

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE

MGT

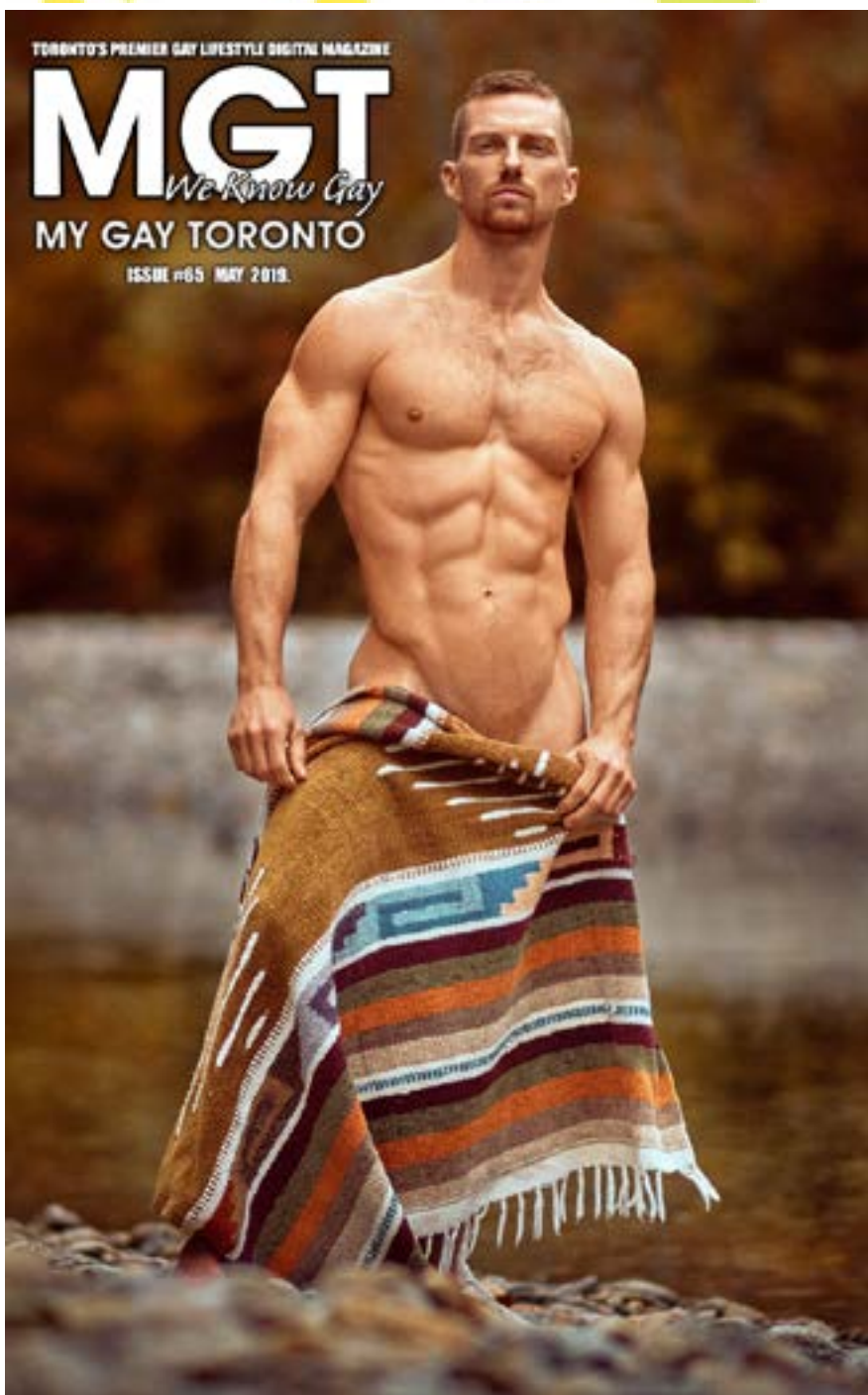
We Know Gay

MY GAY TORONTO

ISSUE #65 MAY 2019.



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SKY GILBERT

BIL ANTONIOU

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PAUL BELLINI

Bellini is gold



Last week marked the Return of the Gold Suit.

The Gold Suit was made for me by Gina Anki of Theatrix Costume Shop in Toronto. It is made of gold lame with silver glitter lapels. I have the pants, too, but I usually just wear the jacket. Twice last week I found occasion to show off this eye-catching piece of wardrobe, modelled after Elvis Presley's legendary gold suit. Please note that I am not trying to impersonate Elvis. I am simply channelling his impeccable good taste in clothes.

The first was the Canadian Screen Awards, which is Canada's Oscars and Emmys shmushed into

one big fuckfest. The Kids in the Hall were being honoured with the Academy Icon Award, and Scott Thompson asked me to be his date. It was fun, following Scott and the rest of the Kids on the red carpet. We did about five interviews with the likes of ET Canada, CBC and other entertainment news organisms. Everyone asked the same shitty questions, like "What's it like to be honoured?" and "What's so special about Canadian comedy?" Nobody cares about the answers, trust me. The biggest laugh was when Thompson backed up abruptly and knocked the ET host flat on her ass, her high heels reaching for the sky. I felt sorry for the poor girl, who laughed and camped it up for the camera, but she no doubt woke the next morning to massive bruises on her ass. You just can't take Thompson anywhere.



Always the kidders, the Kids pretended to be asleep in their chairs while Will & Grace star Erik McCormick inducted them into the Academy. Then they did a bit in which missing member Mark McKinney was replaced with an old lady in a wheelchair. Lots of kidding ensued, but then David Foley teared up on stage recounting the passing of Kids make-up artist Gerilyn Wraith and hair designer Judy Cooper-Sealy, who both died in the past year. Those two women created the look of almost every Kids in the Hall character. They are legends. Afterwards, we hit the dance floor. I danced with Jean Yoon of Kim's Convenience and flirted with mega-hunk Franco Lo Presti of Bad Blood. And of course, throughout the evening, people kept complimenting, and coveting, the gold jacket.

Four nights later, I was a guest for the fifth season premiere of On the Couch, a Rogers cable talk show focusing on Toronto's LGBT+ community. The guests were Jade Elektra, Robyn DeCradle, Jordan Alexander, Belle Jumelles and myself. Once again, the gold jacket worked its magic, inviting compliments and awe from new friends like filmmaker Kate Johnston and her friend Linda Manzer. I was asked if I had any memories of doing The Kids in the Hall show back in the '90s, so I told him about the time I played Napoleon in a sketch that we shot on location in a public park. As I exited the make-up trailer, a bus containing brats passed by and one yelled out the window, "Hey, look, its Hitler!"

Finally, when it was all over, I went home and took off the gold suit, hanging it in the closet for the next big event looming in my future. As I proved twice in one week, when you want to be the centre of attention, and shine like a bauble, wear a gold suit. Nothing else will do.



RAYMOND HELKIO

Queer Ontario: Celebrating Queer Liberation



Queer Ontario is hosting a film screening and premiere of *QueerEdge: From Gay to Queer Liberation* directed by Dr. Nick Mulé as part of their 10th Anniversary celebration.

“Over its first decade, Queer Ontario has spent much of its time and resources in addressing concerns within the LGBTQ communities as with mainstream society,” director and founder of Queer Ontario Dr. Nick Mulé said.

The film interviews over 30 academics, activists, and artists who provide in-depth insights on their queer liberation sensibilities, contributing to a critical socio-political analysis of gender and sexual politics. Linking back to the principles of gay liberation in the Stonewall era to today’s queer liberation movements. The interviews provide a critical analysis of the mainstreaming effects of LGBTQ equality movements versus the progressive, sex-positive views of the queer liberation movements.

The film further examines the space between those who are content with equality and those who continue to fight for liberation. As Mulé notes, “Serious liberation work involves capturing those that society does not readily accept or respect.”

Nick Mulé, PhD, is the founder of Queer Ontario, former chairperson and current member-at-large. He is an associate professor at York University and the principal investigator of the Queer Liberation Theory: Resurrection & Development study.

QueerEdge: From Gay to Queer Liberation

May 15, 2019, 7 PM

Tranzac Club

292 Brunswick Avenue

[MORE INFO](#)

Photo above from the *QueerEdge* official trailer.

[Official Trailer: https://vimeo.com/214739677](https://vimeo.com/214739677)

DREW ROWSOME

Ran & Jaden:

the fabulous shallow world of gay millennials



Life imitates art.

Utilizing the classic comedy trope of a duo of blissful self-centred and oblivious idiots convinced of their own importance, Ran & Jaden have updated to mix in gay and millennial. As my colleague Raymond Helko described the pair: [“over-the-top funny because the stereotypes they play off of are very often true.”](#) Ran & Jaden have amassed a hilarious collection of short sketches on YouTube mocking sex bragging, server baiting, poetry writing and photographer egos. Naturally, they now want to take it to the next step.

What they have planned, according to Jaden, is “a 12-episode narrative, with each episode running between 10-15 minutes in length. Two of the main storylines are about self-esteem/body image in the gay community and racial preferences/fetishizing in dating,



along with the more general pressures faced by young gay Canadians. But I think it does a good job of addressing these things meaningfully without it being sentimental and while still being fun and ridiculous and sarcastic.”



Of course that will cost more than the previous sketches so Ran & Jaden have applied to the Independent Production Fund (IPF) for a grant, “technically a loan,” clarifies Jaden, “that is designed for new web series.” In a twist that echoes the social media saturated and competitive world of gay millennials, “Part of the evaluation process includes how much engagement our trailer gets over the month of March including views, likes, comments and shares. They want to see that people actually care about what you’re proposing to make.”

The trailer is two minutes long and will whet your appetite for the rest of Ran & Jaden’s oeuvre which is readily available on YouTube. We need more satirical takes on the fabulously shallow world of gay millennials so taking a minute, okay two minutes, out of your busy schedule to view, like, comment and/or share Ran & Jaden’s trailer (conveniently right below) can be your good and rewarding deed of the day. And please do it asap before March ends.

It will give Ran & Jaden a slight advantage in an already satirical situation, the chance to grow, blossom and mature into as enduring a duo as the [Vicious Old Queens](#) but without the annoying accents. And if you get a chance, remind them that nudity and semi-nudity is always a good way to get views, if not laughs. and then check out their “[Emotional Casting Couch](#).”



RAYMOND HELKIO

The Rainbow Lounge

LIVE at Buddies!



Tickets aren't even on sale yet and Toronto queers are already practicing for The Rainbow Lounge, a piano bar night on June 27th. Join some of Toronto's most revered artists for a spectacular sing-along evening around the piano. Queer classics, outrageous costumes and a community, come together for a fundraiser that'll bring two LGBTQI refugees from Iran to safety in Toronto. Generously hosted by Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, The Rainbow Lounge is modelled after NYC's The Monster, The Duplex and aims to fill the void left from the closure of Statler's Bar on Church Street.

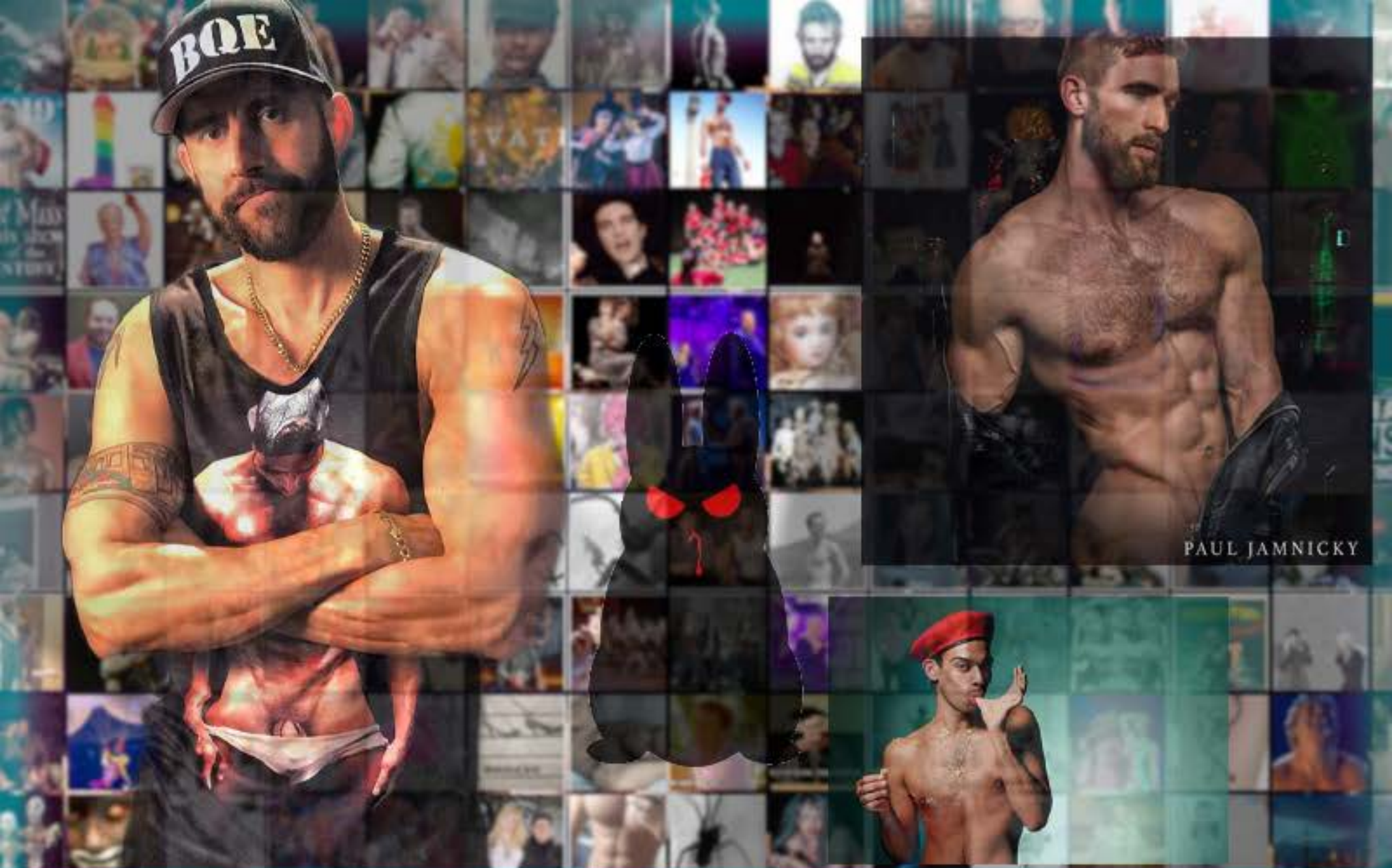
This epic evening will help raise the \$20,000 needed to bring and our are an English-speaking couple from Iran newcomers. While the details about the newcomers remain confidential (to avoid complicating their safe passage out of Iran), Rainbow Railroad has verified that their horrific circumstances warrant the need for starting a new life in Canada. The Rainbow Lounge is just one of many initiatives organized through Team Unlimited, one of about a dozen Rainbow Railroad Settlement Teams who volunteer to support individual cases all the way through the process.

It is illegal to be LGBTQI in 70 countries with 10 countries imposing the death penalty, including Iran. Worldwide there are 65.3 million people who are waiting in refugee camps, each will wait an average of sixty months. But for LGBT refugees, this often means facing similar or worse persecution inside the camps themselves. All of this makes fleeing one's country as difficult as it is dangerous, not to mention costly when you consider even the cheapest housing in Toronto. As the situation worsens in many parts of the world, we need to create meaningful ways for people to come together in support of our brothers and sisters around the globe.

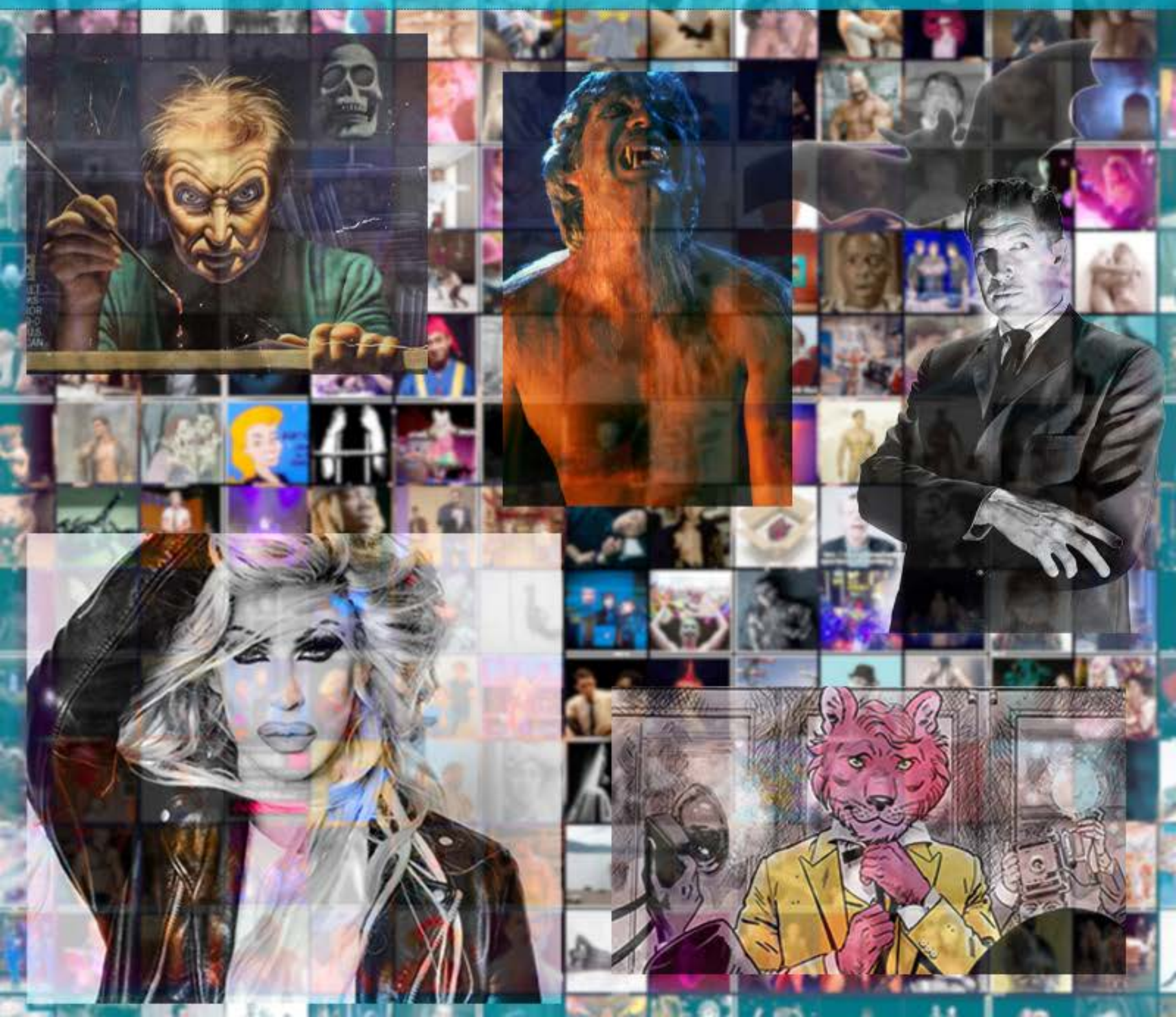
Accompanying the bohemian-rhapsody-circus are veteran musicians David Ramsden and Stewart Borden who's pre-determined song lists will be available closer to the show date for anyone wanting to practice up. Hosted by Raymond Helkio and Chris Williamson the queer star studded guests around the piano include David Bateman, Paul Bellini, Philip Cairnes, Rolyn Chambers, Bitch Diva, Brock Hessel, Joe Hume, Peter Lynch, Charlie C. Petch, David Roche and Mark Stenabaugh with more being be announced closer to the show date. With this collection of legends all in one room, expect there to be a pot of gold at the end of this rainbow!

The Rainbow Lounge - Thursday, June 27, 2019 - Buddies In Bad Times Theatre- 8PM

Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1451142658350681/>



DrewRowsome.blogspot.com



RAYMON HELKIO

Eifman Ballet in Tchaikovsky: Genius and the Price of Fame



Photo courtesy of Eifman Ballet

Vibrant athleticism, nuanced physicality, and dramatic intensity take centre stage as the renowned Eifman Ballet brings the man behind the music to life.

Russia's premier contemporary ballet company presents Eifman Ballet in Tchaikovsky. PRO et CONTRA on stage for three performances this May, at The Sony Centre for the Performing Arts. This heart-rending choreographic love letter to the illustrious Russian composer implements Artistic Director Boris Eifman's signature sublime theatricality, delving into the tormented psyche of composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky as he battles to reconcile his public persona with his inner demons.

"Eifman Ballet is a perennial favourite with Toronto audiences. Their unabashed emotional commitment and unparalleled physical prowess are a rare spectacle," says Svetlana Dvoretzky, president and executive producer of Show One Productions. "With Tchaikovsky. PRO et CONTRA, we witness the marriage of two great Russian artists, Tchaikovsky and Eifman, each at the pinnacle of their respective art forms. Interpreted by Eifman Ballet's exquisite dancers, the result is a powerful meditation on the nature of genius and the price of fame."

Tchaikovsky's music has long inspired a deep curiosity in Eifman, prompting him to explore the source of Tchaikovsky's suffering: the hostility of the world, the oppressive awareness of his own otherness, and the eternal loneliness of his soul.

Set amidst Tchaikovsky's death-bed reveries, poignant chapters and recollections from the composer's life blend with intrusions of characters from his iconic masterpieces, including audience favourites The Nutcracker, Swan Lake and Eugene Onegin. The breathtaking lighting design by Alexander Sivaev and Eifman illuminates the elegant minimalism of Zinovy Margolin's sets and provides a beautiful foil for Olga Shaishmelashvili's lavish costumes. Embodying the joy, the suffering, and the devastating isolation that accompanied Tchaikovsky's towering talent, the exquisite company of 40 dancers will express a symphony of passion through Eifman's ingenious choreography and the composer's own immortal creations.

Boris Eifman is hailed by critics around the world as a leader among living choreographers. His ability to immerse audiences into the boundless world of human passion has defined and ensured the Company's international status. Today, the widely acclaimed works of the Eifman Ballet of St. Petersburg not only represent the highest level of artistic achievement in Russian contemporary ballet, but also introduces international audiences to the spiritual heritage of Russia and the best of world culture.

Eifman Ballet: Tchaikovsky - PRO et CONTRA- May 9–11, 2019- The Sony Centre for Performing Arts

[TICKETS](#)

DREW ROWSOME

Dare Yourself: AD Fetish is the darker side of the Addicted brand



“Our AD Fetish collection blends fashion with erotica,” says the Addicted brand founder Eduardo Suner, who is also the founder of the ES Collections brand that brought us the sun-drenched Bon Voyage swimwear collection. Addicted is distinguished by its colourful, flattering and wearable sportswear, casual wear and underwear. The fetish line is, says Suner, “A harder line of gear that re-imagined the Addicted brand for the S&M scene. It offers the same quality, fit and comfort found in our popular sports collection, but takes the fun into the dark, steamy depths of the sex dungeon.”

The AD Fetish collection not only has harnesses and cockrings, but also sexually charged tanks, underwear and lots of mesh. In the Addicted tradition most items, except for those made of actual leather, come in



vibrant colours. When traditionalists clutch their pearls in horror, designer Carmen Monforte explains that the colour scheme is based on the hanky code and sticks exclusively to the primary and primal colours of blue, red and yellow. hilariously she also explains the yellow hanky code as “DTF with water.”

As well as leather there is a lot of rubber, mesh and barely covered skin. “The gear doesn’t just look good, it feels good,” says brand salesman Nir Zilberman. “The leather is softer than traditional fetish gear,” before noting that, “While traditional fetish wear breaks or rips quickly, AD Fetish is built to last, even through the roughest play.”

Balancing style and the fashion and fuck demands of the BDSM community requires versatility and nerve. But it would be hard to pass on any stud clad in an AD Fetish mesh

harness. Or a Teddy tank. Or definitely if unclad in a cockring double jock. The AD Fetish line is more dashing than dark, but that also makes it ideal for wear even outside the playroom or the Eagle. Fashion cruised fetish decades ago, and Addicted has just bound the two tighter together.



This summer collection from AD Fetish is entitled “Dare Yourself.” If you browse at adfetish.com or through their sister site addicted.es, it is a dare that is hard to resist.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45J_JDb-zzY



Calum Marsh Gets It Wrong



Most people know me as a drag queen, a gay playwright and/or an activist. So often — when I tell them that my 9-5 job is university professor — they say: “Good for you!” Yes, I’m not kidding. It is ‘good for me’ that I somehow triumphed over my crazy effeminate queerness and managed to snag a job. They do everything but pat me on the head.

I feel somewhat the same way about Calum Marsh’s latest article in the National Post: “Why Queer Eye makes me cry. Every. Time.”

Well ‘Queer Eye’ makes me cry, it really does, but for quite different reasons.

Calum says that the old show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* was out of date because of “the stylish queen stereotype.” Now, the show has been “revitalized” with an “earnest unpretentious spirit” of “infectious positivity.” He portrays the queer-eyed guys as therapists who help people by — instead of just dressing them up — encouraging them, for instance, to eat more healthily, and to gain confidence. Okay, got it. But these queer-eyed guys are still helpers. The message of the show is that homosexuals are the world’s perpetual personal assistants. Gays don’t have a life of their own. (God help us if Netflix were flooded with shows about the real life stories of modern gay men!) No. Gay men exist to facilitate straight lives; to make straight lives better.

This justifies our existence, somewhat, because — without our knack for decorating, dressing and therapizing — we would be — for most people — merely pretty ornaments and/or dangerous sex fiends.

All of this flies in the face of history. Without gay men we would not have the modern novel (Proust) or the modern computer (Alan Turing). We would be without great scientists like Leonardo Da Vinci, George Washington Carver, and Alfred Kinsey. We would not have some of the most beautiful fiction ever written (Thomas Mann, Truman Capote, D.H. Lawrence, James Baldwin, Yukio Mishima) We would not have some of the most beautiful music ever composed (Handel, Lully, Saint-Saens, Tchaikovsky, Poulenc, Samuel Barber — and Schubert too, though the musicologists get very angry about this one). Without gay men we would not have some of the greatest paintings ever created (Caravaggio and Michelangelo — to name two you might have heard of), or two of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century (Wittgenstein and Foucault), as well as an ancient philosopher you also may recognize (Plato). And without Bayard Rustin — Martin Luther King’s closeted, gay, unheralded right hand man — we would not have the modern civil rights movement.

Oh yes, and we also happen to dress very well, and we also happen to be very good at helping heterosexuals sort out their inevitably screwed-up lives.

(Just try being a heterosexual. I tried it once; it was a nightmare!)

So Calum — why are you so obsessed with our modern Netflix identity as the ‘world’s personal assistants’ as opposed to our *actual role in human history, which is being a major force in creation of human knowledge?*

Can you answer that one for me, Calum, huh?

DREW ROWSOME

Shakespeare's criminal

Any chance to see Nathaniel Bacon on stage is an event. When it is in a workshop production of a chamber opera by Sky Gilbert and Dustin Peters, it is even more intriguing. Fortunately we got the chance to ask Bacon a few questions about *Shakespeare's Criminal* and the intrigue has become must-see.

Drew Rowsome: [How does it feel to be the man deemed most able to seduce Shakespeare?](#)

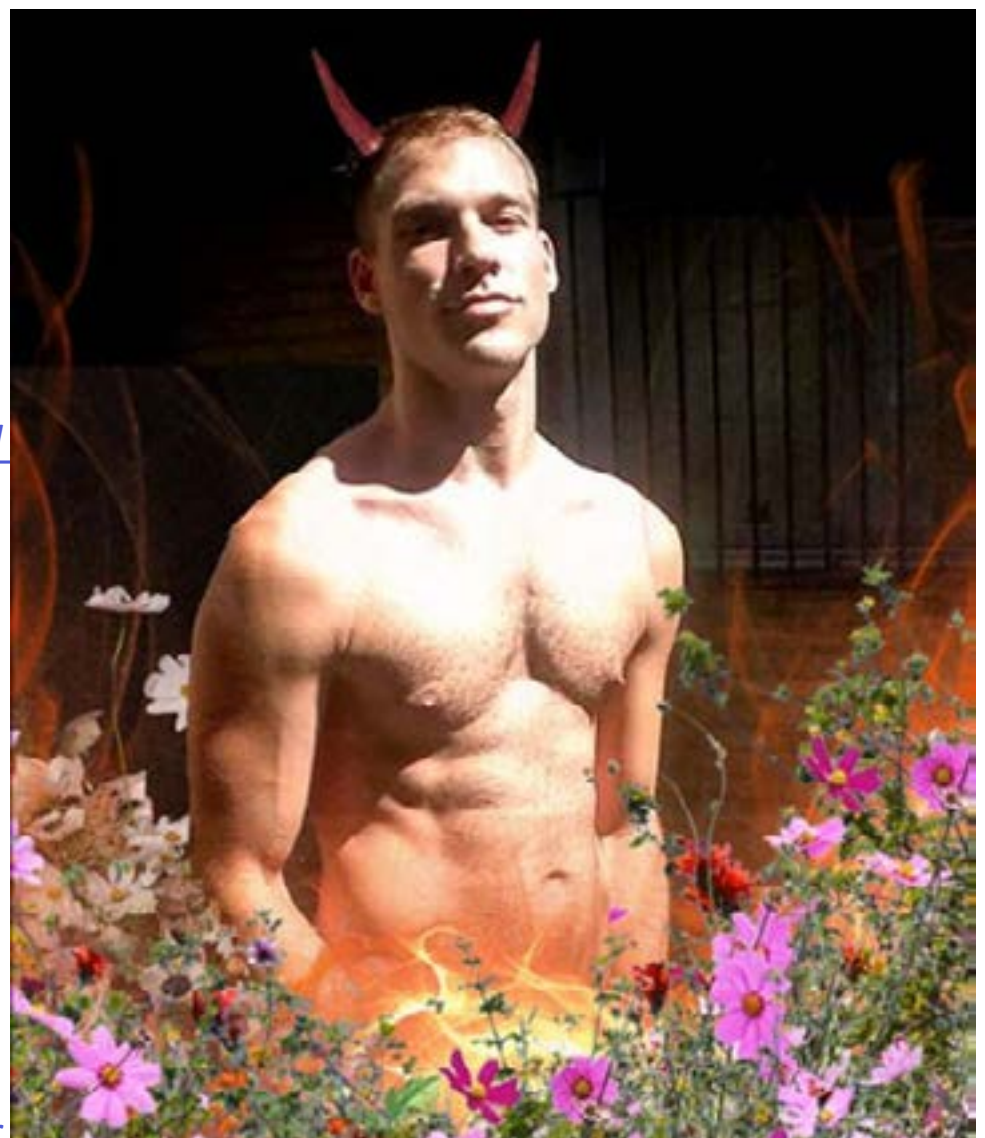
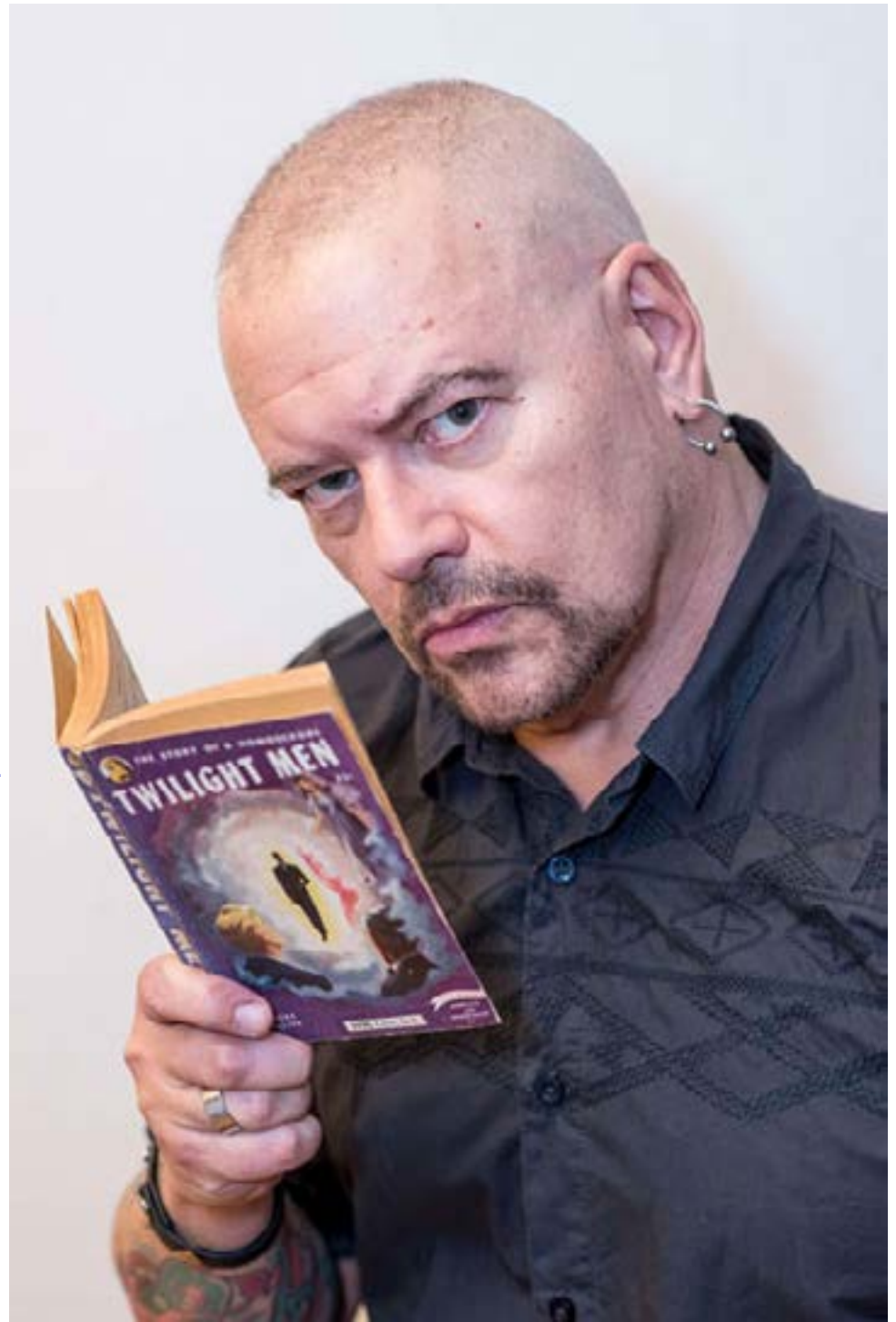
Nathaniel Bacon: Oh, it's an honour, I suppose. Ha ha.

[This is a chamber opera and your co-stars are high powered operatic singers. You're no slouch in the vocal department from *Queer Idol* through *Songs and Screams 1*, *Songs and Screams 2* and *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, but is opera a challenge?](#)

Nathaniel Bacon: Well, I have been singing my entire life and while it's true that I'm not a trained opera singer, like my co-stars, I've done a vast amount of different styles. I grew up singing country, rock and musical theatre. I was also the lead singer in my high school choir and I've done a lot of gospel. So I'm used to adapting my voice for different styles. If I were heading into a pre-existing opera, I would be very nervous. But Sky provides such a creative, collaborative environment and he's very much about the fusion of different styles and the bucking of tradition, so this particular part feels like a challenge, but not an overwhelming one.

[You worked twice before with Sky and were the subject of a chapter of his creative non-fiction *Sad Old Faggot*. How has your working relationship evolved?](#)

Nathaniel Bacon: When I first met Sky, he cast me as the lead in *St Francis of Millbrook* for 4th Line Theatre. I was at the very beginning of my career and had no experience but he loved my read. We got along right away, but although he wrote that show, he didn't direct it, so I didn't spend a lot of time with him then. But we stayed in contact and he came to see me in a couple of other shows. After he watched me in *Hedwig*, he told me he was writing the part of [Casey Donovan](#) for me. He then directed [My Dinner With Casey Donovan](#) himself so we spent a lot more time together and developed a great working relationship. A couple years later, after I'd performed at his book launch for *Sad Old Faggot* he hinted that another role was in the works. That ended up being this opera. So I'm very excited to keep our working relationship growing.



What is the best aspect of working with Sky ([I Cook, He Does the Dishes](#), [It's All Tru \(A Play About AIDS\)](#), [The Terrible Parents](#), [To Myself at 28](#), [A Few Brittle Leaves](#), [Dancing Queen](#), [Hackerlove](#), [The Situationists](#))?

Nathaniel Bacon: Sky sparks creativity and encourages brave choices so he's become one of my favorite people to work with. He pushes the envelope. And I've always believed that's what art is for

Sky seems to see you, as do most (ie: the *Shakespeare's Criminal* promo photo), as a sex symbol. Do you want to milk that designation or would you like to do a gritty ugly role?

Nathaniel Bacon: I'm an actor above all else and I want to stretch myself as a performer, as much as possible. I've had a certain amount of success, playing sex symbols and I have no regrets about that. It's very empowering. But it's just one aspect of what I can do and I'm looking forward to a long career of exploration and challenging myself.

You've re-interpreted two iconic roles and made them your own. How does your approach differ in creating a character for the first time?

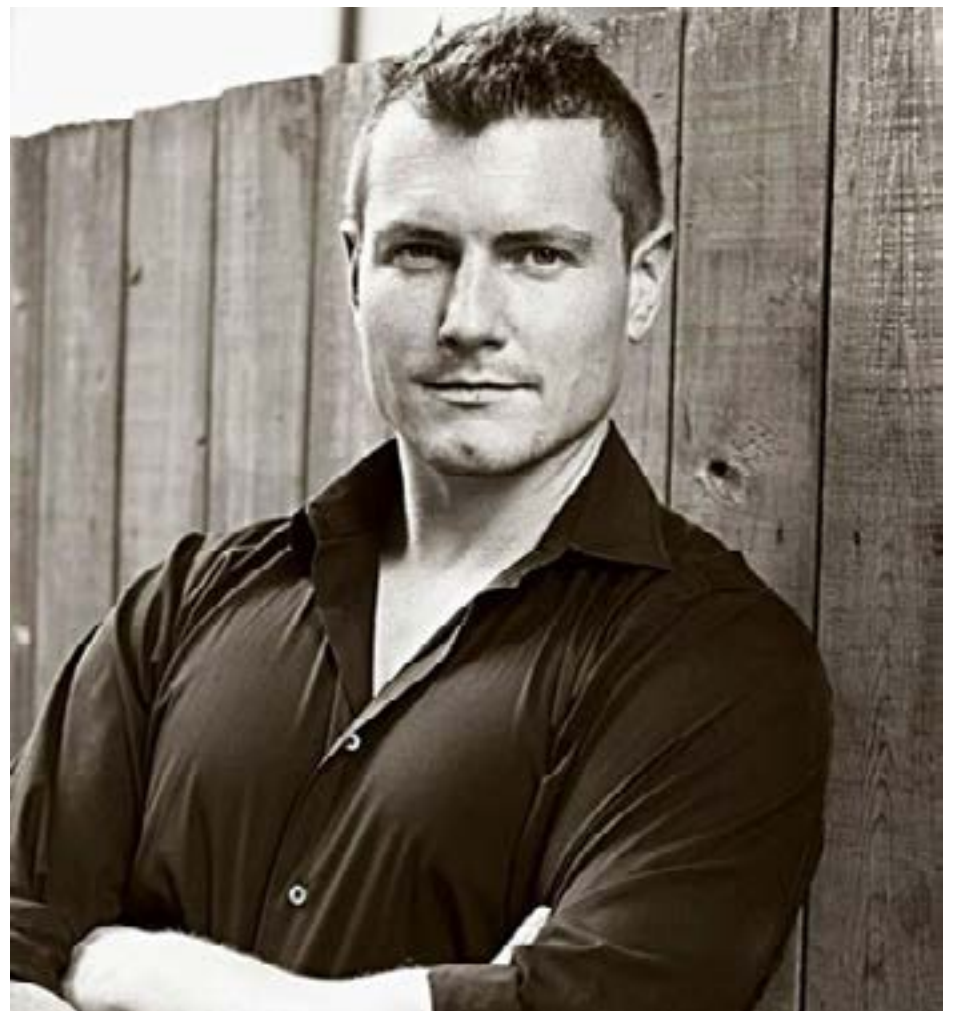
Nathaniel Bacon: Well, performing your own version of an iconic character like I did with [Hedwig](#) and [Frank-N-Furter](#), is all about finding a balance between what people expect/want from them and the new elements you have to infuse into them to create a unique take and a fresh delivery. Creating a character from scratch liberates you from the obligation of doing things a certain way, but it also leaves you flying blind without a reference point. In that way, when playing an original character, I tend to begin with myself and then experiment to find where the character differs from me. Then I just keep adding layers.

You added a charming and heartbreaking depth to playing Casey Donovan. What is the key to your role in *Shakespeare's Criminal*?

Nathaniel Bacon: My character is very elemental, very sexual and very open. So to me, the key to playing him is just staying grounded and committed and allowing the music to inform the tone.

In the promo photo you are depicted as having devil horns. Does this role allow you to draw on your love of horror? How do you feel about the genre's current commercial resurgence?

Nathaniel Bacon: This isn't necessarily what I would call a genre piece. It's more of a psychodrama/fantasy story with elements of black comedy. The devil horns are more of a nod to the ideas of good and evil as well as the concepts of temptation vs liberation. But I am personally thrilled about horror's resurgence. As a kid, was always obsessed with the macabre and often mocked for my interest. But now, times have changed and the genre can demand more respect. I think it enriches our art and storytelling and gives us the ability to delve deeper into dark concepts. I'm all for it.



Marion Newman ([I Call Myself Princess](#)) is a powerful presence as well as an extraordinary singer. Do you have to dial up the diva when on stage with her and baritone Dion Mazerolle?

Nathaniel Bacon: They're sensational. The great thing about Marion's energy as a performer is that it's contagious. She's less an intimidating presence and more of an inspiring one. So being there next to her, when she's kicking ass just makes you naturally strive for more. She's a lovely person.

Some people find opera intimidating. How would you describe Dustin Peter's score?

Nathaniel Bacon: Dustin is sensational. His music is lush and gorgeous. He really has an ear for a memorable and moving melody. And there is a huge scope to this piece, musically. However, it's very accessible and never dry.



[Shakespeare's Criminal](#) was originally slated to be part of Buddies' 40th anniversary season. The break between Sky and Buddies deserves a more nuanced conversation instead of a question, but do you feel it has affected the piece? Do you have an opinion or explanation for what happened? I have a lot of opinions myself and feel [Sky got a raw deal for speaking unclearly about an important issue](#), it's a tough one.

Nathaniel Bacon: I don't think the change has effected the show at all. It was written and conceived of without any involvement by Buddies. They were really just serving as a venue. And Factory has welcomed us with open arms. In terms of the conflict, I think it's too complex to address in a short discussion. However, I will say that I'm never a fan of censorship. And while I may not agree with Sky on every issue, I respect him as an artist and as a trailblazer. His job is to make people think and create a discussion around important issues. And he continues to do that.

Will you be performing alongside Shane MacKinnon ([Gash!](#), [Sodom](#)) and Helene Ducharme ([Rhubarb](#), [Musings](#), [Music & TRANSmediations](#)) at the Saturday night Studio 54 Memorial Voyeur fundraiser following the performance?

Nathaniel Bacon: I don't believe I will be performing, but I'll be there, mingling and having a great time.

How does disco, Studio 54 and the '70s tie into *Shakespeare's Criminal*?

Nathaniel Bacon: It's that whole fusion of contrasting styles that I mentioned before. The idea that the people living in Shakespeare's day and in the 70's, as well as today, for that matter, were feeling the same feelings and struggling with many of the same desires and obstacles. We're channeling that passion and frustration that defies time and celebrating the humanity behind it.

Which play from Sky's extensive oeuvre would you most like to see revived and to be cast in?

Nathaniel Bacon: I've always had an intense love for *Drag Queens on Trial*. We briefly talked about reviving that a couple of years ago and it's never come to fruition. But I think that's a fantastic show that could really thrive in a remount. I would love to do it.

Shakespeare's Criminal has three performances: Fri, April 26, the Studio 54 Memorial Voyeur fundraiser on Sat, April 27, and a matinee on Sun, April 28. factorytheatre.ca

DREW ROWSOME

MGT cover photographer

Vincent Six

is adventuring uncensored





"I've always been a cinema guy. I love to sit and enjoy a good story that takes me away from reality," says photographer Vincent Six. *"I never liked to take random photos. I love to photograph with a purpose and I found that books provide the perfect format to tell stories or create small experiences with my photos. In the digital world there are too many distractions. My books force you to put your phone aside and appreciate this form of art."*

Anyone who has seen Vincent Six's photograph can appreciate their otherworldly grounded in nature quality. The beauty of the wild and the beauty of the male form combined to create an enhancement of both. *"All my life I've been living in big cities and I always missed being closer to nature,"* says Vincent Six.





VINCENT SIX



VINCENT SIX

"When creating, I always try to bring to life memories I lived when I was young. Memories of me enjoying long summers out of town with my friends and family. Bonding stories, bike trips and daily adventures from sunrise to sunset. While I often miss those good old times, my photos are also inspired by new adventures I would love to experience, but I haven't yet had the chance to pursue."



Vincent Six's first book, ***You, Me, The Woods***, has a literal narrative. He describes it as "a kind of a short-film in photo-book format. It was a very intimate experience for all of us involved. The models were a real couple, their first time in front of a camera. We spent a full weekend shooting in the woods in southern France. We barely knew each other before the shoot, but they welcomed me with open arms. The things they shared about their life and their relationship during the shoot helped me to write all the narrative afterwards. I always start a project with a blurred idea or concept in mind and I let the experience shape the art and take a form of its own. Every photoshoot is an adventure and I love to be surprised."



The filmic quality comes naturally. "When I was young I directed lots of short-films, music videos, commercials," says Vincent Six. "Every one of these projects involved big teams and lots of money. I wanted to keep on creating video, but it was too expensive and slow to produce, so I found in photography a way of stripping my art down to the basics. I decided to focus on the creation of single frames that could tell a story if you stuck them all together. Funny enough, now I'm starting to film short clips during my shoots and I expect to release a nice movie about the creation of my next book *Pacific Spirit* when it releases in October."

VINCENT

FIREWOOD



PHOTOGRAPHIES BY
VINCENT SIX



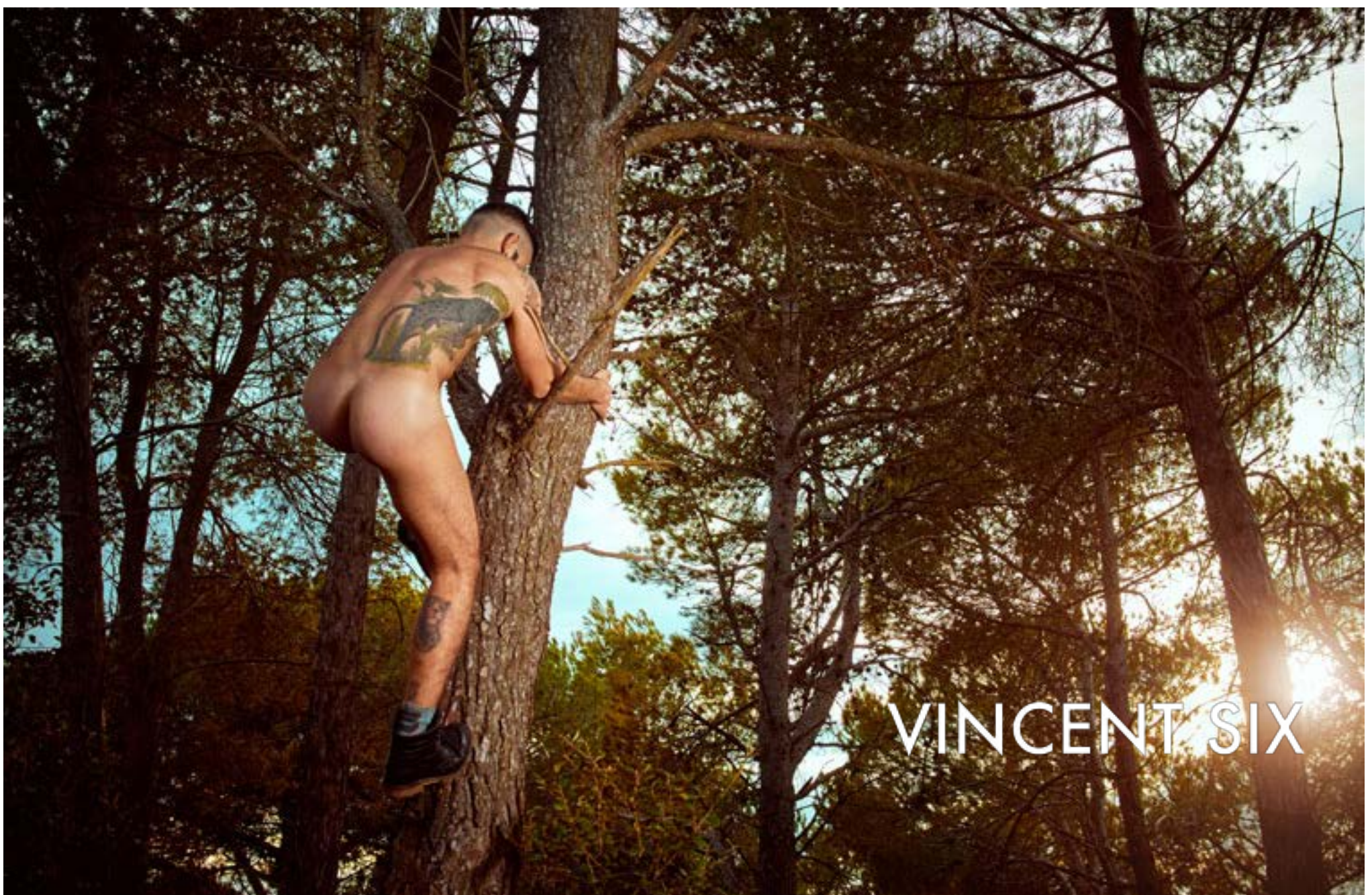
VINCENT SIX



VINCENT SIX



Vincent Six's art is continuing to evolve with six hardcover books to come under the 'VINCENT' collection label. *"All of the books are about men enjoying life and nature. Each book contains more than 200 uncensored photos of 25 models I photographed exclusively for this purpose. The narrative is very open and visual. I hope that everyone conceives their own stories while watching the photos."* And even beyond nature. *"In the book I'm releasing this month, Firewood, there are many indoor shots. They represent my awakening, the moment before I decided to step out and explore the world."*





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But his exploration of the world is far from over. *"I love hiking and exploring new places when I'm not photographing or working in films,"* he says. *"There is a little adventurer inside me. Every time I go hiking with friends they hear me say, 'I need to shoot someone here.' Many friends also tell me about places they have been, which they think would be a good location for a photo shoot. I have a big list of locations awaiting for the right model to come along."*

The right models are not hard to find though Vincent Six has some specific qualities he looks for. *"Attitude and passion. That's all. It's not about having a perfect body. Perfection doesn't exist. Through my eyes, every model I shoot is beautiful for different reasons. Maybe because we spend the day laughing, and often realize how many things we have in common. I love to shoot models with whom I feel I have a connection. Just imagine that you go to the mountains and hike for two hours with someone you don't get along with... That's my worst nightmare, so I choose very carefully the models after talking a lot with them prior to shooting. This also helps them realize that they can trust me with their photos."*



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Trust goes both ways. *"I approach the shoots in a very natural way. I don't ask them to do weird poses. I don't like male photography that portrays men as cold Greek god statues. I want my models to feel approachable, as if they were a good friend. I ask them to be themselves, to enjoy the moment we are sharing. I believe that if you create an environment where the model is having fun, living an adventure, enjoying the landscape and feeling like they are part of the project, you'll always get memorable photos."*





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Part of what makes Vincent Six's photographs so memorable is both the natural and the au naturel state of the models. And how relaxed they are with being nude. *"Many models have texted me afterwards to tell me how special and liberating it was to do something like that. I find my models one hundred percent on Instagram. When I opened the app for the first time some years ago I never imagined how big of a role it would play in developing my photography career. I met all my models via Instagram. It's always a bit awkward to send a message to someone you don't know and ask them to model nude, but in general, all of them get very excited about the idea when they see my work and they see its artistic, rather than erotic, focus."*

Alas there can be a stigma when it comes to male nudity. *"Art is always subjective,"* says Vincent Six. *"Some people, depending of their cultural backgrounds will see a nude as something very natural and others will think is hardcore porn. When I shoot, my focus and main attention is on trying to capture the experience of merging with nature and feeling free. I love to take photos that inspires a different kind of freedom that anyone can enjoy. I think society pushes us very hard on what is acceptable and what is not. In many countries, such as Germany, nudity is the most normal of things. There you can enjoy a sauna naked with your colleagues after work, boys and girls together... it's part of their culture. I wish more people could experience something like that."*



Vincent Six, who is very photogenic himself, knows of what he speaks. When asked if he enjoys being nude in the outdoors he enthuses, *"I love it!"* before qualifying, *"I was so scared the first time I went to a naturist beach. It took me a little while to take off my swimsuit. Since that moment, I never wore it again while on a naturist beach and that was 16 years ago."*

If only social media had the same attitude. Vincent Six feels he has been censored *"Much less than any of my fellow photographers,"* but bemoans that *"Instagram has some unclear rules about nudity which are often applied arbitrarily. If they remove one of my photos I accept it and I don't make a fuss about it. I don't own the platform, so if I want to use it, I have to accept the rules. Everybody's free to find a platform that works for them. That's what I did with my books. I publish all my uncensored photos, which wouldn't be allowed on Instagram. So if one of my photos is removed from Instagram,*



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don't panic, that photo will be included in my next book and everybody will be able to enjoy it. However, I would love Instagram to be more communicative when something like that happens, there isn't any form of appeal available, it's just too opaque."

While agreeable with the strictures of social media, Vincent Six will not compromise his art. *"I thought many times about doing some commercial photography so I could financially support my books and other artistic projects, but I just can't. This always has been an internal battle for me. I don't think I*



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would be good enough. When I photograph I need to feel super passionate about what I'm doing. For me, photography is a way to escape reality and I don't want that to become another job. I want to be free and I don't like my photography work to be constrained in any way."

To remain true to his art Vincent Six created the publishing company VINCENT IV, home not only to his ever-growing body of work but also fellow artists including Ego Rodriguez and Hajime Yamamoto. *"I learned so much self-publishing my first book that I wanted to help other artists I admire to publish their works. Instagram has given a lot of visibility to many artists, but it doesn't give you, in most cases, any revenue to support and expand your work. Many artists could do amazing things if they had some support to help them grow. That's why I wanted to create a publishing company that puts the artist first. When other artists publish with VINCENT VI, they receive 70 percent of the book sale and the remaining 30 percent I use it to cover all the publishing costs. I didn't start the publishing business to earn money, but to help artists grow."*



Vincent Six and VINCENT VI are currently based in Vancouver. *"Nature was the main reason why I came here,"* he says. *"Before Vancouver, I lived in London for nine years and I missed the proximity of the sea and the mountains. Vancouver felt like the perfect combination. I also work as a visual effects film artist and Vancouver has a thrilling film post-production industry. I love to combine books and film work. It keeps my mind busy and I learn a lot from artists that create incredible award winning films."*

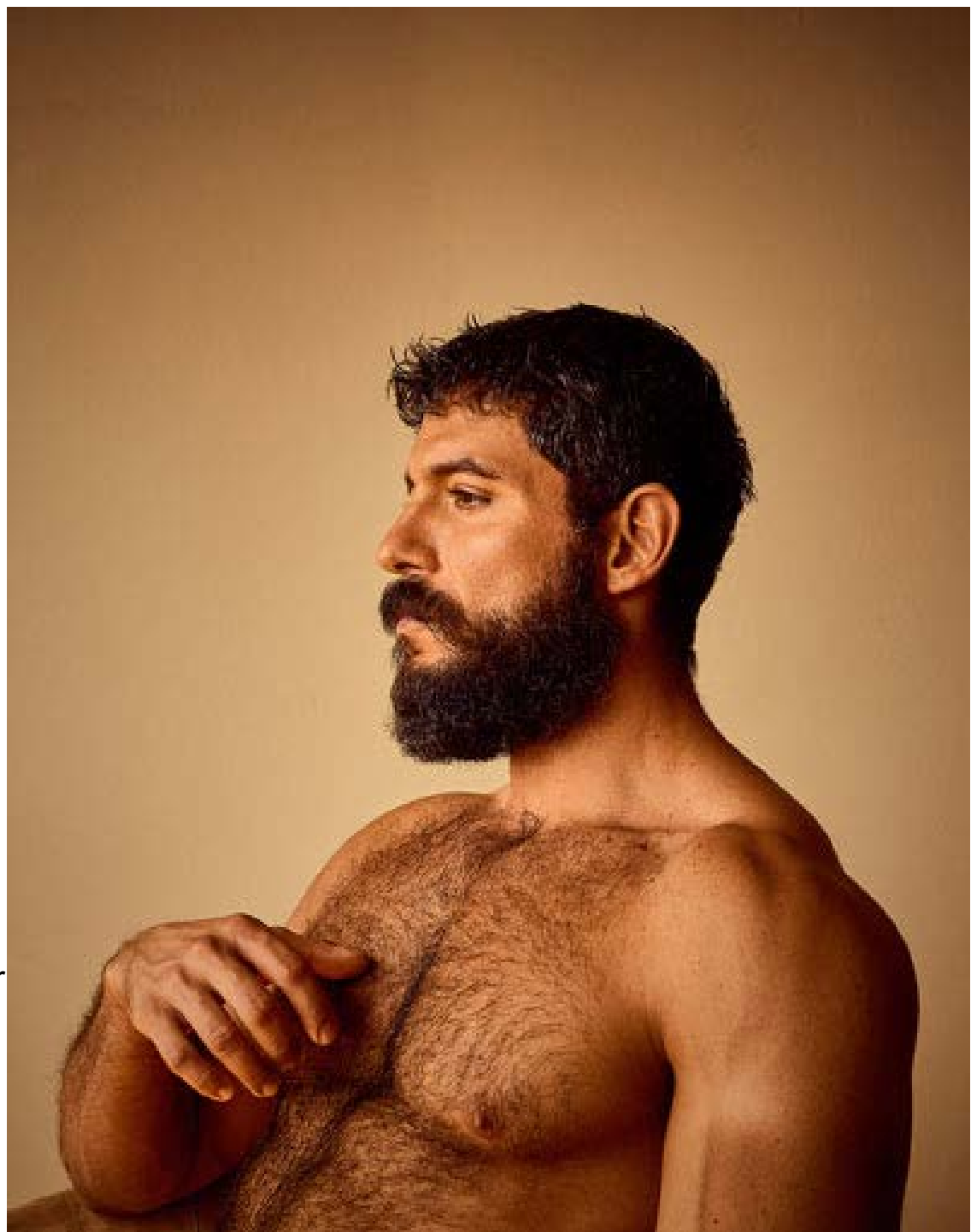
Upcoming VINCENT VI productions are **Firewood** to be followed by **Pacific Spirit**, and **Boreal**. And he notes that, *"Next year, I'd love to make another small book like You, Me, The Woods with a defined narrative and a filmic look."* And he has other ambitious plans. *"I would love to be able to travel more and reach more remote places. I'm taking a surviving in the wild course in the coming months and I dream about being able to gather some models and travel to Alaska or a remote island for a weeklong shooting adventure. I'm working on ways to be able to fund shootings like that and offer ways for people finance or support these and feel part of the experience. I think a photo is only a small percentage of the overall experience and I'm going to work on offering something beyond photos."*



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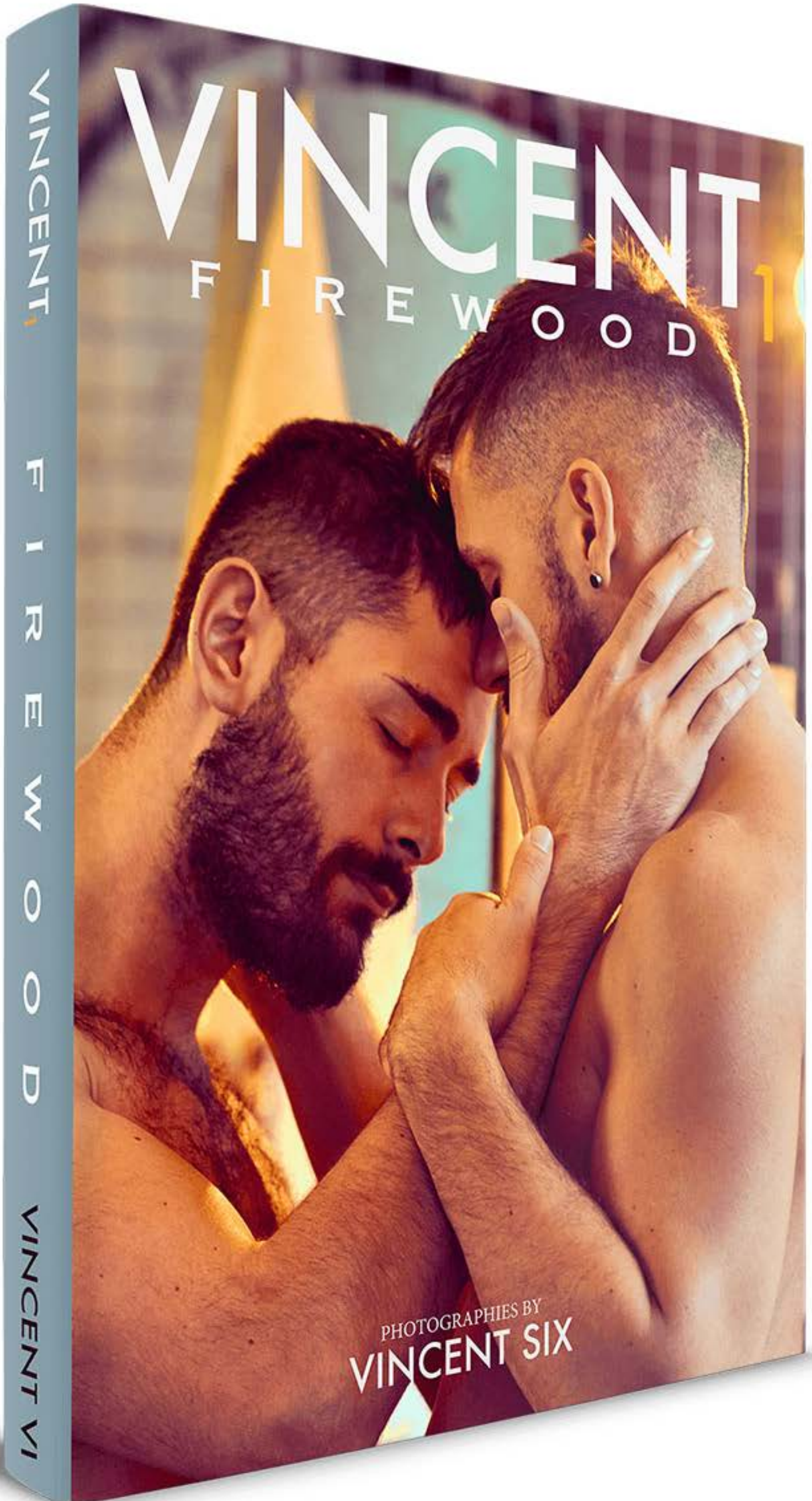
And in the meantime there is business to be taken care of. *"My books can be bought at my website vincentsix.com or through instagram [@vincent.six](https://www.instagram.com/vincent.six) and I sign and ship each one of my books personally,"* says Vincent Six. *"I take care of everything. I'm thinking about the possibility of offering limited prints of images I haven't shown before, but I want them to be very special so I'm still working on some ideas. I don't want to disappoint anyone as I only want to offer high quality content. Even though calendars are very popular, I won't offer them for now. I think the enjoyment of seeing those pics in a calendar is not quite the same as that of a book, so I am focused on printed books only, full of original content and never before seen images. I love to give my supporters unique images that only they can see and which cannot be found anywhere else. My books are like a little secret that only the models and our supporters share."*

MGT and mygaytoronto.com readers are invited to get in on the secret with a five percent discount on the upcoming Firewood by using the code 'MGT.' vincentsix.com





VINCENT SIX



MyGayToronto



DREW ROWSOME

My War Hero Uncle and other highlights of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival



My War Hero Uncle is a documentary with a mystery at its core. Any discerning gay or even ally will clue in quickly to what is happening, but will also surrender to the charms of director Shaked Goren's grandmother who is a classic lovable monstre sacre of a bubbe. And it is worth continuing, the mystery isn't as obvious as we are lead to believe (or as the trailer leads one to believe), and My War Hero Uncle has another story to tell.

The film is so intimate that one occasionally questions it's verisimilitude. Even in these days of reality television, putting his mother on camera for a revelation is so invasive that one hopes it is staged. But the scenes with the grandmother are so touching and familiar, that My War Hero Uncle becomes a coming out story that induces tears and laughter. And, as Michael Lucas so amply proved, footage of shirtless Israeli men is endlessly compelling.



There is more LGBTQ content in Family in Transition, "A candid documentary about the challenges an Israeli family faces when the father transitions to a woman. Though her wife and children are unwavering in their love and support, the process eventually takes a toll on the family dynamic." And LGBTQ history with Barbara Rubin and the Exploding NY Underground that explores the filmic

legacy of the underground filmmaker best known for *Christmas on Earth*, “a sexually graphic hybrid of multi-media installation and performance art.” She also introduced Andy Warhol to the Velvet Underground and influenced Lou Reed and Allen Ginsberg. Warning, the ending sounds tragic as she has renounced her past and her previous work and is now an Orthodox homemaker.



Keep Kleenex handy for *82 Names: Syria, Please Don't Forget Us* where a Syrian POW and torture survivor who “risked his life by writing the names of his fellow cellmates in blood and rust on scraps of cloth and sewing them into his shirt.” The follows him on a tour of German Holocaust memorial sites comparing the two holocausts. Though billed as for ages “11 and up,” *Shepherd: The Story of a Jewish Dog* also sounds intense with a boy reuniting with his childhood pet, who has been trained to round up Jewish prisoners, in a concentration camp.

In a more lighthearted vein there is also a treasure trove of vintage Canadian comedies on view, often with documentaries or panels to supplement the viewing. The highlight is *Becoming Sid Dithers: Eugene Levy from McMaster to SCTV* a selection of Levy's early work (ie: before *Schitt's Creek* made him an international superstar). But 1980 with Ken Finkleman and Rick Moranis in a pilot satirizing a current affairs program, and an episode of *The Funny Farm* starring Eileen Brennan, Howie Mandel, and Mike MacDonald, set in a struggling Montreal comedy club. Also packed with laughs is *The Hart and Lorne Terrific Hour* the CBC variety hour described as “the bridge between Python and SNL” by Norm MacDonald.



Hollywood glamour gets its due with a documentary on Sam Spiegel, as well as one on Carl Laemmle who founded Universal Pictures and made iconic stars out of Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi. *Lemon Popsicle: Of Winners and Losers* puts the “funny, sexy and trashy” Israeli teen comedy franchise under the microscope and frames it with the rise of the controversial producers Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus. Montreal World Film Festival best film winner *Curtiz* is a dramatization of

the making of Casablanca and is reputed to be a stylish masterpiece.



The smaller screen gets its due with Peter Falk Versus Columbo that chronicles Falk's career from "growing up in a Bronx Jewish family to his collaborations with John Cassavetes and his long-running success as Columbo, culminating with his role as the ex-angel in Wim Wenders's Wings of Desire." That documentary is footnoted by the first episode of Columbo, Columbo: Murder by the Book that was written by Steven Bochco and directed by a youthful Steven Spielberg.

Other intriguing documentaries include the politically charged Amos Oz - The Nature of Dreams and Hitler Versus Picasso and Others that combine "history, art and drama" to trace the story of the Nazis' war on "degenerate art." The art of photography gets a shout out with Last Stop Coney Island: The Life and Photography of Harold Feinstein. The Man Who Stole Banksy is narrated by Iggy Pop which is an idea that I'm shocked no-one thought of before. There is more music with It Must Swing! The Blue Note Story, the self-explanatory and must-see Death Metal Grandma, and The Mamboiks documenting the mambo craze from the 1940s to the man who was the inspiration for Patrick Swayze's character in Dirty Dancing.



For musical theatre queens there is Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles, an analysis of the creation of and the global impact of the Broadway hit Fiddler on the Roof. The list of interviewees is droolworthy with Harvey Fierstein, Harold Prince and Fran Lebowitz, as well as archival footage of Jerome Robbins and Zero Mostel. The only question is: where is Bette Midler?

As well as many more documentaries there are fiction feature films and shorts spanning all genres: horror with The Golem, the "visually reminiscent of a Tim Burton film" Madam Yankelova's Fine Literature Club, the uproarious satire Tel Aviv on Fire, and a mermaid in the coming of age tale Virgins. Plus at least two animated films, America and the Chagall-riffing Vanity of Vanities.

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival runs Thurs, May 2 to Sun, May 12 at multiple venues throughout the city. tjff.com

DREW ROWSOME

Shakesbeers Showdown:

#RevengeOfThe5th

The notorious theatrical bloodsport [Shakesbeers Showdown](#) returns for 2019 with “Revenge of the Fifth.” Competitors representing the finest indie theatre groups in the universe, struggle to read and emote Shakespeare’s *First Folio* while drinking copiously. Hilarity and questionable thespian activities ensue. This year Malcontent Theatre joins the battle and two of the troupe agreed to discuss their inevitable victory.

Drew Rowsome: Why will The Force be with (or not) Malcontent Theatre?

Megan Adam: The Force will definitely be with us. Here at Malcontent we all know how to handle a lightsaber.

Jake Fulton: Little known fact: homosexuality is actually a biproduct of abnormally high midi-chlorian counts in the blood stream. What we can deduce from this is that all Jedis are gay, and all gay people are, in fact, Jedis. Malcontent Theatre Company has a queerness at its core that brings with it an extreme level of strength in The Force. The community is going to be angry that I shared one of our best-kept secrets, but if there are any closed-minded types reading this, the next time you have an urge to make an offensive comment towards a queer person: remember that that person has powers you couldn’t even fathom.

Are you with the light (Amsterdam Brewery’s Blonde) or the dark side (Amsterdam Brewery’s Downtown Brown Nut Ale)?

Megan Adam: We plan to start on the light side . . . but anything can happen. Jake and I both have a preference for light beer, but we can also enjoy dark beer. Maybe we’ll be double fisting by the end of the night!



Jake Fulton: Light. But don't let the fact that I'm drinking Amsterdam Blonde fool you. Sometimes the sweetest packages have the most dangerous contents. The other teams may see us as two sweet, cute unicorns, but they had best watch out; Shakespeare himself said it best, "Sharper than a serpent's tooth is a unicorn's horn."

How fluent are you in Shakespeare's *First Folio*?

Megan Adam: I am a Shakespeare nerd and I grew up in Stratford, the bard's Ontarian home. Read: I am going to crush it.

Jake Fulton: For six intense and trying years of late,
My dedication lay in studies great
O'th'poets past whose verse can not be read
By anyone, without a sense of dread.
As such my skills with text durst wholly show
I'll read with ease the fear'd First Folio.

Why is Shakespeare's *First Folio* considered so difficult?

Megan Adam: When the first folio was published language and spelling were very different than they are now. It can be hard to read if you're not familiar with old English spelling –and then when you take into account that we're going to be reading it while inebriated . . . well it's going to be an entertaining night, that's for sure. The last time I was drinking I couldn't remember how to spell horse.

Jake Fulton: Shakespeare's first folio is thought to be so difficult because of the confusing use of the same letter for f and ff, and v and vv. Add this to the complicated verse and ancient vocabulary of the Bard, and you're left with a recipe for drinking beer.

Other than reading the *First Folio*, what Shakespearean role would you like to tackle and why would you excel at it?

Megan Adam: I would love to play Ophelia because I'm a sad bitch and I love swimming. In all honesty though, I find her journey super interesting and heart-breaking from a mental health standpoint. She is so much more than the hot mad girl trope.

Jake Fulton: Go big or go home, right? Hamlet. He's such a puzzle, and I think that there are so many possibilities there. Plus, I can relate on so many levels. Troubled youth with some serious unresolved daddy issues and a flair for the dramatic? I've got it covered.

How well do you hold your liquor?

Megan Adam: My nickname was "one shot wonder" in high school.

Jake Fulton: In university, if I was running late to meet my friends at the club, I could toss back a bottle of wine in 30 seconds and have a great time. Last week I had two beers with dinner before a movie, and I couldn't follow a single thing that was happening on screen. And I had a hangover the next day. So I think I'm in a pretty good place for this competition.



How does a queer perspective give you an advantage when it comes to Shakespeare? To cutthroat competition?

Megan Adam: I think changing up gender roles, or removing them entirely, in the play gives fresh eyes. There's a reason it's so zeitgeisty to cross-cast right now. We are bored of watching men and women have to embody the same roles again and again. As a society, we are realizing that anyone in any body can be a ruler, a servant, a princess, a queen, a jester . . . The queer perspective helps us display characters and relationships in new ways.

Jake Fulton: I once did a scene for a Commedia D'ell Arte instructor, and afterwards she said, "There was something very liberating in the homoeroticism you brought to that." I think everything can be liberated with a little dash of homoeroticism, Shakespeare included! There's the stereotype of the tortured artist, and I'm not advocating for that, but there is something in the challenges that every queer person overcomes that adds extra depth to their work. It's similar to any person that has faced adversity in their life, but having a unique history brings you a unique perspective in the arts, and that can open up a lot of doors. I'm not saying that hetero people are any less able to create great art or whatever, I'm just saying that the ones in this competition are at a serious disadvantage. As for cutthroat competition? Well, a lot of queer people have had to (and still) fight like hell to get to where we are. We can be nice, but we know how to fight for what's right, and in this case it's winning the competition. As for the competition, we have prepared to handle the competition by watching copious amounts *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Trust me when I say, the first folio has been read, honey.



What opposing team offers the most threat to Malcontent's crushing dominance?

Megan Adam: The Spur-of-the-Moment team, not because they're better than us, but because of their connections. This is a fundraiser for their event, Shakespeare in Hospitals. And I heard they chose the judge? Is that nepotism?

Jake Fulton: I'm not worried about any of the other teams if it's a fair fight. Like, not at all. Honestly, there's not a team that even comes close to bringing the star power and raw talent of Malcontent Theatre Company, and they should be scared. But there's a rumour going around that Spur-of-the-

Moment is leaking details on the competition to its own team. I find it very worrisome that their team has such close ties to the leaders. I don't trust them, and I don't think you should either.



[What opposing team offers the least threat?](#)

Megan Adam: I would have to say Shakespeare BASH'd. On the press day they were the only team with just one member present. Trouble in paradise, Shakespeare BASH'd? Where was your team mate?

Jake Fulton: It's really hard to say because I don't think any of the teams stand a chance. If had to choose one though, I'm not confident in the academics' ability to perform. Years of sticking your nose in books does not a performer make. They may know the words, but after a few drinks and that goes out the window, what are they going to bring?

[What triggered your personal love of Shakespeare? Of *Star Wars*?](#)

Megan Adam: I saw my first Shakespeare production at Stratford Festival when I was seven years old. It was *As You Like It* and it was wonderful. But even more wonderful were the set of Shakespearian paper dolls I got at the gift shop. They had all these fancy paper outfits to change into. I don't know why I thought it was so amazing, but I still think about those dolls. As for *Star Wars* . . . I hope not to be blacklisted for this but I am not a big fan. The cool thing about doing a *Star Wars*-themed Shakespeare festival is Princess Leia's hairstyles would fit perfectly in both worlds.

Jake Fulton: I'm probably going to offend a lot of people here, but I learned about *Star Wars* by seeing the new trilogy, and I was too young to care about the story. I just loved it for all the cool creatures they had. I'm a little nervous about going public with this, but my favourite character growing up was Jar Jar Binks, and he still holds a place in my heart. Shakespeare was a different story. In sixth grade we read a student version of *Macbeth*, and I thought it was so cool. I played a witch and did "Double double, toil and trouble," and then I made my mom buy me a complete works. I didn't quite understand the plays at that point, but I would still sit in my room reading them obsessively. I've always been loved math and puzzles, and I felt like deciphering the meaning of the text was the same as solving a puzzle. When I would finally figure out the meaning of a complicated metaphor I felt so fulfilled and accomplished. Yeah, I was very cool as a child.



How does Shakespeare fit into Malcontent's stated aim of producing "original work that is reflective of our times and has the potential to incite change?"

Megan Adam: When Shakespeare was writing the whole purpose of his plays was to reflect the time –he was literally commissioned by the people in power to write the plays. And yet he still managed to tell resonate stories. Now we have so much more power as creators to use our art to promote our own messaging (unlike in Shakespeare's day when he needed to impress kings and queens). I think telling Shakespeare's stories now with a focus on what still resonates, and what seems totally horrific in today's society (such as murky consent, violence, and gender politics) can be useful to incite change in the theatre community and beyond.



Jake Fulton: There's always value in using the past to explore the present. If we don't reflect on what has and hasn't worked in the past, how can we learn from it? I don't think that just applies to social issues and human rights, but to everything, even the arts. MTC just produced a new adaptation of Shakespeare's *Pericles*. It's one of his worst works, but we took it and reworked it into an adult comedy. Sometimes while exploring older texts, you can find some scary parallels. In *Pericles*, a character is kidnapped and sold into the sex trade; that's horrifying enough on its own, but when you realize the play was written 400 years ago, and that this is still happening, it can really ignite your thinking on the topic. I think presenting these works to audiences will get their thoughts going, and hopefully will change the way some people think.

[Will contestants lose or gain points for using a Darth Vader voice? Pretending they are using a Yoda voice instead of just being drunk?](#)

Megan Adam: It's all going to depend on how confident we are when doing it.

Jake Fulton: You can never go wrong with a Darth Vader voice. Or a Yoda voice. Or being drunk. The key is to be entertaining, but not annoying. If your Darth Vader-style monologue runs on for six minutes because of your laboured breathing, don't be surprised if you get booed off the stage. By me.



[\(Here is your chance to butter up the boss\) What is Victoria Urquhart's greatest strength as a referee?](#)

Megan Adam: Victoria is a smart, level-headed, witty, and looks great in stripes.

Jake Fulton: I realize I claimed earlier that her company has been involved in some shady dealings around the competition, but I know that Victoria has nothing to do with it. In fact, I'm confident she would be the first to condemn the act. Victoria brings so much grace, dignity, and respectability to every event she's involved with.

Did learning to pole dance for Malcontent Theatre's production of *XXXposed* help get you in shape for kicking ass at #Revengeofthe5th?

Megan Adam: I actually didn't appear in *XXXposed*, but rest assured I am ready to kick ass in this competition. If there are going to be poles involved that is an asset for us!

Jake Fulton: Learning to pole dance got me in shape for kicking ass at everything. When in doubt, take off your clothes and spin around a pole. But seriously, if we were down on points and I whipped out a pole dancing routine, there's no way the audience would let us lose the game.

What is next for Malcontent?

Megan Adam: A new site specific show, *The Bartender!* More info on our socials @ MalcontentTheatre.

Jake Fulton: The next project for Malcontent Theatre is Duncan Gibson-Lockhart's new play, *The Bartender*, an absurd, queer love story, and a meditation on love, life, death and beauty. You can catch the show running from September 9th to the 22nd at The Lodge, above O'Grady's on Church.

Shakesbeers Showdown: Revenge Of The Fifth is on Sun, May 5 at the 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media & Education, 918 Bathurst St. spurofthemomentshakespeare.weebly.com/shakesbeers



#SHAKESBEERSSHOWDOWN #REVENGEOFTHETH 5th Sunday May 5th 6-9pm at 918 Bathurst!

**AFTER THE FOURTH
AWAKENS...**



Hand To God: puppets from hell are heavenly



Photos by Kristina Ruddick

Hand to God successfully, and outrageously, combines two favourite genres: the southern gothic melodrama and obscenity-spouting killer puppets. The introduction by the puppet Tyrone, outlines playwright Robert Atkins' central thesis in biblical terms, utilizing ever escalating profanities. From there the audience is plunged into a maelstrom of seething sex, violence and felt. It is delightful.



Marjorie (Nicole Underhay) is attempting to recover from her husband's untimely death by conducting a Sunday school puppet workshop. Her son Jason (Frank Cox-O'Connell) and Tyrone are battling for dominance and pining for fellow workshop puppeteer Jessica (Amy Keating). Pastor Greg (Ted Dykstra) and

Timothy (Francis Melling) are both lusting after Marjorie, but with one in the midst of a crisis of faith and the other in a crisis of puberty, Marjorie initially decides to stick with Jesus. And then all hell breaks loose. Literally.



The surprises are part of the fun so telling more could potentially spoil the laughter. Or dampen it from uproarious to hilarious. Even the set by Anahita Dehbonehie is filled with inventive sight gags and surprises that earn laughs as well as admiration. Scaling *Hand to God* down from a Broadway stage to the extremely intimate Coal Mine Theatre must have been a challenge, but director Mitchell Cushman ([Dr Silver](#), [Mr Burns](#)) makes a virtue of the set changes and inventiveness to give a puppet show feel to the proceedings. And to keep the focus on the virtuoso performances, both human and puppet.

Underhay has the toughest job whiplashing from tragic bible-thumping widow to a woman possessed by carnal desires of the taboo variety. She plays the transitions for comedy but then commits to the extremes to a frightening fabulous degree. All while somehow remaining realistically maternal. Dykstra ([The Father](#), [Rumours](#)) is a tragicomic pining milquetoast man of the cloth who finds his backbone briefly and struggles to hold the centre against the onslaught of evil. His interactions with Tyrone are a master class in the double take and arched eyebrow.



Melling takes the horny angry adolescent male and layers in confusion and sadness. He matches Underhay in bravado and BDSM fervour, all while remaining fundamentally, tragically innocent. He also, for a

character supposedly on the less intelligent side, has the best one-liners including one that trashes the muppets and brings down the house. Keating who initially plays sweet and knowing stops the show, literally, in the midst of a graphic gratuitous puppet sex extravaganza that makes Avenue Q look like, well, like a Sunday school production. Of all the repressed desires that explode, hers are the classiest and the funniest.



Cox-O'Connell ([Rose](#), [Romeo and Juliet](#), [Hamlet](#)) can add puppeteer to his resume. He and Tyrone function as duo with again, lots of surprises, sight gags and gross-outs. Cox-O'Connell has multiple whiplash personality changes and they all read true rendering his climactic moments heartrending and tragic. The sweet Jason is all wide eyes and leaking hormones, Tyrone is, as he proclaims, possibly the devil. And we always know who is in possession of Cox-O'Connell's physicality. At one moment, in a semi-blackout, he stumbles offstage and, wordless and with his back to the audience, we fully understand Jason.

Thematically the script stretches a little too far in search of profundity. The point is made beautifully long before the ending, and when there is a bobble-head Jesus, an Exorcist gag that is sidesplitting, oodles of explicit violence played for that unease beyond laughter, a rainbow flag on the church wall to remind us of the dangers of repression of the vilest sort, and the marvellous puppets by Marcus Jamin ([The Daisy Theatre](#), [Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea](#), [Mr Burns](#)), profundity is practically redundant.

While the Coal Mine Theatre is an ideal venue for Hand to God, with a mere 75 seats it is also barely able to contain it. And it is not going to be able to contain the number of people who want to see this production. The majority of the run is already sold out but anyone wanting to get up close and personal with sexy demonic puppets, and extraordinary actors who are the same, should act fast. As Pastor Greg admonishes, "You needed work for idle hands, I gave you puppets!"

Hand to God continues until Sun, May 12 at the Coal Mine Theatre, 1454 Danforth Ave.
coalminetheatre.com



DREW ROWSOME



OUT:

stepping off the sidewalk and joining the parade

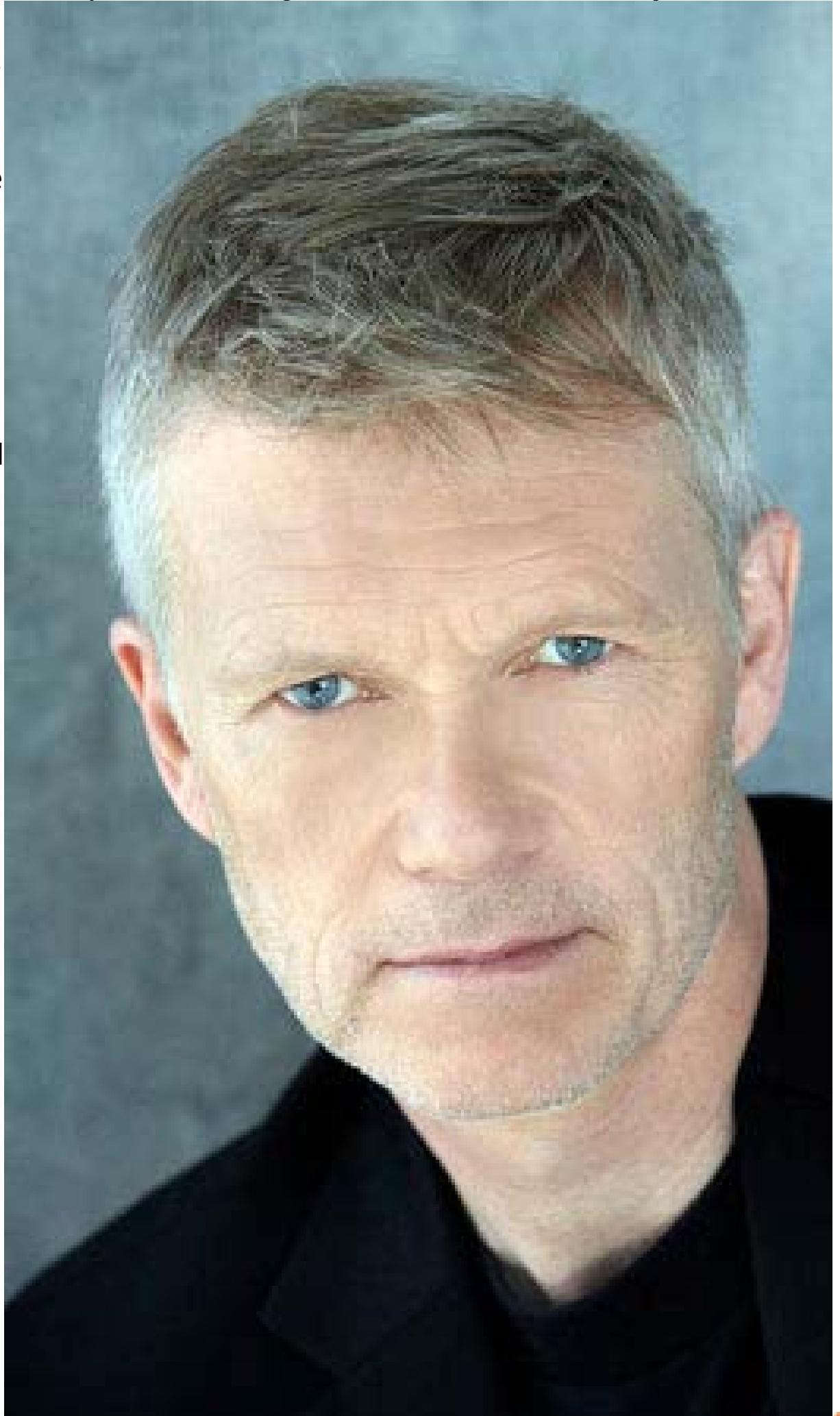


Photos by Michael Cooper, Reenie Pekovic and Tanja Tiziana

It is fabulously fitting for Buddies' 40th anniversary season that they present *Out*, a trip back to the times before safe havens and activist organizations like Buddies helped turn gay into a gayer state of being. A sweet and very funny stroll back to 1977 when discovering one's sexual identity was a crisis. From *Mary Poppins* through *Mary Hartman* to the iconic Judy Garland, Greg Campbell takes his audience through his personal coming out process and the birth of the gay world as we know it now. The days when Pride hadn't been invented but was instead a march for basic rights and recognition, and *The Boys in the Band* was a rare example, and a polarizing one, of representation.

Greg Campbell ([Heart of Steel](#), [Firebrand](#)) is a magnetic performer who easily takes the audience into his confidence. He also portrays dozens of characters, all identified by a physical posture or quirk, or a vocal inflection, without ever losing the thread of who is who in a conversation. More importantly, this feat is accomplished without drawing any attention to the daunting technical requirements: Campbell has a story to tell. He just also happens to be a highly skilled actor.

The switches between characters happen at lightning speed and have been tightly choreographed for clarity and speed.

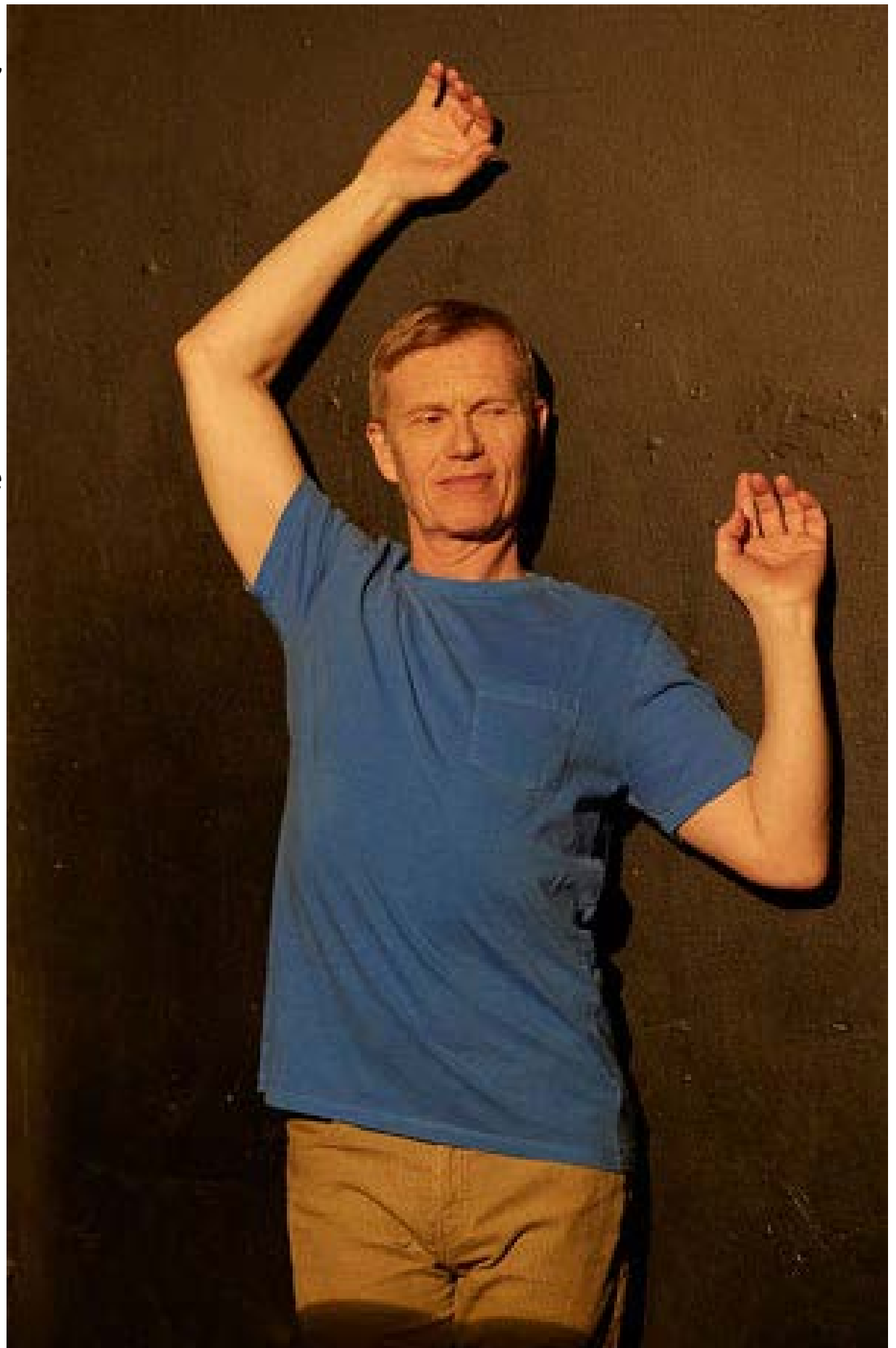


How much is organic Campbell, and how much has been assisted by director/dramaturge Clinton Walker ([The Love Crimes of Frances Lark](#), [Gash!](#)) is impossible to tell, but the final result is seamless except for the initial switch from first person - *Out* begins with a portrait of Campbell's dysfunctional family portrayed totally without narration - to third person. But once the rhythm settles in, Campbell skips past any qualms and is more than capable of being the omniscient narrator or himself, as well as the cast of dozens which includes his younger self.



The plot, culled from Campbell's journals, follows Campbell in his 17th and 18th years as he accepts his sexuality, expresses it and decides to stop hiding it. There are so many details that ring true and create a solid framework. The smell of "popcorn and Aramis" in a theatre full of gay, mostly closeted, gay men. The wisdom of The Village People and how the fantasies they stirred, particularly Felipe Rose in Campbell's case, rallied the gays before conquering the mainstream. The awkward acceptance that a family eventually had to extend or deny. An evocation of the time when a coming out story was seized on as a radical and daring admission, and was all the treasured for its rarity.

Of course coming out stories are no longer rare. Over the decades I've seen dozens of them, many of them at Buddies, particularly in the early years. They were the dominant narrative of gay theatre, literature, music and film. It was the central dilemma of gay life, when and how to leave the closet. Or as Campbell frames it, learning to accept and love oneself and one's sexuality. Of course since 1977, gays and gay art went through the plague and the realization



that white cisgender middle class males are not the only form or the superior form of gay. We went from gay to LGBTQ. And most of the men who told those coming out stories, fighting for the future, are no longer with us. Many of those stories are lost.

So the discussion became - it must be noted only after, during the performance we were too absorbed and laughing - how relevant *Out* would be to a younger audience. My coming out and venturing into the gay world is only a decade removed from Campbell's so *Out* resonated. I remember mocking Anita Bryant and dancing to disco and braving (and cruising) New York's Adonis Theatre and falling in love with every man I had sex with, even anonymously. Would it be different for someone three decades removed? I don't know but I hope it gets put to the test. After all there is one thing that all LGBTQs have in common, that moment when one decides to step off the sidewalk and join the parade.

Campbell's version of that moment is spectacularly rendered (possibly embellished . . .) and he recreates it with such awe and wonder that it is theatrical magic not a historical moment. That surge

of feeling related through the personal and unique to become universal. While *Out* is not high gay sturm und drang drama, it is a crucial reminder of how far we've come and how far we haven't come. Buddies is, against all the odds, presenting its 40th season and it is unimaginably different than the first season, but somewhere, someone is struggling to step off the sidewalk and into the big gay parade. And I hope it is as memorable and powerful and entertaining as *Out*.

Out continues until Sun, May 5 at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St.

buddiesinbadtimes.com





Dungeons and Drag Queens:

the daffy, deviant denizens of Fire Island



The title, tag line and designation are all, collectively and separately, an alluring excess to unpack:

Dungeons and Drag Queens

Fire Island through the eyes of its worst drag queen

Essays by Greg Scarnici

Disclaimer: Some of the names have been changed to protect the guilty

Then in the foreword Scarnici tells us that this is a book about Fire Island that was too gay to be published (publishers are apparently only looking for the current hot trend of “shape-shifting porn star werewolves”). So he self-published “because something tells me there is an audience for a book about a gay guy who dresses in drag and hooks up on Fire Island while someone ODs on his roof deck. And if there isn’t, IDGAF.”

Dungeons and Drag Queens is, initially, about Fire Island, that magical place that figures so much in gay literature - scathingly in [Faggots](#) - and gay mythology. There is a brief history lesson, vivid descriptions equally affectionate and affected, guest etiquette lessons, lots of sexual adventures, considerable product placement (Scarnici is also a DJ at many Fire Island venues) and yes, dungeons and drag queens. Very quickly Scarnici veers fabulously off course and the anecdotes - “essays” is one of the affectations - pepper the pages with comic reminiscences, opinions and name dropping. Scarnici has been summering on Fire Island since 1991 so he knows of what he writes. He is also an associate producer at *Saturday Night Live* and a practicing comedian/parodist/musician and a trashy genderfuck drag queen named Levonia Jenkins. So even the anecdotes that end limply are given a short stroke of a one-liner, and for the most part end hilariously. *Dungeons and Drag Queens*

DUNGEONS AND DRAG QUEENS

FIRE ISLAND
through the
eyes of its worst
drag queen

ESSAYS BY
GREG SCARNICI



is irresistibly funny and, as Scarnici has warned, very, very gay. It is a missive on the state of gay from someone immersed from his high heels to his ratty wig in the state of gay.

There are wonderful stories and profiles of iconic drag queens of a certain age, a touching explanation of his open relationship, a loving defence of disco, a multitude of good and bad tricks, more quotable quips than any book deserves or drag queen should have on hand, and a PSA, quite practical, illustrating why one shouldn't "ever go into a back room without a bandana." There is also however a troubling undertone that surfaces - most notably in "Garden Shed of Earthly Delights" and a trip to Key West - where Scarnici lets snideness override his wit.

When excoriating the elite gays of The Pines, straight white tourists and drug abusers, or chronicling his own failures and misadventures, Scarnici is flat-out hilarious. He is punching up and lands each blow with precision. But more occasionally than is palatable, Scarnici falls into the state of gay trap of mocking the less physically fortunate, the older, lesbians, or those with sexual peccadilloes that don't match his own. It's a fine line to walk and while Scarnici is very, very good at gayspeak, his stiletto sometimes slips and sloppily stabs meanly.



The very short "Golden Time of Day" is a case in point.

In the summer of 2017, there was an artist on the island collecting urine from men on the beach so he could distill their piss into a certain colour of yellow oil paint from the 1500s or some shit. Fine. Then I found out a leather daddy on the island decided to throw him a party so he wouldn't get in trouble for having guys pee in his bucket on the beach. Still all good. But then I found out that the leather daddy decided to sing opera in a harness at the pee party and that's when my head exploded.

A witty, sweet anecdote sacrificed by a judgmental jibe. Scarnici's sense of wonder at the spectrum and spectacle of the state of gay is so compelling that, when something shocks or appalls him, he turns into a vicious old queen. But then of course, doesn't everyone want to sit next to the vicious old queen? She's the one who'll be dishing the good stuff.

There are bonuses of fabulous photos and links to Scarnici and Jenkins' videos and musical endeavours. And, amid all the froth and frivolity, hardcore sex and drugs, there is a touching passage on why 2019 is finally as sexually liberated as 1978, or the delightful line and sentiment that concludes the anecdote "Bukake Boy." The state of gay has a heart. A horny, campy one. One that beats strongly throughout Dungeons and Drag Queens.



The Gordon Place:

Isaac Thorne writes a horror classic with a twist

Just outside the small southern town of Lost Hollow stands the Gordon place. Reputedly haunted, it has fallen into disrepair but constable Graham Gordon has purchased, for reasons he's unsure of, the house despite all the bad memories it contains. Walking into the house for the first time in 20 years, he is initially unaware of the horrors lurking in the basement.

Lost Hollow's self-appointed BIA, Patsy Blankenship, has opened her bed and breakfast to a crew from Channel 6 News, in the hopes that they will help promote Halloween events in Lost Hollow. She has lots of ghost stories to tantalize reporter Afia Afton and cameraman Joe "Staff" Stafford with. Little does Patsy know that Afia was a child in Lost Hollow but was torn away by a vicious vile crime that was never solved.

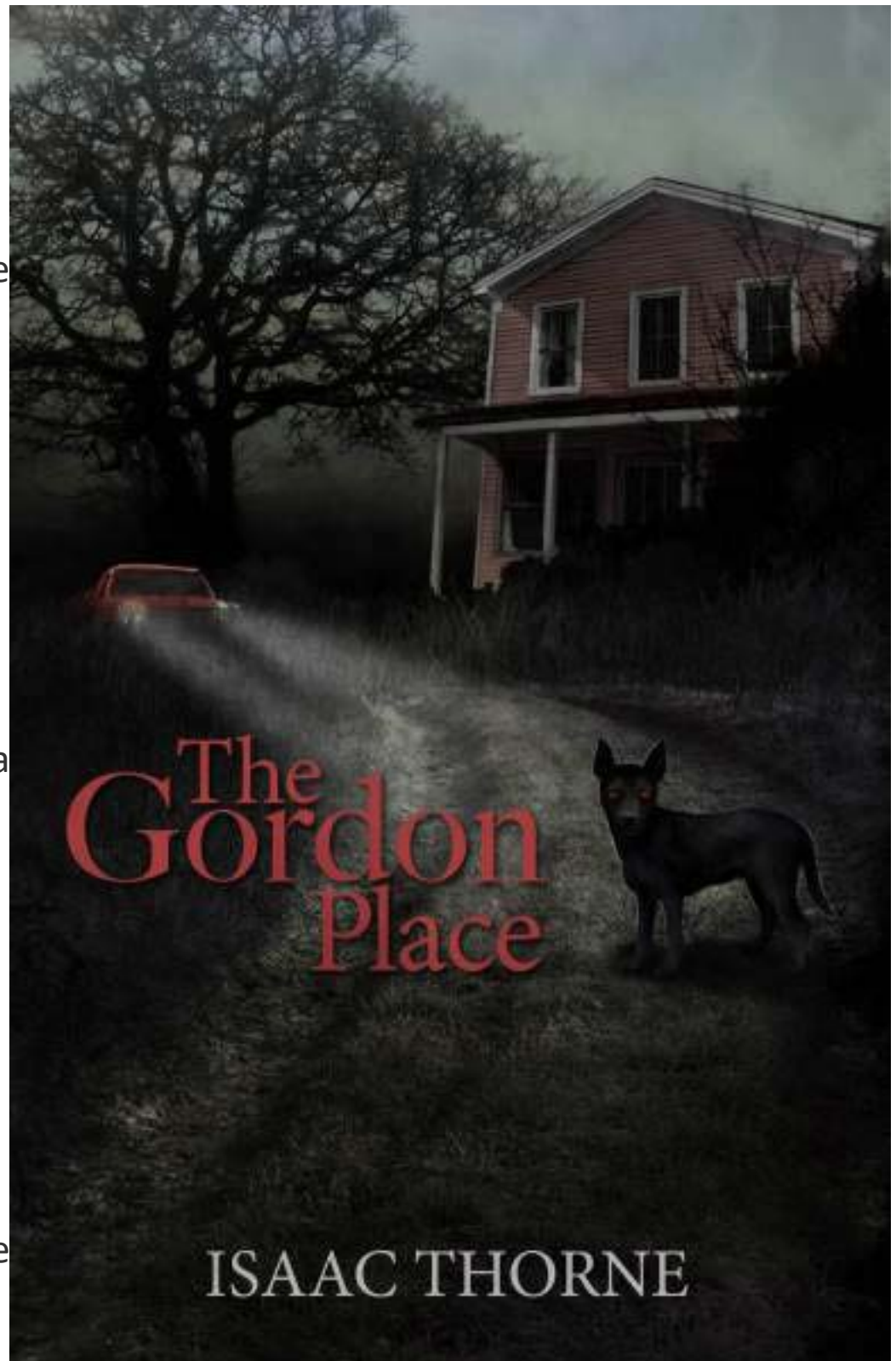
All of the characters, plus a few from the past, collide amid the horror of *The Gordon Place*.

To reveal more of the plot would spoil the fun as author Isaac Thorne ([Road Kills](#)) juggles several horror tropes, stuffs them with macguffins, and twists the readers' expectations mercilessly. Thorne eases into the story as if spinning a ghostly yarn, it is as comforting as sliding into a warm bloodbath and just as soothing and nerve-jangling.

The suspense ratchets the first time the story zigs instead of the anticipated zag, and never lets up from there. It is good that Thorne writes smooth, seductive prose because there are two plot points that require a fair suspension of disbelief, but by that point I was hooked and took the leap of faith that *The Gordon Place* was going somewhere intriguing.

And that it does. Readers looking for a spooky, gory tale full of suspense will be delighted, especially as Thorne counterbalances it with flashes of wit and off-kilter descriptions that are southern evocative and atmospheric. Each character comes complete with a back story, again usually with a twist, that is relevant and revealed in teasing bites. Even the ones who are mocked - it is a small southern town and Thorne has an acid tongue - are treated with a gentleness that makes it all the more troubling when they are put in mortal danger. The sufferings, battering and terror they experience is very empathetic. And thus disturbing and of consequence.

Even the villain of *The Gordon Place* is given a moment of potential redemption, or at least an excuse for his hideousness. That comes quite near the end of *The Gordon Place*, just before the relentless final struggle, when Thorne risks stopping the action to state his dominant concerns. And it is risky, a descriptive catch phrase gets repeated a few more times than is necessary, and the entire section skates on the edge of becoming a diatribe. That is particularly notable because Thorne has subtly seeded his subtext throughout by making Afia a black woman and Staff a gay man. Not just politically correct



- though I personally appreciate how empathetically and realistically Staff is written - but a viciously sweet twist on the, already twisted into a helix, concept of the final girl.



The mini-sermon is redeemed by a pithy one-liner that also dovetails in the theme of memory and forgiveness, followed by a rousing climactic battle of good and evil that is heartbreaking and heartpounding. *The Gordon Place* can be read as a new horror novel classic, perfect for a beach or a chilly night, but it also thrives as a commentary on contemporary mores and manners. And the general lack thereof.

I admit that I approached *The Gordon Place* with trepidation. I am a great admirer of Thorne's short stories and their quirky comic approach to horror as an art form and as transgression. Could that be sustained over the length of a novel? Fortunately it can and hopefully this is the first of many. There are references to horror archetypes, *The Wizard of Oz*, Stephen King, *The Incredible Hulk*, etc, that mix irony with admiration and help ground *The Gordon Place* in a seemingly real world. Thorne even has the chutzpah to nod at his own stories "[Hoppers](#)" and "[Diggum](#)," jokes the reader will get after finishing *The Gordon Place* and deciding to taste what else Thorne has written for our entertainment and horror.





Electric Soul: the early life of a porn star. Sort of

My reaction to *Electric Soul* has to be put into the context by which I was introduced to it. *Electric Soul* is the third volume in the Rise Up - "a series of new adult novels that illuminates pivotal moments in the lives of LGBTQ youth" - autobiographies/novels. The Rise Up series is published by 13 Red Media Ltd "a multi-faceted media company focused on providing consumers with groundbreaking LGBT content." Most readers will know one facet of 13 Red Media, the porn studio Helix.

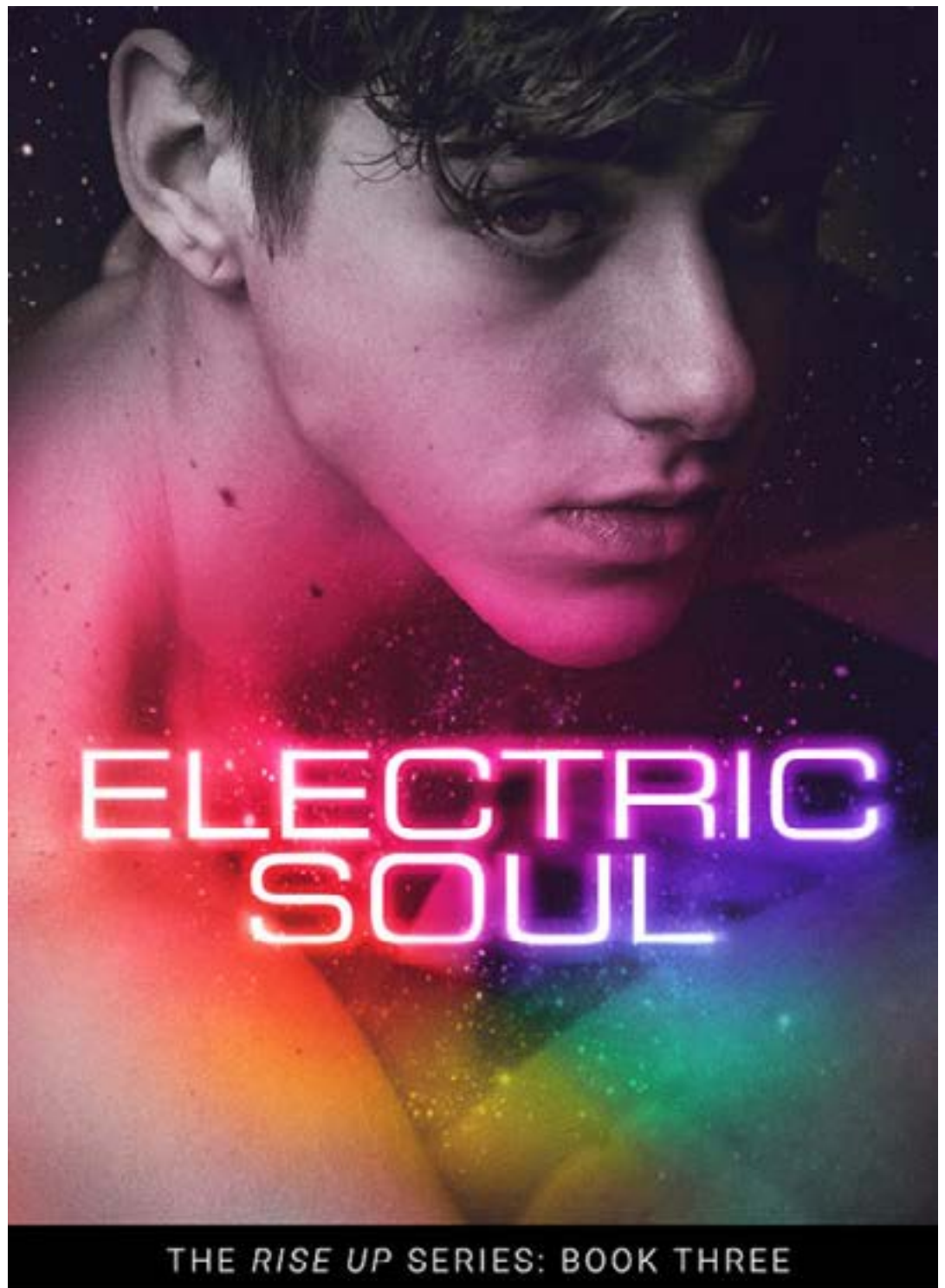
Helix's product sits firmly in the twink genre and, that not being my particular taste, I was unfamiliar with their stars. That is only crucial because the Rise Up series chronicles the early lives of Helix exclusive stars. Book one, *His Own Way Out*, is the story of Blake Mitchell, and book two, *Twink*, of Kyle Ross. I cannot resist a porn star biography or autobiography (see: [Diary of a Puerto Rican Porn](#), [Hindsight](#), [Money's on the Dresser](#), [Making It Big](#), [Boy in the Sand](#), etc. On my biography shelf Celine Dion's demented *My Story, My Dream* is nestled between the powerful *My Life in Porn: The Bobby Blake Story* and the delightful *Ron Jeremy: The Hardest (Working) Man in Showbiz*) and though I had no idea who Blake Mitchell was/is, I added *His Own Way Out* to my Amazon wish list but never got around to acquiring or reading it.

So when a review copy of *Electric Soul*, the story of Joey Mills's youth, was up for grabs, I grabbed. And, crucially, before reading I didn't google Mills beyond a visual (jail bait youthful, hairless and hung) and the official Helix studios blurb:

As gregarious as he is hilarious, perpetual fan favorite Joey Mills is the life of the party, office, and just about any venue he graces with his presence. A mainstay on pollsters "best of" lists, this multiple award winner proves he has charisma and sex appeal to stay on top, even when he's the bottom. Joey isn't your run of the mill boy next door. He's a star. Shine on, baby!

And to note that Mills shot 51 scenes with Helix in two and a half years. The boy has a work ethic. *Electric Soul* turns out to be a rather curious young adult novel. Joey is an angst-ridden teenager with two problems. 1) his creativity - he is a budding visual artist - is stifled by the rigors of school so he turns to the demon weed. (Being a live and let live Canadian, I had to google to discover that the US does allow for drug testing of middle and high school students.) His father was a drug addict but Joey winds up overdosing on a strain of synthetic marijuana and winds up in rehab.

And 2) he is gay and, despite supportive family members and only vague apprehensions, he feels that he cannot come out in his smallish town. His major dilemma over his sexuality appears to be that he enjoys having this secret. Both of the plotlines garner interest solely because of the reader's foreknowledge that Joey eventually winds up a porn star. How does that reconcile? And more crucially how does a



TAYLOR SARACEN

young adult novel portray the choice of becoming a porn actor? As the author, in conjunction with Mills himself, Taylor Saracen works for 13 Red Media as well as writing dialogue for the porn division, the moral questions kept me reading.

Alas, there are no insights or drama associated with rehab, and Joey's coming out is anti-climactic. And *Electric Soul* ends before Joey loses his virginity let alone begins acting in porn. If *Electric Soul*, which is very smoothly and professionally written, were to be promoted as to its actual content, without the porn star hook, it would be very hard (no pun intended) to figure out who the intended market would be.

Joey is repeatedly described as "charming" and with the ability to flout convention and make anyone laugh. On the page he is petulant and spoiled. All of that can be overlooked or glossed over if, as a mild coming out narrative, *Electric Soul* will help even one gay kid struggling with their sexuality. There is a sex scene that is stunningly written in all its awkward fumbling glory that is highly recommended, and the restaurant scenes are also realistically rendered. And when Joey begins to realize the consequences



of his actions and tries to figure his way out of the penalties for his drug misadventures, it does give a reader pause before toking.

There is a massive number of young adult novels that I have no knowledge of (I could barely get through a few chapters of *Twilight*, *The Fault in Our Stars* or [50 Shades of Grey](#)) so *Electric Soul* may actually be a sterling example of the genre. I would love to know how a teenage girl or gay tween would react. And I was impressed enough with Saracen's skill at keeping a listless plot and an unsympathetic protagonist intriguing, that I do hope there is a sequel.

Because a sequel would not only get us to the porn part (just how did Joey move from waiting tables to being bent over them?) but it would also hopefully offer some insight into Mills' current highly explosive life. Joey Mills has left Helix studios amid some unspecified drama, as have both the subjects of the previous Rise Up series and several other exclusive models. Consequently a book tour for *Electric Soul* was cancelled by 13 Red Media and partially reinstated by Mills's own efforts. Then Saracen posted on Twitter:

Many people have DMed asking if I'm still with Helix/13 Red & the answer is that I'm not. I'm proud of the work I did for the company (one more book coming soon), thankful for the opportunity & most importantly, grateful for some beautiful friendships. Now for the next chapter.

Add in the behind the scenes stories generated by the filming of 51 scenes, the Helix hotbed of intrigue with accusations and counter accusations, Mills's - I did a lot more googling - boyfriend (or possibly not) status with the protagonist of *Twink*, his boyfriend (or possibly not) status with fellow porn star Angel Rivera that allegedly precipitated a psychotic break with Rivera's former (or possibly not) boyfriend, and the entrepreneurship that it takes for Mills's to transform his baby face into a business poker face as he negotiates the upending porn landscape. Plus, Mills has tweeted that his mother (who in *Electric Soul* is long-suffering but endlessly understanding) is supportive of his porn career and that coming out process had to be more dramatic than his actual coming out. *Electric Soul II* is a book that I want to read.



Captain Marvel



Vers (Brie Larson) lives on the planet Hala as an elite member of the intergalactic police force, protecting the Kree people from their sworn enemies, the shape-shifting Skrulls. On a mission to save a planet from Skrull terrorism, Vers is taken prisoner and, upon her escape, crash lands on the planet we call Earth in the mid-nineties, which means that on top of the fish out of water jokes that always happen in this genre we also have nostalgia for the era that provides some kickass tunes from the likes of Garbage and Hole on the soundtrack. Looking to track down her Skrull enemies while her mentor (Jude Law) is making his way across the galaxy to help her, Vers is suddenly having haunting flashbacks to a human life that she doesn't remember leading; after teaming up with human special law enforcement officer Samuel L. Jackson, she makes her way to the Skrulls' target, a scientist (Annette Bening) who created a technology that can be used to destroy the Kree, and the search brings her closer to her own past. Ignore the silly plot holes (aliens hurtling through the atmosphere always crash land in America, in her case in exactly the spot she needs to be) and have a great time with this beautifully designed, easily enjoyable adventure that emphasizes a sense of fun and an engaging plot in place of endless explosions and battle sequences. Directors Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden treat the emotional stakes with respect but not undue reverence, we get a sense of Larson's entire character without being bogged down by boring scenes of pompous woe. The overabundance of sci-fi jargon is not as easily processed, but after you get through the top-heavy beginning, the narrative lightens up and stays diverting until the simple but satisfying end.



JT LeRoy:

the allure of ambiguity and the magnificent Laura Dern



You know, JT LeRoy does not exist. But he lives. That's what a famous film historian once said about Bugs Bunny.

- Laura Albert to *Interview*

Like everyone else in the aspiring gay arts and literary world, I read JT Leroy's novel/memoir *Sarah* as soon as I could get a copy. It was moving, frustrating and a must-read. Then, like everyone else, I watched in horror tinged with schadenfreudian delight as Leroy was unmasked and vilified. While the artistic merits of Leroy's writings can be debated, the writer was embraced whole-heartedly. A gay, possibly transgender, HIV positive man-child who was raised by a drug addicted mother who pimped him out as a lot lizard, was irresistible as a cultural touchstone. He was also, understandably, painfully shy but moved in the most rarefied of celebrity circles. He was just ahead of the times.

As the film *JT Leroy* makes very clear, JT Leroy as a work of conceptual art was also just ahead of the times. The Laura Albert character references "Ziggy



Stardust” as a justification of the creation of her alter-ego JT Leroy. That resonates considering how many have come since, from Madonna to Andy Kaufman to Richard Bachman to even Garth Brooks, it is a longstanding artistic ploy. Perhaps people, particularly the literary and celebrity establishment, were so upset by JT Leroy being fraudulent because they weren’t in on the deception. An upstart outsider fooled them all. Today he/she/they would be given their own reality television series.



JT Leroy does a good job of laying out the story of the creation of JT Leroy and how it fell apart. There is a conspicuous credit that states “Based on a true story” so that liberties can be, and are, taken. But the plot follows the basic facts as they are known: writer Laura Albert created JT Leroy as a pseudonym and, when successful, convinced her sister-in-law Savannah Knopp to impersonate Leroy for public appearances. The film contends that Albert enjoyed portraying Leroy, and definitely enjoyed the perks Leroy earned, so much that she was almost possessed by her own creation. And the same transition happened to Knopp.



The film is based on Knopp's book *Girl Boy Girl: How I Became JT LeRoy* and Knopp is, along with director Justin Kelly, an executive producer. So naturally the Knopp character has a crisis of conscience and Albert is portrayed as mentally unstable. Kristen Stewart does subtle work as Knopp/Leroy and her androgynous blankness ideally suits the Leroy persona. When she does need to communicate a contradictory emotion, it is done almost subliminally. She is a clear slate searching, and when she tries on Leroy it fits too well. The look of fleeting fear and horror when she realizes this is quietly devastating.

Laura Dern as Albert/Leroy is magnificent. The script is occasionally obvious - a moment where she realizes Knopp/Leroy has taken her rightful place as Leroy is blatant - but Dern makes it believable. She also provides an eerie ambiguity in the difference between Albert's impersonation of Leroy which feels much like possession, and Albert's impersonation of Speedie the manager which has seams showing all over it. Not only do we and the filmmakers not know just how crazy Albert is, neither does she. But Dern does.



JT LeRoy is not as concerned with the plot or laying blame, as it is with questions of art versus reality and the allure of ambiguity. Knopp/Stewart is torn between the amiable and nurturing (and breathtakingly sexy) Kelvin Harrison Jr, and the manipulative and driven movie star Eva played by Diane Kruger. Gender stereotypes are upended in the same way that JT Leroy blurred gender and sexuality expectations well before it became part of the mainstream. It is deliciously queer in tone and execution.

Albert/Dern initially justifies the creation of Leroy as a way to publicize the band that she and Knopp's brother (Jim Sturgess) are struggling to make a success. The music motif, beyond the Ziggy Stardust reference, is woven into the fabric of the film with the use of Kiss - who were nothing without their heavily made-up alter-egos - posters and t-shirts. The use of the chestnut "Windmills of My Mind" is also a meta-musical moment. Not subtle but precisely on point. And the sole person ballsy enough to play themselves is Courtney Love, who it is a delight to see on the screen again. Unsurprisingly, Love also gets the best zinger of the entire proceedings.

JT LeRoy begins with a quote from Oscar Wilde - "The truth is never pure and rarely simple" - and Albert/Dern reiterates at least twice that "Sometimes the lies are more true than the truth." And that's probably the fascination with the JT Leroy story and with this film. When does a persona become fraudulent, an impersonation a crime? Dern brilliantly skithers across all the possibilities and *JT LeRoy* charms as much as it disturbs. Knopp may not have made her case for redemption but JT Leroy highlights how blurring the edges of reality, sexuality and gender is as enticing and life-saving as it is dangerous.

JT LeRoy opens in Toronto on Fri, May 3

We Know Gay



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drewrowsome.blogspot.ca.



Sean Leber - Founder, MGT Creative Director.



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



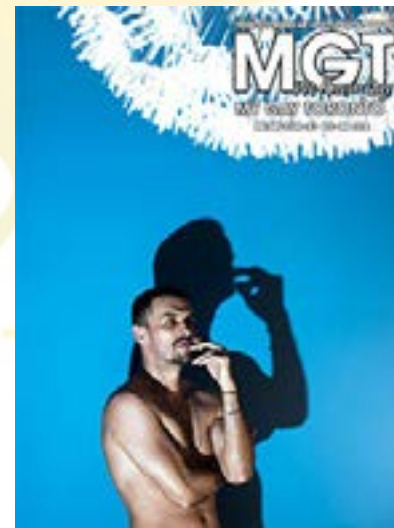
Paul Bellini was a writer for The Kids in the Hall and a producer for This Hour Has 22 Minutes, and columnist at Fab Magazine...



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



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