

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE & MOBILE EDITION

# MY GAY TORONTO

ISSUE #45



**It's All Tru!**

A play  
about **AIDS**

The Cabaret Company  
PRESENTS

# It's All Tru!



A play about **AIDS**

Written and Directed by Sky Gilbert

Starring David Coomber, Caleb Olivieri and Tim Post

Set Design by Denise Lisson

Lighting Design by Oz Weaver

Costumes Designed by Elizabeth Traicus

May 3 - 14 2017

Wed - Sat 8 pm \$20 - \$39

Sun 2:30 pm PWYC

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

12 Alexander Street

(416) 975-8555



**FRI, MAY-26 TORONTO, CANADA**

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

# Alaska Thunderfuck and Bianca Del Rio werq the queens who Werq the World

RAYMOND HELKIO



*Queens Werq the World* is coming to the Danforth Music Hall on Friday May 26, 2017. Get your tickets early because a show this epic only comes around once in a while. Alaska Thunderfuck, Alysya Edwards, Detox, Latrice Royale and Shangela, plus from season nine of RuPaul's Drag Race, Aja, Peppermint, Sasha Velour and Trinity Taylor.

Shangela recently told Gay Times Magazine "This is the most outrageous and talented collection of queens that have ever toured together. We're calling this the Werq the World tour because that's exactly what these Drag Race stars will be doing for fans: Werqing like they've never Werqued it before!" I caught up with Alaska and Bianca to get the dish on the upcoming show and the state of drag.

**What is the most loving thing you've ever seen another contestant on RDR do?**

**Alaska:** Well I do have to say, when I saw Bianca hand over her extra waist cincher to Adore, I was very mesmerized by the compassion of one queen helping out another, and Drag Race is such a competitive competition and you always want the upper hand, I think that was so mething so genuine and special.

**As co-hosts of Queens Werq The World, what are you most looking forward too?**

**Bianca:** Seeing these assholes embarrass themselves in front of the world. But in all honesty who doesn't love traveling and getting to see these wonderful people who take pride in seeing a bunch of American men in wigs.

**Alaska:** Seeing our country's neighbors! I feel as if our Canadian and European fans are so dedicated since the the majority of us live and work in America, that seeing us that one or two times a year is enough kind of amazes me. Deeply humbling to be able to see and meet these beautiful people once again.

**What can fans expect from Queens Werq The World?**

**Alaska:** A full production, a show that has never been seen before, it's going to feel like you're in the Colosseum at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas. It's a star-studded show. There's so many different talented girls that it really throws you a variety of the things you see on Drag Race all in one fierce show!



**What do you think has changed the most about drag since you started?**

**Bianca:** The make-up is getting worse. Go back. Kidding. I love seeing new types and genres of drag. Before it would just be some glitzy bitch butchering her lip sync. Now there's queens playing banjo, how fucking great is that?

**When all is said and done how do you want people to remember you?**

**Alaska:** (snake hissing) Ha ha, but in all seriousness, I want people to remember my journey of I love doing what I love and the lesson of "how you can start as one person and grow into the next." It's achievable, put your mind to it and things will start unwrapping.

**Are you mentoring anyone (i.e. drag daughters?)**

**Bianca:** No bitch wants me teaching them.

**What advice would you give a young queen that you wished you had known when you started?**

**Bianca:** Get Obamacare and a lifetime supply of Xanax and Ambient. You'll need it. And of course, learn how to fucking sew





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# Tim Post: joining Sky Gilbert for comedy, politics and questioning if *It's All Tru*

DREW ROWSOME -

“He’s a provocative writer and he likes a reaction and I think he’s definitely going to get a conversation going with this play,” says actor Tim Post of Sky Gilbert’s *It’s All Tru: A Play About AIDS*. “At the same time he cares about the relationships in the play. Beyond the broader politics of the play, it is about relationships and jealousy, and what happens when new forces come in and disrupt what seems to be this perfect coupling.”



The press blurb for *It’s All Tru* quotes Gilbert (Sad Old Faggot, The Terrible Parents, To Myself at 28, A Few Brittle Leaves, Hackerlove, Dancing Queen, The Situationists) on his inspiration: “The once a day PrEP pill (Truvada) has turned AIDS into a livable illness and makes it possible for gay men to have condomless sex without risk of infection. Paradoxically, the criminalization of HIV injects the reality of jail time into the lives of gay men.” Just the sort of homophobic conundrum to send Gilbert into a rant.

Post agrees with the assessment but laughs saying, “It’s not all politics, it’s good theatre. The play is really funny, Sky loves a good gag. The great thing about the play is that at the end different members of the audience will come to different conclusions. My character can be viewed by some as very unsympathetic but I think there’s another group, who will certainly understand where he’s coming from. What sacrifices do we make to maintain the idea of a happy marriage, a happy

coupling? What do we turn a blind eye to? What choices do we make to sustain a reality that we want to sustain? It'll be very interesting to see among the audience members, who they side with at the end."

HIV is considered differently by to different parts of the community, let alone beyond. "What I find particularly interesting is the generational aspect," says Post. "We decided to play the character as my age, they may adjust it in the future with a different actor, and the other two guys in the play are in their twenties. Their experience of AIDS and HIV is completely different than mine. I think that even within decade spans, our experiences are quite different. Men that are in their sixties and seventies have a different experience, they have an experience of complete decimation of their social group. I lost close friends, and lost a part of my community but not to the extent of older men. And someone ten years younger will have a much different experience as well. The idea of PrEP and how the absence of something like that coloured the experience of my character. And myself. I lived through that period where you had to ask, 'When do you sort of stop having sex?' where people just didn't have a lot of sex. The idea that you can have sex without a condom and it's not necessarily going to be a fatal conclusion: how that changes what we think. And the almost fetishizing of condomless sex. It's all pretty fascinating. And will provoke debate."

Post is mainly known for his film work and after working with Denis Villeneuve and Bryan Singer, Post was honoured to move up to theatrical genius Gilbert. "I knew Sky socially but I'd never worked with him. He's really collaborative and if you come up with something that works, he can throw out lines, he can change things on a dime. He's very egoless in that way. He's looking to make it great. And he loves actors. He enjoys what actors bring so he's like laughing and enjoying the three of us doing our stuff."

Gilbert is not the only one having a good time. "I'm really lucky, everyone's super nice and super talented," says Post. He and David Coomber (The Wizard of Oz, Fortune and Men's Eyes, Red) play the couple and Post says, "David's great. We have a very natural chemistry. He likes to try things out, he's loose, he'll fool around. He'll go with you if you go in a different direction. He's a very, very talented actor." As is Caleb Olivieri as the sexy third, "I think he did a play with Sky when he was younger, like 19 or 18 or something for something in Hamilton." Post laughs, "He's not that old right now. But Caleb is amazing. He has a completely different energy. He's like a free spirit and will come at things in his own way and it's really surprising. He's very fun and exciting to work with."

And It's All Tru has another bonus, the location. "I've had lots of fun at Buddies and seen lots of Sky plays and other social occasions," says Post. "I feel like I'm part of the Buddies community but I've never performed there so I'm thrilled to perform there for the first time." Will he be doing more theatre or going back to film and TV? "I'm open to all of it right now, the experience of doing this play, and doing Gash! at Summerworks, is feeding a part of me that's pretty hungry. It's a creative, collaborative process that's pretty fulfilling. I hope to do more. I'd be happy to be part of the troupe."

More from Tim Post at [drewrowsome.blogspot.ca](http://drewrowsome.blogspot.ca)



It's All Tru runs Wed, May 3 to Sun, May 14 at Buddies in Bad Times, 12 Alexander St.  
buddiesinbadtimes.com

# Hot Docs decides to Take A Walk On The Wildside

DREW ROWSOME

Hot Docs 2017 Trailers: TAKE A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE



Nestled amongst the blockbusters - Last Man in Aleppo winner of the Sundance Grand Jury Prize, and Whitney "Can I Be Me" a reputed warts and all (accent on the warts) recounting of the diva's druggy demise - at the Hot Docs Film Festival, is Take A Walk On The Wildside, a loving portrait of the inimitable Paddy Aldridge and her cross-dressing clientele.

Aldridge is such a familiar face to the queer community that is shocking to learn that her store Take A Walk On The Wildside has only been in operation since 1987. Aldridge has dressed drag queens, transwomen, crossdressers and anyone who has wanted to convincingly present as female. And glamorous. Take A Walk On The Wildside is light on the historical and the political, concentrating more on the sheer joy that the transformation brings. It is touching wish fulfillment as a man, who notes that he is very masculine, says, "It's a side of me I've always fancied. I always wondered - could I do it if I tried."

After Aldridge's expert ministrations, he becomes radiant as they prove to him that, "I can become whoever I want to be." Not a bad message for anyone, gay or straight or anywhere on the spectrum, to get from a short documentary.

There is mild comedy as Aldridge blithely asks "What colour is your underwear?" and she is smooth at upselling that she could make a killing at Holts. But she is dedicated to her cause and though we never learn from Take A Walk On The Wildside why that is, we do understand the pleasure beyond the financial that it brings her. It's comforting to know that in 2017 we no longer need an explanation or justification as to why people have sexual or fashion quirks, we can just enjoy seeing them indulged.



Aldridge is also, as anyone who has worked in gay media knows (and it was nostalgia of another sort to see her clippings from fab magazine), a mash-up of a canny promoter and a charming attention whore. Her innate warmth comes across in *Take A Walk On The Wildside* but her clients are the true stars. Even an extraneous photo shoot featuring Enza Anderson (to attract a more youthful clientele?) can't offset the mood of striving glamour.

Director Lisa Rideout obviously spent time earning the trust of these transformers who are notoriously camera shy, and it pays off. I just wish that all the footage that must be on the cutting room floor could be used to expand *Take A Walk On The Wildside* into the larger piece that it longs to transform into. Though I'm sure that Aldridge is delighted, *Take A Walk On The Wildside* is a glowing advertisement for her store and services.

*Take A Walk On The Wild Side* screens during Hot Docs before *Grey Violet - Odd One Out*, a portrait of a mathematician who is also a queer activist/performance artist in gay-unfriendly Moscow. Similarly themed is *Divine Divas* where Brazil's first drag/transvestite revue reunites after 50 years for a performance that can only be spectacular and heartwarming. Also of queer interest is *Forbidden Games*, the story of Justin Fashanu, the first openly gay British athlete. *Forbidden Games's* tackling of issues of sexuality and race pave the way for, just in time for *Pride*, *The Force* documents the conflict between the Oakland police force and Black Lives Matter.

And of course the ubiquitous RuPaul and Michael Musto make appearances in *Susanne Bartsch: On Top*.

There are also First Nation spelling bee champions, Philippine beauty queens, sexually exploring Down Syndrome caterers, mermaids, Gilber Gottfried, the disposable Japanese pop stars NMB48, donkeys recovering from abuse, photographer Chris Hondros, an inquiry into the legal battle between Gawker and Hulk Hogan over a sex tape, a horror theme park set in an Australian asylum, and the revelation of just what happens when a body is donated for medical science. If only John Waters were to appear in the documentary recounting the socio-political ramifications of Baltimore's rat infestation, Hot Docs would have transformed itself into a literal walk on the wildside.

Hot Docs Canadian International Film Festival runs from Thurs, April 27 to Sun, May 7 at multiple venues. [hotdocs.ca](http://hotdocs.ca)

# T.O. Chechnya with Love: WE EXSIST!

RAYMOND HELKIO

Poster design: John Thai



With Chechen officials fully supporting the current anti-gay campaign in Russia, Toronto has stepped up to the challenge by organizing a march to the Russian Embassy at Bloor and Church Streets. Organized by concerned community members and support from Glad Day Bookshop and Rainbow Railroad. According to Ryan Kerr, one of the event organizers, "We are giving Toronto a chance to gather, to mourn, to rally, to take action. When the stories about the persecution of gay men in Chechnya hit a few weeks ago, so many of us were stunned. And now it's time to stand together and remind Chechnya, as well as other nations in the world where homosexuality is criminalized, that we are strong, beautiful and have a right to safety, to home and to community."

Commencing with speeches from Rainbow Railroad, who are working with the Russian LGBT Network, the rally could easily attract thousands of people which Ryan is excited about, "For an event conceived of only a few days ago we have had almost 25K shares and over 3000 people are listed as attending, interested or personally invited. Also, there's been contact with representatives from the Federal Government who would like to communicate on this issue further. So that's really exciting and meaningful."

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

**DONATE:** Rainbow Railroad, Russian LGBT Network

**TALK:** Raising awareness of this important issue. Tweet using the hashtags #chechnya100 #chechnyaTO

**DO:** Have a sit in. Print the poster of Kardynov we had donated by artist John Thai

**VOLUNTEER:** [TOChechnyawithLove@gmail.com](mailto:TOChechnyawithLove@gmail.com)

T.O. Chechnya with Love

**MEETING POINT:** The 519 Church Street Community Centre, Sat, Apr 22nd , 2-4PM

Facebook event information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/408775246169001/>

# The next great comedian

PAUL BELLINI



I've worked at Second City for five years now, and the place is always a beehive of activity. And because comedy comes from within, it's a remarkably diverse place. I've taught over 40 different classes since I began, and there was never one that was all white, or all male, or even all young. (I did, once, have a class that was all-female, but that's only because the guy dropped out for an acting gig.) Second City does a great job reaching out to every type of community because you never know where the next great comedian will come from.

They even have an award, The Bob Curry Fellowship, named for its first African American alum. It is specifically designed to encourage talent including but not limited to those who identify as Asian Pacific, Sub Continent Asian, Black, Hispanic, First Nations, Metis, Inuk, or Middle Eastern. There's a long list of winners this year, and I recognize some of the names, like Nicky Nasrallah, who is famous for conducting Beyoncercise workshops, and sexy stand-up Foad HP, whose Instagram shot, pictured here, will probably make you want to attend one of his shows.

So they, and the other 11 recipients, will have the opportunity to write and perform a show on Monday, April 24 at the MainStage. It will be directed by MainStage vet Nigel Downer and is bound to be hilarious. Because if there is one thing I know about Second City, it's that they train their talent well.

For more information about the Bob Curry Fellowship, visit: [secondcity.com/diversity-outreach](http://secondcity.com/diversity-outreach)  
 The Bob Curry Fellowship Showcase, Monday, April 24, 2017 at 8pm - 51 Mercer Street, Toronto  
 Tickets are \$15 - [secondcity.com/bob-curry-toronto](http://secondcity.com/bob-curry-toronto)

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*WHAT'S BELLINI WEARING?*  
*POXY PORN*  
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# OUT Adventures

ROBERT SHARP



Ten years ago, Toronto's own Robert Sharp did something daring and dreamy: he quit his job, took a year off, and traveled the world. However, this wasn't some fleeting journey of self discovery. Rob was scoping out the entire planet with his then-partner in life and business, Steven Larkin, looking for concrete destinations and experiences to share with the gay community, and OUT Adventures was born.

A decade later, the company has become one of the world's most highly regarded LGBT travel brands, with a broad range of escapes for like-minded men to choose from. Want to drag yourself out of your comfort zones? You could hike Kilimanjaro, Everest Base Camp, or even the iconic Inca Trail.

If you're after more comfort and culture, Rob offers luxurious and cultured tours as well: celebrate Pride in Iceland, immerse yourself in Mexico City, or go on luxury safari in Tanzania.

However, one area that's really growing for OUT Adventures is their boutique gay cruise offerings. They visited Indonesia last year (see video on next page for a taste of what you missed). They've planned a riverboat cruise of the Mekong River next year, chaperoned by Toronto's own Miss Conception. And they've been cruising Croatia for five years now (in fact, their Dalmatian Coast cruise always sells out).

Given the popularity of Croatia, and to celebrate five years cruising Europe's most beautiful coastlines, OUT Adventures has now launched a second cruise along the country's Northern Adriatic Coast. Rob is also offering a fantastic 15% off tickets if you book before May 15. If you've never been on an OUT Adventure, this would be a perfect first foray.

**Save 15% off our Northern Adriatic Cruise!**

***This food lover's itinerary includes winery visits, a cheese tasting, and dinner at one of Croatia's most revered restaurants. Book before May 15 to save!***

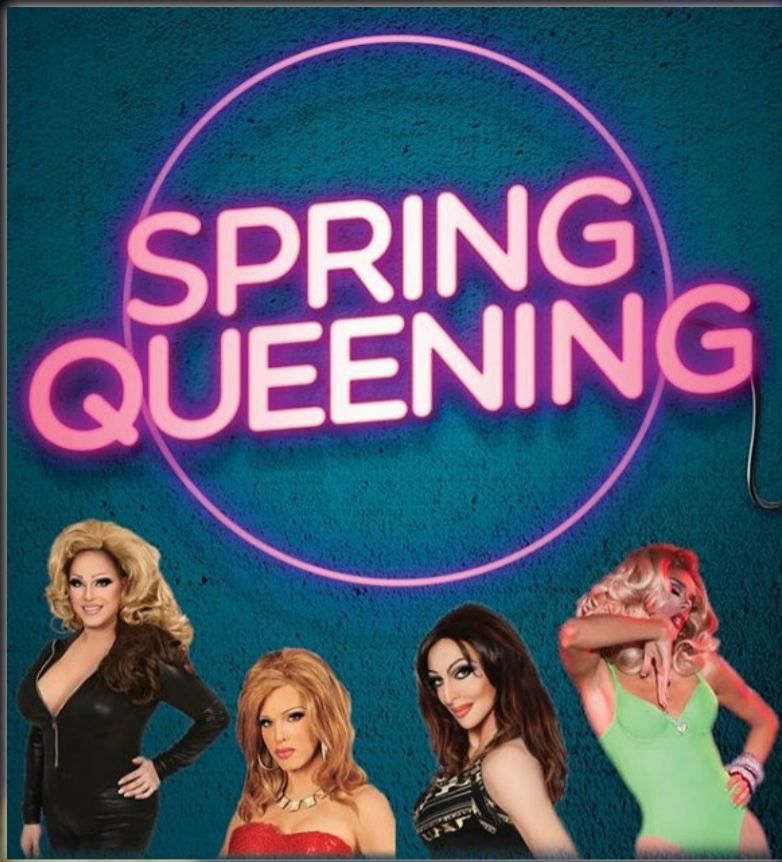
Call 1-866-360-8652, email [info@outadventures.com](mailto:info@outadventures.com) or visit [outadventures.com](http://outadventures.com) to learn more.



Check out this video from last year's Indonesian cruise to see OUT Adventures come to life.

# Buddies and Katinka Kature do some Spring Queening

DREW ROWSOME - Photos by Raul Da Silva



Buddies' weekly Saturday night fundraiser has always included a dramatic drag queen entrance down the stairs and onto the stage to emote. But Buddies, and drag queens in general, have a limitless supply of theatrical drama so The March of the Queens was born and, Buddies and drag queens in general always in a state of constant reinvention, for April it is re-titled Spring Queening. Stay tuned for May's moniker.

Amid rotating DJs - on this evening crowdpleaser DJ Regina - and a revolving selections of queens - this evening Mona Moore, Dmanda Tension and Imarra Black - the genial Buddies staff and hostess/resident goddess Katinka Kature are the constants. Ms Kature is a voluble and sage as she is gorgeous, and she graciously shared her thoughts on Spring Queening.

"After performing on the stairs one night at Buddies, bar manager Patricia Wilson had the idea of having a few girls do a show all together and asked me if I would be interested in organizing it."

"When I started drag I was nowhere close to being the entertainer I am today. A young me would throw on some makeup ( not well), an outfit I could find and put on my heels to walk to Buddies. I always felt at Buddies I could be myself, I could show up and even though I looked like I was hauled out of deep waters, I was treated like I had a place at the bar. The nights I spent at Buddies were some of the best nights I have had and now I want people to feel the same."

"Toronto is famous for what I call 'marathon drag' where you do four songs in a row, your feet hurt, you are drenched in sweat and you feel like you want to take it all off (sometimes it falls off on its own). This show let's entertainers tailor their performances to one specific number. It allows them to create a look based around what they are performing. I think this is a great way for them to explore a different side of them, try something new, or just share what they really love. There is also a host who does all the mic work so the show is quick paced, then there is another set where the girls change and do something different than the first."



“I am often pegged as a glamour girl and I market myself as that: a showgirl beauty queen but I can also be funny; which is unexpected and can throw some people off. For this evening in particular, I encourage entertainers to bring their best drag to the stage; whether that be glamour, comedy, camp, alternative, etc. I want them to share their drag and what they love with the audience and excel at doing so.”

“I really enjoy getting to hang out in the dressing room with the other entertainers in the show! Buddies has a beautiful dressing room by the way and it’s great to get ready and share stories, give advice, help one another, laugh! It’s a great way to start a great night.”

“I hope the audience comes away saying I had so much fun. Or wow wasn’t the music great? Wasn’t the DJ awesome? Did you see that drag queen?! I just want everyone to feel that they came and had a wonderful night. Everyone at Buddies works extremely hard to make this night possible and I hope the audience takes that away and feels that they were part of the night.”



# Mixing It Up At The Mocktail Mixer

RAYMOND HELKIO - Photos by Jrotica



Are you experiencing giddiness, a slight belly-ache from excessive laughter and a sore face from smiling too much? If so, you may be in the throes of a mocktail hangover which, according to Fatima Mehtab, there is only one remedy: more mocktails!

The Mocktail Mixer is Fatima Mehtab and life partner Natalie Zielinski alternative to a boozy night out in Toronto. The alcohol-free affair is a super-charged night of music, entertainment and frivolity, all without the hangover.

Despite the rain, upwards of 40 people took over Glad Day Bookshop for their inaugural event on April 6. With their sights focused on a Mocktail Mixer for Pride, the creators are already busy working at bettering the experience, so I interviewed Fatima and Natalie to find out what we can look forward to.

## Raymond: How did you come up with Mocktail Mixer?

**Fatima:** The idea of Mocktail Mixer started with my own personal need to see more queer events that did not focus on alcohol. As someone who is celebrating sobriety, I think it is important to address this need in our community for more sober spaces and to also show that they can be fun and exciting and well-attended. We embrace the personal choices of everyone but we also feel that our community should have options and we want Mocktail Mixer to serve as an example of a great party that just happens to be free of alcohol [Glad Day did not serve any alcohol at the event]. It also makes me accountable for my own sobriety and it strengthens me as a queer sober person to provide such an environment for my peers.

Throughout the process, I became more aware that there are so many wonderful queer folks who are also sober . . . I used to feel like one of a small few and that our scene was all about partying and losing oneself in the mix. We created a space based on what we wanted in our own lives but it turns out, other people are looking for the same thing. I felt it really brought our community together and I am excited about the future of Mocktail Mixer.

**Natalie:** Almost all nightlife and socializing revolve around alcohol and I never really liked drinking. We thought it was time for something new and fresh.

## With Pride in mind, are there any plans for more mixers?

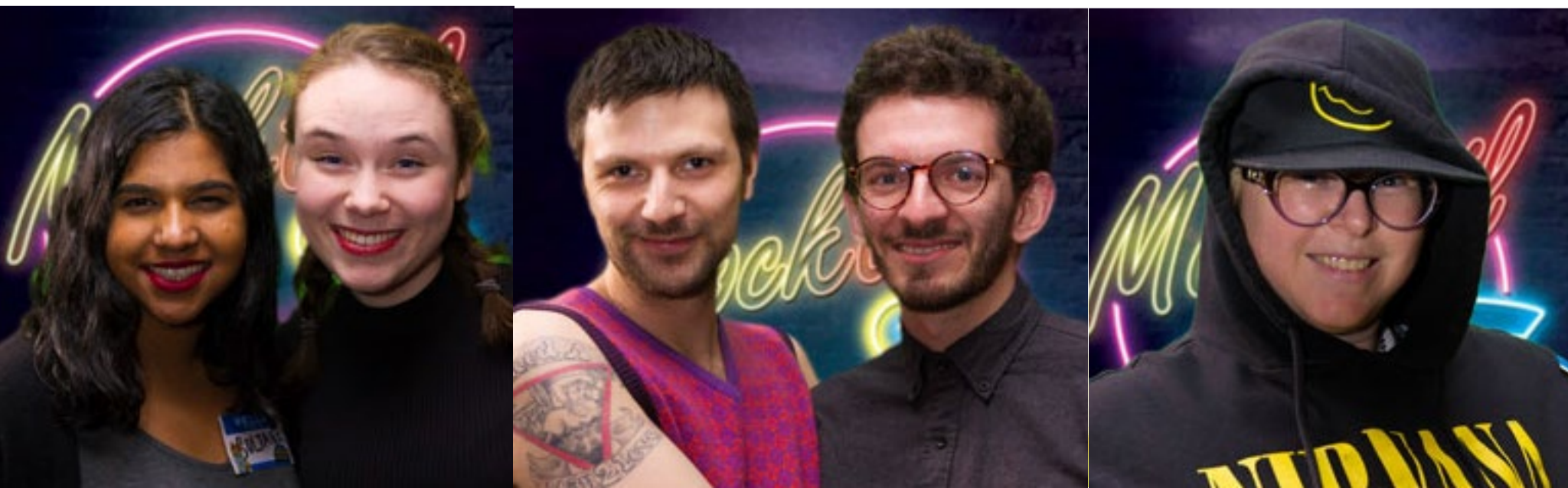
**Fatima:** The first thing we want to do is secure the venue! We will not have a photographer again because some folks would prefer anonymity which I can absolutely respect.

## What was the highlight of the night for you?

**Fatima:** We had some fun games planned but “Hip Hop Musical Chairs” took the cake! It was hilarious and awesome to see everyone scurrying around the chairs while dancing to “The Humpty Dance” and “Hip Hop Hurray.” This will definitely make a comeback at the next Mocktail Mixer event - it was just so much fun to be a quasi-kid again.

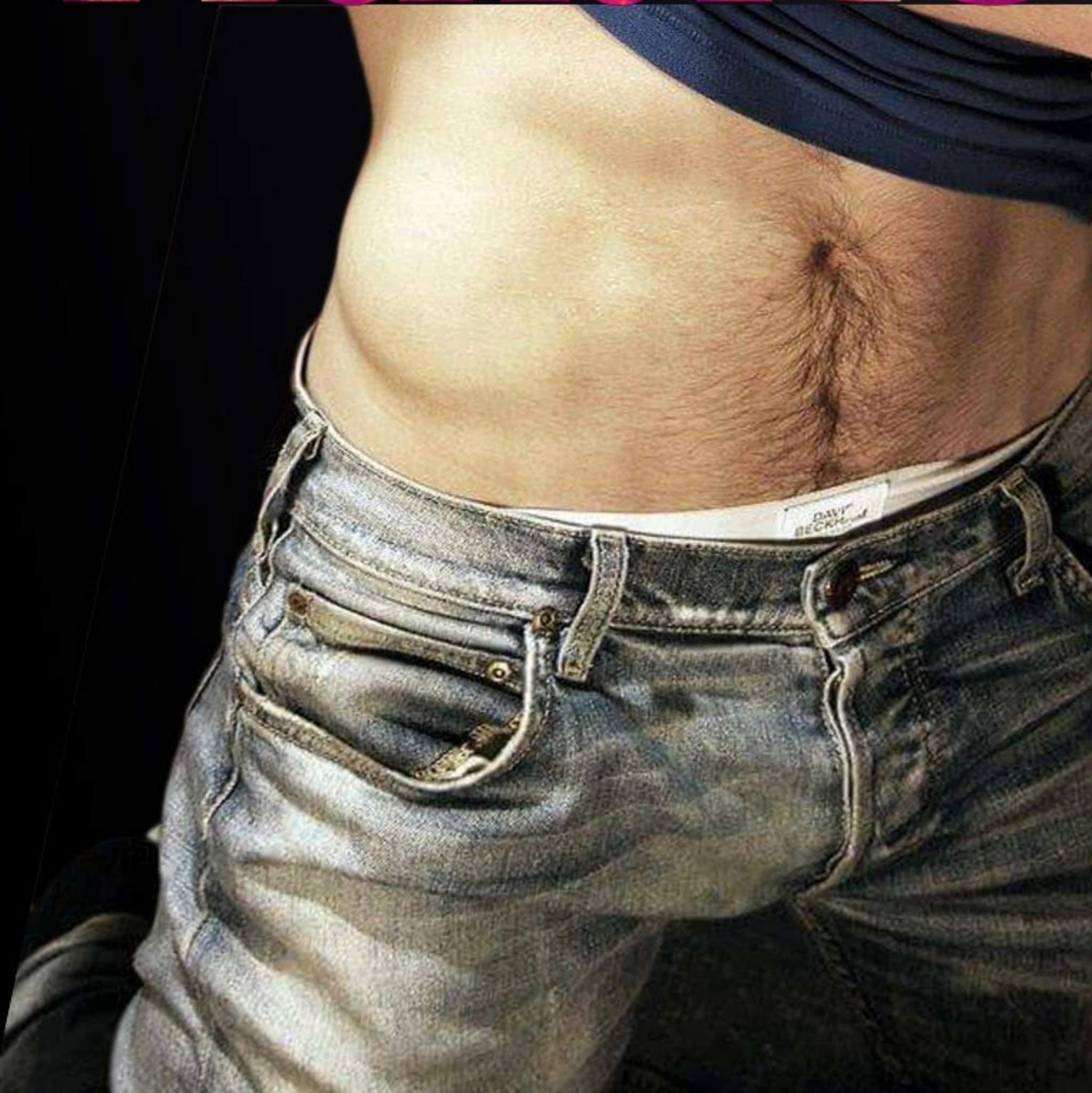
## What is a “mock-hangover?”

**Fatima:** Lying in bed the morning after a night of sober partying and feeling healthy from not having had anything to drink. Having replaced all the drinking with laughter, you wake up still smiling from the night before. Technically speaking, laughing helps your lymph system which in turn boosts your immune system. So a “mock-hangover” would be an immune system reaction opposite to that of drinking.





# Tidbits





# The First Date is the deepest

PAUL BELLINI



First Dates is a lifestyle show on the Slice Network. Filmed in Vancouver, it's about two strangers meeting for the first time to see if they hit it off. It's a very common experience - all people, in every culture, woo potential mates. So it's a popular show.

The episode aired on April 4th features a sexy, grizzled old daddy named Craig, a recent divorcee with a big beard. His blind date is Maxi, a somewhat younger Asian transwoman. They actually do hit it off. Even after she reveals that she is trans, Craig is still moved to say "A beautiful woman is a beautiful woman."

When I speak to producer Toby Dormer about First Dates. "The show reflects Vancouver society. It's open to everyone," he tells me. "We interview applicants, we match them up, and from the minute they enter the restaurant they don't see any members of the production team. It's filmed with remote control cameras. We don't tell them what to say. They pay for their own food, as we have to see who will pick up the cheque and it helps weed out people who just want to be on TV. Most of our applicants are just focused on meeting another person. Meanwhile, we're next door in a different building watching the whole thing go down."

Now in its second season, the show is great fun, but has anyone ever really found love on a TV show? "I know of at least two couples from this season who are still together. We don't expect many of them to work out, that would be ridiculous, but over half have at least gone on a second date on their own."

As for Craig and Maxi, I won't spoil it by telling you if it works out or not. But like a lot of transpeople, she wants to find true love and not be fetishized. "We've had other transpeople apply but couldn't find a match for them," said Toby. "We almost teamed up a transman with a transwoman once, but unfortunately one of them dropped out." Now that sounds like it would have made a fascinating episode.

# We're Funny That Way Festival!

Wednesday, May 3 - Saturday, May 6, 2017 - Acqua Dolce Resto Venue, 50 Prince Edward Island Crescent  
 Alumnae Theatre Company, 70 Berkeley Street. Full Schedule: [werefunnythatway.org/schedule](http://werefunnythatway.org/schedule).  
 Tickets: Gayla Gala: \$300 (tax receipts available) - Festival Tickets: \$50, \$20, \$10



WE'RE FUNNY THAT WAY will kick off with the "Gayla Gala" on May 3, 2017 at Acqua Dolce Resto, with a signature, big ticket variety show featuring fabulous performers who will appear at the Festival throughout the week including Lea DeLaria and Maggie Cassella, David Benjamin Tomlinson, Gavin Crawford, Alec Mapa, Kate Rigg and Lyris Hung. On auction at the gala will be a 30-minute Skype session with musician, producer and actor Debbie Gibson, a longtime supporter of the LGBTQ community.

The current WE'RE FUNNY THAT WAY line-up features appearances by David Benjamin Tomlinson (Blind Date), Amir Brandon (PANAMANIA), Maggie Cassella, Martha Chaves (Just for Laughs), Gavin Crawford (Because News), Lea DeLaria (Orange is the New Black), Johnny B Goode, Ryan Graham Hinds, Mike Hunt-Black, Ivory, Sam Jay (Comedy Central), Belle Jumelles, Aastha Lal (Goodness & Giggles), Alec Mapa (Ugly Betty), Heroine Marks, Chantel Marostica (Just For Laughs), Areta Marshall, Deb McGrath (Little Mosque on the Prairie), Kali Mirchi, Colin Mochrie (Whose Line Is It Anyway?), Teresa Pavlinek (The Jane Show), Kaleb Robertson, Lucas Silveira (The Cliks), Slanty Eyed Mama (Kate Rigg and Lyris Hung), Fay Slift, Shohsana Sperling (The Monkey Bunch), and Stephen Wallem (Nurse Jackie).

Founded in 1997 by comedian, actress and producer Maggie Cassella, WE'RE FUNNY THAT WAY has hosted top talent at the Festival all while also acting as a fundraiser for queer charities across Canada. Proceeds from the 2017 Festival will go to the We're Funny That Way Foundation, which will make their charitable donation to Toby's Place to help create a new safe space for LGBTQ+ Youth in Scarborough, Ontario.

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# Bringing Blyss To Church Street

RAYMOND HELKIO



Bringing Blyss To Church Street - Ray's Anatomy



Harry Singh, Blyss Nightclub Toronto

Bringing Blyss To Church

# Jeff Ho, Prince Hamlet, Pearle Harbour and a theatre/gender revolution

Prince Hamlet runs Mon, April 17 until Sat, April 29 at The Franco Boni Theatre, The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St W. [theatrewhynot.org](http://theatrewhynot.org)

Chautauqua runs Wed, April 19 until Wed, April 26 at the BMO Incubator for Live Arts, The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St W. [riserproject.org](http://riserproject.org)

The Riser Project runs from Wed, April 19 until Sat, May 13 at the BMO Incubator for Live Arts. The Theatre Centre. [riserproject.org](http://riserproject.org)



Genderbending is time-honoured theatrical dynamite. Men in dresses have used comedy and pathos to dig at deep truths about life and to expose hypocrisy. The Theatre Centre is hosting two stellar examples as Jeff Ho stars as Ophelia in Prince Hamlet while concurrently Pearle Harbour pitches a revival tent and presents Chautauqua as part of The Riser Project.

“I’ve always wanted to play Hamlet,” says Jeff Ho. “But I never thought I’d get to be the other half of that romantic plot. We’ve talked a lot about what it means to do this gender-crossed casting. And in my terms, it means we bring all of ourselves. None of us are really trying to perform the gender or the sexuality, we’re performing the text. And of course Jeff Ho being queer and Asian, I bring all of that to Ophelia. I’m performing the soul of Ophelia from how I understand love, which is inherently queer.”

Prince Hamlet is a production celebrating Why Not Theatre’s first decade. Ho explains that director Ravi Jain (Salt-Water Moon, Gimme Shelter) has taken the text and “sliced it up,” added ASL resulting in an almost choreographic effect, while also casting across genders and race. “So much of our rehearsals so far has been about who gets the right to tell this story?” says Ho. “We have ideas of who looks like a Hamlet, what companies should have the right to do this story. But we’re really trying to see how we can blow that up. And see what story remains. What the bare bones are and how we can support that.”

Ho is not a stranger to Shakespeare, not only did he study it at the National Theatre School but he also got his first professional roles in Montreal’s Shakespeare in the Park. But it goes further back. “When I first emigrated, I was blessed with the best ESL teacher who taught us poetry to learn English,” he remembers. “So I had actually been reading sonnets from the time I arrived in Canada. Not for the sense of the words, not to speak it beautifully, but to learn the inherent music of English. So I feel I’ve always been tied to Shakespeare.”

And he also found ties with the character of Ophelia. “The first thing I connected with Ophelia on was that strong core of filial piety. Her struggle of where she fits in, being divided between Hamlet’s love, and needing to stay loyal to her father. I definitely felt that, coming to Canada and my mother sacrificing so, so much for us to come and give us a better life. And for me to realize that I needed to do this theatre thing, this art thing. And to be completely abandoned, to be left alone, silenced. And left to run off. I survived, Ophelia didn’t.”

He happily emphasizes that Ophelia is not, as he at first thought, a supporting role. “Now I consider it one of the huge parts and I’m incredibly happy. It’s a gift part. It’s one of those parts that widens range and is a deep challenge. She doesn’t speak much initially because in the world of the play consists of men silencing her at every turn. But she has this beautiful moment in Act 5, and for once she steps it up and lets it rip.”

Pearle Harbour is the very definition of letting it rip. Pearle Harbour’s Sunday School was a barely controlled explosion of religious satire, drag, sexual harassment, and arts and crafts. The thought of her conducting a revival meeting on a larger scale is as giddily wonderful as it is terrifying.

“Do you feel lost?” asks Harbour. “Are you troubled? Are you behind on your emails? Do you yearn for community that enhances, rather than annihilates, the feeling of being a true individual? The world is full of uncertainty and inharmony, but for one week only, salvation is passing through town! Gather together with our new leader, all-American World-Wartime gal Pearle Harbour, under the milky canvas of our beautiful tent. We will sing together, learn together, breathe together, and live our Truths! In our Chautauqua tent, we come together because we’re falling apart.”

The Riser Project, also a Why Not Theatre production, takes independent theatre artists and gives them the financial ability to create work on a larger scale. As well as Chautauqua, The Riser Project is presenting The Draupadi Project, a reimagining of the epic Mahabharat; a Muslim/Jewish collaboration Two Birds One Stone; and El Retorno/I Return that explores the effect of the Chilean revolution on family.

Ho and Harbour, Prince Hamlet and The Riser Project, are part of the sexual and racial evolution/revolution of theatre. “It’s a huge privilege to be in Canada where we step into new stories every time we go to a new restaurant,” says Ho. “It’s fascinating to see how theatre has changed in the last few years since I graduated from theatre school. The scope is changing. We’re looking at stories through different lenses. Opening up to different stories. It comes with triumphant failures and we need that, but at the same time, as a community we’re leaning towards stories across the spectrum of identity, interculturalism, intersectionality. It’s thrilling.” - Drew Rowsome



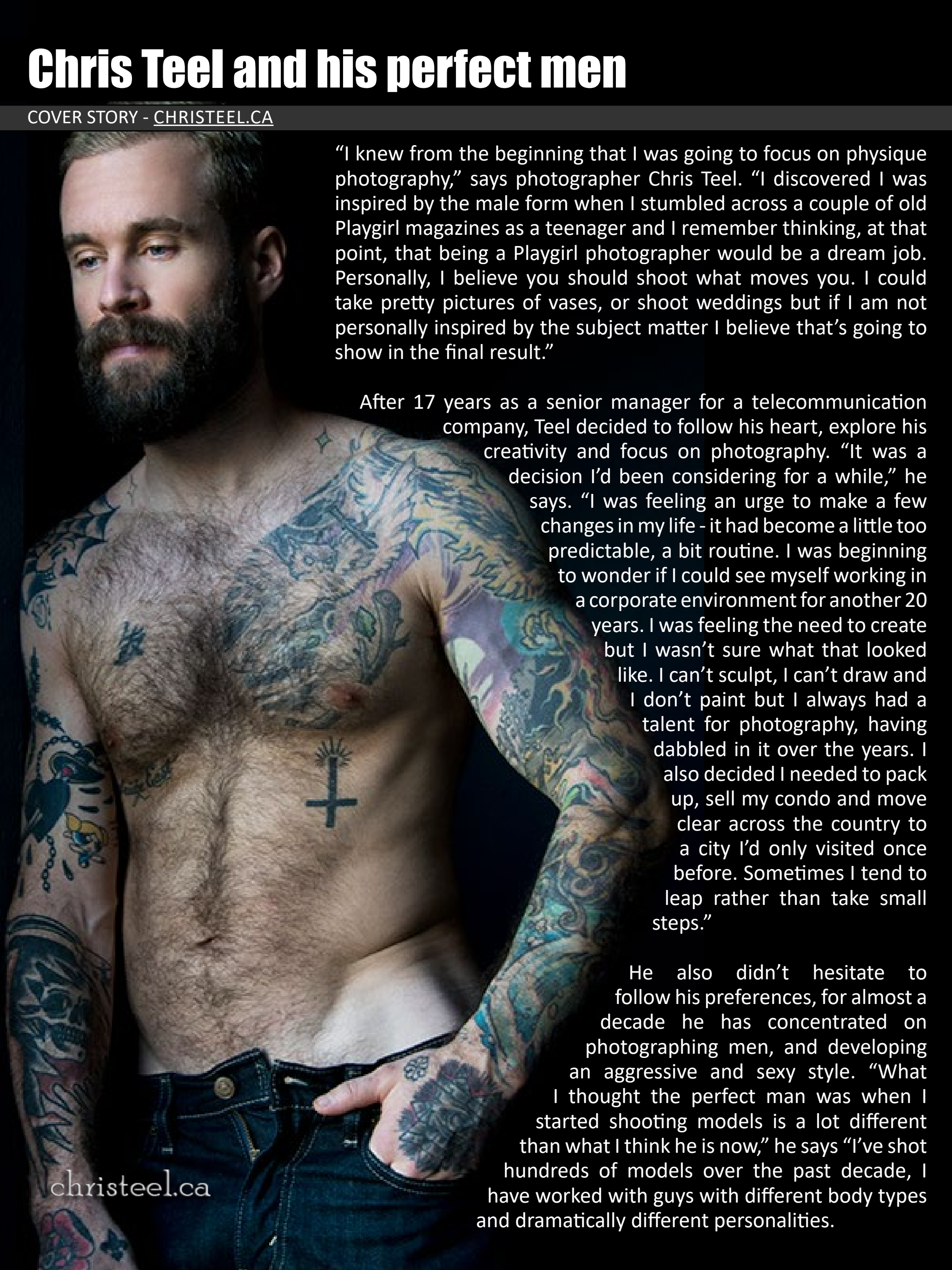
# No need to wear underwear

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# Chris Teel and his perfect men

COVER STORY - [CHRISTEEL.CA](http://CHRISTEEL.CA)



“I knew from the beginning that I was going to focus on physique photography,” says photographer Chris Teel. “I discovered I was inspired by the male form when I stumbled across a couple of old Playgirl magazines as a teenager and I remember thinking, at that point, that being a Playgirl photographer would be a dream job. Personally, I believe you should shoot what moves you. I could take pretty pictures of vases, or shoot weddings but if I am not personally inspired by the subject matter I believe that’s going to show in the final result.”

After 17 years as a senior manager for a telecommunication company, Teel decided to follow his heart, explore his creativity and focus on photography. “It was a decision I’d been considering for a while,” he says. “I was feeling an urge to make a few changes in my life - it had become a little too predictable, a bit routine. I was beginning to wonder if I could see myself working in a corporate environment for another 20 years. I was feeling the need to create but I wasn’t sure what that looked like. I can’t sculpt, I can’t draw and I don’t paint but I always had a talent for photography, having dabbled in it over the years. I also decided I needed to pack up, sell my condo and move clear across the country to a city I’d only visited once before. Sometimes I tend to leap rather than take small steps.”

He also didn’t hesitate to follow his preferences, for almost a decade he has concentrated on photographing men, and developing an aggressive and sexy style. “What I thought the perfect man was when I started shooting models is a lot different than what I think he is now,” he says “I’ve shot hundreds of models over the past decade, I have worked with guys with different body types and dramatically different personalities.

[christeel.ca](http://christeel.ca)



Every guy I've shot had at least one physical imperfection he wanted to improve upon, whether I noticed it or not. The perfect man, in my opinion, projects the confidence he feels whether he has an eight-pack body or not.

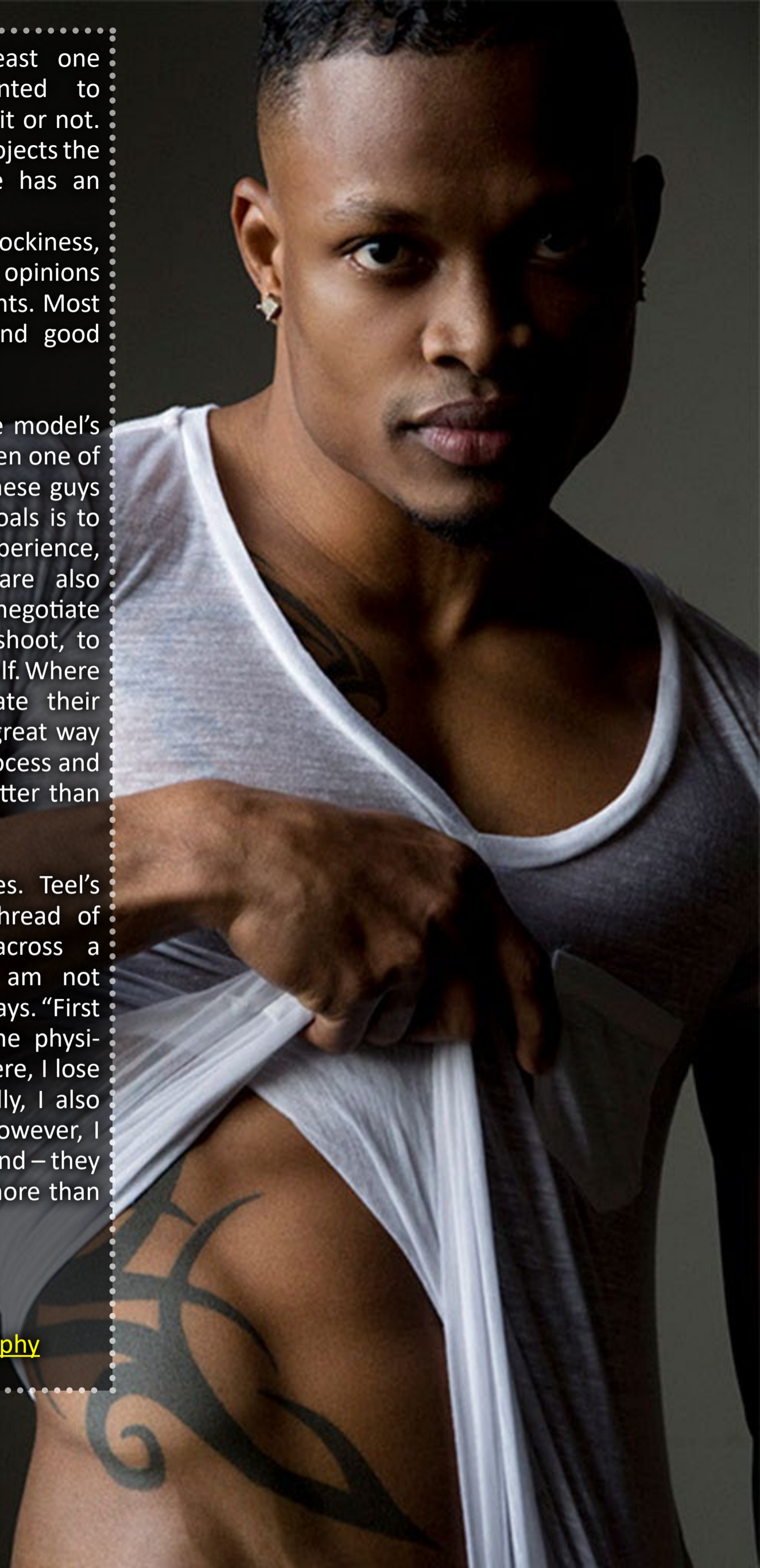
He's able to project a certain cockiness, without being arrogant. He has opinions and is able to articulate his thoughts. Most importantly, he is easy going and good natured."

Teel's mission is to "bring out the model's personality in the photos. I am often one of the first photographers a lot of these guys have posed for and one of my goals is to ensure they have a good experience, especially as a lot of them are also posing nude for their first time. We negotiate everything up front, before the shoot, to avoid any surprises at the shoot itself. Where it makes sense, we'll incorporate their specific interests or ideas - it's a great way of getting them engaged in the process and often, the final result tends to be better than the original idea."

The results speak for themselves. Teel's photographs have a common thread of masculine attractiveness but across a broad spectrum. "Personally I am not attracted to a one type of guy," he says. "First impressions are influenced by the physical but if the personality is not there, I lose interest very quickly. Professionally, I also shoot a diverse group of guys. However, I do have to keep my audience in mind - they certainly respond to some guys more than others and that's the way it is."

[christeel.ca](http://christeel.ca)

[facebook.com/Chris.Teel.Photography](https://facebook.com/Chris.Teel.Photography)





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

**My Gay Toronto.com**

# EVENTS REVIEW

[www.MyGayToronto.com](http://www.MyGayToronto.com)

# The Night Ocean: a gay HP Lovecraft and the horrors and delights of The Erotonomicon

DREW ROWSOME

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None of the narrators in *The Night Ocean* are to be trusted. But all of them are fascinating.

The winding, nesting tale is ostensibly written by Miranda, a psychologist who is investigating the apparent suicide of her husband, Charlie Willet.

Charlie, a journalist specializing in human interest stories, had been investigating a story about the horror writer HP Lovecraft and his long-rumoured affair with a much younger man. From there the tale gets weird and Miranda, who carefully adds footnotes for verisimilitude, is a grounding voice of reason.

I ordered a copy of *The Night Ocean* immediately after reading a review in the *New York Times*. I had no idea that HP Lovecraft had possibly been gay, or what qualified as homosexual in his time period, the 1920s and '30s. At some point, years ago, I had read some Lovecraft and found it dated, overwritten and not particularly appealing. But I was also aware that he is hugely influential, having basically invented the horror genre. Stephen King's *Revival* ends with a full-on salute to Lovecraft and it is the weakest part of an otherwise stellar book. Edward Lee's *Pages Torn from a Travel Journal* and Neil Gaiman's "Orange" riff on Lovecraft and are much more successful.

A quick googling found that Lovecraft has indeed been long considered gay and a re-read of "The Call of Cthulhu" confirmed that he was at least very obsessed with homoeroticism. Of course the problem with Lovecraft is that he was also virulently racist and anti-Semitic, the former also confirmed by the re-read. What author Paul La Farge does in *The Night Ocean* is take Lovecraft's sexuality and spin it into multiple threads that question identity, the nature of horror, and how we create ourselves. It is masterfully done and intoxicating to read.

The threads all hinge on diaries kept by Lovecraft that were later published as *The Erotonomicon*, a play on Lovecraft's grimoire, *The Necronomicon* (now more



familiar from *The Evil Dead*). Lovecraft's reputation is ruined, lives are ruined, and the actual provenance of the diaries is constantly in question. Reading *The Night Ocean* is dizzying as the line between fact and fiction continually blurs and stretches resulting in disorientation. La Farge is urging us to look at the power of the written word and what it can create.

Several characters expound on what a novel is - there is a moving scene in a liberated concentration camp when horror comics are provided to the survivors - and at almost any point in the book one can stop to note how profound, and slyly inserted, La Farge's characters' statements are. Except that, of course, none of the characters are necessarily real or even real in the context of the novel. Somehow that makes it all the more emotionally satisfying.

Adding in much satire on the pompousness of the science fiction community, a few appearances by William S Burroughs, acute observations on race and class (Charlie Willett is incidentally black and one of the main potentially transmigrated souls is incidentally Jewish, but for Lovecraft that would make them less than human), realistic and touching love stories (gay and straight), and a genuinely propulsive pace that draws one in, makes *The Night Ocean* an irresistible read. Most gratifying is that La Farge manages to rectify my most nagging problem with Lovecraft's fiction, his habit of describing something as indescribably horrifying: La Farge finds descriptions that are vivid and are the words that Lovecraft was unable to conjure.



The only problem with *The Night Ocean* is that the vast array of characters and necessarily emotionally remote narrator, produces moments that are more intellectual chess moves than relatable motivations. This becomes, alas, more acute towards the end (but by then you will be hooked) and *The Night Ocean* ends on a note of resignation admitting that a proper ending does not exist. Of course the ending is also realistic, life doesn't often tie up loose ends, and very Lovecraftian, so it is perfectly apt and oddly, disturbingly satisfying.

Wondering if The Erotonimicon is real, I googled after finishing The Night Ocean, and found that Black Hour Books is taking pre-orders for a reprint (all previous copies were supposed to have been destroyed, having been judged obscene, by the government). The website, blackhourbooks.com, also sells copies of books by some of La Farge's other alter-egos but it is enticing to believe. And that is the other powerful message that The Night Ocean delivers, sometimes belief is ecstasy and sometimes destruction. La Farge refuses to make a value judgement on either result - once again, very Lovecraftian.



THE  
NIGHT  
OCEAN  
A NOVEL

PAULA FARGE

<https://www.amazon.ca/Night-Ocean-Paul-Farge/dp/1101981083>

# Little Pretty and The Exceptional: how to deal with the impossible?

DREW ROWSOME - Photos by Joseph Michael ★★★★★

## LITTLE PRETTY AND THE EXCEPTIONAL

By **Ansuree Roy**

April 1 – 30

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There is chaos and comedy as Dilpreet and his two daughters attempt to get their new venture, a clothing store emphasizing saris, ready for its grand opening on Canada Day. And daughter Jasmeet intends to be prom queen while sibling Simran is waiting for LSAT results so she can continue towards her goal of being a human rights lawyer. The curmudgeonly but lovable father, a bubbly princess and a striving bookworm, are all classic tropes and the South Asian-flavoured setting gives it an unfamiliar familiar twist.

Then playwright Anusree Roy (Bombay Black) mixes in an extra plot element and what was an amiable story takes on another dimension entirely. Roy takes the very specific and makes it universal. Yes, the immigrant saga is there, particularly in one powerful speech, but it is only to ground us in a reality that then discusses the ways we handle stigma, particularly around mental illness: one family's dilemma resonates with issues that all of us have gone through, or will go through. What we talk about and deal with, what we hide and hope will go away.

The mix of comedy and drama is not as seamless as it could be, with Shruti Kothari (James and the Giant Peach, Rent) in particular having to shift emotional gears in ways that test even her considerable charm, but in the grand scheme it all makes a deliciously unbalanced sense. The set is draped with glittery fabric and littered with mannequins (one is vandalized at the very beginning and it becomes impossible to restore it to its former glory. It stands on the side of the stage, a mute observer and metaphor) that, depending on the lighting, goes from tacky opulence to horror film. It is a subtle and vicious depiction of how mental illness colours life and makes the audience complicit in the experience. It even asks, the daughter keeps asking for the lights to be dimmed as they hurt her, if theatre itself is not a form of fever dream, vision or disorder.

Though of course, an audience gets to walk away convinced of their sanity and that of the players. Little Pretty and The Exceptional lets us walk away, but not without some nagging questions and soul-searching.

Sugith Varughese gets the best lines, his blissfully unself-aware pronouncements about Indian stereotypes are worthy of a stand-up comedy routine, but in a final monologue he rips the audience's hearts out and truly shines. The monologue alas, comes out of a stylistic netherworld and it is disorienting, not necessarily a bad thing when creating an unbalanced mental state, and announcing a departure in style makes Varughese have to work harder to create the pathos. Perhaps there were lighting cue problems the night I attended as the entrances and exits between the short scenes were insufficiently masked by the distractions of the alternately ominous and joyous environs that were pinpointed.

Farah Merani is subtle as she takes us on her descent, and Shelly Antony (Scarberia) brings a goofy befuddled charm to the boyfriend who, an aspiring bio-chemist, is totally unprepared for the family dynamics and secrets he becomes part of. His arsenal of double-takes, and his one big gaffe, pull the audience much deeper into a group of people we are already heavily invested in. Kothari is a comic delight as she preens, struts and tries to cover her doubts and fears - and also shockingly vulnerable when the fears overwhelm. There is an extended bit with Chinese food preparation that is hilarious, unexpected and director Brendan Healy (Pig, Arigato, Tokyo, The Silicone Diaries) bravely lets it breathe past the point of uncomfortable comedy to where it becomes another illustration of the central metaphor.

A sari shop can be either exotic or, as it was to much of the audience, a familiar memory, but it is to Little Pretty and The Exceptional's credit that it can also be a slice of life that reveals characters we root for as they struggle with a tragedy that we all face in one form or another. And that is also a great illustration of the power of theatre when formed by talented hands.



Little Pretty and The Exceptional runs until Sun, April 30 at Factory Theatre, 125 Bathurst St.  
[factorytheatre.ca](http://factorytheatre.ca)



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# Ghost In The Shell

BIL ANTONIOU

\*\*\*



A robotics company has a breakthrough in artificial intelligence technology when the melding of a human brain with an artificial body results in a successful combination (played by Scarlett Johansson), a moral human consciousness with great use as an infallible warrior. After barely surviving the assassination of one of the senior members of her corporation, Johansson finds herself seeking a mysterious villain who seems to have a laundry list of scientists to kill, but where this takes her is deeper into the secrets of her own past. Adapted quite closely from the anime film of the same name, this beautifully shot science-fiction adventure is an easy but unimpressive indulgence, gorgeous in its every neon-hued frame but not exactly brimming with memorable conflicts; I'd love to say that the story of an Asian consciousness being placed in a caucasian shell was a comment on future technological identity politics, but I hesitate to accuse this film of being as thoughtful as it is amusing. Johansson is strangely uninspired and uninspiring in the role, it's surprising that the actor who pulls off her Avengers and Lucy characters with such impressive ease seems uncomfortable and unsuited to the action heroine role here, and it doesn't help that her plight isn't particularly interesting. As a mindless sibling to Blade Runner, however, this is a pleasure to view, with supporting performances by Juliette Binoche and Michael Pitt that are enjoyable spots of brightness.

# A Kiss with a vicious bite

DREW ROWSOME

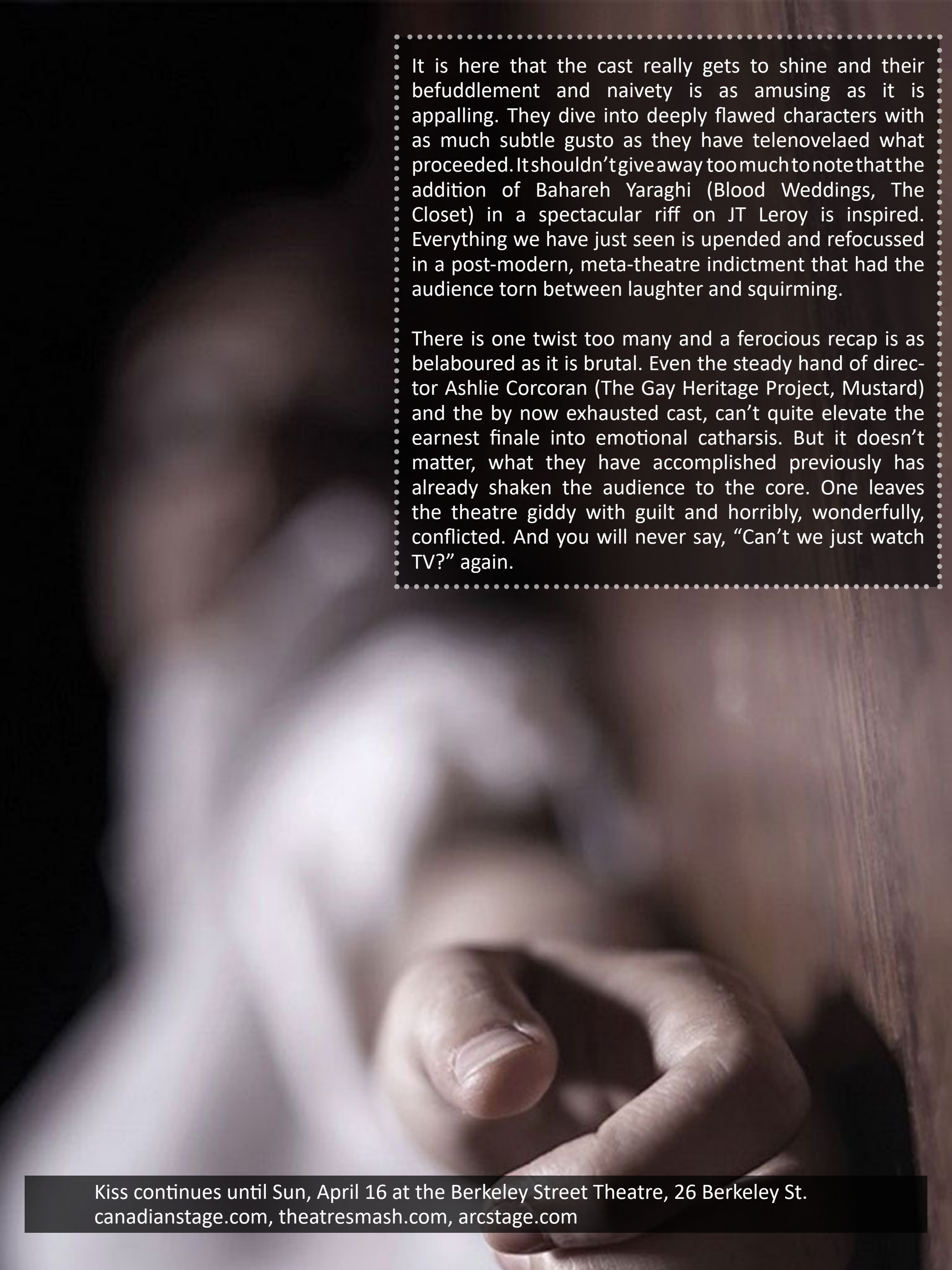
★★★★☆

Kiss begins as a genial, if overwrought, drawing room comedy with more than a soapy hint of telenovela. Love is all, marriage is a goal, and passions seethe and spill all over the stage. There are funny bits involving miscommunication, farcical slamming of doors, and the cast invests realism into the melodrama. But one can't help but wonder what this is doing on a Canadian Stage stage.

It is diverting enough, as two hyper-sexualized men compete for the affections of a delightfully dithering Naomi Wright (*A Room of One's Own*, *Julius Caesar*). Greg Gale (*The Crackwalker*, *His Greatness*) is sleazy seductiveness personified, and Carlos Gonzalez-Vio (*Blood Weddings*) twitches against type while still maintaining much machismo. Mix in Dalal Badr as the spark who uncovers the truths, and it is all dramatic, intense and comical. But it seems as if powerhouse actors are being wasted on a trifle.

Until the twist. And it is a very good twist. So good that I won't provide a spoiler here (and neither does the playbill: a good chunk of it is handed out on the way out of the theatre). The froth and fun become a pitch black comedy mocking political theatre, deliberate first world ignorance, and theatre practitioners in general. It is very nasty, viciously funny and heart-rending. And we now learn why Theatre Smash, ARC and Canadian Stage have conspired to present this Kiss from playwright Guillermo Calderon.





It is here that the cast really gets to shine and their befuddlement and naivety is as amusing as it is appalling. They dive into deeply flawed characters with as much subtle gusto as they have telenovelaed what proceeded. It shouldn't give away too much to note that the addition of Bahareh Yaraghi (*Blood Weddings*, *The Closet*) in a spectacular riff on JT Leroy is inspired. Everything we have just seen is upended and refocussed in a post-modern, meta-theatre indictment that had the audience torn between laughter and squirming.

There is one twist too many and a ferocious recap is as belaboured as it is brutal. Even the steady hand of director Ashlie Corcoran (*The Gay Heritage Project*, *Mustard*) and the by now exhausted cast, can't quite elevate the earnest finale into emotional catharsis. But it doesn't matter, what they have accomplished previously has already shaken the audience to the core. One leaves the theatre giddy with guilt and horribly, wonderfully, conflicted. And you will never say, "Can't we just watch TV?" again.

Kiss continues until Sun, April 16 at the Berkeley Street Theatre, 26 Berkeley St.  
[canadianstage.com](http://canadianstage.com), [theatresmash.com](http://theatresmash.com), [arcstage.com](http://arcstage.com)

My Gay Toronto.com

# FLASHBACK



# Backwood bare-assed: taking it off at Tweed's Riverside RV Campground

DREW ROWSOME- 2013

Drew Rowsome braves the wilderness and discovers a small town embracing a homo invasion.

Tweed, Ontario is a small town of 1,300 people where Rob Ford and his ilk would feel right at home drinking beer and protecting their pale skin from the sun. Lately the town has been abuzz about a new adults-only gay campground, where clothing is often replaced by sunscreen. The surprising thing is how good-natured

and non-homophobic the prurient speculation is. Riverside RV Campground's co-owner Derek Meade laughs before admitting that he and his partner in life and business, Clint St Germain, were nervous about their reception. The campground they purchased last year was a rundown party central that hosted mud-drags, impromptu fireworks and the annual gleeful torching of a car painted to look like an official OPP vehicle.



"I'm not exaggerating," says Meade. "It was a wild place." So wild that neighbours who complained about the noise were threatened with having their homes torched — while they were in them. Even the OPP was reluctant to venture into the melee. "For that first summer, if we had to go into the camp after dark, we went in a car with the doors locked and cellphones in our laps," says Meade. "But we didn't take any crap, didn't hesitate to call the OPP and have them evicted. At the end of the season we ended all seasonal contracts and closed for renovations."

The renovations were extensive; more than seven tons of scrap metal had to be removed and most of the infrastructure needed a lot of work. Fortunately, St Germain is a contractor by trade. "When the workers — and we made a point of hiring local — arrived with their backhoes and trucks, I think they were expecting tutus and us flitting around," Meade says. Instead, the men earned grudging respect when they proved as butch and hardworking as any other contractor.

"We opened June 3, 2011, as a gay campground," Meade says proudly. "We have large sites that are well treed — it's a 40-year-old-growth forest. The sites average 35 by 70 feet and we have 100 acres to work with, so we don't have to cram people in like sardines. People don't realize that we're only two hours out of the city, but it's wilderness. Very rural and pristine. The stars are unbelievable. It's a real camping experience — but a gay one."

There are other unbelievable sights: large sections of the park, including the pool, are clothing optional. “We’re not trying to set up David Balfour Park in our backyard,” laughs Meade. “It’s not a bathhouse in the woods. Guys do hook up on the trails, but as long as they’re not disturbing anyone else. We don’t have specific play areas, but when gay men are naked . . .” Meade himself is somewhat shy and wears a suit in the pool when guests are around. “There’s no pressure. It’s a comfortable environment, not a sexual one. Those who do take their clothes off are appreciative that they can.” And they probably wish that Meade would as well.

There is a section of the clothing optional area nicknamed The Strip — not for the nudity but because the sites back up against a ridge of soapstone deposits and natural granite. “We had two Frenchmen from Ottawa, and they set tea lights all over the rock and strung patio lanterns around their site,” remembers Meade. “The whole site just twinkled. I got goose flesh seeing it. That’s what gay men do; they go in and make it even better than it was.”



It turns out that the campground’s nearest neighbours also believe that gay men make things better. The fear of seeing a willy is worth the tranquility and the removal of their fear of arson. And Tweed, like any other rural town, is starving for tourist dollars, so pink ones are just fine. Outreach to local businesses has gone well, and spotting vacationing homos on the small town’s main street is almost commonplace. Meade marvels at the neighbour who showed up bearing a welcoming jar of homemade pickles (surely no double entendre intended) instead of brandishing a threatening pitchfork. “Last year the campers lit a fire to burn everything down,” says St Germain. “Now they’re setting up tea lights.” Redecorating nature and reclaiming redneck central in the process.

Drew Rowsome is an associate editor at fab, and while tea lights and naked men appeal, he is more intrigued by the luxury rental cabin available.



<https://drewrowsome.blogspot.ca>

Riverside RV Campground is open Victoria Day weekend through Thanksgiving. 84 Robinson Rd N, Tweed. 613-478-2229. [riversidervcampground.com](http://riversidervcampground.com)

# Magic

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# I Know, Groovy?

MR. X - 2012

Last month, I went over to my friend Derek's house for dinner with him and his boyfriend, Jacob. This is a relatively new relationship and I was anxious to see who Derek chose as a potential life partner. I got the opportunity to engage in some pretty intense conversations with Jacob and get his perspectives on a few important issues – namely, what he watches on TV. When I got home later that night, my boyfriend asked me,

“What's he like?”

“Well,” I said, “he says ‘Right’ a lot.”

As the weeks progressed, I was hearing more and more people using the word “Right”; not as a synonym for “correct” or in reference to a direction, but as a euphemism for “You know?”. A friend at work, a waiter, another friend of mine, the ticket guy at the movie theatre, my boyfriend's sister, Ben from *The Bachelor* (shut up, you watch it too), the retail guy at Lacoste, Kelly Ripa (shut up, you watch it too) ... EVERYBODY was presumably using the word “Right” or asking “I know, right” in a context that seemed simultaneously appropriate and inappropriate.



Fifteen years ago, when I was in university, the word that everybody was using was “Like”. Lauded as the “Groovy” of the ‘90s, the word “Like” was one that entered the English vernacular to such an extent that its meaning extended well beyond that which was found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary. In fact, so popular was this word and its usage at the time that Oxford had to change their definition of the word in the subsequent edition of their dictionary to include it as an informal conjunction: “used especially after forms of be to introduce reported speech or thought: She's like, ‘I don't believe it’ and I'm like, ‘No, it's true!’” (swear to God, that's a quote from Oxford). At the time, I would be in social circles and my Rosedale friends would say, “Don't say ‘Like’. It makes you sound unintelligent.”

And now we have “Right”.

Language is a malleable beast. Before “Right”, we had “Sick”, “That's hot” and “Like”; expressions we use no more today than we do “Man”, “Groovy”, “Daddy-O” or “Cool” (that's C-o-o-l, not K-e-w-l for all you annoying internet chatters). And, while “Right” is the new induction into the Young-Hip-And-Trendy-New-Thing-To-Say-To-Sound-Young-Hip-And-Trendy Hall of Fame and the current It Word in the English language, it better appreciate its time while it lasts.

What word is going to replace it?

Groovy, right? Random.



# The Big First Date

CHRIS MUNRO- 2014



Well you did it. You made a connection and have a first date planned. Oh glory day. The church bells are swinging in the background and every breath of air feels just a little fresher today. But not so fast. We still have to get through this important milestone and much can happen on a very first outing. Nerves are common as two people explore one another in an attempt to have fun. Where should we go? What should I wear? How can I make this occasion more enjoyable for both of us?

The first date is our best chance to literally “qualify” this other person. Sure you may have some superficial stats from an online chat, but further information is necessary. Just as a salesperson qualifies a lead before investing his time in pursuing a client, dates can be very similar. Our goal is to have fun, yes. But we also need to be on the look-out for red flags.

Red flags are when something seems off or something falls out of line with your core values during your interaction. Never forget that your time is valuable. Before you go out on your date, think about what values you have and what type of person you see yourself being with. This will help to avoid getting emotionally invested in something that does not fit within your lifestyle. It will help to avoid drama. It will also help calm the nerves.

Remember, you don’t have to impress anyone: you are simply on an adventure, exploring another person and doing your best to make the evening enjoyable.

Helpfully we have compiled a few disasterous first dates for you to study so you can avoid some pitfalls. There definitely are some things you will want to try to avoid in a first date setting: talking about religion, politics, ex-lovers or being overly negative about anything is a great way to kill a vibe. The following video contains “what not to do” footage of men on dates.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NY30WbNVXMY>

*First Date Disasters*



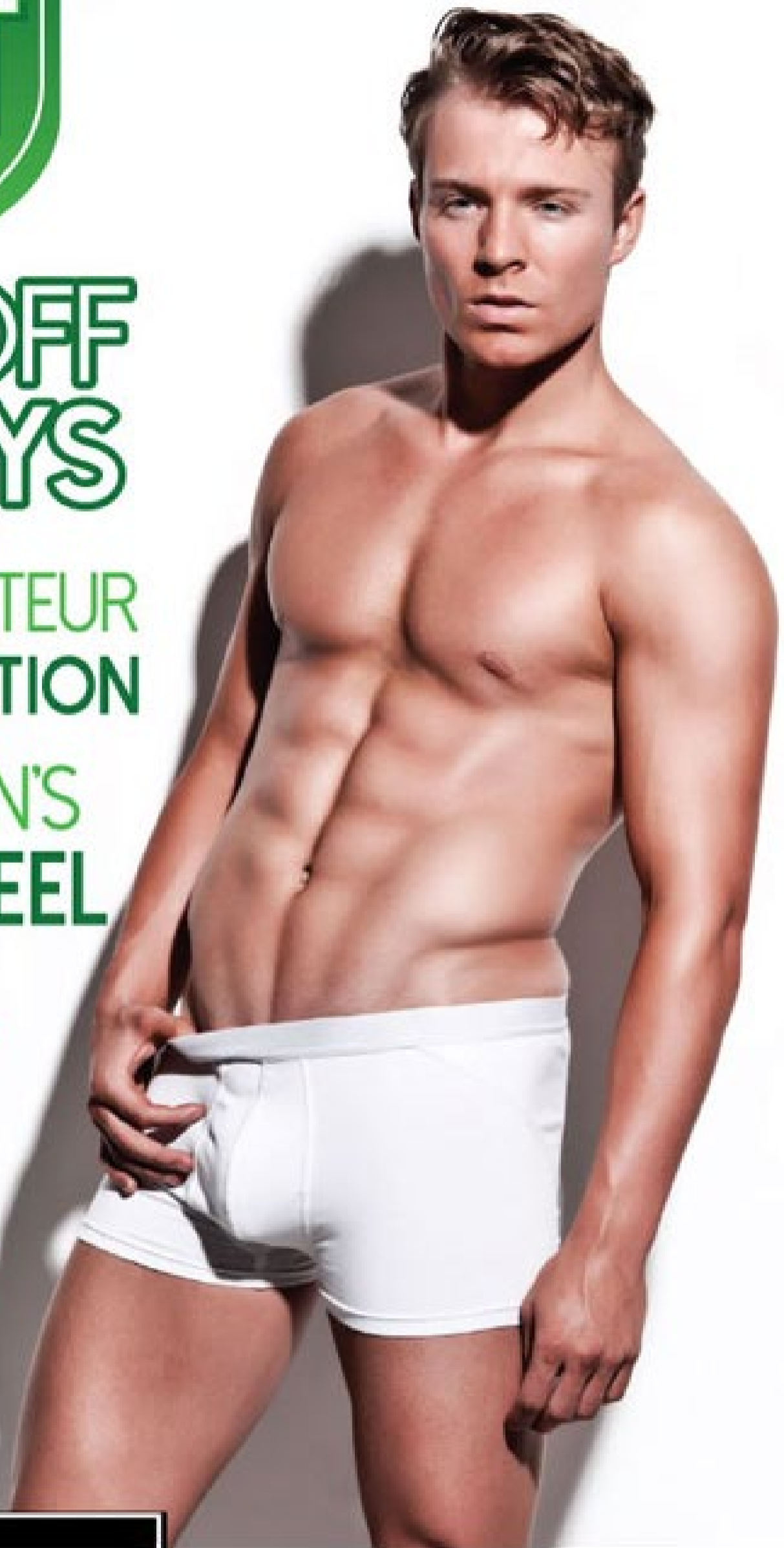
# TAKE IT OFF TUESDAYS

BH-WEEKLY AMATEUR  
STRIP COMPETITION

@ REMINGTON'S  
MEN OF STEEL

CASH & PRIZES  
TO BE WON

CONTEST  
BEGINS @ 11PM



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**OPEN DAILY 5PM-2AM**

379 YONGE ST, TORONTO, ON

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# Which Vitamins and Supplements are Necessary to take Daily?

CHELSEA DERRY- 2011

I had a great question sent to me by a reader:

*“It seems whenever I watch TV, someone is suggesting different vitamins that we need to take daily.*

*If I took everything that was suggested, I would be popping 30 pills per day. What are the essentials that I need to take daily?*

*I am male, 40 years old, work out regularly, and eat healthy.”*



Here are a few of the things I think most people would benefit from:

## **Fish Oil**

About 2 grams per day, taken with food, must be kept in the fridge. Has been proven to improve depression, lower cholesterol and triglycerides, decrease blood pressure, decrease joint pain, improve skin health, prevent neurological diseases (Schizophrenia, Alzheimer's), improve focus, memory and vision. Take only under doctor supervision if you have severe high blood pressure, are taking aspirin or other blood thinners, or have fat-malabsorption or gallbladder issues.

## **Probiotic**

Multi-strain product with counts in the billions of live cells, must be taken with food, must be kept in the fridge. Improves digestion and gut health, puts 'good guys' in the gut, to leave less room for 'bad guys'. Can also improve immune function, and can even influence mood by affecting neurotransmitters (you have more serotonin receptors in your gut than in your brain!).

## **Vitamin D**

We are deficient in Canada! Necessary for bone health, immune health, heart health, decreases risk of MS and Rheumatoid Arthritis. 1000-3000IU per day. Liquid forms of Vitamin D3 are best, always taken with a meal.

## **Multi-vitamin**

This isn't always necessary for everyone; it depends on your eating habits.

\*These suggestions are intended for someone who is in good health. Of course if you have a specific health concern or diagnosis, you will likely need additional support in the way of vitamins/supplements, so see your health care provider to determine what's right for you!



## Drugstore Brands vs. Professional Brands

There are very few times I suggest buying a drugstore brand. That being said, some drugstores/grocery stores do sell some decent brands (Loblaws has a few decent brands in the health food section). Professional brands are available through your Naturopathic Doc, and some can be purchased at health food stores. The advantages of professional products are:

- \* Better quality ingredients. For example, professional brands use calcium citrate instead of calcium carbonate. May not seem significant, but it does impact how your body absorbs and utilizes them.
- \* Quality control: professional brands have more stringent processes, and products are third party tested (meaning an objective company tests the products to ensure they are contaminant-free, and actually contain what they say they contain - important when dealing with the possibility of heavy metals in fish oil, for example)
- \* Higher dosages of individual ingredients that are closer to therapeutic levels.

The professional brand has high dosages, high quality forms of vitamins and minerals, and guarantees, " This product contains NO yeast, soy protein, milk/dairy, corn, sodium, sugar, starch, coloring, preservatives or flavoring" The drugstore brand contains sub-par forms of vitamins and minerals, at quite low dosages, and contains extra ingredients like preservatives, GMO cornstarch, artificial food dyes, silicon dioxide, talc, sucrose, titanium dioxide, maltodextrin and sodium aluminosilicate.

ALUMINUM?! SERIOUSLY?!... Vitamins anyone?

# Cardio

EMERY POSTE



Before walking out of our homes we make sure we look our best: we groom ourselves, we pick our favorite clothes, in part defining who we are and who we want others to believe we are. Maintaining a healthy and fit body should be part of this definition. The cardiovascular system, i.e. the heart and lungs, are the essential parts of your health and well-being. The benefits of Cardio Exercise are stronger heart and lungs, increased bone density, reduced stress and reduced risk of heart disease and some types of cancer. Cardio will help you lose cellulite tissue all over your body. You can't target the areas where you want to lose it the most, but you'll lose cellulite cells from all over your body.

In all cases before you endeavor in new physical activity you should consult with a physician and get a check-up. Once you've done that, the first and albeit most important step is to decide what kind of activities you'd like to do. If you like the outdoors, running, cycling, hiking or walking are all good choices. If you like the gym, you'll have access to stationary bikes, elliptical trainers, treadmills, rowing machines. The treadmill is the most versatile of the machines as you can speed-walk, run, jog, increase and decrease the incline. For those of you who prefer to exercise at home, there's always the latest Celebrity DVD's--just about anything is acceptable as long as it gets your heart rate into your "Target Heart Rate Zone".

A minimum of 20 minutes to between 45-60 minutes is the recommended time you should spend on cardio. If you find committing difficult at first, start by going for 5 minutes, then every time you exercise add one or two more until you've reached at least 20 - exercise in all it's forms is about baby steps, the hardest part being to get started. Take your time, pat yourself on the back for taking the initiative, and in no time you'll be looking and feeling better.



**It's All Tru!**

A play  
about **AIDS**

The Cabaret Company  
PRESENTS

# It's All Tru!



A play about **AIDS**

Written and Directed by Sky Gilbert

Starring David Coomber, Caleb Olivieri and Tim Post

Set Design by Denise Lisson

Lighting Design by Oz Weaver

Costumes Designed by Elizabeth Traicus

May 3 - 14 2017

Wed - Sat 8 pm \$20 - \$39

Sun 2:30 pm PWYC

Buddies in Bad Times Theatre

12 Alexander Street

(416) 975-8555

## CINNAMON DETOX TEA

*slimming tea*

- \* 1 cup green tea
- \* cinnamon stick - 1
- \* raw honey
- \* lemon juice
- \* cayenne



THEINDIANSPOT

## GINGER DETOX TEA

*skin clearing tea*

- \* 1 cup green tea
- \* lemon juice
- \* ginger
- \* honey



THEINDIANSPOT

## TURMERIC DETOX TEA

*cleansing tea*

- \* 1/4 tsp turmeric
- \* black pepper
- \* 1/4 tsp ginger powder
- \* 1 tbsp raw honey
- \* 2 cups water



THEINDIANSPOT

# REFRESHING DETOX JUICES



**1**  
**CARROT APPLE GINGER**  
 2 carrots  
 +  
 2 apples  
 +  
 2 tbsp ginger



**2**  
**TOMATO CARROT RADISH**  
 2 carrots  
 +  
 15 cherry tomatoes  
 +  
 2 radishes



**3**  
**ORANGE CARROT PINEAPPLE**  
 1 orange  
 +  
 2 carrots  
 +  
 1 1/2 cup pineapple



**4**  
**KALE CUCUMBER APPLE**  
 6 kale stalks  
 +  
 2 cucumbers  
 +  
 1 apple

HealthCentral

## FRUIT-INFUSED WATER

ORANGE-KIWI

RASPBERRY-MINT

BLUEBERRY-LIME

LEMON-CUCUMBER





# Hamlet

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## IN A HOT TUB

---

the movie

Trip the light fantastic  
(again) with Hamlet,  
Ophelia, Gertrude  
and Polonius in this  
gender-bending farce  
of never-ending  
happy endings.

**SUMMER 2017**

Facebook/HamletInAHotTub

TheReadingSalon.ca



THE READING SALON PRESENTS HAMLET IN A HOT TUB BASED ON THE PLAY BY BROCK HESSEL AND DAVID BATEMAN ADAPTED BY DAVID BATEMAN  
DIRECTED BY RAYMOND HELKIO FEATURING PAUL BELLINI, AMY J. LESTER, DAVID BATEMAN, BROCK HESSEL MUSIC BY STEWART BORDEN THE READING SALON

My Gay Toronto.com

# MGT MORE



# DALE DAVID

PRESENTS



# JOCK STRAP



# EREZ BEN ISHAY

SATURDAY MAY 6TH

AT

# BLACK EAGLE

457 CHURCH STREET



# LGBT Upcoming Hot Events

[http://www.mygaytoronto.com/events\\_hot/](http://www.mygaytoronto.com/events_hot/)

<p>APR 14 - Thu</p> <p>Meet our Heavenly Hosts and Emcees as they lead us merrily into temptation!</p>  <p>SHAHRAZAD SISTER TWISTED</p> <p>Kinky Jesus: The Second Coming Toronto's 2nd Annual Kinky Jesus Competition</p> <p>GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 14 3:00 PM, CLUB 12</p> <p>www.1080xTOSSTRES.COM</p>	<p>APR 15 - Fri</p> <p>UNDERWEAR</p> <p>4PLAY UNDERWEAR PART 2</p> <p>STRICT DRESSCODE UNDERWEAR OR LESS</p> <p>SATURDAY APRIL 15 10-3:30</p> <p>WINNING: DJ CESAR MURILLE</p> <p>TRUNKS • SIN</p>	<p>APR 20 - Thu</p> <p>1300 MANEQUIN Video Release</p>  <p>FEATURING WANNY DUNN</p> <p>LIVE AT OLYSS NIGHTCLUB</p> <p>MUSIC BY DANIEL BROWN &amp; ELI HART WARDEN</p> <p>FT. SAPPHIRE ROSSIGNOL AND HELENA POISSON</p>	<p>APR 21 - Fri</p> <p>DAVID KNAPP PRESENTS</p> <p>DEMO</p> <p>FRIDAY APRIL 21ST</p> <p>PERFORMING DJ PHIL V DJ KRIS STEEVES</p> <p>EAGLE 457 CHURCH STREET   10PM   65</p>	<p>APR 21 - Fri</p> <p>ALL LIVE SINGING SHOW</p> <p>APRIL 21 &amp; 22 7:30PM</p> <p>THE IMMACULATE MISS CONCEPTION</p> <p>2WD Shows Only \$20 Tickets FOR THOSE WHO DON'T ASK FOR TIMES AND BOX OFFICE Call 416-979-8555 buddies IN BAG TIMES THEATRE 12 Alexander St Toronto</p>	<p>APR 22 - Sat</p> <p>SAT APR 22</p> <p>PERFORMING ALEX MARRIED!</p> <p>WEDDING CRASHER QUEENS</p> <p>519</p> <p>519 Church St</p>
<p>APR 22 - Sat</p> <p>LITTLE DANGERFIELD PRESENTS</p> <p>BEET CURTAINS</p> <p>MURKIN'S OF YAS GARDEN</p>  <p>BE STEADY • APRIL 22 • 10:00PM • \$10 (BYO)</p>	<p>APR 23 - Sun</p> <p>AMANDA JADE LADY ROBERTS ELEKTRA ANYA FACE</p> <p>DRAG DIVAS LIVE</p> <p>The Duke LIVE.com</p> <p>SUN APRIL 23RD</p> <p>SHOWTIME 8PM TICKETS \$10/\$15</p>	<p>APR 28 - Fri</p> <p>PERFORMING WITH THE DANCE SCHEDULE</p> <p>AMANDA RAYGUN HI-DEF HAKAN LOOB KRAHLAH SKANK HONTO</p> <p>FRIDAY APRIL 28</p> <p>CLUB 120 120 CHURCH STREET #10 ADV \$15 AT DOOR 10PM START</p>	<p>APR 28 - Fri</p> <p>JIMMY MOORE</p> <p>MICHAEL JACKSON WILDONA CLEVE LION</p>  <p>FRIDAY APRIL 28 8PM LIVE AT BUDDIES   Tickets on sale Now! JIMMYMOORE.CA</p>	<p>APR 29 - Sat</p> <p>FEATURING ÉFANE LIP (MONTREAL)</p> <p>SATURDAY APRIL 29th</p>	<p>APR 29 - Sat</p> <p>Y APRIL 29 2017</p> <p>DEMUIR</p> <p>NU-Disco Deep House Disco Rare Groove &amp; Classic House</p> <p>JUSTINE JAMES + TRACY + PIKA</p> <p>Remission</p>
<p>MAY 5 - Fri</p> 	<p>MAY 6 - Sat</p> <p>DALE DAVID</p> <p>HOOK STRAP</p> <p>BEN BERRY</p> <p>SATURDAY MAY 6TH</p> <p>EAGLE</p>	<p>MAY 28 - Sun</p> <p>Taylor Skin Care</p> <p>FUND) RAISER FASHION SHOW</p> <p>To Benefit: act AIDS Committee of Toronto</p> <p>FRIDAY MAY 28 2017 (10:00am) 40 Progress Ave, Scarborough, ON</p>	<p>MONDAYS</p> <p>Heavenly Mondays</p> <p>Starring Heaven Lee Hyde</p> <p>with special guest Amanda Roberts</p> <p>SHOWTIME 10:30PM LIVE COVER</p>	<p>MONDAYS</p> <p>FRANKY AT Crews &amp; Tingos</p> <p>MONDAY NIGHT MADNESS</p> <p>DONNARAMA BOA</p> <p>WITH MUSIC BY DJ RELENTLESS</p> <p>SHOWS @ 11 PM &amp; 1 AM No Cover, Always A Good Time #eatsleepcrewsrepeat</p>	<p>MONDAYS</p> <p>Margie MONDAYS</p> <p>AN INDUSTRY NIGHT EVERY WEEK</p> <p>\$5</p> <p>REMINGTONS</p>
<p>MONDAYS</p> 	<p>TUESDAYS</p> <p>T.O.T TAKE IT OFF TUESDAYS</p> <p>BWEEKLY AMATEUR STRIP COMPETITION @ REMINGTONS MEN OF STEEL</p> <p>CASH &amp; PRIZES TO BE WON CONTEST BEGINS @ 10PM</p> <p>REMINGTONS</p>	<p>TUESDAYS</p> <p>Effewescence! featuring Natasha Buckridge &amp; Karin Wong</p> <p>Every Tuesday from 10pm - 1am</p> <p>bliss</p>	<p>TUESDAYS</p> <p>GETTO GLAM BUNDO</p> <p>with DIAMANDA TENSION</p> <p>8:30pm tuesdays</p>	<p>TUESDAYS</p> <p>guy moreau, host james quigley, keys</p> <p>THE VILLAGE Cabaret OPEN MIC</p> <p>STARTS APRIL 11 NO COVER</p> <p>STATLERS 487 CHURCH ST TORONTO</p>	<p>TUESDAYS</p> <p>MANDY BOOCHANDY PRESENTS</p> <p>Laugh a minute</p> <p>TUESDAY OPEN MIC!</p> <p>MUSKOGA</p>
<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> 	<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> 	<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> 	<p>WEDNESDAYS</p> <p>Crews &amp; Tingos</p>	<p>THURSDAYS</p> 	<p>THURSDAYS</p> <p>EVERY! F***ING! THURSDAY!</p>

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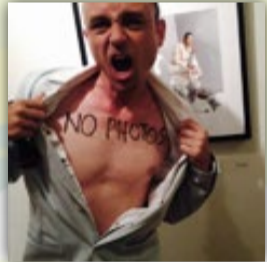
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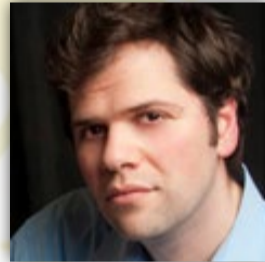
**Drew Rowsome** - MGT Editor, a writer, reviewer, musician and the lead singer of Crackpuppy. The Toronto gay scene is his home and his pet promotional project. His musings, ruminations and longer form reviews can be found at [drewrowsome.blogspot.ca](http://drewrowsome.blogspot.ca). [editor@MyGayToronto.com](mailto:editor@MyGayToronto.com).



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# MY GAY TORONTO

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