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Olly Alexander – After Years & Years
Releases New Album, Polaris

Yellowjackets' Liv Hewson
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Hello Friends!

April stirs something electric in the soul, like a buzzing thaw of change and rebirth, am I right? Or maybe I've been drinking too much coffee again. Either way, to me, spring is like a return to life after thinking growth was a one-time 'flash in the pan.' This issue is a love letter to the artists and rebels blooming in between the lines for the first, second, third, or tenth time. As queers, our power has always been shaped by those brave enough to continue creating or performing their art in places the world once told (or continues to tell) them to hide.

After **Years & Years**, British singer, actor, and activist **Olly Alexander** is releasing his first (new) album, ***Polari***, as a solo artist— Bryen Dunn has this juicy story awaiting you as our first feature. If you like 80s queer pop, you'll want to get your hands on this—and the good news is, it's available now! Who doesn't love Showtime's ***Yellowjackets***? Even more so, who doesn't love the character *Van Palmer*? In our second feature, we dive into our admiration for non-binary actor and playwright, **Liv Hewson**. Liv turned down an Emmy consideration to prove a point about archaic categorization, which you can read more about as you flip through the pages.

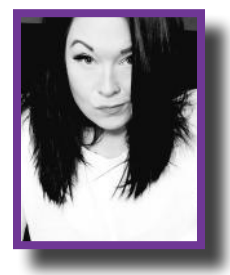
In *Deep Dish*, Rolyn Chambers speaks on 'what's what' with trending Toronto clubs such as **The Lair**, **Anvil**, and the return of **Boutique Bar**. In this *Wigged Out*, the performing troupe **Drag Syndrome** is showing the world how extra fabulous having an extra chromosome can be. In *She Beat*, Jackie Manthorne provides insight into the organization **Queering Cancer**—run predominantly by queer females. Boyd Kodak tells us everything we need to know about **Tsholo Khalema**, South African trans actor, director, and visual creator in *Kodak Moment*. Does pizza that's not pizza spark your interest? Sherry Sylvain urges us to head on over to **Levant** for uniquely delicious Palestinian-inspired dishes in *Beyond the Village*.

Check out our *BUZZpicks* for events you won't want to miss!

"I used to be scared of people thinking I was gay but now I'd be shocked if they didn't."
— Olly Alexander

Happy reading!

Mel MacMullin
Editor-in-Chief




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Photo by Hugo Yanguela

Olly Alexander Reincarnates as Himself After Years & Years

By Bryen Dunn

Olly Alexander's new album of retro-futuristic, gay dance music brings the British singer, actor, and activist into his own right. *Polari* is the first recording released under his name, after fronting the successful career of the Brit-pop group Years & Years.

It could be considered a sort of second coming-out for the queer artist, or perhaps a reincarnation of himself. "I wanted it to be made completely differently than the previous records, kind of like a debut album. I definitely felt more free writing this," he divulges.

The sound has a throwback feel to 1980s queer pop, with solid influence from **Pet Shop Boys** and a collaboration with **Vince Clarke** (Erasure, Depeche Mode, Yazoo). "Pet Shop Boys were definitely an inspiration for the full album, as was past electronic music. Everything was made on the computer and filtered through the lens of now, so it's similar but different. My love letter to pop, I suppose", Alexander explains.

Made almost entirely in songwriter/producer **Danny L. Harle**'s (Charli XCX, Dua Lipa, Marc Almond) studio on London's Hackney Road, right across the road from where Alexander's first adventures in East End gay clubbing and cruising happened, Polari projects a passing of the torch from one era of riveting queer pop history to another. In fact, the album title is in reference to a secret coded language that gay men would use between themselves when being openly gay was illegal.

Alexander first met Harle about a decade before when he did a remix of the Years & Years song, ***Shine***. "I wanted to work with just one person for the full album. I never have much of a plan when going into the studio. I just sort of ask the universe to give me inspiration," he shares. "I was really trying to find what feels like my identity now, and it all started to make sense as soon as I started making a record there. It was exactly what I needed, positioned literally across the road from all the gay bars I used to go to as a teenager."

Fully co-written with Harle, the first song they composed was ***Cupid's Bow***, a rigorous, dreamlike disco reverie on cruising. "Even though it's not in my life anymore, cruising or hooking up, I felt like it's kind of always there. It's in the way that we process desire and intimacy with each other. I see it everywhere," explains Alexander. ***I Know*** is another song on the album about cruising that references the hanky code.



Photo by Hugo Yanguela



Photo by Richie Talboy

The pair discovered a mutual obsession with the pop soundscapes that dominated the 1980s but were set on channelling new ways to expose a modern listener to the joy and escapism the music offered across that pivotal decade. By the time they got to producing ***Make Me a Man***, they decided to approach Vince Clarke to produce it. They sent an email to him, and he wrote back and agreed to be part of the project. The result is an Erasure-sounding track that jams equally as a current dance groove of today and a retro vibe of yesterday.

Another great influence Alexander attributes to the album is his starring role in the recent **Russell T Davies** British mini-series, ***It's a Sin***, about a group of gay men living in the U.K. at the height of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. "That series really changed my life, listening to 80s music while making it and learning about that period of activism, with trailblazers like George Michael, Neil Tennant, Jimmy Sommerville, and Derek Jarman. It helped me understand my own identity growing up in the UK," Alexander admits.

He previously collaborated with the *Pet Shop Boys* on their 2019 single ***Dreamland*** and later released a cover of *It's a Sin* to coincide with the series. On a side note, Davies has a new production in the works that was recently announced. ***Tip Toe*** will explore the most corrosive forces facing the LGBTQ+ community today. As of writing, Alexander admitted he hadn't been approached as yet about being involved.

Commenting on *Polari*, Alexander states, "I made this album for a reason, and I'm so confident in what it is. Recently, I have had this thing where I'm thinking, is this what my creative life should've been all along? I'm putting out music I love, on my terms; that means something to me. Maybe the size and scope of it are going to be different from how it was before, but now I'm doing it for all the right reasons."

The album is a full investigation of Alexander's private thoughts, dressed up as a magnetic succession of anthems for public display. *Polari* is the world he was meant to live in, always. "Just the fact of being gay and having a secret language. That felt like it spoke to me as an artist. That's what my whole life has been. So, it became the thing that defined the best record I've ever made," he concludes.

Olly Alexander will head out on his ***Up Close and Polari Tour*** this spring, playing across the UK and Europe, with possible North American stops to be announced at a later date. Purchase Polari here.

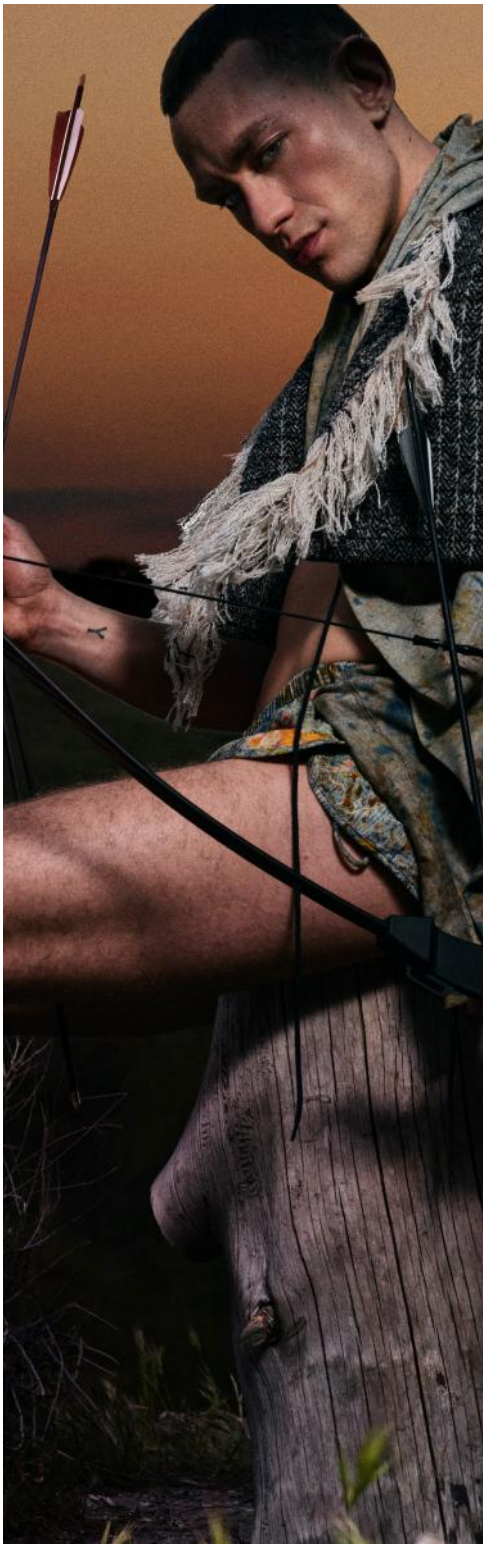


Photo by Richie Talboy

Five Fun Facts

1. Collaboration Dream: Cher
2. Previous Collaborations: Elton John (It's a Sin Brit Awards), Kylie Minogue (A Second to Midnight)
3. Recommended Reads: We Both Laughed in Pleasure by Lou Sullivan, Stag Dance by Torrey Peters
4. He is a Guinness World Record holder for most objects caught (27) in a minute while spinning on a chair, which was inspired by his Eurovision performance for Dizzy
5. He has a bust of himself at Madame Tussauds London

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.




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Liv Hewson Is Done Asking for Permission

and Honestly, Thank God

By Mel MacMullin



There's something radical about Liv Hewson. Not loud or performative. Not curated or polished. Just radically, disarmingly real.

They walk into a scene—on or off camera—and everything shifts. It's not about presence. It's about truth. They don't perform queerness, or package it. They live it. Unapologetically and with zero hesitation. In Liv, there's an embodiment of something bigger. A cultural shift. A refusal to make queerness palatable for the masses. They're not waiting for Hollywood to catch up, they're making art in the meantime, reshaping the narrative from within.

Born in Canberra, Australia in 1995, actor and playwright **Liv Hewson** grew up in a household that balanced introspection and structure—their mother a public servant, their father a psychologist. The nuance of human

behaviour, the stories we hide and the ones we ache to tell, were always close by. No wonder they were drawn to theatre, and eventually, to screen work that demanded more than a pretty face or clever line. Liv brings soul.

We first saw that soul in ***Dramaworld (2016)***, then again in ***Santa Clarita Diet***, where Liv played *Abby Hammond* with the kind of sharp, deadpan wit that only someone who feels deeply can pull off. But it's their role as *Van Palmer* on Showtime's ***Yellowjackets*** that has shown us the full spectrum of their power: funny, feral, loving, queer, scarred, and radiant all at once. "I went through a little grief process of my own as we were filming season three," Liv said in a recent interview. "It was just really important to me that we do it to the fullest." You feel that kind of commitment in every line they deliver. Van isn't just a character. Van is someone Liv is bringing through with all the pain and light they've lived themselves.

But what really sets Liv apart? They're not just acting out rebellion on screen—they're living and breathing it in their everyday life. In 2023, Liv made headlines for turning down an Emmy consideration. Not because they didn't deserve it (they absolutely did), but because of the gendered categories that left no room for non-binary performers. It wasn't a stunt. It was a stance.

"My issue is so structural," they said. "There's not a place for me in the acting categories. It would be inaccurate for me to submit myself as an actress. It just doesn't make sense for me. It's not congruent." That word—congruent—feels like the key to understanding Liv. They're not playing a part. They're integrating. They're aligning. They're reminding us that sometimes the most political thing you can do is refuse to fit where you don't belong.

That alignment also showed up when Liv shared their journey with gender-affirming surgery. "I have just never been happier," they told Them. "I've never been more centered. I've never felt more stable and present and alive." Let that sink in. In a world still obsessed with flattening trans and non-binary experiences into trauma narratives or tokenized side plots, Liv is living out loud. Not to prove a point—but 'to be.' That, in itself, is revolutionary. Their work is also a kind of joy activism. As they put it, "It's fun to play the girls when they're happy, because that doesn't happen often." It's a reminder that queer and trans people aren't simply surviving. They're laughing. They're loving. They're thriving.

Liv never signed up to be anyone's symbol, role model or 'poster child,' they've become something vital to so many of us—proof that you don't have to sacrifice your truth to have a voice. You can make art, speak out, exist beyond the binary, and still be celebrated. Even if you have to build the stage yourself... so grab a hammer and start bangin'.





"I have a right to be here," Liv said. "To be treated with dignity and respect. To move through the world the same as everybody else." Yes, they do. And they're better for it. Liv Hewson is not the future of the acting industry. They are the now. They are themselves, nothing else, and nothing less.

Every time Liv shares part of their experience, whether through a role or a raw interview, they carve out space for others to feel seen. Especially for young queer and trans people, watching Liv exist with this level of honesty can be a lifeline. They don't present a shiny, flawless version of identity. They offer something more powerful: complexity. Fluidity. A mirror that reflects possibility instead of perfection.

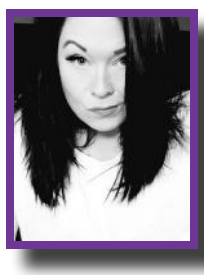
And they're funny. Let's not skip that part. Dry, observant, with a hint of mischief. Whether they're teasing castmates or serving stone-cold sarcasm as Van, Liv has the kind of humour that disarms before it enlightens. It's not performative—it's protective and connective.

In an industry that still too often values image over integrity, Liv is choosing integrity every time; that's the kind of artist you want at the center of the story. Not because they fit the mold, but because they shatter it with care. So, no—they're not here to fit in. They're here to shift things. In doing so, they're giving the rest of us the courage to step into our fullness too.

Liv Hewson is not a trend. They are a tectonic plate... and the ground is shifting. Call it a movement, if you will. But perhaps we should call it 'Liv'-ing to the fullest without seeking approval.

All photos via Instagram @liv.hewson

Melissa MacMullin is a freelance content writer and journalist for leading publications. A strong distinct queer Canadian voice with pride and purpose. Author. Screenwriter. Performer. Part-time adventurer.



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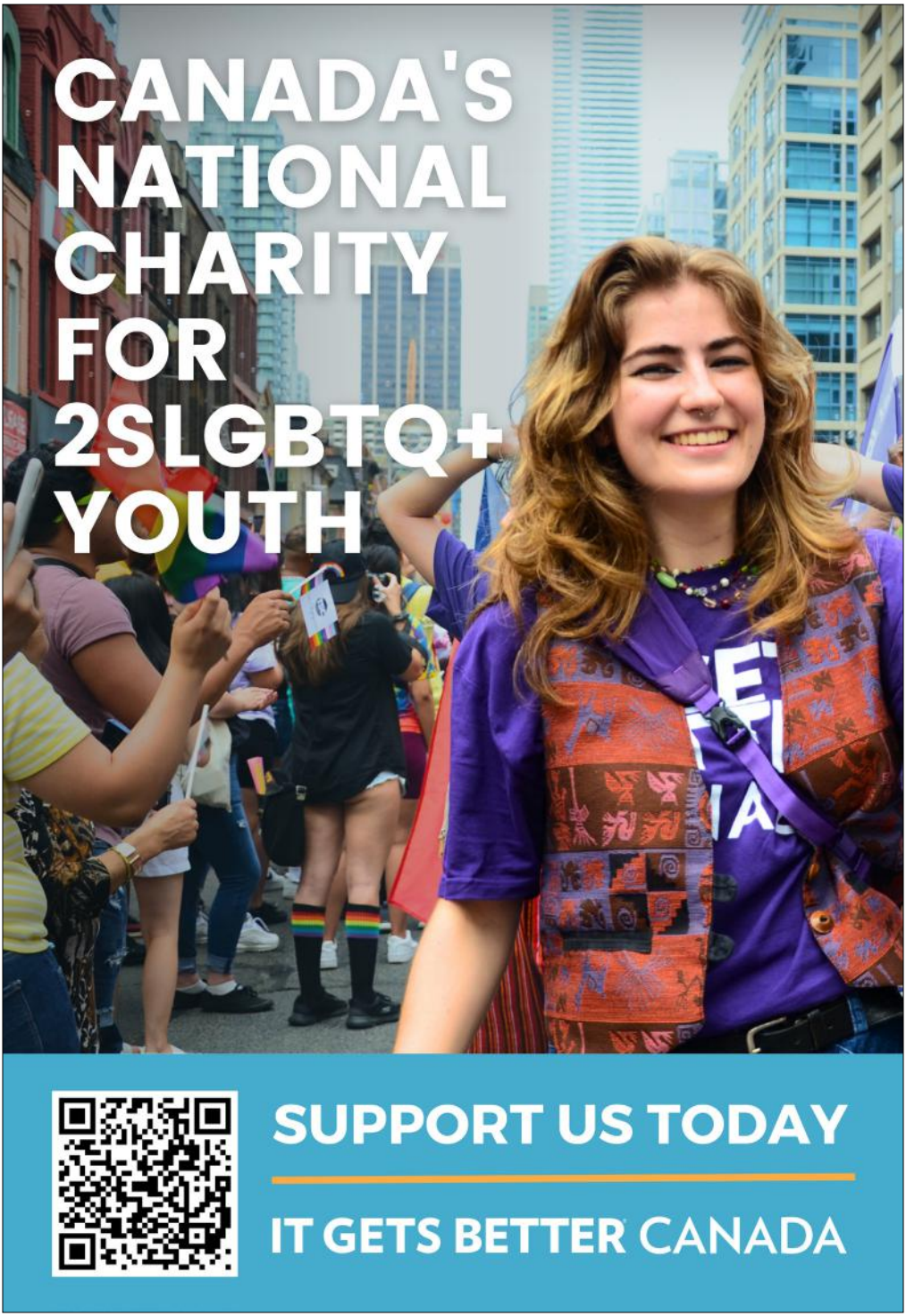
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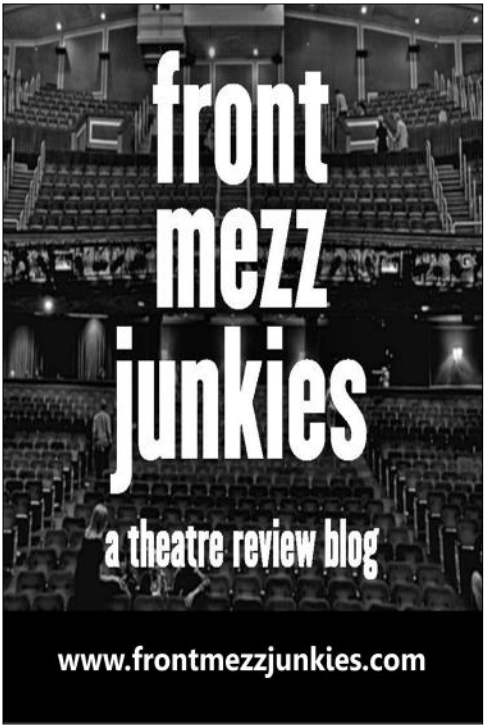
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DEEP DISH

BY ROLYN CHAMBERS

The Lair, Anvil and The Return of Boutique Bar



BOUTIQUE BAR

Spring signals new growth and flowers blooming. After a winter of wonder, Toronto's Queer Village has some new venues sprouting up to beautify our nighttime, twilight garden. Take a sniff.

First is the fragrant return of Boutique Bar to **The Village**. Originally in the heart of the action south of Wellesley St., Boutique had to close and relocate a block north of Wellesley, at 553 Church St. Some will remember this spot as the legendary Smith back in the day, home to many infamous, intimate parties that took over this stylish three-floor brownstone. Open seven days a week, weekends come alive with **DJ Sammm's House Vibes Fridays**, who recently held a unique, original event where local Twitch DJs converged on the spot for a night of dancing and live streaming. It's also gaining a reputation as a hot spot for the lesbian crowd. It's a gorgeous venue that is ripe for activity, and I encourage all DJs and party promoters to hit them up and help solidify their new venue as the place to be.

Second is the sprouting up of a new sex-positive, male-only venue called Anvil, located beside Dudley's Hardware, down an alleyway, surprisingly called Anvil Alley. How did I not notice this before? Though the hours don't make sense (6:00 p.m. to midnight, sometimes 2:00 a.m.), the space does. It's a stylish dark maze of sexy hallways, a raised slurp ramp, private cubicles, a large play area, a porno-watching room (with easily wipeable bench seating), and an outdoor smoking patio. There is no dancing, just cruising… and sex. It's like a bathhouse without the rooms… or towels?

Third is the reseeding and reopening of The Lair. This newish venue, formerly Impact Lounge, is famous for its sex-positive parties (picture a huge backroom that is usually busier than its dancefloor) sweating up this basement venue on Parliament St. Last year it went through a drama-filled takeover of management and is now run by **Matt Kai**, who operates **Freakin' Awesome**



ANVIL



THE LAIR

Gay Stuff. Taking three months off, Kai was hoping to secure a real liquor license for the venue, as they had been operating on LLBO Special Occasion Permits for months. During this time a social media campaign began to circulate, which brought to light some shady dealings between Kai and past employees and performers who claimed they had not been paid. This, however, did not seem to dampen **BARE**, their first party back at the beginning of April, which was relatively well attended. But this first party back was sadly liquor-free. This makes me wonder about the future of the venue. Liquor sales are the lifeblood of any club venue, and if you can't offer this legal lubricant, can you survive long-term?

Fourth is the surprise regrowth of the upcoming opening of the new **Impact Lounge**. Watch out, Matt Kai. After being unceremoniously ousted from the venue that he created on Parliament St., **Jason Voneuw** has been slowly plotting his return. Look for Impact to set down roots in the heart of the village this summer. Expect this new venture, in one of The Village's most historic venues, to be more community-oriented, with more of a restaurant/pub focus.

Whatever your garden looks like, Toronto's Queer Village has something perfect for your bouquet.

Jamaican-born Rolyn Chambers grew up in the suburbs of Mississauga, before attending *Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD University)*. In 2001, he began his *Deep Dish* column with *fab Magazine*, which ran for a full decade, allowing him to interview everyone from clubbers and promoters, to celebrities and politicians. Deep Dish has now been resurrected once again here in theBUZZ. Chambers is also the author of, *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse*, self-published by himself via YumEee! Communications. IG @rahrahrolyn



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Drag Syndrome: Highly Addictive, Freshly Fierce!



Photo courtesy of Drag Syndrome

Meet **Drag Syndrome**, the UK-based collective of drag performers with Down Syndrome who are captivating stages around the world and challenging outdated ideas about who gets to shine in drag. Extra chromosome = extra fabulous.

Founded in 2018 by creative director **Daniel Vais**, Drag Syndrome started with a bold mission: celebrate the talent of artists with learning disabilities while expanding the definition of drag. What's emerged is a dazzling ensemble, each with their own distinct persona and powerhouse presence. Let's meet a few of the stars lighting up the stage:

Horrora Shebang

The self-proclaimed "evil queen of drag," Horrora Shebang mixes gothic glamour with campy, chaotic brilliance. Whether channelling high fashion or full-on villain energy, she's a showstopper with an unmatched presence. Think Morticia Addams meets Leigh Bowery—if they had an even better walk.

Justin Bond

Cool, confident, and always dapper, Justin Bond brings suave king energy to every performance. He's known for his fierce sense of fashion, impeccable rhythm, and deep commitment to elevating drag kings in a queen-heavy scene. When Justin hits the stage, it's smooth, sexy, and smartly political.

Lady Francesca

The duchess of drama herself, Lady Francesca is all elegance and theatrical flair. With a love for Old Hollywood glamour and classic diva attitude, she gives us Rita Hayworth meets RuPaul. She's got a killer eye for costume design and a slow, deliberate confidence that owns the spotlight.

Nikita Gold

A prolific dancer with amazing movements and impeccable taste in music, make-up, clothing, accessories, and everything else in between! She has an incredible fashion sense and is a quintessential queen. Everywhere she travels, Nikita dazzles audiences by taking over stages all around the world.

Davina Starr

Known for having a heart of gold, but don't get on her bad side. With her stunning presence, Davina Starr, a talented performer, understands how to hold a stage. She enjoys spreading love, being glitzy, and unapologetically delivering an abundance of glamour.

Lady Mercury

A cosmic queen with ethereal vibes, Lady Mercury fuses fantasy with fierce fashion. Whether she's channelling intergalactic royalty or a fairy-tale enchantress, she's a visual dream and a creative visionary.

Together, this cast forms a kaleidoscope of queer creativity, proving that drag is not about mainstream—it's about presence, performance, and power. Drag Syndrome's message is clear: everyone deserves a spotlight.

Touring internationally and making waves online, Drag Syndrome is transforming drag into a more inclusive, liberated, and joyful space.


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The Q Musicale— a Pride Toronto Major Cultural Event
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BY JACKIE MANTHORNE

Queering Cancer



Photo Credit: Queering Cancer

Queering Cancer is a Canadian (mostly female) volunteer-run community partnership dedicated to improving the experiences of sexual and gender diverse (SDG) people affected by cancer. The team is composed of queer, trans, and non-binary clinicians, patients, and researchers. Together, they are improving resources, research, and support for patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

Since launching in 2020, Queering Cancer has developed a supportive network for SGD people affected by cancer, collaborated with diverse cancer advocacy groups, engaged in research partnerships, and delivered healthcare professional education in inclusive cancer care to various audiences.

You can find them on Instagram @queeringcancer and through their website www.queeringcancer.ca, where they have a collection of over 70 patient stories from queer and trans people affected by cancer. These stories allow us to read about queer, non-binary, and trans people who have gone through cancer and have overcome any discrimination they faced.

Why is it so important?

It provides a sense of community, and there's a lot of individual and collective strength in that. We all know cancer can be extremely isolating, especially for queer, trans, and non-binary folks who must navigate a healthcare system that is not designed with them in mind. Sexual and gender diversity has always needed, built, and found strength in community. Queering Cancer will keep this at their core as they continue to take pride in making cancer care more inclusive.

A queer healthcare professional stated that, "The stories, especially for newly diagnosed patients, can be really helpful in terms of creating a sense of hope and they're not the only people struggling … Sometimes hearing stories can be a lovely conversation point … to help people to find words to express their experience."

And a queer cancer patient remarked that "It was almost as cathartic for me to discover Queering Cancer as it was the first time I went to a queer dance. Or the first time I had my first testosterone injection, where I really felt like I landed in myself. It had just been such a long time that I had been researching."

Queering Cancer's website contains a searchable section containing hundreds of resources, over 70 queer, non-binary, and trans patient stories, an education section that contains free or inexpensive online courses, and a blog that contains news and updates.

You don't have to feel alone if you, your partner, spouse, or best friend is diagnosed with cancer.

Queering Cancer's Mission:

To transform cancer care for the sexual and gender diverse (SGD) community by improving research, resources, and support for patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

What They Do:

- Collate and share resources and information through their database, blogs and socials
- Source and provide education for healthcare professionals to support affirming care
- Curate stories and first-person accounts from SGD patients and carers
- Provide organizational consultancy and education in SGD oncology care
- Research into SGD cancer experience and improving care

Jackie Manthorne is the author of the Harriet Hubbley mystery series, with three books in this exciting series: *Ghost Motel, Deadly Reunion*, and now *Last Resort*. Available at Glad Day and all good bookstores.





Join our publisher as he chats with LGBTQ+ owned and friendly businesses in North America, and the occasional business experts. .

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A KODAK MOMENT

BY BOYD KODAK

Tsholo Khalema



Tsholo Khalema is a South African Canadian multi-hyphenate artist, director, and educator whose work centers on inclusion and transformative storytelling. With over 20 years of experience in theatre and the arts, he brings a unique intersectional lens to every project, blending lived experience with professional craft.

Boyd Kodak - What have you been doing over the last year?

Tsholo Khalema - Where do I begin? I've been booked and busy! I've been writing my play NtsiNtsi about a nosy little fly who sees everything, like everything, okay? I was blessed to be in 3 Fingers Back by the legendary Donna Michelle St. Bernard. I also launched my first Black Emerging Artist creation program with Theatre Passe Muraille called VUKA, and yes, I facilitated it myself—multi-hyphenate behaviour! My collective, AMAVA, debuted our first show, BLANK, commissioned by Theatre Direct. I also directed and designed sound and visuals for Juicy by Jan Jennings because apparently sleep is optional. Recently got shortlisted for directing The Fabulous Show with Fay and Fluffy at the Canadian Screen Awards.

BK - Excellent, that is an incredible amount of work! What was the most exciting event for you during that time?

TK - Asking me to choose is like asking a parent which child is their favourite. I love everything I do. Each moment had its own flavour: sweet, spicy, and soulful. From the stage lights to the rehearsal rooms, they all meant something different and special to me as a Black artist navigating this wild, beautiful world.

BK - Nice, I don't know many people who can say that they love everything they do. What are you looking forward to next year?

TK - The artist's life is basically a plot twist waiting to happen, but I'm here for it! I'm hyped to build more projects with my AMAVA fam. I'm also getting married soon, so I'm going to soak up some joy in this beautifully chaotic universe. More Black joy. More love. More art.

BK - That sounds great, congratulations on the marriage. Where can we see your work?

TK - If you're really about that life, hit up my website for more of my creative shenanigans: www.tsholovisions.com and catch the vision.

BK- Future plans?

T**K** - One day, I'm gonna be that cool theatre uncle teaching, mentoring, and helping artists birth their own mind-blowing, heart-healing work. I want to support the next wave of storytellers who look like me, sound like me, and dream like me. That's the vision.

BK - Terrific goals. Any message you would like to put out there?

TK - One of my ride-or-die quotes is from Zig Ziglar: "You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great." I've been starting over and over again my whole life, and each time, I level up. Ain't nothing going to hold me back, because I believe in this wild, magical gift I've got. And honestly, I'm fueled by the beauty I see in the world... even in the mess, there's magic.

BK - Wise words, indeed. Finish this sentence for us, "If I could have 3 wishes, they'd be..."

TK - 1. Own a chicken farm. 2. Create art all day, every day, no day job, just a joy job. 3. Be surrounded by a community that's kind and affirming; that's rare in my world, and I want more of that.

Boyd Kodak is an award-winning trans activist, musician, writer, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director.



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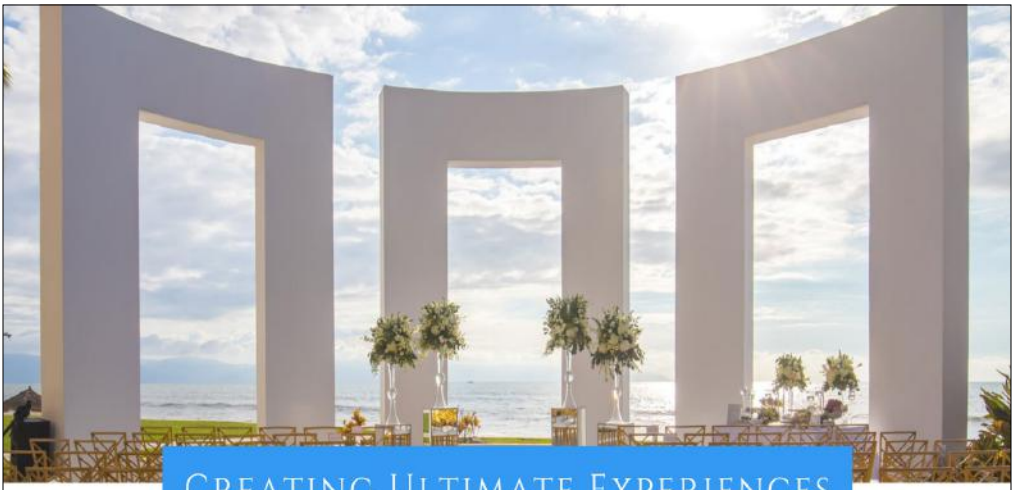
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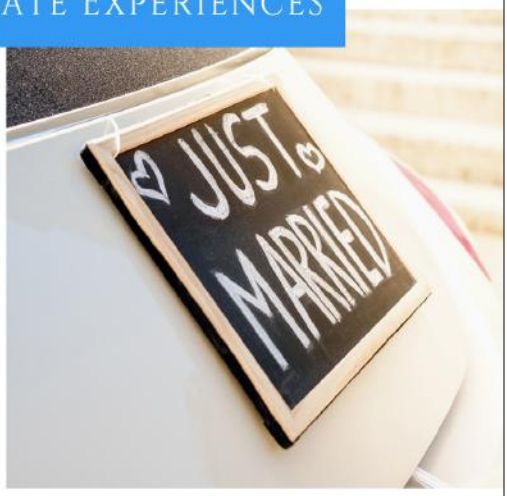

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Levant



Located in Toronto's Bloorcourt neighbourhood, on the south side of Bloor, just west of Ossington, **Levant Pizza** is pizza that is not pizza. I know, confusing, right? But confusing can be delicious.

Uniting global flavours and time-tested culinary techniques, Levant helms an unconventional take on Sicilian-style pizza. They begin with a dough made with '00' Italian flour, which they cold-proof for four long days. This results in a sumptuously thick, yet incredibly airy dough, which is then expertly pressed into a well-oiled pan and left to rest overnight before being baked to perfection. The result is a renowned, light, and crispy focaccia that tastes like it came out of a Sicilian restaurant. This is the cornerstone of their mouthwatering creations when it's topped with familiar and unfamiliar ingredients. They know and have heard repeatedly, that this is not your typical pizza—so, they've leaned into that concept; they are Levant (not) Pizza.

Their commitment to excellence extends to their toppings and ingredients, which draw inspiration from the rich and diverse flavours of the Mediterranean. Not only do they use their delectable focaccia as the base for their iconic (not) pizzas, but it also serves as the foundation for their freshly baked sandwiches, including their beloved Muffuletta.

Levant Pizza is the home of the highly Instagrammable Mix and Match pizza. This innovative concept not only appeals to your visual senses but also allows you to select multiple signature styles on a single pie, ensuring a truly personalized dining experience.

In the Levant kitchen, their motto is simple: "Never Cut Corners." Much like their meticulous preparation of focaccia, nearly all their toppings and dishes are crafted in-house, using only the freshest ingredients and time-tested methods. The chef has always held his mother's wisdom close to heart: to make food that people love; one must first love the way it's prepared.

While Levant excels in (not) pizza and sandwiches, don't miss the opportunity to savour the hidden gems, such as the creamy hummus. As a Palestinian restaurant, they proudly serve traditional Nabulsi-style kunafa (a popular Middle Eastern dessert featuring crispy shredded phyllo-style dough, a rich cheese filling, and a sweet syrup), with a tantalizing tiramisu variation.

Levant Pizza stands out not only for its delicious Mediterranean-inspired pizzas but also for its commitment to being a queer-friendly restaurant in Toronto. Located in central Toronto, Levant Pizza is celebrated for both its flavorful pies and its inclusive environment. This restaurant goes beyond serving great food by actively supporting the LGBTQ+ community. With LGBTQ+ staff and a dedication to creating a safe space, Levant Pizza has become a beloved spot for anyone looking for a welcoming dining experience. They also contribute to local LGBTQ+ charities, reinforcing their commitment to community support. Their zero-tolerance policy for discrimination ensures a safe and respectful environment for all guests.

899 Bloor St. W, Toronto, ON
(416) 901-4488
Mon: Closed
Tue: 3:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Wed-Thu: 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
Fri-Sat: 11:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
Sun: 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).




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BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

LOCAL PICKS

C.U. Next Tuesday - Open Stage

Tuesdays; 9:00 p.m. to midnight

Bring your sheet music or pick a song from their songbooks. Musical theatre and jazz standards are encouraged but you may sing what you like.

O'Grady's On Church, 518 Church St., Toronto

http://www.ogradyschurch.com/

Open Stage Cabaret

Tuesdays; 10:00 p.m.

An open stage event hosted by a stunning array of leading queens, special guests, and DJ Cory Activate. Glorious star-making machinery and big fun. Arrive early to sign up as a performer.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

http://woodystoronto.com

Hump Night Honeys

Wednesdays; 10:00 p.m.

Hosts Carlotta Carlisle and Katinka Kature welcome an array of special guest stars with DJ Chris Steinbach and Toronto's sweetest staff.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

http://woodystoronto.com/

The Dmanda Show

Fridays; 9:00 p.m.

Friday night Drag Race viewing party and live drag show with Dmanda Tension, Vitality Black, and some of Toronto's best performers! Must be 19+ with valid ID.

The Drink, 459 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

https://beacons.ai/drinkatthedrink

James Quigley - Piano Bar

Saturdays; 7:00 p.m.

Crazy, interactive, fun, live piano bar show! Bring your charts and lead sheets, or choose from the on-site list of options, and sing your heart out. No cover.

Flash On Church, 463 Church St., Toronto

http://jamesthemusician.com/

Hollywoody to Broadway Show

Sundays; 6:00 p.m.

Hilarious host Georgie Girl welcomes a selection of guest performers every Sunday evening serving up your favourite hits of stage and screen and more.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

http://woodystoronto.com/

Marvellous Meals and Music

April 20, May 18, June 15; 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Enjoy all live, all 2SLGBTQIA+ musical performances, while you savour a marvellous meal and luscious libations.

O'Grady's On Church, 518 Church St., Toronto

http://theqmusicale.ca/

ROM After Dark - Boots And Blooms

April 25; 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m.

This after-hours Earth Day event is packed with toe-tapping, side-stepping performances and interactive fun—enjoy lively lawn games, immersive selfie booths, climate-focused activities and surprises around every corner.

Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto

https://www.rom.on.ca/whats-on/events/le-rom-de-nuit-boots-and-blooms



TICOT Drag Brunch

April 27, May 25; 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Join Xavier Thrace and Toke-ita Bonita Blake as they host this drag brunch with a difference. This event is an open stage where all performers donate all tips to benefit the 2SLGBTQIA+ charities supported by The Imperial Court of Toronto.

The Well, 487 Church St., Toronto

https://www.theimperialcourtoftoronto.com/





BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

Alternative All-Gender Clothing Swap

April 27; 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Buy less, refresh your wardrobe and keep textiles out of the landfill. Entry is $5 and a minimum of 6 clothing items, shoes, and/or accessories. They do not accept socks, underwear or household items. Items must be in good condition. 100% of the funds go to the Toronto Vegetarian Food Bank. Leftover clothing items will be donated to charity.

Ground Control, 1279 Queen St. W., Toronto

https://www.instagram.com/groundcontroltoronto

Stiletto Flats - Rock And Retro

May 3; 9:00 p.m.

Featuring Elana Harte on lead vocals and guitars, Stiletto Flats will take you through a journey of music that you know and love, which spans from the 1970s to current.

Linsmore Tavern, 1298 Danforth Ave., Toronto

https://www.linsmoretavern.com/tc-events/stiletto-flats/



TICOT Charity Bingo

May 11, June 8; 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Join Teran Blake and Burger for FUN-draising bingo. Supporting: PWA Food Essentials Market; Durham Alliance Outreach Food Pantry; LGBT Youthline.

Flash On Church, 463 Church St., Toronto

https://www.theimperialcourtoftoronto.com/

Marvel Studios' Infinity Saga Concert Experience

May 17; 7:30 p.m.

Experience Marvel Studios' newest film concert, an epic cinematic journey covering 23 films with the legendary music performed live by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

https://www.ticketmaster.ca/

Pitbull - Big 15

May 17; 10:00 p.m.

It's their big 15th anniversary. Featuring DJ/producer Joe Gauthreaux, with Montreal's Diskommander – a squad of go-go dancing studs, hot beats, and a packed dancefloor.

The Axis Club, 722 College St., Toronto

https://www.ticketweb.ca/event/pitbull-events-presents-big-15-the-axis-club-tickets/14261363



Micah Barnes - Up On The Roof

June 7; 8:00 p.m.

Micah Barnes of The Nylons takes you on a musical journey through his life and his career, performing his original material and Nylons' favourite solo at the piano. This is a celebration of the jazz, doo-wop and soul tunes that have shaped Micah's career.

Hugh's Room, 296 Broadview Ave., Toronto

https://www.showpass.com/micah-barnes-up-on-the-roof/





BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

The Q Musicale Fest

June 10-14

All live, All 2SLGBTQIA+ music! 5 days – a Toronto Pride Major Cultural Partner. Enjoy emerging artists, established artists, and an entire evening of strictly trans live music artists.

The Distillery Historic District, Toronto

https://theqmusicale.ca/

ROAD TRIPS

Moulin Rouge - Queens Under The Red Curtain

April 25; 8:00 p.m.

Hosted by Cira Flexion; Featuring Special Guest Stars: Boa (Canada's Drag Race, Season 1 and Slaycation Season 1); Jada Hudson (Canada's Race Season 3 Slaycation Season 1); Vitality Black; Jessyca Prosecco; Jenna Seppa.

The Grand, 28 Elgin St., Sudbury

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/moulin-rouge-queens-under-the-red-curtain-tickets-1107452463129

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

April 26; 8:00 p.m.

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo was founded in 1974 in the wake of the Stonewall uprising to become the world's foremost gender-skewering comic ballet company.

Centre In The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener

https://kwtickets.evenue.net/



Waitress

April 30 through to May 17

Jenna Hunterson is a waitress and expert pie maker stuck in a small town and a loveless marriage. When a baking contest offers her a chance at escape, Jenna fights to reclaim part of herself.

Theatre Aquarius, 190 William St., Hamilton

https://purchasing.theatreaquarius.org/EventAvailability?EventId=605



Queen - It's A Kinda Magic

April 30; 8:00 p.m.

Painstaking attention has been paid to all the music – the iconic voice of Mercury, the amazing guitar solos of May and the groundbreaking Rock harmonies. And with state-of-the-art sound and lighting and authentic costumes, this is as close as you'll ever get to the real thing!

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton

https://www.ticketmaster.ca/

Grimsby Poutine and Mac 'n' Cheese Fest

May 3 and 4

Enjoy food trucks that feature the most delicious poutine and mac 'n' cheese imaginable – live music, an indoor and outdoor artisan market, and free loaded swag bags for the first 30 daily.

West Niagara Fairgrounds, 7434 Mud St W, West Lincoln

https://www.kbeventscanada.com/event-details/grimsby-poutine-mac-n-cheese-fest-1





BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain



Cedars Campground - Opening Weekend

May 9 through to 11

Friday: 9:00 p.m. – Community Bonfire / 9:00 p.m. – Karaoke at The Barn with Jamie B

Saturday: 10:00 p.m. – Meet and Greet Dance with DJ Jeff Bone.

Cedars Campground, 1039 Concession Rd. S.W., Hamilton

https://www.cedarscampground.com/

Victoria Day Weekend

May 16 through to 19

Friday: 9:00 p.m. – Community Bonfire / 9:00 p.m. – Karaoke at The Barn with Jamie B

Saturday: 10:00 p.m. – Uniform Night with DJ Jeff Bone

Sunday: 10:00 p.m. – Lumberjack Night at The Barn with DJ Rose featuring disco/house.

Cedars Campground, 1039 Concession Rd. S.W., Hamilton

https://www.cedarscampground.com/

Mean Girls

May 27; 7:30 p.m.

Direct from Broadway, this is the hilarious hit musical from an award-winning creative team, including book writer Tina Fey, composer Jeff Richmond (Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt), lyricist Nell Benjamin (Legally Blonde), and original director and choreographer Casey Nicholaw.

Canada Life Place, 99 Dundas St., London

https://www.broadwayinlondon.com/

The Bowie Lives

May 30; 7:30 p.m.

Impeccable attention to detail makes this the most authentic revival of the sounds and styles that are David Bowie. Quirky vocals. Precise instrumentation. Lavish outfits.

Gravenhurst Opera House, 295 Muskoka Rd. S., Gravenhurst

https://tickets.gravenhurst.ca/TheatreManager/1/online?bestavail=1375

Niagara Falls Comic Con

May 30 through to June 1

Set to take place over 3 epic days, featuring more than 200,000 square feet of exhibitors, attractions, movie cars, costumes, superheroes, celebrities and more.

Niagara Falls Convention Centre, 6815 Stanley Ave., Niagara Falls

https://www.nfcomiccon.com/

Jann Arden - The Mixtape Tour

June 6; 8:00 p.m.

Jann Arden is a Canadian multi-platinum, award-winning singer, songwriter, actor and author. Arden has released 15 albums with 19 top-ten singles.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton

https://www.ticketmaster.ca/

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