

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE

MGT

We Know Gay

MY GAY TORONTO

ISSUE #56 APR 15 2018 - MAY 15 2018.

TOM SAINT CLAIR





MGT DIGITAL MAGAZINE

Issue #56 Apr 15 2018 - May 15 2018

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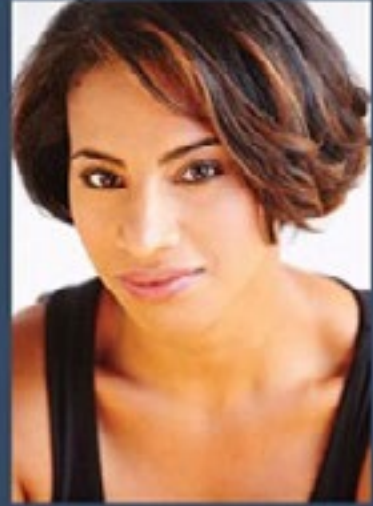
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PLUS MUCH MORE!

Eric Morin: finding just the right amount of sizzle for Fun Home

DREW ROWSOME



Eric Morin is a quadruple-threat. Not only is he a powerful singer, dancer and thespian, but he possesses that elusive charisma that catches the eye and ear. And it doesn't hurt that he has leading man good looks that are striking in any, or out of any, costume. After seducing audiences with a memorable song and dance, tightly-whitey clad number in Hello Again, Morin is tackling four different roles in the multiple Tony Award-winning Fun Home.

Based on Alison Bechdel's best-selling graphic novel/memoir, Fun Home tells the story of a young woman discovering, and embracing, not only her lesbianism but that her father was a closeted gay man. The musical moves back and forth in time, dealing with memory, regrets, sexual awakening and what it was like growing up in a funeral home. When I bumped into Morin just as rehearsals began, he was explosively enthused about Fun Home and intensely focussed on the challenges it presents him. He readily agreed to take the time to answer a few questions by email.

Drew Rowsome: You have lots of experience with musicals, what is special about Fun Home?

Eric Morin: *The joys and challenges of working on Fun Home is creating a clear and vivid history for the four characters that I am portraying. I serve the story to illustrate Bruce's sexual oppression by demonstrating his sexual urges that he sometimes acts upon. I arrive on the scene for a very brief period in all circumstances so I'm not only exploring the text that is on the page but also what is unsaid.*



How did you get cast in Fun Home?

I already had a relationship with director Robert McQueen, musical director Reza Jacobs and Musical Stage Company artistic director Mitchell Marcus, having worked with them back in 2013 when I played the role of Whizzer in Falsettos. They were familiar with my work and since I am self-represented, they had emailed me to audition for the role. On Saturday night, I closed Catalyst's production of Vigilante in Ottawa and drove back to Toronto to audition on Sunday for Fun Home. I brought great vulnerability into the room and two days later, I received an email with an offer.

Having worked with much of the team before, how important is the feeling of family in a rehearsal environment for creating a family on stage?

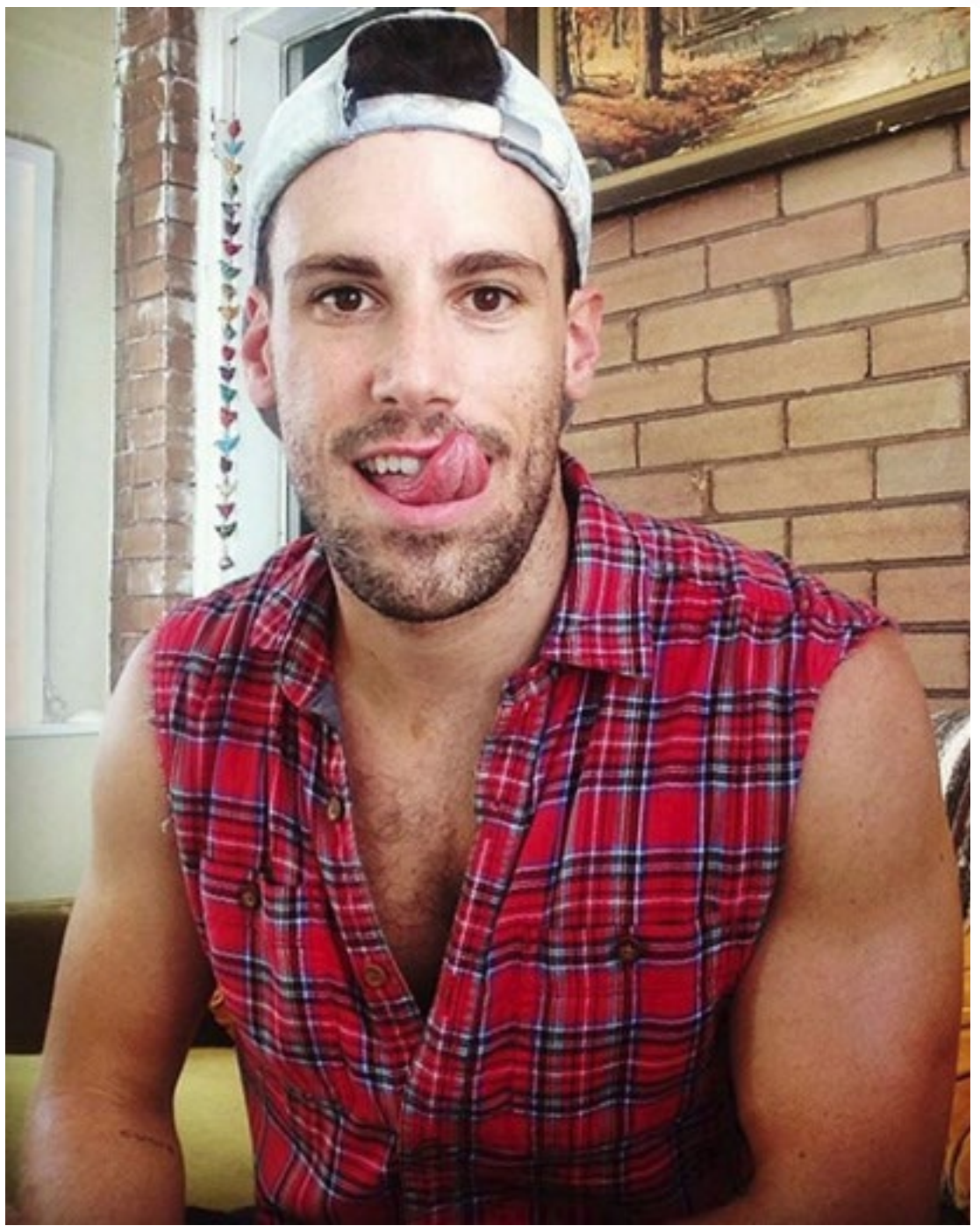
It's incredibly important. We have a history with one another, so naturally we all know how one works and what it is we all bring to the table. Reza and Robert bring such heart to their craft and that is unique. There is also a familiarity that serves us all. The expectations before we start is huge and as an actor, I usually come to the table prepared, off book and have a strong sensibility of the character I am portraying and what the linear focus of the story we are telling is.

You have four roles in a musical that takes place in two time periods. How do you keep each role and time period differentiated? Which of the characters do you most identify with?

I've been working with Robert and Alex and Carmen Amini the costume designers, to interpret what it is I'm exploring in the rehearsal hall. I'm also working with different physical bodies to differentiate them from one another. I identify with Roy the most, as he has the clearest story arc out of the four. Also, in Alison's memoir, he was extremely present in the family's life as he babysat their kids and even went on trips with the whole family. There is a lot of history to draw from and I have had a similar experience with a married man when I was younger.

What is it like working with theatre legends Cynthia Dale and Evan Buliung [The Audience]?

A dream. I have always looked up to them both and hoped I would get to work with them. I've seen them onstage but it's amazing to be working alongside of them. They are both incredibly giving, curious and warm on and off the stage. The same goes for Laura Condlin [An Enemy of the People, Sextet], Sabryn Rock and Sara Farb. I am in great company. I still have fond memories of Cynthia Dale playing Charity in Sweet Charity, Sara in Next to Normal as Natalie, Sabryn in Caroline or Change, Laura in The



Matchmaker and Evan in almost everything that he has tackled at Stratford.

What is your favourite number in Fun Home?

My favourite number is "Helen, Bruce and Roy." It is the scene in which you begin to understand the complexities within this family and the inner struggle and turmoil between Helen and Bruce. The most challenging is "A Raincoat of Love" as it isn't an easy sing. I play a David Cassidy-type character and this one number has challenged me to be quite disciplined in my day to day routine. No drinking or partying during this run!

Coming out stories and closets figure in all our histories. How do Fun Home's dilemmas resonate with your life?

Oh, that's complex. I mean throughout history it was implied that if you came out as an artist your career would be over. Or at least the fear of "What if." I am openly gay, but I don't want my sexual orientation to define what it is I can or cannot play on stage. I love performing as a "straight" male. I think I bring an unbiased attitude when it comes to playing what's on the page and I am not afraid to bring great vulnerability to the scene. Sometimes I find some straight male actors will play their roles with great stoicism and their performance becomes one note. I saw Fun Home on Broadway near the end of the run and felt that way about Michael Cerveris' performance. That is certainly not the case with Evan Buliung. He is fearless and you see the shattered man trying to hold everything together. It's exquisite.

When and how did you decide to embark on a career in acting?

I decided to embark on a career in the arts when I first got a taste for it at the young age of 11. My mom forced me to go to a theatre camp in London called Original Kids. I kicked and screamed and refused to go. She said try it for one day and then you can make up your mind. After the very first day, it was impossible for her to pry me away. I had found my home.

What is it like working with child actors again? Did you work as a child actor or in school plays? Does that give you an urge to mentor and/or remind you of early ambitions?

They are a joy to work with. They are so professional and they definitely keep us 'adults' on our toes. Hannah Levinson [The Sound of Music] is heartbreaking as small Alison. I also had the opportunity to work with her brother Michael Levinson in Falsettos. What a crazy talented family. I did four seasons of the High School Project at the Grand Theatre in London. It certainly gave me a taste of what I could expect in this industry and is the reason I pursued it at a professional level. I love mentoring. I hope to do more of it in the future,

Do you get a chance to work your sex appeal in Fun Home?

LOL. As Roy I guess I do but it's subtle. We talked about whether Roy could show more skin or whether he might kiss Bruce, but it doesn't really ask for it in the scene. We found the anticipation and tension of wanting something to happen is more tantalizing; Less is more in this case



**What is your favourite past role?
The one you are most proud of?**

Oh man, that's a tough question. That's like Sophie's Choice . . . I'm proud of many of them. Gabe in the Canadian premiere of Next to Normal, D'Artagnan in The Three Musketeers, Robert Donnelly in Vigilante, to name a few.

What musical role would you like to get a crack at?

George in Sunday in the Park with George, the emcee in Cabaret . . . The best would be originating a role that has yet to be written.

What is next after Hello Again for the provocative theatre company the ARTillery Collective that you helped found?

We are considering a few things. We would like to do a double bill of two Canadian plays by playwright Bryden MacDonald, Little Dog Laughed by Douglas Carter Bean, a concert of Sunday in the Park with George, and La Cage aux Folles starring local Toronto drag queens.



[The Review of Fun Home can be found here ****](#)

DAVID MIRVISH PRESENTS THE MUSICAL STAGE COMPANY PRODUCTION OF

FUN HOME

THE TONY AWARD-WINNING BEST MUSICAL

MUSIC BY JEANINE TESORI
BOOK & LYRICS BY LISA KRON
BASED ON THE GRAPHIC NOVEL BY ALISON BECHDEL

APRIL 13 - MAY 6, 2018

Fun Home runs Fri, April 13 to Sun, May 20
at the CAA Theatre, 651 Yonge St. mirvish.com,
musicalstagecompany.com



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XXXV

Anniversary



June 7th, 8pm

Enjoy 1993 Prices (selected beverages)

Disgraceful

PAUL BELLINI



What a way to start a day.

“Respect is all that we have,” announced the e-mail solemnly, which was woefully titled “Disgraceful.” Finally, a phishing scam from the ESL crowd with some imagination.

Good morning! Do not mind on my illiteracy, Im from Iran. I installed mine virus onto your system. Now I pilfered all privy background from your OS. Moreover I got a little bit more compromising. The most amusing evidence that I got- its a video with your self-abusing.

Whoh! I’ll admit, this point gave me pause. Blowing a load in front of my PC is tradition in my household, though I did not think this likely, as I long ago succumbed to paranoia and covered up the little camera eye on the computer. Still, I check out porn online on a daily basis.

Had I just fallen into an episode of Black Mirror?

I set deleterious soft on a porn web page and after you loaded it. As soon as you selected the video and tapped on a play button, my software immediately set up on your OS. After downloading, your web camera shoot the videotape with you wanking, furthermore I captured precisely the video you watched. In next week my deleterious soft found all your social media and work contacts.

What this idiot doesn’t seem to understand is that we don’t need him and his “deleterious soft.” Most of us have already plastered the Internet with images of us ‘wanking.’ Has he never heard of dudes nude, or Grindr, or Twitter, or any of the multitude of hook-up apps?

If you wish to destroy the records- pay me 209 usd in BTC(cryptocurrency) . . . You have 20 hours after reading. When I get transfer I will destroy the videotape permanently. Otherwise I will send the tape to all your contacts. Good day.

\$209 USD? Who asks for nine dollars? Honestly, it took me over 20 hours just to process this nonsense. All the same, does my mom or the people I work for need pictures of my knob in action? Do me a favour. If you see compromising pictures of me, ones I didn’t upload myself, let me know. In particular, let me know if you want to get together with me, because I’m always willing to get a little disgraceful. Which is the only bit of information this asshole got right.

Get Feedback On Your Quickie

RAYMOND HELKIO



Poster image: MATTHEW, 6min., USA, LGBT/Family

The Toronto Feedback Film Festival returns this month with an eclectic collection of the best of LGBT Films and shorts under five minutes. The films are selected from entries all over the globe with Argentina, Israel, Sweden, Turkey, UK, USA and Canada making it into the programming. Expect to be intrigued, provoked and pleasantly surprised with the calibre of work and stick around afterwards for the best part, the feedback. With the filmmakers in attendance, the post discussion allows the audience to ask questions and provide valuable feedback about how it was received. The last time I went to one of these programs it was with a group of friends and we had a blast, both watching the films and participating in what became a lively discussion afterwards. This coming program will be moderated by Kierston Drier and it's a good idea to arrive a few minutes early to grab a beer and some popcorn before you settle in.

NOTEWORTHY

THE FRUIT MACHINE, 16min., Canada, LGBT/Drama
Directed by Omer Khan

During the 1950's and 60's, at the height of the Cold War, the Canadian government was doing everything it could to gain an advantage. Major shifts were happening within the RCMP, military, and civil services. A device was introduced to test the stress levels of workers by measuring pupillary response to certain images. This device was called: The Fruit Machine. [CLICK HERE - and see full info and more pics of the film!](#)

BOY, 9min., USA, LGBT/Drama
Directed by Declan Quinlan

A businessman is pushed to evaluate himself after a young runaway leads him into unfamiliar territory. [CLICK HERE - and see full info and more pics of the film!](#)

MATTHEW, 6min., USA, LGBT/Family
Directed by Luke Willis

A teenage boy is figuring out his own sexual identity when his grandfather drives him to hang out with a girl. [CLICK HERE - and see full info and more pics of the film!](#)

A LETTER FROM LETICIA, 3min., Argentina, Animation
Directed by Irene Blei

Argentina, 1976: Leticia Veraldi: was in her 4th year at Colegio Nacional de Vicente Lopez high school in Buenos Aires, when her parents decided to move her to their friend's house in Cipolletti, Rio Negro, for protection. This letter is one from many the young girl mailed to her former school mates. [CLICK HERE - and see full info and more pics of the film!](#)

TORONTO FEEDBACK FILM FESTIVAL -
(LGBT and under 5 minute shorts)
Thursday April 26, 2018. 7PM - Carlton Cinemas, Toronto
RSVP [here](#).
TICKETS are free but PWYC is appreciated.

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DJ ARON FEAT. BETH SACKS 2018 - THE DREAMER'S MIX



The best comes magically in **The Best Is Yet to Come Undone**

PAUL BELLINI



Second City's new MainStage show, *The Best Is Yet To Come Undone*, starts with an uncomfortable scene in which a man (Chris Wilson) negotiates every single move he makes with his date, played by the fetching Stacey McGunnigle. It's one of several sketches in the show that takes on topical hot-button social issues.

It helps that the cast is diverse, and very talented. Sharjil Rasool (who I recognize from a workshop I taught years ago at Comedy Bar) stars in a very funny sketch about being the mascot for a sports team called the St. Catharines' East Indians. Brandon Hackett does an edgy piece about being mistaken for Denzil Washington, and how that's racist (but it's okay if you mistake him for Michael B. Jordan). McGunnigle shines in a sketch about a frantic girl breaking up with her boyfriend because she has suddenly become aware of her worth. Hackett also does a TED Talk about representation, and how everything is queer.

All this satire got me thinking, but ultimately, it was a silly sketch about Luke the Asshole Magician (played, in a horrid wig, by Wilson) that had me collapsing with laughter. A parody of modern magicians who use loud rock music and flashing lights and even hapless audience volunteers, every lame trick is capped off with a shove-it finger to the audience. I'm still laughing about it today.

The Best Is Yet To Come Undone modulates well, from the brashness of Luke the Asshole Magician to the almost-whispered performances of the three female cast members (McGunnigle, Allana Reoch and Nadine Djoury) as public radio broadcasters. There was also the haunting comedy of Reoch's sketch, in which she used an audience member to play her deceased father in a phone call. This is a MainStage show that takes chances. Not everything lands, but no one ever broke new ground from doing the usual.

51 Mercer Street, Toronto

Tues - Thurs @ 8 PM, Fri, Sat @ 7:30 PM and 10 PM, Sun @ 7:30 PM

Tickets start at \$27, available at secondcity.com or call 416 343 0011



The Buddy Cole Monologues: Après Le Déluge

RAYMOND HELKIO



“I, however spoke French with a refined, Parisian accent which made people think I was a snob. Luckily I was; so I didn’t mind.” - Buddy Cole

Lounge lizard Buddy Cole from Kids in the Hall makes a return to the limelight in an evening of humorous monologues from the period the show went off the air in 1995 to the present day. Thompson along with MGT’s Paul Bellini, is the author of Buddy Babylon: The Autobiography of Buddy Cole, a hilarious memoir of Thompson’s most famous character, bon vivant Buddy Cole.

Well known to fans as a member of the sketch comedy troupe The Kids in the Hall, Scott Thompson is anything but your average comedic talent. After Lorne Michaels discovered them in the late ‘80s, The Kids in the Hall created a groundbreaking television series which ran from 1989 to 1995 on CBC in Canada and on HBO and CBS in the United States. After the Kids left television in 1995, Scott and the boys went on to write and star in their own feature film, the cult favorite Brain Candy. Thompson appeared as a regular for three years on Garry Shandling’s revolutionary comedy series The Larry Sanders Show as Brian, the assistant to Hank Kingsley. In this period and afterwards, he made numerous guest appearances on various talk shows such as Politically Incorrect, The Late Show with David Letterman and was a regular fixture on Late Night with Conan O’Brien.

Scott Thompson: Après Le Déluge , The Buddy Cole Monologues
 Saturday May 26 2018 - 7:30 PM – 10:00 PM EDT
 The Royal Cinema, 608 College Street West

[Tickets](#)



RAUHOFFER

81



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dj shane stiel

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MyGayToronto Hot Spots

ROLYN CHAMBERS

Toronto's gay entertainment landscape is constantly evolving and MGT is constantly remapping the scene for you. For this year, these are some the great spots to seek out.



Woody's/Sailor (Bar) - \$ no cover -
465-467 Church St, www.woodystoronto.com, 416-972-0887

The go-to bar for most everyone, this well run beast, headed up by long-time managers and community leaders Dean Orderico and Steven Clegg, is the largest "stand and pose" gay bar in the city. Shows take place most nights boasting some of the city's best drag talent like Georgie Girl and Heroine Marks. Its comfortable atmosphere, always maintained facilities and often opulent decor create the perfect environment to cheer on friends and new acquaintances as they compete in the Best Chest Contest on Thursday nights or the infamous pulse inducing Best Ass Contest on Saturday nights.



Daddy Next Door - (Monthly Event) \$5/ \$10 after 11PM
457 Church St, www.blackegletoronto.com. 416-413-1219

Celebrating the rugged sexiness of the older man, this party has moved and evolved from various bars around the city over its many years of existence. No dress code, no attitude. The brainchild of droolworthy DJ/host Dwayne Minard, longtime gay scene DJ, the party now usually takes place the second Saturday of every month at The Black Eagle. Having gone through a major renovation and upgrade a few years ago, the Eagle has evolved as well from a traditional leather bar into a space that welcomes eclectic weekly and monthly events and on most nights welcomes men out of leather, drag queens and even women.



Jockstrap - (Monthly Event) \$5/ \$10 after 11PM
457 Church St, www.blackegletoronto.com, 416-413-1219

For those who like to show off their goods and expose their assets, this monthly party is the standard. Gay men have long had fetishes with sexy underwear, and this event encourages all to strip down and show off their latest penis product purchases from Men's Room, Northbound Leather, The Stag Shop or Out On The Street.



WolfPackRugged - (Monthly Event) \$5/ \$10 after 11PM
457 Church St, www.blackegletoronto.com, 416-413-1219

Having just celebrated their first year anniversary at the end of March, DJ/organizer Neill MacLeod (who has one of the most spectacular asses this side of Church St) has established another monthly party that allows you to let out your inner spirit animal at The Back Eagle. If Deko-ze, one of the city's most sought after DJs agrees to play at your party, you know you're doing something right. But then again Deko-Ze also just loves spinning funky tribal tech house while wearing a jockstrap in front of a room full of sexy Silver Foxes, handsome Wolves, playful Otters, mischievous Pups and other rugged men.GRRR.



Remington's - (Strip Club) \$5-10
379 Yonge St, www.remmingtons.com, 416-977-2160

Toronto's longest running male strip club may not be centrally located on Yonge Street for much longer (condos will soon be built on its site) so make sure to catch the peelers in action before they make the move to the west end. Women are allowed in but only on the second floor - a treat for the dancers, as some of them are straight. The term gay for pay really pays off here. Tipping in loonies or toonies is ill advised.



Fly 2.0 - (Dance Club) \$\$0-\$20
6 Gloucester St, www.flynightclub.com, 416-410-5246

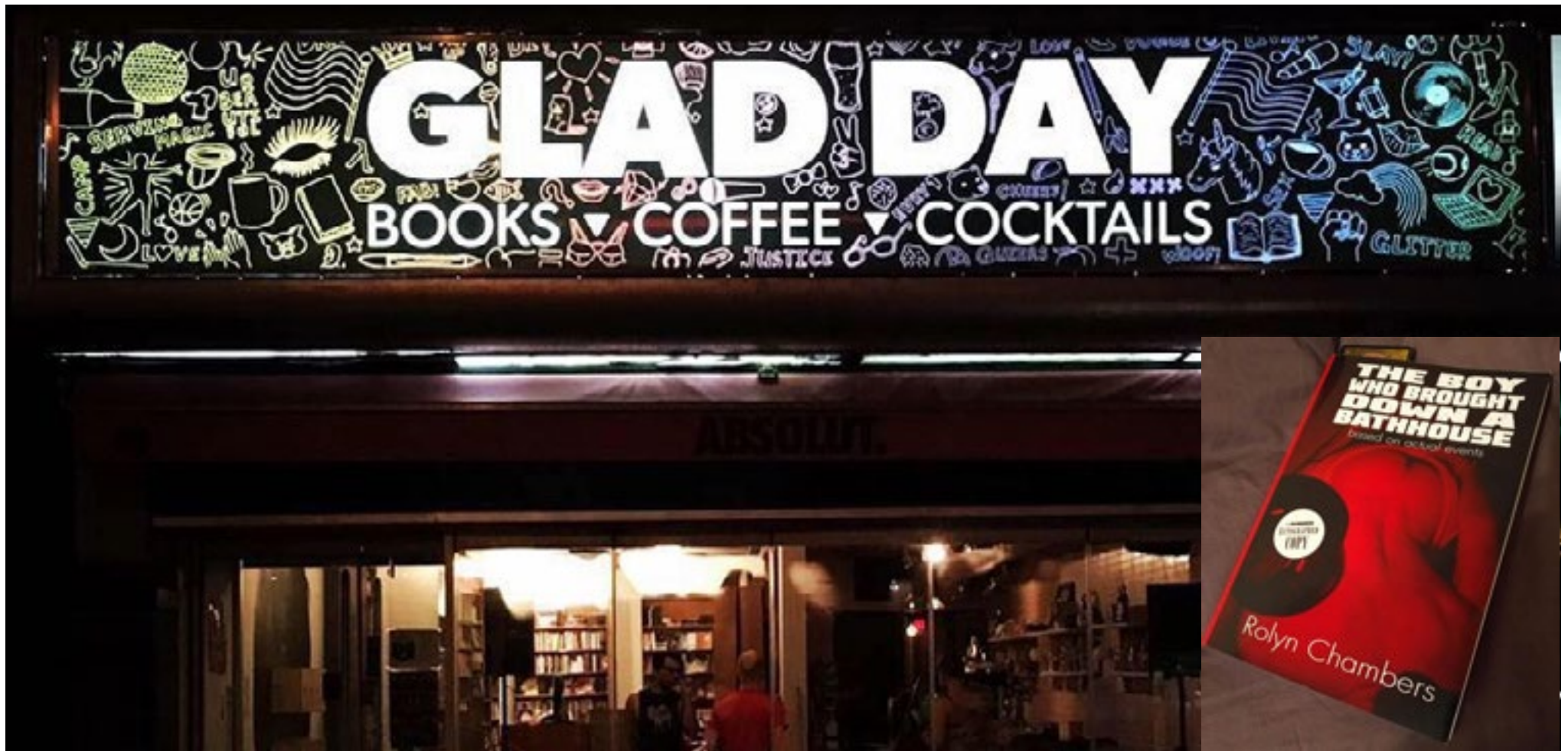
The second incarnation of Toronto's largest true gay dance club is still in the same spot it has occupied for the last 19 years. Situated on three floors, most Friday nights the bottom basement operates as its own venue for Bunker, a dark and sexy after-hours adventure that allows the beats of some of the cities best DJs like Deko-Ze, Ticky Ti and Frustra to invade your body. Every Saturday night dance on the large main floor dance space bathed under the colours of Fly's hydraulic lighting system and laser light show as the city's best DJs including Mark Falco, Sumation and others are joined by international talents like DJ Batty Harris. Hi-energy thumping house beats, delicious go-go men, and 1am drag shows starring Sofonda Cox, Jada Hudson, Devine Darlin', Scarlett Bobo and others are sure to keep you up until its 4am closing

Buddies - (Club) \$ 5-10
Alexander St, www.buddiesinbadtimes.com, 416-975-8555

On Saturdays, this full-time queer focused theatre converts into a comfy dance club. Don't expect anything fancy like state of the art club lighting, or even decorations, but expect a crowd that likes to drink (lots), dance (kind of) and . . . surprisingly, converse. Watch for their infamous drag show, which usually takes place on its centrally located staircase and be sure to ask bar manager Patricia for her famous "Pickle Back" when ordering a pint. (It's a shot of Jack with a chaser of pickle juice.) Rough and tart, just the way Patricia likes it.

AGO/ROM - (Gallery/Museum) \$11+
 AGO- 317 Dundas St W, www.ago.ca
 ROM- 100 Queens Park Circle, www.rom.on.ca

Instead of quenching your thirst for men, fill your cup with culture . . . and men. Toronto's two largest institutions not only boast world renowned collections of permanent and touring art and artifacts but they have also thrown their berets into the nightlife ring. Each hosts evening events geared to those over 19 that mixes live performances, art, alcohol and a steady stream of local DJ Talent including gay scene staples Craig Dominic and Phil Villeneuve. The AGO's aptly named First Thursday allows you to purchase a combo pack that also allows you entry into the latest exhibit. Right now it's Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirrors. And on April 19th they host their annual, more exclusive, Massive Party, an event that takes over most of the gallery for an event that could be called Toronto's Met Gala. The ROM meanwhile puts on Friday Night Live, a themed party every week. Dance next to dinosaur bones or under the slanted walls of the Michael Lee-Chin Crystal. Their annual Pride party, Colour ROM Proud happens on June 15, during Pride month.



Glad Day Bookstore - (Bookstore/Event Space) \$0-10
 499 Church St, www.gladdaybookshop.com, 416-975-8555

Since its move to Church Street last summer, this once quiet queer bookshop, the oldest in North America, has been making lots of noise. Aside from selling books (PS-my new book, *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse*, is one of its top sellers), the new venture has added a café and bar. Check out Drag Brunch every Sunday. Eggs Benny, tastes so much better, henny, while watching the antics of local queens Erin Brockabic and others who often take their show outside, literally stopping traffic by performing on the street. With book racks on rolling wheels the venue converts into a full out event space hosting some of the most inclusive and diverse in the village great weekly and monthly parties, including Jelly with DJ Sammy Rawal.



Pride - (June 22-24, Pride Month June 1-24)
 (Event) \$ most free, certain events vary
www.pridetoronto.com 416-975-8555

Once the Pride flag is officially raised at City Hall on June 1st all manner of queerness invades Toronto. Still one of the world's largest Pride celebrations, join more than one million people as they pack Yonge Street to watch the 34th Annual Pride Parade, as well as the Dyke March on Saturday and the Trans March on Friday. Pride is not a weekend, or even a week, it became an entire month three years ago that partners with some of the biggest venues and business in the city including Ripley's Aquarium, Roy Thompson Hall and Nathan Phillips Square and pairs them with smaller community based programming functions like SOY Youth Stage, Blockorama. Plus affiliated events and parties like Prism (a circuit party festival), and Fit Primpin' and Hot Nuts take place all over the city.



Hanlan's Point

Destination \$7.70 ferry ride

Sunshine, sand, sandals and Speedos. Or not. The choice is up to you at Toronto's only official clothing optional gay beach. Just a short ferry ride from Toronto's Harbourfront will bring you to one of Toronto's three popular islands. Though drinking in public is not legal, everyone packs a liquid lunch to aid in their day of relaxation and people watching. Gay owned yachts anchor nearby, so if you want to meet some new friends with a bit of money just swim over and say hi. If you're more interested in cock than currency take a stroll through the maze of bushes just behind the beach for daylight cruising experiences that will be sure to get the suntan lotion squirting. Keep in mind that sex in public is still illegal. Suck with caution.



Inside Out Film Festival - Yearly Event May 24-June 3
 TIFF-Bell Lightbox, King St- \$ Prices vary

Like the Toronto International Film Festival, Inside Out has, over the last 27 years made a name for itself on the worldwide queer cinema stage. Over 11 days, join more than 30,000 people as they watch over 200 films and attend a slew of gala and after-parties to celebrate and honour their filmmakers and stars. It is here that you can see bigger budget queer focused films, like last years Call Me By Your Name, before they are picked up for limited release in the larger movie houses. But it's best for catching smaller independent films that the world at large will never be privy to. That, and making out in the dark.



AS IF - (Weekly Party) \$0
The Drink, 459 Church St., facebook: Mojo Toronto

Jimmy who owns O'Grady's on Church has teamed up with Steve and Francis who both co-own Pitbull events and the Men's Room to bring the village a multifunctional second floor venue that operates as a coffee house during the day and a cool bar at night. Drinks are served in real glasses, go figure. Open seven days a week there is something different that will appeal to almost everyone each night from drag queens to leather lovers. Mojo Toronto take over the space every Friday night for As If, one of the zaniest nights in the village with weekly rotating themes (check out the Frankie & Ken Party on April 6, the Superstein Party on May 11) and DJs including Cajmere Wray and Recklezz. But it's Toronto's new gay It Boy, Frankie (aka Travis L'Henaff), acting as its sexy host that lures the thirsty boys up those steep stairs.

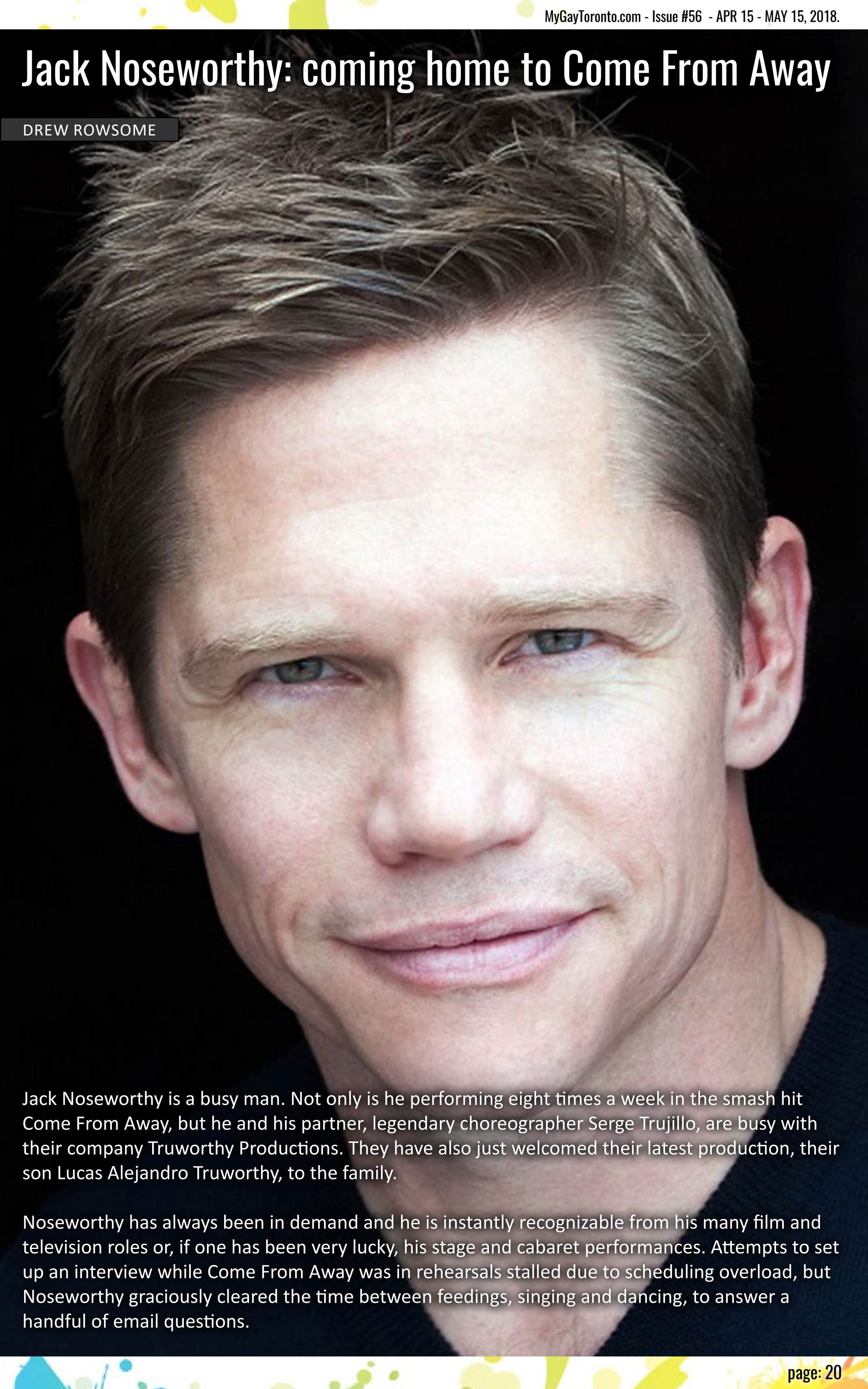


Crews & Tangos - (Bar & Club) \$0-10
508 Church St., www.crewsandtangos.com, 647-349-7469

Crews & Tango aims to be "the number one drag bar in the city." Shows occur nightly on the main floor stage starring queens from every generation including Michelle Ross, Ivory Towers and others, while dancing takes place on the second floor from Wednesdays on, and in The Zone on Saturday and Sunday nights. The large patio out back is great in the summer, but because of Toronto's smoking laws, smokers must trek back through the bar and out to the front sidewalk to satisfy their nicotine cravings. Since the end of March their Friday and Saturday cover charge has doubled to a surprising \$10. Lets hope they put some of that extra cash into repairing their bathrooms, which are the shitiest in the village.

Jack Noseworthy: coming home to Come From Away

DREW ROWSOME



Jack Noseworthy is a busy man. Not only is he performing eight times a week in the smash hit *Come From Away*, but he and his partner, legendary choreographer Serge Trujillo, are busy with their company Truworthy Productions. They have also just welcomed their latest production, their son Lucas Alejandro Truworthy, to the family.

Noseworthy has always been in demand and he is instantly recognizable from his many film and television roles or, if one has been very lucky, his stage and cabaret performances. Attempts to set up an interview while *Come From Away* was in rehearsals stalled due to scheduling overload, but Noseworthy graciously cleared the time between feedings, singing and dancing, to answer a handful of email questions.

Drew Rowsome: Now that you have a few months of shows under your belt, how is the Toronto reaction?

Jack Noseworthy: Simply amazing! The show was originally part of the Mirvish subscription series, and that core audience was the first to get access to the show. You could feel the excitement from folks who knew they were seeing something special. We've recently segued into group sales and single ticket buyers, who have been waiting a long time to see what all the excitement is about. They are not shy about showing their appreciation. The response they give us is like a rock concert!

Playing a version of a real life character, did you read his book Channel of Peace or talk to Kevin Tuerff?

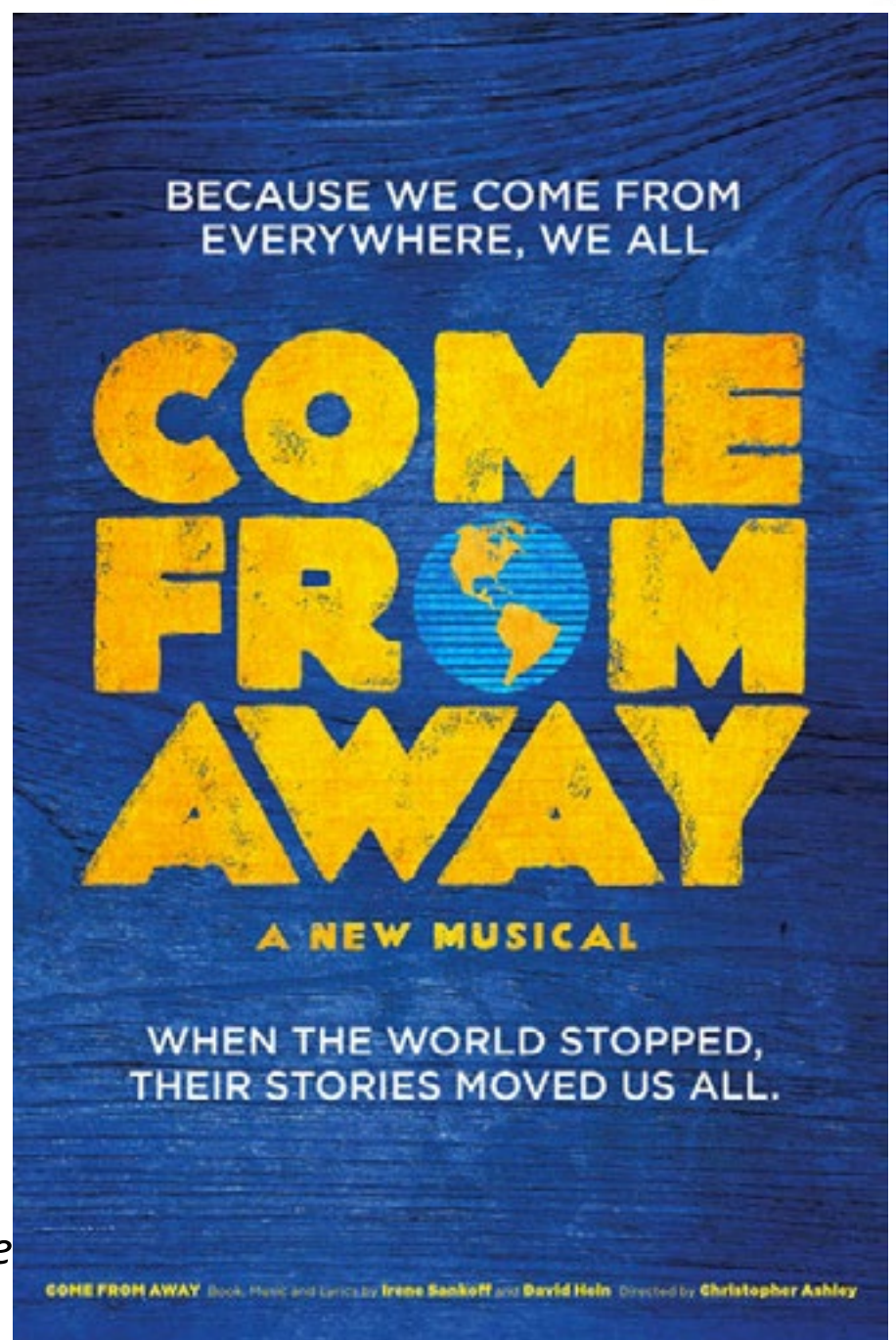
Kevin keeps telling me he will give me a signed copy. When he does . . . I will read it!

What is your favourite moment in the show?

In my song "Prayer" when the rabbi talks about not telling people he was Jewish, not even his wife, and how the events of 9/11 changed him. The experience he has, helps him face his truth and accept who he really is. It strikes a chord with me, and I'm sure anyone who has had to come out. My favourite song? "Somewhere In The Middle of Nowhere."

Though you were in Los Angeles when 9/11 happened, do you, as a New Yorker, feel extra pressure to present this story?

As a Canadian permanent resident living in Toronto and also as a New Yorker, I wouldn't say I feel "pressure." What I feel is a responsibility to be as authentic and honest as possible. The show is very entertaining and the audience feels incredibly fulfilled when they leave the theatre, but these are true events and real people. I want to show them respect.



As a gay man, how do you make Kevin T a character that appeals to a mainstream audience?

My being a gay man has very little to do with the character being appealing. The writers, David Hein and Irene Sankoff did all the work. They wrote a great character that the audience loves. I just have to stand in my light, say the lines and sing the songs. The audience loves Kevin T.

Is it important to make a gay character palatable to a mainstream audience?

One of the reasons I was attracted to the show is because it portrays a truthful example of a gay couple and their relationship. The show does not make excuses for them in any way. Having positive examples of gay people in the media is a vital way to help create tolerance and acceptance. I am thrilled to be a small part of that.

How did you achieve chemistry with your onstage partner Ali Momen?

You can't create chemistry. You either have it or you don't. And Ali and I have it.

How does this version improve on the Broadway version?

They are both exceptional!

Does Toronto feel more like home because of your relationship with Sergio Trujillo?

Without a doubt, having my husband and his family hail from this city has made Toronto feel like home for years. I love Toronto!





Does he give you choreography tips?

I have my BFA in dance and theatre from The Boston Conservatory. We give each other tips.

You've had a varied and extensive career with lots of celebrity contact, including playing opposite Meryl Streep in *Mother Courage*. Who in the cast of *Come From Away* is most Streepian?

Unga, the rare bonobo monkey.

One of your first, and longest-haired, roles was in the music video "Always" for Bon Jovi. Who in the cast of *Come From Away* rocks the hardest?

Anna Ludlow our fiddle player.

All of your grandparents were born and raised in Newfoundland. Has that heritage helped you in creating this role?

My family is on stage with me every night.

What do you hope that audiences take away with them after seeing *Come From Away*?

To never lose hope. Mankind is good.



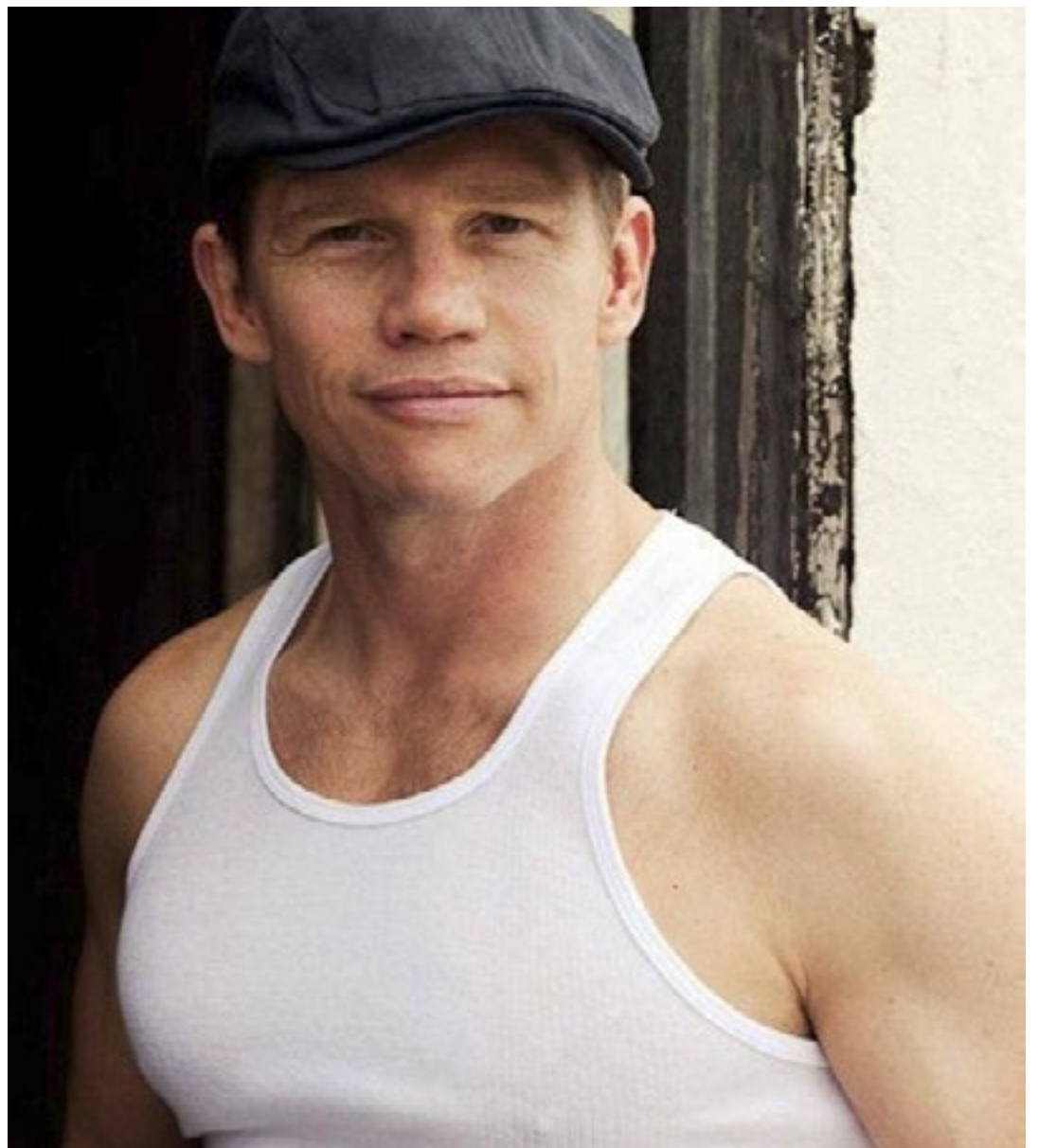


How does it feel to be entering what will undoubtedly be a long run?

It feels great. Being an actor for as long as long as I have, you experience a lot of ups and downs. Come From Away is definitely a high point in my career, and I've been around long enough to know you have to enjoy it while it lasts, because it will not last forever. How do you keep it fresh every night? I don't have to, every night there are 1,200 people in the audience who are experiencing the show mostly for the first time. That does it for me.

As a member of the leadership council of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS and having been very active raising funds would you like to express why this charity is so dear to your heart and how our readers can help?

I went to New York in 1987 at the height of the AIDS epidemic, to start rehearsals for the fourth national tour of Cats. I was in the original production of Jerome Robbins' Broadway in 1989 and was in the final cast of A Chorus Line on Broadway in 1990. I watched hundreds of friends and colleagues die of AIDS. Many of them under 30 years of age. BC/EFA has been there from the beginning, helping and educating hundreds of thousands of people over the years. As a gay man, I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me, and those we have lost to this terrible disease. Being part of the leadership council is my way of giving back.



Come From Away continues until at least Sun, Oct 21 at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, 260 King St W. mirvish.com

E V Zimora: half urban, half classy

PAUL BELLINI



Toronto artist, E V Zimora's debut EP, "Pieces Of Time" is a self produced, audio engineered and self written compilation. She prides herself in writing about her most personal stories, but they are normally depicted with a twist or a hidden underlying meaning.

E V Zimora is a pretty cool name. And yet I never even thought to ask her how she came up with it. That thought occurred to me immediately after hanging up from our phone interview. I almost called back, but then got distracted by the cat.

E V Zimora is a hot new recording artist with a sultry voice. She has released two projects, Fashionista and Pieces of Time, and she just launched her website, evzproduction.com. She just got back from a sudden but fruitful trip to New York City, where she was profiled on WBLS, a hip hop radio station. And in the spirit of full disclosure, E V Zimora is also my cousin.

We knew her as Alexandra when she was a kid, and she was always extraordinary, distinguishing herself as a championship baseball player and graduating from the aerospace engineering program at Ryerson before taking a left turn as a hip hop artist. "I've been writing for a very long time, since high school, and no one knew. Then in fourth year university, I applied for a music internship at an indie studio, just to get free studio time. I started learning how to produce."

But then fate intervened. "I wrecked my back, and had to get surgery on my spine. It took over a year to recover. I was working for Bombardier at the time, but they laid me off right after I returned from my disability leave. So I bought some monitors and a microphone and started recording in my room."

Though she does all the writing and a lot of the producing herself, she has also worked with Toronto producer Omito and has opened for rappers Cloud District twice. E V cites Britney Spears and Tupac Shakur as her two biggest inspirations, her for the vocal stylings and him for the lyrical prowess. She describes her look as "half urban, half classy" and she would be the perfect act for a Pride stage this summer. Still, E V acknowledges that the music business can be tough. "I'm going to take it as far as I can," she declares, but "I'm still trying to get like a 9 to 5 engineering job." No problem. E V can wear many hats, and they all look good on her.

Check out evzproduction.com for info, pix and tracks.

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BUDDIES IN BAD TIMES: CABARET

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HARDER
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TO BE A
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EVENT!”**

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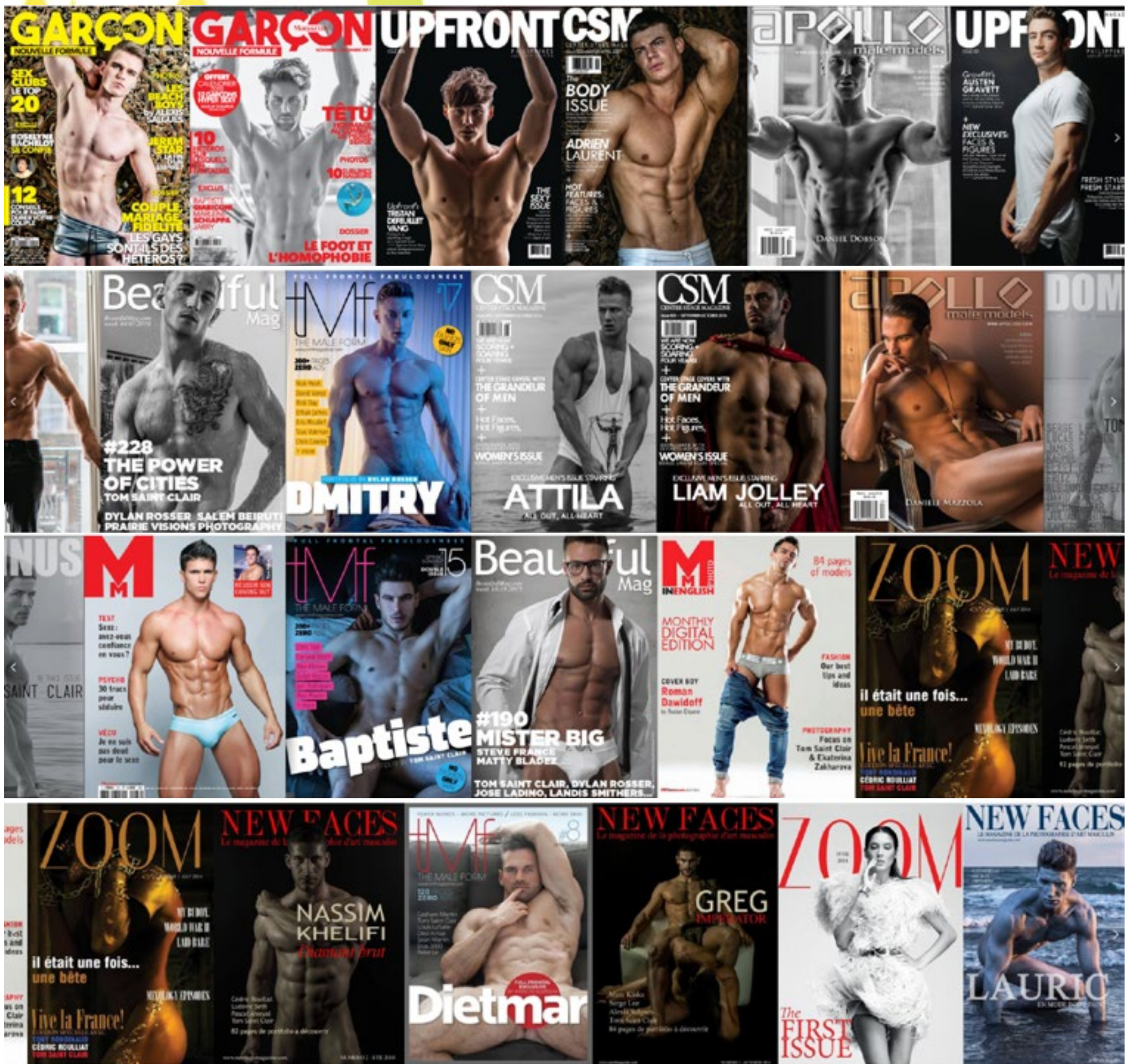
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IN BAD TIMES THEATRE NEXT DOOR

MGT COVER PHOTOGRAPHER PASSION FOR THE EROTIC

TOM SAINT CLAIR

DREW ROWSOME





"I started to shoot my first nude male models when I was 18," says MGT cover photographer Tom Saint Clair. "At the beginning and for many years, it was just for fun. But then my friends began to tell me that I was perhaps a little bit talented and my husband, who is also now my agent, encouraged me to do it professionally." Saint Clair's father was a professional photographer and "as far back as I can remember, I think he always inspired me. Of course we never had the same themes . . ."

Saint Clair has never lost his love of the art. "Photography is my passion and not my main job," he says. "I'm an attorney at law, so when I accept a shoot, even if it's a commercial one, it's because I like the project and the models. When I shoot a model I want to share with my followers my vision of masculinity which is a vision where the male model is strong and masculine but where you can also feel his weaknesses and breaks."

Being labelled a "Fitness & Celebrity Photographer" suits Saint Clair just fine. "Fitness models are easier to shoot because for them a good photograph of their body is a kind of reward," he says. "Furthermore most of the fitness models are comfortable with artistic nude shoots which are the main part of my work today. I'm mostly looking for the natural. I like to photograph a model that doesn't seem to pose. The model must be at ease with his body and nudity because he will spend three to four hours naked in front of my lens. A few years ago I was looking for a body more than a face. I have evolved and now I think my goal is more balanced."

Saint Clair also enjoys working with fashion models and he finds most models easy to work with. "In my career as a photographer, only two or three shoots have been difficult," he says. "The first two because the models were very uncomfortable with nudity and I preferred to just stop shooting after 15 minutes. And the last because the model was beautiful but stupid enough to eat hay. I did the questions and answers and felt like I was rowing in sand. We finished the shoot but I didn't try to work with him again." One model he will work with again is Attila Toth. "I think one of my best



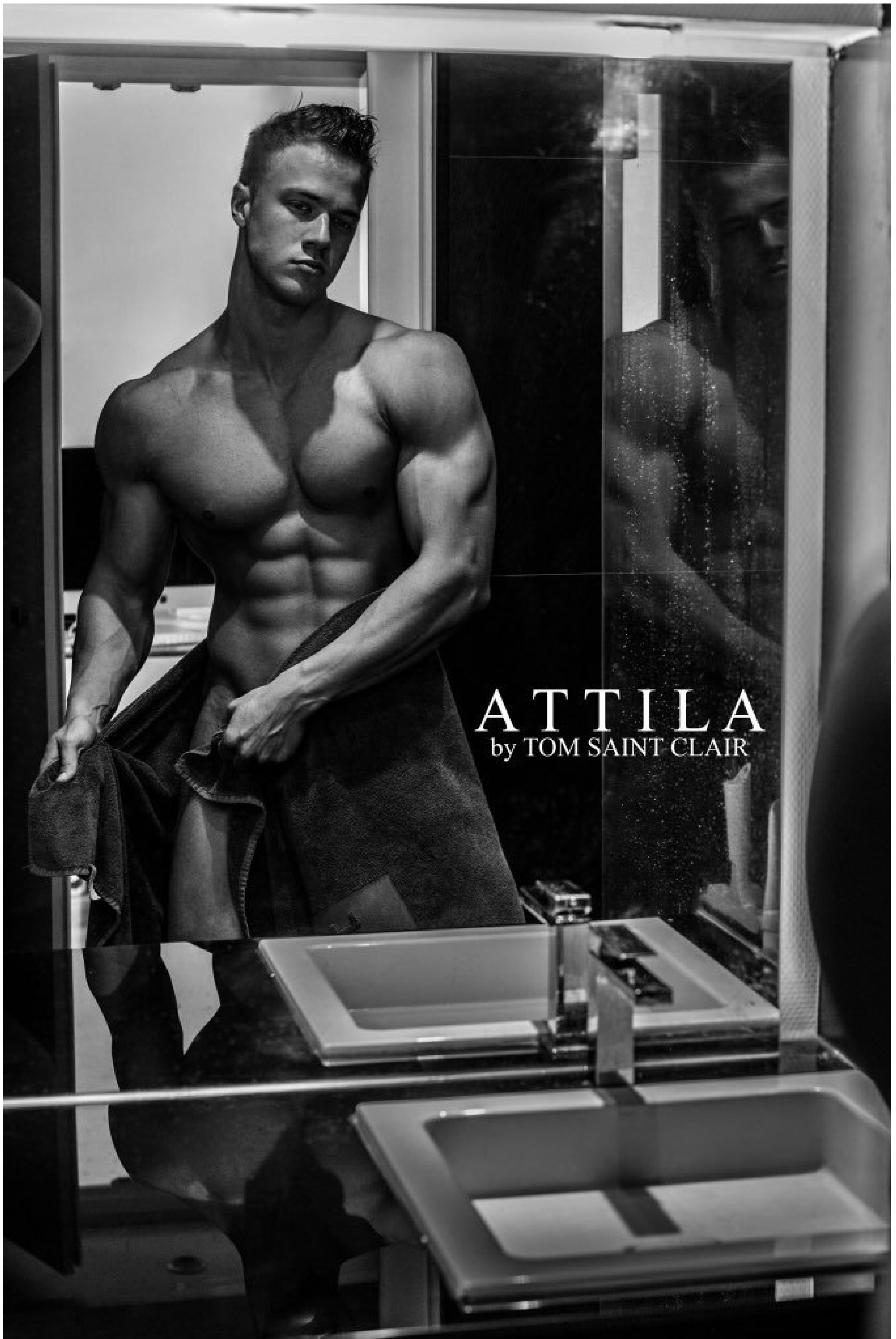
SAINTCLAIR
www.saintclair.com







One model he will work with again is Attila Toth. *"I think one of my best shoots was the one we did in Miami,"* says Saint Clair. *"Attila's a fitness model that I really admire and who has since become a friend. He is a remarkable professional and I am very proud to have worked with him."*



ATTILA
by TOM SAINT CLAIR





Capturing the beauty of the male body occasionally requires some preparation on the model's part. *"For abs, they usually warm up just before the shooting,"* says Saint Clair. *"As for intimate parts, for underwear shoots or when the model agrees to be published frontally nude, it depends on the size of their resting sex. Some are more advantaged than others. Those who are not the most advantaged I ask them to get a little more fit."*

Being able to communicate that request is part of Saint Clair's process. *"I think that a successful shoot where the model is nude requires a relationship of trust and empathy between the photographer and the model,"* he says. *"That's why I always want to meet the model and take the time to talk with him before a shoot to allow both of us to start without being strangers."*

But it is also advantageous for the model. *"Photographing a nude model is much more engaging for the model because he shares or offers a part of his intimacy. An underwear shoot, on the other hand, is quite common."*

While Saint Clair believes in nudity as valid artistic photographic subject, he is not sure that exposed penises are the definition of erotic. *"I don't think it is the fact of showing the sex of the model but rather the fact of photographing him in an atmosphere or a situation that will speak or challenge the person, man or woman, looking at the photo. It is the desire and willingness to see more."* And viewers can see more, Saint Clair notes that, *"On my website I do not publish erotic photos but only underwear photos, portraits as well as my various published work for fashion or fitness magazines. On the other hand on my OnlyFans site I publish the erotic photos I make with some of my models. They are essentially photos that remain artistic but where the customer subscriber can see the sex of the models who have agreed."*







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PHOTO TOM SAINT CLAIR



The OnlyFans concept is changing both the way photography and porn are distributed. *“OnlyFans modified the relationship of models with full frontal nudity,”* says Saint Clair. *“Before OnlyFans many models refused to have nude photos of themselves published. With OnlyFans they have realized that they can earn a lot, a lot of money by doing it - up to several tens of thousands of dollars per month. Personally I do not like pornographic content so I stick to publishing artistic and erotic nude photos. But I don’t judge those who go further.”*

Saint Clair compares OnlyFans to Twitter. *“It is a space of freedom without any censorship so we can find the best, as well as the worst. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between art, the erotic and pornography. because showing a woman’s vagina can be considered pornography but also art, as it is the case of Gustave Courbet’s painting ‘The Birth of the World.’”* The distinction is hard to make. *“Of course art is the opposite of pornography and yet sometimes a talented painter or photographer can telescope these two notions.”* It is a feat that Saint Clair manages frequently.

SAINT CLAIR
PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TOM ST CLAIR





TOMSAINTCLAIR

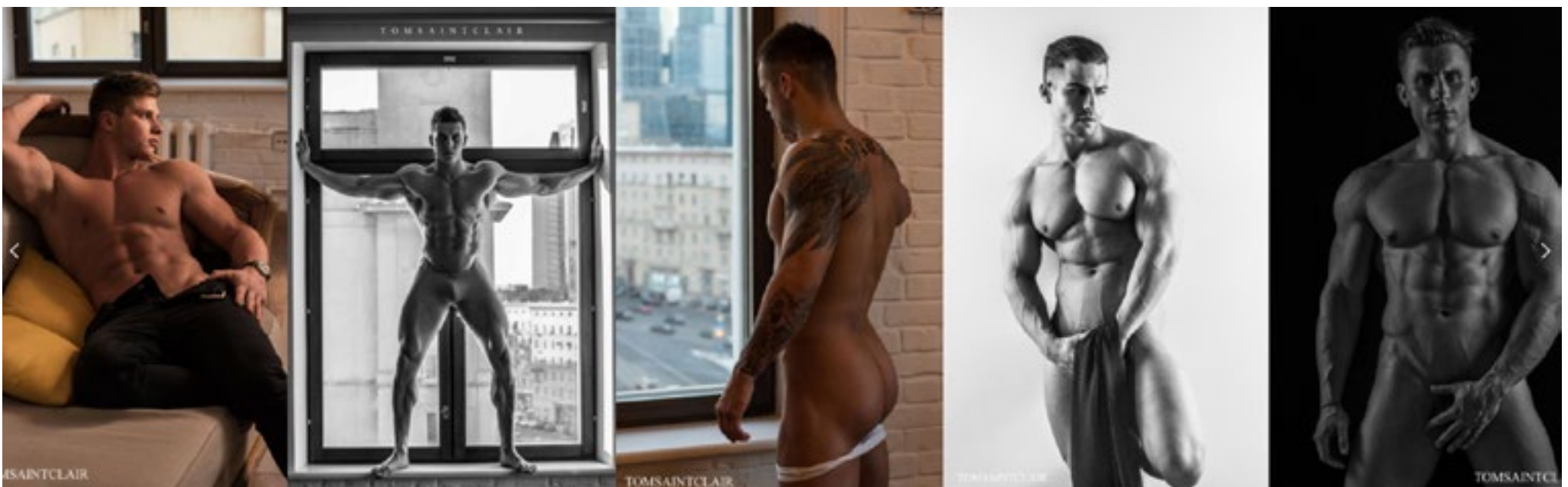


No all social media is as open-minded as Twitter. *"I am regularly censored by Facebook,"* says Saint Clair, *"and more rarely by Instagram. What is frustrating is that sometimes this censorship is totally unjustified but Facebook trusts its censorship algorithms more than human control. There is therefore no possibility of dialogue. Censoring a photo is an infringement on freedom of expression. I know that Facebook is a private company but, since it is in a monopoly situation, I think that it is the state which, in the last resort, should be able to judge whether a photo contravenes community standards. Now, for now, Facebook can sell information about your privacy, your sexuality, etc, etc, and arrogate to itself the right to decide what can be published or not. It's a form of digital dictatorship and Mark Zuckerberg's crocodile tears in front of the US Senate makes me laugh."*

Saint Clair also laughs when asked what his fantasy shoot would be. He is already shooting exactly what he wants to create artistically, so he has an intriguing answer. *"I would love to be 25 again and pose nude for Bruce Weber, Rick Day, Dylan Rosser or Tony Duran who are among the photographers I admire the most and who continue to inspire my work as a photographer."*

Saint Clair's calendar Full Frontal was a worldwide hit and now he is *"in discussion with a very large publishing house for the publication of two mirror books East Boys and Miami Lights. I don't know yet which one will be published first. But it'll probably go on sale for Christmas. In the meantime, photos already published from these books can obviously be purchased. Just contact me or visit my online shop."*

More of Tom Saint Clair's work can be seen at his website tomsaintclair.com and onlyfans.com/tomsaintclair
 Prints can be purchased at <http://menartgallery.bigcartel.com/>





TOMSAINTCLAIR



TOMSAINTCLAIR
photography



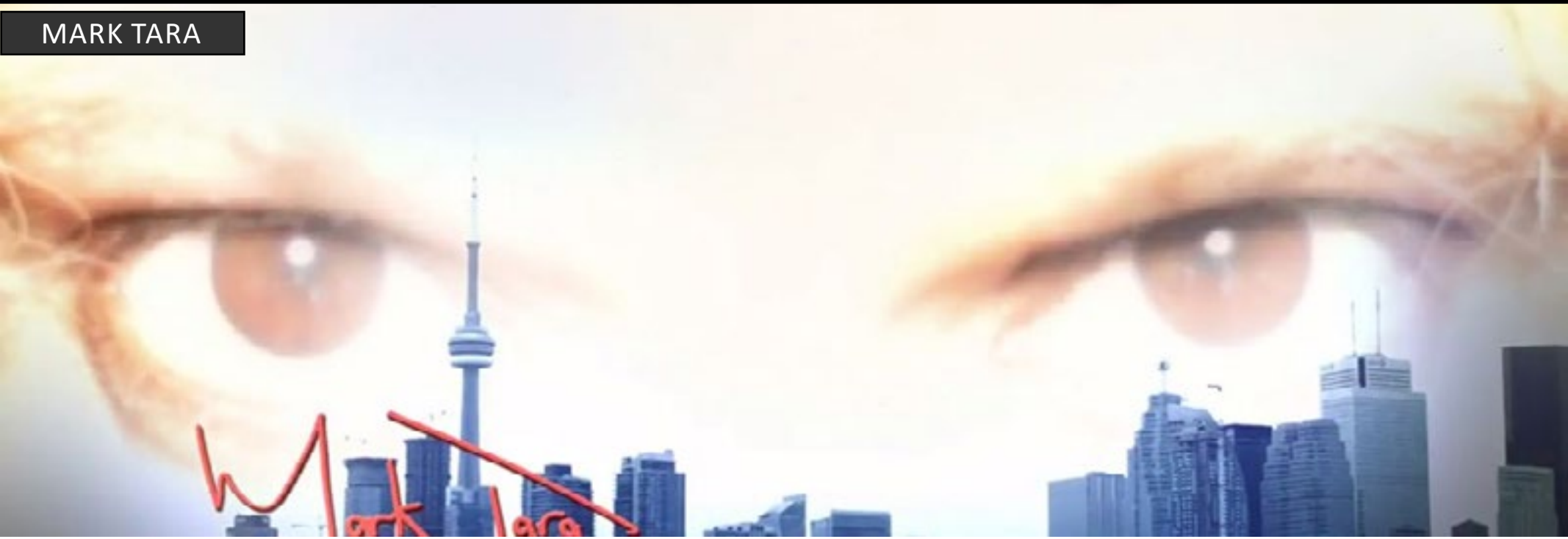
TOMSAINTCLAIR



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TOM SAINT CLAIR

Rainbow Country accepts the challenge

MARK TARA



Mark Tara, the host of Rainbow Country on CIUT 89.5FM, had the opportunity of a reality television lifetime when he participated in the Tomb Raider inspired "Power of Veto" challenge for Big Brother Canada. As the concept and creation of the challenges spring from the devious mind of comedian Trevor Boris, who is a co-executive producer of Big Brother Canada, the results were as hilarious as they were challenging. Tara will be trumpeting his Jolie-esque skills on the air and it will counterbalance a more serious and challenging interview with University of Toronto's Associate Professor of Sociology Dr Jooyoung Lee. The episode is entitled "Inside the Mind of a Serial Killer" and has particular relevance to our community at the moment. There is a direct link to that episode <http://bit.ly/MindOfaSerialKiller> and Rainbow Country airs at midnight on Tuesdays.



MARK TARA

RAINBOW COUNTRY

Tuesday's Midnight @ CIUT 89.5FM

AD Fetish Brings Summer Lovin' Into The Sex Dungeon



Ever since Olympic medallist and figure skater Adam Rippon showed up on the Oscars red carpet last month in an S&M inspired tuxedo that included a leather harness and bow tie, fetish has been everywhere! Now Addicted, the popular men's wear line, is luring guys even deeper into the forbidden subculture with AD Fetish, their edgy collection of kink wear. The collection features stylish tank tops, jock straps, harnesses, singlets, lingerie, leather items and even cock rings, finely and meticulously crafted by Addicted's superior artisan team. "Customers were craving a harder line of gear that re-imagined the Addicted brand for the S&M scene," explains founder Eduardo Suner. "Our AD Fetish collection blends fashion with erotica. It offers the same quality, fit and comfort found in our popular sports collection, but as the new summer campaign depicts, takes the fun into the dark, steamy depths of the sex dungeon."



RAYMOND HELKIO



Peterborough Police Services just announced a confidential community survey led by civilian member Peter Williams. While this may seem like a small step (and it is), but it's a public step, led by their police services, with the aim of improving relations and effective partnerships. Meanwhile in Toronto, our police chief is busy defending himself while the force's appointed LGBT liaison officer Danielle Botineau appears in countless photo ops, media releases and news interviews that all speak to "wanting" better relations but lacking anything remotely resembling an action. Having called and emailed her office over the past few years, I've never had a reply so all I can tell you about what they have done is from their website and as you'll see, the substance is missing. In the place of facts, stated goals or anything tangible that would suggest a dialogue is taking place you can find plenty of photos of smiling cops with community groups, but I fail to see why they need to take and post pictures of themselves doing their job. It's not the cops in the photos who are to blame, it's the police as an organization that has set it up this way when what's needed is to shift some of that bloated public relations budget into the community development side.

Every year when Pride is just on the horizon, the community finds itself in a battle over what Pride really means. It's reassuring to listen to my peers fight over who should be in the parade because it means people care. Without the controversy, it'd be nothing more than a party, and while I love a party, it's rare that lasting change will spring from a hangover.

Just like a Canadian winter, Pride is our annual chance to revisit what happened last year and kick things forward a little. And just like winter, we Torontonians will complain about it every year as if it's a new thing. Annually, the city flips out after the first snowfall immediately followed by, "Can you believe how cold it is?/There's a foot of snow, how will I get to work?/This winter is soooooo long!" Really people, it's Canada and it's like this every year so deal with it.

Enduring the snow is why we are so especially fond of warm summer days. The cold and the heat will continue year and after year, as will Pride. With each issue that raises its head, we have another chance to impact history and in the process become stronger as a community. Like winter, Pride will come and go this year and we can pretend the controversies are new but they never were. As Pride Toronto and the cops continue to wig-out over uniforms, the relationship suffers. We're going into our second year of public debate and yet everyone's talking, but has been little no action in that entire time. It's easy to paint each fiasco as if it's an anomaly, yet these are potential turning points, not just for our community, but for Toronto as a whole. We'll get there, but not until the question shifts from "Should cops be allowed to wear uniforms in our parade?" to "When can we sit down and talk?"

Are You 'Woke'?

SKY GILBERT



I came to understand the word “woke” the other day. It is, for me, a relatively new term. A young theatre person (a ‘millennial’) asked for some advice about a producer friend of mine. They wanted to hire her but they weren’t sure. They asked me: “Is she....woke?” Of course I didn’t know what they meant by “woke.” They responded: “Oh - woke -it just means, is she aware and informed about the latest trans issues?”

I am somewhat put off by the term ‘woke.’ It seems to to me to have an ‘evangelistic’ smell. It’s as if those who fully understand trans politics consider themselves ‘born again,’and have ‘found Jesus.’ It suggests to me that their thinking is not so much made up of ideas, but instead a shared belief system based on instinctual understanding and faith that is never to be questioned. I find this unsettling. But it is much more unsettling that the veteran producer they were asking about was eminently and publicly queer and outspoken in her activism. She is an older woman (over 50) who was on the front lines of queer politics in the 80s. She has performed as a drag king, and is working class. Why would anyone wonder whether she was ‘woke’? Evidently, it was simply because she was old.

Now I’m not suggesting that all the surviving aging queer activists from the 80s are perfect. I’m also not suggesting that older queers should never be questioned or challenged simply because they are old.

But why do young queer activists assume that older activists don’t know anything -- that they are not ‘woke?’

Could it be that present day millennial queer politics exists in a kind of vacuum? It’s evident to me that many millennial queers have not read Judith Butler or their Michel Foucault. But more importantly they know nothing of queer history. They don’t know for instance that the heroes at Stonewall were not ‘trans’ people -- the word ‘trans’ didn’t exist then -- instead, many of them were sex trade workers and drag queens. These millennials don’t know that hate speech, prejudice, access to washrooms, and issues about the relationship between gender and sexuality are not new. We have been fighting these battles for many, many years. But some millennials just don’t seem to realize that their politics has its foundation in the politics of earlier generations of queer radicals.

Is she‘woke’?

What a question.

She was awake and raging, baby, way before you were born.

My GayToronto

PHOTOS BY WADE GARDNER



Alan Hollinghurst's potent mix of literature, sex and gay history

DREW ROWSOME

The Sparsholt Affair

On my way to interview Alan Hollinghurst, I returned to my now well-worn copy of his new novel *The Sparsholt Affair*, and dipped randomly into different sections. Hollinghurst is a much-lauded author, the recipient of many awards, with his first book *The Swimming Pool Library* propelling gay literature into the mainstream. As well as being book that had a profound effect on me personally. As did *The Sparsholt Affair*, which is such a masterful piece of work that I was nervous about not being prepared enough to meet the author. Sampling turned into reading for the sheer joy of being immersed in such a well-constructed and gloriously written book. I was so immersed that I missed a subway connection and had to backtrack.

The Sparsholt Affair recounts the story of three generations of Sparsholts, but also provides an overview of a segment of gay life from the 1940s until today. The structure is unusual and highly addictive, with many events taking place off the page and each section focussing on a different character and different time. *"I feel I'm doing something different through the vehicle of the form of the book,"* says Hollinghurst. *"Taking it in unexpected directions with these strange gaps and jumps in the structure. To me the pleasure of the reader is the paramount thing. I want the reader to be seduced by each section of the book. Somewhat disconcerted when they're wrenched out of the story and then have to reorient themselves."*

At the heart of *The Sparsholt Affair* is a scandal, the titular "the Sparsholt affair." Though we never learn the gritty details, the scandal, taking place just before gay sex was legalized in Britain, appears to involve not only gay sex but also a threesome. The scandal reverberates throughout the book and affects all the characters,

all of whom have secrets of their own. *"The book charts the move from a time when secrecy and gayness were closely connected towards one where it's almost the opposite,"* says Hollinghurst. *"There's been a huge change in the concept of personal privacy. The exhibitionistic and probably narcissistic world of Instagram, putting pictures of their own sex life online for anyone to look at. It's an amazing reversal of the canvas of the world of the first part of the book."*



The first part of the book takes place at a British university during World War II. The bombing of England, the blitz, is underway, so there are blackouts and the characters are feeling what Hollinghurst describes as *"that tremendous aphrodisiac effect of being thrown together in the dark all the time. I'm sure there was an upturn in homosexual activity during that period. As there was in sexual activity in general. Partly because of the pressure of the imminent possibility of being killed. And that feeling of 'If I don't do it now, I might never do it.'"*

A small circle of friends make the acquaintance of, essentially stalk, a new student who is



physically a god and much desired. *"I loved writing the first part, it was easiest"* says Hollinghurst, and he has created a marvellous depiction of the simmering lust of a boy's school without ever slipping over into parody or porn. *"I started out being very explicit which then sort of seemed to be the point,"* says Hollinghurst. *"But as it went on, I wanted to do less and less. Partly because in life you don't really know what happens between other people and that itself is part of the point of the book. Jane Austen didn't have to have all sorts of cocks and tits and things. Of course by agitating the imagination of the reader you can get this sort of collaborative thing. That's one effect of leaving things out, you get them to fill in the gaps. You can have something with that charged erotic feeling without getting explicit. I think I'm more drawn that. And I didn't want to be mealy-mouthed about it. I've always thought that sexual behaviour was a distinct thing to describe. And difficult."*

While Hollinghurst is somewhat circumspect, the characters do have a lot of arousing sex, some furtive and some brazen. There are recurring vivid descriptions of nipples and of how tactile the feel of skin is. *"Well I've read some bad porn,"* says Hollinghurst laughing. *"It has a different purpose. I just write about sex as another part of human interaction, of character, of conventions. I always thought it was worthy of detailed description, I haven't lost that feeling. Nonetheless, I seem to be closing the bedroom door more often. Describing the evolving life of the characters doesn't necessarily mean describing an explicit sex scene. Sex which goes wrong or doesn't quite happen is interesting and revealing. And more realistic. There is this pornographic tendency of idealizing which is actually kind of boring."*

The themes of darkness and secrecy continue as characters move forward through time and more lusts smoulder and eventually are either satiated or denied. To give away more of the plot would be to destroy the excitement of discovery, of solving the puzzles of just who characters are and how they fit into the narrative. *"It would be very boring if you knew everything about a book before you started it,"* says Hollinghurst. *"The rewarding thing for me is to discover as you read. Ideally you wouldn't have a blurb at all. So much of the effect of the book depends on surprises."* The surprises in *The Sparsholt Affair* do create a most addictive structure which parallels the echoing themes and the relentless sense of time moving forward. Visits to a 1940's pub contrast with the discovery of a '70s gay bar and eventually a contemporary sex and drugs-soaked nightclub.



"The excitement of going to an underground place to be together, I think that's nice," says Hollinghurst. *"There's something special about any gay space. Pre-1967 it was done in a furtive way, the places couldn't declare themselves. You had to find it. There's still a thrill, it's still a big step. You're declaring who you are and where you're going."*



Hollinghurst compares it to the big-windowed spaces open to the street that many gay bars have evolved into and wonders if we've lost "the black door. Though there still are lots of black doors, perhaps people prefer it. The mystique of the gay space."

Talking with Hollinghurst and then re-reading *The Sparsholt Affair*, I affirm just how intricate and clever the novel is. A character declaring that *"We'll have to have the lights off"* in order to complete their liaison, echoes when a highly visual character is frustrated to have sex in complete darkness. Moments that only registered subliminally on my first read. *"I do plan in some detail when I'm first thinking up a book,"* says Hollinghurst. *"I really just collect masses and masses of details which then have to be systemized into something. I don't start writing until I have a sense of the whole thing. The early parts required a lot of detail for the significant events. There are recurring motifs. You hope that the organic imaginative life of the book prompts you with these little connections. Ideally the reader will read it twice to appreciate all the things that are signalled yet don't appear all that significant when they happen."*

With any story wherein a character's time frame parallels that of the author, it is hard not to make autobiographical assumptions. *"It's hard to say how much of myself I'm putting in,"* says Hollinghurst. *"A certain amount. One is always drawing on memory when writing. Certainly the people, particularly gay people coming from*

the provinces to London to be in the place where you can lose yourself and hope to find yourself. That trajectory is very familiar." However he points out that main character in the book has a distinct difference: he is dyslexic. Hollinghurst says he did that deliberately as many of his previous characters have been *"bookish."*

The very title of Hollinghurst's first success, *The Swimming Pool Library*, is a three-tiered *"bookish"* metaphor. *"You can never recapture the experience of your first book,"* says Hollinghurst. *"I had a full-time job at the time and I got home in the evenings and the weekends and nobody knew anything about it. I did have a feeling that I had a really good idea. It was impossible to predict how it would be received, and there was a lot of nervousness around it at the time. It was impossible to sell the paperback rights before publication. No-one would touch it. I couldn't get an agent because I had nothing yet to sell. That made me very nervous about its prospects. But then it became a bestseller and I had paperback publishers jostling to get the book. I was able to sell the rights for vastly more after."*





When I relate how much *The Swimming Pool Library* meant to me when it came out, Hollinghurst is modest. *"I guess it was a turning point,"* he says. *"You have a large general readership reading a book about a gay life from a gay point of view. It was almost exactly 30 years ago and it was a very different world from the one into which this one is emerging."* Though Hollinghurst admits he did consciously create a specifically gay novel aimed at the mainstream. *"I thought it could change, it could happen in a new way,"* he says before referencing an influence of a few years earlier. *"I think Edmund White's *A Boy's Own Story* is quite important. It made quite an effect on me. It just wasn't like those coded bummed-up British things, but it was, in my experience, unprecedentedly frank about what the actual experience was. beautifully written, almost too beautifully.*

And that suggested new possibilities to me. These experiences that had never been written about before in English."

The Sparsholt Affair is an anomaly, a highly literary book that is as absorbing as a beach read. In many ways it is a mystery novel, the solution of which the author guides the reader through but never quite solves. *"Literary fiction is rarely going to sell a whole lot unless you win a big prize or something,"* says Hollinghurst, adding that neither does gay fiction. I point out that gay fiction usually has the advantage of a bare-chested man on the cover to lure the reader to enter within. Hollinghurst considers the rather austere cover of *The Sparsholt Affair* and admits, *"We thought about that but in the end decided not to."*





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BIL ANONIOU

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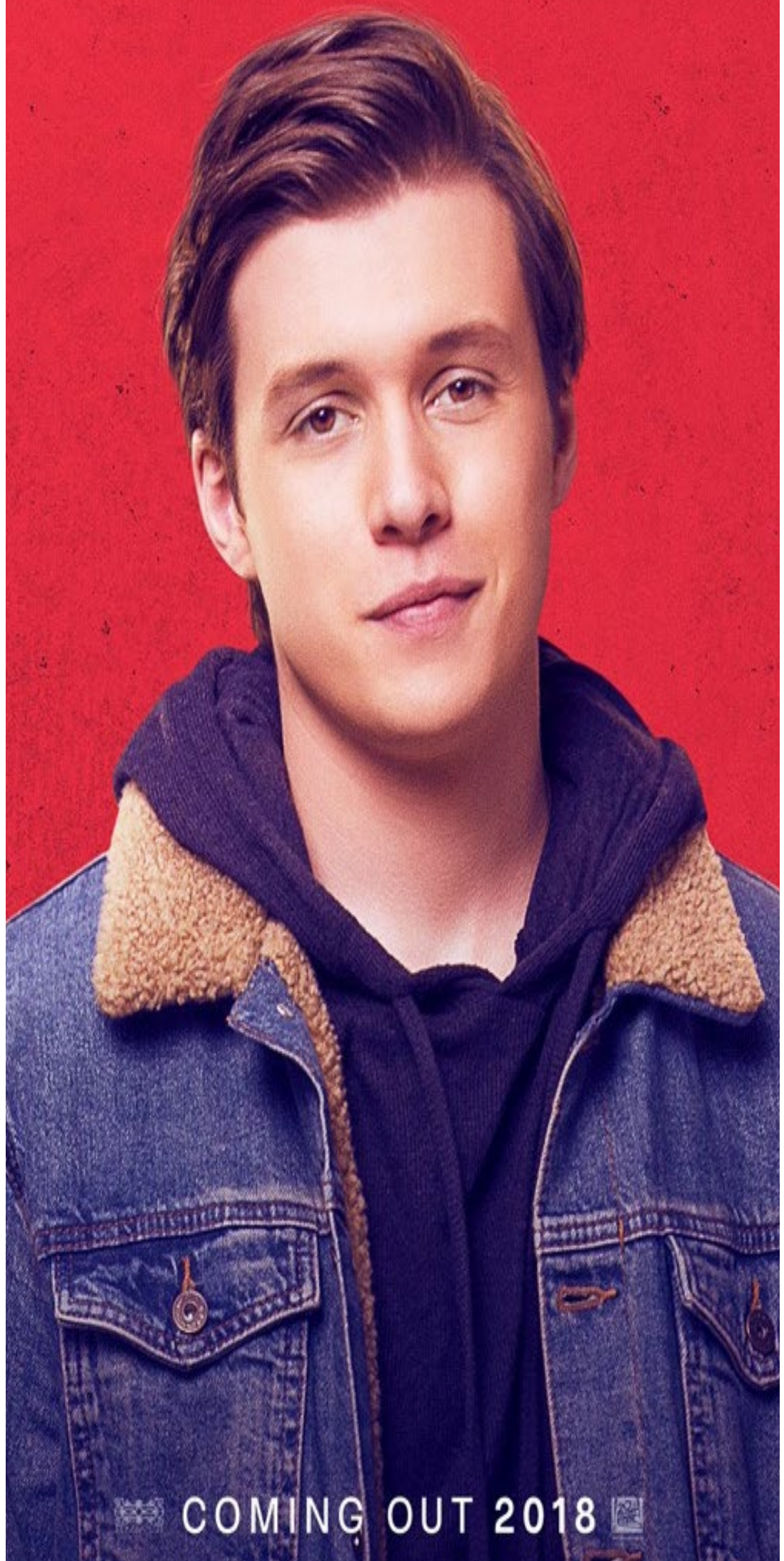
Nick Robinson is wonderful as the teenager of the title, outwardly the very picture of east-coast upper-middle-class standards but inwardly dealing with a very big struggle: he's gay, and while he does not seem to have any internal conflict about it, he feels that telling his family and friends will upset a stable ecosystem of which he is a thriving part.

An online posting board that his local peer group contributes to is all the rage at school, full of plenty of gossip and no shortage of faux-Hedda Hopper blind items, and on one particular occasion Simon's eye is caught by an anonymous confession: a young man posts on the forum that he is gay and is scared to come out. Still unable to talk to the world about who he is and how he feels, Simon instead begins an epistolary relationship with this stranger and, through their communication, they each find themselves developing strength and support (not to mention their own little community) from the experiences they share. Simon looks forward to every message while trying to figure out who this anonymous person is through cringeworthy experiences that can only make the viewer love him more, his quest for what he hopes will be a great romance threatened when when his emails are discovered by a social outcast from the drama department, who blackmails Simon to advance his own goals.

Sharply written and delicately directed, this gentle film is a lovely tribute to the spirit of young people and benefits from a terrific cast and a rich sense of humour. Robinson never overplays the character's isolation, his woes are wholly sympathetic and are made that much more endearing by his closest friends and the spontaneity with which their scenes are performed, while Jennifer Garner and Josh Duhamel add no small amount of charm as his affectionate and boisterous parents. The story avoids cheap melodrama by giving Simon no obvious, external motivation for his fears, he doesn't have homophobic parents or live in a conservative, religious town, he actually has no reason to be afraid and yet he is; as his mother tells him in a very lovely scene, there are things about his coming to terms with himself that he must go through alone, and the sensitivity with which this is treated might be the most touching aspect of the film. The dark misery of *Beach Rats* and the romantic fatalism of *Call Me By Your Name* are necessary, but seeing the clean, suburban world of Y.A. fiction being given a queer spin is surprisingly very satisfying, more than making up for its being set in the same false (aspirational, let's say) idea of small town living that hasn't changed since the days of *Andy Hardy*.

LOVE, SIMON

HE'S DONE KEEPING HIS STORY STRAIGHT.



DREW ROWSOME ✖✖✖✖✖

April 15-24, 2018

Mr. TruthCREATED AND PERFORMED BY
LAUREN GILLIS AND ALAINE HUTTONPart of the **RISER Project**

There is a repeated - escalating in hilarity each time - moment in Mr Truth, when a character makes a blanket statement the “everyone” enjoys a specified kink or fetish. The other character denies vehemently that “that” is part of her sexual repertoire. And then her eyes dart to the predilection in question, indicating that she has at least considered it. And if not previously considered, is at that moment intrigued.

The riff surfaced in my mind, and I chuckled, as I was about to write this opening sentence of this review: “All of us have kinks or fetishes that are as benign or as bizarre as they are often denied.” A blanket statement. But one that is as accurate as Mr Truth’s mission statement:

Whenever you tell yourself “I DO NOT FIND THIS EROTIC” and a little snag churns your gut and whispers that you’re in denial, Mr Truth is with you.

Mr Truth - from the moment Alaine Hutton bounds on stage with boundless deliberately awkward energy and plans to rev up the audience -is an uneasy combination of sketch comedy and performance art. The serious ideas and the set piece laughs are meant to rub against each other, create a friction that accentuates the other. At times it works brilliantly, at others it is a leap too fresh and unfamiliar to be made easily. The comic segments explore benign and bizarre kinks and fetishes: nasal penetration, diapers, suburban bliss, furniture impersonation, tentacles, and “mindful fingering” (aka “muffing”). There is also a singing cervix and some satirical nightclub dancing.

These are interspersed with a podcast wherein a man describes his descent into an obsessive kink, a rape/abduction fantasy that is blurring the lines between consensual and non-consensual. It begins comical and thoughtful, gets very dark, and then becomes a very twisted punchline. As well there is a hooded phallic figure with a vaginal face, who glides through the proceedings, full of comic menace. The creators of Mr Truth are juggling a lot of dangerously explosive concepts and they almost pull it into a powerful whole.



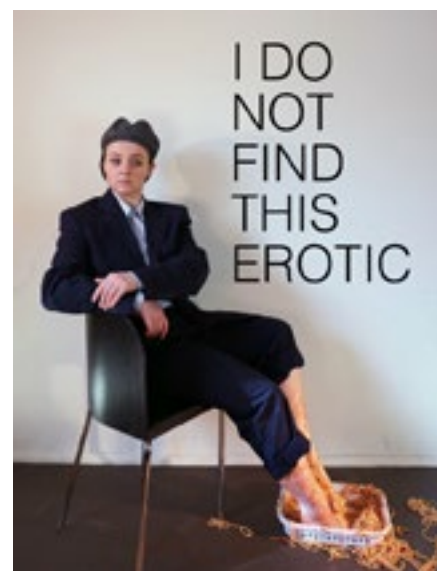
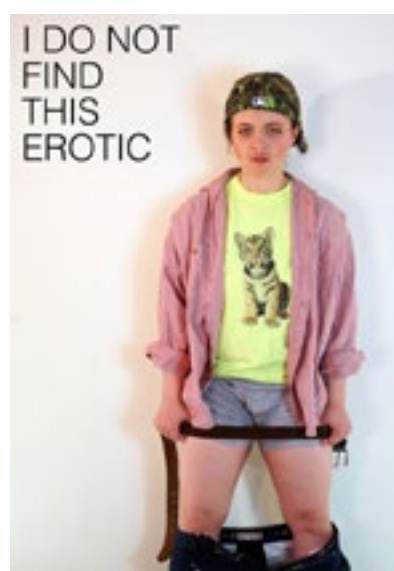
But that is the impetus behind The Riser Project of which Mr Truth is the opening production, to give a theatrically innovative show a full production. The creators and performers, Lauren Gillis (The Marquise of O, All's Well That Ends Well) and Hutton, are Lester Trips (Theatre) a company that "devises a bouffonesque approach to character deliberately maddening dramaturgy, and a physical foundation stemming from training in butoh-based embodiment." The Riser Project is the perfect place to expand the Mr Truth project, refine it and present it to an audience. While Mr Truth may not be fully formed or even completely coherent, it has a quirky, kinky heart that is beating to be expressed and experienced.



Both Hutton and Gillis are gifted clowns, switching characters with either full costume changes or the simple adoption of an attitude, posture or placement of a baseball cap or wig. Occasionally they break the fourth wall for a quick laugh that breaks the flow, but emphasizes the gender politics. The gloriously crisp and evocative video projections by Peter Demas showcase Hutton and Gillis in another medium at which they are as adept. Both are billed as "Co-Writer/Deviser" as well as performers but there is not a director credited, just two "outside eye"s: Justin Miller (Pearle Harbour's Chautauqua) and Ted Witzel (The Marquise of O, All's Well That Ends Well, La Ronde), both brilliant artists with their own quirks and kinks.

As a conceptual framework, quirky and kinky works well, and a strong theatrical restructuring might erase some of the charm. Or it might get the point across more effectively and enhance both the comedy and the horror. The Riser Project productions are quite likely to re-surface and grow into more mainstream and/or critical hits. It will be intriguing to see how Mr Truth mutates and just how nasty and kinky Lester Trips can get.

Mr Truth continues until Tues, April 24 and The Riser Project continues until Sat, May 12 with Tell Me What It's Called, speaking of sneaking and Everything I Couldn't Tell You at The Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St W. riserproject.org, theatrecentre.org



DREW ROWSOME ★★☆☆



Filmmaker Arshad Khan lives in the intersection of several contemporary hot button issues. So much so that his biographical film *Abu*, almost requires an update before each screening. The cultural landscape is changing that quickly. Changing while remaining tragically the same.

Khan is gay, Muslim, Pakistani-Canadian and a #MeToo survivor. While the documentary is titled *Abu*, the Urdu word for father, the film is about Khan and his struggle to feel at home in the world. *Abu* traces his disconnect all the way back to well before his birth, when the partition of India and Pakistan first uprooted his father. It was only the first of many.

Fortunately for *Abu*, Khan's father acquired one of the first VHS recorders in Pakistan and Khan's life, from childhood, is extensively documented. Much of the footage is intimate and, as Khan says in the narration, fraudulent: home movies only show the facade, only the happy times. And the happy times do look wonderful, family outings, dancing to vibrant pop music both western and eastern, catching the casual affection that exists between siblings and between children and parents.



The nostalgic sweetness doesn't last. Khan's deadpan but hypnotic narration has provided a counterpoint to the family footage, and to his mounting despair and confusion. The edits become punctuation. The film zeroes in on pointed moments - Khan and his brother being forced to kiss their father during his birthday party (birthday cakes are used as a potent creepy metaphor), his sister's fleetingly surfacing unease during her wedding festivities, a piercing glance of despair and anger from his mother when Khan is visibly fey - to show just how fractured the family really is.

It is the accumulation of details that overwhelm in the same way that life seems to have overwhelmed Khan. A jump cut from Pakistan greenery to Mississauga drabness shows visually how drastic the difference is. The realization that the events of 9/11 and his Pakistani passport are going to disrupt his career as a flight attendant and his entire existence. Finally daring to dance jubilantly on a Pride parade float while his voiceover intones, "But all the world's prejudices show up in the gay world. Your race, your weight, your dick, all have to measure up."

Khan never loses empathy for his father, even when the man becomes fundamentalist and in direct conflict with Khan's inner core. This lack of drama - the family is as repressed as the WASPs who inhabit EM Forster's *Maurice*, a book an insightful high school librarian suggests to Khan - doesn't flatten the film as much as it heightens the tragedy. When the evil and horror that only a family can produce is treated by all, and by the film, in such a matter of fact manner, it is truly insidious and suffocating.





Khan does have the insight to realize that he and his father are on parallel courses - the father finding family in the army, Khan in activism and the gay community - and that is visualized through animated dream sequences that link the two's psyches. There is also an animated sequence, a glorious one, when the 14-year-old Khan falls in love with a youth named Elvis and the love is returned. It is as if, as in the technicolour fantasy Bollywood clips and the equally technicolour fantasy '80s music videos interspersed, heightened emotions or real emotions can only be expressed at a distance through art. Or through a documentary.

We never get to directly see the central conflict suggested by the title, but we explicitly see another tragedy. Khan describes himself as a child as "a momma's boy." We see his mother as a glamorous fun-loving woman in a restrictive marriage. She blossoms after immigrating, but it is squelched when the father's adoption of hardcore religion infects her as well. The colourful clothing and smile are replaced by a monochromatic head scarf and pursed lips, the love for her son with confusion. There is footage of the truly heinous Dr Farhat Hashmi, a lifesucking televangelist, that contrasts with the father's jubilant encounter with a poet/musician, trading rhymes and riffs instead of prohibitions.

And of course the father is filmed on his deathbed, where it is impossible not to sympathize and relate to the reconciliation. The mother has to settle for being interviewed on camera, growing visibly more uncomfortable and prickly. When his mother expresses her desire for Khan to get married, he protests that he has a boyfriend. She replies, "I totally didn't hear that." She missed one step in the father's journey from liberal to reactionary to accommodating.

There are so many little stories, so many unsolved mysteries (the mother has an intense one), so many characters, that Abu feels like many dangling threads failing to be resolved. But that is what life is like, that is what Khan's life is apparently like: no catharsis, just a continual struggle to understand, live, love and forgive. Home is not guaranteed and even chosen family can prove difficult, but Khan's unique intensely personal journey, full of intersections, intersects with all of us. We all have either had to come out, deal with religious tyranny, felt like an outsider, and/or had a rocky moments in relationships with parents. As Abu attempts to untangle the threads, we get to reflect on ours. And wish for more animated sequences and for actual change.

Abu opens at the Yonge-Dundas Cineplex on Friday, April 13. abumovie.com



Category E: a dystopian future where humans are lapins

DREW ROWSOME

★★★★

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CATEGORY E

BELINDA CORNISH

APR 11–29, 2018

PREVIEWS: APR 8 & 10

www.coalminetheatre.com


The Coal Mine Theatre is an intimate space, deep and narrow. When a cage is set in the middle, with the seats on either side, it becomes almost claustrophobic. The perfect setting for what is billed as a “horror-comedy.” The tension of what the wire mesh will protect us from, it feels very WWE cage match, dissipates as the audience realizes that the fencing is for us to peer through, to watch those who are trapped within.

The stage/cage contains two cots and has a clinical feel, whitewash over brick and harsh fluorescent lights. Corcoran (Robert Perschini) is in a wheelchair, picking at what appears to be a scab under an eye patch while doing a cryptic crossword puzzle that we learn is 17-years-old. Newspapers are apparently long extinct in this dystopian future. His cellmate is Diana Bentley as Filigree who is considerably paler, erratic and twitching with violence. Enter Vivien Endicott-Douglas (The Circle) as Millet, a new roommate.

And of course, remember that there are only two cots.



Belinda Cornish's Category E pulls its plot from several Star Trek and other sci fi classics (there is an explicit Logan's Run reference), where a disparate group are held captive and mysteriously experimented upon. The difference here is that the characters seem to understand and accept their situation, while the horrified audience has to puzzle it out. The clues are cleverly revealed and remain evasive enough to create tension though the climax is telegraphed very early on. There are also a series of metaphors - carrots, quotes from Alice in Wonderland - that suggest, with little subtlety, that the characters are less WWE and more WWF or PETA stand-ins.

Be warned that the small amount of comedy is very dark and the horror is front and centre. We never see the experiments, but we do see graphic evidence of the results. The voiceovers, ads for various beauty and dubious health products, for scene changes are comical but, and here is the true horror, too close to contemporary commercials to register as cutting-edge satire. Bentley does deliver some fine physical comedy as she leaps from her bed to scratch her butt against the wall. Even better, the laughs come back to haunt when we find out - in the best reveal and line of Category E - why she itches.

Bentley is quicksilver at moving convincingly from passive observer to manic aggressor, and her character's secret is a very disturbing one that makes Bentley's performance all the more remarkable. Endicott-Douglas has heavy lifting to do in making a shallow and annoying character someone to root for. She has a subtle way of adding small physical details to contradict her words and creating a well-rounded but contradictory Millet. Director Rae Ellen Bodie (The Picture of Happiness) emphasizes the realism of the setting with concrete props, convincing gore, and a minimal emphasis on the science fiction elements. The concept appears to be unleashing great grounded performances upon a negligible play.



Persichini is a solid and intriguing presence throughout, and delivers a transcendent moment when he unleashes his theatrical baritone to tell a story. It is spine-tingling. And heartbreaking when it is echoed later in the play. His plot twist is downplayed instead of being a big reveal which adds to the cryptic, pun intended, quality of Corcoran. And it is fascinating to watch how physical a performance Persichini can conjure while confined to a wheelchair in a small, enclosed space.

Corcoran not only tells off-the-cuff stories, but he is suspiciously well-read and educated. He and Millett discuss literature and mathematics in laboured metaphors and when they debate Finnegans Wake, Filigree screams, "What's the story?" Of course Finnegans Wake is deliberately obtuse and intentionally devoid of plot, Corcoran, like many, wasn't even able to finish reading it. Cornish has carefully given herself a valid excuse against Category E-naysayers. If only the text had had the conviction and skill of the team at the Coal Mine, an excuse wouldn't have been needed.

Category E continues until Sun, April 29 at the Coal Mine Theatre, 1454 Danforth Ave.
coalminetheatre.com

social media - Tidbits

Attitude Magazine
3 hrs · 🌐

American Horror Story just out gayed itself.



Dame Joan Collins joins 'American Horror Story' season eight

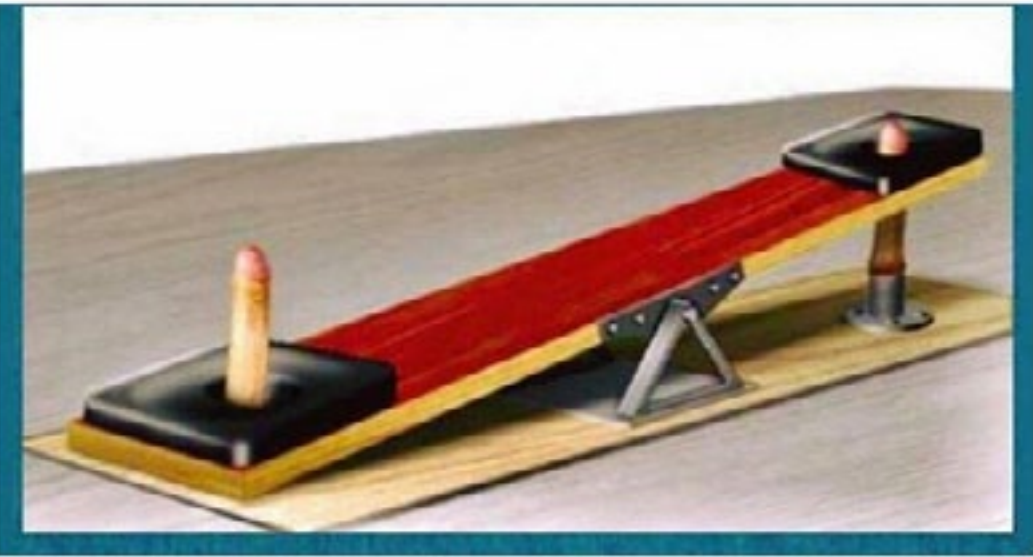
The 'Dynasty' star will join Kathy Bates and Sarah Paulson in the upcoming instalment.

ATTITUDE.CO.UK

Me: My resolution is to eat more protein
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Paul Johnson ▶ Bears, Chubs, and Dads. Oh my!
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JUNE 2018

we're funny that wayTM foundation



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Thanks to the support of our sponsors and festival goers we were able to donate \$30,000 to help open Toby's Place – the first ever LGBTQ drop in centre in Scarborough Ontario. Thank you everyone!

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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



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



Mark Tara radio host 'Rainbow Country' CIUT 85.9 FM and personality. marktara.com



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



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