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FEBRUARY 2025

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LGBTQ NOMINEES COMMAND
SPOTLIGHT AT MOVIE AWARDS

KARLA SOFIA GASCÓN MAKES HERSTORY

THE 45TH RAZZIES

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REGENCY GIRLS

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BOOK BY JEN CRITTENDEN AND GABRIELLE ALLAN
MUSIC BY CURTIS MOORE
LYRICS BY AMANDA GREEN
DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY JOSH RHODES

A raucous and daring new musical comedy from two-time Tony and Grammy nominee Amanda Green (*Mr. Saturday Night*, *Hands On A Hardbody*, *Bring It On: The Musical*), three-time Emmy-nominated composer Curtis Moore ("The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"), and Emmy-winning writers Jen Crittenden and Gabrielle Allan ("Seinfeld," "Scrubs," "Veep"). Elinor Benton is in a predicament: she's pregnant, unmarried, and living in 19th-century England. What's a young woman to do? Facing certain ruin, she gathers up her three best friends and sets off on a life-changing road trip to find Madame Restell, renowned for helping women with "female troubles." This epic journey, equal parts hilarious and profound, transforms each of them as they make choices about their own futures. This world premiere production, directed and choreographed by Josh Rhodes (Broadway's *Spamalot*, the Globe's *Cabaret*), is a riotous adventure of love, rebellion, autonomy, and self-discovery.

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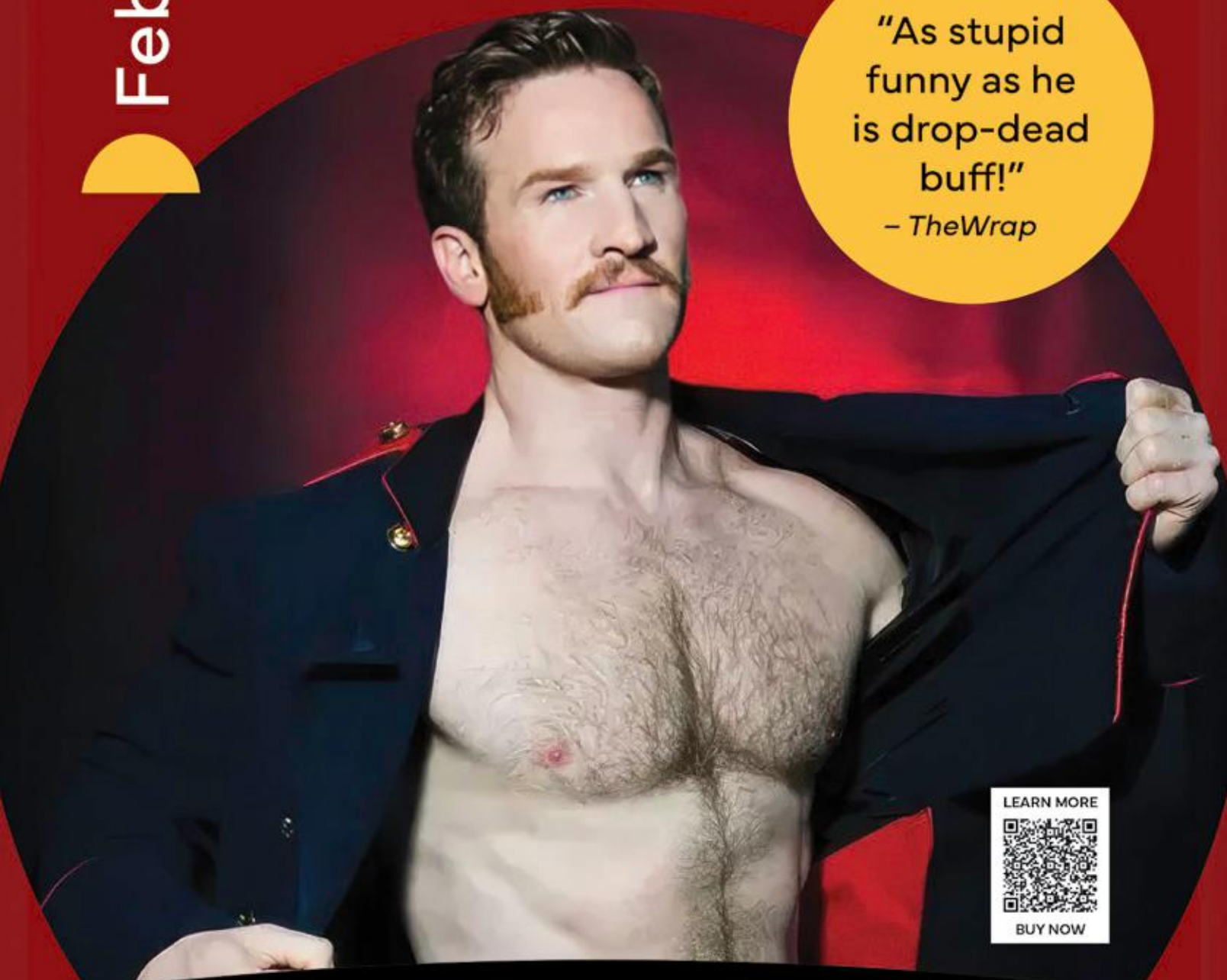
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Kirsten Chambers in *Salome*. Photo by Chris Kakol courtesy of Florida Grand Opera.

SD OPERA™ 60 SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

LGBTQ NOMINEES COMMAND MOVIE AWARDS ATTENTION

Shhhh. We better not tell recently inaugurated President Trump the Redux and his phobic cronies that an openly transgender actor was just nominated for an Academy Award for the first time in history! They might not be too pleased since they just declared there are officially only two recognized genders in the USA. Then again, they've likely already been tipped off by one or more of Trump's newly appointed "special ambassadors" to Hollywood: Mel Gibson, Sylvester Stallone and Jon Voight. What alternate reality are we suddenly living in?

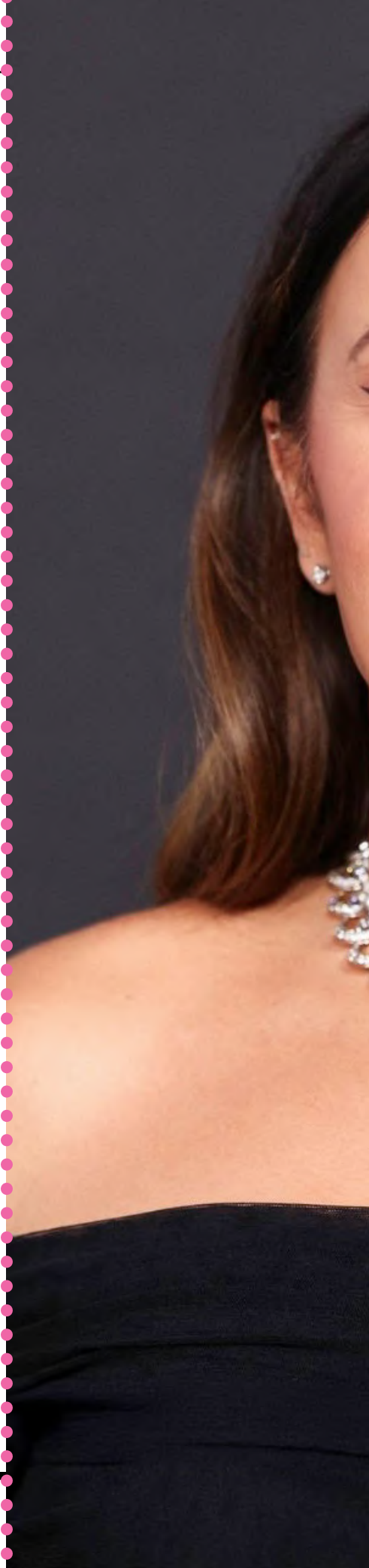
Nominations for the 97th annual Academy Awards (aka the Oscars) were announced on January 23, later than usual due to delays provoked by the LA County wildfires. They were energetically and hilariously announced at 5:30 a.m. Pacific time by actor-comedians Bowen Yang (*SNL, Wicked*) and Rachel Sennott (*Shiva Baby, Bottoms*). Barring any additional delays, the awards ceremony will be broadcast on **Sunday, March 2**.

While this year's Oscar nominations include a number of LGBTQ+ contenders, **Karla Sofia Gascón** is truly making history as the first openly trans woman to receive a nomination in an acting category. Gascón landed her nomination for her titular role in Jacques Audiard's dazzling musical-thriller *Emilia Pérez*. It follows a former drug cartel leader (Gascón), who enlists the help of a hard-working lawyer (a revelatory performance by Zoe Saldaña) to assist her transition to a new life in contemporary Mexico.

The academy's nod follows Gascón's history-making journey through this awards season, which began at Cannes in May 2024. Gascón also made history as the first openly trans woman to win Best Actress at the French festival. She shared the prize with co-stars Saldaña, Selena Gomez and Adriana Paz. Netflix subsequently picked up *Emilia Pérez* and can currently be watched there.

According to *Entertainment Weekly* and to clarify: "While Gascón is the first openly trans woman to be nominated for any acting Oscar, she is not the first trans person with an acting Oscar nod to their credit. Before coming out as trans in 2020, Elliot Page competed as a lead performer in the category for his work in the 2007 movie *Juno*. Trans people who have been nominated for Oscars in other categories include Anohni (Best Original Song), Yance Ford (Best Documentary) and Angela Morley (in the now-defunct Best Music, Original Song Score or Adaptation category)."

Emilia Perez received 13 Oscar nominations, setting a record for a non-English language film. However, not all award-granting bodies have been so kind as to help the film. GLAAD denounced it and did not nominate it for any of its 2025 awards. The group released a statement that reads in part: "Considering the legitimate criticisms that have been lobbied against the film regarding both its trans representation and its depiction of Mexican culture, it's wildly disappointing to realize just how many Academy voters are completely out of touch and clearly voting for the guise of performative





progress of what *Emilia Pérez* symbolizes, rather than let the communities represented in the film take the lead and determine whether or not this is a portrayal that deserves celebration."

Then again, **GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics** (of which this writer is a member) recently honored *Emilia Perez* with six Dorian Award nominations, including LGBTQ Film of the Year, Non-English Language Film of the Year, Film Performance of the Year (Gascón) and Supporting Film Performance of the Year (Saldaña). Additional Dorian Award nominees are listed in the next page.

Productions nominated for Best Film of the Year by both the Academy and GALECA are *Anora* (written and directed by queer-friendly filmmaker Sean Baker), ***Nickel Boys*** and ***The Substance***. Other films that received significant nominations from both groups are ***The Brutalist***, ***Dune: Part Two***, ***Sing Sing*** and ***Wicked***.

Some Oscar-nominated 2024 movies with significant LGBTQ+ content or relevance include:

Conclave. This gripping drama set during the election of a new pope is up for Best Picture, Best Leading Actor (Ralph Fiennes), Best Supporting Actress (Isabella Rossellini), Best Adapted Screenplay, and more. No spoilers, but the plot features a big climactic twist involving the newly-elevated pontiff.

Wicked. The blockbuster movie of the long-running Broadway musical was honored with 10 nominations. These include Best Picture, Best Leading Actress (Cynthia Erivo, queer star of stage, screen and music), Best Supporting Actress (pop singer-turned-movie star Ariana Grande), Costume Design, Film Editing and Production Design.

The Brutalist. Nominated in 10 categories, the film has a shocking and controversial plot development that I won't reveal here. But the film also boasts some architectural elements many LGBTQ+ viewers are swooning over. Its nominations include Best Picture, Best Director (Brady Corbet), Best Leading Actor (Adrien Brody), Best Supporting Actor (Guy Pearce, nominated for the first time in his 30+ year career), Best Supporting Actress (Felicity Jones) and Best Production Design.

Sing Sing. This fact-based drama set in the notorious prison garnered a nomination for out actor Colman Domingo as Best Leading Actor. This powerful movie is also in the running for Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Original Song ("Like a Bird").

Last but definitely not least, queer music icon **Elton John** received his fifth Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song "Never Too Late." He has previously won two Oscars. This new recognition is for his title song (co-written with Brandi Carlile, Andrew Watt and longtime collaborator Bernie Taupin) from the Disney-produced documentary *Elton John: Never Too Late*.

Let's be grateful for some great movies to help us get through our turbulent political times!



GALECA

THE SOCIETY OF LGBTQ ENTERTAINMENT CRITICS

GALECA: The Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics was founded in 2009 and currently consists of over 500 members. Each year, the group honors the best mainstream and LGTBQ+ film, television and Broadway/off Broadway productions via their Dorian Awards. Among GALECA's 2025 nominees are:

FILM OF THE YEAR

*Anora (Neon)
*Challengers (Amazon MGM Studios)
*I Saw the TV Glow (A24)
*Nickel Boys (Orion Pictures/Amazon MGM)
*The Substance (Mubi)

LGBTQ FILM OF THE YEAR

* Challengers (Amazon MGM Studios)
* Emilia Peréz (Netflix)
* I Saw the TV Glow (A24)
* Love Lies Bleeding (A24)
* Queer (A24)

DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

* Brady Corbet, *The Brutalist* (A24)
* Coralie Fargeat, *The Substance* (Mubi)
* Luca Guadagnino, *Challengers* (Amazon MGM Studios)
* RaMell Ross, *Nickel Boys* (Orion Pictures/Amazon MGM Studios)
* Jane Schoenbrun, *I Saw the TV Glow* (A24)

LGBTQ SCREENPLAY OF THE YEAR

* Challengers (Amazon MGM Studios)
* I Saw the TV Glow (A24)
* Love Lies Bleeding (A24)
* Problemista (A24)
* Queer (A24)

LGBTQ NON-ENGLISH FILM OF THE YEAR

* Crossing (Mubi)
* Emilia Peréz (Netflix)
* Queendom (Greenwich Entertainment)
* Vermiglio (Sideshow / Janus Films)
* All Shall Be Well (Strand Releasing)

UNSUNG FILM OF THE YEAR

(To an exceptional movie worthy of greater attention)

* Didi (Focus Features)
* Hundreds of Beavers (Cineverse)
* My Old Ass (Amazon MGM Studios)
* Problemista (A24)
* Thelma (Magnolia)

UNSUNG LGBTQ FILM OF THE YEAR

* Femme (Utopia)
* My Old Ass (Amazon MGM Studios)
* National Anthem (Variance, LD Ent.)
* The People's Joker (Altered Innocence)
* Problemista (A24)

FILM PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

*Adrien Brody, *The Brutalist* (A24)
*Daniel Craig, *Queer* (A24)
*Colman Domingo, *Sing Sing* (A24)
*Karla Sofía Gascón, *Emilia Peréz* (Netflix)
*Cynthia Erivo, *Wicked* (Universal)
*Marianne Jean-Baptiste, *Hard Truths* (Bleecker Street)
*Nicole Kidman, *Babygirl* (A24)
*Mikey Madison, *Anora* (Neon)
*Demi Moore, *The Substance* (Mubi)
*Justice Smith, *I Saw the TV Glow* (A24)

SUPPORTING FILM PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

*Michele Austin, *Hard Truths* (Bleecker Street)
*Yura Borisov, *Anora* (Neon)
*Kieran Culkin, *A Real Pain* (Searchlight Pictures)
*Ariana Grande, *Wicked* (Universal)
*Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, *Nickel Boys* (Orion Pictures/Amazon MGM Studios)
*Brigette Lundy-Paine, *I Saw the TV Glow* (A24)
*Clarence Maclin, *Sing Sing* (A24)
*Guy Pearce, *The Brutalist* (A24)
*Margaret Qualley, *The Substance* (Mubi)
*Zoe Saldaña, *Emilia Peréz* (Netflix)

DOCUMENTARY OF THE YEAR

*Dahomey (Mubi)
*Daughters (Netflix)
*The Remarkable Life of Ibelin (Netflix)
*Sugarcane (National Geographic)
*Will & Harper (Netflix)

LGBTQ DOCUMENTARY OF THE YEAR

*Chasing Chasing Amy (Level 33)
*Frida (Amazon MGM Studios)
*Merchant Ivory (Cohen Media Group)
*Queendom (Greenwich Entertainment)
*Will & Harper (Netflix)

ANIMATED FILM OF THE YEAR

*Flow (Sideshow / Janus Films)
*Inside Out 2 (Disney)
*Memoir of a Snail (IFC Films)
*Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl (Netflix)
*The Wild Robot (Universal, DreamWorks)

GENRE FILM OF THE YEAR

(For excellence in science fiction, fantasy and horror)

*Dune: Part Two (Warner Bros.)
*I Saw the TV Glow (A24)
*Nosferatu (Focus Features)
*The Substance (Mubi)
*Wicked (Universal)

FILM MUSIC OF THE YEAR

* The Brutalist (A24)
* Challengers (Amazon MGM Studios)
* Emilia Peréz (Netflix)
* I Saw the TV Glow (A24)
* Wicked (Universal)

VISUALLY STRIKING FILM OF THE YEAR

* The Brutalist (A24)
* Dune: Part Two (Warner Bros.)
* Nosferatu (Focus Features)
* Nickel Boys (Orion Pictures/Amazon MGM)
* The Substance (Mubi)

CAMPIEST FLICK

* Hundreds of Beavers (Cineverse)
* Madame Web (Sony)
* Megalopolis (Lionsgate)
* The Substance (Mubi)
* Trap (Warner Bros.)

"WE'RE WILDE ABOUT YOU!" RISING STAR AWARD

* Jonathan Bailey
* Vera Drew
* Karla Sofía Gascón
* Brigette Lundy-Paine
* Mikey Madison
* Katy O'Brian
* Drew Starkey

WILDE ARTIST AWARD

(To a truly groundbreaking force in entertainment)

* Colman Domingo
* Luca Guadagnino
* Coralie Fargeat
* Jane Schoenbrun
* Tilda Swinton

GALECA LGBTQIA+ FILM TRAILBLAZER

(For creating art that inspires empathy, truth and equity)

* Vera Drew
* Cynthia Erivo
* Luca Guadagnino
* Jane Schoenbrun
* Julio Torres

Dorian Award winners are scheduled to be announced on **February 13**. For the full list of nominations and more information about the Society of LGBTQ Entertainment Critics, visit **galeca.com**.

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HAPPY FEBRUARY!

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY! HAPPY BLACK HISTORY MONTH! HAPPY MODERNISM! HAPPY PRESIDENTS' DAY!

Palm Springs Vintage Market (mid-century modern, Americana, fashion, art and pop culture) will be on two dates this month: February 2 and February 16 are the dates with the extra one to honor Modernism Week. The shopping paradise will be on Calle El Segundo, just north of the Agua Caliente Casino parking structure. palmspringvintagemarket.com

Rock the Park concert, Tribute Bands, Season Four, presented by Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, will be Wednesday, February 5, with Twisted Gypsy, Fleetwood Mac Tribute Band; March 5, AbbaFab, Abba tribute; and April 2, Vegas McGraw, Tim McGraw Tribute Band. pschamber.org



The highly anticipated **Rancho Mirage Writers Festival** will occur February 5-7 at Rancho Mirage Library and Observatory. Ticket holders will connect with best-selling authors, explore new literary works, and join discussions. The theme for this 10th annual event is the United States Semiquincentennial. Historians, journalists, leaders and writers to appear will include Bill Gates, Doris Kearns Goodwill, Jon Meacham, Theo Baker, Robert Barnett, Dr. Anthony Fauci, David Hogg, Seth Rudetsky, Rick Steves, Bruce Vilanch and Melissa Stockwell. rmwritersfest.info

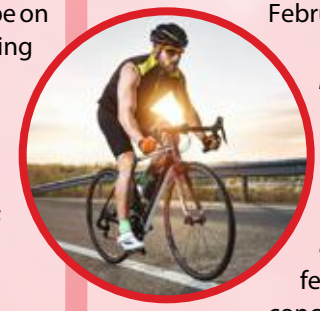


The largest-ever preseason event in North American professional soccer history will be in the area in February. Twenty Major League Soccer and National Women's Soccer League teams will participate February 5-22 in the **Coachella Valley Invitational** at Empire Polo Club in Indio. coachellavalleyinvitational.com



PS Test Fest cocktail party and silent auction will be Thursday, February 6, at Toucans Tiki Lounge. PS Test is a no-cost healthcare clinic for STI testing and treatment in Palm Springs. healthypstest.org

Marks Art Center at College of the Desert Art Market will be Thursday, February 6. Plus, at the Street Fair on Saturday, February 8 and also an Art Market on April 10. collegeofthedesert.edu



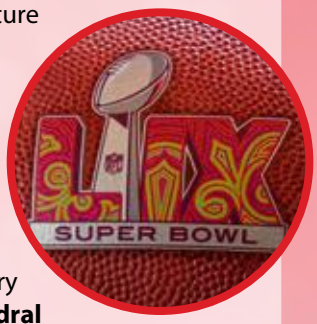
Palm Canyon Theatre will present ***My Fair Lady*** from February 7 to March 2. palmcanyontheatre.net

Musical Theatre University will present ***Hairspray*** February 7-9 at Helene Galen Performing Arts Center at Rancho Mirage High School. psusdfoundation.net/mtu

The 27th annual **Tour de Palm Springs** in Coachella Valley will be Saturday, February 8. This is one of America's largest and most festive cycling charity events. Over 20 band concerts will occur throughout the event and rest stops. Over 150 local nonprofits have been recipients of funds over the years. tourdepalmsprings.com

City of Indio hosts **Second Saturdays at Center Stage** in downtown Indio. E & J Movement will play February 8 in this free monthly concert series. indio.org

Desert Winds Freedom Band Jazz Band concert and gala fundraiser will be Sunday, February 9 at Agua Caliente Cascade Lounge. Dean McDowell is the artistic director. The concert, including a brunch buffet, will feature Tod Macofsky and Francesca Amari. desertwindsfb.org



The 2025 **Super Bowl** will be played Sunday, February 9, in New Orleans. The event will be celebrated at bars and house parties throughout the area. Check your local hangouts for party schedules.

Daytime Moon will play Tuesday, February 11, as part of **Tastes and Sounds of Cathedral City** in Cathedral City Community Amphitheatre. Yoga is every Tuesday morning through March 25. **Taste of Jalisco Festival** will run February 1-2 in the Town Square and Festival Lawn. discovercathedralcity.com



Tickets will go on sale February 12 for the always sold-out, highly anticipated **Red Dress Dress Red** soiree, benefiting the LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert, on Saturday, March 15, at Palm Springs Air Museum. The center's **Info-A-Go-Go Expo** (connection, empowerment, collection action event) will be at

Palm Springs Pavilion on Saturday, February 1. Attendees have a chance to win two tickets to the RDDR Party. thecentercv.org

McCallum Theatre will present **Palm Springs Legends** on Wednesday, February 12. The stars who made Palm Springs are portrayed in classic style by tribute artists. Come see and hear tributes to Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, Kenny Rogers, Ann-Margret, Don Rickles, Elvis, Bob Hope and more. mccallumtheatre.org



The 20th annual **Modernism Week** will be February 13-23, with over 500 events during the 11-day celebration throughout the area. This draws people from all over the world. It offers tours of iconic homes in more than 28 neighborhoods, walking tours, nightly parties, double-decker bus tours, fashion events, classic car show, landscape talks and garden tours, biking tours and world-class speakers. Look for yours truly on top of the bus leading some tours and hosting a costume contest during happy hour on both Fridays at CAMP (Community and Meeting Place) at Hyatt Hotel. The Trini Lopez Museum just opened, and a cocktail party will be held on Valentine's Day. modernismweek.com

Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival will run from February 13 through March 2 at Riverside County Fairgrounds. Highlights will include motorsports, rodeo, concerts and exhibitions. The first Pride Day of the year in California will be **Out at The Fair** on Saturday, February 15. Emcees at the pageant stage will be Alexander Rodriguez and Landa Plenty. Deven Green and Ned will host bingo in the Shalimar Building. The Presidents' Day Parade will be on Monday morning, February 17, with step-off at Miles Park at Miles Avenue and Deglet Noor Street in Indio. datefest.org



NGPA (National Gay Pilots Association) Industry Expo and Winter Warm-Up, a flagship member event, will be February 13-16 in Palm Springs. Event locations will include Palm Springs Convention Center, Renaissance Hotel and Palm Springs Air Museum. ngpa.org

Play Lounge PS will host a **Singles Awareness Party** on Valentine's Day, February 14. It is listed as hanging out with other singles and enjoying pizza and drinks while contemplating life. playloungeps.com



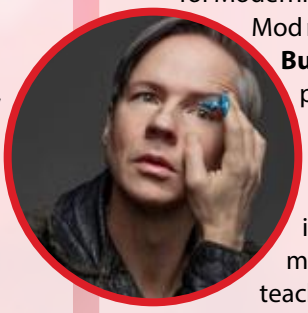
Desert Theatreworks will present Neil Simon's timeless comedy ***The Odd Couple***, reimagined in its female version, February 14-March 2. dtworks.org

Greater Palm Springs Food & Wine Festival and **Desert Woman's Show** will be Saturday, February 15, at Classic Club in Palm Desert. Events will include fashion shows from seven local boutiques, speakers, a tasting area, and an Italian cooking demonstration with celebrity chef Antonello Zito, winner of *Chopped* on the Food Network. The 500 free general admission tickets for the Woman's Show will be sponsored by Desert Care Network. marloproductions.com



Billy L'Amour and Sherry Vine will star as Bosom Buddies (with all live singing drag revue) on Saturday, February 15 at Toucan's Tiki Lounge. reactionshows.com

Special Spring concerts at Palm Springs Cultural Center will be: February 15, **Stephanie J. Block**, Broadway's Best in the West; February 16-17, **The Gand Band** with special guests for Modernism Week, Hey, Hey … We're the Monkees! Mod music and cocktail party; February 21, **Lady Bunny**; February 28, **John Cameron Mitchell**. psculturalcenter.org



Special theme nights at **Acrisure Arena** for the Coachella Valley Firebirds hockey teams: Saturday, February 15, celebrating local heroes, including police, fire, EMTs and first responders, medical professionals; Wednesday, February 19, teachers and education professionals; Saturday, February 22, Pink in the Rink in honor of breast cancer patients and survivors. cvfirebirds.com

The 27th annual **St. George Greek Festival in Palm Desert** will be Saturday and Sunday, February 15-16. pdgreekfest.org

Revolution Stage Company will present **Sharon McNight in Red Hot Mama, The Sophie Tucker Songbook**, Wednesday and Thursday, February 19-20. revolutionstagecompany.com

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission's Rhinestone Rodeo will be Wednesday, February 19 at Hyatt Regency in Indian Wells. cvrm.org

Palm Springs International Jazz Festival will be February 20-23 featuring Lance Conrad, Arturo Sandoval, Dianne Reeves, Cecile McLorin Salvant and Charles Lloyd. psjazzfest.org

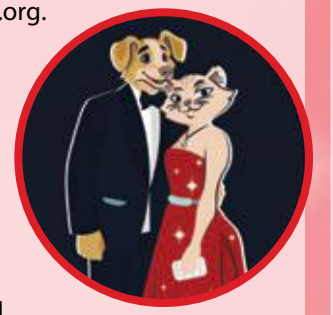




IBC (International Bear Convergence) will be February 20-24 in Palm Springs. It features four days of pool parties, dance events, concerts, comedy and other events, including a performance by CeCe Peniston and Hungry Bear Drag brunch. Charities benefiting from the event are AAP/Food Samaritans and The LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert. ibc-ps.com

Black History Month parade (starting at Baristo Road and Palm Canyon) and town fair (in downtown City Park) will be Saturday, February 22. The annual Black History Awards gala will be Saturday, February 1 at Hilton Hotel. The Black History Tour will be Monday, February 17, visiting historic buildings, landmarks, mid-century modern and history. palmspringsblackhistory.org

Desert Pet Walk benefiting Palm Springs Animal Shelter and Desert Wildlife Center will be Saturday, February 22, starting at the animal shelter and proceeding through Demuth Park with routes designed for pets and people of all abilities. desertpetwalk.org. Coming Saturday, April 5, will be the annual **Faux Fur Ball** at Palm Springs Air Museum. psanimalshelter.org.



The fourth annual **Eisenhower Health Cardiovascular Institute Symposium** will be February 22 at Annenberg Health Sciences Building in Rancho Mirage. Open to the public. Learn about advancements in cardiac, vascular and thoracic care. eisenhowerhealth.org/cardiac

California Desert Chorale's annual spring fundraiser and recital, Friends in Song, will be Saturday, February 22 at Hope Palm Desert. Tim Bruneau is the artistic director. Bruce Mangum is the principal accompanist. californiadesertchorale.org

Filmmakers' Gallery Winter LGBTQ+ Shorts Film Festival will be Thursday, February 27, at Mary Pickford Theatre in Cathedral City. thefilmmakersgallery.org



Dezart Performs will present ***Grand Concourse*** February 28-March 9 at Pearl McManus Theatre at Palm Springs Woman's Club. dezartperforms.org

Joe De Hoyos, DJ Mr. D, will host a music video show, **Flashback Fridays,** featuring dance music from the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and to today, every Friday evening at Streetbar. He is a former music director at College of the Desert's KCOD Radio and is celebrating his 44th year as a DJ. facebook.com/DeejayMisterDee



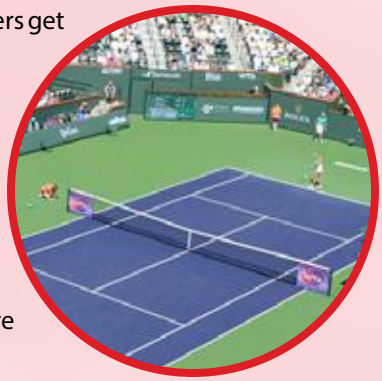
Open Mic Night will be held on Wednesdays at Play Lounge Palm Springs, where Joel Baker will be on the piano. Biran Alex Thom will host. playloungeps.com

Mod Squad Variety Show with Jeff Stewart, Jason Weber and Francesca Amari will be on Wednesdays at VIP Lounge upstairs at Palm Springs Cultural Center. psculturalcenter.org

Did you know there are about 2,000 free parking spaces in public lots in downtown Palm Springs, plus plenty of free street parking.

Celebrate **show biz awards season**: February 2, Grammy Awards; February 7, Critics Choice Awards; February 8, Directors Guild of America Awards, Producers Guild of America Awards; February 15, Writers Guild of America Awards; February 16, BAFTA Awards; February 22, NAACP Image Awards; February 23, Screen Actors Guild Awards; March 2, Academy Awards.

BNP Paribas Tennis Tournament will be March 2-16 at Indian Wells Tennis Garden. BMW owners get preferred parking. bnpparibasopen.com



Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce Police and Fire Appreciation luncheon will be Wednesday, March 5, at Palm Springs Convention Center. Salute the dedication and bravery of our local police and fire personnel. pschamber.org

Cathedral City LGBT Days — California's first pride festival of the year — will be March 7-9. The festivities will include the annual bed race and parade, plus a new drag race this year with lip-sync competition, wheel of shade and audience favorite, plus a performance by Radio Ready and DJs Aron and Beth Sack. I will be hosting the festivities again this year. A free screening of *Some Like It Hot* will be shown March 7, as well as a drone show. Miss Conception's Sashay through the Desert Show will be presented March 7-8. cathedralcitylgbtdays.com



Desert X, the nine-week art exhibition, will run March 8-May 11 at numerous installations. They are seeking info center volunteers, cite docents and student tour docents — contact trish@desertx.org.

Our hearts, thoughts, prayers and best wishes are with all our friends and neighbors who were affected by the devastating wildfires in the Los Angeles area. Thanks to all the first responders who gave so much.

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FALL IN LOVE WITH THEATRE!

PREPARE FOR EXHILARATING PLAYS AND MUSICALS THAT SHOWCASE EXCITING PREMIERES THIS MONTH

The Old Globe in Balboa Park has unveiled the highly anticipated San Diego premiere of ***Appropriate,*** a masterful work by Tony Award-winning playwright and two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist **Branden Jacobs-Jenkins**. Helmed by the talented **Steve H. Broadnax III**, known for directing *Thoughts of a Colored Man* and *Sally & Tom*, this comic drama delivers a cutting and humor-laden exploration of family dynamics, history and legacy. *Appropriate* will be performed on Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage through **Sunday, February 23**.

The estranged siblings of the Lafayette family come together to settle their late father's Arkansas estate. Amid the clutter, they uncover a shocking relic that forces them to confront long-buried secrets and decades of resentment. As tensions boil over and the cicadas roar, the family faces unsettling truths about their past and how it has shaped them.

"The Globe launches its 2025 season with one of the most exciting plays in recent memory," Artistic Director **Barry Edelstein** said. "With *Appropriate*, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins reinvents the American family play even as he grapples with big questions of history and national identity. That he does this while delivering an evening of fierce laughter and theatrical thrills is a truly remarkable achievement. The very gifted director Steve H. Broadnax III, who makes his Globe debut, has gathered a powerhouse cast who will unleash the potent energy of this extraordinary play in a production Globe audiences are sure to embrace." **619234.5623 | theoldglobe.org**

At **Diversionary Theatre** in University Heights will be the San Diego premiere of ***We Are Continuous***, written by **Harrison David Rivers** and directed by **Kian Kline-Chilton**. Performances will run **Thursday, February 13,** through **Sunday, March 9**.

We Are Continuous offers a poignant exploration of identity, love and the invisible threads that link us. Simon and his mother, Ora, have always shared a deep bond — two souls united by trust and unspoken understanding. However, when a life-altering secret emerges, their relationship faces upheaval. As they face the reality, they must navigate what it truly means to be family, to forgive, and how to move forward when everything they believe is suddenly cast into doubt. This evocative and heart-wrenching journey delves into the intricacies of love and the connections that shape our lives.

Regarding this production, Kline-Chilton said, "I'm filled with so much gratitude — to be making my Diversionary debut, to be directing this profound play, and to be working alongside this incredible cast and design team. Harrison is one of my favorite playwrights, and this piece asks the ultimate question: 'If you could have any conversation with the people you love most, and they would agree to anything that's brought up, what would you say?' In just 80 (or so) minutes, you'll experience some of the most beautiful, raw, funny and touching dialogue. Be ready to laugh, to cry, and maybe even to pick up the phone and call your mom. It's a beautiful reminder that it's never too late to reconnect with the ones we love the most."

Rivers added, "I'm honored to be back at Diversionary Theatre with We Are Continuous, a play that feels more and more relevant with each passing day. We're living in an incredibly chaotic moment. There is a lot of distrust. And a lot of fear. I know when I'm afraid, I turn inward. I get quiet. I keep things to myself. *We Are Continuous* is about three very brave individuals who, despite their fear, despite their misgivings about each other and about the world they find themselves in, have chosen to share their hearts. They are choosing to be vulnerable with the audience, with each other. There is no real connection without vulnerability. And I believe that connection — that finding ways to connect with each other no matter our beliefs, affiliations, etc. — is key to bettering the world we live in." **619.220.0097| diversionary.org**

International City Theatre will kick off its 40th anniversary season with the Los Angeles premiere of ***Desperate Measures***, a lively musical inspired by Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Saddle up for this joyous musical comedy featuring a score by award-winning composer **David Friedman** and a book and lyrics by two-time Tony nominee **Peter Kellogg**. Directed and choreographed by **Todd Nielsen**, with music direction by **Daniel Gary Busby**, this three-week run will take place from **Friday, February 21,** to **Sunday, March 9** at ICT's venue at Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center.

Amidst the joyful Wild West musical comedy fun, *Desperate Measures* — like Shakespeare's unconventional comedy about ethics, sexuality and deception on which it's loosely based — manages to ponder the true nature of love and justice. When a narcissistic governor sentences dangerously handsome Johnny Blood to hang, Johnny must put his fate in the hands of a wily sheriff, an eccentric priest, a saloon girl-gone-good and a novice nun. Together, they face uncharted territory as laws are broken and hearts are won. **562.436.4610 internationalcitytheatre.org**



The cast of *Appropriate* (from left) Daniel Petzold, Steve Kazee and Maggie Lacey. Photo by Rich Soublet II.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Celebrate Black History Month with the **Los Angeles LGBT Center** through these performances at The Village at Ed Gould Plaza.

On **Friday, February 7**, Dave Trudell will present his written and performed work, ***White/Out***.

"On a sweltering summer day during the height of the pandemic, I step outside of my apartment and melt into a protest in progress. As I march through the streets of Los Angeles in support of Black Lives, complex and illuminating memories flood my consciousness. Black Lives Matter and I'm white, queer and awakening to the defining role race has had in my life and how it intersects with my queerness."

Jon Gentry will showcase ***Black Bastard*** on **Saturday, February 8**, co-presented by ONE Institute. Queer. Southern. Creole. *Black Bastard* transports audiences to 1990s Houston in a humorous, heartfelt coming-of-age tale. Jon, an inquisitive Black boy, develops a love for literature until his family fractures, thrusting him into the role of "man of the house." A comedic spiral ensues as Jon grapples with his identity(ies). When a bully confronts him at school, Jon begins to search for his absent father, but is he ready for what he may find? Vividly portraying more than 15 characters, writer/performer Jon Gentry explores themes of masculinity and self-actualization through artful techniques and nostalgic references. The piece contends that humans are collective "bastards" on an eternal quest for selfhood and someplace to call home.

On **Saturday, February 15**, a dynamic dance performance will highlight the voices and experiences of Black gay men in ***Brother to Brother: The Unpacking***. This event will combine filmed interviews, live dance and original music to explore themes such as love, social injustice, religion, Black pride and mental health. Experience a deep inquiry into diverse perspectives and common experiences, expressed through various artistic forms.

Additionally occurring on **Saturday, February 15**, an evening dedicated to community engagement will take place, showcasing works that delve into the complexities of existence within bodies that diverge from heteropatriarchal norms. The program includes ***Queeriosity: A Documentary*** and ***Moe's Vagina Talks***. Attendees are invited to prepare for an enriching evening with the aim of fostering a deeper understanding of ourselves and, ultimately, envisioning a liberated future characterized by equality and freedom for all.

Queer Documentaries: An Intimate Sharing is directed by Johnny Laveie and Larry Jean Powell, with writing, performance and composition by Johnny Laveie. **lalgbtcenter.org**

Joe DiPietro's ***3 Summers of Lincoln*** is a captivating new musical that recounts the inspirational story of one of the most significant friendships in our nation's history and a divided country coming together. Summer, 1862. President Abraham Lincoln must find a way to bring an end to the Civil War.

Enter the influential abolitionist Frederick Douglass. If he can meet Lincoln face-to-face, he can help the president solidify a vision of the future that ends slavery alongside the war while preserving the Union. Just three meetings occurred between the two men — pivotal conversations between two brilliant leaders that shaped the course of history.

This marks the sixth collaboration between DiPietro and Rich Family Artistic Director **Christopher Ashley** at **La Jolla Playhouse**, including the hit shows *Babbitt* and *Memphis*.

Ivan Hernandez will portray Lincoln and **Quentin Earl Darrington** will play Douglass in the upcoming world premiere. The production will run from **Tuesday, February 18, to Sunday, March 23**, at Mandell Weiss Theatre.

"I cannot think of a better time in our society to bring this bold new work to our audiences," Ashley said. "It is an honor to collaborate with this stellar cast and creative team on a world-premiere musical that spotlights a history-changing friendship through an extraordinary lens and soaring original music." **858.550.1070 | lajollaplayhouse.org**



Quentin Earl Darrington

HELLO, DOLLY!

HEIDI MEYER BRINGS THE BELOVED CHARACTER OF DOLLY LEVI TO LIFE IN SAN DIEGO MUSICAL THEATRE'S NEW PRODUCTION

Taking on the role of the iconic matchmaker Dolly Levi in San Diego Musical Theatre's production of *Hello, Dolly!* is a thrilling challenge for **Heidi Meyer.** A seasoned performer with a fascinating journey from New York actor to San Diego-based physician, Meyer is now tackling one of musical theatre's most beloved leading lady roles.

This also isn't Meyer's first time hitting the San Diego Musical Theatre (SDMT) stage. Her history with the company includes memorable performances of *A Christmas Story* and *Man of La Mancha* in 2019. Beyond her on-stage presence, Meyer also serves on SDMT's board of directors, a volunteer position she took to help navigate the theatre's reemergence post-COVID.

"My day job is as a physician, so they wanted someone on the board to help navigate all the new rules and challenges for reopening," she said.

Her work behind the scenes, however, did not automatically land her the role of the leading lady.

"I auditioned just like everybody else," Meyer said. "Even though they know me and I'm on the board, I didn't expect to get called back. I really didn't think the show was quite right for me."

However, after reading the callback sides, Meyer discovered the richness of Dolly's character. "The scenes are incredible, and then you remember the songs she gets to sing. It's an amazing leading lady role, so I was thrilled when they offered it to me."

Rehearsing for *Hello, Dolly!* has been a whirlwind for Meyer, who balances a demanding full-time job as a physician with nightly rehearsals.

"Dolly does a lot in the show," she said. "She's on stage most of the time, singing, dancing, acting. It's a lot to juggle. But I've been planning my life around how to manage my energy. There's not a whole lot of social life these days!"

The production is being directed by **Randy Slovacek**, whose extensive history with *Hello, Dolly!* Includes working on both the Broadway and touring productions with Carol Channing.

"Randy has very clear ideas about Dolly," Meyer said. "She's always in control. She's sharp, confident, and never flustered. It's been a great challenge to embody that while staying mentally sharp after a long day of work."

Meyer also highlights her castmates' sacrifices to bring this production to life. "Many of them have full-time jobs and long commutes," she said. "One castmate drives from Huntington Beach, and another teaches high school English during the day. It's incredible how much everyone puts in to make this happen."

For Meyer, *Hello, Dolly!* is more than a classic American musical — it's a celebration of resilience and femininity. The show's source material, Thornton Wilder's 1880 play *The Matchmaker*, remains surprisingly relevant.

"In 2025, a story about a woman who controls her destiny, manages the lives around her, and supports herself while staying emotionally strong feels more needed than ever," Meyer said. "Dolly's ability to multitask and bring people together is a love story for the feminine spirit."

Meyer said she hopes this production gives audiences the chance to rediscover the depth of the story and the music.

"The score is magical," she said, recounting a moment with her co-star, **A.G. Parks**, who stars opposite her as Horace Vandergelder. "He told me, 'Every time I sing *Hello, Dolly!* I tear up.' That's what a great story and score do. They take you there emotionally."

While *Hello, Dolly!* is often associated with high school productions or amateur theatre, Meyer assures audiences that SDMT's professional staging will highlight the show's emotional landmarks in ways they may not have experienced before.

"Even with amateur actors, it's entertaining," she said. "With professionals, you can really leverage how beautiful the books, lyrics and score are."

SDMT's year-round commitment to musical theatre makes it unique in San Diego County in that they are the only theatre to exclusively produce musical theatre year-round, which is often held up through the passions of the cast and crew.

This production will run in SDMT's converted black-box theatre, a space born of necessity after the company lost access to larger venues. Despite the smaller stage, ticket sales have been strong, often selling out. However, despite interest, the company's current venue limits how many people can experience their productions.

"We need a larger, permanent home," Meyer said. "Right now, we're always looking for sponsors and donors to help us find or build a new space. People often don't realize how much work goes into keeping a theatre company running. It's a huge community effort."

As opening night approaches, Meyer reflected on the dedication that it takes to bring *Hello, Dolly!* to life. "It's truly a labor of love for everyone involved," she said. "From the cast to the crew to the board members, we all put our hearts into this."



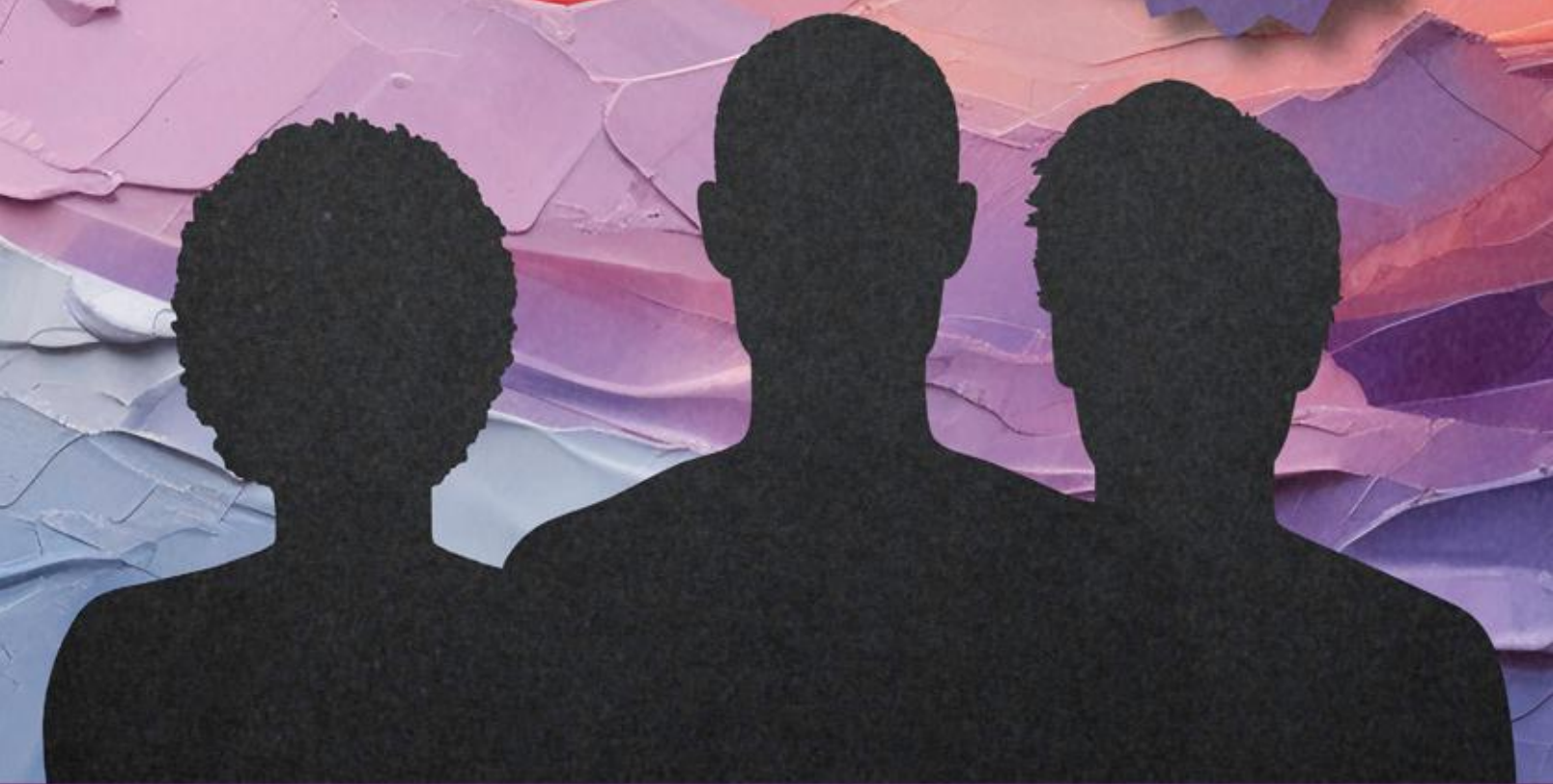
photo by julie licari

SDMT's *Hello, Dolly!* will run from Friday, February 7, to Sunday, March 9.
sdmt.org | 858.560.5740

WE ARE CONTINUOUS

by Harrison David Rivers
Directed by Kian Kline-Chilton

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FILL YOUR FEBRUARY WITH CAPTIVATING MUSICAL NIGHTS

Just in time for Valentine's Day, **Pink Martini** — the beloved "little orchestra" from Portland, Oregon — will be back in Costa Mesa to team up with the Pacific Symphony Pops to deliver a musical cocktail of sophistication and vibrancy.

Pink Martini, renowned for its eclectic sound, features talented lead singer **China Forbes**. The group masterfully intertwines an array of musical genres, drawing from classical melodies, lively Latin rhythms, and the enchanting vibes of golden-age Hollywood, all while incorporating elements of jazz. Their diverse repertoire spans songs sung in over 25 languages, showcasing their global influence and appeal.

This season, Pink Martini is commemorating 30 remarkable years of captivating audiences worldwide with their unique musical fusion and engaging performances.

Don't miss the anniversary tour at **Segerstrom Concert Hall** on **Friday and Saturday, February 14 and 15**. **pacificsymphony.org | 714.755.5799**

Enjoy a hilarious and heartfelt evening that blends cabaret and stand-up with Broadway's hunky gay ex-Mormon dad, **Claybourne Elder**, in ***If The Stars Were Mine*** from **Thursday, February 20, to Sunday, February 22,** at the intimate Samueli Theater at **Segerstrom Center for the Arts**.

Claybourne, who currently stars as John Adams in HBO's hit period drama *The Gilded Age*, recently played Andy in Broadway's 2021 Tony Award-winning revival of *Company alongside* Patti Lupone. He is a SAG Award, Grammy, Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel nominee who has brought laughter and heart to audiences nationwide with performances in *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, and *Torch Song*.

Drawing from his favorite music in the Great American Songbook, including works by Sondheim and Whitney Houston, *If The Stars Were Mine* delves into themes of sex, fatherhood, religion and love. Claybourne will be accompanied by **Rodney Bush**, a composer, songwriter and music director with over 50 credits in musicals and operas nationally and internationally. **scfta.org | 714.556.2787**



Claybourne Elder

R.E.S.P.E.C.T is a vibrant tribute to the iconic **Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin**. This concert featuring a band and exceptional vocalists, will immerse audiences in a love, tragedy, courage and triumph narrative. Experience an unforgettable evening celebrating one of the greatest artists ever.

The concert will feature many of your favorite hits, including "Natural Woman," "Think," "I Knew You Were Waiting for Me," "Chain of Fools" and "Respect." You'll be out of your seat and dancing in the aisles as you lose yourself in the music that inspired a generation.

The show can be seen on **Friday, February 21**, at **Cerritos Center for the Arts**, and on **Saturday, February 22**, at **Balboa Theatre** in San Diego. **respectontour.com**

Mid-Century Moderns, the original 1960s jukebox musical comedy set in Palm Springs, will return on **Saturday, February 22**, for five final performances at Revolution Stage Company. The show is currently the Coachella Valley's longest-running theatrical production, boasting 90 performances since its April 2022 premiere.

"For three years, Coachella Valley audiences have returned to 1966 Palm Springs and delighted in the music, comedy and romance that is *Mid-Century Moderns*," said **Dan Gelfand**, the show's co-creator and co-producer. "Audiences, whether visitors or locals, have loved the show, and we are so grateful for their support. This is one last chance to discover or rediscover the show. Whether it's boomers who love '60s music, or women who identify with our lead character recreating herself in Palm Springs after her husband's passing, or simply fans who enjoy a romantic musical comedy, *Mid-Century Moderns* seems to resonate with a wide variety of people who truly enjoy the show."

The musical features beloved pop hits from the mid-1960s, including songs by Tom Jones, Petula Clark, Lesley Gore, Frank and Nancy Sinatra, The Association and The Monkees. The music comes alive in the humorous and original story of a determined Wisconsin widow who transforms from frumpy to fabulous when she finds herself at the center of modernity in Palm Springs. **revolutionstagecompany.com | 760.318.4115**

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QUEER-UP YOUR PLAYLIST


photo by nick spanos

Margaret Cho returns with fresh music. The Grammy- and Emmy-nominated comedian, actress and singer will drop a new album on **Friday, February 14**, via her Clownery Records label, which will include the lead single and title track, "**Lucky Gift**." The album also features "**Funny Man**," a sincere tribute to comedian and actor Robin Williams. "I wrote this for Robin Williams after he passed away," Cho said. "It's really an anthem to the funny guys who didn't feel so funny on the inside all the time."

On "Lucky Gift, " Cho sings in a sultry pop tone while playing her double neck mandolin-guitar, the mandotar. "This is my power pop anthem and the first song I wrote on my mandotar," she said. "It is definitely giving gay pop in the best way and it's my favorite song I've ever written."

Eight years have passed since Cho's Grammy-nominated album, *American Myth*, was released in 2016. The album includes the notable song "Anna Nicole," inspired by her friendship with Anna Nicole Smith.

Cho expressed her excitement about the upcoming ***Lucky Gift*** album: "I am thrilled to share this album which has been many years in the making. There's tributes to Robin Williams, lost love, found love and anthems to nonbinary and gender nonconforming folx. I collaborated with Garrison Starr and Roger Rocha in different cities at different times but it all feels like it comes from the same place and the same heart."



The new album *Reclamation* from award-winning singer-songwriter and social justice advocate **Crys Matthews** is now available. "This album is both sonically and ideologically the fullest representation of who I am as an artist and as a human," Matthews said.

As a preacher's kid, a Black woman, a butch lesbian and a proud Southerner who sings social justice music alongside traditional country and Americana tunes, Matthews embodies not just the space Black artists have been denied in country and Americana music, not just the space LGBTQ+ individuals have been denied within communities of faith, and not just the autonomy women have been denied over their own bodies; she is reclaiming the South that nurtured her. **Eric Philbrook,** American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers VP & Creative Director, said about Matthews: "By wrapping honest emotions around her socially conscious messages and dynamically delivering them with a warm heart and a strong voice, she lifts our spirits just when we need it most in these troubled times."

When Matthews attended a panel at Folk Alliance International in February 2024, she heard a Scottish folk artist inquire as to how many record labels pursue what the artist referred to as "music from my tradition," four words that intrigued Matthews. "I loved the idea of that. It seems like the best way to talk about music: what is your tradition, who are your people, what is the fabric of you?"

Matthews is boldly answering those questions on her new album.



Mae Martin, the award-winning comedian, producer, actor, podcast host and singer-songwriter, will drop their debut album, *I'm a TV*, on **Thursday, February 27**. Two tracks from the album, "Good Dream" and "Stowaway," are now available for listening. This album signifies Martin's first foray into music after partnering with Universal Music Canada (UMC), the leading music label in the country.

I'm a TV marks a new chapter in Martin's creative journey. The album, entirely written by Martin and produced by **Jason Couse and Wes Marskell** of The Darcys, is an indie rock exploration of hazy millennial nostalgia. The music feels like a pleasant dream — vivid with coming-of-age emotions and memories of high school basements. A self-proclaimed "chronic over-sharer," Martin has created a body of work that is genuine and intimate. As an authentic extension of their artistry in a new creative medium, *I'm a TV* enables Martin to share their experiences and perspective without the pressure to deliver a punchline.

"I've been writing songs since I was a teenager, with no intention of ever sharing them," Martin said. "But it took moving to LA a couple of years ago and really having some time to sit alone in a rented apartment to reconnect with that Toronto teen. I didn't realize how badly I wanted to sit with an acoustic guitar by myself and get to say what I wanted to say without the pressure to find a punchline. Then, filling out the sounds with a band, collaborating with friends, I just leaned into warmth and simplicity and tried to learn this new medium as best I could and trust my gut. All that matters to me is that the album feels like an authentic extension of everything I write and do. No matter the medium I've been trying to say the same thing my whole life, and I kind of hope I never figure out how to say it perfectly because the joy is in trying to express it."

photo by andrew max levy

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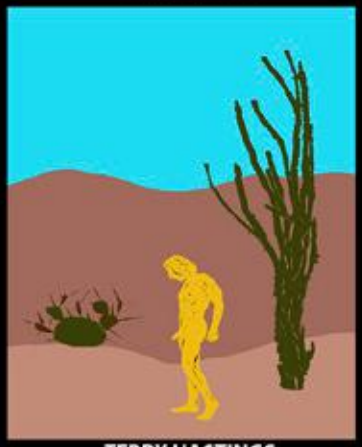

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GIVE 'EM THE OLD RAZZIES DAZZLE!

There's just something about a bad movie, anything from hammy acting, wooden and unintentionally hilarious dialogue, a director's misplaced notion that they were going to be filming the next big thing, which all equals a magnum opus of mediocrity. And that's not subscribed to low-budget efforts, or directors, many big-name talents have taken big swings, resulting in big misses! Hey batter, batter, I want that two hours of my life back!

Well, sometimes. As a young man, I would happily spend my hard-earned cash on movies I had read about in a book titled ***The Golden Turkey Awards***, and later another one called ***The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film***, which still sits on my bookshelf today, its pages earmarked with schlockfests to seek out like ***Reefer Madness*** and any number of 1950s sci-fi offerings.

Then I discovered the **Golden Raspberry Awards**, aka the **Razzie Awards**, an institution of 45 years now, a celebration of sorts for the worst movies in any given year, the anti-Oscars, as it were. Yet, by highlighting these less-than-stellar examples of cinematic non-excellence, it created a buzz around the films being dishonored. Were they *really* that bad? The only way to watch them and find out for yourself.

So, let's dive in and celebrate this year's worst in show ahead of the award ceremony on **Saturday, March 1**, which you can watch on **youtube.com/@razziechannel**.







HISTRIONICS

The parody award show came to be after one of its co-founders and film industry veteran, John J.B. Wilson, endured a double bill of the Village People's only film foray ***Can't Stop the Music***, and the **Olivia Newton-John** roller-skating epic ***Xanadu***.

The 99 cents he plucked down for the two movies produced an invaluable idea. One that he and co-founder Mo Murphy staged in Wilson's living room, and was held on March 31, 1981, in Hollywood, natch. The lectern in his living room's alcove was constructed out of cardboard, while a broomstick with a foam ball attached to it served as a "microphone," with ***Can't Stop the Music*** announced as the Worst Picture for the inaugural ceremony.

And I thought that January 19 was their worst inaugural ceremony, albeit it's a different lineup than the 1970's version we all remember, save for former singer Victor Willis, who left the group prior to the movie musical. Oh, and he stated last year that "Y.M.C.A." is not a gay anthem. McXuse me? My whole childhood is therefore a lie. A horrible, horrible lie. Now back to my column, already in progress.

The concept that "encourages well-known filmmakers and top-notch performers to own their bad" immediately gained traction, with Los Angeles papers highlighting it, and saw its attendance move away from its humble beginnings in both size of attendees and where it was held over the years, the locales have ranged from schools, theatres and hotels.

The annual ceremony is held the night before the prestigious Oscars, with its little gold man signifying the echelon of acting. The statuette for the Razzies takes the same tongue-in-cheek approach as its satirical presentation. A golf ball-sized raspberry sits atop a Super 8mm film reel atop a 35mm film core with brown wood shelf paper glued and wrapped around it —sitting atop a jar lid spraypainted gold.

That's a lot of layers for something that is transparent in its focus on the love of the absurd. And there have been a number of notable recipients that have also leaned into that aspect by showing up to receive this dubious accolade. Hollywood A-listers like **Halle Berry** and **Sandra Bullock** were on hand to snatch their Worst Actress trophies, for ***Catwoman*** and ***All About Steve***, respectively.

Even though it's done in jest, the Razzies hasn't been without its fair share of controversy. There was the blunder of having a category dedicated to the Worst Bruce Willis Performance in a 2021 Movie in 2022, after the actor headlined a string of poorly received films. His family announced in March of that year that the ***Die Hard*** actor had been diagnosed with aphasia, which is a language disorder that makes it hard to understand, speak, read or write.

The category was retracted, as was late actress **Shelley Duvall**'s 1980 Worst Actress nomination for ***The Shining***, after it was learned how her "performance was impacted by Stanley Kubrick's treatment of her throughout the production."

Someone who also got caught in the crosshairs for her performance in a Stephen King adaptation was 12-year-old **Ryan Kiera Armstrong**, who was in the 2022 ***Firestarter*** remake. Her Worst Actress nomination was rescinded, as was the awards show recognizing anyone under the age of 18 being submitted from that point forward. The Razzies themselves later won the category for the blunder. Well, that was nice of them, in a messed-up kind of way.

And now that you're up to speed, here are this year's nominees.

AND THE RAZZIE GOES TO . . .

Have you, or someone you know, sat through any of the five nominees for **Worst Picture**, you may be entitled to compensation . . . or a brain scan because what were you thinking?

The based on a video game sci-fi/action/comedy movie ***Borderlands*** lost an estimated $100 million at the box office, had negative reviews, and yet had Oscar winners **Cate Blanchett** and **Jamie Lee Curtis** in its cast. Ouch doesn't begin to cover it! You want some Bactine for that wound?

The buzz was strong regarding ***Joker: Folie à Deux*** until it came out, that is. The highly anticipated comic-book-based sequel featured the odd choice of having its stars, **Joaquin Phoenix** and **Lady Gaga,** sporadically burst into song.

Madame Web is another example that Sony Pictures should just stop making superhero movies, especially ones that waste a cast including **Dakota Johnson** and **Sydney Sweeney**, among others. The comic book flick about Cassandra Webb (Johnson) developing clairvoyance — OK — that leads her to protect a trio — do tell — who are being hunted by an unknown adversary that wants them all shades of dead — you don't say? Upon its release, the film was immediately touted as being a Razzie contender.

This one's gotta hurt famed director **Francis Ford Coppola** and it certainly did have that affect on his wallet, as ***The Godfather*** director sank $120 million of his own money into the much-derided film ***Megalopolis*** that only grossed $13.9 million at the box office. Now, I'm no mathematician, but that is a lot less than it cost to make. Adding insult to injury, this tale of Cesar (**Adam Driver**) whose idea of a utopian society is at odds with the greedy Mayor Franklyn Cicero (**Giancarlo Esposito**), has been his dream project for over 40 years. I guess dreams don't always come true!

Reagan was presented as a love letter to the 40th President, and his ascent from Hollywood to the White House. P.S., you couldn't pay me to watch it.

COULD WIN: In a weird way, I didn't outright hate *Joker: Folie à Deux***.** I saw what director Todd Phillips was trying to do in theory, but it was the execution of it that led to many, many repetitious scenes. And that's a nicer way to say the movie got boring AF.

SHOULD WIN: *Megalopolis* was not only a tongue twister to pronounce, but it was also a small example of the question what the f**k? nature of the entire film being answered.





The **Worst Actor** category features thespians who are based on two real-life people — kinda — and three fictional characters. Don't worry, I'll let you know who's who.

First up is **Dennis Quaid** in *Reagan*, who was probably hoping that playing a historical figure would equate Oscar gold, and not a trophy worth $4.97! He has stated that Ronald Reagan was his favorite President in his lifetime. That's a choice. So, one can't help but wonder if his nomination will cloud that for him.

Jerry Seinfeld played a character named Bob Cabana, who is based upon a real person, William Post in Netflix's *Unfrosted*, which is a loosely based on the true story of the creation of Pop-Tarts toaster pastries during the 1960s. Got it? Good.

Jack Black is Jolly Ol' Saint Nick in *Dear Santa*. Well, not really. A young boy with dyslexia writes a letter to Santa, except what with being dyslexic and all, he conjures up Satan! Granted, whatever form he takes on film, Black is always 100% annoying. #notafan

How do you mess up the beloved children's book *Harold and the Purple Crayon*? Start by casting **Zachary Levi** as the grown-up version of Harold, who uses his Purple Crayon to enter the real world with non-hilarity ensuing.

Joaquin Phoenix won an Oscar for his portrayal of Arthur Fleck aka *Joker* in 2020. Fast forward to 2024 and Phoenix reprised his role in *Joker: Folie à Deux***.** Now, I don't speak French, I only kiss it, but I believe the subtitle means "what were they thinking?" in making the movie a musical.

COULD WIN: Phoenix gave a pretty lackadaisical turn to one of his best works. And stick to your day job; your singing was a little pitchy.

SHOULD WIN: Quaid. If I wanted to watch a President who doesn't care about our community, I'd just watch the news, and save myself time and money.





The ladies up for **Worst Actress** are an Oscar winner, a Grammy winner, two nepo babies and a woman who had a really bad 2024.

Cate Blanchett is known for taking risks with her acting roles, like playing Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There*, which resulted in an Oscar nod in 2007. But that wasn't the case for her in director Eli Roth's *Borderlands*, and she stated she took the role because she enjoys cray cray roles that people wouldn't expect her to take.

Lady Gaga's acting has garnered her nominations for a New York Film Critics Circle Award, BAFTA Award nomination, Golden Globe Award nomination and Screen Actors Guild Award nomination. However, that isn't the case for her portrayal of Harley Quinn in *Joker: Folie à Deux*, and she was shocked at the film's reception. Not as shocked as audiences were, though.

You know a movie may be in trouble when a studio drops it into theatres during the first two months of any given year. Such was the February release for *Argylle* with **Bryce Dallas Howard** as a writer who gets caught up in espionage that mirrors what she writes about in her books. Hmm, how very *Romancing the Stone*.

The daughter of Melanie Griffith and Don Johnson and granddaughter of Tippi Hedren, **Dakota Johnson,** has gone on record as saying she will never do a movie like *Madame Web* again. Can you blame her?

Poor **Jenny from the Block** had one hell of a 2024 with a canceled concert tour due to low sales, and a pending divorce from Ben Affleck. Her nod for the Netflix sci-fi movie *Atlas* is like the fetid cherry on top of an already crap year.

COULD WIN: Does it make me a bad gay if I say Gaga?
SHOULD WIN: Does it make me a worse gay if I say Blanchett?





It's pretty bad when you're nominated for a **Worst Supporting Actor** Razzie for just your voice only. But somehow, double nominee **Black** has pulled that off in *Borderlands* as a robot appropriately named Claptrap. And he is joined by diminutive actor **Kevin Hart**, who portrays Roland, and received flack for the role in that he is the physical polar opposite of the character in the videogame.

Shia LaBeouf appeared in drag in the mega bomb *Megalopolis* and uttered the line, "Revenge tastes best while wearing a dress." Truer words were never spoken. Just like those shouldn't have been. Meanwhile, **Tahar Rahim** was Evil Spiderman to Johnson's *Madame Web*, all of which sounds sticky.

I never knew that **Jon Voight** was a quadruple! Want proof? He's nominated for *Megalopolis*, *Reagan*, *Shadow Land* and *Strangers***.** What a coup! A real feather in the career cap there, Jonny.

COULD WIN: Voight.
SHOULD WIN: See above.





2024 wasn't a banner year for **Ariana DeBose**, with her co-starring roles in *Argylle* and *Kraven the Hunter* equaling a dual Worst Supporting Actress nomination. She had previously won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in 2022 for *West Side Story* and now finds herself on the other side of the gold, two-fold.

Reagan's **Lesley-Anne Down** had big shoes to fill in portraying Margaret Thatcher, following in the footsteps of Meryl Streep in *The Iron Lady* and Gillian Anderson in *The Crown*. But her nomination equates to a misstep along the way.

Emma Roberts has chalked up the hate for *Madame Web*, in which she played Spider-Man's mom, Mary Parker, because of it being heavily ridiculed online. And summed up her thoughts thusly, "What bums me out about a lot of stuff, even stuff that I've done, is people just make such a joke out of everything now." She makes it sound like a bad thing.

Amy Schumer played true-life breakfast magnate Marjorie Post in *Unfrosted*, who was one of the first female executives. She and her husband also had Mar-a-Lago built. That's not so grrrrreeeat!

FKA twigs, no that's a person and not something you'd find in the woods, I think, is a singer, songwriter, producer and dancer who is up for her role *The Crow*. At least she got to have a love scene with Bill Skarsgård, so that's a good consolation prize.

COULD WIN: Down because of the aforementioned pumps she had to fill.
SHOULD WIN: DeBose's two nods could see her as the lead contender. Sorry girl.





WORST IN SHOW

Those up for **Screen Combo** should come as no surprise and they include: Any Two Obnoxious Characters (But Especially Jack Black) in ***Borderlands.*** Any Two Unfunny "Comedic Actors" in ***Unfrosted.*** The Entire Cast of ***Megalopolis***. Harsh! **Phoenix** and **Gaga** for ***Joker: Folie à Deux***. **Quaid** and **Penelope Ann Miller** as Ronnie and Nancy in *Reagan.*

COULD WIN: *Megalopolis* cast, even though Aubrey Plaza was a part of the ensemble.
SHOULD WIN: Gee, let me think about this one. *Borderlands*! Duh.

As for the **Prequel, Remake, Rip-Off or Sequel** movie that could take home this dishonor, the nominees are: ***The Crow***, ***Joker: Folie à Deux***, ***Kraven the Hunter***, ***Mufasa: The Lion King*** and ***Rebel Moon: The Scargiver.***

COULD WIN: *Joker: Folie à Deux*. 'Nuff said, I don't want my gay card revoked.
SHOULD WIN: *Mufasa: The Lion King*. C'mon, we've seen this movie before; it's right in the subtitle.





CUT. PRINT. THAT'S A WRAP!

It's a fair assessment to proclaim that I've seen more bad movies than good. And there ain't no shame in my movie-watching game. I get struck funny by things that most people don't find to be humorous and must have a higher pain threshold than I give myself credit for.

But, in some respects, it's akin to rubbernecking a car crash. You don't want to look but feel compelled to do so. That's my story and I'm sticking to it. Until next time, that's all the news that's fit to print.


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TABLE FOR 10

A BENEFIT FOR SADDLEBACK FOUNDATION & PASCAL CULINARY ARTS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



Table for 10 is an incomparable, decadent culinary experience bringing together more than 50 of the region's finest chefs, culinary artisans and sponsors, taking place on the evening of **Sunday, March 2**.

Each chef will create and serve an exclusive tableside dinner for 10 guests, perfectly paired with exquisite wines and presented at beautifully adorned tables designed explicitly by the participating restaurants and chefs. The evening will begin with a vibrant cocktail reception and culminate with an extraordinary auction, offering indulgent dining experiences, rare luxury items, exceptional wines and unforgettable trips to wide-ranging destinations.

For the fourth year, the Pascal Culinary Arts Scholarship Program at Saddleback College Culinary Arts School will be the recipient of the fundraiser. This program creates life-changing financial grants for culinary arts students in Orange County. The program focuses on making an impact for culinary students who show financial need and are currently enrolled in classes and meet the GPA criteria. The goal is to provide scholarships to as many deserving students as possible each year, which, in turn, gives back to the culinary community.

VIP CHEFS FOR THIS YEAR'S FUNDRAISER

Venue Host Chef: **Paul Bauer**, Renaissance Newport Beach
Honorary Chef: **Kyung Carroll**, The Resort at Pelican Hill
Chef Scholarship Chair: **Pascal Olhats**

Kristin Martin, founder of the Table for 10 culinary event and CEO of KM Productions, is the driving force behind the scholarship program in conjunction with Saddleback College Foundations' Pascal Olhats Culinary Arts Scholarship Program.

Explaining why she chose this particular foundation, Kristin said, "This was an easy pick for me as I was a schoolteacher and principal for 14 years. Educating our youth is top priority for me. By assisting these kids with their college tuitions, labs, housing, food, etc. We are investing in the future.

"Last year, one of the recipients was living in their car. It makes me feel really good to help these students. They want to succeed and just need a break. The funds are distributed over time each semester. Students are required to carry a full class load and have a 2.5 GPA to continue receiving the funds."

Pascal Olhats is the scholarship program's namesake and a culinary legend in the Orange County food scene. He is a well-trained executive chef and restaurateur. Over the past 35 years, he has won numerous awards and owned several restaurants in the OC: Tradition by Pascal, Pascal Épicerie, Café Jardin, Pascal's Tea Garden Creperie and Pascal's Café (a café/ bakery/ fine dining establishment).

Pascal Cuisine is a private chef service for exclusive fine-dining events, offering full-service catering throughout Southern California. Events can be booked at **pascalcuisine.com**. His signature coffee and espresso are available on the site.



pascal olhats and kristin martin



Born in Normandy, France, Olhats — like many chefs in Europe — is all about apprenticeships in the kitchen. His first jobs were in the top kitchens of his hometown of Rouen, including Hotel de Dieppe and La Couronne in the heart of the old city.

Olhats' next stop was Brussels in Belgium, where he attended the CERIA, a hotel and restaurant college, for four years. From there, he worked for the well-known Chef Paul Bocuse, first as a server and then as chef de rang (head waiter). From there, he moved to Lyon, well-known for producing and weaving silk, considered the capital of gastronomy in France, and home to Bocuse's inside food hall and market, Les Halles de Lyon on Cours Lafayette. It is there that Pascal worked at Leon de Lyon Restaurant as chef de rang. St. Tropez was calling for his next job as service staff manager for three years at the famous Le Club 55.

In 1984, Olhats moved to the United States, where he began working as chef for Piret's Restaurant and then chef de cuisine for Le Meridien Hotel in Newport Beach. He was also the executive chef at Player's in Irvine, followed by executive chef at Chanteclair Restaurant in Newport Beach.

He was invited twice to cook at the prestigious James Beard House in New York. He travels the world with groups to explore countries, culture and cuisine, partnering with Silversea Cruise Line. He currently is the Californian Ambassador of Baja Shellfish Farm and promotes amazing Pacific shellfish.

Chef Olhats' latest endeavor is as a culinary instructor at Saddleback College, currently teaching French bistro cuisine, classic French cuisine and vegetarian cuisine. As an ambassador, he represented the Macanese government's tourism efforts to promote and demonstrate Macanese cuisine in the United States at events, including the Pebble Beach Food and Wine Festival.

Accolades: The Zagat Guide has rated Pascal Restaurant the No. 1 restaurant in Orange County for 20 years. He appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* preparing his "Diet a la French" and has also appeared several times on *The Real Housewives of Orange County*.

CHEF OLHATS SPOKE WITH *THE RAGE MONTHLY*.

What inspired you to get involved with the culinary program at Saddleback College?

My inspiration to start teaching at Saddleback College was a great opportunity to share my cooking knowledge with aspiring chefs. It is truly the greatest chapter of my career.

Please share the most rewarding aspect of teaching those aspiring chefs.

The most rewarding part has been to see how within just a few classes how fast the students are elevating their food prep and cooking skills.

What does it means to you to have KM Productions and the Saddleback College Culinary program fundraise to award your students with scholarships specifically?

It is a huge honor to have the Saddleback College Foundations' Pascal Olhats Culinary Arts Scholarship Program as the recipient of the Table for 10 fundraiser. Those funds really transform lives. Many students enroll with no cooking experience at all. Then, by the end of the semester most of the students either can get a great job in the industry or feel confident enough to cook fabulous meals for their family and friends.

The best part for me is that I can share my passion and knowledge for the industry with my students. Working with KM has given me the opportunity to have a platform to unite our culinary community: cooks, chefs, purveyors and patrons!

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chef pascal olhats

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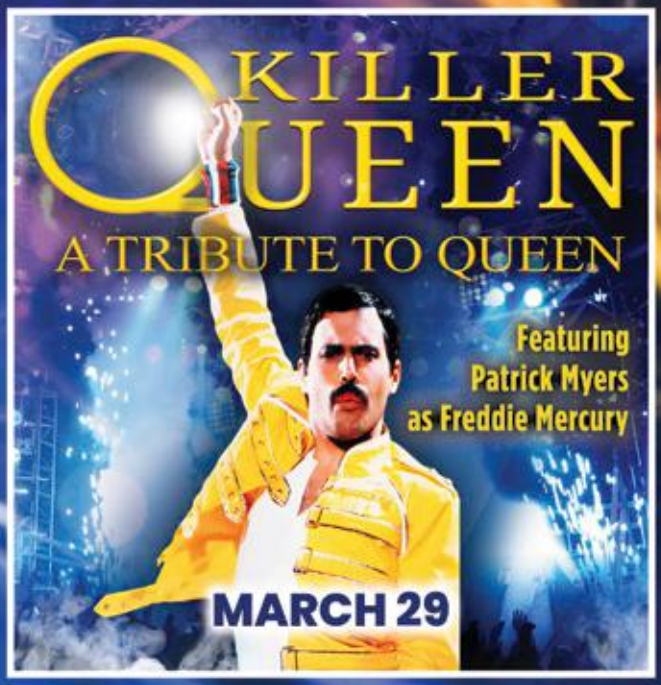
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