anger as well. *Feud*, a laugh riot, just flies by while *Rise* plods and sinks. Gay history shouldn't have to be as torturous to watch as Canadian history, and *When We Rise* does us no favours. Do yourself a favour and watch *Feud* instead.

The Love Project

LEE FANCY

Ellen Degeneres Lady Gaga and Pharrell Williams star in a new ad campaign for Revlon in support of charities that spread love and understanding.

“The Love Project is the beginning of a social movement which aims to inspire more love, acceptance and caring in the world,” says Carlos Barreto, Revlon’s senior vice president of marketing. “At the heart of this campaign is the belief that all people are beautiful and that love can create a better world.”

The company has committed \$1 million to support charities including the Women’s Heart Alliance, the Born This Way Foundation, From One Hand to AnOTHER and the Trevor Project. In a 30-second TV commercial that debuted during the Academy Awards, Williams, Gaga and DeGeneres extol the virtues that “promote love, kindness, empathy and understanding,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVsl8GyWGG0>

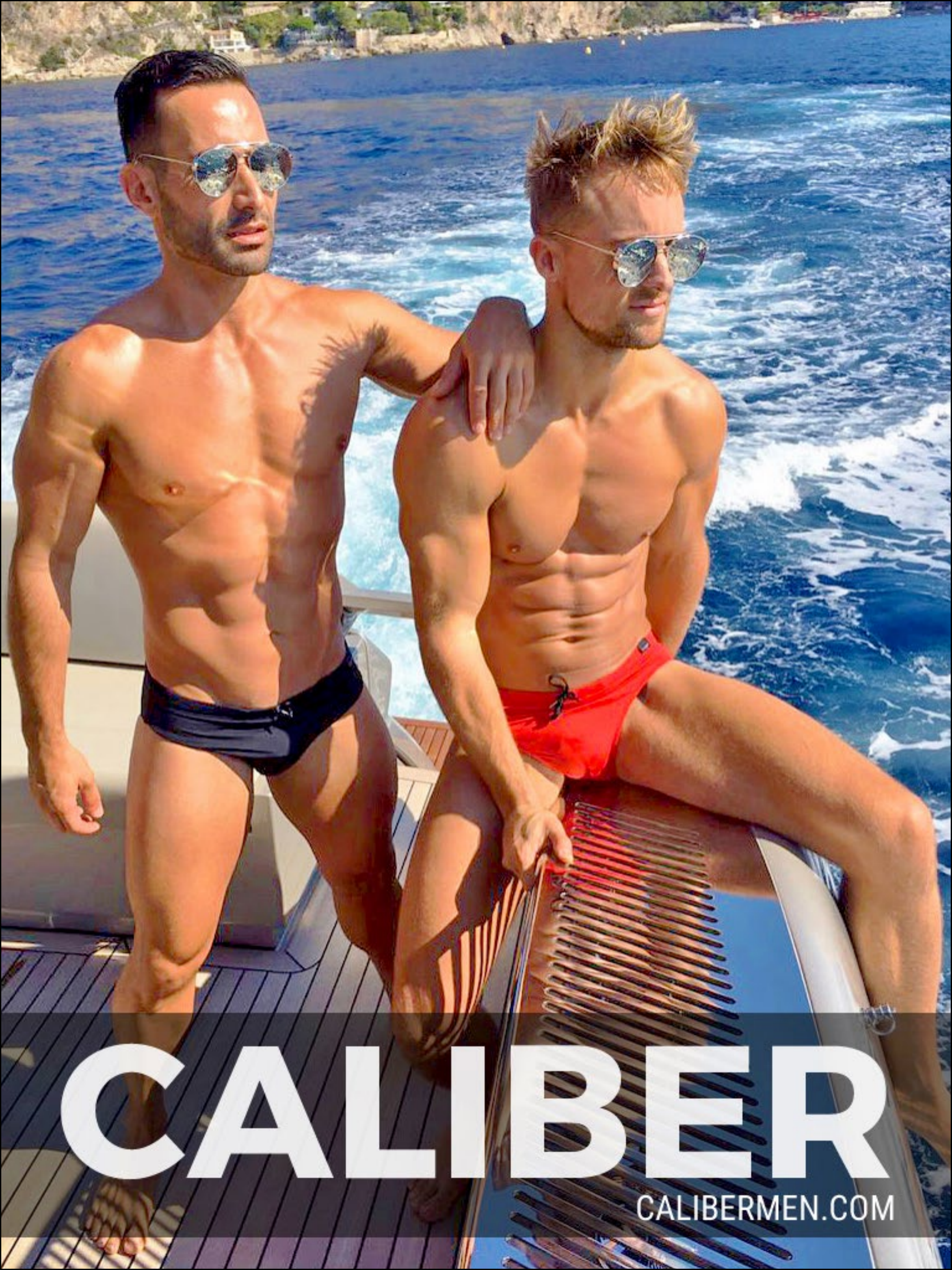


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Sergei Polunin: ballet's bad boy and savior

SEAN LEBER

Blessed with astonishing power and poise, Sergei Polunin took the dance world by storm and became the Royal Ballet's youngest ever principal dancer at age 16. At the peak of his success, aged 21, he walked away, driven to the brink of self-destruction by stardom - his talent more a burden than a gift.

Polunin has received numerous awards, including the Prix de Lausanne, the Youth America Grand Prix in 2006, and was named the Young British Dancer of the Year in 2007.

In 2014 Polunin started his collaborations with a famed American photographer and music director David LaChapelle. Polunin took part in projects including dancing in the video for Hozier's "Take Me to Church" that went viral and presented Polunin to an audience far beyond the classical ballet world. The latest collaboration is [Diesel's 'Make Love Not Walls' campaign](#).

Polunin is also the subject of the documentary *Dancer* which offers an intense personal portrait of a most singular man and dancer. It is an unprecedented look into the life of a complex young man who has caused classical dance to go viral. Urban rebel, iconoclast, airborne angel, Sergei is transforming the shape of ballet as we know it. But virtuosity comes with a high price. How can you be free to be yourself when you are ballet's "hottest property?"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYZHI9PQTvo>



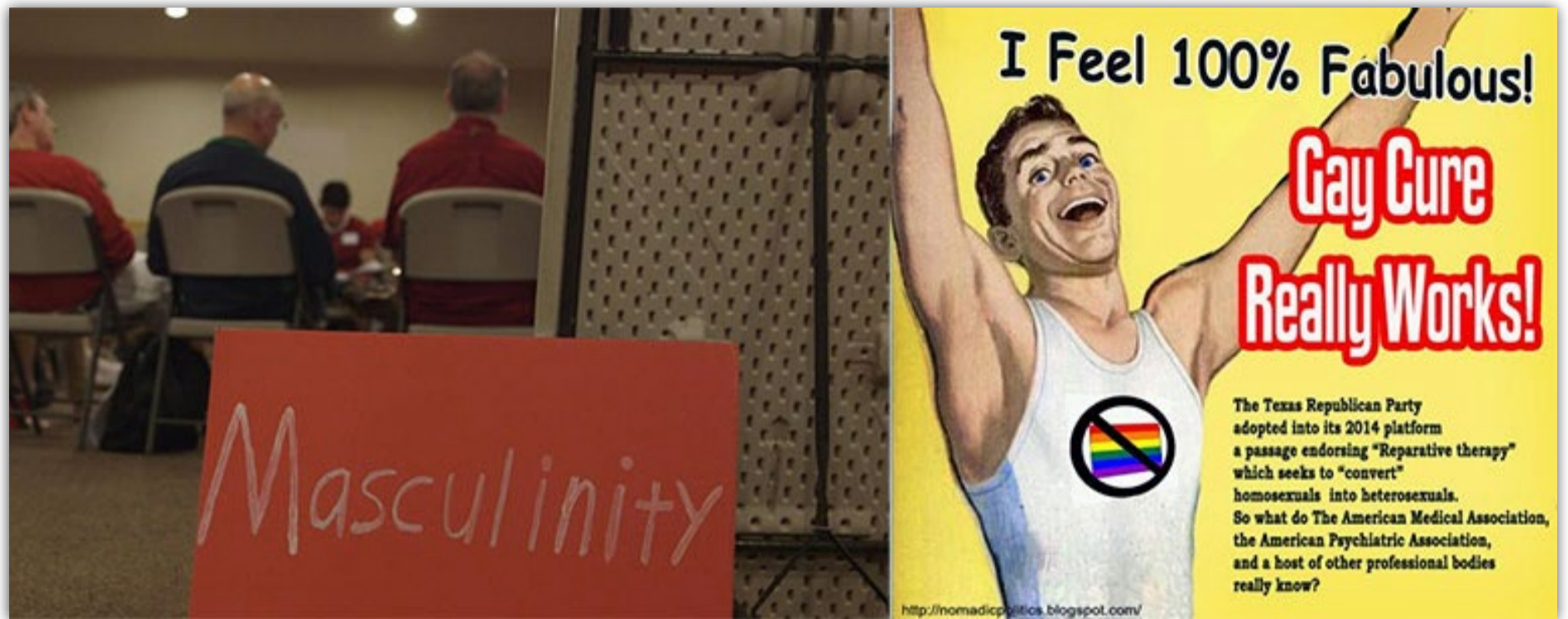


FRI, MAY-26 TORONTO, CANADA

The Danforth Music Hall, 147 Danforth Ave, @ 8pm

The Trump Effect: Conversion Therapy's Resurgence

RAYMOND HELKIO



With Donald Trump at the helm, we're seeing a greater than usual concentration of Republican inspired behaviour including a renewed interest in conversion therapy as a tool for 'fixing' LGBTQ people.

Despite advancements like Toby's Law, conversion therapy in Canada is not yet banned at a Federal level and many ex-gay organizations and groups who endorse conversion/reparative therapy continue to operate as registered charities. Some provinces have made gestures or passed laws to make conversion therapy illegal for sexual orientation and gender identity including Ontario and Manitoba.

But it's not banned in Alberta, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, NWT, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. And sitting on the fence we have BC, Nanavut, PEI, Quebec and Yukon Territory.

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association of Ontario, conversion therapy is linked to depression and suicide within a population that is already vulnerable. LGBTQ youth face 14 times the risk of suicide and substance abuse than their heterosexual peers.

And while Ontario banned the practice in 2015 deeming it ineffective and harmful, many still exist AND because they are faith-based organizations, they are registered

charities with the Canada Revenue Agency. Which means your tax dollars reimburse their donors.

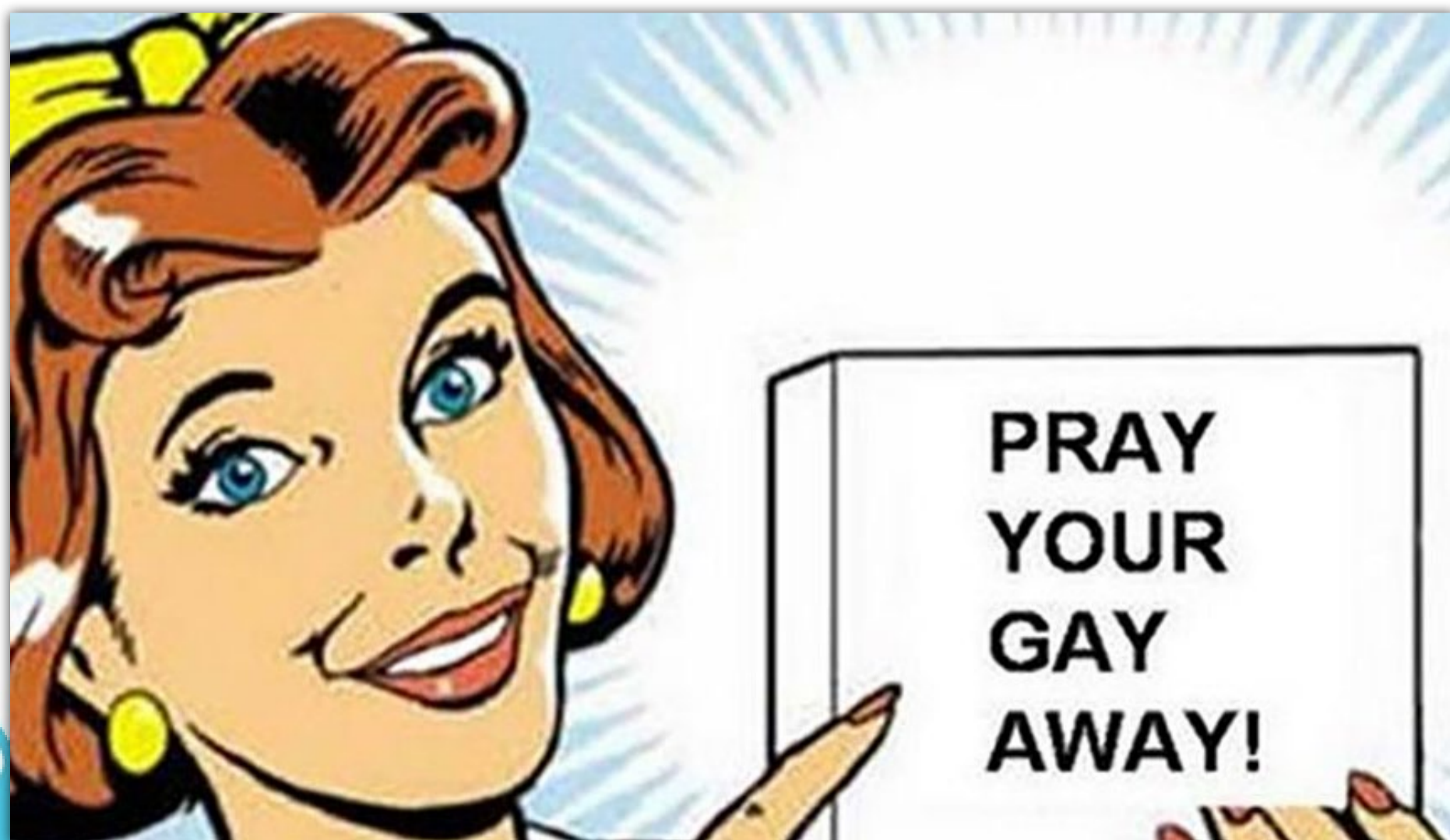
Here in Canada, there are several organizations that counsel, minister or offer an intensive course to people with same-sex attractions, including the international organization Exodus Global Alliance which incidentally has a branch in Ajax, Ontario.

Then there's Vancouver's Journey Canada which offers courses in Calgary, Cambridge, Charlottetown, Edmonton, Halifax, Ottawa, Peterborough, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. According to their mission "Journey Canada exists to help people find hope and live life through experiencing Jesus in their relationships, sexuality and identity" which quite frankly sounds like the creepiest threesome ever!

If you don't think that's enough to worry about, consider that in their recent annual report they have an annual revenue stream of over \$825,000 with 46% of that going towards what they call "Discipling and Supporting Individuals."

<http://www.journeycanada.org/who-we-are/>

As we move further into Trumpland, let's remember there is a ripple effect and so we need to stand against these newly re-bloomed pimples.



Balls to the wall

DREW ROWSOME

April is Testicular Cancer Awareness Month. It's a good time to get in touch with those happy orbs that drive much of our life. And how much do you know about your balls? They are far more fascinating, productive and mysterious than they are given credit for being. Balls, a documentary, explores as many facets of the testicles as the creators could brainstorm. A lot of questions are answered and a lot of trivia is spurted. For the month of April there will be a short video from Balls released on YouTube every few days. Host Charlie David hopes you will indulge your curiosity and not leave checking your testicles dangling for a later date.

The trailer for Balls can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJVRgVol-r0



BALLS

a documentary

And instructions on performing a self-exam are at:
www.border2border.ca/testicular-cancer-awareness-month/



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Tidbits



PEAK PRIDE

The first ever Peak Pride festival is poised to launch at Big White April 7-9 2017, and one of RuPaul protégés and a Canadian dance music diva will headline the weekend, which is already creating a lot of buzz.

Drag superstar Alyssa Edwards, who hails from will take the stage during Saturday night's WipeOut Party. Simone Denny will headline Friday's opening reception. Other talent and entertainers includes DJs and drag performs from Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto.

Peak Pride co-producers Peter Breeze and Dustyn Baulkham have been eagerly awaiting this moment. "To see Peak Pride come from a vision I had over a year ago to reality is empowering and it gives me goose bumps just thinking about it," says Baulkham. "Taking over a mountain village like Big White is a big deal. It's going to be one epic weekend."

Baulkham says Peak Pride is working closely with Big White and the local establishments to provide a variety of activities over the weekend. While the evening events are for the 19+ crowd, a Ski Parade down the mountain on Saturday afternoon will end up in the village with activities for all ages. www.peakpride.ca



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Fak Yaass

RAYMOND HELKIO



If Brian from Queer As Folk had sex with Chris from Greek In The City their offspring would probably be something like the character Nico from the soon to be released series FAK YAASS. Based on a true story, the web-series is about a gay Greek party boy who moves back to his hometown to care for his disabled and homophobic grandfather. While the concept is not new, FAK YAASS promises a mix of My Big Fat Greek Wedding and Girls, plus plenty of hot steamy flesh for good measure. Filmed in Toronto at such iconic locations as FLY nightclub, the original Babylon from the Queer As Folk series.





“My family and their journey was the inspiration behind this series. I think that every person in our community struggles with coming out and being accepted by their family. I am so thankful to have an accepting family and I really wanted them to see how proud I am of how far they’ve come. We really explore the clash of two worlds in FAK YAASS. Although we find comedy in the differences it’s what brings them together where we see the heart and love this series is grounded in. I believe that this story is universal; we want people to learn, grow and accept each other, just like the Nikolakis’ family will in season one.” - Vasilios - *Creator of FAK YAASS*

<https://vimeo.com/206126066>



Double ginger beef

RAYMOND HELKIO



To say Dwayne Minard is easy on the eyes would be an understatement. If his beats don't make you hot and sweaty, his boyish charm will. Spinning since 1990, he's earned legendary status as an entertainer and proudly represents Toronto with a style that's remains uplifting and fresh.

Dwayne got his break when he covered Rick Astley in a lip sync contest at the nightclub Studebaker's. Later he met songwriter Gavin Bradley and together they formed Righteous, churning out heart-pumping remixes under their name as well as for superstars like Nelly Furtado, White Punks On Dope, Billy-Newton Davis, Culture Club, Fritz Helder and Amanda Morra.

You can catch Dwayne at the upcoming Ginger Edition of the DND party at The Black Eagle, April 8th 2017. Seth Fornea of Colt fame will be the guest host whose presence guarantees that the night will be steamy.

<https://soundcloud.com/dwayneminard>



DND

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FEATURING...
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MIXCLOUD.COM/DWAYNEMINARD

OPENING SET BY...
DJ MIKEYB
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BLACK **EAGLE**

\$5 TILL MIDNIGHT

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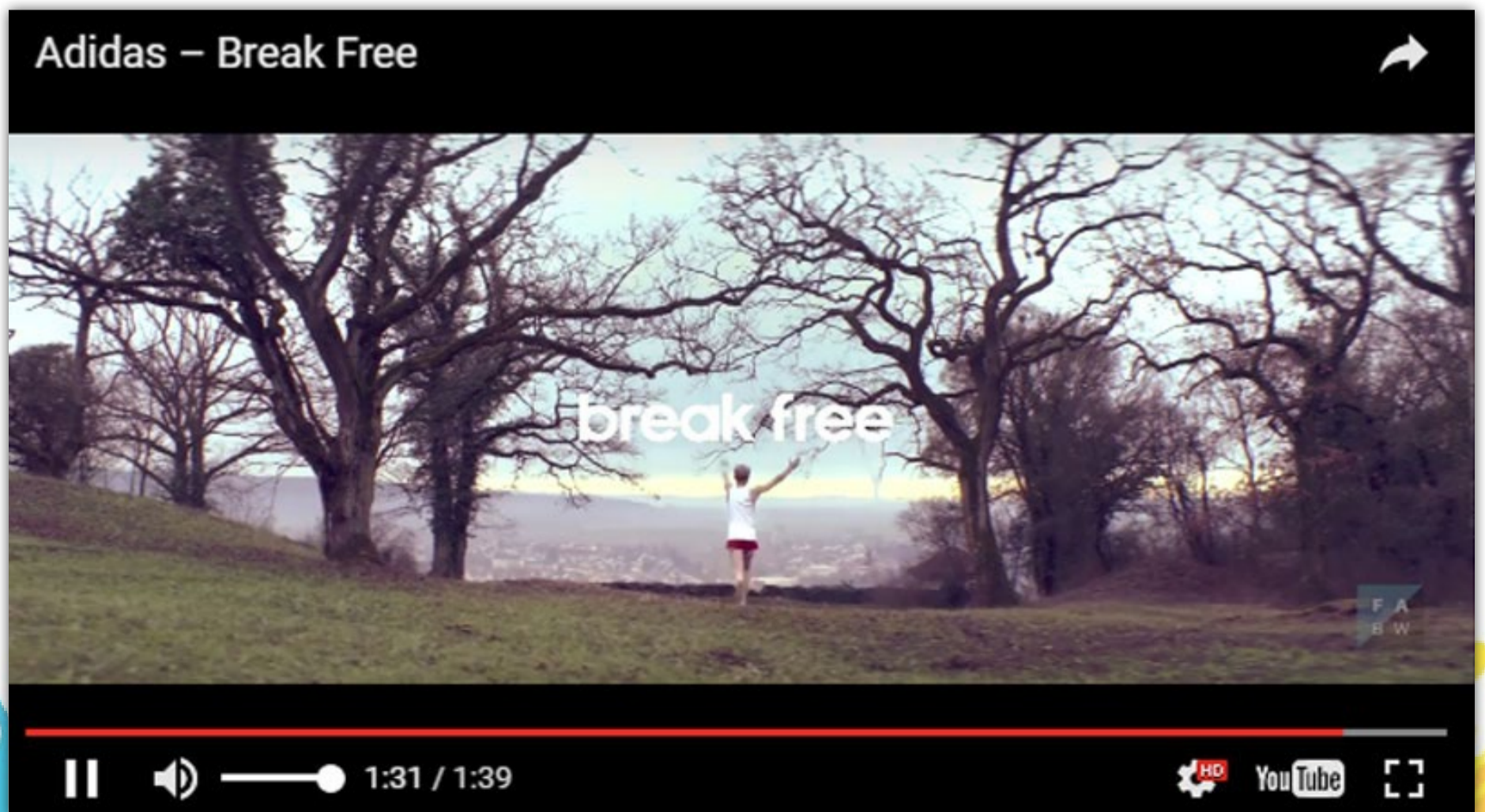
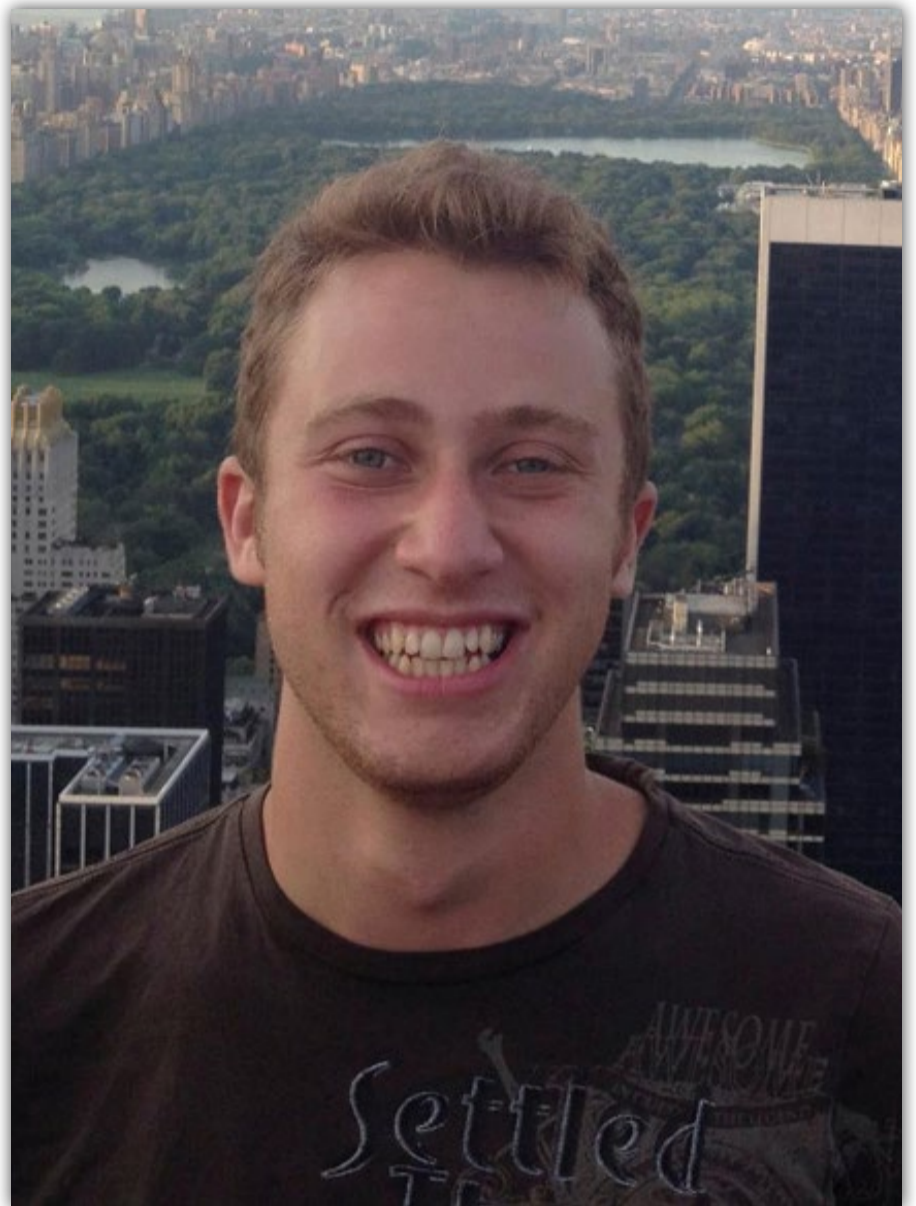
Break Free

SEAN LEBER

Inspired by his recently deceased relative, a young German student Eugen Merher made this touching tribute. It's a story about an aging runner, constrained to living inside a retirement home, longing to put on his running shoes and break free from it all for one last run.

Eugen sent his video to Adidas hoping they would at least acknowledge his work, but they remained silent. Disappointed, he uploaded it to Internet and within days it touched millions of people in a way no ad ever will. It gives hope, it makes you cry and I hope Adidas is regretting ignoring him.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXfLI3qYy0k



Ikea's Hydroponic System

By Jess Murray - Truth Theory

Ikea's indoor garden system is the perfect option for those who wish to grow their own food all year round but don't have the garden space to be able to do it. Ikea's indoor hydroponic garden allows anyone to grow fresh produce at home without the need for soil or any previous gardening experience.

The hydroponic system of the garden means that adequate light and water are everything that is needed to grow the plants successfully, meaning that there is no need for soil. According to the report, many of the vegetables that are widely available today are grown using this method. The absorbent foam plugs that come with the Ikea system enable the seeds to sprout, and then proceed to keep the seeds moist without over-watering them. Following the germination of the seeds, all that needs to be done is to transfer the entire foam plug into its own separate small pot and fill it with pumice stones, which can retain a lot of water.



The pots can then be transferred to a growing tray that is equipped with a solar lamp, which will provide the plants with enough nourishment to last all year round. The system is so efficient that it can even be successful in rooms without any sunlight, although they can be placed on a windowsill that gets a lot of sun if it is convenient.

The growing tray is additionally equipped with a built-in water sensor, which ensures that the plants are given the perfect amount of water. Helena Karlén, from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, said, "The challenge was to make growing plants in a hydroponic system simple, so that anyone could succeed..."



Named in the KRYDDA/VÄXER series, the design was born out of a collaboration with agricultural scientists in Sweden, with a target audience of those who live in apartments or don't have a garden, as well as people who want completely fresh produce even during the cold winter months. Whilst the system is not the first indoor hydroponic system, it is a more affordable option than most, and ideal for those with minimal space. It also fits with Ikea's notably forward-thinking over the past few years, as they follow an eco-friendly trend towards sustainability. To check out more indoor gardening devices, click [here](http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/products/indoor-gardening/).

<http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/products/indoor-gardening/>







Reviews by
Drew Rowsome
Raymond Helkio
Paul Bellini
Sean Leber
Bil Antoniou

My Gay Toronto.com

EVENTS REVIEW

www.MyGayToronto.com

The Book of Mormon: sacredly profane song and dance

DREW ROWSOME

★★★★☆



By the time The Book of Mormon reaches the dance number in “Spooky Mormon Hell” - with gaudy glittery devils, a heavy metal Satan, skeletons bearing doughnuts, Adolf Hitler, Jeffrey Dahmer, Genghis Khan and a song-and-dancer too deliciously funny to be revealed - it would seem there is no taboo left to be smashed. Of course there is, there is still a hilarious 45 minutes remaining.

I haven't laughed this hard in a long time. From the opening appearance of Jesus himself in neon drag introduces the opening number where Mormons ring doorbells while singing and dancing their hearts out, right through to the rousing finale where religions of all brands is reduced to rubble, the gags fly fast, furiously and with a relentless rhythm tied to a tuneful score. I initially began taking notes of things I found particularly clever or that garnered an involuntary laugh, but gave up quickly, just jotting down scribbles to jog my memory. Though The Book of Mormon has a very serious, satirical purpose, bless its nasty little heart, it can't resist entertaining the hell out of you.

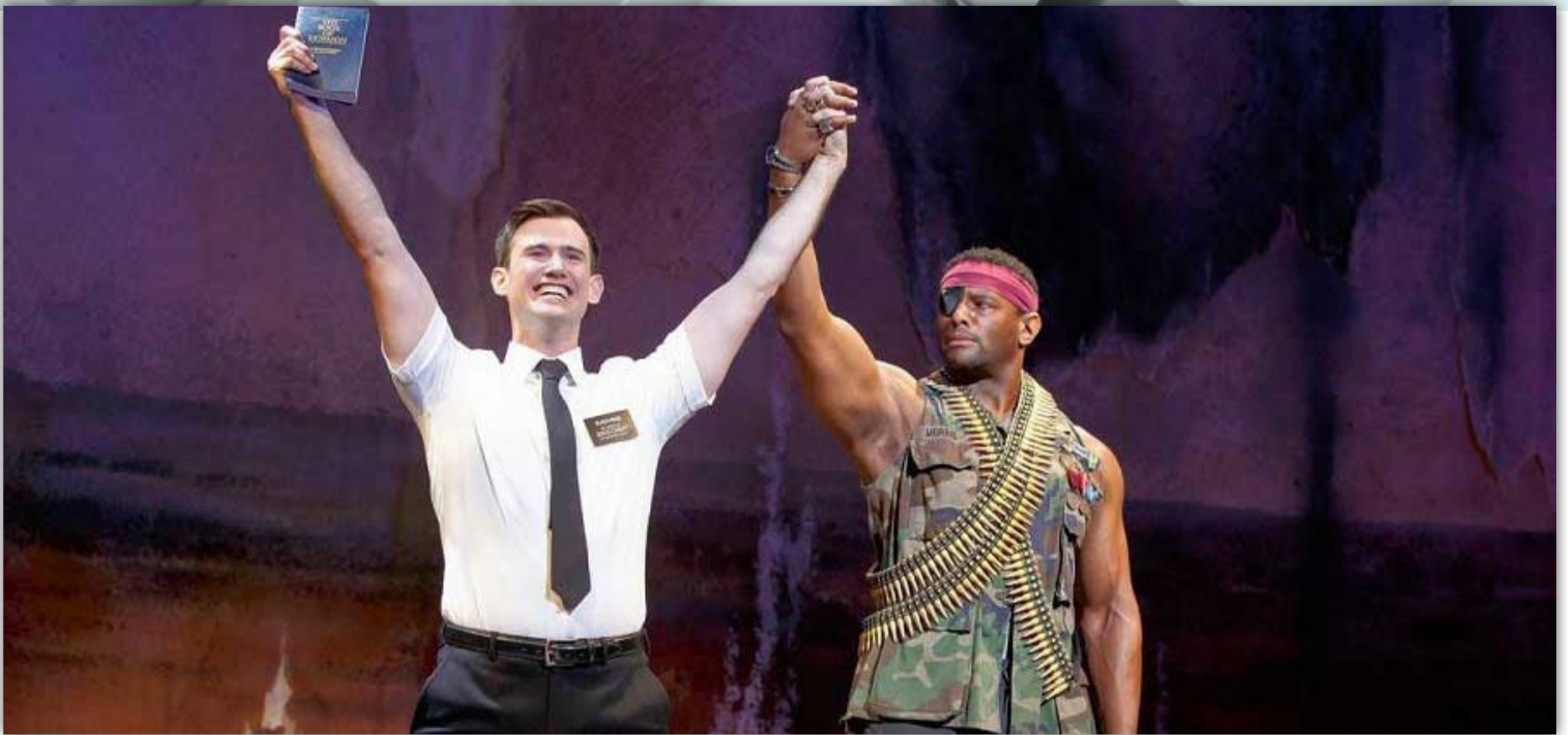
The jokes are profane, scatological, obscene and vicious with liberal use of four-letter words usually absent from musical theatre. The shock value wears off quickly but the



female circumcision jokes, and slurs about most ethnicities and more than a few celebrities. A dead horse is dragged across the stage but it is the sacred cows that take a beating. Some of the laughs are of the “I can’t believe they said that” variety, but by the time the cast launches into “I Am Africa,” the real raison d’etre is apparent: the song not only spoofs white privilege and colonialism, it smashes it with a comedic sledgehammer, indicts us all, winks and dances on.

Hometown boy Sterling Jarvis (Clybourne Park) is not given enough to do but his is one of the few lead voices that manages to have depth amidst a sound design that favours only the top end of vocal ranges. And he gets a laugh with every variation of the word “clitoris.” Camp and prissy are usually complaints about the gay character, but PJ Adzima walks that line with flawless flamboyance. The least subtle - in a show where subtlety is only a subtext - number “Turn It Off,” is a showcase for Adzima as the Mormon missionaries sing and dance their big, eventually sequined, salute to repression. The Book of Mormon as a whole acknowledges, and trades on, the odd erotic power of the starchy Mormon style. But strangely they are willing to give Hitler a blowjob in hell but don’t have the nerve to address the porny camp splendour best exemplified by Mormonboyz.com.





With something to offend and delight just about everyone, The Book of Mormon is a true show for the whole family: the unending waves of laughter, gasps of horror and bliss, and crude attempts to sing-a-long with the madly mutating score, showed that I wasn't the only audience member utterly captivated and swept up. There is a reason that The Book of Mormon swept the Tonys and has incredible word of mouth. Ticket demand is so strong, and it is a tragically short run, that there is a lottery system in place for those determined not to be left out - that info is at mirvish.com.

A longer review is online at drewrowsome.blogspot.com



The Book of Mormon continues until Sun, April 16
at the Princess of Wales Theatre, 300 King St W. www.mirvish.com

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Sousatzka: towering performances in a hot mess musical

DREW ROWSOME- Photos by Cylla Von Tiedemann

☆☆☆☆



Somewhere in the creative process Madame Sousatzka became Sousatzka. At least they resisted putting an exclamation mark in the title. Sadly they also resisted getting to the heart of the material and, like so many other single-monikered musical events, Sousatzka somehow evolved into a big bloated hot mess.

There are incredible performances and some extraordinary singing, but tethered to middling songs and a book that is, to be charitable, overstuffed and mostly confusing, Sousatzka never becomes the rousing emotional experience it is meant to be. It begins excitingly as we are plunged into the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, but the energy dissipates as the overly complicated memory flashbacks intersect and interfere with the heart of the story.

The relationship between the piano prodigy, a very fine but underused when not behind the piano Jordan Barrow, and the teacher/muse Madame Sousatzka (Victoria Clark) is a fine little chamber musical that abounds with pithy sayings about art versus political activism, and the creation of art and the observation that “The mainstream is where the water is shallow.” It is as if the writer, the usually vibrant Craig Lucas, was writing the reviews in advance.

Madame Sousatzka lives in a bohemian household in a bad part of town and the residents are introduced as, "We're crazy. But crazy cute, not mentally unstable." They then proceed to tell us how wacky and fun they are though Sousatzka never bothers to demonstrate this. Far too often as Sousatzka plods along, a character faces forward and sings - usually magnificently - exposition, description or insights the audience has already gleaned. Clarkworkshardandhervoicisremarkableifdisconcertingly operatic, and she does manage to pull a lovable character out of the scattered motivation she is given.

Then the larger themes are woven, or shoehorned, in. Apartheid is equated with the holocaust leading to one of the most bizarre special effects I've ever seen. It is meant to be a spectacular moment but it appears to have been cribbed from Disney World's Haunted Mansion. The big anthem "Rainbow Nation" comes out of nowhere and departs to the same place. A Christmas bell is an odd maguffin that is made a big fuss over and then, like the rainbow nation, disappears, never to be seen again. Perhaps it is just an awkward lead-in to Judy Kaye's big number. It is a damn good number, but what is a Christmas song, complete with risible snow effects, doing in a show about the Holocaust and apartheid?

Perhaps Kaye was contractually owed a solo number so one was written, or maybe there is just more commercial value in an original cast recording/future cabaret standard that doesn't try to rhyme Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. There are a few other head-scratchers. It looks like Nick Wyman's big number was cut - he is set up for a big music hall themed number that explores his otherwise non-visible penchant for drag. At least he seems to come out to Madame Sousatzka near the end, though no-one seems to know why, Or care. He then spends the rest of the show crying. Or maybe Wyman was just suddenly overwhelmed by what his role was reduced to.

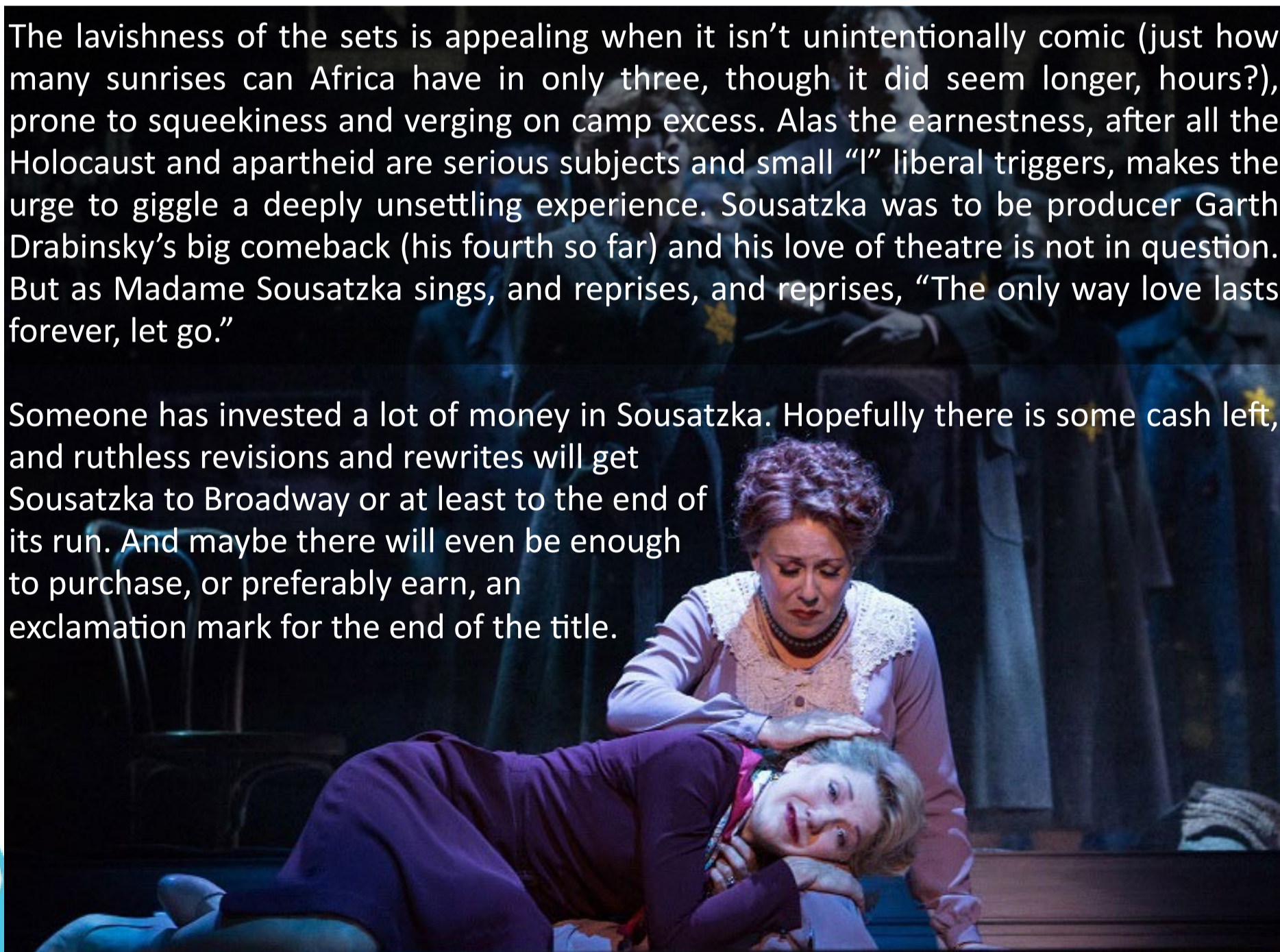


A punk/new wave dance number is nostalgic hilarity (but must have been fun for the costume designer, Paul Tazewell (Hamilton, Side Show, Memphis, In the Heights) who is the only person involved who seems to have a sense of humour -the gowns in the salon scene are to die for!) leads to a ballet performance by an extraneous girlfriend (Virginia Preston) that features the chorus in African costumes bowing down to the white goddess . . . And that is not as deeply weird as the finale where poor Ryan Allen, who magnificently sang a full-throated if contextually puzzling “Rainbow Nation,” is dispatched as either a shrouded corpse or an angel, and Madame Sousatzka gets her just reward in a heavy-handed scene - not even a musical number! - that only became a plot point somewhere in the second act. Even a rousing reprise of an African-flavoured number for the curtain call can’t salvage the limpness.

However theatre buffs will not want to miss this version of Sousatzka before it is either radically revised for Broadway or quietly euthanized. Clark’s performance will be one of those “I actually saw it!” cards to be played at dinner parties, and Montego Glover as the prodigy’s mother brings down the house with an unforgettable performance of an unchoreographed and utterly forgettable song. And Sara Jean Ford looks great and gets some much-needed laughs as the slut with a heart of gold.

The lavishness of the sets is appealing when it isn’t unintentionally comic (just how many sunrises can Africa have in only three, though it did seem longer, hours?), prone to squeekiness and verging on camp excess. Alas the earnestness, after all the Holocaust and apartheid are serious subjects and small “I” liberal triggers, makes the urge to giggle a deeply unsettling experience. Sousatzka was to be producer Garth Drabinsky’s big comeback (his fourth so far) and his love of theatre is not in question. But as Madame Sousatzka sings, and reprises, and reprises, “The only way love lasts forever, let go.”

Someone has invested a lot of money in Sousatzka. Hopefully there is some cash left, and ruthless revisions and rewrites will get Sousatzka to Broadway or at least to the end of its run. And maybe there will even be enough to purchase, or preferably earn, an exclamation mark for the end of the title.



Mrs Henderson Presents: nostalgia with a dash of titillation

DREW ROWSOME - Photos by Cylla Von Tiedemann

***☆☆



Who isn't nostalgic for a big old-fashioned musical? Lavish sets, rousing numbers extolling the theatre and patriotism, a wide range of emotional moments, subtle social commentary, and, just for extra enticement, some titillation. That is exactly what Mrs Henderson Presents is presenting.

The tale of the woman who, apparently single-handedly, changed the stringent British censorship laws regarding nudity, is the basis of Mrs Henderson Presents. And it is an intriguing story: a plucky widow buys a down-on-its-luck vaudeville theatre and, through the use of nude tableaux, helps to win the Second World War. But a historical lesson, even with boobs, could become boring, so the creators pile on other themes, a dash of post-modernism, and lots and lots of glitz.

The best addition is the feminist recasting of the women's dilemma about getting naked. There will be no guilt when it is time to ogle these women. And when they do get naked, they are beautiful. But just to keep things fair, there is a comic scene where ringleader Maureen (Evelyn Hoskins) insists the men in attendance must also strip. It is odd that the women are presented as objects of desire while the male nudity (and there are flashes and Malthouse, as befits the male protagonist, prances a good flopping eyeful) is all played for comedy. While injecting this feminist, and very welcome, twist, Mrs Henderson Presents also give feminism's little brother gay rights a vigorous nod.

When new owner Mrs Henderson meets dancer/choreographer Bertie (Adam Rhys-Charles) she hires him because he is so good-looking that no-one will care whether he can sing or dance. Fortunately Adam Rhys-Charles is very good at both and he strolls away with every scene he is in. Of course he is competing with nude tableaux which gives him the advantage of movement - and frequently sequins - but the disadvantage of competing with abundant flesh. He is also the first in the show to drop his drawers and it is a stunning sight though only from the back and, counter-intuitively to the themes, he immediately covers up with a towel.

Mrs Henderson asks Bertie to assess the looks of the gamines she has hired and he shrugs, saying he doesn't know as he is "otherwise inclined." To a big laugh, Mrs Henderson responds, "That's delicious." And Rhys-Charles is delicious but alas, Bertie is all song and dance with no romance and he appears to be the only homosexual in the theatre. For a backstage musical, that is unlikely but then musicals are usually fairy tales, almost always stripped of fairies.

There is so much nostalgia that the obvious parallels to today get buried in the murk, though the censorship dance, with its scandalous jazz hands (though that reference comes later in the show making the choreography psychic as well as befuddling), draws a direct parallel to our current political plight. And of course nostalgia works. The predictable plot pulls together for a climax that combines the worst of *The Sound of Music* (what is it with climbing mountains?) with an erotic fan dance (burlesque and tease still work) and a paean to the glories of treading the boards, to send everyone out happy. Who isn't satisfied by a good old-fashioned musical?

A lengthier version of this review is at drewrowsome.blogspot.com

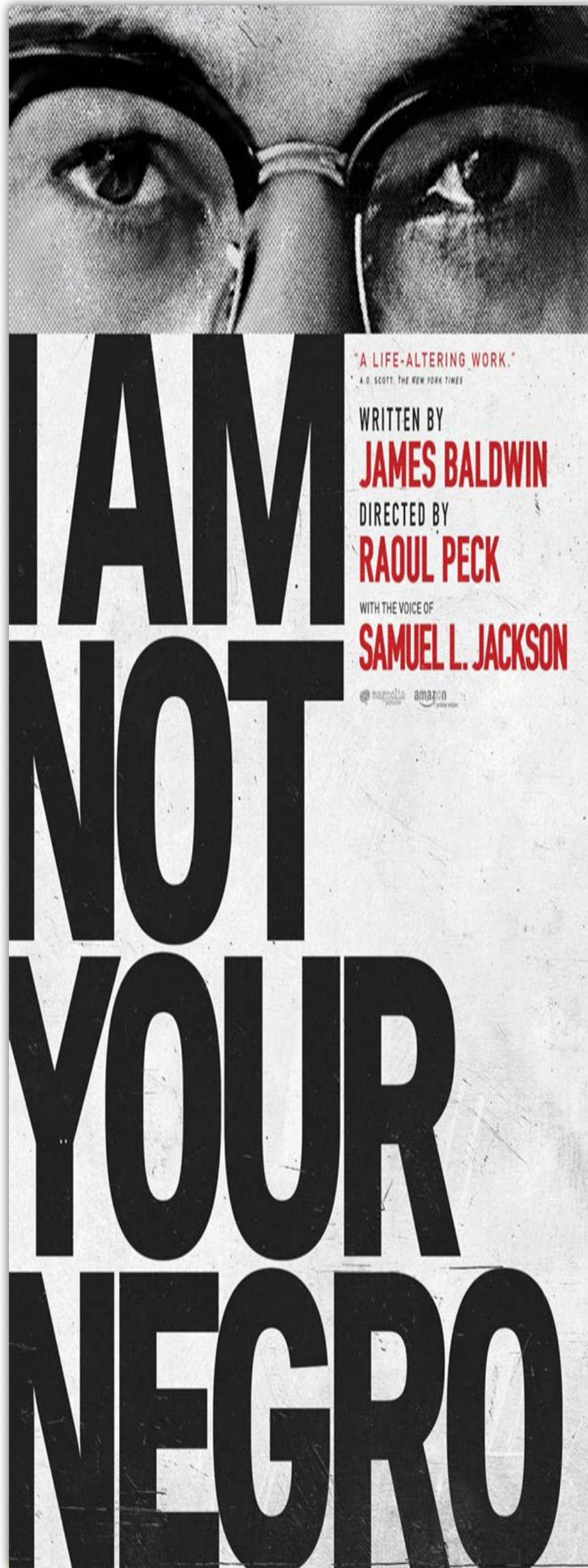




I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO

BIL ANTONIOU

Celebrated author and civil rights activist James Baldwin worked on a book meant to cover the lives and deaths of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., all of whom he knew personally before they were assassinated, but never got past fifty pages of notes. These writings form the skeletal basis of this elegant, moving documentary in which Samuel L. Jackson reads Baldwin's text while Raoul Peck expertly compiles footage without any additional commentary. We see Baldwin's consciousness form as a member of an oppressed population in America, his sharp observations contrasted with the entertainment he was taking in at his local movie theatre (the footage of which is expertly chosen and looks gorgeous here). As an adult, his fame as a writer meant he was called upon to give speeches or interviews on national talk shows, expressing his views in that wonderfully performative but also sincere manner of his, all the while Jackson's narration maintains the experiences of the deceased mens as fascinating counterpoint. Peck avoids conventional biography and so will likely inspire some disappointment for keeping details of Baldwin's life mostly obscure; his being gay is mentioned only in passing but is not really explored, as it is never a part of the author's public presentation of himself (at least not in the footage included here). A great example of the personal as political and a tribute to a great artist (one who was too harsh on Doris Day, mind you, but a great artist all the same).



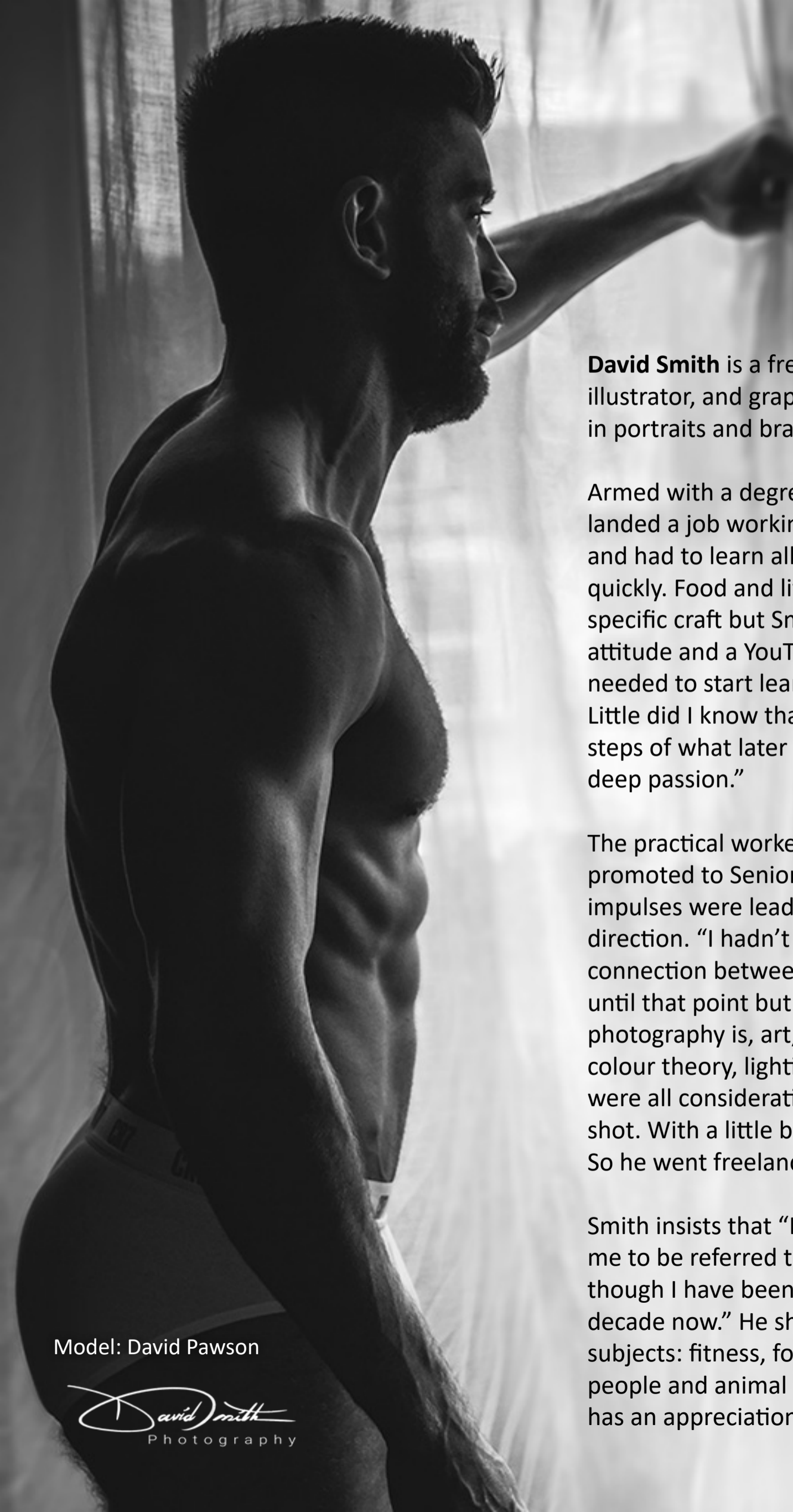
The art of David Smith

COVER STORY



David Smith
Photography

Model: David Pawson



David Smith is a freelance photographer, illustrator, and graphic designer specializing in portraits and branding.


Armed with a degree in illustration, he landed a job working for a restaurant group and had to learn all elements of design quickly. Food and lifestyle photography is a specific craft but Smith says, “A can-do attitude and a YouTube account was all I needed to start learning the fundamentals. Little did I know that I was taking the first steps of what later would turn out to be a deep passion.”

The practical worked well and Smith was promoted to Senior Designer, but his impulses were leading him in another direction. “I hadn’t quite made that connection between art and photography until that point but that is precisely what photography is, art,” he says. “Composition, colour theory, lighting, pose, and message were all considerations for getting the perfect shot. With a little bit of luck thrown in.” So he went freelance.

Smith insists that “It’s still quite peculiar to me to be referred to as a photographer even though I have been practising for almost a decade now.” He shoots a cross section of subjects: fitness, food, architecture, and people and animal portraits. But he obviously has an appreciation for the male form.

Model: David Pawson

David Smith
Photography



“I have a lot to thank photography for,” he says. “It is perhaps one of the most visible and commercial forms of art available in the industry so there are great opportunities for exposure. I regularly post entries on community forums such as Gurushots, Viewbug and the Gay Photographers’ Network.” And he is still learning, saying, “I will continue to experiment, to observe and to create original works. And perhaps inspire a few people along the way.”

www.facebook.com/davidsmithphotog

www.gurushots.com/davesmith1981uk

www.viewbug.com/member/davesmithuk





David Smith
Photography

Model: Saad Huda





David Smith
Photography

Model: Jordan English

Great Great Great: 50 shades of millennial angst

DREW ROWSOME

In *Great Great Great*, poor Lauren is overwhelmed with a first world problem. Should she stay in a five-year-old comfortable relationship with a cute loser nerd who loves her and obeys her every whim? Or, should she jump into a relationship with the older sexy man who has read enough, or enough reviews of, *50 Shades of Grey* to boss her around sexually?

Poor Lauren can't decide - and oddly, in a film by an avowed feminist and an avowed gay man, never considers exploring both or just enjoying the situation - so she passively drifts through both: she proposes to her live-in and half-heartedly starts an affair with Christian Grey-lite.

While her passivity is possibly realistic for a hipster millennial, it isn't very dramatic and her dour demeanour makes it hard to care one way or the other.

Of course her choices are not *Great Great Great*. Her fiancé Tom, played by the appealing and geeky Daniel Beirne, is an unemployed urban planner and spends his day drinking, playing with Lego and going to a boxing gym where he has a mildly homoerotic/definitely sado-masochistic relationship with his trainer Zack played by a buff Ian Fisher. (Of course both of those mild kinks are both standard facets of a relationship with a personal trainer, so I don't think we are supposed to read much into it.) Beirne does have an extremely charming scene where he flexes a bicep in order to take a selfie. His pride, reasonable guns and self-deprecation are as appealing as an unkickable puppy. But then who wants to fuck a puppy?

Lauren, in the time before she met Tom, met David at a conference in, of course, Seattle, where they had a brief, allegedly torrid, affair.





Lauren works at Module 45 a company that rents out work space and encouragement to floundering entrepreneurs. David becomes her new boss, in a position for which she was passed over. He immediately puts her into several different positions. David is played by familiar face Richard Clarkin who is ruggedly handsome and plays smarmy, and sexually dominant, very well. But even he couldn't sell a romantic line like "I can get sex anywhere but I like you." But Lauren doesn't seem to want to be liked, she wants to be told to get on her knees.

Lauren proposes to Tom and tells David, "Why don't you meet me in the storage room in 15." She dresses in a schoolgirl outfit to entice Tom into spicier sex (it results in erectile dysfunction, he loves her for herself) while David strips her naked and fucks her. And it is here that Great Great Great really confuses. Sarah Kolasky, who wrote Great Great Great as well as playing Lauren, has a very nice set of breasts. And she is not, in the interests of verisimilitude or pushing boundaries or exhibitionism, afraid to flaunt them. Not so much the men who are, in the context of Great Great Great, the sexual objects. While Lauren's nudity is realistic, Tom and David both appear to have sex while wearing briefs.

And if that is what was concerning me in the midst of Lauren's dilemma, then you can understand my dilemma in writing about Great Great Great.

Kolasky is half of a sketch comedy duo and is the "Chair of the Breakthroughs Film Festival, the only festival in Canada dedicated to showcasing short films by emerging female directors." Director Adam Garnet Jones has won a bunch of awards from LGBT film festivals and is astonishingly cute. So I find it odd that their film is so flat and politically reactionary: the ambiguously happy ending is utterly Trumpian tragic.

There is a bit of humour from Meredith Cheesbrough as the sassy best friend and Lindsay Leese as the practical mother. Beirne struggles to keep a bit of banter near the beginning afloat, but it is no wonder that he, in fact all the characters, drink so much. There is a moment when Lauren, in a fit or forced cheer, offers, as she has many times, to make a drink. She grabs a bottle out of a paper bag, and, channelling Patsy, mock swigs. Being a serious hipster millennial must be angsty but if only the Great Great Great gang drank as entertainingly and effectively as the bawdy broads from Absolutely Fabulous, they would know exactly what to do with an excess of men.



Great Great Great screens on Thurs, March 23 at the Scotiabank Theatre Toronto, 259 Richmond St W as part of the Canadian Film Fest 2017. greatgreatgreatmovie.com

My Gay Toronto.com

FLASHBACK



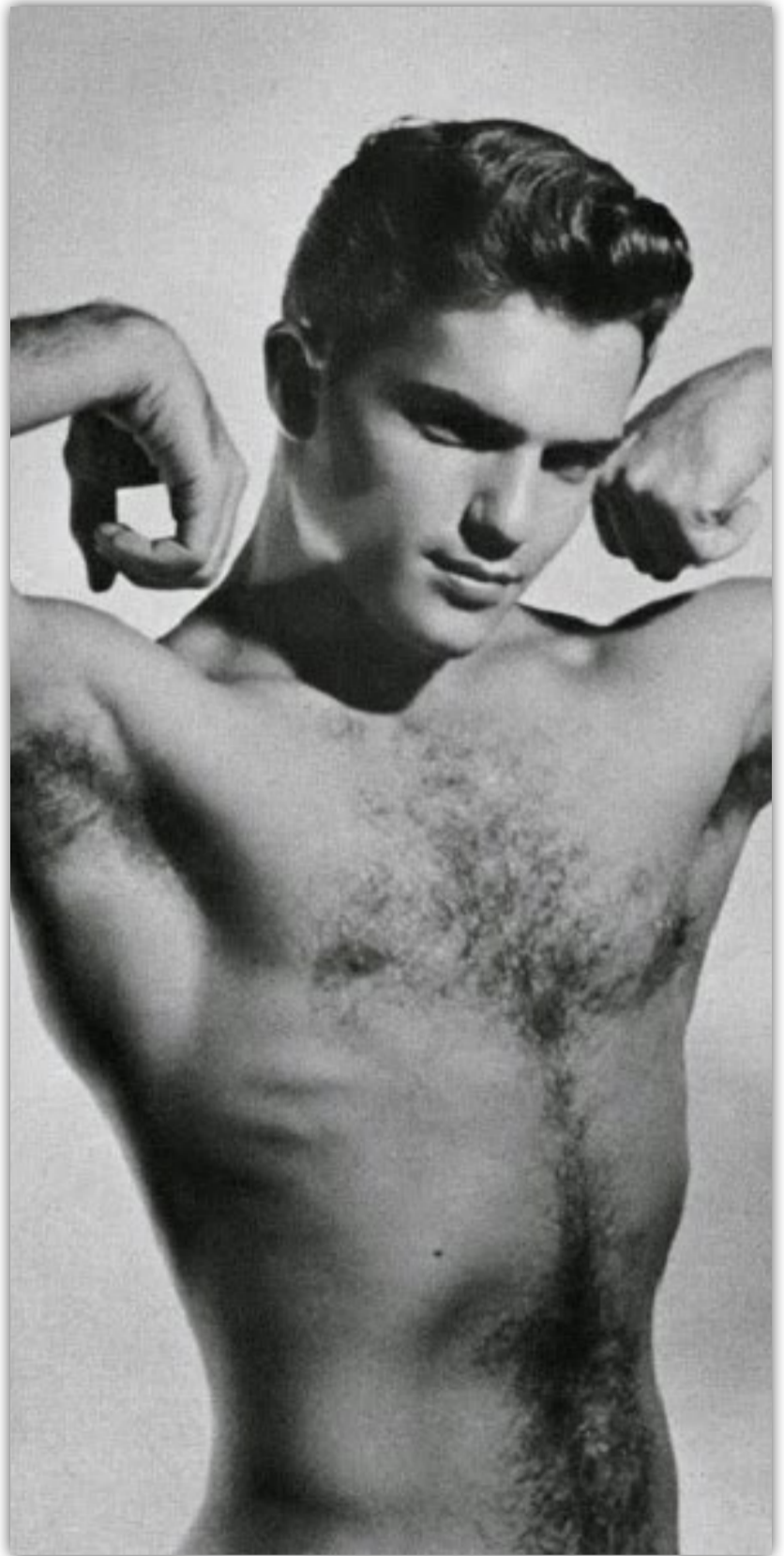
Artistic Smut

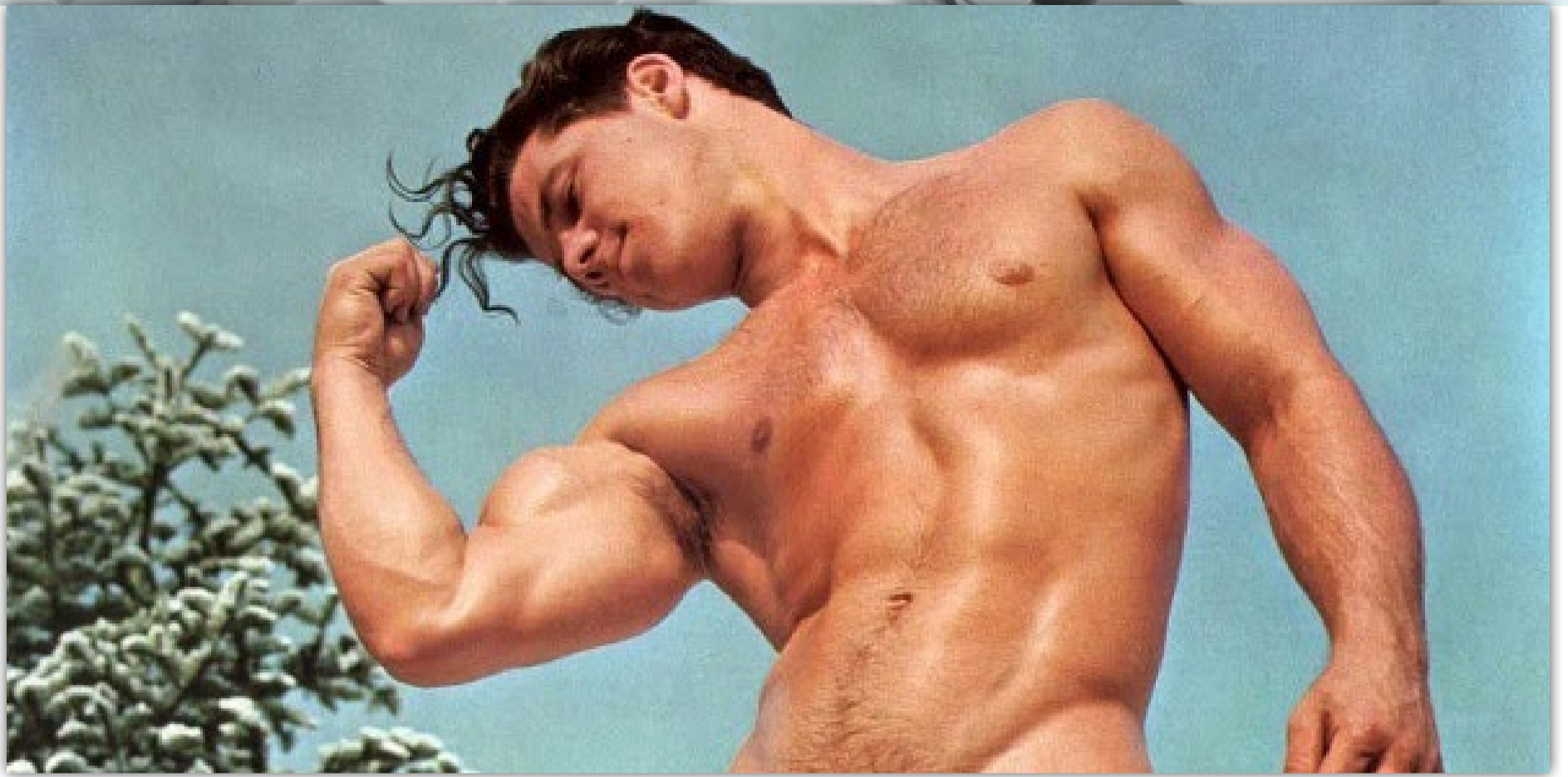
DREW ROWSOME - 2009

Drew Rowsome encounters a bevy of sailors, cowboys and leathermen as he explores a historic world of champions and rogues.

The spirit behind this year's Pride slogan "Can't Stop, Won't Stop" extends way back to the 1940s. In the days before gay porn became available at the click of a mouse, gay men's insatiable need for erotic imagery and community was provided by beefcake photographers. Brandon Matheson, curator of Champions and Rogues a collection of beefcake photographs on show at the O'Connor Gallery, sees these photographers as unsung heroes. "It was a small group of men who faced huge threats of jail time to produce these photos," explains Matheson. "They put their lives on the line to fight in court."

While some did do stints in the slammer they were also eventually victorious and paved the way for the flood of gay skin magazines that proliferated in the '70s and beyond. "Not only did they reach out to isolated gay men," says Matheson, "but they were the foundation of gay publishing."





The beefcake magazines created what Matheson calls “smoke screens” to slide their homoerotic images past the police. “There was a health and fitness craze that started around the same time that Charles Atlas started advertising in the backs of comic books,” says Matheson. This created an excuse for titles like *Physique Pictorial*, *Tomorrow’s Man* and *Young Adonis*. Other defences included that they were artistic, which explains the many classical art styled poses of seminude men next to phallic columns, and the naturist movement. Masturbation was not yet considered healthy but the images could be construed to promote healthy living and artistic education.

The magazines in which the photos appeared were mainly shells for advertising the profitable photo sets for sale within. The photo sets were hand printed and mailed out to eager one-handed users. And the sets were far racier than any magazine of the time could allow. Matheson explains that the photos were often sent with posing pouches carefully painted over the exposed genitalia. Upon receipt the water based paint had only to have a bit of spit applied for removal and, presto, full frontal nudity.

Some of these photo sets have survived and *Champions and Rogues* features 50 original prints in all their shimmering silver nitrate glory. The colour photos in particular are a revelation. As Matheson notes, “Colour photos age differently. The colours are more saturated and have a softer glow.” If the charged eroticism of the images is not enough, *Champions and Rogues* also has one complete set of photos from Champion studios in the original envelope — and the original football jersey worn by the otherwise naked model in the photos. “Thank goodness it was nylon. If it was cotton it would have rotted by now,” laughs Matheson before sighing. “If we only had the jockstrap as well.”



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Little Orphan Tr-Annie

SAMANTHA LAUZON - 2010

There are so many things that worry a girl before her first day of class: I stress about what am I going to wear and whether or not some bitch will have the same Guess bag. In my case, there are special circumstances, since (for lack of a better term) a male to female Transsexual woman means I was born with junk in my front trunk, which means life has never been easy for me.

I transitioned in high school in a dramatic fashion: I began the school year dressed as a man but came back from the Christmas break as a woman. For those few extra cookies, Santa sure had his work cut out for him at my house.

I dropped out of high school when I was 19 to pursue a career in Entertainment, believe it or not. I was a dancer on CityTV's Electric Circus along with some very popular Female Impersonating/Transgender friends of mine.

As fun as that was, there was something inside telling me I deserved better. Hence, the reason I'm heading back to school. What am I taking you ask? Hair Styling, and you know what, I actually see myself succeeding at.

When I go to school, I have to consider the underwear that will be the most comfortable for my tuck. They can't be too tight around the thigh that they cut off my circulation but tight enough to last up to nine hours a day. My preference is Fruit of the Loom children's (girls, of course, with the pretty flowers on them) size 10-12. Yes, that may seem small, but honey, I want to give my teacher an apple, not an unexpected peek-a-boo surprise. I have to look on the bright side, if anyone tells me to go fuck myself, I can always assure them that, considering that my dick is wedged up my ass, I'm already there.

I'm what people call "stealth," meaning they don't generally know I'm a transsexual unless I tell them; however, I have to consider the possibility that someone will "out me" to someone else. So I usually take that power back by telling people that I'm



transgender right off the bat.

It goes a little something like this: In class the other day my girlfriend Joanna asked “So when do you and Alex (my fiancé) plan on having kids?”

“Honey, I can’t have kids. I’m a transsexual” I replied.

The look on her face was priceless.

I wasn’t always this optimistic with life and what I was going through. Like so many of my trans counterparts, I’ve gone through depression and drug addiction but I miraculously have found a way out of that dark place.

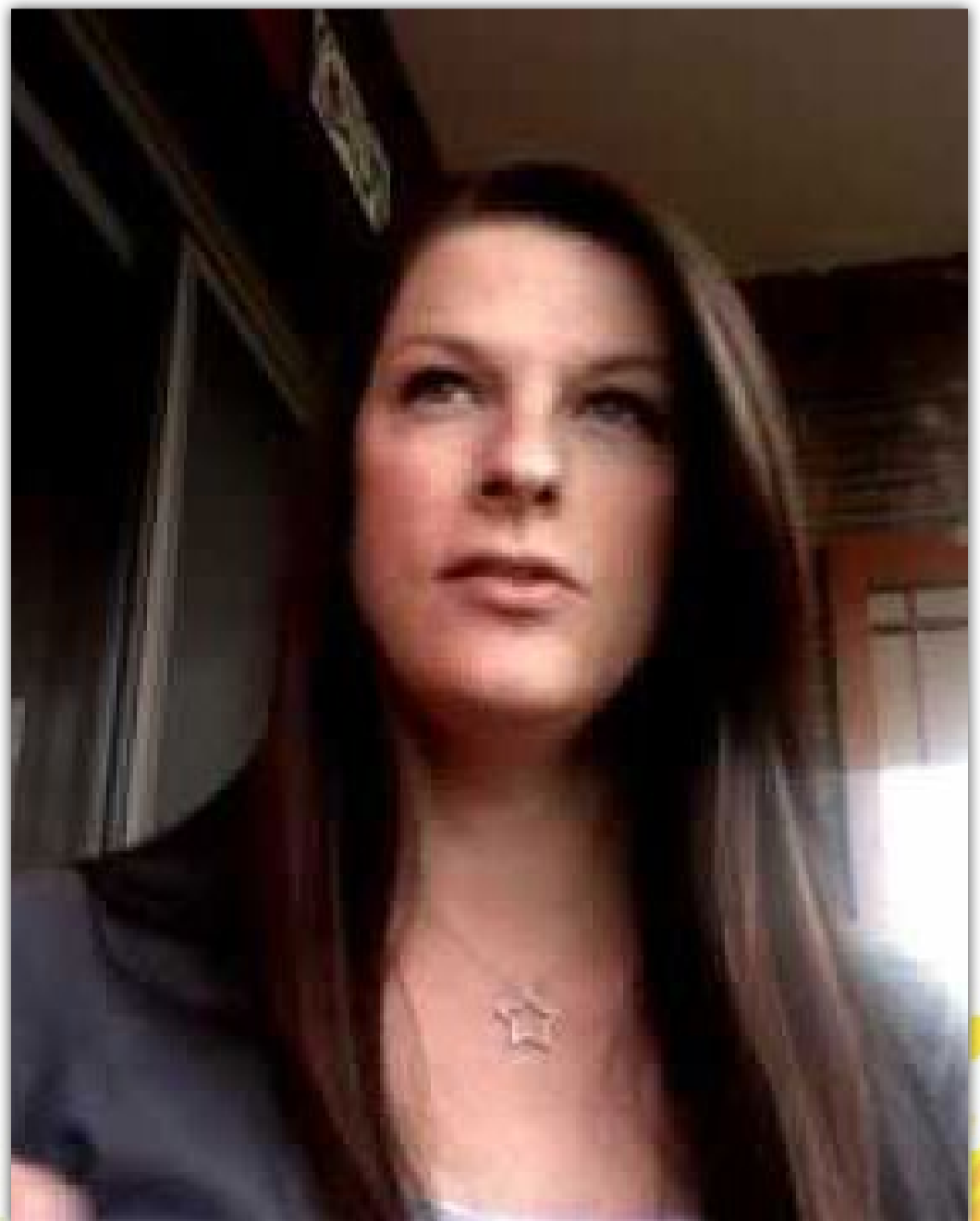
It wasn’t so long ago when I truly believed that the only time a man wanted me, is when he was having sex with me. Well, that’s all changed.

Although the title is “Little Orphan Tr-Annie” I’m coming to realize that I’m not alone anymore. I’ve got my family, my friends and my fiancé who are all rooting for me, and it feels good.

www.youtube.com/user/SamanthaLauzon

To all the GLBTQ youth out there. Wondering when does life get better, wondering why they feel the way they feel and how will the pain ever go away. My babies it’s ok. ONE day maybe not today or tomorrow but ONE day it will get better! Reach out to local GLBTQ agencies in your area or if you live in a small rural community reach out online. There are way’s to “erase” your tracks as to what sites your searching so you can do this safely. My thought’s and prayers go out to the families who lost their LGBTQ angels to soon. Contact The Trevor Project it’s a 24hr toll free number for Gay or Questioning youth. There is help! YOUR NOT ALONE.

www.itgetsbetter.org/video/entry/1565/



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Hawai

SHANNON MCDONOUGH - 2010



Visiting the islands of Maui and Oahu was unlike anything I had ever experienced. The beauty is breathtaking and the people are warm, welcoming and kind. The Polynesian people are very accepting of gays, lesbians and trans folk. They have an expression, "Every family has one" and they have a word for butch lesbians and effeminate men... "Mahu". I like the sound of that. What could be better than a gay friendly, tropical island paradise, I ask you?

My girl and I were looking for a place to escape the Xmas holidays. And since I had seduced her with my stories of heaven on earth it was a no-brainer for us - We were going to Hawaii! Specifically, Oahu and Maui. Hawaii actually consists of hundreds of islands in the South Pacific, but the main 8 islands are Nihau, Kauai, Oahu, Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Kahoolawe and "The Big Island", Hawaii.



With only had 9 days for our vacation, we decided to just hit 2 islands. TIP: If you can swing it, go for 2-3 weeks. You'll want to see and experience it all.

First stop Maui, and the Kaanapali Beach Hotel. www.kbhmaui.com Maui's most Hawaiian hotel. Located on the beach right next to "Black Rock" a beautiful lava formation and a snorkeler's dream. Our first day we spent 2 hours snorkeling, with eels, manta rays, a million tropical fish, sea turtles and when we held our heads under

water, we could hear humpback whales singing. It was heaven! They are serious when they call it Maui's most Hawaiian hotel. Karen and I took a lei making class, taught by a wonderful fellow full of amazing stories about the history of the Hawaiian people. You can take hula lessons, ukulele, basket weaving, you name it. Each and every night there is a live performance of Hawaiian music, and dance...you can't stop swaying they whole time you are there.



We did a couple of day trips out to beautiful beaches and little towns but the best was the "Road To Hana". Hana is located on the East side of Maui and is only accessible by a small winding road through the jungle, bamboo and rain forests and dozens of cascading waterfalls and pools. I have to say it was the highlight of our trip. If you can only do one thing...take this road trip. Leave at 6 or 7 am and plan to be gone all day. (Do as I say and not as I did-we left late and had to rush-then drove back down the winding road in the dark during a flash flood-the colour is just coming back to my knuckles now) Pack your bathing suit, towels, a lunch and your sense of adventure. Every twist and turn on this road takes you to a new and even more beautiful location. My favorite was Wainapanapa Park, hands down. A gorgeous black sand beach surrounded by a lush rain forest and really cool caves to explore. My only disappointment was learning too late that you can actually camp there. What a dream!

I drove Karen nuts because I want to stop and get out and explore every cliff, every waterfall pool, every scenic lookout, every jungle, every blow hole--- So on my next trip to Maui, we are going to rent a camper van and explore all of these wonders at our own pace, without fear of missing anything.

Leaving Maui was painful. We wanted to stay longer but Honolulu was calling. If Maui is the peaceful serene island, then Oahu is the party place. We stayed at the boutique "Hotel Renew" www.hotelrenew.com a beautiful hotel filled with some the most helpful and friendly staff I have ever encountered. Right on Waikiki beach next to the world's most famous volcanic crater "Diamond Head", and right around the corner from "Hula's Bar and Lei Stand"-Hawaii's most famous and longest running gay bar (35 years)-with the best view in the world!



Hula's plays great music, has retro video dance parties, hosts a gay boat cruise on

“The Mai Tai” and even has weekly yoga classes. I mean, c’mon...this place is awesome. We were lucky enough to catch their Xmas show, filled with drag queens and performances by some sexy Tahitian dancers-what a blast.



Now you can't go to Hawaii and not surf-so I booked us a lesson with Jojo from www.gonesurfinghawaii.com and had the time of our lives. Jojo and Kenny are amazing surf instructors. I had surfed a few times on Bump, but Karen had never touched a board before. A quick lesson on the beach, and we were off. We both made it up within a few minutes and surfed the day away. If you have always dreamed of catching a wave, trust me-call Jojo and you will have an amazing day. And you'll be hooked on surfing! (You can book Jojo through the Hotel Renew as well)

Xmas day was our last in Hawaii so we decided to do it up. We spent the morning “snuba”-ing. It's a cross between snorkeling and scuba diving. Perfect for someone who isn't scuba certified but wants to check out the sea life 20 feet below the surface.

We wrapped our day with a cruise on the “Mai Tai”, dancing the hula to Hawaiian Xmas songs with our fellow queers and whale watching.



So all in all, a very gay friendly adventure. Hulas and the cruise were really the only gay specific things we did, but everywhere we went on both Maui and Oahu, we held hands, we kissed and nobody so much as raised an eyebrow...Well none of the locals did, and once the tourists realize they are the only ones starring, they feel stupid and look away... Right on, I love Hawaii. ALOHA



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Baked Goat Cheese With Coconut And Salad Greens

SEAN LEBER - 2011

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 small round of goat cheese (120gr each)
- 4 tablespoons of olive oil
- Balsamic Vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- salt, fresh ground pepper
- 3/4 cup bread crumbs and 3/4 coconut flakes(fine) mixed together
- 1 1/2 large handful of mesclun or mixed salad greens, torn into bite-size pieces, carefully washed and well dried. For salad choose mixture of the greens that include red leaf lettuce, radicchio, butter (Boston) lettuce, arugula, mizuna, mustard greens, oakleaf lettuce, in any combination.



Cut roll of goat cheese horizontally to 4 rounds. Place on a plate and drizzle with olive oil. Use cooking brush to equally distribute oil over all sides of cheese. Set aside to rest for a few minutes.

In a small bowl mix salad dressing by combining balsamic vinegar, garlic, salt and pepper. Set aside.

On the plate spread mixed bread crumbs and coconut flakes mixture. Coat goat cheese rounds with crumbs so all sides covered equally and place on non stick baking sheet. Bake in oven 4-6 minutes till cheese becomes nice with rich gold color.

Place salad greens in bowl, drizzle with dressing. Toss well and divide among 2 plates. Place a hot cheese round in the center of each mound of greens. Serve immediately. Serves 2



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LEE FANCY

Whenever possible, the most environmentally effective choice you can make at the produce counter is to buy local goods. Between the energy and emissions required for transportation, and the pesticides and preservatives often applied to maintain freshness, the apple grown in Ontario leaves a smaller ecological footprint getting to a your kitchen table than one grown in New Zealand, or even in Washington state.

Beyond the environmental impact, it tastes better. Food grown in your region was probably picked in the last few days. Produce flown in from California or overseas has changed ownership three times, traveled more than 4,000 km and is more than a week old. Buying local farm products from Ontario is a vote for sustainable farming communities from Windsor to Thunder Bay and all points in between. Every dollar we spend is an opportunity to add momentum to revive the local farm industry.



Today the number of farms in Ontario that produce food for the market place is down 43% from 1949. Land is being converted to housing or to farms that only produce grains for the fuel industry, which has devastated the Farming industry. Buying local will show the there is still a market for the small town farming.

So when you go to the market keep in mind that every dollar you spend has a direct impact on someone's life. I am sure that there is someone you know who has grown up on a farm; I am from rural Nova Scotia and have seen firsthand how buying local products benefits our region. Please step forward and help preserve a part of our history by keeping farm life alive in Ontario.



MGT MORE





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<p>TUESDAYS</p> <p>MANDY GOODHANDY PRESENTS</p>	<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> <p>STROLLERS PRESENTS</p>	<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> <p>NACKY WOP</p>	<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> <p>Rough Pillows Presents</p>	<p>THURSDAYS</p> <p>EVERY F***ING THURSDAY!</p>	

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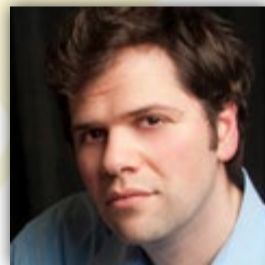
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Paul Bellini is a writer for The Kids in the Hall. He was also a producer for This Hour Has 22 Minutes, and a long-time columnist at Fab Magazine. He currently teaches Sketch Comedy at both Second City and George Brown.



Raymond Helkio - is an author, director and award-winning filmmaker. He cofounded The Reading Salon...



Bil Antoniou - is an actor and play writer. He is also movie reviewer who has been writing for www.myoldaddiction.com



Shannon McDonough is writer, actor and comedian. She is most known as host in LGBT travel series Bump!



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ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

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<https://www.youtube.com/user/mygaytoronto>

The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for 'My Gay Toronto'. At the top left is the YouTube logo with a 'CA' indicator. The search bar contains 'mygaytoronto'. A 'Sign in' button is in the top right. The channel banner features a vibrant, abstract background with yellow and green splatters and the text 'My Gay Toronto' in a large, stylized font. Below the banner, the channel name 'My Gay Toronto' is displayed with a 'Subscribe' button. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Videos', 'Playlists', 'Channels', 'Discussion', and 'About'. The main content area shows a video thumbnail with two people on a boat, with the channel name 'MyGayToronto' overlaid. To the right of the video, the channel name 'MyGayToronto' is listed, along with '41 views 1 month ago' and 'Music by Epidemic Sound (http://www.epidemicsound.com)'. A 'Read more' link is also present.

<https://www.facebook.com/MyGayToronto/>

The Facebook cover photo features a vibrant, abstract background with a rainbow unicorn head on the left. The text 'MyGayToronto.com' is prominently displayed in the upper right, with the tagline 'Toronto's Daily Online & Digital Gay Lifestyle Magazine.' below it. A 'Find us on: facebook.' button is in the bottom right. In the center, there are several 'Like' buttons arranged in a cluster.

<https://twitter.com/mygaytoronto>

The Twitter header image features a vibrant, abstract background with a rainbow unicorn head on the left. The text 'My Gay Toronto.com' is prominently displayed in the center. A 'Search Twitter' bar is in the top right, and a 'Tweet' button is next to it. In the bottom right, there is a 'twitter' logo. A small thumbnail of the website is visible in the bottom left corner.

~~\$69.89~~ \$54.99

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