

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE

MGT

We Know Gay

MY GAY TORONTO

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Superstar Photographer

David Vance



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My GayToronto

SEAN LEBER



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What is your Gay Toronto?

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My Gay Toronto.com

Photo by Matt Klopot

TRAVIS WALL'S

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Getting intimate with Raw Studio and Buster's designer Ed Velasquez

DREW ROWSOME

"Jockstraps are my most popular selling, most comfortable, most everything," says Ed Velasquez, the designer of the underwear lines Raw Studio and Buster. "Believe it or not, second to that would be my cock rings or, how to put this, sort of push-up bras for your junk. Everything is up and out but they're comfortable, they don't leave lines. You can go commando and still have a little bit of support and it just feels like you're more of yourself."

Velasquez explains that, "There are two looks. Raw Studio is for the gay man of any age who has their sexuality under control, they know who they are. They're confident and they want products that make them feel that way. And make them look good. Buster is more of a sports casual, not so fetishy, not so sexually charged. More practical, more cotton-based, something you can wear on a daily basis. Raw Studio is racy and sexy, Buster is comfort casual."

Comfort is crucial for Velasquez.

"I'm usually inspired by the fabric.

Predominantly I use European fabrics, micro-fibres, laser-cut out fabrics. It's about the tactile quality. I figure if it's something that close to your body, it really should feel nice. Once I have it, I start playing around and trying different things. I try to design something that is comfortable to wear and feels good when it's on. Especially some of the kinky wear, you want it to fit a certain way and have that look but at the same time there's nothing worse than wearing something that feels uncomfortable. It's owning that piece and that piece owning you. When I'm creating the first design, the prototype, I'm the first person wearing it. Do I like it? I run it through the test of wearing it all day long. If it feels great and comfortable, it has my approval. If it doesn't perform the way I want it to perform, I scrap it and start all over again. I am my own best customer."





So Velasquez is always walking around in something brand new and kinky?

"Yes," he laughs. "That's never been a problem." He's particularly proud of "the strapless ones, I started calling them "the sock" many years ago, there's a pouch that holds everything in. It's designed in a way that it's comfortable, you can move around and not pop out, do sports and everything. It holds everything together. It's actually an amazing design when you don't want underwear lines or you're wearing something semi-see-through and still want a little bit of support."

Does he have a personal favourite among his designs?

"I'm more of a jockstrap sort of guy because of comfort, breathability, freedom of motion, and support. And they're hot." Looking and feeling good are almost as important as comfort and Velasquez gets an extra kick out of his product. "I don't know how to say this without painting myself like a total perv. I find it extremely alluring to know that someone values my designs enough to buy them. And it's hot to know that people are walking around wearing something that I've made and designed and possibly even touched. For me that's a bit of a turn-on."



JockstrapCentral



JockstrapCentral





Though a one-man underwear entrepreneur, Velasquez's designs are easy to find. "JockstrapCentral.com is the main sales outlet but I also sell out of The Men's Room on Church Street and their Montreal store. I finally have a website where people will be able to find me directly which is rawstudiodesigns.com. There will be a lot of new products. Jockstrap Central, who've become good friends over the years, have a specific target market, so I've been designing predominantly with them in mind. With my own website it's more of a free-for-all and an expanding, the same stuff I've been covering but also one-of-a-kind pieces and catering to a different sort of demographic. With Raw Studio and also Buster, I'm trying to cover both sides of a coin because I don't think any man is completely one or the other. We gay men do like our underwear and we do tend to show them off more."

rawstudiodesigns.com

More from Ed Velasquez at drewrowsome.blogspot.com



JockstrapCentral





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Two Sopranos, a Mezzo and One Bitch Diva

RAYMOND HELKIO



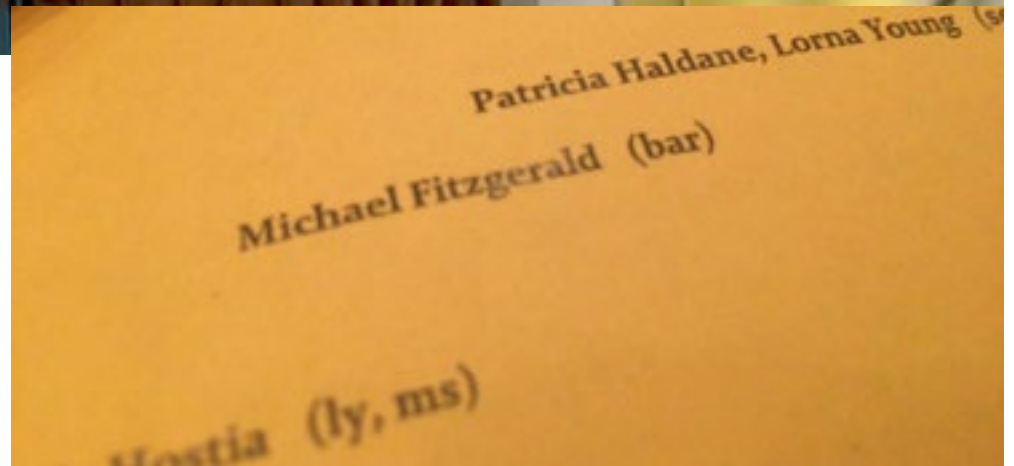
Michael Fitzgerald is legendary in the performing arts community. His alter ego, Bitch Diva, have helped transform him into a force to be reckoned with. He is widely known for his sharp-witted tongue and pitch-perfect voice, which he often uses in place of the more traditional lip synching. From aria's to cabaret, Micheal is as talented as he is entertaining and recently I caught up with him (in boy drag) just before his performance at Teeming With Song (think: Bach to Bernstein), a concert in which he was doing what he does best, baritone.

Ray: Tell me about tonight's show, Teeming With Song?

Bitch: It's a concert put on by a group I'm in called The Castle Frank House of Medley. Tonight will be two sopranos a mezzo and me. We sing as an ensemble and perform duets and shit like that.

What are you most excited about?

Remembering all my words.



What do you know now that you wish you had known before you started your drag career?

How to put on eyelashes.

What can we expect from your upcoming show at Club 120?

It's a cabaret show with a Christmas twist show and a couple of surprise guests. It's fun show and the last one was a blast with jazz, musical theatre standards and classical numbers.

The Bitch Is Back! - Bitch Diva at 120 Diner
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6 till 8pm
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Tom Hearn and The Miracle on Mercer Street

PAUL BELLINI



Tom Hearn is a happening young comedian. He is currently in the cast of The Sketchersons, who do a new show every Sunday night; he's in a troupe with Erica Gellert called Tom and Erica, which won Best Ensemble at a recent Fringe fest; he runs an improv group called Kinsey Fail; he's one of the nominees for this year's Tim Sims Encouragement Fund; and, he's gay.

Tom is also starring in Second City's upcoming Christmas show, Miracle on Mercer Street. Written and directed by Reid Janisse, it's a puppet show that tells the story of a real live 13-year-old girl who spends the winter holiday visiting her grandmother in the town of Holidale. But the town is being torn apart as the residents clash over their different traditions, and by a dastardly mayor's plan to chop down the town's oldest tree. Can the townspeople come together to save the tree, and enjoy the holidays in peace?

But back to Tom. "I've done theatre my whole life," he tells me over phone. "I bring an LGBT flavour to the stage. Getting gay people on stage is kind of my thing. Any time I get to present a sketch with a bit of flair, I do. I'm still learning how far I can push it." Case in point - when he started his LGBTQ improv show Kinsey Fail, he thought it was amazing that there were eight other members. "Now it's up to 25," he exclaimed. "Our audience, too, is largely gay, which is a different sort of audience than Bad Dog Theatre usually gets." Any plans to bring the show to the Village? "We've done shows at Glad Day. It's fun to do shows in the Village, to be in a room where everyone is queer."

Meanwhile, he's delighted to be entertaining children this Christmas with Miracle on Mercer Street. "It's a sweet little play, about diversity and celebrating differences, and it's family-oriented. I like kids. They give you an honest reaction, plus this type of story is important for them to hear."

Miracle on Mercer Street runs from Dec. 16 to January 5, 2018 at the Second City MainStage, 51 Mercer Street, Toronto

Tickets: <https://www.secondcity.com/shows/toronto/showstorontomiracle-mercerc-street/>

Trans Artist Epiphany Mattel's New Single: #FIXYOFACE

RAYMOND HELKIO

Epiphany Mattel's new single #FIXYOFACE takes aim at pretty people who make themselves ugly by refusing to wear the most important accessory, a smile. Epiphany explains, ***"It's about everyone going above and beyond with their appearance to stand out and be noticed at clubs today, but then they bring their scowl, a resting bitch face, that makes them unapproachable,"*** explains Mattel. ***"They're so insecure with themselves, they push that negative energy on the rest of the party and make everyone else uncomfortable. It's a party bitches... lighten the hell up."***



Epiphany Mattel is raw, unapologetic, and provocative. She stirs pots and fixes plates by speaking her truth and not caring if people receive it or not, as long as they hear her. ***"It's important to me that people know my name, respect my mind and acknowledge my existence,"*** she says. ***"Who's gonna believe I'm a star if I don't believe it myself? I am a bad-bitch force to be reckoned with. You may not know it yet and that's cool for now because in time, you will."***

Epiphany Mattel grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. Her parents raised her to be confident and speak her mind, that is, until she told them that she was a girl. Her mother, a devout Baptist, took the religious "God doesn't make mistakes" and "let's pray the demon out" path, sending Epiphany to priests, psychiatrists and other medical professionals to fix the problem. Her father's approach was more physical. He sought to beat the trans out of Epiphany and would tease, taunt and shame her. At one point, he even shaved her head.



Most surprisingly, her father was a gay man who harbored a strong hate towards transgendered people. He viewed them as freaks, criminals and sexual deviants. ***"He would say to me, 'if you are gay, that's fine, I can help you with that, but why in hell do you wanna be one of those things?'"***

Once puberty hit, Epiphany left home and sought refuge in the hood where she learned about street code and survival. She became a dangerous beauty, a chameleon concerned with creating her own lane rather than trying to fit into a predetermined space someone else chose to place her in. #FIXYOFACE is available on iTunes.

Veronica's latest single is on the Money

RAYMOND HELKIO

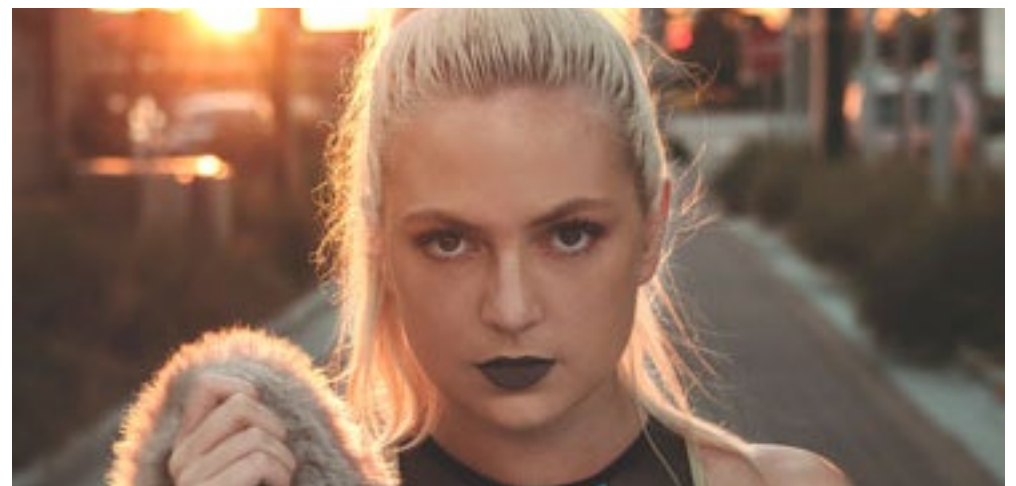


"Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it."

—Veronica Rinomato

Only a few stations in and around Toronto are playing Money yet it's already number six in Quebec's Top 100 Anglophone chart with over 50 Francophone radio stations playing the song in Canada. My Gay Toronto's Raymond Helkio interviewed Veronica about her latest single, mentorship and the value of selective friendships.

Veronica: *The weekend we wrote Money, 4Korners the Raptors DJ hit me up and told me he was playing one of my songs at the ACC. My producer and I bought tickets and went down to hear him play our song in front of 20,000 people! So were incredibly stoked about that. Then I went to a after-party with 4Korners and he played my song again and I performed it with him at Masion Mercer. During that time my producer went to the studio and created the beat for Money and the next day I went in, we wrote the song, recorded it. and BAM! The lyrics and melodies flowed through me so easily.*



What was the most challenging part about creating the video for "Money?" *We drove down to Miami to shoot "Money." The drive definitely wasn't easy nor were some of the shoot locations. We didn't receive permits to shoot or anything like that, so we walked around everywhere finding the coolest spots filled with beautiful pieces of art and meet some amazing people. Almost got our car towed a couple times, but all in all it was worth it.*

Who is your mentor? *My dad is my mentor. He has become a very successful business man and I've learned a lot from him on how to handle myself as a professional and be the best at what I do. He is constantly pushing me to become a better artist and a young boss everyday.*

What do you know now that you wish someone had told you when you started your career? *To limit the people you trust. You don't need everyone to be your friend and you don't owe anyone anything.*

PHOTOGRAPHER DAVID VANCE GRACES THE COVER OF MGT

David Vance

DREW ROWSOME

David Vance's photographs are instantly recognizable and, as even he has to admit, very influential. You may not know his name, but you will recognize his style and many of the images. His specialty is in making a subject beautiful, ravishing, and extremely desirable. For the celebrities he photographs, that is a demand, for the models who appear in his books and artwork, it is an honour. Vance is also surprisingly self-deprecating, smart and sassy, and took considerable time to not only give us insight into his art but to choose personal favourite photographs to illustrate his thoughts.

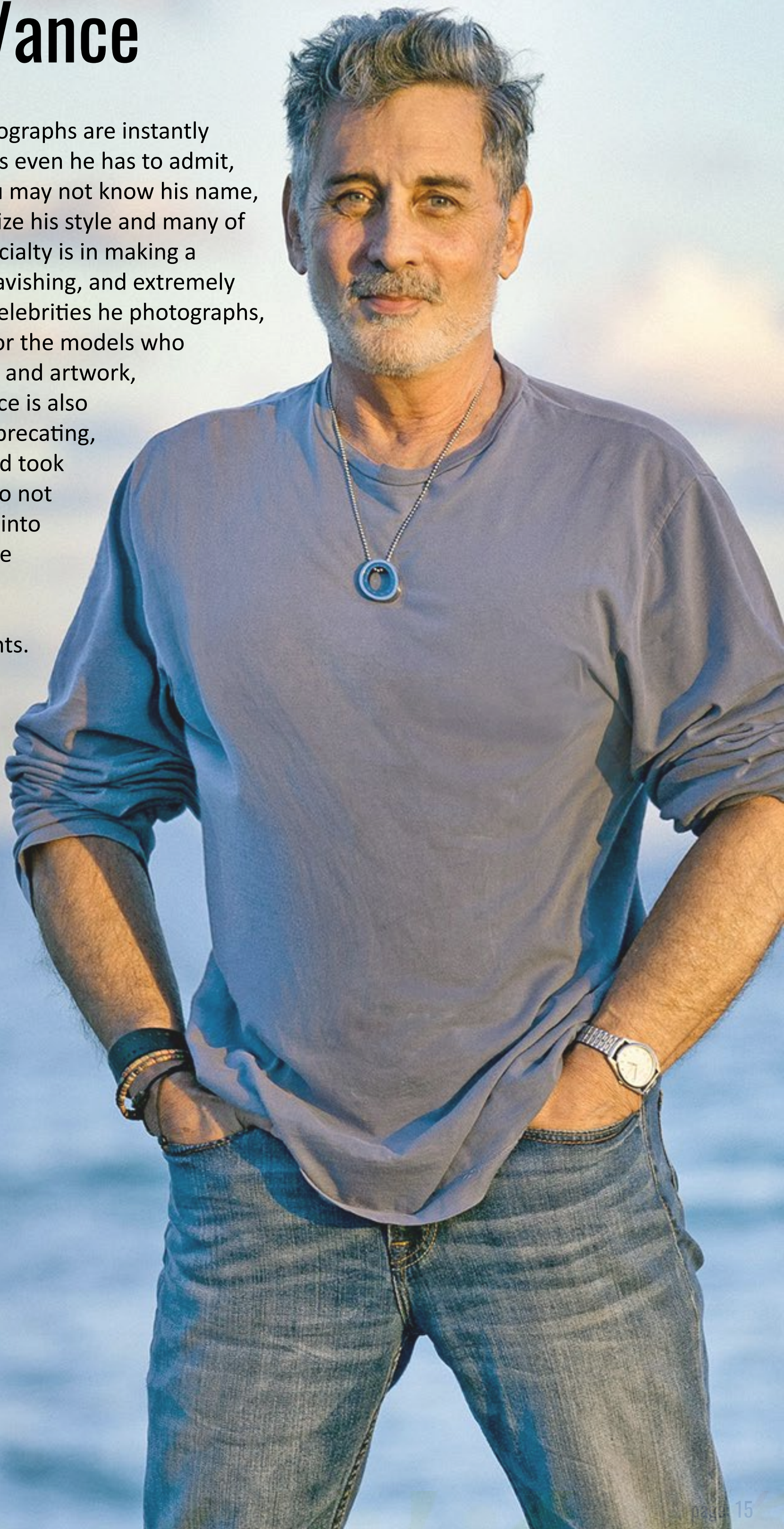




photo by David Vance ©

What inspired you to become a photographer?

David Vance:

As a child of 10, I was interested in art. Drawing, painting, etc were my favourite pastimes. By the time I was 14, my parents began to worry that I would pursue that as a career and end up a "starving artist." They bought me a darkroom kit and veered my interest toward photography. I concurrently met a photographer whose portraits looked like paintings and was swayed in that direction. He used a technique that was developed in the 1930s which incorporated selective chemical toning and watercolor. I began to emulate his technique and light.



How does the approach to your commercial work differ from your personal work?

For many years I did work for advertising agencies where I was subject to the demands of art directors. It was lucrative, but didn't arouse me in the way my portrait and figure work did. It was more homogenized and less artistic. My favourite was editorial work where I had more control of the art direction. Now my commercial work is mostly public relations portraits and personal portraits so it corresponds more closely with my personal work.

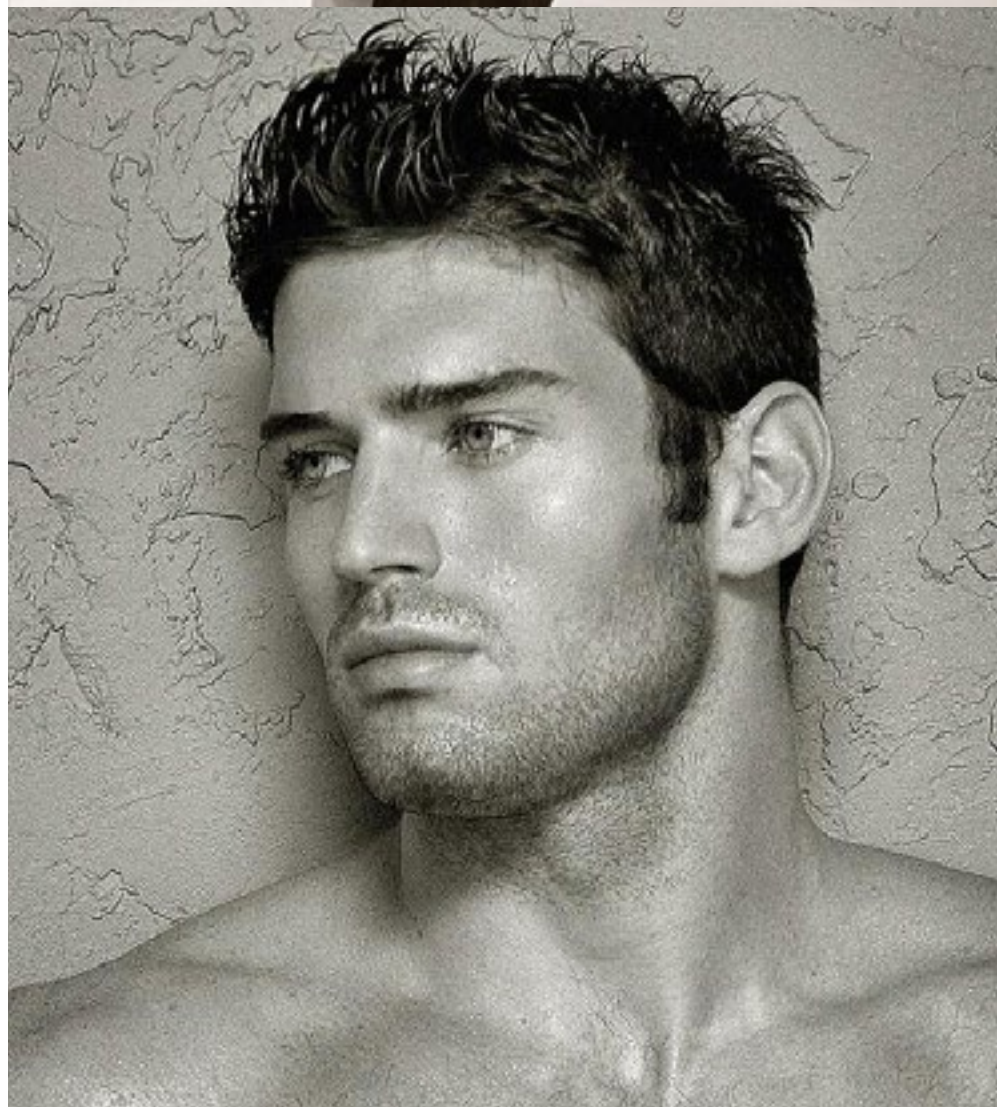




photo by David Vance ©

There is a consistency to the models in your male photography. What do you look for in a model?

When it comes to models, I have very eclectic taste.. I love a pretty face. Faces have always been my primary visual attraction. If the body is exceptional but the face is not at least interesting, I lose interest. Other than that, and equally important for an ongoing muse-type relationship, I have to connect with the model. There has to be electricity. Some call it rapport. I don't know what it is exactly but it's a kind of fire that keeps the inspiration alive.



What qualities make a photograph erotic?

This is an age old quandary. I don't think there is a single correct answer. What's erotic to me may not be to someone else. It's personal and individual, kind of like "beauty is in the eye of the beholder."



What gives a photograph that quality that makes it art?

It needs to be evocative. If it doesn't muster some emotion in the viewer, it fails.



When shooting nudes, how do you make the model comfortable?

This is a question that I almost always get in interviews... The sad truth is that some people who don't know me, hold me in high esteem or put me on some creative pedestal, but actually I am very real. That is to say more specifically, I am funny and clumsy. Once I've tripped over equipment or cords a couple of times. all the pretense disappears and we are all on the same playing field with the same goal: to make beautiful images. That being said, many of the men I shoot are fitness models who are already comfortable with their bodies.

Which photographs are you most proud of?

*I don't really know how to answer that. I love all my children equally. I do have some favourites, I guess, but I've been doing this for so many years that it's too difficult to choose. I am particularly fond of a photo I took early on. It was in my first book, *Visions*. I think it's in the forefront of my consciousness because I just got blocked on Facebook for a month because of it. I shot it in 1973. Eight years later Annie Leibovitz did the famous photo of John and Yoko that was on the cover of the *Rolling Stone* which was very similar. Maybe I was an inspiration...*

*I am also very fond of the images in *The Woods* book because they are close to my heart.*





photo by David Vance ©

What advice would you give an aspiring photographer?

The best advice I ever got was from a professor in my first year at the Rochester Institute of Technology. He told us the best thing we could do with our camera at this point was to put it in a drawer, then go out and experience life. See a play, a film, get laid... it's your life experience that creates your point of view, that makes you an individual and that's what makes your work unique.

Is it more difficult to shoot celebrities than models?

I don't think one is more difficult than the other. I work best one on one. Where I have run into difficulty is when there is interference from agents and publicists.

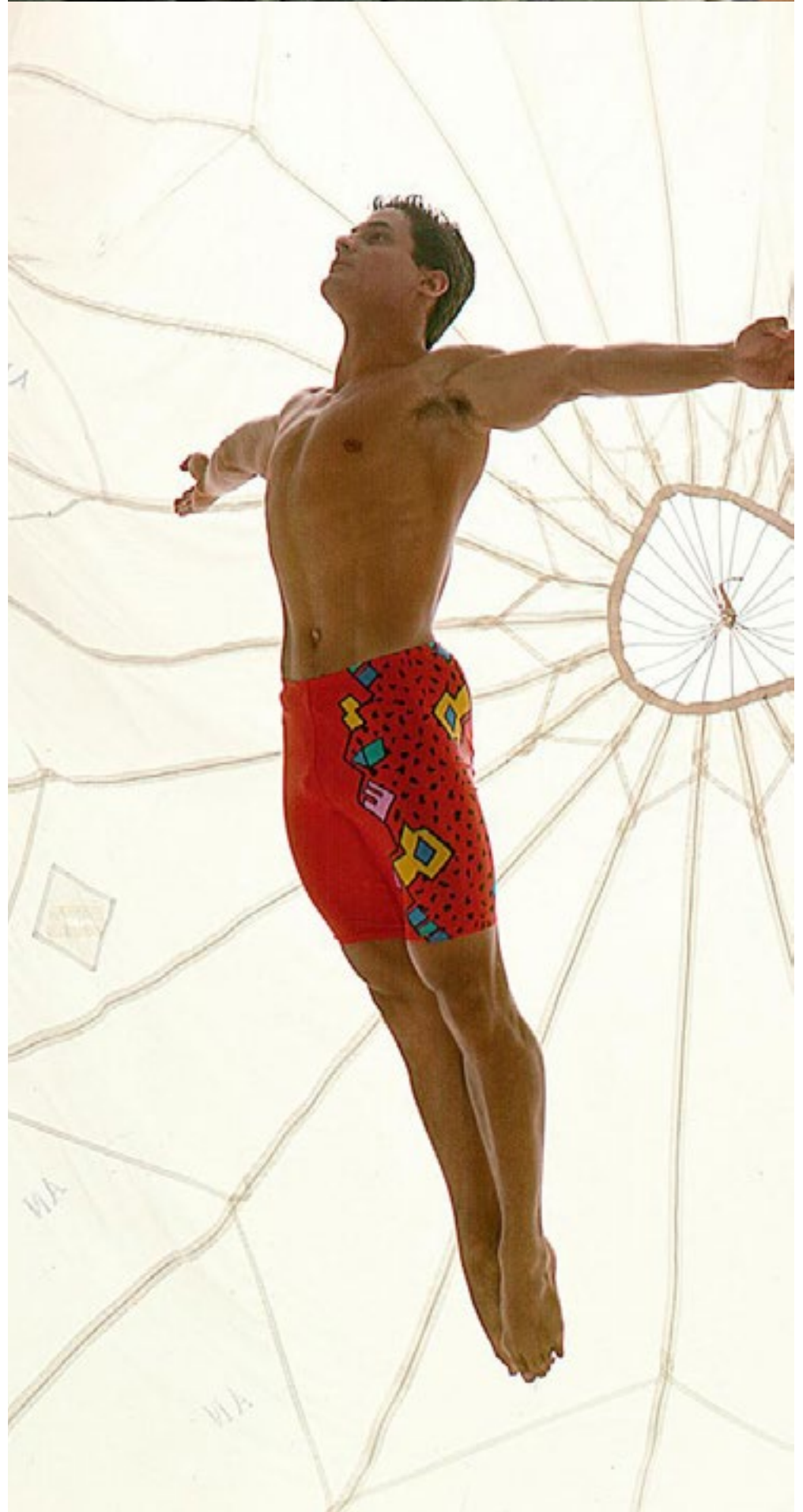
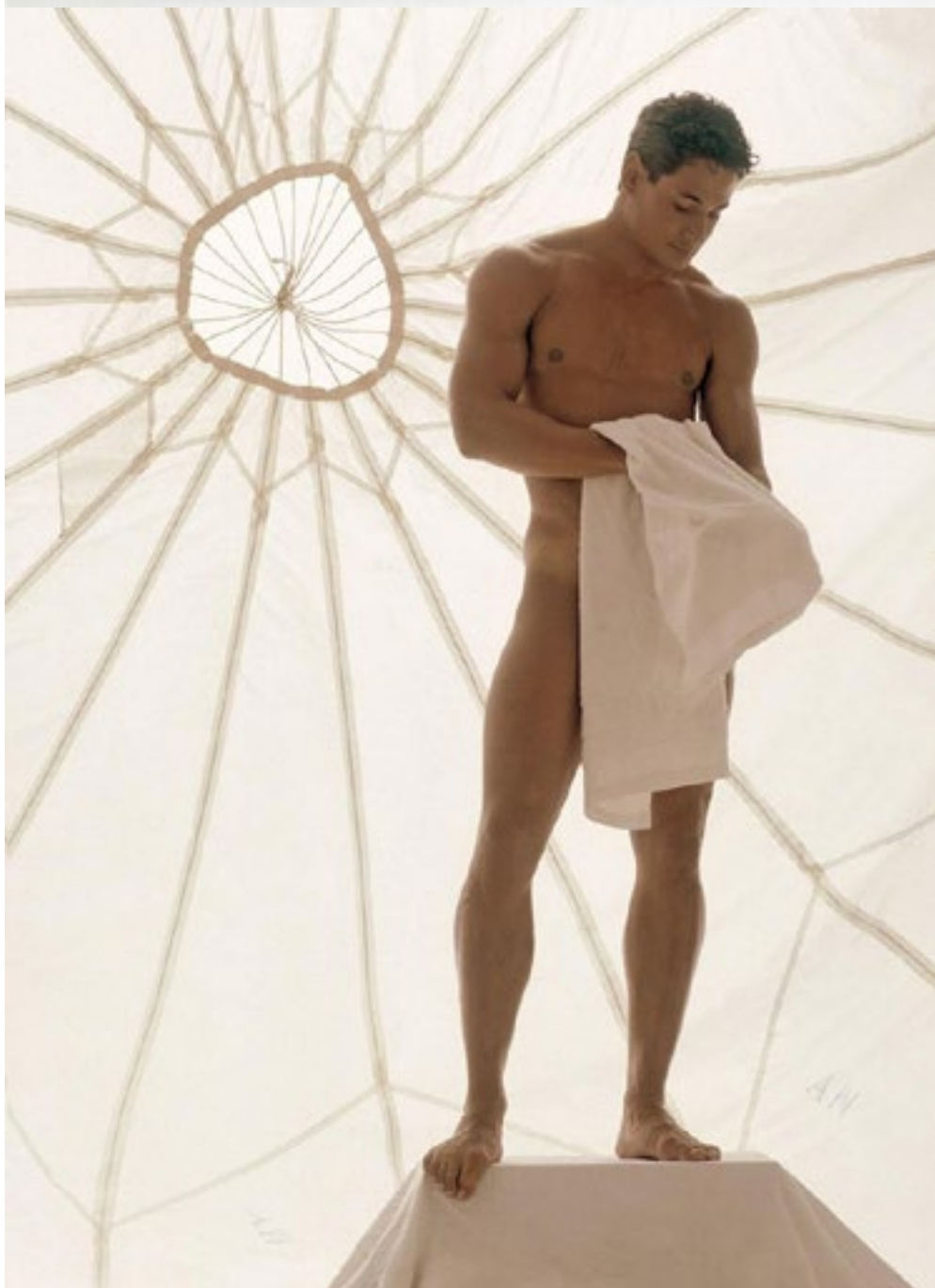
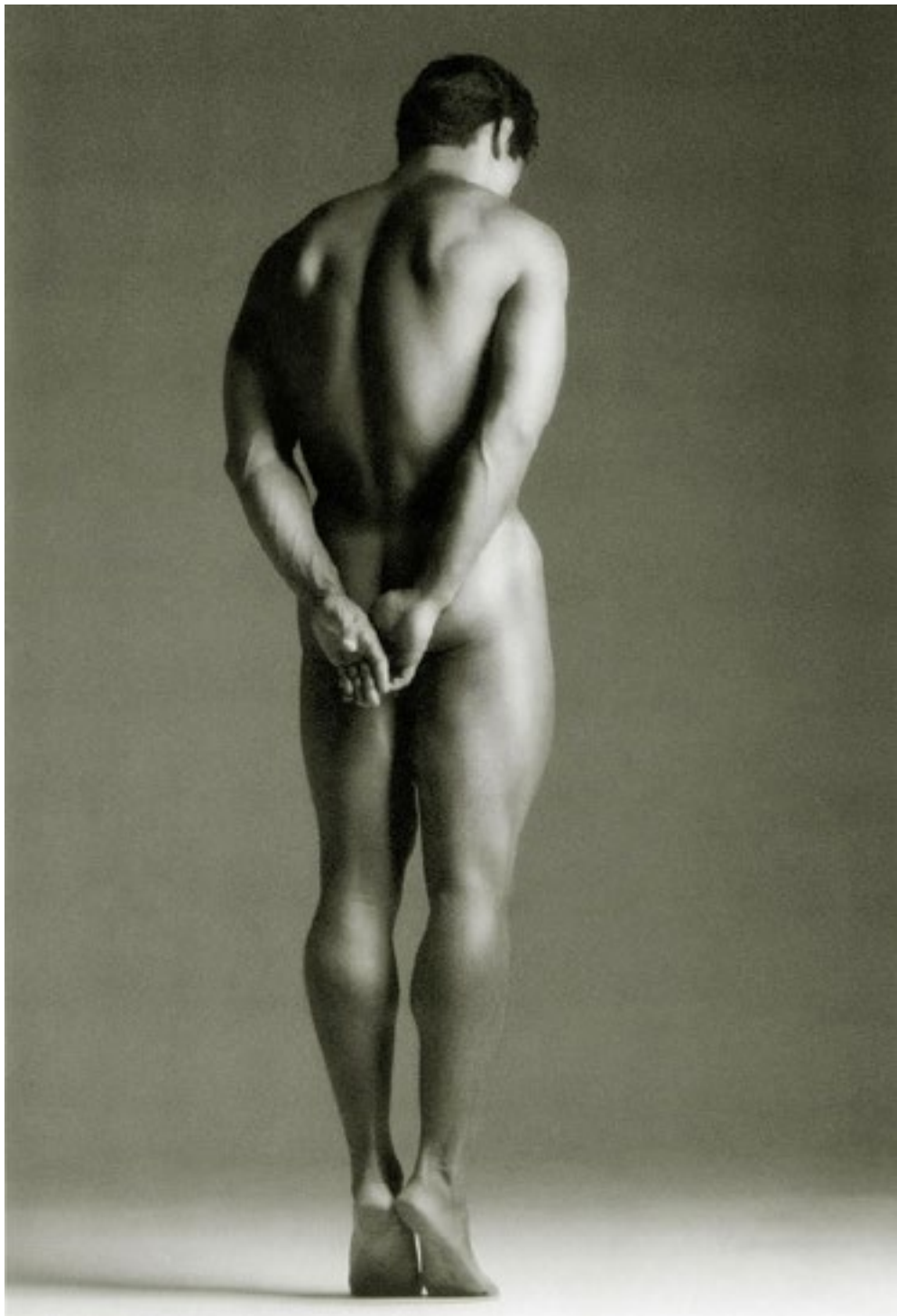
You have many photographs featuring dancers. Are dancers more inspiring to work with?

The best! I love dancers, gymnasts, aerialists, athletes, basically anyone who can move gracefully and has command of their body.



What celebrity was your favourite to shoot?

I have photographed Olympic gold medalist Greg Louganis a couple of times, once in LA for Exercise For Men Only, and once in my studio in Miami and on location for Playgirl. He is a really humble, wonderfully talented human being.



My most gratifying experience has been with singer Dionne Warwick who I have photographed since 1982. She is a strong personality, she knows her brand and what she likes and doesn't. We have great fun together and have become friends over the years. When she comes for a session she always likes to have a bacon burger which she makes in my kitchen. We have made so many memorable photos that I made a special book to commemorate our collaboration.

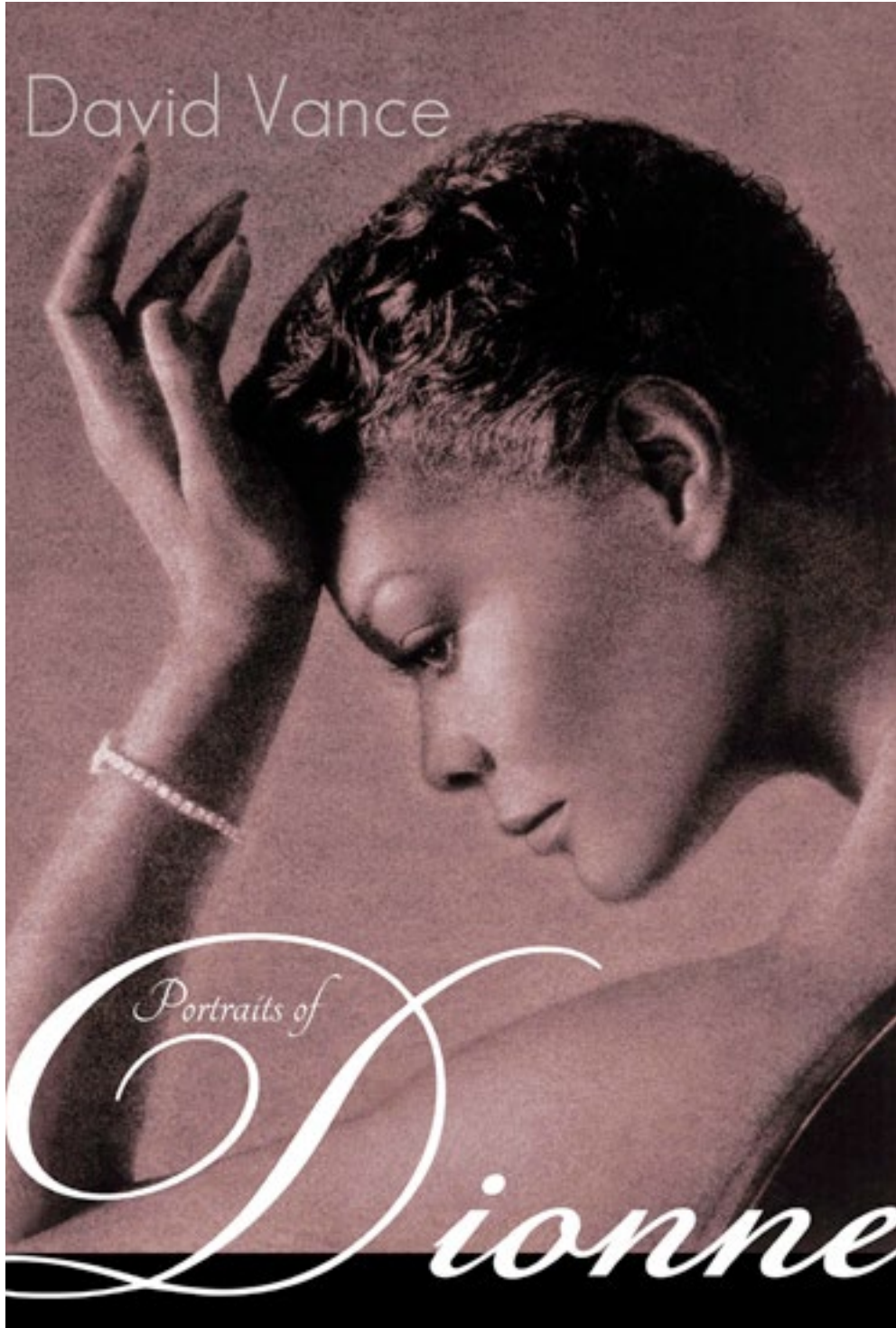




photo by David Vance ©

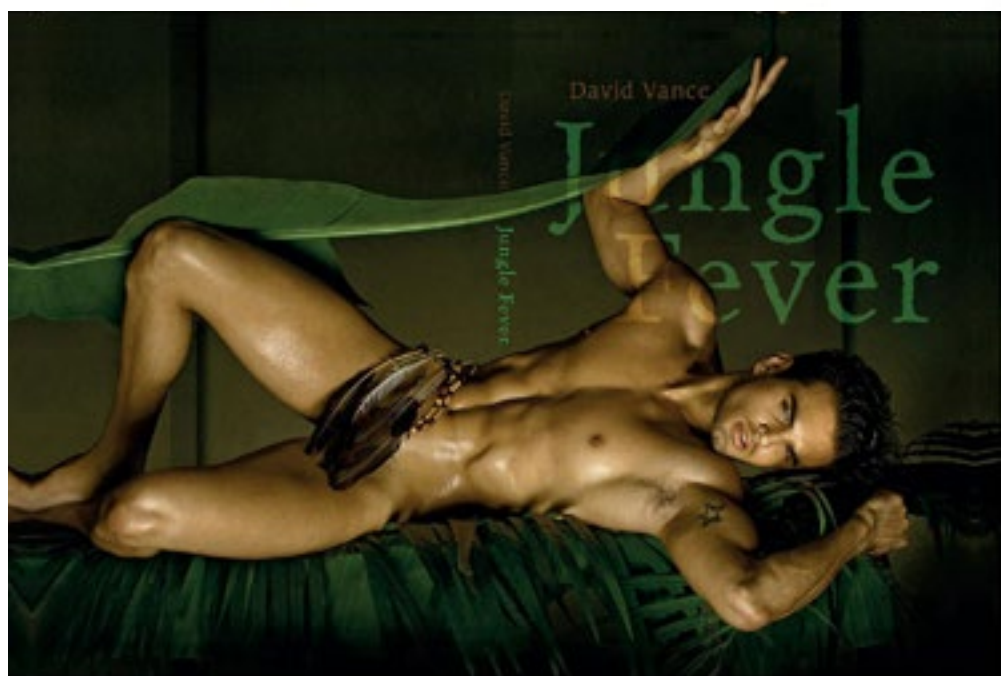
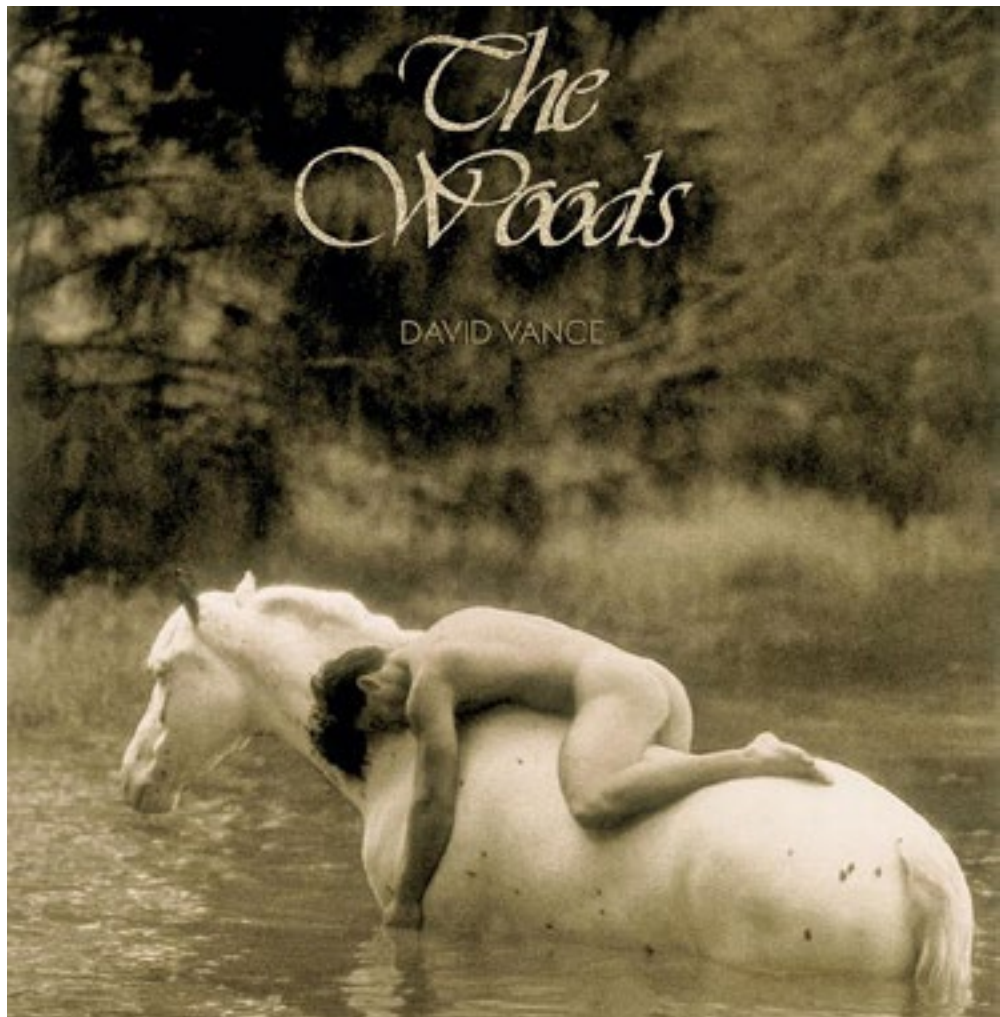
What was your worst or funniest celebrity experience? They can remain anonymous...

My worst experience was shooting was with Lil Wayne who was two days late. It was a shoot for the cover of a trade magazine celebrating the 50 anniversary of The Hit Factory recording studio. We had to shoot in sections because everyone wasn't available at the same time. When he finally showed up he was difficult and really unfriendly. He didn't even shake my hand when we were introduced.



You have had 11 books of photography published. Which is your favourite?

Of course I love all my children equally. I will admit that I am partial to The Woods book and also Jungle Fever that I self published.



Several of your books have sold out their printings. What is the best way for our readers to explore your earlier work?

My first two books, Visions and The Ultimate Book of Nudes - not my title - are out of print but may be available on ebay. For The Woods book I have created a second edition that is available on demand in hard and soft cover versions as well as eBook at blurb.com/b/857466-the-woods

Does having your work so available on the internet enhance your profile as a photographer?

I suppose. I can tell people to google me and there are a lot of my images.

Does it give you pride?

I have pride in my work but it's nice to share it with the world.

How does it affect your business?

I think being so readily available it waters down the value of the images. I would prefer that people buy my books and prints.





DAVID
VANCE
2017

What would be your dream shoot?

Photographing Barack Obama. Maybe the whole family. I have great respect for them and the image they project to the rest of the world.

As an iconic photographer, many of your images are instantly recognizable as your work. Which photographers do you admire?

At first I was drawn mostly to portraiture and I loved the work of the Hollywood photographers of the 1930s, especially George Hurrell. When I started leaning more toward fashion, I was particularly influenced by the work of Richard Avedon.



If there is anything else that you feel our readers should know?

There is a general misconception that I only photograph pretty people and models. That's not true. I am available for private and personal photos of anyone who is interested in commissioning me.

Also while I appreciate the positive response my images receive on social media, I am particularly grateful to those who actually purchase my books and prints. It allows me to continue doing the work I love.

Please visit my websites:

davidvanceprints.com

davidvancephotographer.blogspot.com

blurb.com/user/dmvance

and for those who are on a budget I have posted many of my images on
redbubble.com/people/dmvance.

David Vance can also be found on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Model Mayhem and at davidvance.com





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David's new book Emotions 2018
is great holiday gift for your
loved one.

Signed copies of the book are
available on David's website
in the book gallery.

www.davidvanceprints.com

David Vance

EMotion 2018



GMÜNDER



Top Destinations for LGBTQ Snowbirds

[JILL WYKES - SNOWBIRDADVISOR.CA](http://JILL.WYKES-SNOWBIRDADVISOR.CA)

As some of our readers have pointed out, a small but significant number of Canadian snowbirds come from the LGBTQ community, and while LGBTQ snowbirds share many of the same needs and concerns as all snowbirds, they also have some more specific needs and concerns that must be considered when choosing where to travel.

Accordingly, we convened a panel of LGBTQ snowbirds to learn more about their needs, concerns and preferred destinations and share their destination tips below with other LGBTQ snowbirds.

Of course, not all members of this community will necessarily limit themselves to gay-friendly destinations but our research shows that the majority will.

Most gay men and women we interviewed during our research said that finding a like-minded community and feeling safe were very important in choosing a destination.

As one panelist put it: "Being gay is definitely a strong factor in choosing our snowbird destination - in two senses: we want a place which is "gay-friendly" in terms of its attitude toward gay people, and a place where other gay people and gay-oriented businesses and services are likely to be found.

This means that we are more inclined to choose larger urban centers like Honolulu, or



gay-oriented destinations like Puerto Vallarta."

He added: "Frankly, speaking for myself, my being gay is probably the dominant feature in guiding my choices for retirement travel."

A gay woman we spoke to had this to say: "Most LGBT prefer a social community but there are big differences based on age, just like with straight seniors. All LGBT will look for tighter village communities with high walk scores and seldom pick remote all-inclusive resorts or big box mall, suburban locales. A pet friendly score is a #1 way to determine if an area is friendly as gay people in general prefer 'pet friendly' communities."

Safety is a primary concern for everyone we spoke to. Here's what one panelist said: "When scouting out the perfect vacation spot, it's imperative that you consider the laws of the land and choose wisely. We opt to always travel to countries which absolutely protect the rights and privileges for all its citizens. For us personally, LGBTQ equality and anti-discrimination laws are mandatory."



Florida offers a variety of LGBTQ-friendly destinations

Overall, Florida has lots to offer the LGBTQ community seeking a relatively safe and supportive environment.

There are a wide variety of accommodations to suit every budget, from quaint B&Bs to apartment and condo rentals to funky resorts with unique amenities - and the safe, friendly and accepting atmosphere all LGBTQ need.

Here are some favourite Florida destinations among LGBTQ snowbirds:

Ft. Lauderdale

Ft. Lauderdale on Florida's Atlantic coast has long been a beacon for gay men in particular. There is a thriving community here and the population grows each winter as more and more LGBTQ arrive.

The Sebastian Beach area of Fort Lauderdale's many fine beaches features a gay enclave of boutique hotels in vintage mid-century modern style and several well-equipped B&Bs. The Royal Palm Hotel & Spa is an excellent resort within walking distance to the beach. It features amazing amenities in a private, fenced compound, which include spa services and a clothing optional pool.

The Fort Lauderdale Beach area has numerous bars, restaurants and shops and there's something to suit everyone's budget.

Adjacent to Fort Lauderdale is the city of Wilton Manors. This sprawling area is a mix of vintage 1950s bungalows, unique condo developments and new-build mansions. Located on the Intercoastal canals which are famous for the seasonal migration of Manatee, Wilton Manors has the second largest population of LGBTQ in the U.S. outside San Francisco. From leather to dance, country to piano bar, there's a wide selection of gay/lesbian bars to suit everyone's taste. The Sunday Gospel Revival Brunch is one of the most popular venues in town.

South Beach, Miami

Another popular enclave is the South Beach area of Miami Beach. This Art Deco lover's paradise, with its architectural gems of the 1930's glamour and style is home to the iconic mansion of Versace.

There are parties and events held frequently for the LGBTQ community, "often at the trendy and always-packed Palace Bar, at the 12th Street Beach off famous Collins Drive" our panelist advises. Nearby Lincoln Road is a pedestrian mall lined with shops, restaurants, entertainment and countless art galleries and street performers.

During the internationally-known annual Art Basel Fine Art Festival, international celebrities invade South Beach.

Because of its creative and artsy vibe, SoBe is the place to see and be seen and remains one of the more LGBTQ-friendly areas of Florida.



St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg on Florida's Gulf coast has a considerable resident population of both gay men and gay women. There is definitely a sense of community with various events and celebrations for the LGBTQ crowd and this has made St. Pete's a draw for LGBTQ snowbirds.

One panelist has a recommendation in St. Pete's: "In St. Petersburg, Florida, we'd recommend The Flamingo Resort. Once a Holiday Inn in an older part of the city, its new owners have created a private oasis for both local and visiting LGBTQ. It features a country bar, a disco dance floor and small leather bar. The property is completely fenced off from prying eyes so patrons feel safe and free to be themselves. They're focused on offering a diverse slate of themed parties year-round and have quickly become the destination of choice for many communities in the surrounding area."

Tampa

Also in Florida, Tampa is another Gulf coast port city with a long history of gay-friendly and safe surroundings. The former Cuban cigar factory area known as Ybor City features the famous Hamburger Mary's franchise. This iconic restaurant and bar is the quintessential arena for drag queen performers and their fans. It features daily shows of the top entertainers in the US and is home to one of RuPaul's Drag Race, Season 3 finalist Alexis Mateo.

Key West

Key West has a well-known reputation for its gay friendly atmosphere. It has long been a haven for artists, writers and gay-cation goers who seek the calm, relaxing pace of the Keys.

It is home to established gay venues such as The Bourbon Street Pub and exotic accommodations like The Island House and The Equator are popular places to stay. Key West is expensive and not for those vacationing on a budget. Key West is also home to the "0 Mile Marker", where the USA begins.

Out West

Palm Springs

One of the oldest havens for LGBTQ, Palm Springs has an established gay community as well as an annual winter influx of LGBTQ that is growing each year. Seasonal flights from Canada are available in the winter months.

The laid back casual atmosphere is a backdrop to the many boutiques and specialty stores in the Uptown Arts and Antique District on North Palm Canyon Drive, catering to the many gay residents, who now number about 50% of the population. This is thought to be the highest per-capita gay population in the U.S.

Palm Springs has many events throughout the year including the International Film Festival, Cinema Diverse (the gay and lesbian film festival), the Nabisco Classic (formally the Dinah Shore Classic) and of course - the White Party.



The city's annual Gay Pride Festival is a huge event with live entertainment, food and dancing at the many gay bars on Arenas Street. Halloween is another big event in Palm Springs. On Thursday evenings, Palm Canyon Drive becomes a pedestrian zone with a weekly street festival.

Honolulu

Honolulu is another mecca for LGBTQ in the winter months, but it is expensive, so not for everyone.

Fabulous Waikiki Beach is a big draw, along with the many bars, restaurants and amenities that this big city has to offer.

Once in Honolulu, it is easy to island hop and explore the Hawaiian Islands, as well as rent a car to explore the North Shore and coastline of Oahu.

Monthly rentals in Honolulu are more costly than most destinations, so be prepared to downsize to a studio or bachelor condo.

Flights are available from Vancouver and Calgary, with connections from other parts of Canada.

Mexico

Puerto Vallarta

This resort town has been a popular destination for gay men in particular for decades. Many choose to rent near the downtown area in condos or rental apartments.

The cost of living is relatively inexpensive and there is a sizeable LGBTQ community here in the winter months.

This port city is also home to visiting Atlantis Cruise lines, where boatloads of 3,000+ gay men disembark for a night of partying at local watering holes.

One Giant Step for Government, One Small Step for HIV Criminalization

RAYMOND HELKIO



Coinciding with World AIDS Day, today's announcement (December 1, 2017) from the Ontario government, sanctioned by Public Health Agency of Canada, is a plan to limit prosecution of HIV non-disclosure cases. While this is a step in the right direction it's hardly the ideal way to respond to HIV, or any illness.

Under the current law, not disclosing one's HIV+ status to a sexual partner is a criminal offence, punishable by law which includes imprisonment. Despite there being no evidence to suggest that HIV criminalization works and mounting evidence that it doesn't people still argue that this law is in the best interest of public health. No other STD or illness has had the law applied to it in this manner so the question is why would we treat people with HIV as less than or different?

The public's health depends on each of us assuming personal responsibility for our bodies. Trusting what someone else says about their health status is not assuming responsibility because what someone 'thinks' about their HIV status and what is 'true' will vary by situation. Under the new policy, Ontario's Crown attorney won't prosecute cases of non-disclosure, but here comes the big BUT, among other things the HIV positive person must have had a suppressed viral load for at least six months and practice safe sex.

Let's celebrate the great leaps our government has taken to make right with the gay community such as their recent apology for it's treatment of the LGBTQ2 communities. During his speech, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, "Today, we finally talk about Canada's role in the systemic oppression, criminalization, and violence against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit communities..." adding that "criminalization HIV" is one of many issues left to reconcile. That's hardly consolation for those already persecuted. And those yet to be. Even though they've taken a step to loosen the law, the law still has holds people with HIV to a unnecessarily harsher standard.

The Globe and Mail Demonizes Gay Life

SKY GILBERT



Do you frequent Church Street? Do you like to meet guys on Grindr?

Are you living in fear?

According to a recent article in the Globe and Mail you are terrified because 'unease has been growing in recent years as a result of a spate of missing-person cases that remain unsolved.'

Tu Tanh Ha's article is blatantly homophobic: filled with unproven speculation and misinformation.

Yes, it is true that queer people (gay, trans and lesbian) have been, at times in the past, beaten and killed by homophobic and transphobic people. And yes it's also true that recently there have been posters in the gay village for a missing man --Andrew Kinsman. And it's true that recently a woman named Tess Richey was killed near Church Street. But are queer people scared to go out on Church Street? Should they be?

The answer is a resounding 'NO.'

The article in the Globe and Mail seems to lay all the blame for one young woman's death on Crews and Tangos, and blames the disappearance of Andrew Kinsman -- with no proof -- on online dating apps. First of all, the writer calls crews a 'village drag bar.'

In actual fact Crews and Tangos -- as anyone who hangs out on Church Street knows, is a bar that, like many other bars on Church Street, features drag queens. But its clientele is made up mostly of younger bi and straight people of all genders, many of whom are just 'out' or experimenting with their sexuality. Secondly, just because a woman who visited Crews and Tangos was tragically killed is that the bar's fault?

And when it comes to gay online dating apps, are they dangerous -- as this article says -- because gay men aren't properly introduced online to their sexual partners?

Who says? Where's the proof?

Why is the Globe and Mail publishing this garbage and fermenting fear and lies around queer institutions and organizations?

I don't know. But it sure seems like somebody at the Globe and Mail doesn't like us.

This is an era when all around the world people who are threatened by terrorists have decided not to live in fear but instead bravely party as usual, no matter what the threat. But the Globe and Mail is implying that queers should stay home.

It's negative propaganda about our community, and I, for one, don't like it one bit.

Rock Hudson's tricks

PAUL BELLINI



Rock Hudson Erotic Fire



Rock Hudson was the ultimate movie star - gorgeous, manly, sufficiently talented, charming, and hung. The whole world loved him. What they didn't know at the time was that Rock Hudson was gay. And not just any kind of gay, but a real slut, who had sex almost daily and racked up numbers in the thousands. Studio head Ed Muhl once said, "Rock ... saw sexual intercourse as little more than a handshake."

Rock Hudson: Erotic Fire is the new tell-all biography from Darwin Porter and Danforth Prince of Blood Moon Productions. It is juicy beyond words. Born Roy Fitzgerald, Rock started doing bit parts in the '50s, at one point even playing an Indian chief. But when he began working with director Douglas Sirk, some sort of magic happened. The movies, glossy melodramas like *All That Heaven Allows* and *Magnificent Obsession*, made him the top romantic star of the time. He reached his peak with a Best Actor nomination for George Stevens' epic *Giant*, then broke box office records when he teamed up with Doris Day for *Pillow Talk*.

Rock enjoyed a 30 year career in both movies and TV, but he was forced into a silly sexless marriage with Willson's secretary Phyllis Gates, herself a lesbian.

("Both Phyllis and Rock asked that the word 'obey' be removed from their vows.") Of course the marriage was a Hollywood joke. Debbie Reynolds reportedly said "When he got married, the whole industry laughed itself silly." Gates herself said that she brought Rock to a psychiatrist who told her "Your husband has the emotional development of an eight-year-old."

Rock worked constantly, but one day his old friend First Lady Nancy Reagan noticed a blotch on his neck. Later examination revealed it to be karposi sarcoma, and Rock Hudson spent the last years of his life unsuccessfully treating and hiding the fact that he had AIDS. In 1985, the world's most famous movie star became the world's most famous person with AIDS.

Most biographies provide all the standard facts, and this one is no different, but only the DPs can provide this sort of information, about Rock's encounter with Psycho star Anthony Perkins:

"Tony had this specialty. He fills his mouth with the hottest water he can stand. Then he goes down on you. He calls it a 'hot flash.'" So. Not only did the book teach me a lot about Rock Hudson, I also learned something that I'm going to try out later tonight.



2017



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MGT'S ANNUAL

HOLIDAY

GIFT IDEAS

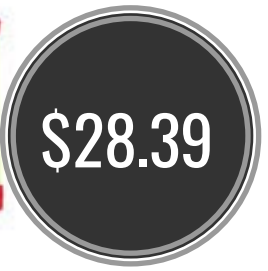


The Andrew Christian Wrestling Singlet

A super sexy, super stretchy, homage to the most skin-on-skin sport there is. The Andrew Christian Wrestling Singlet's sporty appeal is aggressive and will grapple anyone's attention.

It comes in neon red and neon yellow, both of which are accented with contrasting colors around edges. Even the provocatively narrow-and flattering—racer-style back is edged in neon, which only adds to the '80s appeal of this look.

The winning recipient will either want to take you down in thanks or join you in a bucket of popcorn and a binge watch of Magum PI.



Tom of Finland Deep Throat Numbing Spray

Everyone on your gift list will have encountered this problem, from one direction of the other. Those times when the fantasy just doesn't fit with the reality. So, give them a little help with Tom of Finland Deep Throat Numbing Spray. Much like a dentist visit when the freezing hits the throat and BAM! no feeling. The spray is specially formulated to reduce the discomfort associated with oral sex, yes that damn gag reflex. Get in deeper and go longer.

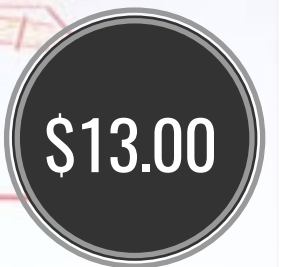
The desensitizing Benzocaine formula numbs the back of your throat, easing any oversize discomfort to help get the most out of oral play.

And it's minty fresh!



Christmas Lovepop Card

Part of any traditional holiday, or any special event, that requires a gift is a nice card with a lovely note. A Lovepop card will bring it to a whole different level with some artistic and creative 3D cards that pop. These cards are simply a must this holiday season.



Only gay in the kitchen apron

Have a friend who loves to delight you with their culinary skills?

Delight them back with this colourful apron and hat. Can be worn with or without underwear!

Merry Christmas.



beatport

\$1.99+

Beatport

You do not need to break the piggy bank to buy a Xmas present for your loved one. Unique and different Xmas gifts can be inexpensive and cost less than a few bucks. In the digital world we live in there are tons of great ideas.

Beatport has an awesome selection of new tracks by the world's most popular DJs. You can purchase a track in mp3 format for as low as \$1.99.

There are lots of categories and charts to choose from, if you are young or at least young in spirit, you will find something that makes their hips move and their body pop.



Messiah

Handel's Messiah is Toronto's must-see holiday classic. The Toronto Symphony Orchestra joins forces with British conductor Matthew Halls and a stellar line-up of Canadian vocalists - Karina Gauvin (soprano), Krisztina Szabó (mezzo-soprano), Frédéric Antoun (tenor), Joshua Hopkins (baritone) and the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir - for five transcendent performances of the immortal oratorio.

Roy Thompson Hall – 60 Simcok St,
Ticket price: \$45+, Dec 18-23



\$45.00+

\$30.00+

PC Cooking school's

couple classes @ Loblows, Carlton and Church

Nothing says holiday season more than the tasty holiday foods we all love. Loblows is offering cooking classes for adults (and kids) at various GTA locations.

There are lots of options and chefs to choose from and prices start at only \$30 per class per person. Learn to cook new dishes and have some time with your special someone. Check the website for calendar, chefs, and locations close to you. Classes can be booked directly through the website.



RUSH to Relax This Holiday Season

As long as you are not drunk and/or look like a narc, poppers are still plentiful in Toronto. Most of the adult video shops around Yonge/Wellesley will sell it to you providing you don't give them attitude when you walk in. Just picture the look on your partner's face when they unwrap a bottle of pure joy. For the shy types you can order online but do it now as it takes at least 10 days to ship and the two of you will want them before Christmas frolicking. (it will cost you 47 euros ~ \$74 + shipment.)



\$74.00+

RUSH
LIQUID ANISE

RUSH
It's The Rush Hour



RetroFestive: everything Christmas and everything camp

Not only does RetroFestive have everything you need for your personal decorating and elevation of Christmas spirit, but they will gladly help you bring a little camp joy into the life of even the most dour on your list. Would could resist a bear-like snowman wielding a phallic glitter light? Or a bendable Catwoman action figure? Or a cute and cuddly Pennywise doll? Or moving beyond ugly Christmas sweaters to ugly Christmas formal wear? And there will many more eye-catching, cute and crazy items on display at the RetroFestive kiosk at the Toronto Christmas Market in the Distillery District from Thurs, Nov 16 to the last minute panic of Thurs, Dec 23.

retrofestive.ca





Gifts for the male gaze

The photographers featured in MGT and on MyGayToronto.com create some of the most strikingly erotic and inspiring photographs in existence. Of the many books they have published, any of the following sampling of favourites will enrapture and arouse anyone lucky enough to receive them. Or prints can be ordered from the photographers' websites.

G Elliott Simpson's Transformation (gelliottsimpson.com)

Dylan Rosser's Red (dylanrosser.com)

Mitya Nevsky's Russian Guys (nevskyphoto.ru)

David Vance's The Woods (davidvance.com)

Most of these, and other fine gay art photography books, are available at Glad Day Bookshop, 499 Church St. gladdaybookshop.com

MGT's Holiday Gift Ideas with Paul Bellini



THE NEW ASIAN MEN
 2018 CALENDAR

Holiday Cocktail Ideas

DELISH.COM

Christmosas



Eddie's Eggnog



Creamsicle Mimosas



\$39.99

Fireball Hot Toddies



Moscow Mules



bad humanity is getting (also so he can say, "Swiss Miss Bish")

- Religious candles with rainbow flag border - now he can pray to the gay gods that the world will become less offensive



THE DRAG WANNABE-\$12.25

- Dust Blaster - just aim and press, perfect for getting drunken idiots off their stage
- Table covering (various patterns) - it's like fabric, but cheaper, and wipeable
- Skate protectors - for those long winter treks home in heels
- 12" chocolate foil toonies - once upon a time drag queens were tipped one and two dollar bills . . . maybe this will make up for it. Or they can just eat it



THE SLUT-\$18.50

- Magnifying glass with LED lights - perfect for dark room penis inspection
- Dinosaur grabber - when he's on his knees sucking off someone and sees another penis prospect out of reach this handy device will assure no crotch gets away
- Wine bottle tags - after each "bottle," has been drained during an orgy, they can use them to tag them as, "DONE"

- Betty Crocker Mug Warmer - buy two to keep their buttocks warm for their next top who is only 30 minutes away on Grindr
- Jurassic Egg & various Dog Toy Bones - in case Grindr top can't make it, these should help fill the void



THE PARTIER-\$12.50

- Mint julep cup - because, Scarlett, every good party begins with a Mint Julep on the veranda
- Starlight projector - turns at home celestial clubland experiences into teaching moments. "There's Uranus!"
- Pet treat launcher - to be filled with capsules of Molly or bags of coke and create an after party game for all the good little girls and boys
- Tea strainer - perfect for portable coke crushing
- AIM Dental Floss - remove dental floss, fill bottom areas with your stash, replace dental floss, sneak into club, party, floss



Lastly, package everything up in "borrowed" Holt Renfrew bags. Happy Holidays!

3 NITES ONLY APRIL 26, 27, 28
BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES: CABARET

**"HE TURNS GOGO INTO THEATRE AND
BOYLESQUE INTO**

**CHRIS
HARDER
PORN
TO BE A
STAR**

**A MUST-SEE
EVENT!"**

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Did you know?

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About COC

VECHT MEE!

Jouw hulp is nodig. Steun de nationale en internationale strijd voor acceptatie en gelijke rechten.

STEUN COC

- Word lid van het COC
- Volg ons op Facebook
- Volg ons op Twitter

The oldest surviving LGBT organization in the world is Netherlands' Center for Culture and Leisure (COC), which was founded in 1946, and used a 'cover name' to mask its taboo purpose. <https://www.coc.nl/engels>

Involved in many aspects
COC Netherlands is involved in many aspects of LGBT rights, with a focus on youth & school, 50+, safety, culture & religion and international issues. COC Netherlands is a federation that consists of 21 local associations. So, wherever you live in the Netherlands, there's always a COC in the neighborhood.

Power from within
The way we work can be defined as *inside-out*: we support coalitions of LGBT's and straight people and empower them to make a change from within their own community or organization. We believe that this power from within ultimately has a stronger effect than a top down approach. Plus: we are convinced that we accomplish so much more when LGBT's and straight people act together the fight for emancipation, social acceptance and equal rights.

Vinden dit leuk

Aantal volgers via sociale media: 22691

In de media

- 20 oktober 2017 - Ingrid van Engelshoven nieuwe minister voor LHBTI-emanipatie
- 19 oktober 2017 - COC wil actie tegen anti-LHBTI-wetgeving Litouwen
- 10 oktober 2017 - COC positief over LHBTI-maatregelen in regeerakkoord
- 30 oktober 2017 Nieuwe publicatie: hoe maak je van school

Barbara Jordan was the first African American to be elected in Texas in 1973.

She was also a woman, a Democrat, and gay.

She later became the first black woman to give the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention.

[\[more on Barbara\]](#)



The first gay doll, Gay Bob, was launched in 1977. He had a pierced ear and his box was shaped like a closet.

[\[more on Bob\]](#)



Plumbum returns in A Christmas Carol!

DREW ROWSOME

Since 1997, the Christmas season has been enlivened by Ross Petty's pantomimes. Ludicrous, hilarious, and packed with song and dance, the pantomimes are not only consistent hits but also birthed an unexpected superstar: Plumbum who returns after a year off to grace this year's A Christmas Carol. The love an audience has for this sashaying, sweetly lascivious character is obvious from the cheers and laughter that explodes every time she appears. My idea was to talk with Plumbum to find out what is in store this year, get a sense of her certainly scandalous personal life, and find out how she is coping with what is now an illustrious career. There was one hitch.

Plumbum - having played everything from a naughty nurse to royalty to sophisticate (Peter Pan) to fairy godmother (Cinderella) to a fish-hybrid (The Little Mermaid) - is herself played by renowned actor Dan Chameroy, who was reluctant to speak in character. Actors are usually attention whores so Chameroy's reaction puzzled me but, as he was willing to talk as himself, we did chat. "I'm game for anything," understates Chameroy. "It's just that for me, the trick about playing that character is that she's very quick-witted. I don't want to stumble through an interview trying to be as witty as she is. If I felt more confident, I would have jumped at the idea but it would be too risky to make it interesting. And face it, she's very hard to book. Let's be honest, she's saving the big interview for Ellen."



that's why she fits so well into the pantomime, because obviously kids are watching her and they probably like the fact that she is who she is. Looking the way she does is just a bonus for some people. I don't approach her as a drag queen or as anything specific, she's just a person. However the audience interprets what she is that's their business, that's their job.

STARRING
AJ BRIDEL
DAN CHAMEROY
"PLUMBUM"
EDDIE GLEN

ELGIN THEATRE NOVEMBER 24 - DECEMBER 31
ROSSPETTY.COM 1-855-599-9090
GROUP SAVINGS (12 OR MORE) 647-438-5559

The truth of the matter is that Plumbum and Chameroy have an uncomplicated relationship based on mutual respect. "I like playing characters that are larger than life, it's a natural thing for me to do," says Chameroy. "The joy that I have is that they're big but come from a truthful place, from a place of honesty. Their reactions and the way they express themselves might be outrageous but they're still real people and that's a lot of fun for me to play. Plumbum has no inhibitions so it's a great character to step into. She's carefree and she doesn't really have a mean bone in her body. She's kind of oblivious in a weird way, almost childlike in the way she deals with things. . It's fun because there's an innocence about her that's really great to play. I think

And I'm fine with what anyone thinks. I hope people just look at her as a person. I hope people look at the person and not what they represent. We have to just get over our differences. We're all people who love the same way and make our mistakes and screw up. Once we can just, get over this shit, see ourselves as people, the world will be a better place. "

It was serendipity, as well as Chameroy, that created the super nova. "I think this is my eighth panto, seventh as Plumbum and one as a normal person. The first time I did a panto I was playing Robin Hood. And then somehow I went through some sort of weird transition as far as Ross was concerned, and I started playing women. It seems to be happening more than I expected, but there you have it." The press material, and reviews, have referred to Plumbum as an icon, and Chameroy as very talented. Is there any friction between the alter-egos? Chameroy is diplomatic, "It's always weird when 'iconic' is connected to anything a person does. It's flattering and she's an enjoyable person to become. She's a lot of fun and I'm glad people enjoy her."

With Chameroy being so humble, how did producer and former star Ross Petty feel about Plumbum's command of the spotlight? "He was jealous of me and we had a lot of infighting and Ross and I don't speak anymore," deadpans Chameroy before correcting. "I think Ross retired because Ross wanted to focus on just producing the show. I think that all the hassle he had when he was doing the show was too much. And also because, well, I was better."

Though Plumbum is a, ostensibly guileless, scene-stealer, Chameroy is very generous towards his co-stars. "AJ Bridel [Kinky Boots, Assassins] is fantastic. I'd never worked with her before, I saw her perform once long ago, that's the thing about being in theatre, you have very little time to see stuff, but in rehearsal she's beautiful. What a voice. Great timing. She's a beautiful girl, talented, she's just fantastic. We're loving working with her. Everyone in the cast is strong. Cyrus Lane is playing Scrooge. Cyrus has been at Stratford for years and lots of theatre in Toronto. He's kind of known for being a mysterious theatre guy, but I've known him for years and he's hilarious, very spontaneous. The perfect choice for Scrooge, he's got a lot of charming charisma. And then there's my friend Eddie Glen who's been doing this for I think 15 years, he understands comedy like nobody. These people feed off each other so it's great when you have people who are really skilled at this kind of stuff, it's like you're breathing together with comedy. It's a fantastic way to work."



Or is he just being nice because Plumbum, in some perverse way, needs minions? “The goal is, she’s funny and she has a lot of smart things to say occasionally, but that’s just what people see. People anticipate that she’s going to be ridiculous, over-the-top, making crazy comments, but to be fair these shows don’t work because of just one person. It’s a real ensemble and everyone is important. If my comedy lands, it’s because everyone else has delivered. It’s all about timing and teamwork. I’m here to serve the story and give the people what they enjoy, and if that means ripping the scenery apart and making a few jokes, then that’s what I’ll be doing.”

The panto has a long run but Plumbum is up to it. “It’s a lot of fun,” says Chameroy. “I think it’s the greatest job happening at this time of year. You get to perform in an extraordinary theatre, the Elgin is the best, a great place for an audience to see a show. I feel honoured to get to perform in that theatre. And it’s great to be working at Christmas. It’s the time of year that you want to have fun. Tracey Flye our director has been directing it for years and she’s so great. She knows what it is. She’s a great guide. It’s a great comfort to come back and just do your thing. It’s a great way to go to work. And it doesn’t hurt that it’s right across from a mall.”

Chameroy can afford to have fun with this role. He is highly respected for many roles at Stratford, in musicals and as the lead in Sondheim’s company, serious heady stuff. And he already has a Dora for playing Gaston, that bastion of masculinity and about as opposite to



Plumbum as it possible to get, in Beauty and the Beast. Chameroy laughs when I tell him I saw him in Beauty and the Beast and that, not only was he great, and very sexy, in the part, but it left me thinking that Belle had made the wrong choice. “That was a great opportunity,” says Chameroy. “When they cast that part, I was in Halifax doing a show and I listened to the Broadway recording and I thought, ‘That would be a great part to play but they’ll never cast me because I’m just not the right type.’ I had an impression of what they would do. I could sing it and do it but the type that I was, visually and physically, wasn’t the type they would go for. When they ended up casting it, I was very reluctant to even put myself up because I thought they’d just dismiss me and I’d end up feeling like a total fool. So the fact that I got the part was something that I’d envisioned but in a way thought wasn’t going to be a possibility.”





And then Plumbum/Chameroy's feisty spirit surfaces. "It was a great moment for me to book something that I wanted to do but I thought was going to be a stretch. It was a good learning lesson in that way to not put limitations on yourself in any kind of choices you make, in show business or any kind of business. Just go for it. Don't put blocks up. Don't make your life harder than it is. Self-doubt doesn't help anyone." Sage Christmas/panto advice from an icon.

More from Chameroy and Plumbum at drewrowsome.blogspot.com

A Christmas Carol runs from Fri, Nov 24 to Sun, Dec 31 at the Elgin Theatre, 189 Yonge St. rosspetty.com



THE FAMILY MUSICAL WITH A SCROOGE LOOSE!

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

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NOV. 24^{TO} DEC. 31**

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Guillermo del Toro: At Home with Monsters haunts the AGO

DREW ROWSOME

When Guillermo del Toro was a child, his grandmother had him exorcised twice. Fortunately neither took.

Not only did del Toro grow up to be a renowned filmmaker, but he is also an obsessive collector. He has saved every book and comic book he ever read. He saved props, costumes, notebooks, sketches and prototypes from his films and acquired many of the same from films he admires. He also acquired curiosities, toys, models, objects that fascinate him, and commissioned artworks as well as collecting it. His collection became so huge that he was forced to purchase a second home, "Bleak House," which doubles as a personal museum and an immersive environment in which he creates.

With *At Home with Monsters*, del Toro has partnered with art galleries to display some of his vast collection, pairing his treasures with items from the galleries' collections. The Art Gallery of Toronto's version is extraordinary, on one level a voyeuristic look inside an artist's mind, but on a deeper level *At Home with Monsters* is a visceral tour of our relationship with art, death, horror and inspiration.

There is an extreme beauty in the iconography of horror and *At Home with Monsters* takes full advantage of the creepy splendour to be found there. There are wax museum displays, sculptures, paintings, film stills, cabinets of curiosities and overwhelming displays of book covers. Every corner reveals a new astonishment. Each visitor will react to particular items, for me, a partial list, would include the mask from *Phantom of the Paradise*, old editions of *Plop!* magazine, dark Disney cels, a glistening oil rendering of Ray Harryhausen's stop motion creations, original *Hellboy* sketches by Mike Mignola, life-size sculptures of John Merrick, HP Lovecraft, the cast of *Freaks*, and a heartbreaking dance between Frankenstein's monster and Little Maria. All powerful memories of things that disturbed and delighted my childhood and beyond.



The AGO artwork that is integrated into the exhibit is just as intriguing and familiarly unfamiliar. There are delicate silver skulls from the Victorian era, a Mark Prent sculpture, paintings by John Scott (one partially painted with blood), and, most astonishingly, one of the 15 existing copies of Charles Pachter and Margaret Atwood collaboration *Speeches for Doctor Frankenstein*. The artwork belonging to del Toro is just as impressive with Michael J Deas' "Portrait of HP Lovecraft" and original sketches from Bernie Wrightson's *Frankenstein*.



Frankenstein is a favourite of del Toro's and he hopes to eventually make his own version, based visually on Bernie Wrightson's work. Frankenstein is also a thematic constant, from the giant head depicted photographically in the entranceway, through the multiple

sculptures, to the final image and quote from del Toro (which leads into the best gift shop the AGO has had since Frida & Diego featuring, of course, all sorts of Frankenstein merchandise). We learn that del Toro considers Pinocchio to be a version of Frankenstein - del Toro considers early Disney superior because "the best fairy tales are dark and bad things do happen to children" - and that there have been thousands of printings of Mary Shelley's book of which curator Jim Shedden has assembled over 700 covers. Of course that is minuscule compared to the undertaking, with the assistance of The Beguiling, of covering gallery walls with over 50,000 issues of Creepy, Eerie, Famous Monsters of Filmland, Rue Morgue and seemingly every fantastical comic book ever published.

And there is most macabre joy at the heart of At Home with Monsters. There is equal weight given to acknowledged masterpieces like Mary Shelly's book or Edgar Allan Poe and the pulp horror that we all consume guiltily. It appears that del Toro has no guilt and his work is luminous because of it. He loves FW Murnaus' Nosferatu as much as Tobe Hooper's version of Salem's Lot. The lush Gothic splendour of Crimson Peak is given equal weight with the haunting creatures of Pan's Labyrinth and the steam punk style of Hellboy. They are all monsters, we are all monsters, and they, we, are all high art and low brow, beautiful and horrific.

There are 13 libraries, arranged thematically, in Bleak House. At Home with Monsters recreates versions of seven of them. As Shedden says, "He is first and foremost a man in love with books." One of the rooms, guarded by ravens and inhabited by, among others, an Edgar Allan Poe sculpture, is the Rain Room. A room down a secret passage, where it rained 24 hours a day so he could meditate, was a dream of del Toro's. So he created it. And the AGO recreated it. And it is as disturbing and delightful, welcoming and repulsing, as the rest of At Home with Monsters. And his grandmother would hate it as much as gallerygoers will be awed by it.



Guillermo del Toro: At Home with Monsters continues until Sun, Jan 7 at the Art Gallery of Ontario, 317 Dundas St W. ago.ca



The Appropriation of Jackie Shane

SKY GILBERT



Jackie Shane was gay. She was a drag queen.

It's time to state the facts.

Lately her story has been appropriated by opportunistic academics who have misrepresented her as having been, historically, a 'trans' performer.

This is not simply a mistake; it's homophobic.

Jackie Shane was, according to all witnesses, a brilliant drag singer/performer who was much beloved by the gay community in Toronto in the '60s. She eventually moved back to her native Nashville; now her brilliance has been rediscovered and soon she will be coming back to Toronto to perform once again.

Hallelujah!

However, academics - who often have a tendency to be out of touch with the truths of street culture - have decided to take advantage of the resurgence of interest in Jackie Shane to advance their own trendy theories, and promulgate homophobia.

They are attempting to erase history by representing Shane's story as that of a trans activist - rather than as the history of a gay man and drag queen.

Why am I concerned here with labels?

I am a gay man and a drag queen. Homophobia has increased in the last couple of years. I notice this in the context of what I call a rising 'Fear of Drag Queens.'

Even RuPaul has to deal with this. As in the old days of homophobia and anti-sexual feminism, drag queens are now being castigated for 'nasty humour,' and for 'making fun of women,' and even for 'making fun of trans people.'

This is homophobic slander. Drag queens love women. They pay homage to them through drag -- and historically, they are the pioneers of the trans movement.

If Jackie Shane wishes to become an icon for the - very important - modern transgender movement, more power to her.

But the historical facts are these. Jackie Shane was performing in drag long before the term 'transgender' even existed. When she performed in the 1960s 'trans' meant transexual. She represented herself as a gay man and a drag queen, not as trans, and was known as such. She was, as was Craig Russell, a leading force in gay liberation, along with the drag queens at Stonewall.

Those are the historical facts.

And no amount of academic obfuscation can deny them.

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October: Michael Rowe pens a classic horror novella with a hot twist

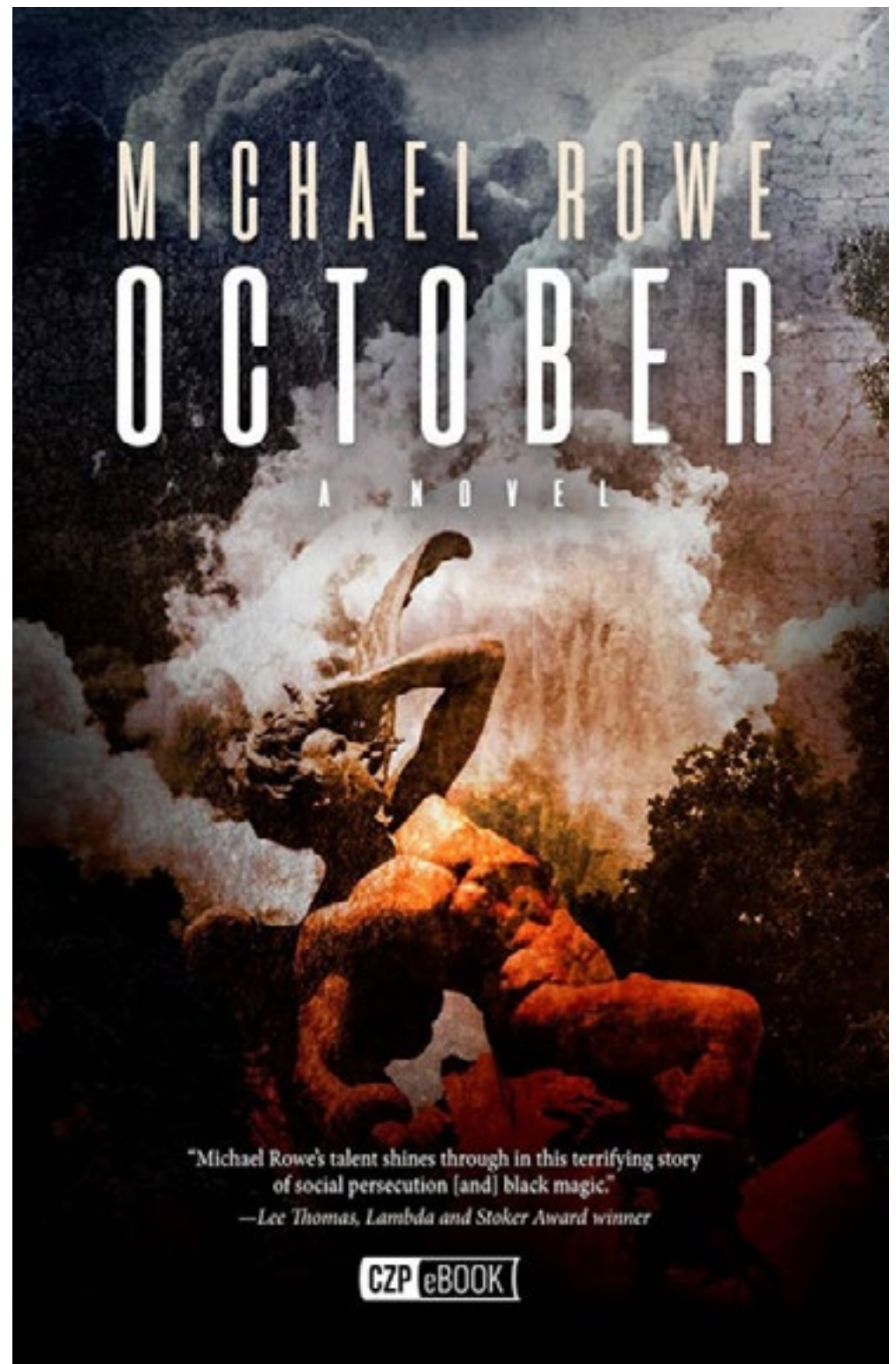
DREW ROWSOME ★★★★★

This year's best Halloween treat didn't arrive until November. Michael Rowe's novella *October* wasn't released until October 31, but waiting until October is not an option; any dark night of impending winter is an ideal time to curl up with this insidious confection. Rowe takes a *Carrie*-esque revenge tale, spikes it with Leo Ford leather fantasies, and just enough *Hellraiser* demon lover wish-fulfillment to keep the "it doesn't get better" moral tone ambiguous. *October* is genuinely scary and suspenseful, and refreshingly, gloriously gay.

In the small town of Milton, Ontario - masterfully evoked in the manner of *It* or *Summer of Night* - Mikey Childress is tortured by the town bullies and all the other inhabitants. His suffering is gruesome and only slightly leavened by a friendship with a spunky goth fag hag, until he is the victim of a malicious prank involving a jockstrap that leads to a brutal gay bashing. The torture has gone too far and hurt is replaced by a rage for revenge. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the town contains a coven of witches with whom Mikey crosses paths and . . . To give away any more would ruin the joy and horror as Rowe unveils the plot points, teasing out what the reader suspects, and often twisting in unsettling ways.

Aside from being a classic spooky story, Rowe (*Enter, Night, Wild Fell*) explores the dark terrain of sexual and emotional desire. Mikey has a crush on one of his chief tormentors, a hunky blond, so when Adrian Johnson - a tall, not-coincidentally blond, irresistibly handsome bad boy - appears, Mikey and the reader are smitten, despite knowing better on some visceral level. It is tricky terrain, where love and lust, in this case specifically gay love and lust, is sublimated into masochistic pleasure and pain. It is heartrending, horrific and sadly familiar. It is gay coercion porn taken to terrifying extremes as the giddiness of young love/anti-hero worship is revealed as manipulation and self-deception.

The beauty and brutal ugliness of a small town gives a solid foundation and even the worst of the bullies is given enough backstory to become a breathing character. Nothing is black and white and Rowe is merciless about not letting the reader off the hook for anyone's actions. The fag hag Wroxy is delineated so clearly that she refuses to become a plot device, and the reader understands and empathizes with all of the protagonist's choices even as they become morally dubious and grotesquely extreme.



Somehow Rowe manages to balance the lush creepiness of Gothic prose and tropes with a lean, relentless prose, paradoxically leisurely but driving. *October* could easily have been a long, immersive novel, but benefits from the punchy restraints of a novella and the constraints of unfolding over a clock-ticking month of time.

October is a very satisfying horror novella, there are scares and gore aplenty, but the unflinching examination of the perils of bullying and revenge and how they both scar irrevocably, elevates it to another plane. And the sex is unabashedly hot—there is a special appeal when wish fulfillment porn is written with literary flair. We all crave and fear an Adrian, and *October* allows us, in classic horror form, to question just how far we could, how far we should, go in dealing with our demons. Fortunately Rowe is willing to go right to the edge and just a chilling step or two beyond.

October is available from Amazon.ca, iTunes, Kobo.com and in other digital formats.
chizinepub.com

House Guests

an invitation to a party
of intimate artistry

Photos by Jae Yang



Becoming one of Corpus' House Guests is a magical experience, but also one that is somewhat dependent on the element of surprise. Which is also convenient as I have no idea how to put into words just what House Guests is. While probably best grouped with interactive and immersive theatre, House Guests also draws from dance, clowning, performance art, drag, and the haunted house ambiance of a dark maze to create something unusually absorbing, comic and disturbing - sometimes all at once.

8 Baden Street, just north of the bustling hipster hub of Dundas and Ossington, is a nondescript house except for the sign on the door that reads "House Guests." A woman checks my name off a list of tonight's guests and I knock at the door. In a flurry of frazzled hospitality, a charming and handsome man in a bathrobe ushers me in and explains he is running late, needs a shower, and if I'll just have a seat in the living room he'll be right down. When the routine is repeated with the following arrivals, I realize that House Guests has already begun.





Our genial host, who I later learn is Corpus' artistic director Daniel Danzon, races upstairs to have a shower and disappears. Sort of. To say he melts into the furniture would be a pun as well as a visual descriptive. We, the guests/audience, make idle awkward Toronto house party chit-chat about the horrors of gentrification, real estate and theatre gossip, until a string of lights conjure a proscenium, curtains part and we meet the cast. Libations are served and the cast scatters, urging us to follow at our whim.

8 Baden Street consists of four levels providing multiple staging spaces and a multitude of experiences. The entire house has been equipped with speakers murmuring musical cues and sound effects, and ingenious lighting effects. What a guest will experience is dependent on where their curiosity leads them, up stairs or down, which cast member they allow to lure them, or which doorway they poke their head into. Again it is just like a house party where the guilt and thrill of perusing an open diary is as expected and unexpected as the performers' shifts in character.

Because the number of guests is small, each gets a unique, intimate experience. At one point I found myself racing down a flight of stairs because I heard applause in another part of the house, only to stumble into a grouping of guests involved in a choral reading. I realized it was better to abandon my critical faculties, any attempt to see it all, and just surrender to the experiences on offer that I chanced upon. I can't speak for any other guests, but chatting afterwards, they all had ones I wish I had seen, and many were envious of my luck.

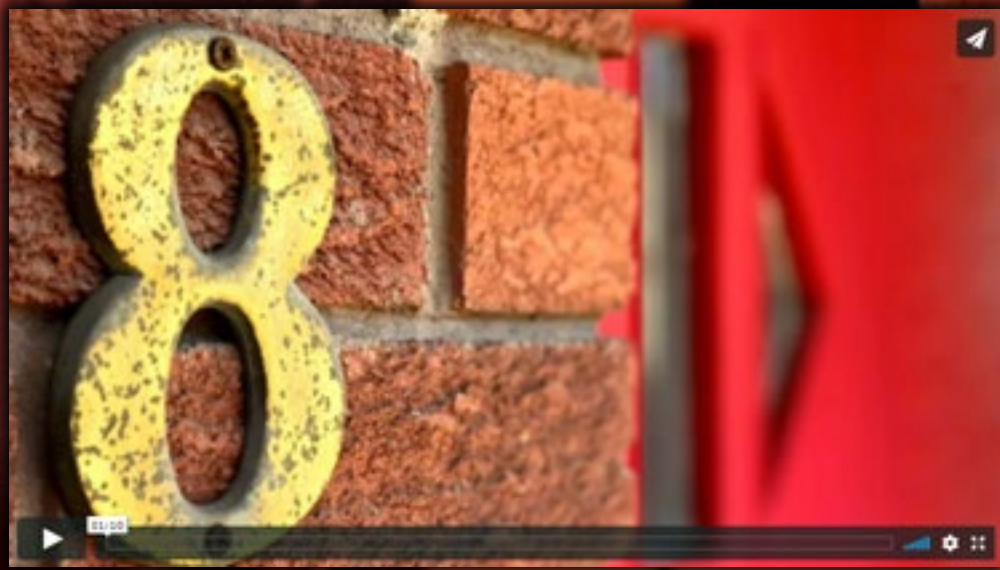
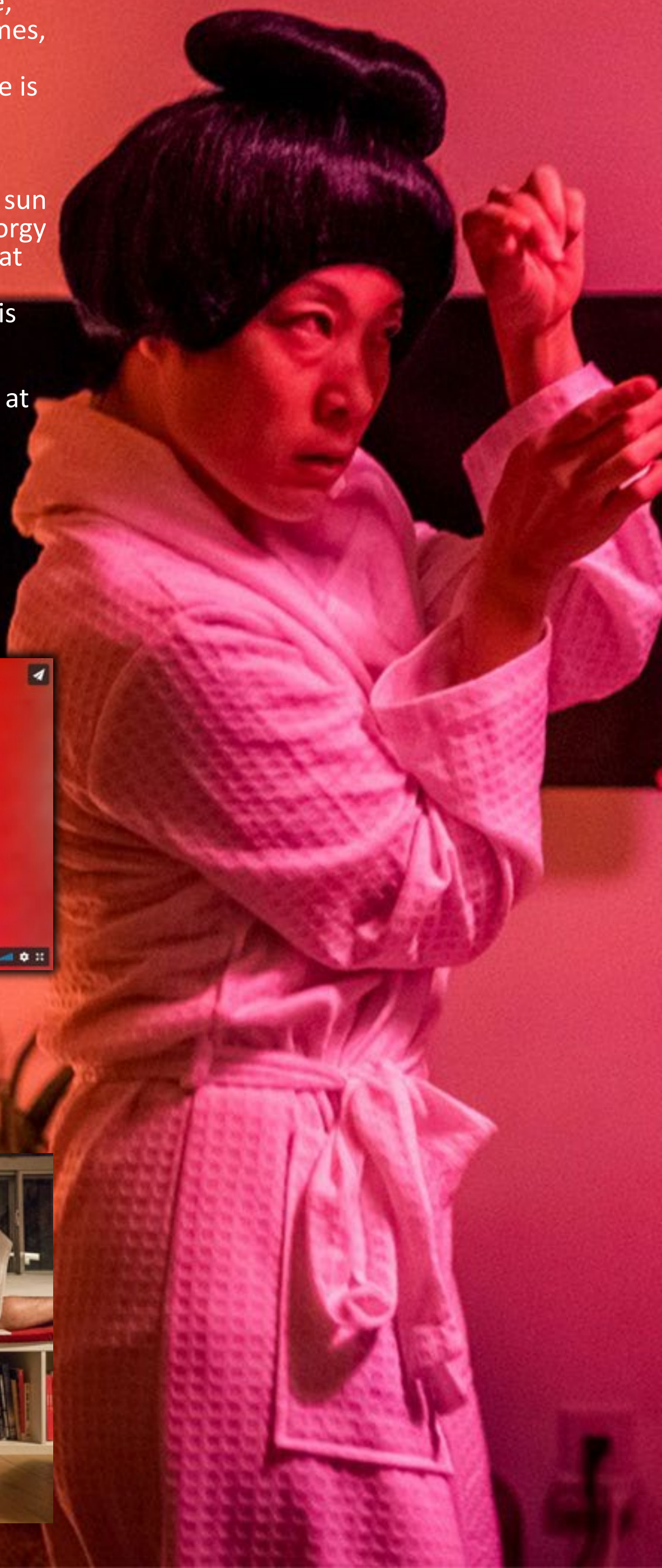
In no particular order (and by no means even a partial catalogue, I was part of a Marina Abramovic moment with a ghost; watched Jolyane Langlois slither acrobatically over kitchen appliances; made up for barging in on Rob Feetham reading on the toilet by letting him in through a window so he could file his slippers; watched Takao Segawa dance and recite a spellbinding tale wherein a giant glowing peach gave birth to a Charlie Chaplin doll; was shushed as Indrit Kasapi flinched from mysterious knocking and insisted we listen for voices in the wall; and watched Michael Caldwell perform a whimsical and heartbreaking puppet show. Then all the guests were subtly herded to the second floor living area where, just like a house party, even the wallflowers joined in a dance party. And then to the kitchen to break bread.



For the first time I looked at my watch and realized that we had gone over the allotted time of 90 minutes. And though I was ready to explore more, see more, our genial host made an entrance, showered and in dashing formal wear, and the main events were over. Far too short and fabulously overwhelming. I had taken notes but could only record impressions, the House Guests thematic stew is rich and elusive. It is fascinating to snoop through someone else's home and psyche, and when it reveals ghosts, childhood games, fairy tales, dreams, voyeurism, drag and dress-up, and the power of the gaze, there is a lot to process and ponder.

In the diary that I peered into, I read the scribble: "The universe is an orgy and the sun is at the center of it." House Guests is an orgy of ideas and artistry that puts each guest at the center of their own universe. The invitation to be a guest at 8 Baden Street is one that should be accepted.

House Guests continues until Sun, Dec 17 at 8 Baden St. corpus.ca



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Chavela

a portrait of a dark and delicious diva

DREW ROWSOME

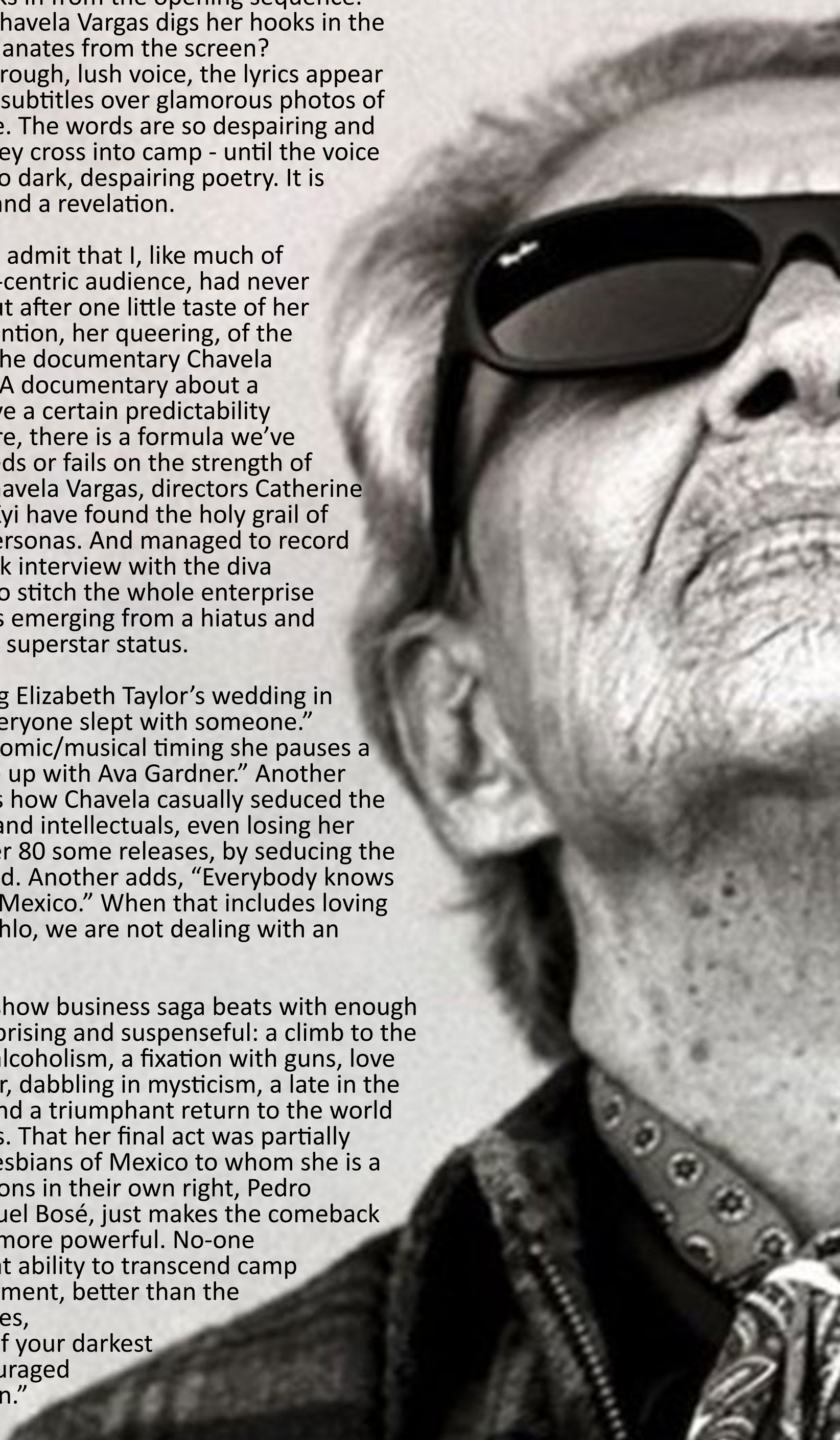
Chavela digs its hooks in from the opening sequence. Or it could be that Chavela Vargas digs her hooks in the instant her voice emanates from the screen?

While she sings in a rough, lush voice, the lyrics appear in faux-handwritten subtitles over glamorous photos of Chavela in her prime. The words are so despairing and over-the-top that they cross into camp - until the voice transforms them into dark, despairing poetry. It is haunting, hypnotic and a revelation.

It is embarrassing to admit that I, like much of an English language-centric audience, had never heard of Chavela, but after one little taste of her voice and her reinvention, her queering, of the ranchera tradition, the documentary Chavela became irresistible. A documentary about a musical icon can have a certain predictability built into its structure, there is a formula we've all seen, so it succeeds or fails on the strength of the subject. With Chavela Vargas, directors Catherine Gund and Daresha Kyi have found the holy grail of Behind the Music personas. And managed to record a delightful and frank interview with the diva herself - with which to stitch the whole enterprise together - as she was emerging from a hiatus and ready to reclaim her superstar status.

She tells of attending Elizabeth Taylor's wedding in Acapulco where "everyone slept with someone." Then with flawless comic/musical timing she pauses a beat before, "I woke up with Ava Gardner." Another interviewee explains how Chavela casually seduced the wives of politicians and intellectuals, even losing her record contract, after 80 some releases, by seducing the label head's girlfriend. Another adds, "Everybody knows she slept with all of Mexico." When that includes loving and leaving Frida Kahlo, we are not dealing with an ordinary biography.

Chavela hits all the show business saga beats with enough twists to keep it surprising and suspenseful: a climb to the top, a descent into alcoholism, a fixation with guns, love affair after love affair, dabbling in mysticism, a late in the game coming out, and a triumphant return to the world stage from the abyss. That her final act was partially engineered by the lesbians of Mexico to whom she is a folk hero, and gay icons in their own right, Pedro Almodovar and Miguel Bosé, just makes the comeback all the sweeter and more powerful. No-one celebrates divas, that ability to transcend camp to ecstatic enlightenment, better than the gays. Almodovar raves, "She absolved you of your darkest sins. And then encouraged you to do them again."

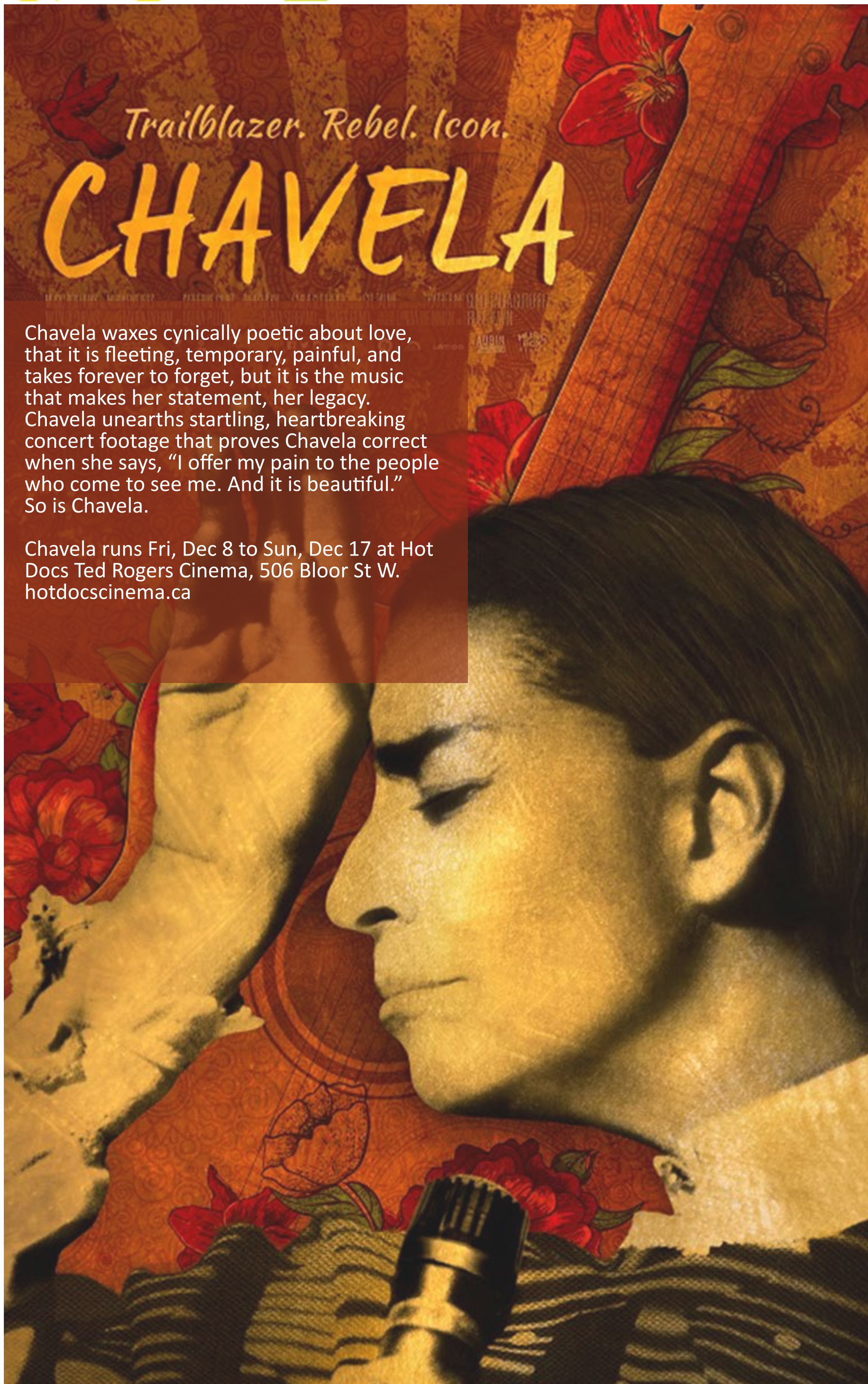


Trailblazer. Rebel. Icon.

CHAVELA

Chavela waxes cynically poetic about love, that it is fleeting, temporary, painful, and takes forever to forget, but it is the music that makes her statement, her legacy. Chavela unearths startling, heartbreaking concert footage that proves Chavela correct when she says, "I offer my pain to the people who come to see me. And it is beautiful." So is Chavela.

Chavela runs Fri, Dec 8 to Sun, Dec 17 at Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St W. hotdocscinema.ca



Poor Agnes takes a calculated risk

PAUL BELLINI

★★★★★



Poor Agnes is a new Canadian film, shot in Thunder Bay and featuring a remarkable lead performance by Lora Burke. It's about Agnes, a sweet small-town girl, who is also a psycho killer with a severed head in the freezer. A private investigator shows up at her house to ask questions. She makes dinner for him, then has sex with him, then ties him up and locks him in the cellar. She proceeds to torture him until his will is broken. Then a third man comes into the picture...

Producer Jonathan Hlibka is wearing many hats when it comes to Agnes. His company, Other Animal Productions, produced it, and he is also the film's distributor and publicist. Its success is important to him. Luckily, he believes strongly in the film.

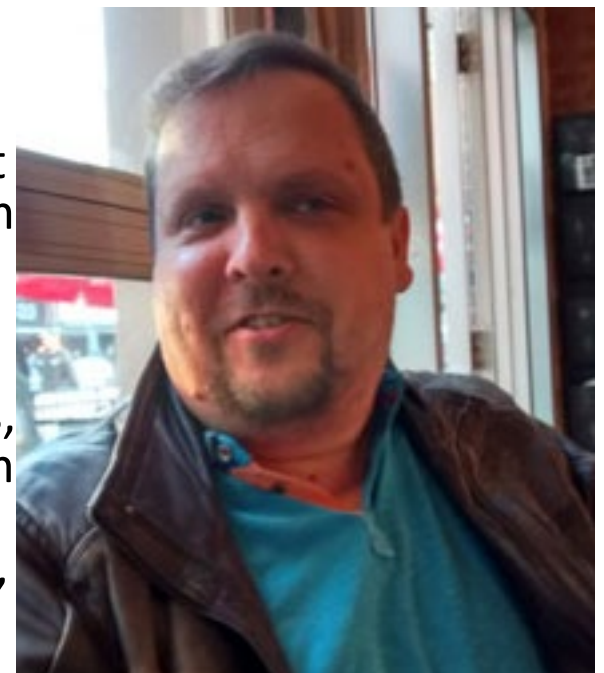
"The characters sang to me," he tells me over coffee. Shot in 14 days by director Navin Ramaswaran, the film is full of suspense. Mostly, the viewer is never quite sure what Agnes will do next. The screenwriter, James Gordon Ross, admits that he listened to "very narcissistic pop songs in order to get into the right emotional space" for the character. Hmm. I always said all that Katy Perry music would lead to murder.

Hlibka has high hopes for the movie, but he is also realistic. It opens at the Carlton



Cinema in November, and he's pushing for a good run. "A successful screening allows a producer to up the chances for everything after that - platform sales, broadcast sales, even awards consideration." It already won the 2017 Barry Convex Award at the recent Fantasia Film Festival.

This is Hlibka's first shot at being a film producer. A graduate of the Claude Watson School for the Arts, he got into the film business through doing soundtracks, scriptwriting, produced



music videos, and then went into public relations. He ran The Big Picture Cinema on Gerrard for seven years, but the landlord was not maintaining the building, making it difficult for him to rent it out or hold premieres there. He was fortunate enough to be the publicist for Theeb, a recent Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Film, and he keeps busy elsewhere. "I help develop food and cannabis products. I volunteer at the Daily Bread Food Bank. I'd like to produce more plays, although doing so caused my hair to go grey."

Despite his success, he is quick to remind me that it is always a struggle. "Years ago I suggested to a pizza company that we partner up and offer a promo code for a digital download of a movie with the pizza. They didn't get it. I think it's just the business culture in this country. Canadian business is so risk-averse." But the same can't be said for Poor Agnes. It risks everything, which is why it is such an exciting new film.

God's Own Country: an achingly romantic gay love story

DREW ROWSOME ★★★★★



A film centred on a gay romance is still so rare that it arouses as much trepidation as it does hunger. For decades we have projected ourselves onto the divas and movie stars who, while resolutely heterosexual, still had the power to express the emotions and desires we also feel. So when *God's Own Country*, trailing acclaim and awards, promises the shopworn tale of a repressed Brit saved by the love and lust of a Romanian gypsy, I couldn't resist.

God's Own Country is swooningly gorgeous. Josh O'Connor as the Brit has a quirky appeal, and Alec Secareanu as the tall, dark and handsome is typecast. That they both are as talented, able to convey a lot of emotions with little dialogue, as they are alluring, is a bonus. And they are joined by a third character, the British countryside, that is lingered on lovingly and with deliberate framing to emphasis both its vistas and its intimate secrets. The green verdant terrain is given as much emphasis as the tantalizing terrain of the men's bodies.

Fortunately *God's Own Country* is not all gloss and cinematography. O'Connor has an anonymous spit-for-lube encounter in a trailer used for hauling cows, and the men's first sex scene is rough and conducted in mud that does not look at all art-directed. The progression of their sexual relationship from candid to candlelight, is mirrored by the depiction of farm life. Though the symbolism is blatant, the amount of sweat and the necessary brutality of labouring on a farm is shown in ways that are unusually harsh. But the realism pays off when love blossoms and Secareanu's character midwives life instead of death.

Writer/director Francis Lee forefronts the gay love story but he is also, as evidenced by the final credits, filming a hymn to the small family farm and the people who work them. And, as artisanal cheese-making is about as stereotypically a gay industry as there is, the two themes dovetail neatly. O'Connor's arc, as he slowly thaws and releases his grip on tradition, is beautifully and subtly played and it almost appears as if his physical presence, the very structure of his face, changes as the character accepts some happiness. This is mirrored by very fine work from the team of Gemma Jones and Ian Hart who, as the parents, have the very same struggles but in supporting roles.

But it is Secareanu who is the leading man. Though there is casual nudity and gay sex scenes that are more explicit than the mainstream usually permits, Lee never treats the men as sex objects in the way he does the countryside. But Secareanu's deep eyes and lithe musculature can't help but draw the eye and ardour. We don't just understand why O'Connor thaws, we experience it with him. Despite being distanced by the overt symbolism, occasionally Masterpiece Theatre-slow pace, overly coiffed hair, and the relentlessly linear plot, by the time the climax arrived, my heart was in the grips of *God's Own Country* and Secareanu's charm. The magic of film romance had worked and elicited a visceral reaction: I won't be signing up to shovel shit or birth breeched lambs, but I would gladly accept the attentions of a roaming gypsy in need.

God's Own Country opens Fri, Nov 3 at the TIFF Lightbox, 350 King St W. tiff.net, godsowncountry.film

Victoria & Abdul

BIL ANTONIOU

In 1997, Harvey Weinstein got wind of a film about Queen Victoria filmed for television by the BBC and, seeing its cinematic potential, took it away from the small screen and turned it into an Oscar nominated hit, making its star Judi Dench a late-life cinematic sensation.

Twenty years later, with Weinstein's public and professional downfall just barely in the rearview mirror, another film about the monarch who enjoyed a more than sixty year reign is the subject of a film, this time made with the big screen in mind and with Dench in the lead role once again.

A number of years after her friendship with her beloved John Brown, Victoria is charmed once again by an outsider, this time a lowly Indian clerk sent from the furthest reaches of the empire to present her with a coin as a token of affection from her subjects in the far east. Having become despondent with the daily routine of pomp and ceremony, her increasing age feeling no benefit from her duties, Victoria has a spring put back in her step by the mercurial Abdul (Ali Fazal), who gives her Urdu lessons and spins lovely tales about the homeland that she rules but will never see.

Her increasing affection and admiration for Abdul, which eventually has her bringing his family to England and deciding to bestow titles upon him, causes nothing but strife in the household, with a group of tense and terrified men and women reaching the point of revolt when they can take the interference of this upstart charlatan no more.

Stephen Frears has worked so beautifully with Dench before that it is shocking how very simple and dull this film is: the objections to Victoria's relationship with Abdul are not surprising, but the fact that the supporting cast can only manage one tone of emotion over what is years of Abdul's presence in the household is ridiculous. Surely there were at least some staff members who tolerated his presence without sticking up their noses at every sight of him, and the film could stand exploring the possibility that Abdul had some shady qualities even when he was most in the queen's favour.

The pointed commentary on British hypocrisy towards its own subjects (foreigners are usually in your face because you stole or at least interfered with their country, folks) is enough a part of the story without needing to present Abdul as a simple and flat symbol, the injustice he suffers would still track if you allowed some emphasis on the less savoury aspects of his character (he doesn't seem to mind that his friend suffers from their years in England, and what of his STI that is never really resolved?) Lee Hall's screenplay is a shallow experience that doesn't feature nearly as much spontaneous delight as John Madden's film, or anything near the richness of Frears' previous collaborations with Dench; her Oscar-baiting scene, a lengthy close-up of her responding to accusations of mental incapacity, is as wonderful as this masterpiece of an actor always is, but it comes nowhere near her inspirational speech outside the Windmill theatre in Mrs. Henderson Presents, or basically the entirety of *Philomena*.





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FLASHBACK

What's my age again?

JESSE T.

I'm turning 30 years old this month and, contrary to popular belief, my life is not ending. I set up a date with Chad, a cute, blonde 20-year-old guy that I've been chatting with online. We plan to go for dinner and drinks.

After dinner we get to the bar and Chad gets carded at the door. The bouncer turns us away because Chad's ID is fake. Before I can react, Chad is pulling me down the street, "Let's go for ice cream instead," he suggests.

On the walk Chad confesses that he's only 18, but he'll be 19 in a few weeks. I try not to show it on my face that I'm having a debate in my head: should I date so young?

"Why would you lie that you're older?" I ask.

"Believe it or not," Chad succinctly replies, "When I tell guys I'm only 18, it detours them."

He's right. I think that a 40-year-old can date a 30-year-old and still be compatible, but 29 and 18 is different. Eighteen equals teenybopper and immaturity. Maybe I'm being too judgmental? I'm an adult, but I'm still young! I decide to go for it. I watch Chad scanning the ice cream choices: so help me God, if he orders bubblegum flavour I'm outta here.

On our next date Chad invites me to an event put on by a local University's Queer group.

Since I can get a wristband I go to the bar to get us both drinks. Coming up from behind Chad, I see he's talking to someone. Right before I get to them I overhear this twink ask Chad, "So who's that hot old guy you're with?"



I spit my drink out, which I thought only happened in the movies, stagger and quickly turn around to go back to the bar.

The event is for gay youth and some of them are as young as 16. In their eyes I am old, but not in an insulting way: I think they mean grown up. I can remember being 16 and seeing my teachers in high school as "old" but they were only the age I am now.

As I watch Chad dancing smack in the center of the dance floor, surrounded by other young gays with their love lives still an unwritten book, I remember being almost-19 again. Every year he'll go through chameleon-like changes, just like I did. There is so much a 19-year-old has to go through, and trust me, none of it involves a monogamous boyfriend. I realize it's not going to work.

I'm 29 and I love it. I'm happy to be here and glad to be over all the things that it took for me to get here. With that said I leave and never see Chad again.

Later, after telling my friend Steve about how I ditched Chad, he tells me I should have given it more of a chance. I disagree.

"Let me put it in a way you'll understand," I tell him. "Chad wants tickets to a Taylor Swift concert, I just went to see Amanda Marshall ... at a casino."

How to celebrate eco-friendly holiday

LEE FANCY LEBER

Christmas, one of the biggest holidays for retail, generates unnecessary trash, uses precious resources, and creates quite a large footprint.

When family and friends are visiting from out of town, traveling creates a large carbon footprint. Try to get members to carpool for the trip or if distance and time are an issue, take transit to and from the airport or train stations. Consider a rented Christmas tree, which is delivered in a pot, remains alive through the season and is picked up after New Year's Day. Or, as we did this year, buy a Living Christmas tree which can then be placed outside after the holidays and reused year after year.

Consider re-using paper already in your house for wrapping paper. Use gift boxes made from recycled cardboard and reuse the ones you were given. Make your own cards with supplies at home, or buy cards made of recycled paper.

Give gifts that are homemade. Try searching the Internet for simple crafts, bake a batch of homemade cookies or bread, or start seedlings for an indoor houseplant.

Here are some ways to lower electricity bills and save energy during this holiday season.



1. Use LED Christmas Lights - LED Christmas lights consume 90% less electricity compared to regular incandescent bulbs. They are also about 50% cheaper.

2. Fiber Optic Decorations - These trees have a single light at the base to light up the entire tree along with the decorations.



3. Timed Christmas Lights - Do not turn on the Christmas lights during the daytime. No one can really enjoy looking at the lights during the day. Use a timer to automatically switch lights on and off.

4. Tree On, Lights Off - When the tree is lit, there's no need to have other lights on. You will also enhance the festive atmosphere.



note: tree can only be inside house or condo for duration of a week, after that needs to be placed outside or it will die.

5. Decorate with Candles

- Candles are another way to decorate a room. You can use scented candles; just make sure they are made of Soy or Bee's wax, not paraffin.



6. Lower the Thermostat

- More people in your house means more body warmth.

7. Make you own ornaments - Use ribbons and bows or handmade crafts. You can use them year after year and also appreciate that you made them.



7. Buy Energy-free Gifts - All most 40% of all batteries are bought during the Christmas season. If you must use batteries make sure that you buy rechargeable batteries.



Maui: The Gay Side of the Valley Isle

JON FAIRBANKS - PHOTOS: 'TOURISM AUTHORITY (HTA) / TOR JOHNSON'



For the queer couple seeking a romantic haven, the island of Maui is waiting to welcome you with bright rainbow leis. From snorkeling to whale watching and lounging on a remote gay beach, Maui is paradise found. With a population of less than 150,000 people, the gay scene is much smaller on Maui than in Oahu but there's a small, tight knit LGBT community and a lot of great activities geared toward the gay tourist.

Whether you want to surf, canoe or kayak, opportunities abound on gay Maui for the outdoor enthusiast. There are several companies that offer visitors equipment and training. If you're looking for something lower impact, Maui is the leading whale-watching center in the Hawaiian Islands. Head to the beach and try to spy a Humpback, dolphin or sea turtle. Stick around and be sure to catch one of the most amazing sunsets you'll ever experience. No Ka Oi Adventures offers nature-based excursions organized for gay and lesbian travelers. The operator specializes in

nature-based excursions and offers the queer traveler small group tours featuring off-the-beaten-path destinations on the island.

The first step in planning your memorable jaunt to the Valley Isle is finding the right accommodations. Luckily there are several gay and lesbian owned or friendly hotels and resorts on the island. Some of these properties, like the Maui Sunseeker, offer LGBT specific packages and host commitment ceremonies. In 2010, Hawaii became the seventh US state to legalize civil unions.

The amazing coastline is one of the main reasons to visit Maui and Little Beach is the most popular gay beach on the island. You'll find this nude beach in Makena State Park, South of Wailea at the end of Wailea Alanui Road. You'll have to walk past the Big Beach and over the lava-flow trail to get there. It's a great place to meet and greet the local gay set and gay tourists from all points.



After a day of fun in the sun, you'll want to experience the local gay nightlife. Don't expect to a wide variety of dance clubs and other gay venues like you'd find in Honolulu, but you'll definitely have a great time. One of the most popular bars for gays and lesbians on the island is Ambrosia. Named by Maui Time Weekly as best bar (two years in a row), Ambrosia offers daily entertainment and eclectic décor. If you want to try some exotic local drinks, you'll fall in love with Ambrosia. Their wide varieties of specialty martinis are extremely popular and are the perfect way to cap off an adventure-packed day. There are also great drink specials and a happy hour every night from 6pm to 9pm.

Betty's Beach Café is also a great place to eat, drink and be Mary! Their Sunday brunch is out of this world, featuring amazing omelets, egg scrambles and signature cocktails. No trip to this tropical venue would be complete without trying one of their "Betty" drinks. From the Bettie Paige (red wine, peach schnapps and pineapple) to the Betty Rubble (a Blue-beri Hawaiian), there's truly a vice for everyone. Happy hour is always a blast at Betty's. Every afternoon from 2pm to 5pm enjoy \$3 Mai Tais and \$4 Longboard Kona Beers. Stay or come back later in the evening for Betty's evening happy hour, from 9pm to 11pm every day.



October is a great time for gay travelers to experience Maui. Maui Pride is October 5-7, 2012 and it's always a celebration to remember. The festivities begin that Friday with an Aloha Reception at the Maui Sunseeker. This mixer is a great opportunity to get to know the local queer community and hobnob.



The main event will be held at the Maui Tropical Plantation on Saturday, October 6. Entrance is free and there will be a wide variety of vendors and activities. That morning the Pride committee will also be sponsoring drag races and other fabulous events. Saturday night, return to the venue to hula your ass off! DJs will be spinning and live performances (including the local Deborah Vial Band) are scheduled to entertain the masses. The final day of the Pride festivities kicks off at Stella Blues for breakfast (8am to 10am). Cap off the final day with a snorkel tour or hidden waterfall hike.

Before you leave Maui, during Pride or any other time of the year, you **MUST** take a helicopter ride overlooking the island. Air Maui and other operators offer flights for tourists and it's only about a 45-minute flight. The sea cliffs are breathtaking! The waterfalls, awe-inspiring.

When the luau is over and you're depressed that you have to leave the dream vacation of a lifetime, take solace, when you say "aloha" it means goodbye and hello. The friendly islanders will be there to welcome you back with sweet, sun-kissed smiles!

For more information about Maui or other LGBT destinations please visit www.gaytravel.com

Pay it Forward

SAMANTHA LAUZON

About a month ago I got a text from my very good friend Tommy. In it he said he was going to have to quit hair school. He'd recently cut my hair and did a great job so I was shocked. I asked why and he explained that his mother's cancer had become worse and taking care of her put him under too much financial strain to continue school.

Within moments my brain went into action. Here was a friend in need and I couldn't just sit by and watch him throw away his dreams and hard work. What could I do?

Turns out a lot! I'm also enrolled in Bruno's Hair School in Hamilton and my tuition is already paid in full. However, I can honestly admit that I'm not attending often enough to graduate anytime soon.

So I sprang into action. I called the director of the school John Morrison and asked if I could transfer the remainder of my tuition to a student who was already attending. Surprisingly this task was easier than I had thought. All I had to do was go in, sign some papers, and Tommy was set!

Once my game plan was set I called Tommy back. He cried on the phone telling me that I didn't know how much it meant to him and in truth I do. I know exactly what giving someone a break in life can mean, and how it can affect them both spiritually and emotionally.

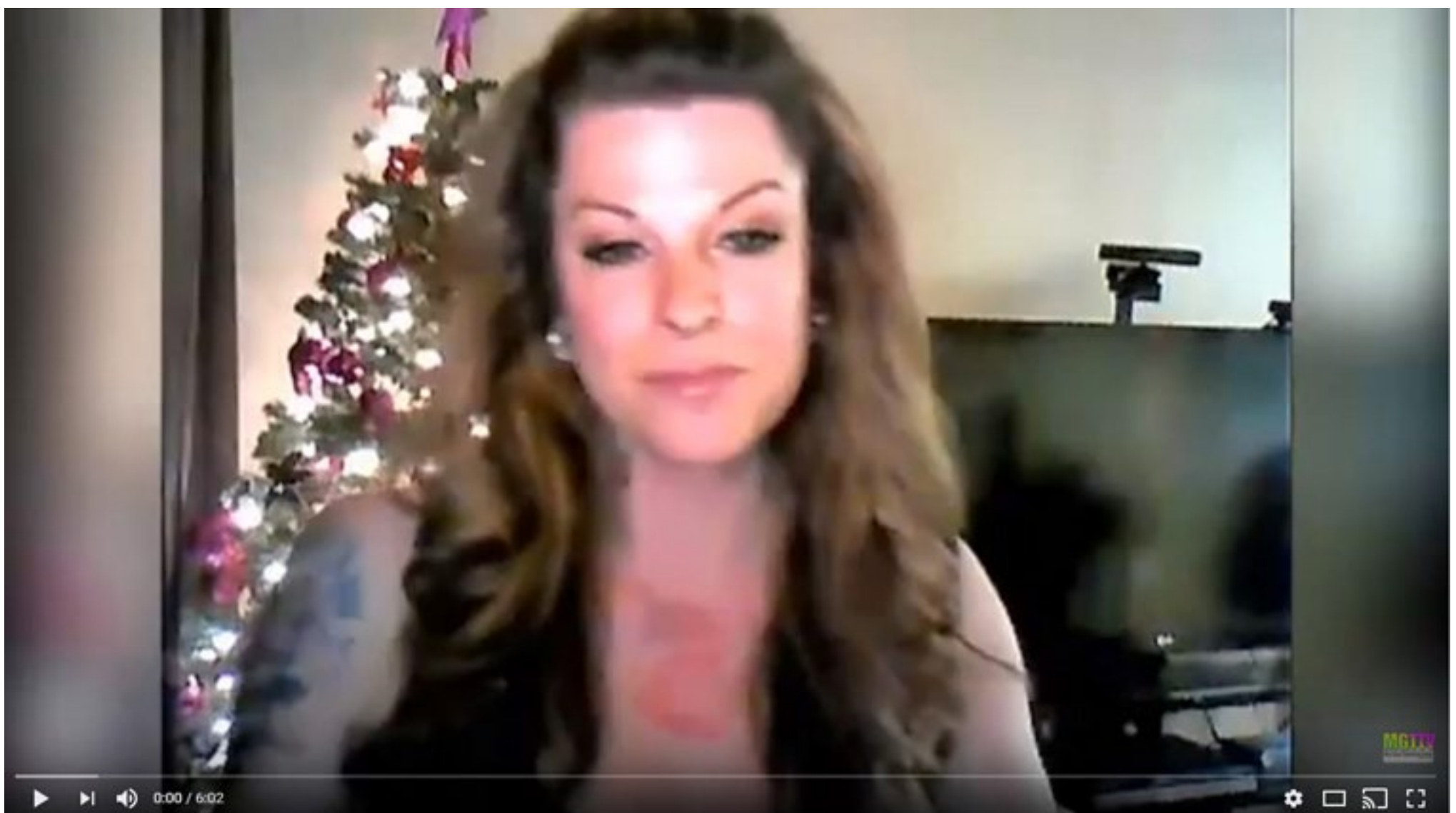
I went in the next week and had the papers finalized and then took Tommy out to lunch.



It has been a long standing dream of mine to pay for someone to go to school. I always told myself when I was successful I would contribute to the LGBT community by way of helping pay tuition for someone. Well, now it is a reality and it feels great knowing that I've helped a friend and a member of the community further themselves in life and their dreams.

My life at the moment has been going so well it just seemed the right thing to do to pay it forward. I can only hope Tommy does the same and so on and so forth.

Take a moment this holiday season to spread some cheer and give back to the people around you. You may not be able to pay someone's tuition to school, but buying that homeless guy a sandwich or a coffee can really help to keep you warm inside. Happy Holidays and I wish all the very best to you and yours this Holiday Season.



7 Dumbest Pull-Up Mistakes

SCOTT HERMAN

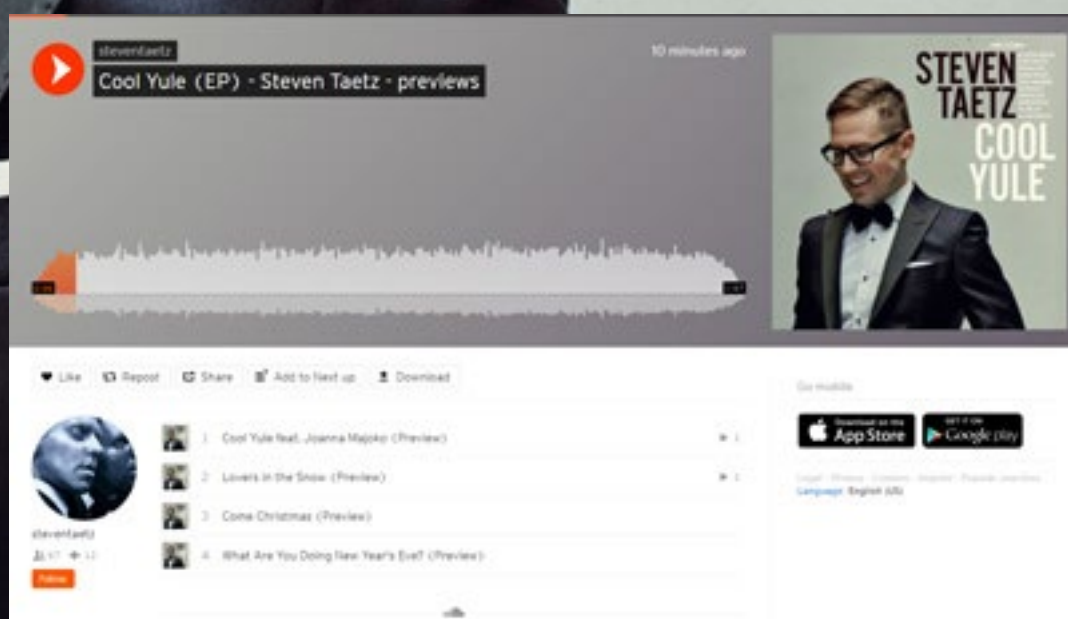
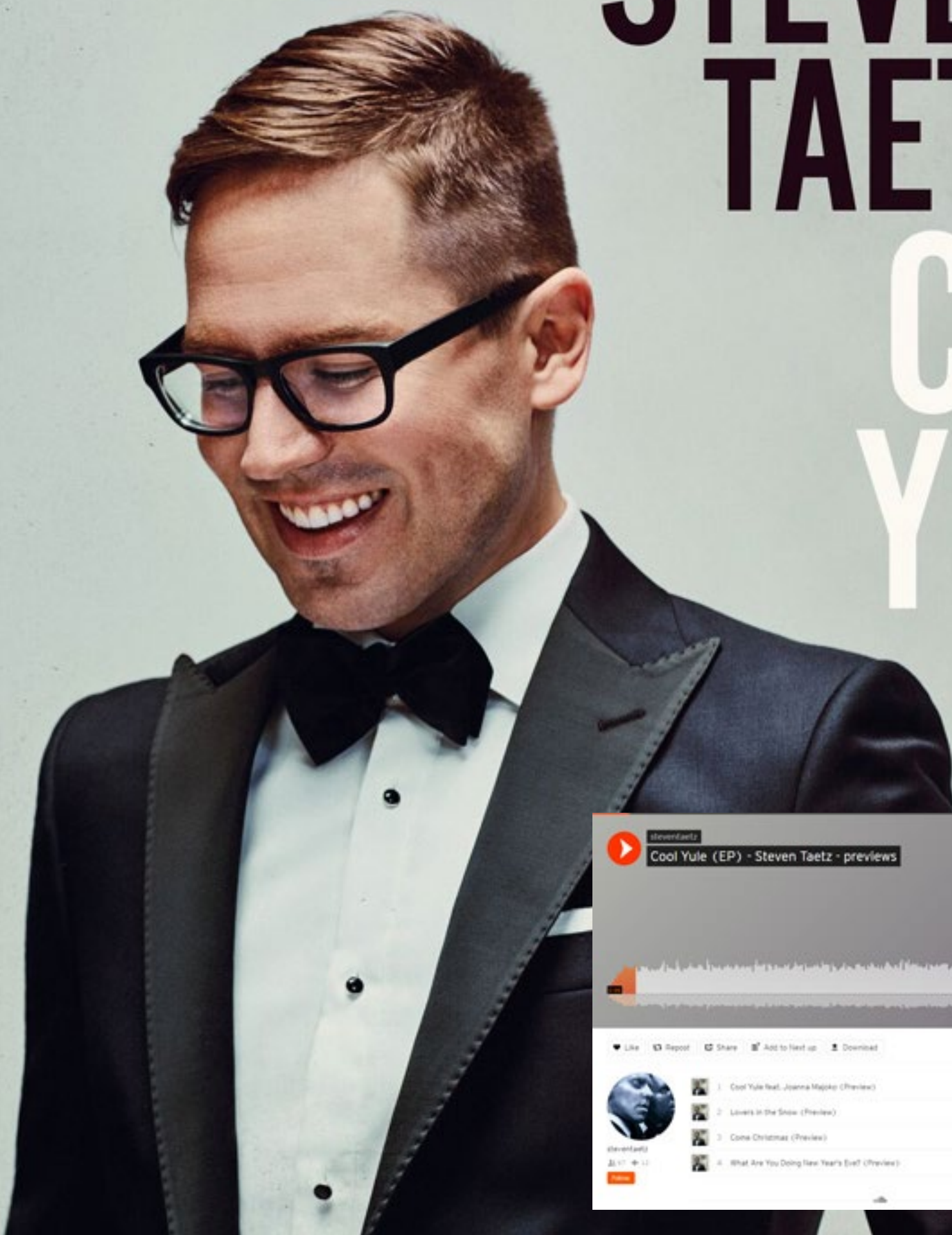


STEREO

STEVEN TAETZ

with DREW JURECKA
EWEN FARNCOMBE
SØREN NISSEN
ANDREW MILLER
NATHAN HILTZ
JOANNA MAJOKO
KEVIN TURCOTTE
JOHN MacLEOD
DAN DOUGLAS
and JOE PHILLIPS

COOL YULE



Toronto-based singer, lyricist and composer Steven Taetz releases a new EP of Christmas swing and Adult Contemporary material co-written and recorded with leading Canadian jazz artists. The material highlights classic standards as well as newly-written seasonal hits that showcases his writing style, live performance sound, and feature Canadian-created Christmas tunes for anyone wanting to swing with their holiday tunes.

The 4-song EP includes an uptempo big-band-style title track “Cool Yule” made popular first by Louis Armstrong, followed by a dreamy ballad co-written with Montreal’s Caracol called “Lovers in the Snow.” Another original, “Come Christmas,” provides a contrast to every sickly-sweet carol, this one about getting over a broken heart at Christmas, and finally an updated jazz rendition of “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?” with leading horn player Kevin Turcotte.

You can see Steven perform live at artist feature concert for TD’s Music Fridays at Union Station on December 22, 4:00pm.

Album Cool Yule ep can be purchased at iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/album/cool-yule-ep/1317437599>

STEVEN TAETZ

WAITING FOR ISHTAR



A love letter to the most misunderstood movie of all time.

A film by John Mitchell and Jonathan Crombie

PAUL BELLINI

A few years ago, filmmaker John Mitchell (*Portrait of a Serial Monogamist*) was at a party. Someone asked him what his favorite movie was and he said *Ishtar*. The party stopped cold. No one could believe him. Wasn't *Ishtar* that 1987 legendary flop starring Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman that cost billions and almost ruined Hollywood?

Mitchell decided to watch it again, but it was 2006 and no DVD of the movie existed at the time. Indeed, the only thing Mitchell could locate was a VHS copy at the Toronto Public Library. But when he went to get it, he was told he would be #47 on a list.

At first, he and his partner, actor Jonathan Crombie, set out to make a documentary about the movie, but most of those involved were not available. So they decided to try to track down the other 46 people on the waiting list. This is the quest of *Waiting for Ishtar*, Mitchell's new documentary.

Mitchell hosted a screening recently at CineCycle. I was invited and despite a nagging cough and freezing cold weather I decided to attend. Mitchell prefaced the screening by talking about Crombie, who has since died, and how they were eventually able to track down interviews with Carol Kane, Charles Grodin, Paul Williams, and many others.

The screening began and I settled into my seat. Not five minutes into it, I had a brief

coughing fit. No big deal, I thought, but the asshole sitting behind me, one of those typical Queen Street failed artist types, leaned over and said "If you are going to continue to cough, can you go outside? I'm serious." I ignored him, but that was it. He had managed to completely ruin the screening for me, as I spent the rest of the time fantasizing about projectile vomiting in his face.

Ah, but here's the good news. I no longer have to put up with cunts like this guy, because as of December 15, *Waiting for Ishtar* will finally be available on Vimeo On Demand. This means I can order a copy and watch it, and cough to my heart's content, in the privacy of my own home.

Like so many others, I had always avoided *Ishtar*, a comedy about two songwriters stranded in the desert, because I read that it was a bomb. Like Mitchell, I suspect that the movie needs to be rescued from its unfair assessment. After all, writer/director Elaine May was a genius whose previous comedies, *A New Leaf* and *The Heartbreak Kid*, are among my favorites. How could *Ishtar* be as bad as they say it is?

Why take my word for it, or the word of any stupid movie critic or anti-coughing fascist? See *Waiting for Ishtar* for yourself. It's one of the most entertaining little documentaries to come out this year.

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand>

Top 30 Songs Of Christmas 2017 || Best Songs Of Merry Christmas

Best Songs Of Merry Christmas

- 01. It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas
- 02. Sleigh Ride
- 03. A Holly Jolly Christmas
- 04. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow
- 05. We Wish You A Merry Christmas
- 06. The Christmas Song
- 07. The First Noel
- 08. Home For The Holidays
- 09. Rudolph The Red
- 10. Christmas Eve
- 11. I'll Be Home For Christmas
- 12. Merry Christmas Darling
- 13. Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree
- 14. Charlie Brown Christmas
- 15. Christmas
- 16. Joy To The World
- 17. Oh Christmas Tree
- 18. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
- 19. Petit Papa Noël
- 20. Feliz Navidad
- 21. Christmas Waltz...



Exit full screen

0:20 / 1:35:50

**MyGayToronto.com wishes you
Merry Christmas and
Happy Holidays :)**

Official Christmas Carols 2017 🎄 2 HOURS BEST 🔥 Fireplace and Christmas Music video

We Wish you a Merry Christmas

Exit full screen

0:06 / 1:59:56





2018's new years' nudes are spectacular

DREW ROWSOME

For the last couple of years, I have written about the upcoming calendars of particular interest. That interest can be sparked by the fundraising for charity that the calendars do, or just because they are artistically sexy and something that one would enjoy viewing on their wall for 365 days. The best, included here, do both. I hesitated this year because, while the posts in 2016 and 2017 were wildly popular, they also created unexpected problems.



I can only speculate on what lead a disgruntled Warwick Rowers employee to go on a rampage and threaten to sue every site that used photos in order to promote the Warwick Rowers' calendars and products. The resultant fallout led to a mass extermination of blogs, including mine, on Tumblr and other sites. Copyright is a tricky legal entity and should be respected, so I want to make it clear that all of the photos you are about to enjoy are meant to be enticement to purchase the calendars - using the links provided - so that you can enjoy the photos the way they are meant to be seen and in their full glory.



The Warwick Rowers are back, as they have been every year since 2009, for 2018. Though the photos are fresh, their mission remains the same:

- to promote positive, inclusive and respectful attitudes towards people of all genders and sexualities through the content that we create
- to fund university rowing and particularly to make rowing more accessible to a wider number of students
- to fund the ongoing development of Sport Allies, a registered charity with a mission to promote sport, and particularly team sport, as an inclusive and supportive route to personal growth for everyone

To that end they announce:

We are back with our biggest and best calendar range ever! As well as a new calendar with unique video updates, two new films shot in England and Spain, we bring you our third coffee table book in two exciting editions. We're also giving you the chance to slip into our brand new onesies and keep in touch with us all year through a brand new digital subscription and members' forum!

The calendar and all the other Warwick Rowers swag can be ordered at warwickrowers.org



The Boys Just Wanna Have Fun Calendar, photographed by Lisboeta Italiano, is a fundraiser for the Boys Just Wanna Have Fun Sports Club. Their motto is,



We are a sports club based in Lisbon, Portugal who promotes the practice of sports without any type prejudice. Inclusion, diversity and equality are some of our values. At the moment we have a rugby team called Dark Horses, a volleyball team called Lisbon Crows, a swimming team called Lisboa Poolboys, a group who practice Tango once a week, a football team called Lisbon Foxes and a running team. To get more info send and email to info@bjwhf.org

The calendar is themed around "Desire" and from the samples, it earns that capital letter. The calendar can be ordered at bjwhf.weebly.com



You can see much more of 2018's new years' nudes spectacular [\[here \]](#)

Last minute Christmas gifts: Wobbling Willy, Edible Anuses and BBJ

DREW ROWSOME



Christmas is almost upon us and those who haven't finished shopping need to get snapping. The malls are packed but online shopping has become more efficient so, with a bit of typing and a not overextended credit card, there are still some possibilities.

For someone intimate who you want to never forget you - NOT someone you are not intimate with, you don't want to be a disgraced Matt Lauer. Or even a Mario Batali who had to apologize with a pizza dough cinnamon bun recipe (stay tuned for Kevin Spacey's favourite way to serve chicken) - there is the fabulous Wobbling Willy. Yes, a photograph of the face of you or a loved one or a fantasy figure (with the later we're again in dicey territory as most respectable male porn stars already have a moulded likeness for sale) can become 3D and be grafted on the shaft of a beautiful festive dildo.

Not only a distinctive gift but a considerable ego-stroker if you use your own likeness atop the (probably) unlikeness. They will never forget you. And even Gramma might be eternally grateful for a version - not of you, that would be disturbing for most octogenarians even tenuously related - featuring handsome sophisticate Ian McKellen or feisty Ed Asner or even that cute whippersnapper Justin Bieber who dreams of being a whopping Wobbling Willy. The practical toys can be ordered for \$99 at wobblingwilly.com requiring only a clear .jpg and a credit card. However the item is so popular that orders can't be guaranteed for Christmas Day but one can get a headstart on Valentine's Day.



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ALWAYS HIRING
NEW TALENT
TO TAKE IT ALL
OFF ON STAGE

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BLACK

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DJ JOSH KARMIN
SATURDAY JANUARY 13TH

\$5 BEFORE 11PM - \$10 AFTER 11PM

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The UPS Store
Church & Maliland - branch 478



TRAVIS WALL'S

SHAPING SOUND

AFTER THE CURTAIN



FEATURING WINNERS
FROM
**SO YOU THINK
YOU CAN DANCE**
LEX ISHIMOTO
GABY DIAZ
AND
NICK LAZZARINI

CREATED BY AND STARRING TWO-TIME EMMY AWARD-WINNER TRAVIS WALL

PRODUCED BY
**break
the floor**
SHAPINGSOUND.CO.COM

FEBRUARY 1 & 2

BUY TICKETS

AN UNCONVENTIONAL LOVE STORY
ABOUT THE 1981 TORONTO
BATHHOUSE RAIDS

RAID

OPERATION SOAP

by Raymond Helkio with David Bateman
introduction by Paul Bellini

“It’s been so long since I last went to Buddies in Bad Times Theatre that I had forgotten how hilariously irreverent queer humour can be... you’d wonder how they managed to give us non-stop-laughs out of a serious topic like the bathhouse raids but RAID did just that.” –Anne Watson

“Please play this at my funeral” –R.M. Vaughan
*referring to RAID’s version of
Don’t Leave Me This Way*

“I had no idea what to expect,
the show was AMAZING!”
–Rolyn Chambers, Daily Xtra

GET THE PLAY ON AMAZON
OR GLAD DAY BOOKSHOP



PRESENTED BY DALE DAVID



JOCK STRAP

SATURDAY JANUARY 6TH

BLACK **EAGLE**
457 CHURCH STREET

MUSIC BY DJ

SUMMATION

\$5.00 B4 MIDNIGHT

\$10 AFTER MIDNIGHT



Ho Ho Ho



*Happy Holidays
from all of us at*



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS...

SATURDAY DEC. 23

SQUIRT.ORG MEN'S ASS CONTEST
HOSTED BY SOFONDA COX WITH IVORY TOWERS
AND MISS FIERCALICLOUS

SUNDAY DEC. 24 CHRISTMAS EVE.

9PM GEORGIE GIRL AND SOFONDA COX OLD SCHOOL SHOW

11PM SMOKING HOT DIVAS SOFONDA COX WITH DEVINE DARLIN, TYNOMI BANKS,
JADA HUDSON AND ERIN BROKABIC

MONDAY DEC. 25 CHRISTMAS DAY OPEN FROM 8PM

SHOW AT **11PM** SOFONDA COX WITH MICHELLE ROSS. JADA HUDSON AND LEELANDO

TUESDAY DEC. 26 BOXING DAY OPEN FROM 1PM WITH 2 SHOWS

8PM MISS CONCEPTION BROADWAY AND BEYOND

11PM BABY BEL BEL WITH SAPPHIRE TITH-REIGN, VANITY ALA MODE AND PRIYANKA

BOOM!!

2018



*New Year's Eve
Blowout!*

MIDNIGHT COUNTDOWN WITH GEORGIE GIRL
AND

DANCING ALL NIGHT LONG WITH DJ PHIL VILLENEUVE

FULL SERVICE
UNTIL 3am

NO COVER CHARGE!

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LGBT Upcoming Hot Events

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HOUSE MUSIC, HOT DADDIES & DADDY CHASERS

DND

SATURDAY
DEC 9

SPECIAL GUEST MEET
ADAM RUSSO
DJ & ENTERTAINER

FEATURING
DJ DWAYNE MINARD

EMCEE'D BY
DJ MIKEY B

EAGLE



JOCK STRAP

SATURDAY DECEMBER 2ND
EAGLE

PRESENTED BY DALE DAVID

CINDEL



Tuesday October 31
Woody's is

LIT

HALLOWEENIE COSTUME BLOWOUT!

with DJ CHRIS FRANKENSTEINBACK

CHURCH STREET IS CLOSED TO THE LIVING
NOT-TO-BE-MISSED!

NO COVER CHARGE!



NOV 21 - DEC 17

Early bird tickets: \$25
Priority Club: \$1000

8

Buy your tickets
corpus.ca



Nov 23

SALACIOUS!

BOOK LAUNCH
GLAD DAY BOOKSHOP
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2017
8PM

THE BOY WHO BRANDED
DOWN A BATHHOUSE
A FURRY CHICKEN!

RAIN OPERATION SOAP
BRYANNE BILLY & DAVID CAZEMER



Nov 26
SUNDAY NOVEMBER 26
4PM SHARP!

MISS CONCEPTION CELEBRATES
TEN TERRIFIC YEARS OF HER

HOLLYWOOD BROADWAY SHOW



Dec 2 - Sat

JOCK STRAP

SATURDAY DECEMBER 2ND
EAGLE

PRESENTED BY DALE DAVID

CINDEL



Dec 9 - Sat

DND

SATURDAY
DEC 9

SPECIAL GUEST MEET
ADAM RUSSO
DJ & ENTERTAINER

FEATURING
DJ DWAYNE MINARD

EMCEE'D BY
DJ MIKEY B

EAGLE



MONDAYS

Crews Tangos

**MONDAY NIGHT
MADNESS**

DOWNBARA
FROM MISSISSAUGA

BDA
FROM MISSISSAUGA

WITH MUSIC BY
DJ RELENTLESS

SHOWS @ 11 PM & 1 AM
No Cover, Always A Good Time
#feelsleepcrewsrepeat



MONDAYS

Magie MONDAYS

AN INDUSTRY NIGHT
EVERY WEEK

\$5
LUNCH
TWO LUNCH
DRINKS

REMINGTONS



MONDAYS

FEEL WITH KATINKA & CARLOTTA



TUESDAYS

T.O.T

**TAKE IT OFF
TUESDAYS**

B-WEEKLY AMATEUR
STRIP COMPETITION

REMINGTONS
MEN OF STEEL

CASH & PRIZES
TO BE WON

COMPET
SIGN @ 8PM




TUESDAYS

8:30pm
tuesdays

PHOTO
DUMBO

WITH
DUMBO
TENSION



TUESDAYS

8-11

guy moreau, host
james quigley, keys

THE WILKINSON Cabaret

OPEN MIC

STARTS APRIL 11
NO COVER

STATLERS 487 CHURCH ST TORONTO



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Laugh is a muscle

**TUESDAY
OPEN MIC!**

WANDY BOBBAN PRESENTS

ROCKEY | 1000 HWY 7 E. TORONTO



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WEEKLY DRAG AND VARIETY
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WEDNESDAYS

COMP NIGTY GUESTS

DRAG SPECIALS
ALL NIGHT LONG!



FRIDAYS

COLLEGE NIGHT WEDNESDAY

OCTOBER 2017

NEW TOY OF TRAVE (MILK) AND JAY MONROE
WOMEN OF THE NIGHT (MILK) AND JAY MONROE



FRIDAYS

Corona Tangos

SOUL SISTERS

ROCKEY | 1000 HWY 7 E. TORONTO



EVERY F*cking THURSDAY!

Open Mic

HOSTED BY:
DOMAYEN LENAGAT & JAMIE BIRD

Thursdays | 10PM
Statlers
487 Church St. / No Cover



THURSDAYS

MENS BEST CHEST CONTEST AND SHOW

STILL THE BIG DADDY!



THURSDAYS

THE MUSIC THURSDAY



FRIDAYS

SHOW US YOUR INNER DIVA VOCAL REHAB KARAOKE

THURSDAYS 10PM - 20M

WITH YOUR FEARLESS
KARAOKE LEADER
FLVCC



FRIDAYS

BEAR NIGHT

THE LODGE

THE LODGE | TORONTO



FRIDAYS

Striker Sports Bar

FRIDA NIGHT GHT

DRONTO'S FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEO



FRIDAYS

CLUB LITE FRIDAYS

DJ RELENTLESS

MYKLOUD.COM/DJRELENTLESS



FRIDAYS

BEST ASS CONTEST / SHOW



SATURDAYS

SATURDAYS

LAST SATURDAY OF MONTH

THURSDAYS

SUNDAYS

SUNDAYS

We Know Gay



Drew Rowsome - MGT Editor, a writer, reviewer, musician and the lead singer of Crackpuppy. drewrowsome.blogspot.ca.



Sean Leber - Founder, MGT Creative Director, and contributing editor.



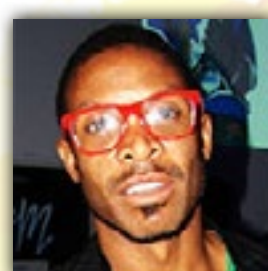
Raymond Helkio - is an author, director and award-winning filmmaker. He cofounded TheReadingSalon.ca



Paul Bellini was a writer for The Kids in the Hall and a producer for This Hour Has 22 Minutes, and columnist at Fab Magazine...



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



Rolyn Chabers was a fab columnist and currently social columnist for Daily Xtra!



Sky Gilbert - Canadian writer, actor, academic and drag performer. skygilbert.blogspot.ca



Alexandra Matveeva - owner of toronto lesbian website - letzto.com



Lee Fancy is contributing editor and listings coordintor.



Samatha Lauzon is Trans activist and educator.



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