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FAREWELL *POSE*

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SPECIAL
WITH
RYAN
O'CONNELL**
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

LIFESTYLE

EVENTS

FASHION

ENTERTAINMENT

NIGHTLIFE

COMMUNITY

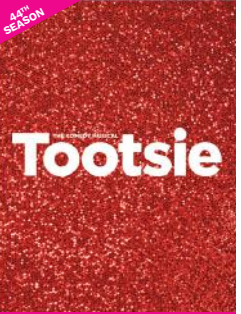
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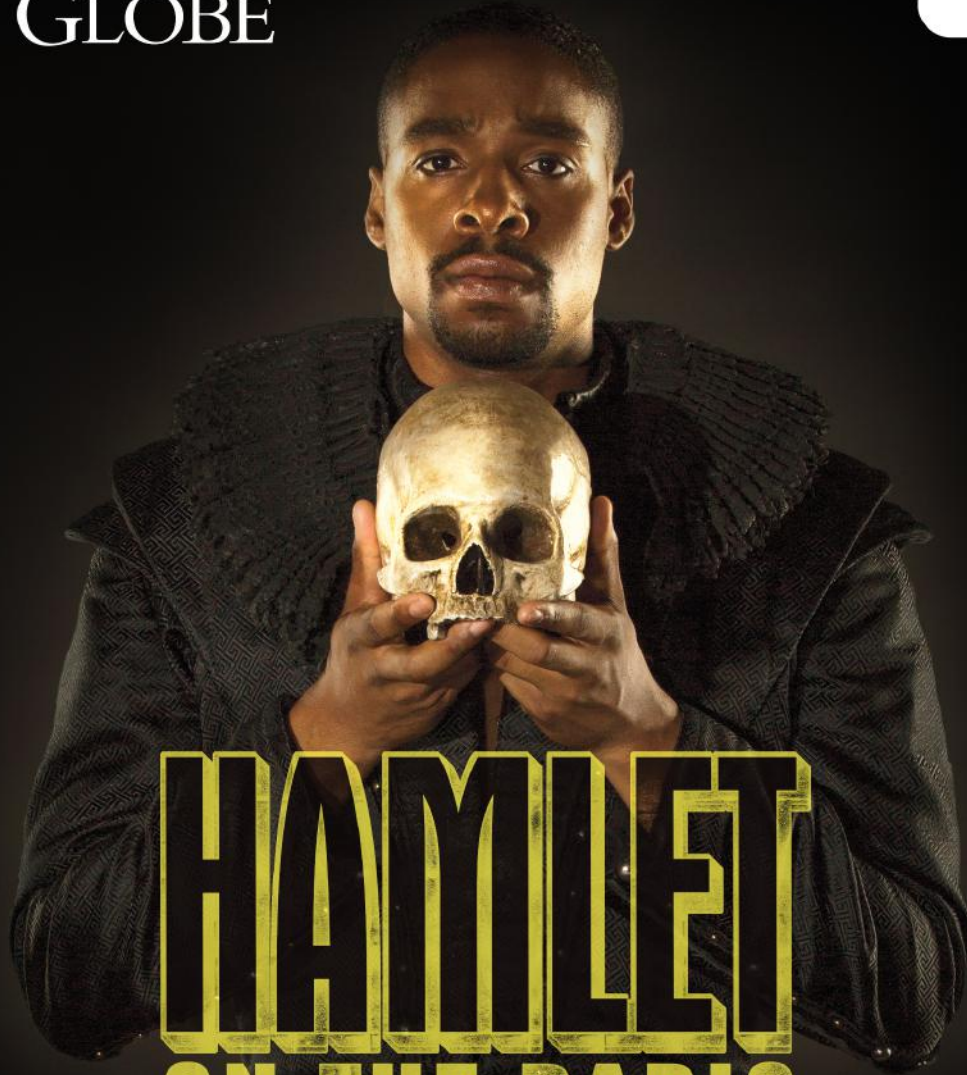
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Grantham Coleman appears in the title role of *Hamlet*, 2017. Photo by Jim Cox.

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Pride In Media

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SUBSCRIPTIONS – One year (12 issues): \$40.00

Direct all editorial and subscription orders
to our office or website.

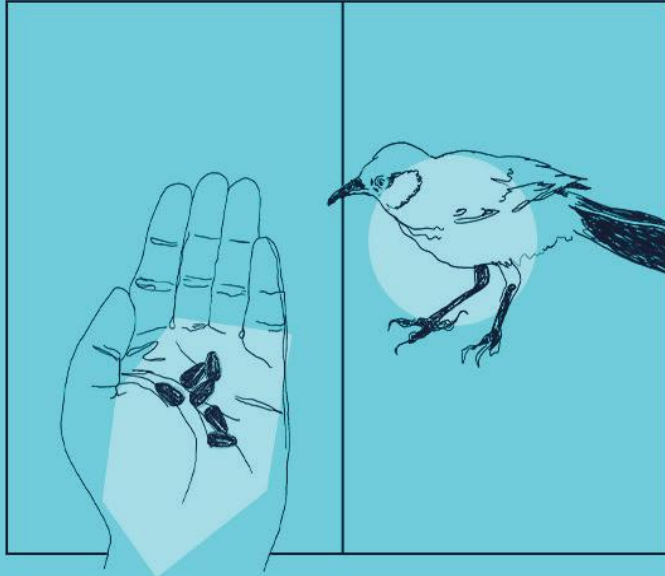


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PRINTED IN THE USA



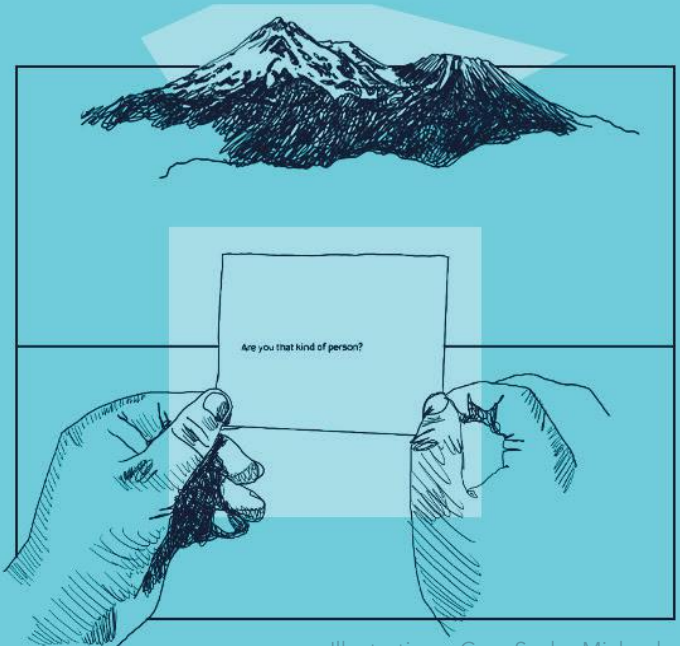
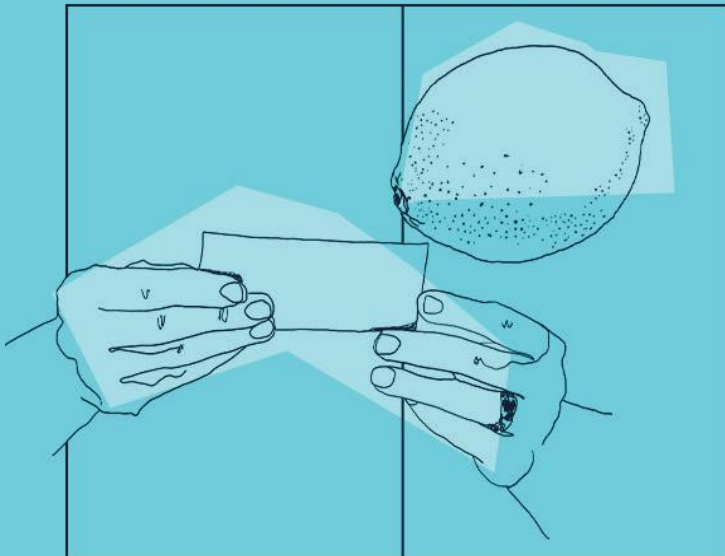
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HARVEY MILK DIVERSITY BREAKFAST

This celebratory event is designed to bring together more than 1,000 diverse San Diegans – business, labor, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, all communities, all ages, all San Diegans who support equality and justice – to honor the memory of this influential civil-rights activist. As San Diego County starts opening up, organizers are still not able to safely host more than 1,000 of our community in-person at the annual Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast. In lieu, the San Diego LGBT Community Center will host the 2021 Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast as a free virtual celebration.

Mark your calendar on **Friday, May 21** at noon for an extraordinary online Harvey Milk event with special guests, inspiration and appreciation for all of the LGBTQ leaders who paved our way. Although we won't be coming together for breakfast with sponsored tables, The Center has unique opportunities and recognition to support this year's special presentation. Contact Ian Johnson, the director of development, at ijohnson@thecentersd.org if you'd like to sponsor or have questions. thecentersd.org/hmdb



presents

Trivia Night

TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER

Hey smarty-pants, put on your thinking caps for Radiant Health Centers' Trivia Night fundraiser on **Thursday, May 20** at 6 p.m. Join the festivities via Zoom for a fun night with community allies and friends. Four rounds of trivia will be played with two winners for each round. Prizes will be awarded for each winner with a grand prize announced at the end of the event. Chat, fun and interaction will be encouraged.

Trivia Night will be hosted by **Ryan Budds**. The comedian, trivia host, TV producer and actor has hosted more than 5,000 in-person trivia events and comedy shows in Los Angeles and Chicago since 2006 and over 550 virtual shows since March 2020.

Based in Orange County, Radiant Health Centers has provided more than three decades of exceptional care and support to people affected by HIV and their loved ones. It has been instrumental in driving new HIV transmissions down over the past 15 years. However, an average of six people a week in Orange County are still diagnosed with HIV.

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LONG BEACH PRIDE

Welcome back! After having to cancel last year's celebration due to the pandemic, Long Beach Pride returns in 2021 with a virtual celebration on **Sunday, May 16** beginning at 7 p.m.

Over the past several years, the Long Beach Pride Festival & Parade has become one of the largest in the nation, attracting more than 80,000 participants over the two-day celebration. More than 200 marching groups and floats comprise the parade entries since 1995, representing various religious, human service, governmental and social organizations. We can't wait to celebrate again with Long Beach Pride – (hopefully) in person – in 2022! longbeachpride.com



What could be better than wandering your favorite gayborhood and enjoying its many unique sights and sounds? And eating the whole time as you do it! The annual Taste of Hillcrest lands on **Saturday, May 22** for your palate's pleasure.

This year, more than 35 Hillcrest restaurants are participating, giving foodies a chance to sample some of their best and signature dishes. From quaint cafes and French and Italian style bistros to five-star dining delights, Taste of Hillcrest is the most anticipated self-guided culinary walking tour in San Diego.

Sample bites at locations including Pad Thai, Sashimi, Italian Antipasto and Classic American Comfort Food. Your taste buds will go wild on this culinary journey. Enjoy your friends and one unforgettable tasting adventure.

Tickets cost from \$30 (early bird) to \$40 on the day of the event. The ticket includes up to 35 tastes, access to the Taste of Hillcrest app, a map of participating locations, and a Fabulous Hillcrest lanyard. A free shuttle will be available for participants. The shuttle makes frequent stops around the neighborhood.

fabulouhillcrest.com/taste-of-hillcrest

FILMOUT SAN DIEGO

FilmOut San Diego strives to recognize, promote, celebrate and support the important diverse artistic contributions LGBTQ filmmakers and others make to our community. This month, FilmOut will stream the Rainier Werner Fassbinder biopic *Enfant Terrible* from **Thursday, May 20 through Sunday, May 23**.

An official selection of the Cannes Film Festival, *Enfant Terrible* is the story of a child of his time: It's about an extremely talented and dynamic artist named Rainer Werner Fassbinder who dreams of making movies about the cold-hearted, archaic Federal German society and about the longing for respect and love of the outsiders – foreigners, underprivileged groups, small-time convicts.

His fulminant rise to being one of the most important directors in Europe correlates with his mental and physical fall and his early death. filmoutsandiego.com





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FAREWELL POSE

GROUNDBREAKING,
AWARD-WINNING
LGBTQ SERIES RETURNS
FOR A FINAL SEASON

I'm always sad when treasured shows leave the air, relishing in the gems of insights that the characters and storylines have provided me. But in the case of FX's *Pose*, it's more about how it digs deep into my emotions, uncovering that I wasn't dead inside on a weekly basis, leaving me unable to bury those feelings as unearthed truths that need to be catalogued and placed within the museum of my heart.

The series struck a chord — and a pose — with audiences, introducing us to chosen families, each residing in the safety of their respective houses, populated by real-life trans actresses Indya Moore, MJ Rodriguez, Dominique Jackson, Hailie Sahar and Angelica Ross. The incomparable out actor Billy Porter played an emcee presiding over the underground gatherings, announcing the categories for each house to compete for trophies and glory during the vogue balls.

Pose also served as a history lesson, one in which the all-too-real specter of the AIDS epidemic and the grip of fear it held in its deadly clutches during the 1980s and '90s could get a co-starring screen credit.

And it also shines an important spotlight on the vibrant New York City ballroom scene during that era, which was founded by the Big Apple's Black and Latino LGBTQ community and was the subject of the 1990 documentary *Paris Is Burning*. I believe there's an ointment for that, and if your Paris burns for more than four hours, consult your doctor immediately, if not sooner.

It's very much a textbook example of the old NBC *The More You Know* PSA's, crafted for people who only know about voguing from the Madonna song. So, as we bid adieu to *Pose*, let's look at its legacy and what the future holds for its final season.





WHAT'S THE TEA?

If you don't like spoilers, then don't read this section... see I can be nice! Just don't let it get out, I have a reputation to uphold. When we last saw the characters in the Season 2 finale, they were all on the precipice of change with Angel (Moore) and the swoon-worthy Papi (Angel Bismark Curiel) engaged, Damon (Ryan Jamaal Swain) kicked his dance career into high gear and Ricky (Dyllón Burnside) snagged a backup dancer spot on Paula Abdul's tour, while Blanca took runaway teens under her motherly wings.

And how do these events come into play for the series finale?

Even though showrunners have been tightlipped about the third season, which premiered on **Sunday, May 2** and will conclude its seven-episode arc on Sunday, June 6, they have discussed some details in various media outlets. However, they didn't spill the tea on every character's storylines, but here's what we know from their quasi loose lips that didn't sink our battleship!

Co-creator and executive producer Steven Canals revealed to *TVGuide* that there will be a time jump, which also happened between the first and second season without the aid of Doc Brown, a time traveling DeLorean with nary a flux capacitor or 1.21 gigawatts needed to transport the show to the future. Sorry, I watched *Back to the Future* the other day. Anyhoo, this time around, the show quantum leaps from 1990 to 1994.

As the AIDS epidemic rages on, the new season will see Pray Tell (Porter) dealing with his health, as well as a new threat, courtesy of a new house that "forces the House of Evangelista members to contend with their legacy." Ooh, sounds juicy and fraught with drama! And the gays hate that... on opposite day!

But it won't be all drama with a capital D! Well, perhaps there will be off shoots of it in Blanca's (Rodriguez) storyline. She will be centered around her attempts to have it all with "career, home and family," just like Joan Crawford in *Mommie Dearest*, minus the wire hangers.

She will try to strike a balance between being a nurse in an AIDS ward working alongside Judy (Sandra Bernhard), a good partner to her love interest Christopher played by Jeremy Pope, who portrayed aspiring screenwriter Archie on *Hollywood*. Alright, work it out, sis! All the while, she must attend to her household and the children who populate it. On the latter, while she remains devoted to her charges, Blanca also explores self-care by concentrating on herself and the goals she has set for herself.

Seeing as her original crew have carved out lives of their own, that most likely means there will be new faces representing the House of Evangelista. *Pose* producer Janet Mock indicated

(continued on page 15)



as much in an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, revealing that she believes “that there will be a new House of Evangelista. I think that that’s something that we could boldly say that Blanca will likely have new children in Season 3. It makes sense — her children are grown. They’ll come and go. Family dinner may be bigger.”

In the trailer that was recently released, Pray Tell and Blanca rally their friends to overcome the circumstances of a community devastated by those losing their lives to AIDS to return to the ballroom scene. And Porter let the proverbial cat out of the bag that he will step behind the camera to direct an episode.

ART IMITATING LIFE

And speaking of the ballroom scenes, *Pose* was among the shows whose production was halted only eight days into production, due to COVID-19. And the virus that is still impacting our lives, much like AIDS did during the 1980s and '90s, will have an impact on how the show had to be shot, Canals said in an interview with *Variety*.

“Things like kissing — we will likely forgo those moments. The place on our show where the biggest impact will be felt will be the ball scenes. Those scenes have 125 to 150 background actors,” he said. “That’s tricky because that’s such an important and critical part of our show and the narrative. We’re just, only now, having conversations of ‘Is there a world where we forgo these things?’”

Back in December, Porter told *Live with Kelly and Ryan* that filming on Season 3 with COVID-19 protocols in place was “not the easiest version of filming a television show that I have been a part of, but I am grateful that we are back to work.”

So are we, Billy, so are we.

THE CATEGORY IS ... GROUNDBREAKING

We can all be grateful for the legacy that *Pose* will leave behind. Show creators Ryan Murphy, Brad Falchuk and Steven Canals assembled the largest cast of LGBTQ characters in a scripted series ever and has been history making in the process.

In 2019, Porter was the first-ever openly gay Black man to win an Emmy Award for lead actor in a drama and his red-carpet fashions have become the living embodiment of the phrase “expect the unexpected.”

And there has never been a greater televised platform for trans actresses of color and the show’s three main actresses Rodriguez, Moore and Jackson took to Instagram to express their feelings about being a part of the show, with the latter’s sentiment summarizing *Pose*’s legacy.

“It has been an absolute joy to be a part of this historic, game-changing, trailblazing show! I have grown so much and [am] forever grateful for the acknowledgement and validation this amazing opportunity and experience has brought!”

There has never been, and may never again be, another show like *Pose* and the three adjectives that Jackson chose in referring to it are the epitome of spot-on. I am so hoping that the new episodes will contain an avenue for Jackson’s Elektra Abundance to read someone to filth, like she did with a transphobe in the Season 2 episode titled “Life’s a Beach.” I could watch that on a loop all day, every day! So, it will be a case of wait-and-see if she’ll get to sharpen her tongue and claws again this year.

CUT. PRINT. THAT’S A WRAP!

One of the aspects that I will miss most is discussing the show with my friend Jack. Notice that I said friend. Even though he is straight and I am gay, we don’t introduce each other to people as “this is my straight friend” and vice versa. He’s just my friend. And I think that’s indicative of what *Pose* has accomplished during its television tenure, showcasing that people are people and that labels are best left for clothing. Until next time, that’s all of the news that’s fit to print.





FEELING SPECIAL WITH RYAN O'CONNELL

We aren't living in the most enlightened of ages, but we are making progress in at least one way. People with physical disabilities, long excluded from leading roles in the entertainment industry, are finally being recognized as major talents on screen and stage. Ali Stroker, who uses a wheelchair, won a 2019 Tony Award for her groundbreaking performance as Ado Annie in the Broadway revival of *Oklahoma!*, while the numerous deaf cast members of last year's movie *The Sound of Metal* just helped it nab two Academy Awards.

One of the most prominent groundbreaking talents is actor-writer-comedian Ryan O'Connell. Born with a mild form of cerebral palsy (CP) in 1986, O'Connell had multiple surgeries and intense physical therapy while growing up in Southern California. He performed in plays and musicals throughout his high school years despite his physical limitations, and he also studied screenwriting. While O'Connell was in high school, he discovered another potential roadblock: He was gay.

As O'Connell recounted to *Vulture* magazine in 2019: "The moment I realized I was gay was – truly – seeing Ryan Phillippe's ass in (the 1999 movie) *Cruel Intentions*. I remember seeing Ryan Phillippe's ass and being like, 'That's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen in my life.' And then being, like, 'Oh, fuck me: I'm gay and disabled; this is so rude.'"

He continued: "I was closeted until I was 17. I came out because I really liked this boy who I knew was gay, and I knew that in order to pursue him I needed to be out of the closet. I came from a very gay family. My grandfather was a closeted homosexual who died of AIDS. My uncle's gay. My sister's bi."

O'Connell has mined much of his personal journey in *Special*, the series he created for Netflix in 2019. He adapted it from his 2015 memoir *I'm Special: And Other Lies We Tell Ourselves*. O'Connell stars in the show as Ryan Hayes, an insecure gay blogger with CP who still lives with his mother, Karen (played by the luminous Jessica

Hecht). He also wrote the series and serves as one its producers along with actor-producer Jim Parsons of *The Big Bang Theory* fame.

The first season was a hit with gay viewers as well as the disabled community. It also garnered notice from the Television Academy, which nominated the show for several Primetime Emmy Awards including Outstanding Short Form Comedy Series and nominated O'Connell for Outstanding Actor. *Special* also received a Special Recognition Award from GLAAD last year. Even more viewers have discovered the series while bingeing streaming content during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The second and final season of *Special* is set to premiere on Netflix on May 20. It picks up two months after the dramatic finale of Season 1, when Ryan had a huge fight with his mother and moved out. Ryan still hasn't spoken to Karen and has a case of writer's block that's getting him in hot water with his self-absorbed boss, Olivia. Enter Tanner, a flirty dance instructor who charms Ryan despite not being totally available. When his writer's block eventually lifts, Ryan is inspired to write a longform piece about disability. From there, he begins a journey of self-discovery that creates unexpected complications in his relationship with

Tanner. Cute newcomer Buck Andrews is partly responsible for these as Henry, a more aggressive gay guy on the autism spectrum who befriends Ryan.

Meanwhile, Ryan's best friend Kim (the delightful Punam Patel) lets her guard down when she meets Harrison (sexy Charlie Barnett, who previously starred in the movie *Private Romeo*, a gay take on *Romeo & Juliet*). He is a sensitive and fabulously wealthy tech mogul, but Kim's insecurities and jealous tendencies continue to hamper her personal life and threaten to push Harrison away. This season is about the primary characters — Ryan, Karen and Kim — coming into their power and realizing they all deserve big, gorgeous lives whether society agrees or not. Did I mention Leslie Jordan also appears as an unexpected new friend to Karen?



THE RAGE MONTHLY SPOKE RECENTLY WITH O'CONNELL ABOUT THE NEW SEASON OF HIS HIT SHOW.

How have things changed in your life or career since Season 1?

I guess the one thing is that whenever you want to make gay shit, it's an uphill climb, unless you're Ryan Murphy (laugh). It has gotten a little easier for me. I'm at point one-and-a-half now instead of at the very beginning of my career.



Given your success, do you feel any pressure to be the spokesmodel for gay men with disabilities?

(Pause) No (laugh). Of course, when you are representing a historically marginalized group there is a responsibility to be truthful about it. I've learned I have to divorce myself from my fears about representing the community and be authentic. It's true what they say, "Write what you know." You have to write and speak your truth.

I understand Season 1 was pretty autobiographical. How much of Season 2 is based on your life?

Season 2 is actually not autobiographical at all. I would say the themes are very true to my life experiences but not the actual experiences. I've always been more fully cooked than Ryan on the show. I moved out of my parents' house when I was 18 and lost my virginity at a normal age (laugh). But the show is emotionally authentic to my life.

What do you recommend to people with CP or other disabilities who want to make it in the entertainment industry?

First things first, you have to feel you have the right to be

there. Rob Schneider in *Deuce Bigalow: Male Gigolo* and Adam Sandler were who I aspired to be when I started out. And why not? They were hilarious and popular! You have to have confidence and be tenacious. It took four years to get Season 1 of *Special* together. The rejection was so demoralizing. It was a very painful process. But you have to keep at it because rejection is part of the process. You have to emotionally bottom to be a top, bitch, so put on that strap on and get to work (laugh)!

You and Max Jenkins (who plays Ryan's new love interest, Tanner) create some sexy sparks this season! What was working with him like?

Max is great! I discovered him when he did the original *High Maintenance* series back in like 2011. We became friends when he moved to L.A. I got so excited to give him a really juicy part on the show.

What are you working on now that *Special* is, sadly, ending?

I'm finishing a novel, *Just Be Looking at Him*, and working on a movie of it with Greg Berlanti (the out producer of the CW's multiple superhero series plus director of the 2018 *Love, Simon* movie). I also sold a show called *Accessible* to HBO and am waiting to hear if they're going to film it.



Very exciting! We wish you continued best of luck in all your efforts.

Thank you so much!

***Special* returns to Netflix on Thursday, May 20. Visit [netflix.com](https://www.netflix.com).**

Shante, you save.

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ANOTHER GAY MOVIE DIRECTOR'S CUT

Breaking Glass Pictures will re-release the breakout comedy in celebration of the film's 15-year anniversary. Arriving **Tuesday, May 4**, the cult classic is sure to shock new audiences with this special Director's Cut, complete with never-before-seen footage including icon Mink Stole, certain to please diehard fans.

When writer/director/producer Todd Stephens watched his iconic film for the first time in 10 years, he said a light went off. He decided to create a 15-year anniversary Director's Cut to refresh this beloved gem, and the result does not disappoint. The gold includes previously-cut scenes with the infamous Mink Stole, paying homage to Coco Peru's classic performance in *TRICK*. Many other hilarious and sexy moments await in this historic re-release.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to unleash *Another Gay Movie* back on the world," Stephens said. "It now includes a brilliantly twisted scene with my idol, Mink Stole, that I never should have cut in the first place."

Andy Wilson (Michael Carbonaro) is your typical All-American 17-year-old gay virgin. Like everyone else, he's dying to have sex. Totally out of the closet and mad crazy horny, this naive high school senior is caught in that awkward vortex between child and adult. Much to the dismay of his mom, Mrs. Wilson (Lypsinka) — who wonders why all her carrots and cucumbers keep disappearing — Andy spends much of his private time practicing for the big moment when he'll finally take the plunge. Andy is not alone. He attends high school with his three best friends, all of them totally out-loud-and-proud: Jarod (Jonathan Chase) is a buff varsity-jock stud; Griff (Mitch Morris) is the valedictorian, sinewy sexy and a closet romantic; and Nico (Jonah Blechman) is the pierced alternative-kid gay-cinema expert. The guys all have one thing in

common — they're all "booty" virgins. What follows is a raunchy ride on the bumpy road to virginity loss. In the dirtiest, funniest, most scandalous gay-teen-sex-comedy-parody ever, four young gay friends make a pact to lose their virginity by summer's end. The boys soon face giant sex toys, naked celebrities, masochistic teachers, and an uncomfortable romance with a quiche. With a dozen jokes a minute and a who's who of gay celebrities (including Graham Norton, Scott Thompson, Ant, Mink Stole and Richard Hatch) as you've never seen them before, *Another Gay Movie* is a candy-colored romp where getting laid is all that matters!

"Todd is brilliant with drama and comedy — as there is always a mix in any of his films," said Jonah Blechman, who recently collaborated again with Stephens on the upcoming Magnolia Pictures release, *Swan Song*, with Udo Kier, Jennifer Coolidge, Linda Evans and Michael Urie. "In one of my most outrageous performances, the *Another Gay Movie* franchise was what I like to call my Queer protest films. I'm forever proud of the boundaries we all broke, that even today, have yet to be topped in the queer genre!"

"You know, at live shows, people still bring me *Another Gay Movie* DVDs to sign, all I do is beam. It's like they are 'in the know,'" Carbonaro said. "After 15 years, I still get jazzed thinking about it. I feel incredibly lucky and proud to have gotten to be a part of this film that Todd dared to write and we all dared to make. It grabbed our audiences... right where they needed to be grabbed. It was nothing short of legendary."

The few trims and adds have improved this super edgy LGBTQ film's greatness. And let's face it, right now everyone could use a little joy in the world. What will a new generation of woke Millennials and Gen Z'ers think? bgpics.com

5 FLIX NOT TO MISS



MOFFIE

To be a moffie is to be weak, effeminate, illegal. The year is 1981 and South Africa's white minority government is embroiled in a conflict on the southern Angolan border. Like all white boys older than 16, Nicholas Van der Swart must complete two years of compulsory military service to defend the apartheid regime. The threat of communism and "die swart gevaar" (the so-called black danger) is at an all-time high. But that's not the only danger Nicholas faces. He must survive the brutality of the army — something that becomes even more difficult when a connection is sparked between him and a fellow recruit.

An adaptation of André-Carl van der Merwe's iconic memoir, the film serves as a brilliant period piece exposing the psychological violence of institutionalized homophobia. Aching raw depictions of the brutality of military training recall scenes from Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* while the timid tenderness, beautifully acted by Brummer and Villiers, provide a soft juxtaposition.

Following the film's premiere at Venice Film Festival where it was a nominee for the prestigious Queer Lion, *Moffie* has gone on to receive critical acclaim for its brilliant directing, cinematography and acting. IFC Films' *Moffie* is **now available** in select theatres and on digital and VOD platforms.

moffiefilm.com/home

ICARRYYOUWITHME

Based on true love, this decades spanning romance begins in Mexico between an aspiring chef and a teacher. Their lives restart in incredible ways as societal pressure propels the couple to embark on a treacherous journey to New York with dreams, hopes and memories in tow.

Academy Award nominee Heidi Ewing's (2006 Best Documentary nominee *Jesus Camp*) luminous, moving debut as a narrative filmmaker follows a tender romance spanning decades. Starting in provincial Mexico and continuing as first Iván, then Gerardo, journey towards sharing a life together in New York City, *I Carry You With Me* is an intimate love story, as well as a soulful rumination on family, sacrifice, regret and, ultimately, hope.

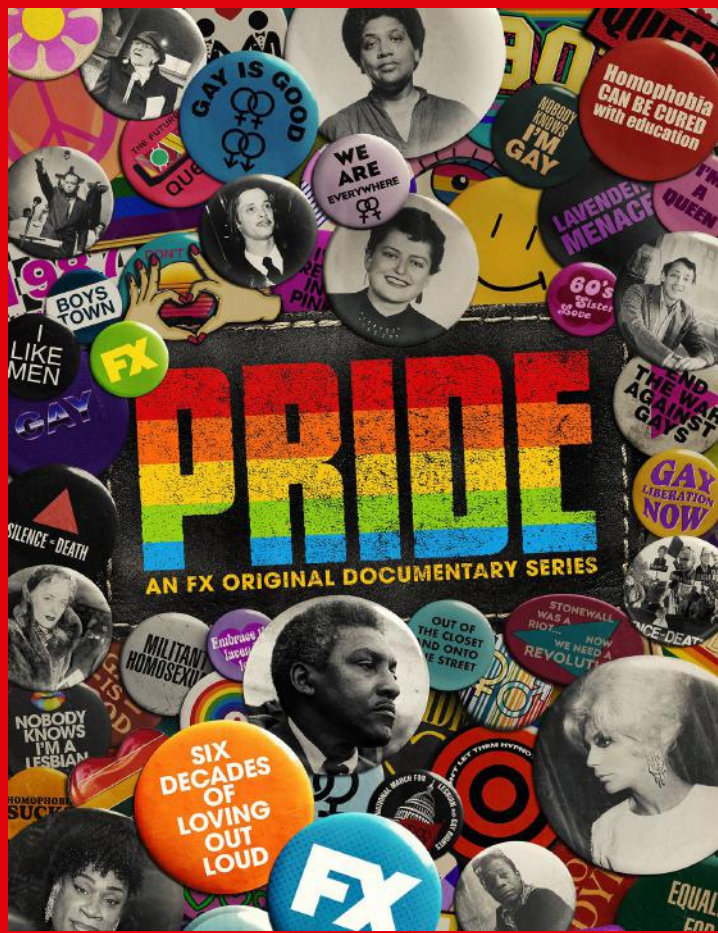
Ewing gracefully traces both men's lives from their childhoods in Mexico, through the decisions that lead them into adulthood. Iván, an aspiring chef and young father, hopes to secure a spot in a restaurant's kitchen while supporting his child. But the discovery of his relationship with Gerardo causes conflict, and in despair, he makes the arduous choice to cross the border into the United States, promising his son and his soulmate Gerardo that he will return.

Actors Armando Espitia and Christian Vázquez bring pathos and passion to the characters of Iván and Gerardo. Textured with small moments of intimacy, *I Carry You With Me* is also richly alive with the breadth of its cross-cultural perspective and broad expanse of time. Though based on a true story, Ewing's vision in the film is boldly original — an impressionistic, open-hearted take on the American dream, told by a filmmaker drawing on her years of practice in capturing the human experience.

Opening in Los Angeles on **Friday, May 21** and nationwide on **Friday, May 28**, *I Carry You With Me* is a two-time Spirit Award nominee and winner of the 2020 Sundance Film Festival NEXT Innovator & Audience Awards.

sonyclassics.com/film/icarryyouwithme





From Emmy Award-winning Killer Films (*This American Life*, *Mildred Pierce*) and Sundance World Cinema Grand Jury Prize-winning VICE Studios (*Flee*, *The Report*) comes *PRIDE*, a six-part documentary series chronicling the struggle for LGBTQ civil rights in America from the 1950s through the 2000s.

Six renowned LGBTQ directors explore heroic and heartbreaking stories that define us as a nation. The limited series spans the FBI surveillance of homosexuals during the 1950s Lavender Scare to the Culture Wars of the 1990s and beyond, exploring the queer legacy of the civil rights movement and the battle over marriage equality.

Featuring little-known characters such as Madeleine Tress or 1980s videographer Nelson Sullivan, who chronicled a vanishing downtown New York City during the AIDS epidemic, the series also features international figures such as civil rights pioneer Bayard Rustin, writer Audre Lord and Senators Tammy Baldwin and Lester Hunt. The evolution of trans rights and identities through the decades is charted through interviews and archival footage of pioneers including Christine Jorgensen, Flawless Sabrina, Ceyenne Doroshow, Susan Stryker, Kate Bornstein, Dean Spade and Raquel Willis.

PRIDE premieres **Friday, May 15** on FX, next day FX on Hulu. fxnetworks.com/shows/pride



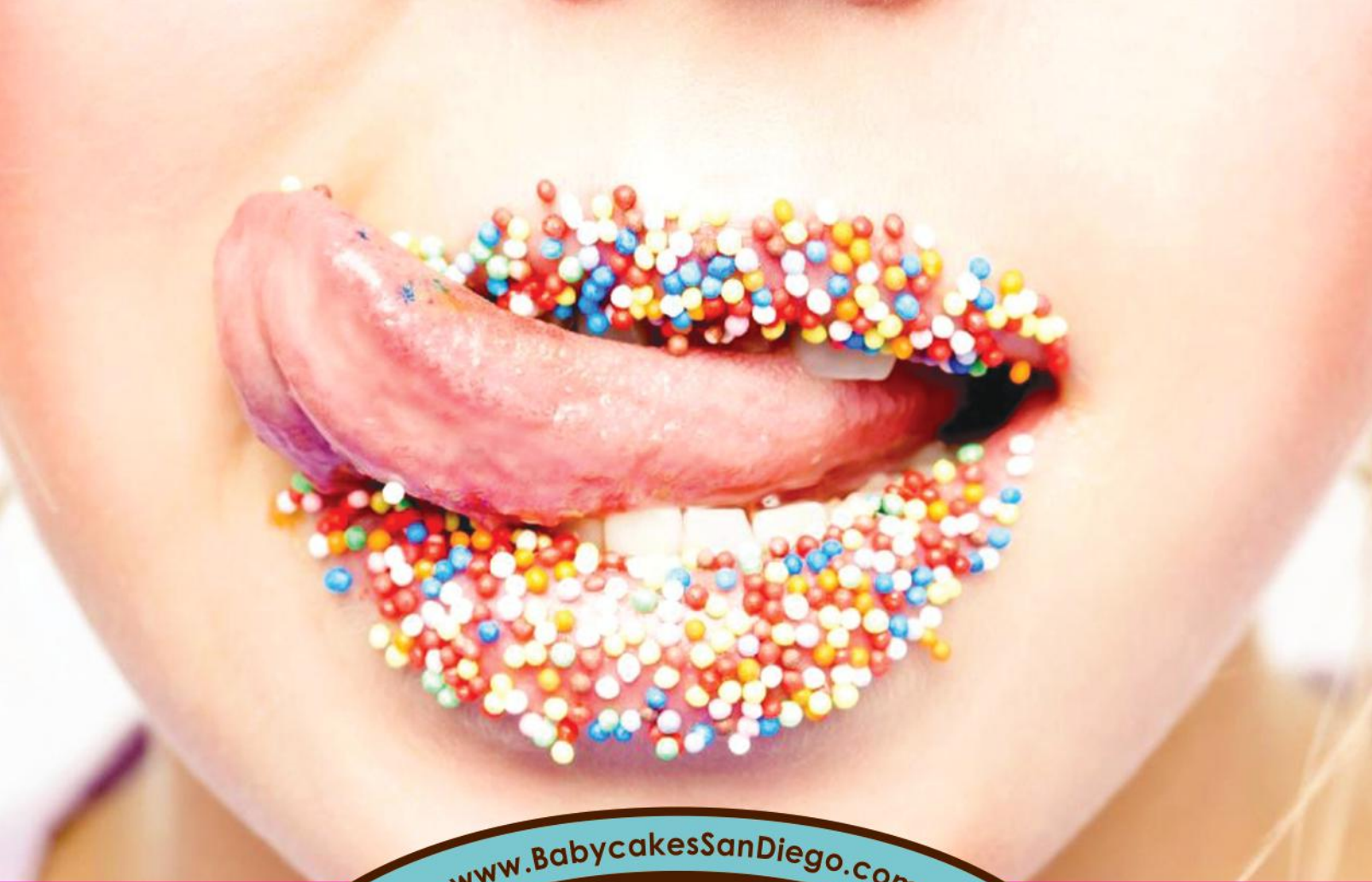
HALSTON

His name built an empire. His style defined an era.

Roy Halston Frowick, known simply as Halston, was an American fashion designer who rose to international fame in the 1970s. His minimalist, clean designs often made of cashmere or ultrasuede were a new phenomenon in the discotheques and redefined American fashion. Halston was known for creating a relaxed urban lifestyle for American women. He was frequently photographed at the legendary Studio 54 disco with his close friends Liza Minnelli, Bianca Jagger and Andy Warhol.

The new limited series *Halston* follows the legendary fashion icon, played by Ewan McGregor, as he leverages his single, invented name into a worldwide fashion empire that's synonymous with luxury, sex, status and fame, defining the era he lives in, 1970s and '80s New York — until a hostile-takeover forces him to battle for control of his most precious asset... the name Halston itself.

The series debuts **Friday, May 14** on Netflix. Executive produced by Ryan Murphy, Ian Brennan, Alexis Martin Woodall, Ewan McGregor, Daniel Minahan, Eric Kovtun, Sharr White, and Christine Vachon and Pamela Koffler of Killer Films. Minahan also serves as the series director. netflix.com/Halston



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MARVELOUS MAY MUSIC

SEEK SHELTER

Iceage



The fifth album from Iceage is rough and rebel, full of piss and vinegar, and lyrically sophisticated and cynical. Musically, it is loaded with super strong guitar work and the brilliant arrangements — produced by Peter Kember, known as Sonic Boom — that add more than a touch of tough and tender. Take the track “Love Kills Slowly.” It sweeps in with a morose beauty of sadness. Elias Bender Rønnenfelt, the lead singer who wrote all the lyrics, has a vocal quality reminiscent of a remorseful Bono of U2. “Love Kills Slowly” has such a tragic feeling. Think INXS. Rønnenfelt’s voice is that mesmerizing. He has the passion and talent to draw the listener in to a net of emotions, yet you feel liberated by the feelings presented.

“Drink Rain” captivates a la Robert Smith of The Cure with a Randy Newman vibe. You know Randy Newman... *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*? This is a song about love that is vibrantly heartfelt. With lyrics as “I’m close to my love. I drink the rain like iced champagne. I wonder if it’s too pure for me but I’m close to my love.” Those are the two songs that stuck in my thoughts and heart... let’s get on to the tough part of *Seek Shelter*, which is just as well-done in a different way.

Oh, did I mention INXS? Iceage lets it slam down on the head with “Vendetta.” The song has a beat like a suicide blonde and it is as tough lyrically as leather or steel. “Vendetta” struts in like a Wall Street wall of sound and lyrically is an anthem exposing greed and corruption. With the Greek chorus of bandmates adding to the arrangement, it’s very reminiscent of The Clash. As well as the song, “High & Hurt” from their album, it’s nice and raw in the emotions. There are nine songs on the album. Take a musical journey courtesy of Iceage. No white horse required. **Available May 7**

Maia Sharp's voice is warm, dreamy and smooth on the ears. It's mellow but intricately personal. Bring Bonnie Raitt's delivery and style in range but keep the target on Sharp. She is clever in that in combining guitars and an easy yet strong vibe with a sleek side of production by her and her songwriting. Sharp shares an individual story in each song filled with emotional vibrancy. She excels at songwriting and teller of tales, and this shows on *Mercy Rising*. "Whatever We Are" is timeless in the yearning and beauty in the pure simplicity of love. Sharp takes it to town with "Not Your Friend," which tells the story of a woman who is simply tired of being "just friends." Take the track "Backburner," which is invigorating with innovative lyrics such as "When I put you on the backburner, you set the place on fire." The song sizzles like water being brought to a boil on the stove, and it is wisely romantic at the same time. Sharp isn't for the emotionally stilted but for the people who understand that sometimes feelings exposed and a beautiful voice deserve to be heard. **Available May 7**



MERCY RISING

Maia Sharp

MAN ON MAN

Man on Man



It's not a novelty or as innovative as much anymore to come out as an openly gay singer or musician. Yes, it's commendable and honest but that doesn't make the music created any better or worse. However, in the case of Joey Holman and Roddy Bottum of Man on Man, their musicianship and musical style is spot on and surprisingly well done. They may look like two former wrestlers or two bears of a certain age but the heart and talent shines through on their debut. The old adage applies here: Never judge a book by its cover. From the song "It's So Fun (To Be Gay)," think new Pride anthem to the positivity and strong arrangements and guitars of "1983" as these two gay lovers and music makers have got it going on unabashedly and proudly with the lyrics and music. At times sexual, at times serious and at times exuberant, the dynamic duo is making their presence known. **Available May 7**

THE PERSONAL TRIUMPH OF SHARON STONE SHINES IN *THE BEAUTY OF LIVING TWICE*



The Beauty of Living Twice



SHARON STONE

There is nothing basic about Sharon Stone's instincts. She is a person, a woman, an actor and a humanitarian. She is a survivor. That leads all of those who admire and respect her to answer the eternal question: "What happened or where did she go for a spell?" It was a brain bleed that Sharon Stone survived. She is doing fine now. Thank goodness for all her family, friends, loved ones and doctors who helped and rallied around her, who had faith she would survive. I could not imagine being in her shoes, but I can imagine that Stone would revel at the thrill of her character throwing those chips up in the air in *Casino* and her smile when she walked out. That was a mythical moment in motion picture history.

There is a lot of personal triumph in *The Beauty of Living Twice*. I don't want to spill all the beans of her autobiography, but there is much to learn about the person behind the person in show business. Stone's book is so personal, revealing her truths that are relatable on many levels. There's so much about her youth, her family, and her mother and father in this autobiography. She's to be admired for sharing all this. She is a single mother now of three boys... now boys to men. Her love is palpable. Let the facts of life lead you into a place where you can be content and know that for Stone to share her story is worthy of its own place in accomplishments.

Sharon Stone has been called "the last living movie star." So it goes without saying that she brings the reader into her film career, from exhibiting her star quality in *Stardust Memories* directed by Woody Allen to trying to kick Arnold Schwarzenegger's ass in *Total Recall* to her breakout starring role as Catherine Tramell in *Basic Instinct*. Stone's recollections on these films and working with Robert DeNiro in *Casino* are revealing, savvy and smart.

It must be remembered that Stone is also a world-wide activist; her fundraising and awareness on the scene for AMfar and several AIDS charities is remarkable, as is her quest to help improvised countries. There is definitely a spiritual aspect to Stone to discover and think about in *The Beauty of Living Twice*. Other than getting to know her past, it's rewarding to hear her aspect and beliefs over the years and now. There is nothing "basic" about Sharon Stone, that's for sure.



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**NOT SO
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ELLIOT & ME

This musical comedy is based on the lives of songwriter Elliot Willensky and his younger brother Steven. Elliot is a charming, free-spirited ladies' man overflowing with talent and joie de vivre . . . with a knack to drive Steven crazy. The brothers have written a two-man show they are preparing to pitch to legendary Broadway producer Max Stone. It's a heartfelt story of brotherly love based on a powerful bond that has grown through the years.

Elliot and Steven reflect on the volatile ups and downs of their shared experiences: from their raucous "wonder years" growing up in Bayonne, New Jersey; to the painful conflict when Elliot defies the expectations of his traditional middle-class Jewish family and drops out of medical school to write pop songs; to Elliot's rise to stardom writing hits for Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston and Steven's starry-eyed admiration for his Hollywood lifestyle; and eventually to their role reversals when Elliot's career hits a few bumps in the road and he needs to rely on Steven for help. Join Laguna Playhouse for an evening filled with humor, colorful personalities, unexpected situations and uplifting musical moments. Streaming takes place through **Sunday, May 16. lagunaplayhouse.com**



JUKEBOX HERO

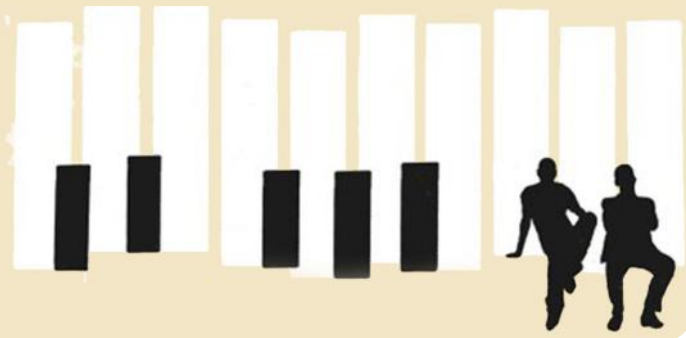
Get ready to twist and shout and shake it all about with San Diego Musical Theatre's (SDMT) *Jukebox Hero*, a benefit concert scheduled to stream through **Sunday, May 30**. *Jukebox Hero* will feature Broadway's favorite jukebox musicals including the iconic music of *Moulin Rouge*, *The Cher Show*, *Mamma Mia* and *Rock of Ages*.

Follow Shirley Johnston's wild and comical journey through the Top 40 hits over the decades as she goes from a small-town girl to stardom in this original jukebox musical revue. The story goes full circle with a star-studded cast featuring: Berto Fernandez, Jennifer Hubilla, Luke Harvey Jacobs, Karyn Overstreet, Neil Dale, Shirley Johnston and Bryan Barbarin.

"*Jukebox Hero* is such an entertaining show it will have the streaming audience jumping to their feet to dance and sing-along," said **Jill Townsend**, SDMT artistic director. "It is comical with a subtle reminder for everyone to 'Don't Stop Believing' in their dreams while providing much needed funds to help SDMT get closer to our dreams of returning to the Horton Grand Theatre very soon!"

"We are proud to report that *Jukebox Hero* was filmed exercising all the CDC's recommended safety protocols," said **Erin Lewis**, SDMT producer. "Additionally, all cast members were fully vaccinated at time of filming thus we were able to safely create a more traditional performance."

"Performing *Jukebox Hero* in front of a live audience was absolutely exhilarating," Johnston said. "To work with these amazing fellow actors and be inspired by the audience was only second best to being back on the stage for a San Diego Musical Theatre's Broadway musical production!" **sdmt.org**



NICHOLAS, ANNA & SERGEI

The world premiere of Hershey Felder as Sergei Rachmaninoff in *Nicholas, Anna & Sergei*, a streaming film written by and starring the virtuoso pianist/performer. The production will also feature soprano and actress Ekaterina Siurina as Natalia Alexandrovna Rachmaninoff and actor and master violinist Igor Polesitsky as Dr. Golitzin. *Nicholas, Anna & Sergei* will stream live on **Sunday, May 16** at 5 p.m. with the recording available on demand through **Sunday, May 23**.

Taking place as a memory play in the house in which Rachmaninoff died in Beverly Hills, *Nicholas, Anna & Sergei* is the story of a very strange and little-known real-life meeting between the famed Russian composer and pianist and Anna Anderson, the woman who claimed to be the Princess Anastasia, the sole surviving member of the Romanov dynasty. *Nicholas, Anna & Sergei* will feature many of Rachmaninoff's most beloved melodies and music.

Originally scheduled as part of San Diego Repertory Theatre's

2020/21 onstage season, San Diego REP and Hershey Felder Presents – Live from Florence will provide patrons who held tickets for the in-person production an exclusive package of bonus content only for San Diego REP audiences. Interested patrons who did not previously have tickets can also purchase the bonus package, including a special cooking show hosted by Hershey as well as two exclusive talkbacks.

Felder's arts broadcasting company, Hershey Felder Presents – Live from Florence, produces high quality streaming arts programming for international audiences, both for the period while theatres remain closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and beyond. Since the start of the pandemic, Felder's live streams have generated more than \$2.6 million in sales. Felder has donated 80% of these proceeds mainly to theatres in the United States, as well as several abroad, arts organizations, schools, artists and publications that have been financially impacted by the worldwide health crisis. **sdrep.org**

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UNITING IN MOVEMENT

Seegerstrom Center and American Ballet Theatre (ABT) have completed a new artistic collaboration during which 18 dancers and the artistic staff of ABT developed and rehearsed three works that culminated in an exhilarating live performance in Seegerstrom Hall and which can be streamed on-demand **Wednesday, May 12 through Wednesday, May 26.**

Uniting in Movement is comprised of works of contemporary choreographers Lauren Lovette and Darrell Grand Moultrie, each with very personal and unique visions for the future of ballet. The program also pays homage to ABT's classical heritage with a virtuosic showcase of ballet technique grand pas classique choreographed by Victor Gsovsky and *Swan Lake Act II* pas de deux with choreography after Lev Ivanov.

In order to perform *Uniting in Movement*, ABT was in residence at Seegerstrom Center beginning March 22, rehearsing this new program that received its world premiere before a live audience on Sunday, April 25 in Seegerstrom Hall, followed by this streamed version. These performances are the first in Seegerstrom Hall since the shutdown of all live theatre in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, just one week after the world premiere of ABT's new production of Alexei Ratmansky's *Of Love and Rage*.

The choreographers, dancers and ABT artistic staff lived and rehearsed in a quarantined "bubble," isolating themselves at the Avenue of the Arts Costa Mesa, venturing out only to rehearse in the center's studios and, ultimately, perform in Seegerstrom Hall. All rehearsal and performance activity adhered to strict medical and safety guidelines, with an initial quarantine and testing period prior to the start of ABT's residency.

Lovette's work, *La Follia Variations*, is set to music of the same name by Francesco Geminiani. With costumes by fashion designer Victor Glemaud, *La Follia Variations* brims with poetry, wit, nuance and power. Moultrie's *Indestructible Light*, set to music by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Neal Hefti and Billy Strayhorn, is an expansion of his earlier work for the company created in an East Coast bubble in fall 2020. *Indestructible Light* is a work for eight dancers and celebrates the resilience of artists despite impossible odds. The pas de deux from *Swan Lake, Act II* has replaced the previously announced *Let Me Sing Forevermore* by Jessica Lang.

"These creations reflect a time of recalibration on how we create and deliver new work, reinvent how to gather together to create, and what it means to use this art form to lift us all, artist and audience alike," said **Kevin McKenzie**, ABT artistic director. "Lauren's use of classical vocabulary for dynamic effect of empowerment and Darrell's facile use of classical technique fused with classic jazz are contrasted with two pas de deux. All of which exemplify the vibrant spirit of American Ballet Theatre."

"As you can imagine, *Uniting in Movement* is a complex project requiring the combined, or uniting, resources and experience of both the Center and ABT, particularly during this period of quarantine," said **Casey Reitz**, Seegerstrom Center president. "The project aligns with the mission of our Center for Dance and Innovation, which was established to support and advance the creative and sometimes even experimental process of developing new works by talented artists. The Center and ABT have a long history of producing extraordinary dance projects, including new productions, world premieres, and two projects that were broadcast on *Great Performances: Dance in America*. We are especially proud of how *Uniting in Movement* so beautifully confirms the resilience and indomitable spirit of the arts and artists." scfta.org



Coronado Playhouse presents the critically acclaimed play by Nick Payne, streaming on-demand from **Wednesday, May 12 through Sunday, May 30.**

Constellations received the UK's Evening Standard Theatre Award for Best Play in 2012. The American premiere of *Constellations* opened on Broadway in January 2015 starring Academy Award nominee Jake Gyllenhaal and Ruth Wilson.

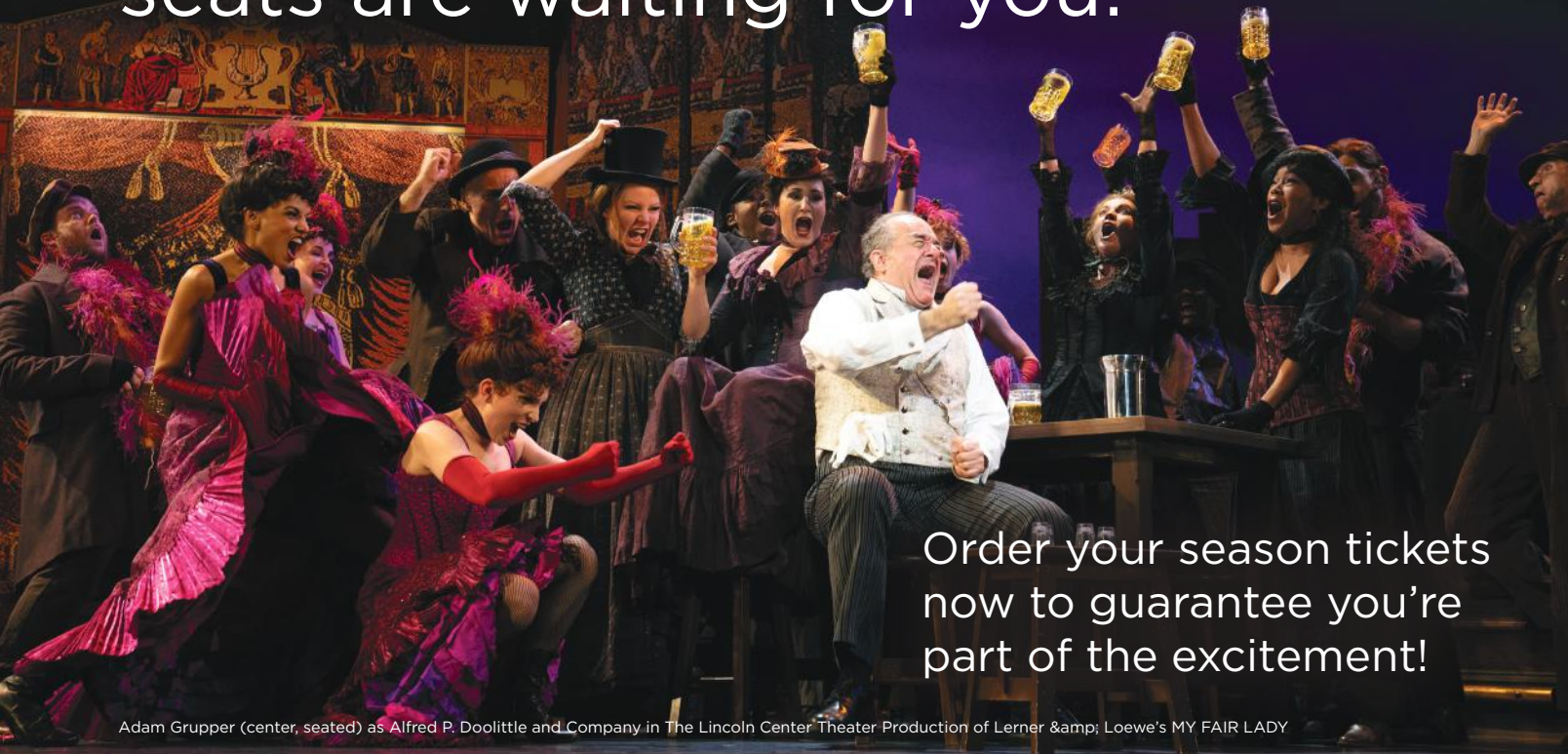
Constellations takes a chance encounter between two drifting souls, Marianne and Roland, and opens a door to the infinite possibilities of their relationship. It's a spellbinding exploration at how the tiniest change in the details of our lives can dramatically alter the lives we live.

Suppose that life exists in a multiverse ... a set of parallel existences that contain infinitely different outcomes. The possibilities in our lives are then endless. Every possible event that could happen, does happen. And if Marianne and Roland meet ... are drawn together in every version of existence ... every possible happy ending and heartbreak that could befall them, will.

Coronado Playhouse has assembled an experienced creative team led by director Samuel Young to tell this poignant story. This marks Young's third directing endeavor at the playhouse, after the 2019 production of *The Winter's Tale* by William Shakespeare and the 2020 production of *Moon Over Buffalo*, which was cancelled just before opening night due to COVID-19.

During the run of *Constellations*, the playhouse is partnering with the San Diego Brain Tumor Foundation. The foundation serves the local community by providing money to patients and their families who are coping with the daily stresses and difficulties of a brain tumor diagnosis. Through donations and fundraising efforts, the foundation can provide a variety of essential services to the local brain tumor community. coronadoplayhouse.org

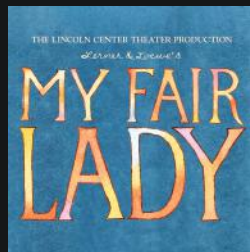
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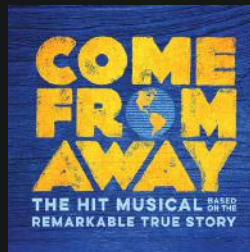
Adam Grupper (center, seated) as Alfred P. Doolittle and Company in The Lincoln Center Theater Production of Lerner & Loewe's MY FAIR LADY

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“If I had a dollar for every time a man, job or friend decided to ‘go in another direction,’ I’d have about \$174. But who’s counting?”



TO QUIT OR NOT TO QUIT?

A few years ago, I wrote a blog article about the act of quitting. Basically, I deconstructed why quitting has such a negative connotation. For example, when we quit smoking or drinking or eating carbs, we're often rewarded, even lauded as heroes in some circles.

Yet, to this day, being called a "quitter" is rarely a compliment. Why? Who determined that quitting was bad and why hasn't the typical prejudice often accompanied with quitting been extinguished?

Throughout my life, I've had the privilege of quitting many things: men, jobs, friends. To be fair, they've also quit me. If I had a dollar for every time a man, job or friend decided to "go in another direction," I'd have about \$174. But who's counting?

Personally, though, the issue with quitting isn't so much about giving up but knowing in your bones that it's the *right* time to give up. To quit and know without a doubt that you won't have regrets about your decision later down the road. Is that possible? I mean, how do we actually know we've made the right decision until we make it? And if it turns out to be the wrong decision, what do we do rectify it?

Maybe part of the problem with quitting is how we consider the action. Maybe in some instances, quitting isn't giving up but simply changing our minds. After all, we grow up (most of us, anyway), we evolve (again, most of us) and we learn that things change. Specifically, *we* change. As a result, what we liked or wanted or hoped for a year ago, a month ago, a week ago, day ago, may not be the same anymore.

When I was younger, I wanted to be an actor. Just one problem: I have the acting skills of Madonna. I tried acting. I starred in a few local commercials, a web series, an independent horror film (equipped with my very own *Baywatch* running scene), but I eventually quit going out on auditions. Why? I changed my mind. I decided acting wasn't right for me... as did many casting directors.

So, would you call me a "quitter" and criticize or judge me for this decision? Or would you slap me on

the ass, buy me a drink and say, "Thank God"? Perhaps you need to see my acting reel for an honest reaction.

Why, then, when we quit a job, a relationship, a friend, a family member or a city that is no longer fulfilling to us, do we beat ourselves up with feelings of guilt and/or regret? Why do we consider quitting these unfulfilling situations to be a bad thing? Why do we allow ourselves to feel like failures?

Life is short. As such, no one wants to waste their precious time. And, since life is so short, shouldn't we try to enjoy it as much as possible? With that being said, how much time, effort and energy should we dedicate to a job, relationship or city that has seemed to run its course? Should we give it adequate time to change, to get better? What is adequate time? Or, at the first sign of trouble or inconvenience, should we move on to something else, something new?

Think about that popular saying: The grass is always greener on the other side. Now, think about its counterpoint: The grass is greener where you water it. But realistically, how much water within ourselves are we supposed to use to make the grass greener, to make a situation better? Don't we eventually risk letting ourselves run dry? And then what? We're just stuck.

Perhaps knowing when to quit and being able to quit, to officially pull that plug clean out and walk away, is a sign of strength, not weakness. I can't help but wonder if that's the ultimate quality we should all strive to achieve: quitting without explanation, but also quitting despite the possibility of guilt or regret.

There's another popular saying, one we should all become familiar with and, when needed, use as a security blanket: Life goes on.

Whether we have feelings of guilt, regret or fear, life goes on, for a little while, anyway. And if we don't make the most of it, who will?

Still, it's difficult to know which is worse: missing an opportunity because we were too scared to make a change or making that change prematurely and missing what we already had.

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



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