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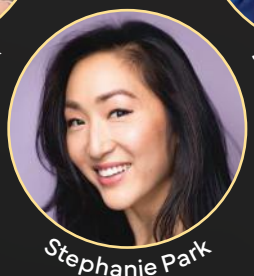
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Andriana Chuchman in *La traviata*. Photo by Thomas Grady courtesy of Opera Omaha.

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(from left) Krystina Alabado, Isabelle McCalla, Kate Rockwell, and Ryann Redmond. Photo by Jim Cox.

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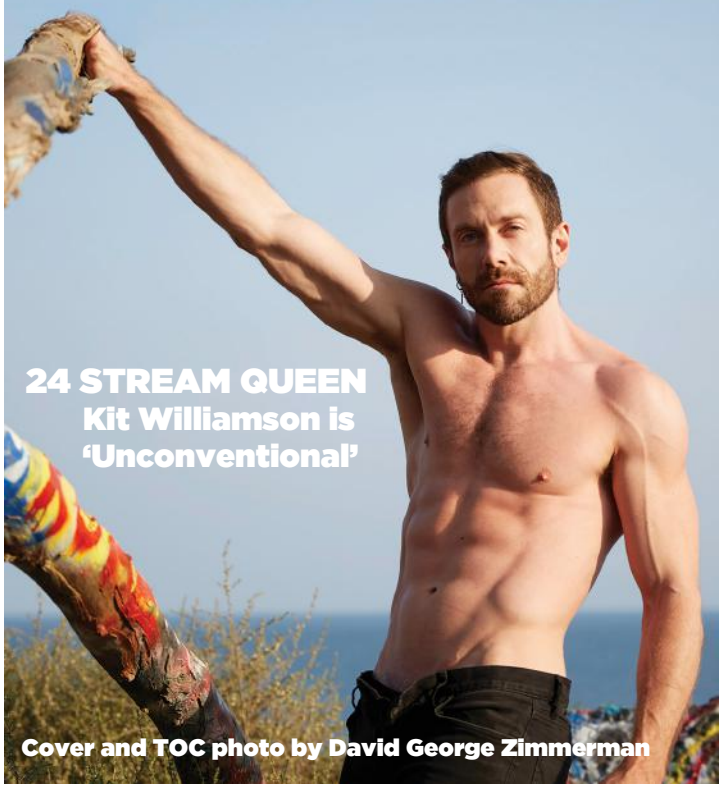
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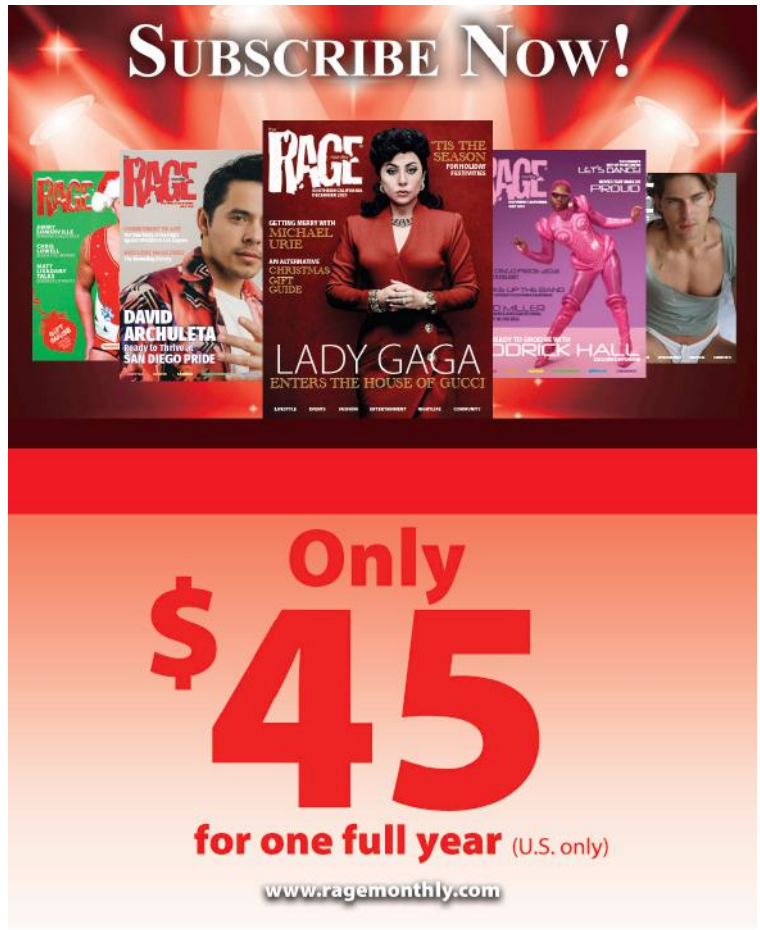
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A CELEBRATION OF QUEER COMIC BOOKS AND COSPLAY PRIDE

Prism Comics, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting LGBTQ+ diversity and representation in comic books, graphic novels and popular culture, has announced the fourth annual **Q Con**. This event represents the only queer comic convention in Southern California and signifies the return of the **Q Con Podcast**.

The event is scheduled to occur on **Saturday, May 3** at Fiesta Hall in West Hollywood. Q Con celebrates LGBTQ+ comic books, graphic novels, pop media and gaming cosplay.

Open to the public, Q Con is suitable for families. Pre-teens to adults can explore an extensive array of comics and graphic novels that affirm queer representation. Attendees can meet comic creators, obtain autographs, participate in panels, and proudly showcase their cosplay. A costume contest will offer fun and prizes.

Q Con the Podcast will return with bi-weekly episodes that include engaging interviews with Q Con exhibitors and industry professionals. Each episode is complemented by discussions with pop culture experts on the latest entertainment news from a queer viewpoint. **qconprism.org**

A FLAVOR-PACKED CULINARY & COCKTAIL EXPERIENCE

Get ready for the **Taste of Hillcrest** on **Saturday, April 14.** This is the perfect chance for foodies to enjoy a delightful day filled with amazing bites, refreshing craft cocktails and the lively spirit of Hillcrest, San Diego's vibrant LGBTQ+ cultural hub district.

This year's event will provide a unique tasting experience, highlighting over 25 of the best restaurants, bars and shops in the gayborhood. Guests can indulge in everything from gourmet dishes to artisanal beverages. Whether you crave authentic Italian, vibrant Mexican flavors, classic American cuisine or sumptuous pastries, Taste of Hillcrest has something to delight every palate craving.

Kick off the day with a free pre-event yoga session by S.H.I.F.T. Pilates. Then, gather your favorite foodie friends, bring your biggest appetite and get ready to sip, savor and enjoy a delightful stroll through Hillcrest. **fabuloushillcrest.com**







ISAAC MIZRAHI LIVE

Fashion designer and entertainment figure **Isaac Mizrahi** will perform at various venues across California. These performances, featuring his acclaimed jazz sextet, will showcase his trademark mix of humor, clever storytelling and music. With a captivating stage presence, Mizrahi is renowned for enchanting audiences with his distinctive style.

In addition to his cabaret shows, Mizrahi has left a lasting impression on the entertainment industry as a performer, host, writer, designer and producer for over 30 years. His most recent role was Amos Hart in the Broadway production of *Chicago*. He has performed at various venues nationwide, including his annual residencies at Café Carlyle and 54 Below in New York City, Bing Concert Hall at Stanford University, Artown Festival in Reno, Hobby Center for the Performing Arts in Houston, Westport Country Playhouse in Connecticut, and the Festival of the Arts BOCA in Florida.

Mizrahi is widely recognized for his contributions to film and television. He co-created and is featured in the documentary *Unzipped*, which follows the creation of his Fall 1994 collection and received an award at the Sundance Film Festival. His television work includes hosting *The Isaac Mizrahi Show* for seven years and judging on *Project Runway: All-Stars* during its seven seasons. In June 2023, he premiered his podcast *Hello Isaac*, featuring candid discussions with celebrity guests about success, failure and everything in between.

Upcoming appearances in Southern California will include **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** in Beverly Hills on **Thursday, April 17**; **Carpenter Performing Arts Center** in Long Beach on **Saturday, April 19**; and **Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center's David & Dorothea Garfield Theatre** in La Jolla on **Tuesday, April 22**. **helloisaac.com**

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GET CENTERED

Supporting LGBTQ Centers is Crucial Now More Than Ever to Safeguard Rights and Provide Essential Resources Amidst a Challenging Political Climate

Los Angeles LGBT Center, in partnership with TransLatin@ Coalition, Equality California and Advocates for Trans Equality, will host **Trans Liberation Now!**, a large-scale rally at Anita May Rosenstein Campus in Hollywood on **Saturday, April 5**. This event aims to celebrate, empower and promote transgender visibility and liberation. The rally will serve as both a local action and a catalyst for a nationwide movement, inviting peer organizations nationwide to host parallel events in solidarity.

With dynamic speakers and compelling calls to action, Trans Liberation Now! seeks to unite communities, confront anti-trans laws, and uphold the rights and dignity of transgender, nonbinary, intersex and non-conforming (TGNBI+) individuals everywhere. Participants can also engage on-site with local organizations providing advocacy resources, as well as health and social services through the TGNBI+ Resource Fair.

"The Los Angeles LGBT Center is proud to stand with our trans community in demanding nothing less than justice, protection, and full equality. At a moment when the political scapegoating and legislative attacks against transgender people have reached the highest levels of government, we refuse to be silent. Trans Liberation Now! is a call to arms — a declaration that we will fight for the rights, dignity, and very existence of TGNBI+ people," **Los Angeles LGBT Center CEO Joe Hollendoner** said.

More than 700 bills that would negatively impact TGNBI+ people are under consideration in statehouses across the country, and this number is only expected to grow in the coming months. In response to the Trump administration's aggressive rhetoric and heightened legislative attacks on the TGNBI+ community, Trans Liberation Now! will carve a space dedicated to community engagement and tangible call-to-action. Attendees are encouraged to RSVP at **lalgbtcenter.org**

Art enthusiasts should mark their calendars for the **2025 Ageless Art Show** at **San Diego LGBT Community Center** in Hillcrest on **Saturday, April 19**. Celebrate the power of creativity and the remarkable talents of the **50 & Better Together Senior Services Program**. This unique occasion highlights the extraordinary creations of the Ageless Art Group, offering a space to honor the significant contributions of LGBTQ+ artists 50 and older —artists whose impact on our community warrants recognition and appreciation.

Enjoy an afternoon filled with stunning artwork, refreshments and wine. Many artists will also have their pieces available for purchase. **thecentersd.org**

San Diego LGBT Community Center also invites everyone to participate in one of their most anticipated fundraising events of the year: **Dining Out For Life San Diego** (DOFLSD) on **Thursday, April 24**.

DOFLSD attracts thousands to dine at various San Diego locations every year, raising money for The Center. This initiative transforms mealtime into a significant act of generosity. This is a chance to enjoy a delightful experience while contributing to the local community and nourishing your body.

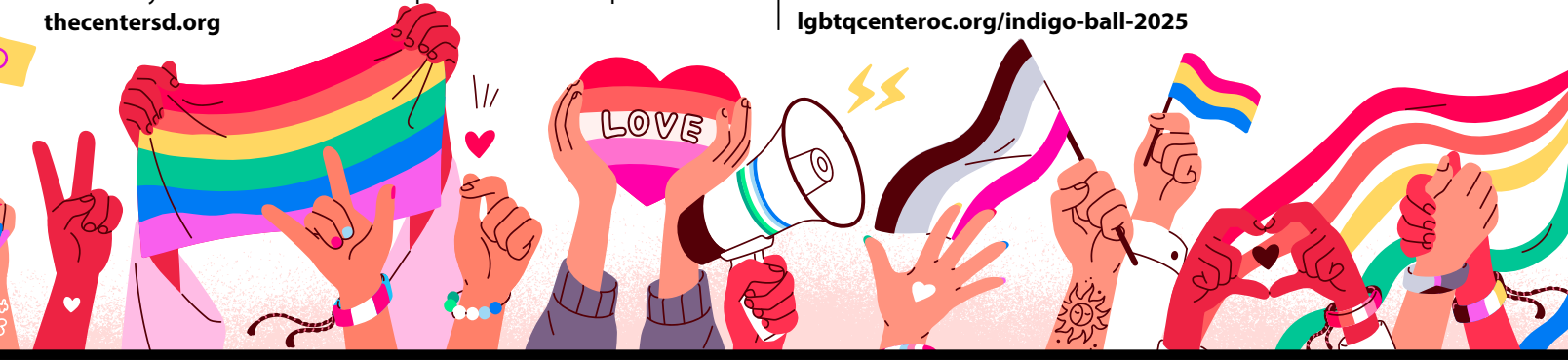
This fundraiser is crucial each year, generating essential support and funding for vital services. This year is especially critical because The Center faces significant federal funding risks. Proposed cuts aim at LGBTQ+ programs, affecting healthcare access, HIV prevention, housing, mental health services and other supportive resources, putting the capacity to deliver life-saving care in jeopardy. DOFLSD provides the financial resilience to counter these challenges and assist those in need while providing a fun and inclusive opportunity for everyone to participate.

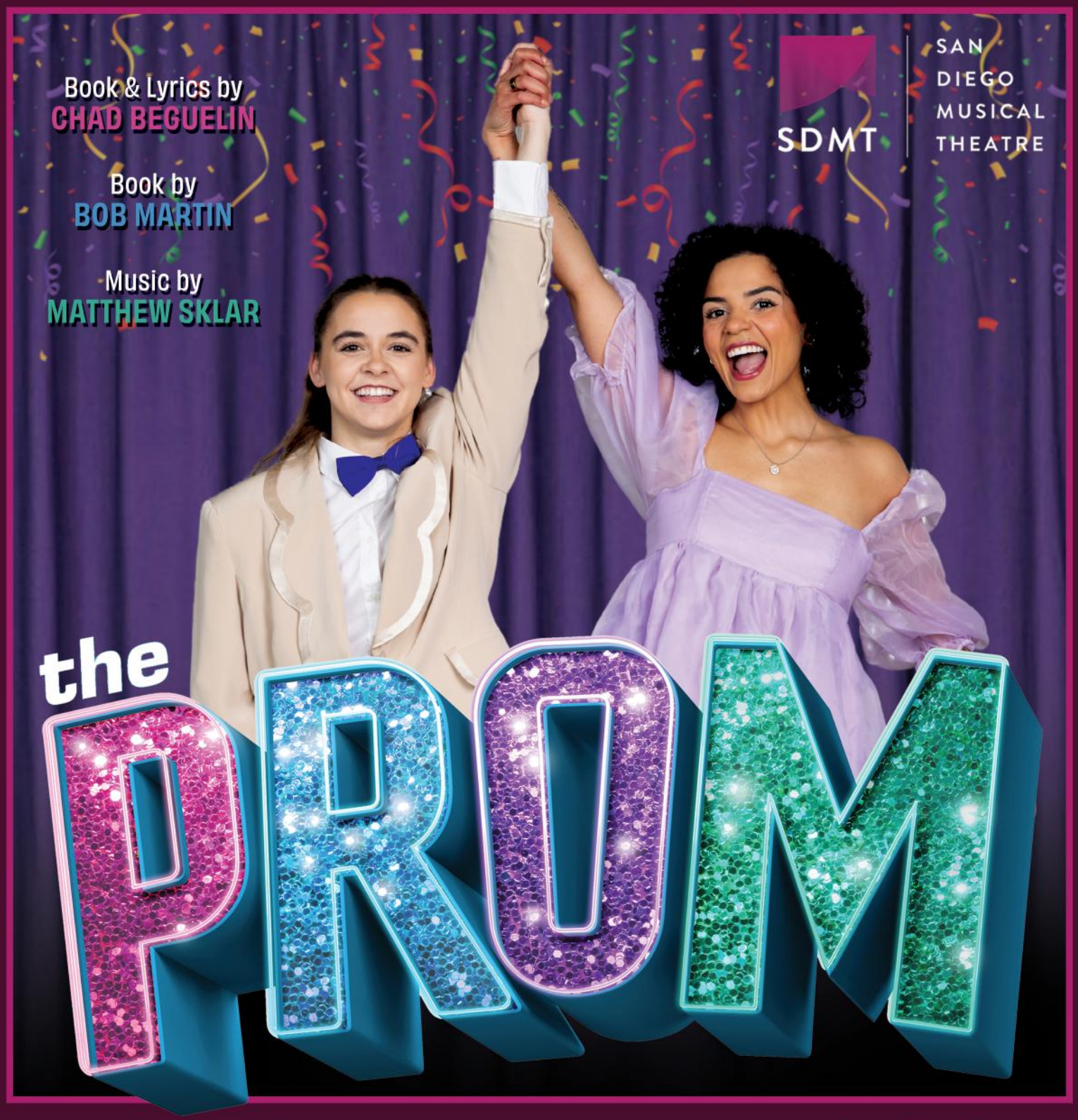
Making a meaningful impact and supporting your community has never been simpler. Participating restaurants, bars and cafés throughout San Diego will contribute 25% or more of their sales from breakfast, lunch, dinner and late-night services to The Center, ensuring crucial services remain accessible for those in need. Just show up, order your favorite meal and enjoy. **thecentersd.org**

In a regal mood? **Indigo Ball 2025** will be **Saturday, April 26**. Organized by the **LGBTQ Center OC** at Hyatt Regency Newport Beach, this annual gala serves as The Center's biggest fundraiser. Experience a night full of entertainment, connection and celebration of the organization's impactful services to the community.

This year's theme, Out to Empower, honors the resilience, strength and unity that characterize the LGBTQ+ community. Participants will assist The Center in continuing its vital work and supporting many individuals' lives.

The Torchbearer Honorees will be **Adams Bouska and Jeff Parshley**, co-founders of the NOH8 Campaign. The host will be **Manila Luzon**, an international drag queen celebrated for her campy approach to glamour, signature black-and-blonde wigs, and sharp humor. Manila, who seamlessly blends stylish fashion with playful elements, gained prominence as a fan-favorite runner-up on *RuPaul's Drag Race* Season 3 and made two comebacks on *All-Stars*. **lgbtqcenteroc.org/indigo-ball-2025**





MAY 2 - JUNE 1, 2025

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Musical Direction by VAN ANGELO

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JOIN PALM SPRINGS GAY MEN'S CHORUS FOR A MAGICAL CELEBRATION



Disney Pride in Concert will be a spectacular celebration of LGBTQ+ life, love, family and Pride presented through the combination of timeless songs from the Disney songbook, curated video clips from the Disney vault, and the personal life experiences of singers.

The latest concert will coincide with their 25th anniversary celebration, and is a collection of iconic songs from nostalgic Disney films like *Peter Pan, The Little Mermaid, The Lion King* and *Mary Poppins*. Along with modern Disney and Pixar movies like *Coco, Zootopia* and *Wreck-It Ralph*.

The Palm Springs Gay Men's Chorus (PSGMC) will be one of only a handful of choruses nationwide that have the privilege to present this performance for kids of all ages.

PSGMC Artistic Director **Jerry R. Soria-Foust** is a music educator and arts leader with a career spanning more than 25 years. At age 19, he had his first GALA chorus experience, performing in the inaugural season of the Indianapolis Men's Chorus. That experience was transformational, and he credits participation in several GALA organizations for the fulfilling life he leads as a conductor and activist today.

From 2004-2009, he served as the San Diego Men's Chorus's artistic director. He led that chorus through many milestones, including performing as mainstage entertainment on an ocean liner for RSVP Cruises, singing the national anthem for the San Diego Padres, and becoming the resident choral ensemble in the newly renovated Balboa Theatre. During his time with SDMC, the chorus collaborated with several award-winning artists.

Soria-Foust was the founding director of Opus Q – A Men's Vocal Ensemble, specializing in diverse repertoire performed in intimate settings in the Bay Area. He also served briefly as the artistic director for the Lesbian/Gay Chorus of San Francisco, where the chorus collaborated with luminaries like Sharon Gless and Sir Ian McKellen, and he guest-conducted the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus.

He has been involved in over 100 productions as a theatre director and producer. As executive director and director of education of Berkeley Playhouse, he drastically expanded the organization's programs, ticket sales, subscribers and budget. From 2011-2019, Soria-Foust founded and served as artistic director of Windy City Performs, an all-ages professional theatre and conservatory in Chicago. WCP was nominated for multiple BroadwayWorld Chicago awards and was named Chicago Magazine's Readers' Choice award for Best Theatre in 2016.

His passions include inspiring people of all ages to love the performing arts, creating access to life-changing performing arts opportunities for children of all backgrounds, and exploring how the arts can answer some of today's most difficult challenges. He graduated from Butler University, the American College of Education and San Diego State University. Soria-Foust currently serves on the Education & Membership Committee of GALA Choruses and is a member of the American Choral Directors' Association.

THE RAGE MONTHLY CAUGHT UP WITH SORIA-FOUST BEFORE THE CONCERT'S OPENING TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE TRIBUTE TO DISNEY.

How did you land the Artistic Director position for PSGMC?

I am in the middle of my fourth season as artistic director of PSGMC. I was hired in the summer of 2021, as the chorus was coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, when no one knew if people would come back to singing in groups or if audiences would come back to hear us! It was a national, months-long search, one that started before my family moved across the country from Indiana to California.

Can you share what has been the most rewarding part of this chapter?

There have been so many highlights over the past four years! We have worked with Broadway and pop stars, collaborated with other community organizations, performed in some of the most exciting venues, and even traveled across the country to present our music at the quadrennial GALA Choruses festival in Minneapolis (along with 7,000 other queer and allied singers). Of course, the privilege of presenting Disney pride in concert is extremely notable, as only a handful of other groups across the country have been selected by Disney to do this piece. We're so excited to bring it to the Annenberg Theatre in late April.

It is truly a dream to work with a board of directors that is forward-thinking, committed to excellence, and very much interested in making the chorus into a world-class organization while maintaining its important role as a leading community organization. Because we have such a strong board and the board understands its role so well, I am able to do things artistically that are really satisfying, and I feel fully supported trying new ideas.

When did the chorus move to Palm Springs Art Museum?

The chorus has been a long-time partner with the PS Art Museum and the Annenberg. We feel so blessed to perform in this architectural gem, and the staff treats us like family. Anything we need, they are there to provide it — always above and beyond. I love that the auditorium just feels like Palm Springs with its style and orange colors. And the audience is so close and cozy. It's almost like sitting in your living room.

What was the inspiration behind your decision to go with the Disney theme?

Disney Pride in Concert was conceived by the Boston Gay Men's Chorus during COVID, with music arranged by Chad Weirick, who is on the staff of Boston. It's been performed in Boston, San Francisco, LA, Fort Lauderdale, and now Palm Springs. The piece is a two-hour musical and audio/visual walk down memory lane. It features the stories and characters that so many of us have cherished over the years and is presented in a way that celebrates community, family and, of course, Pride. Working with Disney to present this exciting show has been a years-long process. Audiences will be treated to music from all of the classic stories like *Peter Pan, Cinderella, Pinocchio*, etc. Plus, there is music from more recent hits, like *Coco*, and some of the Pixar movies, including *Toy Story* and *Monsters Inc.*, and others. The coordination of the video elements with the music is just spectacular.

You also have a background in conducting. Will you be leading the chorus on this one?

My role as artistic director is to develop the vision for our seasons and our shows, take the chorus through the rehearsal process, conceive and execute the production elements of the show, and make sure all of it comes together in a way that is true to the vision and representative of our chorus' reputation of excellence. Of course, the capstone of that entire process is the actual performance, where I get the honor of leading the chorus in front of an audience. It is a truly thrilling experience to lead 120 singers on the stage of the Annenberg in front of sold-out audiences.

Would you elaborate on the curated video clips from the Disney vault and what audiences can expect?

One of the great challenges of putting this piece together is making sure the tempos are just right, as all of the music is timed to sync with video clips provided by Disney. It's a lot of pressure-especially for me. But we hope we do it so seamlessly that the audience doesn't even realize it's a challenge.

What future aspirations do you imagine for PSGMC?

In general, I am always striving to make our sound better, our productions more exciting and professional-looking, and our collaborations more meaningful and truer to the mission of the organization.

In terms of specific plans for the future . . . We have a few really exciting announcements to make in the next few months, including about our Season 26, which will be bigger and better than ever. I can't announce our season publicly yet, but I can tell you that we hope to bring our bus tour back in December, commission more new music for men's voices, lend our energy and time to some new causes in our community, and present some truly memorable concert themes and music for our loyal and supportive audiences in 2025-26.

***Disney Pride in Concert* will run Thursday, April 24 through Sunday, April 27 at Annenberg Theater in the Main Museum, 101 Museum Drive, Palm Springs. psgmc.com | 760.325.4490**



Jerry R. Soria-Foust

HAPPY APRIL!

THE YEAR IS ALREADY FLYING BY, AND WARM TEMPERATURES ARE A CONSTANT AS THE SOCIAL SCENE CONTINUES TO HEAT UP EVERYONE'S SCHEDULES.



Tastes and Sounds of Cathedral City offer free concerts every Tuesday evening at Cathedral City Amphitheater. Leanna and The Free Agents will take the stage on April 8, followed by Giselle Woo and The Night Owls on April 15. tasteandsounds.discovercathedralcity.com

Rock The Park, Tribute Bands: Season Four from Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce will present Vegas McGraw, Tim McGraw Tribute Band, Wednesday, April 2, and L.A.Vation, billed as the world's greatest tribute to U2, Wednesday, May 7. pschamber.org



FIND Food Bank, the desert's regional food bank live telethon, will be Friday, April 4 on KESQ News Channel 3. findfoodbank.org

Palm Springs Animal Shelter Faux Fur Ball will be Saturday, April 5, at Palm Springs Air Museum. A Night of Glitz and Glamour will raise money for the shelter and Desert Wildlife Center. psanimalshelter.org



Palm Springs Cultural Center's spring concerts will include **New York's Finest: Mama, I'm A Big Girl Now**, with the original Tracy, Penny and Amber from Broadway's *Hairspray* reuniting for a tribute to celebrate 20 years of Broadway hits on Saturday, April 5. psculturalcenter.org

The 13th annual **Sammy's International Meatball Festival** will be Sunday, April 6 at Boys and Girls Club of Cathedral City. Meatball tasting/competition plus entertainment from Leanna and Miguel. bgcccity.org

Palm Springs Opera Guild will present **Opera in The Park** on Sunday, April 6 in Sunrise Park. This free outdoor concert will feature world-class opera singers performing arias and ensembles with a live orchestra. palmspringsoperaguild.org

An encore of the Modernism Week show celebrating the 1960s, **Hey! Hey! We're The Monkees**, a musical tribute to the PreFab 4, will be Wednesday, April 9 at Agua Caliente Casino Cascade Lounge featuring Joan and Gary Gand, Alan Kraemer and Claudia Ried, Siobhan Velarde, Robbie Wayne, Will Wiegler and Lily Mitchell. thegandband.com



CSUSB Opera Theatre will reprise its production of the **AIDS Quilt Songbook** at CSUSB Palm Desert on Friday, April 11. The event is a collection of songs and poems dedicated to those impacted by AIDS, honoring lives lost, acknowledging the stigma and fear surrounding the disease, and offering a tribute to those affected since its emergence in the early 1980s. csusb.edu/pdc

The **Agua Caliente Casino Palm Springs** 30th anniversary outdoor concert and celebration will be Friday, April 11, with rock legends Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo. aguacalientecasinos.com

Desert Theatricals will present ***Hairspray: The Broadway Musical*** on April 11-13 at Rancho Mirage Amphitheatre. desert-theatricals.com



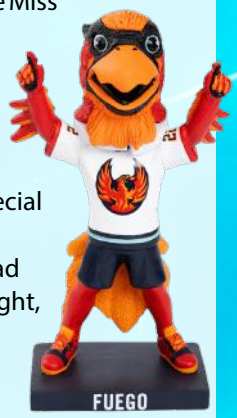
Modern Men, Coachella Valley Men's Chorus, spring concert, **The 70s Show**, will be April 11-13 at Palm Springs Cultural Center under the direction of Dr. Stan Hill. modernmen.org

The **Do LaB**, an art experience and electronic music festival within the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, will return for its 20th anniversary during both weekends, April11-13 and April 18-20, at Empire Polo Club in Indio. The lineup will feature DJs and electronic music artists along with drag persona and Palm Springs hotel owner **Trixie Mattel**. Headlining Coachella will be Lady Gaga, Green Day and Post Malone. coachella.com



City of Palm Springs Parks and Recreation will present the **World Art Day Festival** on Saturday, April 12 at the downtown City Park. This free event will include artists in action, live entertainment, art programs, hands-on projects and a play zone. psworldartday.com

REAF (The Richmond/Ermet AID Foundation) House Party PS: Lights! Camera! Action!, celebrating stars of the silver screen, will be Saturday, April 12, at a private estate in Palm Springs. In a tribute to Frank Sinatra and the Rat Pack, special entertainment will be singer-songwriter Spencer Day, known for Post-Modern Jukebox; in tribute to Judy Garland, will be Kim Schroeder-Long. Also appearing will be Miss Bee Haven and emcee for the event, Bella da Ball. The event benefits Oak Grove Sanctuary and The Bent Theater Company. Coming soon will be REAF's pink party on Saturday, May 10. reaf-sf.org



Coachella Valley Firebirds hockey team special event nights will include: Saturday, April 12, pre-game events in the Plaza, plus a bobblehead giveaway; Friday, April 18, Fan Appreciation Night, with live music on the Plaza, specials and rally towel giveaway. cvfirebirds.com

Free movies in the downtown City Park, presented by the Palm Springs Cultural Center, will include ***The Love Bug*** on April 15 and ***The Secret of Nimh*** on April 29. psculturalcenter.org

Pride Night at The Living Desert Glow in the Park will be Thursday, April 17. Hundreds of larger-than-life lanterns will showcase the wonders of wildlife from across the globe, through April 27. There is also an adults-only night on April 3. livingdesert.org/glow.



Dezart Performs will present ***Falsettos***, directed by Dennis Courtney, April 18-27 in Pearl McManus Theater at Palm Springs Woman's Club. dezartperforms.org

A fundraiser for Palm Springs Cultural Center will be Saturday, April 19, titled **Unlimited, A Wickedly Wonderful Celebration of Oz**. This immersive concert, directed by Douglas Graham, is inspired by musicals *The Wizard of Oz, The Wiz* and *Wicked*. Broadway star Julie Garnye and local performers, including Charles Huff, will appear, along with DJ Tina Turntables, Oz-themed cocktails, a build-a-wand craft station and photo ops. Costumes encouraged. psculturalcenter.org

Easter celebrations! Check your favorite bars and restaurants for Easter bonnet contests, Easter egg hunts and fun events where you can wear your bunny ears and fuzzy tails.

Earth Day, Our Power, Our Planet, will be celebrated Tuesday, April 22, at Rancho Mirage Library. ranchomirageca.gov

CV Rep (Coachella Valley Repertory) will present ***Other Desert Cities*** from April 23 to May 4. cvrep.org



DAP Health's **Dining Out for Life Greater Palm Springs** will be Thursday, April 24 at dozens of locations throughout the valley. Whether breakfast, lunch or dinner, dining out or take-out, restaurants, bars and coffee shops will donate a percentage of their sales to DAP Health to fund programs and services. daphealth.org

California's country music festival, **Stagecoach**, will be April 25-27. Featured headliners will include Zach Bryan, Jelly Roll, Luke Combs, Brothers Osborne, Lana Del Rey, Sammy Hagar, and Backstreet Boys. stagecoachfestival.com

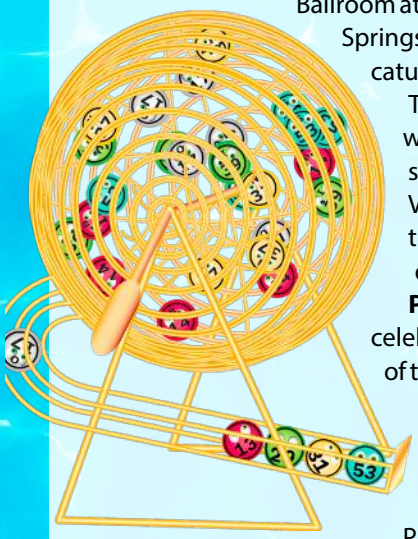
The annual **Pink Ball** benefiting the Transgender Health & Wellness Center's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Rapid Rehousing Program will be Saturday, April 26 at Flannery Exchange. A Cabbello will provide entertainment along with drag artists Vanity Halston and Diva as well as DJ Galaxy. trans.health





Mid-Century Modern is a new comedy television show from the creators of *Will and Grace*, which premiered on Hulu in March. It stars Nathan Lane, Matt Bomer, Linda Lavin and Nathan Lee Graham, and is set in Palm Springs with three gay men of a certain age who retired together and live at the Dinah Shore estate. There are exterior views of the Dinah and other Palm Springs locations, such as Purple Room (renamed Cheuvette Inn) and downtown PS. 20th Television is the studio. Guest stars include Kim Coles, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Judd Hirsch, Richard Kind, Cheri Oteri and Rhea Perlman. hulu.com

The fourth annual **Animal Samaritans "Caturday"** breakfast and bingo will be Saturday, April 26 in Sky Ballroom at Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs. animalsamaritans.org/caturday.



The **Desert X** art exhibition will run through May 11 at sites across the Coachella Valley. A map is available on the website and app. desertx.org

Palm Springs Hot Rodeo, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the International Gay Rodeo Association, will be May 1-4. This is the first-ever all-women-led rodeo. The host hotel is Motel 6 in downtown Palm Springs. Activities will include a dance contest and cowgirl night at Hunters, a pool party at Motel 6, a welcome party and registration mingle at Tool Shed and dancing under the stars at Oscars. The rodeo will be at A. C. Dysart Equestrian Park in Banning. psrodeo.org

McCallum Open Call Talent Project will be May 2-3, with local performers of all ages presented in a talent competition. mccallum-theatre.org

Retro Palm Springs, a nostalgic fan convention celebrating pop culture, will be May 3-4 at Palm Springs Convention Center. The days will include celebrity guests, rad vintage shopping, an arcade and video store and retro-themed experiences. Guests will include local Wesley Eure (*Land of the Lost, Days of Our Lives*), Kathy Coleman, Sid Krofft, Elizabeth Berkley, Mark-Paul Gosselaar, Mario Lopez, Tori Spelling, Brian Austin Green, Christine Elise, Stephen Baldwin, Holly Marie Combs, Kerri Green, Doug Jones, Morgan Fairchild, John Ratzenberger, Judith Hoag and David Barclay. Memories from *Beverly Hills 90210, Saved by The Bell, Cheers* and many others will be brought to life. retropalmsprings.com



The **Palm Springs' Cinco de Mayo Arenas District** celebration will be Sunday, May 4. Entertainment will include Mariachi Arco Iris de Los Angeles, DJs Lizz Castles, Bassmoves and Galaxy. Plus, mechanical bull riding. cincodemayopalmsprings.com

Harvey Milk Coachella Valley Diversity breakfast will be Thursday, May 8 at Palm Springs Convention Center. Honorees will include Toni Atkins, 51st president pro tempore of the California State Senate, and Holly Near, singer-songwriter and actress. The breakfast honors the memory of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay elected official in California and his legacy of groundbreaking inspiration in the struggle to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality. pspride.org/harveymilk



It's never too early to think of Christmas. **Barry Manilow** will presents his holiday concerts, Manilow, A Gift of Love VII, December 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 at McCallum Theatre. These five concerts benefit 25 local charities, including AAP-Food Samaritans, Boo2Bullying, DAP Health, Safe Schools Desert Cities and Guide Dogs of the Desert. agol7.com



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Elmer's Restaurant
FARM
Fusion Five
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The Pantry at Holiday House
Jake's
Johannes
Juniper Table
Loco Charlies Mexican Grill
Low Desert Modern Mexican
Native Foods
Palm Greens
Play Lounge Café
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La Cocina at Reforma
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Runway
The Barn Kitchen at Sparrows Lodge
Tac/Quila
The Front Porch
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See the full list of locations & details on DAPHealth.org/DOFL

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APRIL FOOLS' PREDICTIONS

It's no secret that I love a good prank, and I've stated before that I feel that April Fools' Day should be an all-year event. Still, I usually reserve my best ones for the first day of the fourth month of the year.

Take, for example, last year: A friend of mine gifted me with a Madonna Blonde Ambition Tour jacket — I'll just assume it wasn't an original — and it seemed like the perfect opportunity to spin a yarn on the Book of Face. I explained that Madonna had given me the jacket after I was selected to be a backup dancer on her 1990 world tour.

However, during rehearsals on "Express Yourself," I went left when I was supposed to go right and twisted my ankle, rendering me unable to continue on, and my consolation prize was the jacket. And I explained in my post that by wearing it many, many, many years later was a reminder about the resilience of the human spirit. Sure, Jan.

The reactions I got ranged from "you're so brave" and "thank you for sharing your inspirational story." Not a single person responded with "good one," or even "April Fools." Y'all have calendars on your phones, right?

So, it is in the spirit of shenanigans that I look into a crystal ball and present you, the reader, with my take on entertainment predictions, April Fools' Day style.

THE BIG SCREEN

The 1960s cartoon ***Johnny Quest*** will get the live-action treatment, but Race Bannon (**John Cena**) and Dr. Benton Quest (**Michael Fassbender**) are gay daddies in more ways than one. Not only are they raising the titular character (**Noah Schnapp** in a blonde wig) and Hadji (a de-aged **Kal Penn**) but are also heavy into the leather scene and circuit parties. Talk about a balancing act!

The Color Pink is an all-lesbian sequel to ***The Color Purple*** that focuses on the Sapphic relationship between an older Celie (**Whoopi Goldberg**) and Shug (**Margaret Avery**) during the 1940s, as the two women take on homophobes and sees them changing hearts and minds. Aww! Not to be outdone, the all-trans remake of ***A League of Their Own***, starring **Elliot Page**, **Indya Moore**, **Hunter Schafer** and **Dominique Jackson**, will take on the topical theme on trans athletes. It will also focus on changing hearts and minds. Double aww!



9 to 5 is finally getting a sequel. But since the original film came out in 1980, the focus will be on the daughters and granddaughters of the characters played by **Jane Fonda**, **Lily Tomlin** and **Dolly Parton**, who will reprise their roles.



After her surprise Oscar snub — I'm still mad about it! — **Demi Moore** will resurrect one of her most iconic roles as ***GI Jane***, who has risen in the ranks and is now addressed as ***Sgt. Jane.*** The movie even has a Hollywood connection, and a meta one at that!

There's a bomb threat at very same Oscar's ceremony that saw

Mikey Madison take home the coveted statue for ***Anora*** that Moore seemed a shoo-in to win for ***The Substance***. Sgt. Jane realizes the bomb is in the Best Actress Oscar, tackles Madison to the ground, while updating her catchphrase "Suck my d**k" from the 1997 action film with the more current "Eat a bag of d**ks!" She snatches the trophy, runs off-stage, extracts the bomb, detonates it, and then puts the award on her shelf where it belongs. End scene.

Another strong woman will be featured as the Blaxploitation genre makes a comeback, with its roots still set during the 1970s. ***Wicked*** star **Cynthia Erivo** headlines ***Lady Pantsuit*** and will fight for women everywhere in her quest for equality by using her cunning, sweet karate moves, and her enormous fingernails as weapons to make her point with male chauvinists the world over. All while sporting her signature terrycloth pantsuit. Look for **Pam Grier,** who rose to fame playing characters like ***Coffy*** and ***Friday Foster*** as her mentor, Foxy Lady Pantsuit!



Regarding ***Wicked***, rather than go from the page-to-the-stage route, author Gregory Maguire's book sequel, ***Son of a Witch,*** will not only go into production as another film musical, but will also undergo a title change to ***Wicked II: Electric Boogaloo***.

The story centers around Liir (**Lil Nas X** in his film debut), the son of Elphaba, who is bisexual and must make the tough choice of settling down with either Dorothy (**Millie Bobby Brown** playing a 40-year-old version of the Kansas farm girl — because have you seen her recent makeover?) or the Tin Man (**Russell Tovey**). He ends up choosing the latter, oil can indeed!

Meanwhile **Judy Garland**'s daughter, **Liza Minnelli**, is getting a big screen retelling of her tumultuous life and will be played as an adult by none other than **Lady Gaga**. This is a stellar bit of casting, seeing as I'm convinced that Gaga will eventually morph into Liza. Gurl, the new dark hair isn't helping your case, k? Get ready for ***With a Z***, coming soon to a theater near you!



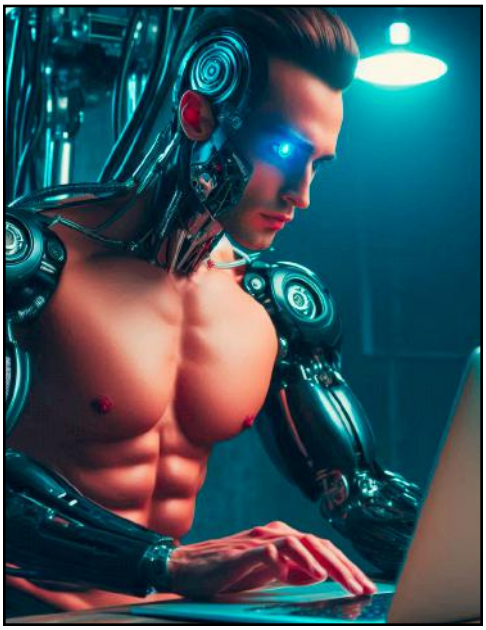
And that's not the only biopic in the works! Two of synth pop's hard hitters, **Erasure** and **The Pet Shop Boys**, are having their life stories told, but wait there's more! Each will be filmed using sock puppets with googly eyes. But the lead singers of each group will give voice to their unusual likenesses. **Andy Bell**, who just released new music with the album ***Ten Crowns***, will chronicle his life in ***You Can Ring My Bell***, while **Neil Tennant** headlines ***Doggy Style: The Story of The Pet Shop Boys***. Since **Vince Clarke** and **Chris Lowe** hardly ever speak, they will provide the soundtracks to their respective films instead.



Since we're keeping our fingers crossed that the third iteration of ***The Fantastic Four*** with **Pedro Pascal** won't, um, suck, gay porn producers rush ***The Fantastic Foursome*** into production before ***The Fantastic Four: First Steps*** releases on July 25.

Other, ahem, full releases based on existing properties are also in the pipeline. Since there's a real proliferation of masked killers, like ***Halloween***'s **Michael Myers** and ***Scream***'s **Ghostface** stabbing things, but not with their knives in adult-oriented fare, be on the look for ***I Wanna Tap That Pumpkin*** and ***Moan*** for spooky season.

Lube is the first musical gay porn ever, and will be a spiritual sequel to ***Grease***; only the actor playing Danny Zuko, Rod Cocksure, is actually out, as is his leading man and lust interest, Oliver Newton-Dong. Do you like action and adventure in your porn? Sure! Who doesn't? Then look no further than ***Indiana's Bone and The Temple of Booty***. And there's more man-on-man action to be had with ***John Dick***. And this one is pretty self-explanatory ***Charlie's Anals*** — I'll show myself out.



The White Lotus Season 3 standout **Patrick Schwarzenegger** will take over the mantle of his father Arnold's most famous role in ***The Son of The Terminator.*** He plays dual roles as both the killer cyborg and himself. The robot from the future's primary mission is to go back in time and save the Internet before his human counterpart blew it up with people looking for his full-frontal pics from the Max series.

THE SMALL SCREEN

And speaking of ***The White Lotus***, it will get its very own spin-off that will be a TV event akin to the Hurricane Saturday crossover on ***The Golden Girls***, ***Empty Nest*** and ***Nurses*** circa 1991. Since two ***Best in Show*** alum, **Jennifer Coolidge** and **Parker Posey**, have appeared on the Max series thus far, and seeing as **Catherine O'Hara** and **Eugene Levy** co-starred with the funny ladies in the Christopher Guest mockumentaries, the latest installment will follow the Roses of ***Schitt's Creek*** building a luxe resort, ***The White Rose***, in the titular town.



Tanya McQuoid (Coolidge) returns from what was presumed to be from the dead after David (**Dan Levy**) and Patrick (**Noah Reid**) find her in the woods, suffering from amnesia and muttering "These gays, they're trying to help me." Meanwhile, Posey's Victoria Ratliff shows up courtesy of a tsunami and can only say "Piper, noooo!!!" on a loop, while Alexis (**Annie Murphy**) adds to the cacophony with "Eww, David!" infinitum. All of this is done as a not-so-subliminal reminder to audiences that they are, in fact, watching a crossover.

Mike Flangan has had a slate of hit shows for Netflix with, ***The Haunting of Hill House***, ***The Haunting of Bly Manor*** and ***The Fall of the House of Usher*** — what's that I'm smelling? Why it's a theme. If it had been burnt toast, that would mean I was having a stroke, so color



me relieved. Flanagan announces his next project, ***The Haunting of the Bathhouse***, and it will feature a few of the actors in his stable. Look for **Rahul Kohli**, **Zach Gilford**, **Robert Longstreet**, **Oliver Jackson-Cohen** — no relation to Oliver Newton-Dong — **Sauriyan Sapkota**, **Matt Biedel** and special guest star **Bruce Greenwood** as Daddy, who are attempting to escape from a bathhouse teeming with supernatural entities. But the biggest scare factor is if any of them will upgrade from a locker to a room. I'm scurred!

Bravo will reinvent ***Schoolhouse Rock!*** to take on LGBTQ+ issues and combat the times we live in. A few for examples include **"Three is a Magic Number"** will be changed and highlight the benefits of adding one more to a relationship with "**Throuple**." And given the fact that Orange, The Not-So-Great and Terrible, loves to show off the fact he has the rudimentary skill set to sign his name, **"I'm Just an Executive Order"** becomes this generation's **"I'm Just a Bill."**

The Brady Bunch is getting a gay makeover with ***The Beardy Bunch*** that will mirror original Mike Brady actor **Robert Reed**'s real-life struggle with him hiding his homosexuality, and will be presented as a drama. But not like the awful 1990 series ***The Bradys***, which featured the grown children dealing with a wealth of drama with a capital D! However, it did show us that one can beat alcoholism in just an hour's time, as **Fake Marcia** (Leah Ayres) did in an episode.

Anyhoo, **Matt Bomer** will portray TV's favorite Daddy who will be busy with three side men of his own and yet will still feel all alone in not being able to be his true self. **Rosie O'Donnell** will portray the wisecracking maid, Alice. And Mr. Beardy suspects he's not the only closeted one in the family when Alice starts a softball league with Marcia, Jan and Cindy.



Another sitcom staple, ***Friends***, will attempt to correct what modern audiences deemed problematic during its initial run . . . gay panic moments. Like the one between Ross (**David Schwimmer**) and Joey (**Matt LeBlanc**) in the seventh season after they accidentally fall asleep together on the couch. NBC relaunches Must See TV on Thursday nights with ***Friends of Dorothy.*** However, they missed the memo on the other criticism about the series with its lack of diversity, and the main cast is still all



white people with white people problems.

Three Season 17 ***RuPaul's Drag Race*** contestants are going to try their hands at acting. **Hormona Lisa** will appear as the sadness emotion from ***Inside Out*** in the live-action Disney+ series based on the two animated movies. And can we talk about this season's Snatch Game? It's better if we don't, but a bright spot was **Onya Nurve** as Eddie Murphy**.** The *Beverly Hills Cop* actor was so impressed with the impression that he hires her as his stunt double on Netflix's fifth installment in the franchise.



And finally, what arrives when you order RuPaul on Wish, **Kori King**, will star in the public access spoof of ***Sesame Street*** with ***Yasssame Street,*** based solely on the Big Bird dress she wore during Episode 3.

Sarah Jessica Parker gets her **Jane Fonda** on when she re-invigorates the at-home fitness craze that swept the nation in the 1980s. While we wait for the next season of ***And Just Like That,*** the actress releases the DVD ***Sarah Jessica Parkour***, in which she ups the ante of the series of leaps, vaults and rolls by wearing Manolo Blahniks to stick the landing.

Since Disney+ loves to milk the ***Star Wars*** cow — seriously did you see ***Star Wars: Skeleton Crew***? It was like ***The Goonies*** in space. The House of Mouse's first official LGBTQ+ series in the venerable space opera's canon, ***Star Wars: The Ass End of Space***, features a ragtag group of denizens on the planet Jockohomo at the furthest reaches of space. They do battle with a marauding group of religious space types, The Right Wingers, who are hell bent of sourcing the planet for the galaxy far, far away's most precious commodity: glitter.



HEAR ME OUT!

Beyoncé will branch out into Pirate Metal — yes, that's a real thing — after conquering the Country charts and winning a Grammy Award in the process. Her Pirate Metal redo of "Bootylicious" will see her reunite with her former Destiny's Child bandmates, **Michelle Williams** and **Kelly Rowland**, and then she makes them walk the plank back into obscurity. Harsh!

Madonna has gone on record, so to speak, on Instagram to proclaim that her new album will be a sequel to 2005's ***Confessions on a Dance Floor***. Her new music is scheduled to drop near year's end and will feature antithesis songs to "Hung Up," in the guise of "Picked Up," while "Fall" will be this album's "Jump."

Ricky Martin will come out — hey, he already did that! — with a remixed and updated version of his 2000 single, "She Bangs," rechristened as **"He Bangs."** The accompanying video causes a stir with the 53-year-old singer shaking his bon bon in nothing but a jockstrap. Talk about "Livin' La Vida Loca." I think I'm out of Ricky Martin songs for puns, cuz "The Cup of Life" doesn't really work in this. Oh wait, he is wearing a jock in the video. Well, that problem is solved as you can't have a jock without a cup!



CUT. PRINT. THAT'S A WRAP!

Thanks for indulging me in this annual flexing of my creative muscle. Hmm, that sounds vaguely dirty, but that's the price I pay for having a mind that primarily resides in the gutter. Thankfully I have this avenue to get these things out of my mind and onto the page. Until next time, that's all the news that's fit to print.

Tim Parks is a freelance and columnist, and has been part of Team Rage since 2009.
He is the award-winning author of *The Scheme of Things* and *The Best Laid Plans*, available onAmazon.com.

KIT WILLIAMSON IS BUILDING A QUEER TV UNIVERSE, ONE HOT MESS AT A TIME

When it comes to queer storytelling, Kit Williamson has proven himself as someone willing to forge the path forward. Best known for creating and starring in the Emmy-nominated series EastSiders, Williamson is back at it with a new show, *Unconventional*, that doesn't just challenge the norms — it tosses them to the wayside completely.

Before he was reshaping television narratives, Williamson was a kid in Jackson, Mississippi, who dreamed of making stories that matter. "There weren't a lot of opportunities to do theater, and certainly no opportunities, really, to be involved in film," he tells *The RAGE Monthly* of his upbringing.

"That was something that I knew from a really early age that I loved."



Noah and Margot - Kit Williamson and Aubrey Peeples

At 16, Williamson packed his bags and headed for the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, an arts-focused boarding school that set him on his path. From there, he went to New York for college, landed on Broadway by his junior year, and worked his way toward Los Angeles, where he earned his master's in playwriting at UCLA and shot the first two episodes of *EastSiders* in his living room with $2,000 and a stick of gum holding everything together.

"I wanted to have creative autonomy and not wait for permission to make something," he said, a thought process that he also carried over to *EastSiders'* spiritual successor, *Unconventional*. In comparing the two, Williamson said, "I like to say *EastSiders* is about being a gay mess in your 20s, and *Unconventional* is about being a gay mess in your 30s."

Although Williamson can juggle anything from stage to film, he prefers to stay in the writer's room, saying it's the essential part of his creative drive.

"I have the most control over writing," he said. After some thought, he added, "Though, there is something really nice about showing up to somebody else's set, to your trailer, and memorizing your lines and having that be your job."

Unconventional premiered on the queer streaming platform Revry and follows Williamson's character, Noah, as he helps his sister start a family while simultaneously trying to adopt a child with his husband. Though the storylines are fictional, some elements draw from real life.

"It's not necessarily autobiographical," Williamson said. "But I think it's just a part of the journey as you enter your 30s, to start to look around and say, 'Well, what do I actually want? What trajectory am I on personally, professionally? Do I see myself starting a family? How could I ever afford it?'"

The latter question, especially for queer families, isn't always as straightforward. Queer families are often depicted as though a stork delivered a baby to their door, but real life is more complicated. Seldom-discussed issues like paternity rights and fertility issues are front and center in the *Unconventional* storyline, which revolves around Noah being the donor for his sister's baby.

The idea for the show developed at the Sundance Lab, where COVID-19 wound up shutting down production soon after it started. "That [the lockdown] at the time was a mandatory 14 days," Williamson said. "It stretched into nearly a year."

The pandemic era proved challenging for all filmmakers, especially those like Williamson who already had a tight budget to start. The shutdown led to numerous changes, including relocating the show from New Orleans to California. Although that was made out of necessity, Williamson said it wound up giving the show a unique aesthetic.

The Palm Springs and Joshua Tree desert settings, however, also proved a huge challenge in the summer.

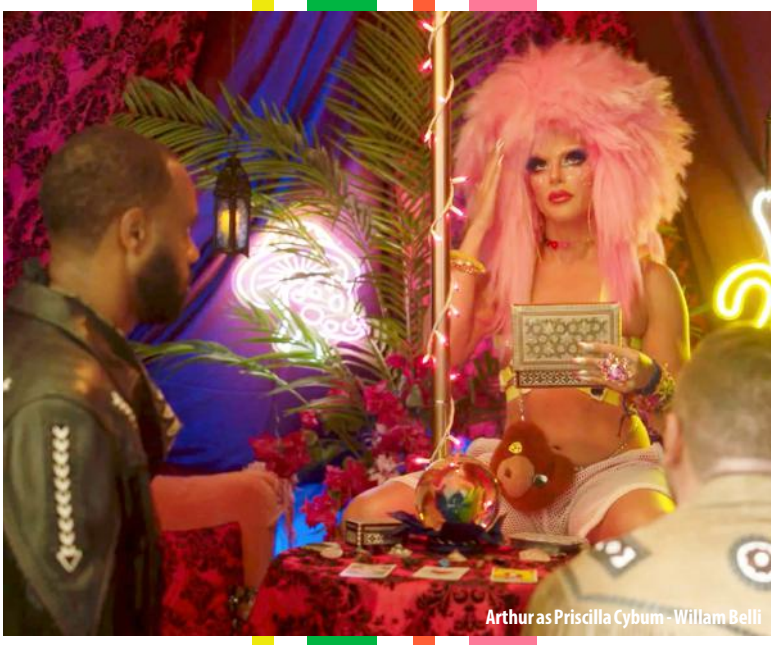
"I promised [*RuPaul's Drag Race* legend] Willam [Belli] I would never do that again after we shot an episode of *EastSiders* in Palm Springs in 117 degrees, and his high heels fell apart because the glue became unbonded in the heat," Williamson said.



Dan and Noah - James Bland and Kit Williamson



Eliza and Margot - Briana Venskus and Aubrey Peeples



Arthur as Priscilla Cybum - Willam Belli


Kathy Griffin


Kit Williamson


Dan, Noah and Adam - James Bland - Kit Williamson - Constantine Rousouli

After years of pursuing the story and enduring the sweltering summers, production finally wrapped in 2023, which led to the partnership with Revry for distribution.

Williamson took his combined set of skills, which also include directing, producing and casting, and put them full force into *Unconventional*. He also had a significant hand in the casting role, noting that he hardly ever makes an actor audition.

"I have actor PTSD," he said. "That [audition] environment and that dynamic…I just really dig into a performer's body of work and get to know them as a person. I see if I can write for them based on what I can glean from their creative output already."

It's a good thing he plays such a pivotal role in the casting because the impeccable lineup, which includes icons like Kathy Griffin and Willam Bell, sets the show up for success from the start.

"I can't sing the praises of the cast loud enough," Williamson said of the cast, which also includes James Bland as his on-screen husband, Dan, who also helped write and produce the show. Elsewhere in the cast, Aubrey Shea plays Williamson's on-screen sister, Margot, and Briana Venskus is Margot's wife, Eliza, who also acts as the surrogate for the baby the show revolves around. Williamson was especially excited to land Dana Wheeler-Nicholson as his on-screen mother, Carolyn, saying he has been a fan of hers since her time on *Friday Night Lights* and *Tombstone*.

"We've just got an incredible ensemble," he said. "And our whole cast is entirely comprised of out queer actors, so I think inherently, that just brings a level of understanding and depth and authenticity to the roles."

On the flip side, the show also includes actors like Tuc Watkins, who are out and proud in their day-to-day lives, but play straight characters on the show.

Insisting he's not an absolutist, Williamson said the ultimate goal is equality across the board. "It's equality in casting, fairness and equity in casting, and that involves not putting queer performers into a box, as well as not shutting them out from playing roles that align with their personal identity," he said.

As to what he hopes people take away from the show, Williamson said, "One of my primary motivations in making a show is to demonstrate that there is no one true path in this life, in relationships and starting a family. There's power in going off the beaten trail. There's beauty when you open your eyes to the fact that you're going to have to take charge of your own destiny. That opens up a world of possibility where you can really write the rules for yourself."

Ultimately, *Unconventional* is a show meant to speak directly to the community it's born from. Although Williamson hopes it has mainstream appeal, he cares more about the people it's made for and insisted, "The audience is aware of who they are."

Catch all the episodes of *Unconventional* streaming now on Revry. **revry.tv/originals/unconventional**

Andrew J. Stillman is a writer of fantasy stories and freelance content. He makes YouTube videos and explores the world on his travel blog at lifeinanotherworld.com. Follow him @andrewjstillman on all the things.

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ALL ARE WELCOME AT THE WEDDING BANQUET

DIRECTOR ANDREW AHN'S JOYFUL COMEDY OF ERRORS IS ABOUT A CHOSEN FAMILY NAVIGATING CULTURAL IDENTITY, QUEERNESS AND FAMILY EXPECTATIONS



Kelly Marie Tran, Lily Gladstone, Han Gi-Chan and Bowen Yang
photos courtesy of Bleecker Street / ShivHans Pictures

Twelve years before Ang Lee directed the modern gay classic *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), he made a splash internationally with *The Wedding Banquet*. It told the comedic story of a bisexual immigrant man with a gay male partner who reluctantly marries a woman, both to get her a green card and to make his traditional Taiwanese parents happy. Only Lee's second feature film, 1993's *The Wedding Banquet* was both a critical and financial success.

Flash-forward 32 years to April 18, when Bleecker Street will release a "remake" also titled *The Wedding Banquet*. This time, queer director **Andrew Ahn** will serve as director and co-writer (with **James Schamus**, who also co-wrote the original). Ahn has definitely made the plot relevant for LGBTQ+ and general moviegoers today.

Much has changed culturally since the original film, which was made before the legalization of same-sex marriage, and the new film is now being released at a moment when LGBTQ+ rights in the US are under ever-increasing threat. Although Ahn's *Wedding Banquet* is in direct conversation with its predecessor, peppered with tie-ins and lines that wink at the original, both he and Schamus were emphatic on a fresh "reimagining."

"This is not a remake," Schamus emphasized in the film's press notes. "You don't try to calculate something to emulate the specific kind of success that the original film had. Rather, what you want to do is build up an organic community of collaborators, of creators, of just human beings to take that material and run with it and create something that's special and organic to their lives now, their experiences under very different circumstances."

The new version boasts a terrific, multi-generational and ethnically diverse cast that includes **Bowen Yang** (*SNL, Wicked*), Academy Award nominee **Lily Gladstone** (*Killers of the Flower Moon*), **Kelly Marie Tran** (*Star Wars Episodes 8 and 9*), relative newcomer **Han Gi-Chan**, veteran actress **Joan Chen**, and Academy Award winner **Youn Yuh-Jung** (*Minari*).

In addition to *Driveways*, Ahn's previous works include *Spa Night* and *Fire Island,* as well as episodes of popular streaming series such as *Bridgerton, Pride* and *Generation*. All of his movies prominently feature Asian and LGBTQ+ characters. Ahn recently spoke with *The RAGE Monthly* via Zoom from his home in metro Los Angeles. Some questions and responses have been edited for length and/or clarity.


Han Gi-Chan, Youn Yuh-Jung and Kelly Marie Tran

I've been following you since at least *Spa Night*, and I really want to congratulate you not just on *The Wedding Banquet* but the whole trajectory of your career. I think it's so exciting that Asian and Asian American filmmakers are having more opportunities today.

Yeah, it's been a wild ride for me. I would not have expected a career like this after making *Spa Night*, but I'm so glad that I've been able to make films about Asian American people and about queer Asian American people and make a living from it. (*laugh*) I feel very proud of that fact. The industry's really changed and grown so that I could grow with it.

I have watched *The Wedding Banquet* and I was really familiar with the original version. So I was pleasantly surprised to see enough of the original story, but you certainly take things in different directions and work in some new elements. How did this remake or update come about? Whose idea was it?

Our producer, Anita Gou, is the rights holder and she wondered if there was the possibility of some sort of reimagining for a modern queer audience. She had spoken with our producers Joe Pirro and James Schamus, who I had worked with on *Driveways*, and they brought up my name. I met with Anita at Sundance in 2019 and told her that I was really scared to imagine what a remake of *The Wedding Banquet* would be, because I love the original film. It was the first gay film that I ever saw as an 8-year-old boy, and the fact that the first gay film that I saw was about Asian Americans and filled these characters with so much humanity set me on the right path in many ways.


Lily Gladstone and Kelly Marie Tran

So, for those reasons I didn't want to remake the movie but then I thought about how much has changed for the queer community since 1993. Namely, now queer people can get married so then, for me, the question became "Now that we can get married, do we want to? Should we?" (*laugh*) That became the central question for me in this film, and gave me the feeling that there are new questions to ask within the community that I can now examine and explore.

What were some of the other new elements or modern-day things that were important to you as you developed this?

I wanted to tackle this question of queer people having children and what that's like for us. There was a conversation that I had with my boyfriend, very early in our dating, where we talked about having kids. He told me "Well, if it happens, it happens," which is a line in the movie. I remember thinking "Oh no, it really doesn't for queer people." (*laugh*) We can't just whoopsy daisy a baby into existence, and so it made me think about how as queer people we have to be extremely intentional about having children. So any sort of very human hesitation can become a giant obstacle.


Joan Chen

I wanted to show a character in this film that I think is going to be an incredible parent but really questions and hesitates and gets scared about that possible future. In the original, they kind of accidentally have a baby. In this film, I wanted them to go through the process of wanting to have a baby. That was a new element and then, of course, the kind of parent-child dynamic with the Joan Chen character in our film, May. She's not what you might imagine from an immigrant Chinese mother. Her reaction to her daughter being queer is actually trying to be an uber-ally. That for me was a fun dynamic to portray on film.

Oh, definitely. How involved was James Schamus, who co-wrote the original? How involved was he in writing this with you?

Incredibly involved. Our collaboration was really special. I worked with James on *Driveways* and I love James' insights into character and the structure of the film. There's so many characters in this and just being able to weave them together to create this story about a family, I really needed James' collaboration. It was a long process. We worked on the screenplay for many years, and I made *Fire Island* in between *Driveways* and this. I'd been working on *The Wedding Banquet* before I even knew that *Fire Island* existed in my life. And so, getting the chance to work so closely and over such a long period of time with James was a real honor. I love the kind of legacy of the film, and that he has really helped to cultivate a new generation of queer talent.

Your cast is amazing! You already mentioned Joan Chen but then you've got an Oscar winner, a fairly recent Oscar nominee, Bowen Yang, and *Star Wars* alumni. How did you assemble or wrangle such talent?

I know! It's a fun little queer *Avengers* cast that we have. (*laughs*) It was all a very organic casting process. We worked with our casting director Jenny Jue, who is incredible. We looked at the script and saw these humans and wanted to figure out "OK, who could bring that humanity, that joy, that emotion to these characters?" Bowen Yang, obviously I loved working with him on *Fire Island* and could not wait to work with him again, and felt that he really could capture that millennial ennui indecision that is so relatable. Kelly Marie Tran is just incredible, and I think her own coming out journey really dovetailed with the character (Angela) and understanding Angela's problems with her mother but then also becoming a mother.


Bowen Yang and Han Gi-Chan

Lily Gladstone I love. I remember meeting her for the first time to talk about this film the day after the Golden Globes (2024) and she had won, and I had assumed that she would cancel the meeting because she had just won a Golden Globe! I thought she would be partying and hung over but we kept the meeting as scheduled. I showed up to meet her and I said "I would have totally understood if you wanted to postpone this" and she said "No, I want to act, I want to go back to work." She loved the script. She's such a real one. Gi-Chan, our actor from Korea, had been in a few BL "boys love" shows in Korea. It's one of those things where it's still really tough, I think, for young Korean actors in Korea to play gay roles. They're scared of what society or culture might think of that. He's such a generous person and he's so bold, and he really knew the humanity of this character in such a beautiful way. He was so excited to do it and this is his first English language film. It was his first time in North America, and I loved his energy and think it's perfect for the character.

Joan Chen, love her. She is just so generous and lovely, and brought this incredible energy to the role; this kind of ostentatiousness but then also real heart. And then finally Youn Yuh-jung, Oscar winner. I remember the very first take we did with her. She was incredible, and I went up to her and said "That was lovely, can we go again?" She looked at me and said "Andrew, if it was truly lovely we wouldn't have to go again." (*laugh*) And then she told me "You don't have to be nice to me; that's so sweet, but you can just give me the note. It's fine." That's when I knew "Oh, she is such a professional and she takes the craft so seriously." Just her embracing young queer talent and Asian American talent, she really believed in the film in a way that I think is such a gift. I can't wait for people to see her in the movie. I can't wait for people to see the entire ensemble together. I think they have such lovely chemistry.

They really do, and there are a lot of subtleties I picked up among or between all of them. I think the movie kind of demands a second viewing to pick up on a lot of little, subtle, unspoken gestures and things like that. They're really nice. Since you've worked with (out actor) Bowen Yang a couple times now, what is it that you most enjoy or appreciate about working with him in particular?

I think Bowen has this magical quality of vulnerability. There are a lot of actors who kind of protect themselves and there's an image, but with Bowen I think you really see to the heart of him. That, I think, takes so much strength and so much talent to be able to show. For me as a director, as a storyteller, I really love being able to see the underside of a character or the truth of them. Bowen, for me, just feels like such a muse. It feels like a real match made in heaven. I love what he brings to these roles and can't wait to do it again.

Oh good. It's great to see how his career has taken off between your films and *Wicked*.

I know! He's a star. (*laugh*)

You likely didn't anticipate this while you were making it, but *The Wedding Banquet* is coming out at a rather politically charged time in our country. The relationships and some of the topics in the movie are now under fire. How does that feel to you or how are you navigating that?

My role as an artist and filmmaker, I think, is to provide a space for people to explore or examine their values as a person and their role in this world, and hopefully find some strength from that opportunity — that time — watching a film. And then with that strength go out there and make a difference. Find a way to change the world for better. I think when we're out in the greater world we do have to put up walls because it's scary and it's tough. But I think with art and with film, you can open yourself up and do that examination and exploration of yourself and then build yourself up, find some joy or get some strength.

You can go out there and you can protest and vote and participate in mutual aid. I think it's really important for me that films kind of work hand in hand with getting out there in more direct ways. So that's my hope. This is why I love being able to talk about our film, because I think that this is the way you can really feel its impact outside the theater. Come to the theater, get inspired, and then go out. That's just as important as the work itself.

bleeckerstreetmedia.com/the-wedding-banquet

Chris Carpenter has been writing about entertainment since 1996 and a member of Team Rage since 2012. He is a founding member and vice president emeritus of GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics.



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CHEYENNE JACKSON GIVES US LIFE



It takes a weak, orange-colored man to hurl insults, but it takes a brassy, Black, trans warrior to hurl a brick. Stonewall taught us that marginalized members of society have the most to lose from the status quo and the most to gain from a revolution.

Or, as the infinitely talented and thoughtful Cheyenne Jackson puts it, "Vulnerability is your power."

For someone who has dominated every endeavor he tackles, Jackson is shockingly and endearingly humble. He looks beyond the brilliant spotlights of his triumphs like *Glee, Xanadu, American Horror Story* and *30 Rock* to glean inspiration from more spiritual sources.

"My dad taught me early on to really look for the signs in nature, the universe or God, or whatever guides you, to look for those specific guideposts and signs that show you that you are on the right path and you're doing the thing that needs to be doing, that you were put on Earth to do," he said.

Fortunately for us, Jackson's to-do list includes the one-man show he will bring to **Samueli Theater** at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa from **Thursday, April 10** through **Saturday, April 12**.

"This is kind of a meditation," he said. "It's called *Signs of Life*, and it's really about the big markers in my life.

"This show, I wrote it about a year and a half ago for my 54 Below residency in New York, and there's going to be a couple of new things, because I'm currently writing a new show for Carnegie Hall, so I'm going to be trying out a couple of new things, but for the most part, it's pretty intact to what I did in New York."

Jackson, 49, alchemizes Big Apple dreams into a

personal theater-going experience. "It's just a matter of how I can calibrate my energy. It is a very intimate space, 54 Below, so just like with acting on television versus acting on stage, you just vibe with whatever the space is. And I've done this show in really teeny spaces, and I've done it in really big spaces, and it goes over well usually both ways. I got to match the audience's energy."

And that audience includes some patrons who are very near and dear to Jackson's harmonious heart.

"My mom lives in Orange County and she'll be bringing her girlfriends to the show. So there will be a mix of her OC friends and my drag queen friends, but that's the beauty of art. It brings us all together."

That spirit of inclusiveness cascades from the crowd to the set list.

"There's comedy and there are some big numbers from shows that I've done," Jackson said. "I do a big Elvis song. Oh, there's some Lady Gaga. I recently did a new production of *La Cage aux Folles* at the Pasadena Playhouse, and I did not get to sing 'I Am What I Am' because I didn't play that part, but in this show, I get to sing that. So that's a fun moment. There's some Sam Smith, and then there's even a Chappell Roan song. I just learned a new song that I've been kind of workshopping, so it kind of runs the gamut. There's old-school musical theater, there's some great classic jazz, there's some folk. And that's kind of like me, I'm a little mishmash of all those different things, and somehow it just kind of comes together."

Jackson is serving sections of his soul; each facet of this show represents the star's wit, whimsy and wanderlust.

"I do love to do all of those different things, but that's the fun part, to really sift through the great stories and the great lessons and such, the juicy things, the funny things, and then really kind of marry it with wherever I am emotionally and the sense that I want the audience to be able to get. That's kind of the fun part. It's kind of like a puzzle and finally all the pieces come together."

When asked to distill his distinct dazzle into a defining declaration, Jackson digs deep.

"It's about connection," he said. "And I get candid in my show. I struggle with connection. I struggle with reaching out to my friends and making myself vulnerable. Like my father before me, I definitely tend to isolate and tend to think that I'm fine on my own. And my husband [Jason Landau], who is super outgoing, can talk to anybody at any time about anything. I said to him one day, like, 'How do you do it? I just want to connect more, I want to connect more on stage, I want to connect more in my life.' And he said, 'Well, if you want to do that, you have to go first. You go first.' So that's kind of been my philosophy in this show and what I want to impart to people. Right off the top in the first bit of the show, I won't give it away, but I definitely, I take the piss out of myself right off the top, just to show them that I'm going to be vulnerable tonight and I'm going to be honest. And my hope is that people in the audience can see themselves in me and see their relationship with their father or their son or their mom. And it's a shared experience."

Community is key to Jackson's worldview. "It means chosen family, it means safety. It means hunkering down, no matter how bad it gets."

As oppression rains down on the LGBTQ+ population, entertainment is our umbrella. It shields us from direct impact but doesn't shelter us from reality.

And nobody wields a more pleasantly powerful *parapluie* than Jackson.

"My kids [twins Willow and Ethan Jackson Landau] are at that age where they're just hearing bits and pieces of everything, and they know about Trump and they know what the world is, and they know that there's major stuff happening. But I always go back to, of all things, this lyric from the musical *Avenue Q*: this is only for now. 'Only for now.' Everything changes; the good, the bad and everything in between. So, I like to reassure my community by reminding them this is just for now."

This moment is fleeting. This moment is powerful. This moment is rebellion and revelry and resplendent wonder, all colliding in a cacophony of community. Join the show . . . enjoy the now. **scfta.org | 714.556.2787**

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Prepare for another unforgettable night at **Segerstrom Center for the Arts** this spring. Alongside the mesmerizing Cheyenne Jackson, the stage will sparkle with the sensational cabaret extravaganza that promises to highlight the 2024/2025 Cabaret Series. Step into the whimsical world of **Forbidden Broadway**, a brilliant and tongue-in-cheek parody of beloved Broadway shows, taking the spotlight at Samueli Theater from **Thursday, May 15 to Saturday, May 17** with the uproarious performance of ***Merrily We Stole a Song***.

These two exceptional shows will offer a final chance for theater enthusiasts to soak in the enchanting atmosphere of live music, comedy and theatrical brilliance this cabaret season. Forbidden Broadway delivers a side-splitting take on popular shows, featuring outrageous parodies of *Hell's Kitchen, Stereophonic, The Outsiders, The Great Gatsby, Back to the Future, The Wiz* and the ever-popular *Merrily We Roll Along*. Expect clever send-ups of stars like Roger Bart, Patti LuPone, Daniel Radcliffe, Ariana DeBose and Jeremy Jordan, not to mention the delightful nods to the upcoming Tony Awards and selections from Alessandrini's recent *Forbidden Sondheim*. Don't miss out on the laughter and magic of these theatrical gems. **scfta.org | 714.556.2787**



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Elinor Benton finds herself in a dilemma: She's pregnant, unmarried and living in 19th-century England. What can a young woman do? Facing unavoidable disgrace, she enlists her closest friends for an unforgettable road trip to seek out the one woman who might provide the opportunity to alter her destiny. This remarkable journey, equally hilarious and deeply moving, brings personal transformation to each of them as they confront choices regarding their own futures.

Directed and choreographed by **Josh Rhodes** (Broadway's *Spamalot*, The Globe's *Cabaret*), this world premiere promises a delightful escapade filled with love, rebellion and autonomy self-discovery.

Performances run from **Wednesday, April 2** through **Sunday, May 4** on **The Old Globe Theatre's** Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage.

"The Globe's season continues with a real marvel," Artistic Director **Barry Edelstein** said. "*Regency Girls* is a totally original, world-premiere musical that's utterly delightful, funny as all get-out, and about some very big and timely themes. Its creators are at the top of their games: amazingly gifted storytellers from film, TV and theatre, and their talents combine to make something spectacular. Director-choreographer Josh Rhodes, a dear friend of The Old Globe, has gathered a cast of powerhouse American musical theatre talent and I can't wait to share what they make with audiences at The Globe, and, I'm sure, beyond."
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TRUE STORY OF LUTHIER AMNON WEINSTEIN IS A TESTAMENT TO HOPE AND SURVIVAL

International City Theatre will stage the American premiere of ***The Violin Maker***, a new play inspired by the true story of Israeli violin maker **Amnon Weinstein**, who gathered and restored damaged violins that survived the Holocaust to create a remarkable collection recognized worldwide as the Violins of Hope.

The Violin Maker will run from **Friday, April 25** through **Sunday, May 11** at ICT's home in the Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center.

Weinstein began repairing violins rescued from the Holocaust to keep their histories alive. But before Weinstein can bring these instruments back to life and the world, he must wrestle with his ghosts and those of his family. This new play masterly weaves Weinstein's extraordinary story with the true tales behind each of the violins — as well as with music, performed live on stage on piano and **Jonathan Rubin** on the **Shony Alex Braun violin**. Although the Shony Alex Braun violin is not part of the Violins of Hope collection, it also survived the Holocaust, and audiences will learn its story during the course of the play.

According to the play's writers, **Lisa Pearl Rosenbaum** and **Ronda Spinak,** "Luthier Amnon Weinstein took what might have become an exhibit of ruined instruments, restored them and put them into the hands of musicians all over the world so that a new generation can hear them. The survivors of the Holocaust will not be here forever, but these violins will continue to tell their stories for generations to come."

The play dives deep, with more stories, scenes and additional music, to follow the arc of Weinstein's life — from a proud Israeli boy who wanted nothing to do with the Holocaust and his family's pain, to a man who devotes his life to repairing "stringed survivors" whose voices are now heard in concerts around the world, restoring the dignity of their owners for generations to come.

As explained on the Violins of Hope website: "The Nazis used music and especially violins to humiliate and degrade Jews in ghettos and camps. They confiscated many thousands of instruments from Jews all over Europe. Our concerts are the ultimate answer to their plan to annihilate a people and their culture, to destroy human lives and freedom. The sound of violins is often compared to the beauty of the human voice. When played with talent and spirit, it is known to reach out and touch hearts. This was the role of violins in the war — to touch hearts, kindle hope for better times and spread it around. Wherever there was music, there was hope."
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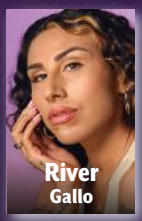
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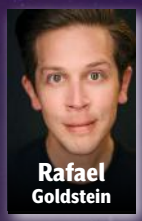
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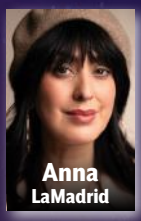
Take your seat for a comic, irreverent celebration of life! Since Greg's terminal diagnosis, he's felt a deep connection to the Earth—and to save himself, he'll need to save the planet. Viv desperately wants to savor every last minute with her husband. Meanwhile M, our emcee, searches desperately to find meaning in the chaos of their final year with Dad. A heartfelt family story and joyful theatrical event, as magical as the world itself. Ages 16+

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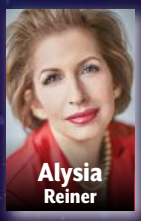












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South Coast Repertory will present the world premiere of ***You are Cordially Invited to the End of the World,*** an adventurous new work by **Keiko Green,** one of the country's most in-demand playwrights. Explore heartfelt themes like family, identity, and the joys and challenges of navigating our fast-paced world. With a delightful mix of wit, heart and a cosmic dose of humor, Green's play beautifully captures the essence of our shared human experience, embracing all its messy and wonderful complexities.

Taking place from **Saturday, April 5** through **Saturday, May 3,** this show is ideal for families, college students, the LGBTQ+ community, and anyone who enjoys new plays and clever comedies.

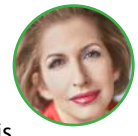
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RIVER GALLO as M (they/them)
The emcee. An emerging nonbinary drag performer, desperately searching for meaning in the chaos of their final year with dad.



JOEL DE LA FUENTE as GREG (he/him)
Recently received a terminal diagnosis. He feels a profound connection to the Earth — and to save himself, he must save the planet.



ALYSIA REINER as VIV (she/her)
Slightly neurotic and quick to become riled, she desperately wants to savor every last moment with her husband, Greg, while wondering how she can fix this situation.



ANNA LA MADRID as LILA (she/her)
Viv's younger sister is high-maintenance and the center of her own universe. However, she is ride-or-die for family and can be a surprisingly great listener.



RAFAEL GOLDSTEIN as Will (he/him)
M's boyfriend is good-natured and well-meaning, but he feels uncomfortable in social situations. He's too smart for his own good.



SHARON OMI as Janet (she/her)
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OPPOSITES ATTACK IN SAM SHEPARD'S PULITZER PRIZE-NOMINATED PLAY

Experience the raw and riveting world of Sam Shepard's ***True West***, where the scorching California desert reflects the escalating tensions between estranged brothers Austin and Lee. This modern American classic unfolds within a suburban setting, revealing a primal battle for identity and power as the siblings face their turbulent past and uncertain futures. Through dark humor and unyielding intensity, *True West* investigates the delicate boundary between civilization and chaos, raising significant questions about authenticity, ambition and the wildness inherent in us all.

Witness Shepard's masterpiece brought to life in an engaging new production by **The Roustabouts Theatre Company** on stage through **Sunday, April 13** at Diversionary Theatre in San Diego.

Shepard is regarded as one of America's most celebrated dramatists. He has written nearly 50 plays, which have been produced across the country in venues ranging from Greenwich Village coffee shops to regional professional and community theaters, as well as college campuses and commercial Broadway houses.

Regarding *True West*, Shepard once said: "I wanted to write a play about double nature, one that wouldn't be symbolic or metaphorical or any of that stuff. I just wanted to give a taste of what it feels like to be two-sided. It's a real thing, double nature. I think we're split in a much more devastating way than psychology can ever reveal. It's not so cute. Not some little thing we can get over. It's something we've got to live with."

theroustabouts.org | 619-568-5800

COOKING COMPETITION BECOMES HILARIOUS BATTLEGROUND FOR BELONGING

Cygnet Theatre in Old Town San Diego will showcase the vibrant, bold comedy ***The Hot Wing King*** by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Katori Hall**. Under the direction of Kian Kline-Chilton, the show will run from **Wednesday, April 9** through **Sunday, May 2**.

As Memphis's annual Hot Wang Festival approaches, Cordell Crutchfield is determined to win the crown with the support of his partner Dwayne and their friends, known as The New Wing Order. Just when victory seems certain, a family tragedy brings Dwayne's troubled nephew into the mix, turning their preparations into a recipe for chaos. Hall's Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy explores the challenges and rewards of being true to oneself and the families we create.

"It's a true honor to lead a project that places the beauty of vulnerability at the heart of Black male spaces," director **Kian Kline-Chilton** said. "I want to unapologetically showcase every facet of what makes us beautiful — our laughter, our hair, our fashion, our love — in our most human, unapologetic form. My hope is that this experience will not only bring audiences joy, but also inspire them to embrace love in all its fullness, reminding us of the power of self-expression in a world that so often demands we dim our light."

The ensemble will include **Rondrell McCormick** portraying Cordell; **Xavier Daniels** as Big Charles; **Tristan J Shuler** as Dwayne; **Kevane La'Marr Coleman** as Isom; **Jocorey Mitchell** as Everett; and **Carter Piggee** as TJ. **cygnettheatre.org | 619-337-1525**


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in his one-of-a-kind musical show
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CÉAD MÍLE FÁILTE

IRELAND'S WARM WELCOME TO AMERICAN AND LGBTQ+ TRAVELERS

Let's face it: The world is full of chaos right now, and it can be difficult to feel safe going anywhere outside of the United States for fear of how they may treat us. Our current presidential administration seems to be cutting off our allies one by one and slowly making travelers, LGBTQ+ or not, feel isolated.

Fortunately, the island of Ireland remains not only a safe haven for American and LGBTQ+ tourists but one they hope to see increase in the coming years.

"It is critical to keeping and sustaining so many small authentic businesses on our island with such a connection as two countries that our tradition is so close, our values are so close, and we love seeing American tourists coming over," **Peter Burke**, Minster of Irish Enterprise, Trade and Employment, tells *The RAGE Monthly*. "We have about 1.4 million tourists that came over last year. That was a 19% increase on 2023 levels."

Besides being welcoming to Americans in general, Ireland is also a huge supporter of the LGBTQ+ community and proves a great place to visit in an inclusive environment.

"Back in 2015, we had a huge majority in favor of same-sex marriage, whereby at that particular time, Irish society put love first, really embraced diversity, all types of culture," Burke said. "We have so many different parades — not just the familiar Dublin Pride, but so many other events right around the country that really celebrate diversity and the LGBTQ+ family."



Dromoland Castle



One of those events is **The Outing Festival** in Shannon, in County Clare on Ireland's west coast. This particular event brought me over to the country this year and did not disappoint. The festival puts a queer focus as it celebrates County Clare's storied history with matchmaking events. Over the course of a three-day weekend, which usually falls on or around Valentine's Day, couples and singles alike gather together for speed dating, blind dating, group activities and live entertainment in a festival that has started a number of romances over its 12-year run.

"Even this year, I already know of three, four, maybe five relationships that started here," festival creator and organizer **Eddie McGuinness** said of the event. "Over the years, we've had dozens of relationships begin at the festival. Two marriages. So, I've done my job — I've given people a safe place to actually sit and talk."

If you're interested in attending the 2026 event, tickets are on sale at **theouting.ie**.



Those who may confuse the festival with similar events like Pride, however, would also be mistaken. "Unlike other Pride celebrations around the world, which are a day or a week, this festival is about giving us a safe space to actually have our own place," McGuinness said.

Apart from the festival, the west coast of Ireland also doesn't get enough of the shine it deserves. Consider a trip to the **Cliffs of Moher** to see the stunning Ireland coastline, but stay mindful that it is, in fact, possible to fall off the cliffs. If you do, don't expect to let anyone know you survived. Nearby the Cliffs of Moher, a tour through the **Aillwee Caves** is an incredible look into prehistoric history, with bones of ancient bears and caverns hidden underneath the cave.

The city of **Galway**, an hour north of Shannon, is also known as "the festival capital of Ireland," so put it on your list to see what they have going on. With its location to both a bay and a river, it's also a great location to experience the amazing food the country has to offer.


Cliffs of Moher

One way to do that quickly is to join the **Galway Food Tours**, which I did. My guide, Danny, showed me the unique coffee stylings offered at Little Lane Coffee, an amazing chowder from Rúibín Bar & Restaurant with fresh clams from the nearby ocean, a to-die-for chocolate experience at Truffle, and a seafood and stew showdown at Tigh Neachtain's.

I dined on my own at **McSwiggans**, which offered mussels from the Killary Fjord in Ireland and served me one of the best half-ducks I've ever had in my life.

Those interested in medieval times and fun European things like castles should also set their sights on Ireland. The Outing Festival, for example, takes place around the corner from the impeccable **Dromoland Castle**. **Dublin Castle** shows that even the biggest cities can have some old-fashioned style and the **Trim Castle** should be on everyone's list to visit at least once.



Dublin Castle

The latter castle is another reason I visited Ireland, as my ancestor, **Hugh de Lacy**, built it.

Irish heritage is also a big reason Burke wants to maintain US-Ireland relations: "At different points in time in our history, we had so many people leave Ireland and seek a better life in the US. They settled down, became part of society, brought up their families, and never forgot their past. About 32 million Americans claim Irish heritage. That's a very, very significant number."

photography by Andrew J Stillman




Andrew with Hugh de Lacy

Considering there are hardly 5 million inhabitants in Ireland today, I'd have to agree.

Regarding Trim Castle, not only was it the backdrop of the wildly popular movie *Braveheart*, but it's also the largest Anglo-Norman fortification in Ireland. A tour transports you back in history like no other experience, especially considering the castle has turned into ruins and amplifies the ancient walls that have still stood the test of time for nearly a thousand years.

Trim Castle can be tricky to get to, and Americans should beware of the narrow roads on the way. Driving on the other side of the road itself is stressful enough, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't get into a small fender bender while I was there (although nobody was injured, and it didn't do anything to ruin the trip.)

A stay at the **Trim Castle Hotel** may also provide you with a stunning view of the castle right out your window, depending on which wing you land in. An epic sunrise awaits as the sun's rays creep across the castle keep that still acts as a beacon of protection for the structure.


View from Trim Castle

No visit to Ireland would really be complete without a visit to **Dublin**, even if you only have about five hours or so to spend in town like I did. Within those five hours, I highly recommend visiting **The Book of Kells Experience** at Trinity City College. The exhibit is an illustrated manuscript and Celtic Gospel book in Latin that covers the four Gospels of the New Testament. Although the Book isn't available for photography, the exhibit — especially the interactive part — is well worth the visit.

Above the Book is also **The Old Library** project, which is a restoration of ancient texts that comes complete with a large, rotating 3D model of Earth known as Gaia.

One thing I wish I would have been able to do, and the first thing on my next Ireland bucket list is a tour of the Guinness factory. In the States, I'm not usually a fan of Guinness, but I was convinced to try one at The Crane Bar in Galway after being told it was "the best place to get one in the country."

Although I can't confirm that particular opinion, I would love to be able to tour the brewery where all the magic happens, especially since you can have your photo printed on the foam at the end.

Whether you're looking for something gay, something outdoors, something historical or something that transports you to another world, Ireland should be high on your list of places to visit. With Celtic mythology, welcoming people and unforgettable experiences, come experience the céad míle fáilte, or the "hundred thousand welcomes" the country is known for.



Lamb Dinner


The Old Library

Andrew J. Stillman is a writer of fantasy stories and freelance content. He makes YouTube videos and explores the world on his travel blog at lifeinanotherworld.com. Follow him @andrewjstillman on all the things.

Desert Theatricals

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Questions? Please email info@desert-theatricals.com.

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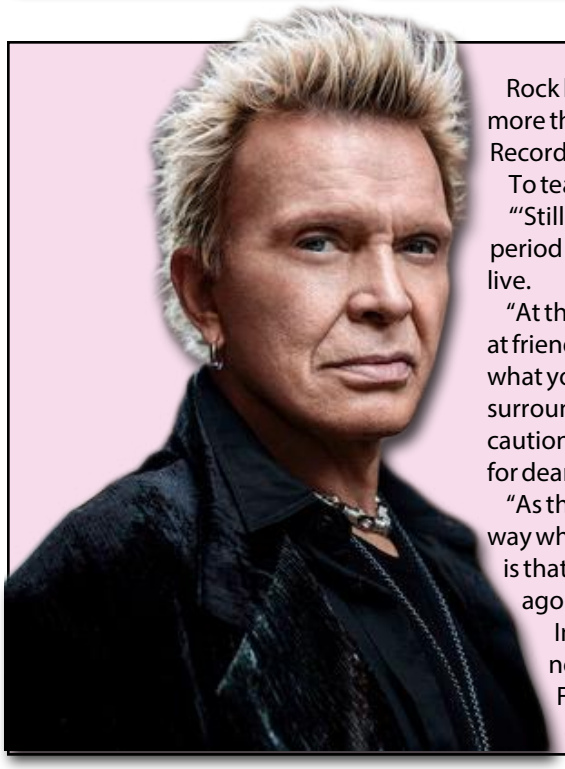
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APRIL'S HOTTEST DROPS IN MUSIC



Who Believes In Angels? was devised by **Elton John**, 11-time Grammy-winning superstar, and frequent collaborator **Brandi Carlile**, in partnership with John's lifelong collaborator and friend Bernie Taupin and the multiple Grammy-winning producer/songwriter Andrew Watt. According to John, the studio album mixes Elton-led songs and Brandi-led songs and came together in just 20 days. In listening to the single released in March, *Who Believes in Angels,* it feels like the classic Taupin/John collaborations found in *Madman Across the Water*. From the moment the song started, I knew it was an Elton John song. Add the soaring, storytelling beauty of Carlile's vocals and there are the makings of a hit song. It feels like a comfy old sweater that just got a zipper repair and can be worn again. The full album will be released **Friday, April 4.**





Rock legend **Billy Idol** is preparing to release his first full-length album of new music in more than a decade. ***Dream Into It*** will be available on **Friday, April 25** through Dark Horse Records, featuring appearances by Avril Lavigne, Joan Jett and Alison Mosshart of The Kills.

To tease the upcoming record, Idol has released the new single "Still Dancing."

"'Still Dancing' is really a reflection of my whole journey," Idol said. "From the punk rock period through to now. And I'm still looking towards the future, still living the life I set out to live.

"At the start of the song I'm recalling the early times in London, when I was living in squats or at friends' apartments, all my belongings in a plastic bag. Everybody at home or work told you what you were doing was never going to happen. But punk rock gave me an opening. I was surrounded by people who loved the music as deeply as I did and you were going to throw caution to the wind, believe in what you were doing and grab on for dear life," he said

"As the song says, there have been many moments along the way where I've been self-destructive. But what's seen me through is that unflinching belief in the music that started all those years ago. That's been the greatest gift of all."

In addition to the forthcoming album, Idol has been nominated for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame's Class of 2025. Fan voting will be open until April 21, with inductees to be announced at month's month.





Hip-hop crew **Wu-Tang Clan** has linked up with longtime producer Mathematics for a special Record Store Day release titled ***Black Samson, The Bastard Swordsman***. Coming from the Wu-Tang, The Saga Continues collection, the 12-track album will be limited to 5,000 copies that will only be sold at participating Record Store Day retailers. Besides appearances from all nine surviving Wu-Tang Clan members, the 2xLP will include contributions from Kool G Rap, Benny the Butcher and Kurupt. It marks the first Wu-Tang project since 2017's *The Saga Continues*, which was also helmed by Mathematics.

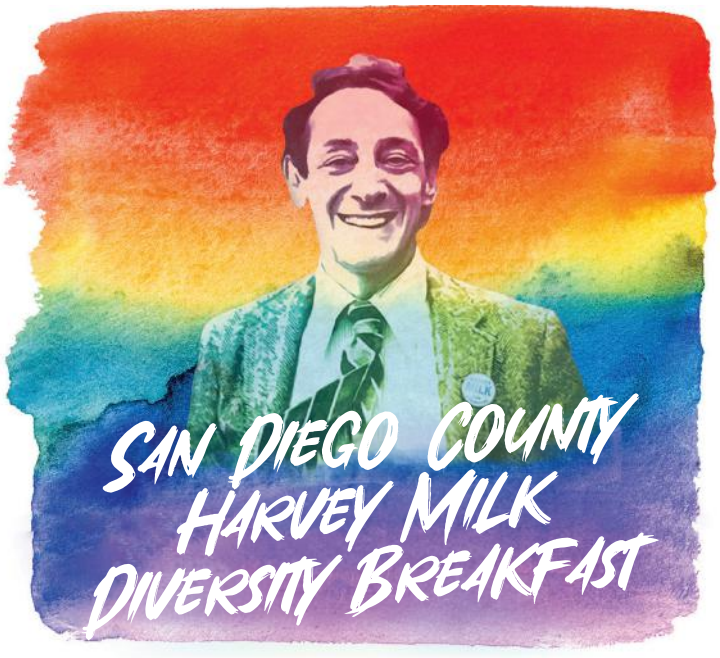


Attention vinyl and CD lovers! **Record Store Day 2025** will take place on **Saturday, April 12**. Since 2008, independently owned record stores around the world have been the focus of a day to celebrate their role in their communities and the people who make them spin: the staff who run them, customers who shop them, and the artists who make the music they sell.

In 2025, the continuing popularity and resurgence of physical media, including the vinyl and CD formats, means that more people than ever are coming to the record store searching for special releases and limited cuts (max 5,000 copies). Check out their website for the list of limited cuts to be released this year. They cross every genre and era of music.

Record Store Day is organized in partnership with the Alliance of Independent Media Stores (AIMS) and the Coalition of Independent Music Stores (CIMS). **recordstoreday.com**





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Does Size Matter?

Do me a favor: Open that gay hookup app you have installed on your phone. It doesn't matter which one you choose — Grindr, Scruff, Sniffies — I guarantee you'll find some twink, daddy or discreet Republican searching for a "big dick." Not only are these eager bottoms on the hunt for dongs the size of hockey sticks, but they're often looking to have their asses "destroyed."

Umm, excuse me. Ouch! Now, you'll never hear me knock someone entering through the back door, but I do feel there is a fine line between pleasure and pain, and being ripped open like a package on Christmas morning. For me, that line is a healthy six inches. Of course, that's not accounting for girth which, in my opinion, should not be comparable to a Coke can. There's a reason I quit drinking soda 20+ years ago.

It's interesting to chat about penis size for no other reason than the fact that so many men tend to place currency on what's in their pants, and I'm not referring to their pockets. Sure, length and width are common topics of discussion, but what about whether a man's hang low is, quite simply, pretty or not? I've seen a cock-a-two in my life, and there are some unattractive ones out there. Not to mention, many sporting shitty haircuts.

Still, when there are myriad factors to consider regarding quality men, factors such as personality, loyalty and honesty, I can't help but wonder: Does dick size matter?

Several years ago, I picked up a dude at a bar. No, that's not the start of a joke or the latest *Dateline* episode. He looked like Blair Underwood, and I was ready and willing to explore *his* under wood. Yet, when I got him home and unzipped his pants, I discovered he had a third leg! I told him to get out and to put that thing in an Uber before it hurt someone.

Contrary to that experience, I once was in the process of entertaining a man and learned quickly that he didn't just look like a Ken doll but also had the anatomical features of one. I stole a glance at my watch, lied about being late for a party, and ran for the door, all the while trying to pull up my shorts without falling flat on my face.

Fast forward to a more recent encounter. I went on a date — yes, a real date — with an extremely nice and attractive guy. It was after the movie and during "dessert" that I froze, coming face-to-face with the reality that he wasn't only packing in everyday life but also in his Calvin Klein briefs.

I reached out frantically to one of my friends, asking, "What do I do?" His advice: "All in, sis — we don't turn away food."

What can I say? I'm like Samantha Jones. I'm Goldicocks, and I want to locate the member that's just right!

Honestly, I'm not much of a size queen. As mentioned, I've been around the block — twice — and throughout my travels, I've maybe met three or four peens inadequate in size for my basic needs. I'm interested in the man attached to the dick, and *if* he's a dick.

Although I think there are more significant features to worry about, I do understand the importance of compatibility. That being said, should dick size be a deal breaker? Can it be ranked up there with must have decent job and an excellent credit score? Remember, a better job may be on the horizon; a credit score can change in an instant. However, the type of tool a man has in his tool bag can't be exchanged with a visit to Home Depot.

So, I repeat: How important is dick size? What, exactly, are you willing to sacrifice and/or compromise on in terms of sex?

Perhaps this is where the argument for open relationships and throuples comes into play. Nevertheless, I can say with certainty that regardless of how small or big my hypothetical man's piece is, I'd never want him fitting it into someone else's hole(s). Full stop.

Then again, other than a few rare instances, I'm a firm believer in the idea that the man makes the penis, not the other way around. After all, it's not what you're working with necessarily that matters, but ultimately the type of work you're able to produce.



Cutter Slagle is the author of suspense, horror and crime-fiction works. cutterslagle.com



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