

# VENTS



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# THE YAGGAS

Photo Credit : Franco Vogt

HOST OF THE MONTH

# SHELÉA





**We're very happy to have some time today with acclaimed and GRAMMY-nominated singer-songwriter, pianist, producer and actress extraordinaire Sheléa; greetings and salutations Sheléa, and thank you for taking time out of a very busy schedule to talk with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A musical rabbit hole, how is 2025 treating you and yours?**

Thank you so much for asking. 2025 has been both a blessing and challenging. I lost my beloved Uncle Mike in February so that was a difficult time of grieving. But it really brought my family closer together. I'm finally starting to feel like myself and incredibly excited to release new music.

**Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the upcoming PBS special Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony which is set to premiere on PBS stations this May 30! Starting at the top, can you explain to any audiophiles late to the party what this eagerly anticipated special is all about and how it all came together?**

Back in 2022, I debuted a tribute show to Aretha Franklin with a dear friend and conductor, Jules Buckley at The Royal Albert Hall in London. It was such a joy to create it because of what a presence she has been in my musical journey. It was a huge success and we have toured it primarily in Europe. I have a wonderful relationship with PBS, and we decided to make this concert my 10th PBS Special.

**As a card-carrying Aretha Franklin aficionado, what did it mean to you not only professionally, but also personally to contribute such an amazing Valentine to the Queen of Soul in the form of Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony?**

It meant a great deal. I remember fondly listening to her gospel album, "Amazing Grace" as a little girl. I recall being so moved emotionally by what I heard—even at a young age. Her unapologetically soulful approach has been a blueprint for me. Both of us were raised in the church and that influence is evident in all we do. I am also so honored to represent in this show, Aretha The Musician, The Jazz Singer, The Gospel Singer, The Songwriter and Producer.

**Can you give fans of Aretha Franklin and yourself a hint or three as to what some of the music evergreens they can expect and look forward to hearing from during the PBS special Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony?**

You will definitely hear the hits: "Natural Woman" and "Respect." But you will also hear some of her rare arrangements of The American Songbook.

**Speaking of those classic Aretha songs which you performed, was it at all intimidating to cover such classic gems as Chain of Fools and Natural Woman? Was there a weight or a gravity to tackling songs which are uniquely part of our shared cultural DNA?**

I have had the privilege of paying tribute to so many iconic voices of our time. The important thing to remember is there will only be one Aretha. I have to be Sheléa. I studied and did my homework so I was prepared. I channel her while being myself.

**What makes PBS the perfect home for Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony?**

PBS represents excellence. They have always provided their viewers with quality programming, and this will be no different. I grew up watching PBS as a girl and it's so rewarding to provide entertainment for the next generation that's watching.

**Can you talk about the experience of collaborating with Emmy Award-winning Music Director Rickey Minor and The Pacific Symphony on Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony?**

Rickey Minor has been an angel in my career. He was responsible for introducing me to Quincy Jones, performing at The White House the second time, performing at The Kennedy Center and Governor's Awards. So this was such a full circle moment working together. When I asked him to be the musical director, without hesitating, it was a resounding yes! That touched my heart so deeply. I always feel self with him at the helm. That is such a gift.

**Prior to the May 30 debut of Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony, you have a freshly-minted and self-penned tune entitled Never Give Up On Love which is set to light up record charts across the ever-lovin' globe when it drops this April 25; major congratulations! What was the genesis of this gem of a ditty?**

I wrote "Never Give Up On Love" with my dear friend and collaborator, Davy Nathan. I found love during the pandemic, and so I wanted to write something to encourage everyone to never give up on finding that special person. Also never giving up on doing what you love.

**In the wake of the April 25 release of your new single Never Give Up On Love and on the eve of the May 30 premiere of the PBS special Aretha! With Sheléa and The Pacific Symphony, can fans look forward to even more music from you as 2025 marches forward?**

Absolutely. I will be releasing a new single every last Friday of the month. I will release the EP "Spirit," in August.

**What does your touring/performing dance card look like in the coming weeks and months?**

I'm so excited to be returning to the UK with Stevie Wonder as his special guest in July. I will also be doing shows in Italy as well.



# Matthew Finlan





**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed and award-winning actor, writer, and producer Matthew Finlan; greetings and salutations Matthew and thanks for taking time out of a super-busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine!**

**Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

2025 has really kicked off with a bang! I can hardly believe we're already a quarter of the way through the year. It's been full of travel, time with family, and a lot of moments to feel grateful for, so I'm really thankful for how it's unfolding so far.

**Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the wickedly scary and fun new horror film Hell of a Summer! Starting at the top, can you explain to anyone late to the party what the film is about and how your character of Ezra figures into the proceedings?**

Hell of a Summer is a coming-of-age comedy-horror that follows a group of camp counselors on the night before camp officially begins—but the twist is, there's a masked killer on the loose. I play Ezra, who's the outspoken and completely over-the-top theater counselor at Camp Pineway. He either has everything figured out, or he just really loves being the center of attention.

**Did you know as soon as the screenplay for Hell of a Summer from writers/directors and stars Finn Wolfhard and Billy Bryk crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?**

Absolutely! I actually got the audition when I was at the airport, and I was so excited by the script that I ended up filming my audition the next morning in my hotel room. Normally I would've waited until I was back in my apartment, but I didn't want to risk missing out on the chance. I connected with the material right away and just let my inner Ezra loose.

**Speaking of Finn Wolfhard and Billy Bryk, what was it like collaborating with them on the set of Hell of a Summer in their capacity as directors? Are these two creative wun-**

**derkinds what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director(s)'?**

It was honestly such a joy to work with Finn and Billy. Their talent is unbelievable, and on top of that, they're just the kindest people. Watching them switch so effortlessly between acting and directing was really inspiring. Plus, knowing how many years they put into writing and shaping the story made the whole thing feel even more special. What they accomplished is no small feat.

**Coming into Hell of a Summer, were you a confirmed and card-carrying fan of the slasher genre which the movie so lovingly parodies?**

Oh, I've always been a die-hard slasher fan! I grew up watching horror movies—The Strangers basically ruined my childhood (but in a good way!). And of course, I'm obsessed with the Scary Movie franchise. It's not quite the same as a slasher, but that perfect mix of comedy and horror definitely influenced me.

**The cast for Hell of a Summer is exceptional and includes the likes of the aforementioned Finn Wolfhard and Billy Bryk, as well as Adam Pally, Rosebud Baker, Fred Hechinger, Susan Coyne, D'Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai, Abby Quinn and others! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this taut ensemble?**

Getting to work with a cast that strong honestly made every day on set a total pleasure—and it made the job feel a lot easier too. Every day felt like we were actually at our own summer camp, and it turned into one of the best summers of my life. Working (if you can even call it that!) alongside such an incredible group of people was a dream, and I'd go back to Camp Pineway in a heartbeat.

**You're also the executive producer and star of the smash CBC unscripted paranormal comedy series Ghosting with Luke Hutchie and Matthew Finlan, which recently kicked off its sophomore season; congrats again! For the uninitiated out there, can you explain what the series is about?**

Ghosting is an unscripted comedy where Luke Hutchie and I investi-

gate famous hauntings, with our famous friends. We have no clue what we're doing, but we're really good at getting ourselves into trouble. It's real ghosts, real actors, no scripts—and somehow, everything that could go wrong usually does!

**How is this second season of Ghosting like the first? How is it different? And can you talk about the major talent and celebrity-wise who will be popping up in this new season?**

Season two really found its groove, and Luke and I took things nationwide. We traveled everywhere—from the Yukon to Newfoundland and Labrador—to investigate Canada's most notorious hauntings. As we went across the country, we invited some of our iconic friends to join us on what we called our "road trip to hell," and luckily, they said yes! This season we've got Priyanka, Percy Hynes White, Nikki Roumel, Krista Nazaire, Veronika Slowikowska, Joel Oulette, and Jordan Connor joining the fun.

**Can you give readers a hint or three as to what else you have coming up in the future, in terms of acting, writing, and producing?**

While I can't give away any titles just yet, I can say that you'll be seeing my face in a few new shows coming out soon, plus a feature film that should be hitting screens later this year! On the writing and producing side, there are a few projects in the works, but it's a bit too early to share details—boring, I know, but I promise there's more on the way!

**Final – SILLY! – Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, The Player, Barton Fink, Hail Caesar, Ed Wood, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, or Bowfinger?**

I'm kind of embarrassed to admit I haven't seen all of the ones you listed, but from the ones I have seen, I'd have to go with Once Upon a Time in Hollywood. But now you've definitely inspired me to watch the rest.





Skylar Bible



**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor and stuntman, Skyler Bible; greetings and salutations Skyler and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the Q&A celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Actually, it's been such a whirlwind, with the fires in LA, and then I shot a feature film with some friends, which we wrote, acted, and starred in. (Called "We're So Sorry" shameless plug haha coming soon), I've been auditioning more as the industry begins to pick up? I think? It's all chaos, we're just out here making the best of it.

**Major kudos and accolades on your upcoming bravura turn in the eagerly anticipated live action film remake of Lilo and Stitch which is set to make its theatrical premiere this May 23! Starting at the top, can you explain to anyone not in the know what Lilo and Stitch is about and how your character of Agent Foster figures into the proceedings?**

Thank you!! Such a blessing and incredibly grateful to be a part of this film, to anyone not in the know, there's an alien creature that lands in Hawaii, and Cobra Bubbles is sent to investigate the crash with a team...myself being the "go to guy" of that team, banter and chaos ensues as Agent Foster tries to pull Cobra back to reality a bit haha.

**Prior to landing the role of Agent Foster in this new iteration of Lilo and Stitch, had you been familiar with the animated version of the film?**

Yes, I had! I actually thought the animated version was one of the most witty, comedic, and well written Disney movies out there. It just felt different than the normal "Disney", it was refreshing.

**Were you at all dubious about transposing Lilo and Stitch from computer animation to live action? Was there ever a moment where you questioned whether such a feat could be pulled off?**

Oh of course, especially a beloved character like Stitch, I definitely thought about the repercussions of fans not gravitating towards the film, but after seeing the performances on set, the way the scenes were coming together, and then the reactions to the trailer, that was quickly dissipated.

**You work with such a great cast of actors in Lilo and Stitch, including the likes of Zach Galifianakis, Courtney B. Vance, Billy Magnussen, Chris Sanders and Maia Kealoha! What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this stellar ensemble?**

Truly a fantastic cast, the film and comedy nerd in me had to really be kept in check haha. Most of my scenes were with Courtney B. Vance and he is just such an icon and altogether a good man, not to mention hilarious. I just wanted to show up prepared above all else, to hold my own on and off set with those powerhouses. I was honored to act opposite him.

**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like collaborating with insanely talented director Dean Fleischer Camp on Lilo and Stitch? Is Dean what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

He was incredible, the most down to earth guy ever. Full of ideas that he easily conveys to you, but in an actionable sense as well. He would come up with different lines every take and we would discuss for a split second and then go for it, we just got to play and it was the most fun. He rocks, hope to work with him again and again, (Dean, you know how to reach me, let's do another)

**Lilo and Stitch was shot in beautiful Oahu, Hawaii! What was it like filming in such a distinct and unforgettable locale?**

Ugh. The absolute BEST place to do anything. Life. Work. Eat. Surf. Hike. Beach hangouts into the night. Waterfall. Everything. To do what I love in a place like Hawaii...a dream. I love it in Hawaii and will 100% be going back asap. My home away from home.

**Along with the forthcoming release of Lilo and Stitch, you have a couple of projects which are set to be released soon that we're clamoring to check out; kudos and accolades! What can you tell our ever-inquisitive readers about the upcoming See You When I See You and Grizzly Night?**

Thank you!! I was fortunate enough to be cast in a small role in Jay Duplass' new film, "See You When I See You," and Jay is such a dream to work with, along with the rest of that cast, everyone was the most talented and welcoming. Can't wait to work with Jay again and everyone involved (Jay... your move). It's a wonderful story and I am lucky to be a part of it! And then, "Grizzly Night" is coming soon to theaters! A true story taking place in 1967, it was my true honor to play a Native American man, Steve Pierre. He was the guide to a rescue party that ventures out to save a young couple in need after a grizzly bear attack in the heart of Glacier National Park.

**You're a proud Native American and Latin actor who was born and raised in the beautiful Santa Barbara, California area! How do those seemingly disparate roots inform you as both an actor and as a person?**

Very proud, my heritage informs me as a person first and foremost, to be a role model where I can be, and within my work, to be able to relate to an audience, and more specifically, an individual. So to see that happen through various projects makes me so happy, to have any amount of Native Americans come up to me and express their excitement to see themselves represented up on their theater screen is a job well done in my book.

**How did you land upon the pathway of becoming a well-regarded stuntman and dynamic thespian?**

I fell into it for sure, no pun intended. I have always been athletic; I play soccer regularly and other sports as well. I owe everything to

my agents and team who put me in front of the right people I could prove myself to. From that first job, lead to two and four and so on! It's about people, always has been, are you good to work with, respectful, and will those people want to work with you again? It's said work begets work, but I feel like it's "fun and professional work, begets work."

**Word 'round campfire has it that when you're not dazzling audiences with your out-of-this-world acting, you can be found staunchly supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters; thank you! Can you talk about how you became involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters and what it means to you personally?**

Well thank you haha, I got involved with BBBS as soon as I could. When I was growing up I had so many role models, and examples of how to be a good man, a good person, my mom raised me on her own and with that comes her working most days and she obviously holds all the credit. When she wasn't at home, I had so many great examples of how to be an upstanding human and when I found out that BBBS was operating out in LA, I wanted to be that for someone else.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies- Living in Oblivion, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, Hollywood Shuffle, Bowfinger or Barton Fink?**

Does Singing In The Rain count? haha "Make 'em Laugh" is one of my all time favorites, but I do love a Tarantino movie, of course. Once Upon a Time in Hollywood just fuels me to make movies every time I watch it. Bowfinger also, INCREDIBLE, love Steve Martin and Eddie Murphy is stellar in that movie. I just love movies haha, all of them?





# Max Parker





**We're thrilled to have actor and musician Max Parker with us today. Max, welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we jump into your latest projects, how has 2025 been treating you so far?**

Thank you so much, VENTS! 2025 has been treating me well. There's been a lot going on, from several auditions to songwriting camps to preparing for the rollout of Juliet & Romeo, all whilst in university – things are busy, but a good busy. I can't complain!

**Congratulations on your upcoming role in Juliet & Romeo! Can you tell us a bit about the film and how your character, Benvolio, fits into the story?**

Thank you! Juliet & Romeo puts a fresh twist on Shakespeare's classic tale. We still follow the familiar story of Romeo and Juliet, at least that's what audiences will think they're in for – how they meet, fall in love, but the real magic happens in the music and visuals. To say nothing of some pretty wonderful surprises along the way. The original pop songs are captivating, seamlessly blending in with the real-life medieval setting in Verona and neighbouring castles and villages and forests that feels both modern and reimagined. I gotta say, it was pretty awesome to be a part of this special film!

As some might know, Benvolio is the "peacekeeper" in the classic story and somewhat in the film, who always tries to prevent conflict between the Montagues and Capulets. While that remains true in this film, we also begin to see a deeper, more internal struggle within himself. It feels like the weight of the world is on his shoulders, as if he alone must carry the burden of the rising tensions between the two houses. As Romeo's cousin, Benvolio is already deeply involved in everything that is happening around Romeo's narrative, but his character is significant in a critical moment when he is entrusted with delivering an important message to Romeo. The question is, does he deliver the right one? That's for the viewer to decide.

**When Juliet & Romeo first came your way, did you know right away that you wanted to be part of the project? What stood out to you about Timothy Scott Bogart's take on the classic story?**

I was sold as soon as I saw the breakdown. When I realized the film was a musical and that I'd have the chance to showcase my vocal ability in my audition, I felt confident about delivering a strong tape. I took this audition seriously and was lucky to have plenty of time to prepare for both the acting and singing portions. I remember running through my script lines and song lyrics constantly, and it became as familiar as breathing in the lines and lyrics. I knew I had to have the material on the back of my hand if I wanted to put my best foot forward. This felt like a massive opportunity because music has been such a big part of my life – I've been singing since I was 6 years old.

Tim's take on the story is brilliant for so many reasons, including how he writes the script for a story in medieval times and yet with a modern contemporary play on the words used. But for me, it's also the music that makes the film truly special. These songs are pure gold, and they amplify everything tenfold. I remember hearing them for the first time and feeling absolutely exhilarated. They're just so infectious, there's no doubt about it!

**And speaking of Timothy Scott Bogart, what was it like working with him? How did he shape the experience on set?**

Working with Tim is effortless. He's one of the rare directors who creates such a welcoming

environment, making it easy to bring our best to the roles. What's amazing about him is how he pulls parts of us into the characters we play. He sees actors as humans first, and sees how each of us, well at least for me I know, he was able to use how I am as a person in real life and how to reach deeper to translate my character of Benvolio. This was seamless because Tim built so much trust, and I think that really translated on screen for all of us.

I was so emotional when I got picture-wrapped, because honestly, who wouldn't want to keep acting in Italy? Singing, dancing, riding horses, sword fighting and doing it all in real locations, in real castles! The sets were so thoughtfully designed that I truly felt like I was Benvolio, living through these moments. It was pure magic, and I would do anything to go back!

**The film features an incredible ensemble cast, including Jason Isaacs, Rebel Wilson, Dan Fogler, Rupert Graves, Derek Jacobi, and Rupert Everett. What was it like collaborating with such a talented group, and did you have any particularly memorable moments on set?**

Collaborating with these incredible actors was definitely a highlight—but to be honest, the best memories happened off set! I remember being in the makeup trailer when Jason Isaacs casually asked if anyone played tennis. Turns out, he's insanely good. We ended up playing on the nearest clay courts from our hotel, and he absolutely smoked me! I had no idea he was that skilled at tennis! I later found out that he travels on every set with his tennis gear and tennis is truly his game. I competed in tennis as a junior in major competitions and then continued on in high school and competed provincially and then taught tennis...so you would think that I could get some pretty good shots in, haha. But with tennis you can't just stop for a couple of years, it's not like riding a bike. Looks like I have to up my game for next time with Jason!

And still on sports, Rupert Graves invited some of us out for runs, and that became a core memory for me. He's the kind of guy who loves to explore and find new places to check out. Within days, he had discovered this amazing 10KM trail winding around the hills near where we were staying in Salsomaggiore Terme, and I ended up running with him a lot. Out of all the memories I made, that one feels the most nostalgic now—some truly unforgettable scenery, running and chatting about life in the rolling hills in the heart of Northern Italy!

**Juliet & Romeo joins a long list of adaptations of Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet, with iconic versions from filmmakers like Franco Zeffirelli and Baz Luhrmann. In your view, what sets this film apart from previous interpretations?**

The songs truly set this film apart. I know I've said it previously, but there's no exaggeration that they're a huge part of what makes this version so special. And shooting in real Italian locations, as I've mentioned, only elevates the storyline further. Visually, I think we stayed true to the time period, while the music brings a fresh, modern energy. It's the perfect blend of old and new.

**Who are some of the people—whether in the acting world or beyond—who have influenced you personally and professionally?**

There have been quite a few musicians and actors who have inspired me.

In the music world, Coldplay is a band I really look up to. I've always loved their outlook on life and human connection. Other musicians and producers who have influenced me include Ed Sheeran, Benny Blanco, Lenny Kravitz, INXS, Twenty One Pilots, Jon Bellion, and many more.

When it comes to actors, Matt Damon is my #1 inspiration. The way he carved his own path with Good Will Hunting is something I'll always admire. Another performance that really stuck with me is Tom Holland in The Crowded Room. He fully commits to his roles, and his interviews show how down-to-earth he is. I hope I can emulate that essence too – both of these examples of actors inspire me because of how decently kind and intelligent they both are and how they bring these powerful traits into their artistry and craft.

**Many actors eventually explore writing or directing. Is that something you see yourself pursuing in the future?**

Since I'm already a songwriter, I could definitely see myself writing a screenplay someday—but I think I'd really crush a script for theatre because of the musical element! We'll see what happens, but I'm always keeping that option open.

**And finally, a fun one—what's your favorite movie about filmmaking? Living in Oblivion, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, Barton Fink, Ed Wood, or The Player?**

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood!! What a great film—easily one of Tarantino's best, in my opinion. In recent years, I've really come to appreciate his knack for building out longer narratives before the action. Sometimes, staying patient as a viewer makes the payoff even more impactful.





**Dennis Andres**



**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor and filmmaker Dennis Andres; greetings and salutations Dennis, and thank you for taking time out of a busy work dance card to talk with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the proverbial celluloid Q&A pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

And thanks so much for having me! I'd be lying if I said 2025 hasn't been equal parts amazing and stressful. But they're all good problems to have. I hope your year has been good to you!

**Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the upcoming eagerly anticipated feature musical film Juliet & Romeo, which is set to make its North American premiere this May 9, with a UK premiere to follow on June 11! For anyone crashing the party a little late, can you explain what Juliet & Romeo is about and how your character of Lord Paris figures into the proceedings?**

Thank you, I appreciate that! Juliet & Romeo is a reimagining of the classic, told through a bold, musical lens. It's big, theatrical, and a little surreal at times, but still grounded in real emotion.

As for Paris, we wanted to shake it up a bit. This time, he has more weight to him. He's a leader, a soldier, and not just some guy in the way. He's trying to do right by his family and his people, but of course, it's a Shakespearean love story, so things get... complicated.

**Of course, everyone is familiar with William Shakespeare's classic Romeo and Juliet. How does this iteration differ from the original play? And what distinguishes it from the various and sundry cinematic remakes which fans have flocked to over the years?**

The biggest difference between Juliet and Romeo and the other versions will likely be that this one will have a lot of foot tapping and head nodding to the beat of the music. It's got this bold, pop musical heartbeat that sets the tone right from the start.

It still honors the original story, of course, but it does it with big visuals and a fresh-feeling style. It's not afraid to take some risks, and I think that's what makes it stand out. Plus, there's that Paris guy who's a total stud. But hey... I'm not here to start drama.

**You work with such an incredible ensemble of fellow thespians in Juliet & Romeo, including the likes of Derek Jacobi, Rebel Wilson, and Jason Isaacs. What was it like exercising your own acting chops alongside these talented actors?**

They had a tough time keeping up, but after a bit of hand-holding, they were okay. I mean, of course, it was everything you would hope it would be. I'd be lying if I said it's not a bit intimidating improvising or ad-libbing with Rupert Everett or having Rebel stare into your soul during an exchange. It's a pleasure being able to share a scene with these actors. Jason and I are best buddies now. Obviously, don't ask him about this... but it's true, I swear!

Joking aside, I would love the chance to share the screen with any of them again—it was an absolute pleasure!

**Your director for Juliet & Romeo is Timothy Scott Bogart of Spinning Gold fame! What was your collaboration process like with Timothy on this film? Is he what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

Working with Tim was great—there's no two ways about it. We sat down and talked about the film and his vision for quite some time. His passion and attention to detail made the process rad! Being pulled into the fold and having the captain ensure that you understand how important you are to the story is never not going to be awesome, you know?

It helped me identify what I like to see in my director as an actor, which is really nice as I step into the director's chair on my own project soon.

**How did you land upon the pathway of wanting to become an actor? Is there an E! True Hollywood origin story you could share with our ever-inquisitive readers?**

I think "accidentally" is probably the most accurate answer. I mean, I absolutely loved good movies growing up, but I was an athlete for the better part of my youth. I had zero intentions of doing anything in the entertainment world. School was also not my strong suit—I loved learning but loathed school. I guess I was always a bit of a shthead that excelled in sports. After some injuries that took me out of any kind of future in football, I quickly realized I would have to find something else.

After some deep reflection and realizing that becoming a lawyer meant more school (which I hated), I realized I could maybe make a living acting like a goofball... because no one was going to give me money for my devilish charm, you know. The rest is kind of history.

**Can you give readers a hint or three as to what you have coming up after Juliet & Romeo? Looking at your upcoming projects, you look to be quite busy!**

Yeah, well, a project I have coming up right now that I am most excited about is a film that I wrote called The Ferryman's Coin. We are currently tightening all the nuts and bolts and heading into pre-production. I can't say a ton about the project yet, but it will be a sharp, cheeky thriller full of twists and turns. I wrote this film as a way to pay homage to some of my favorite stories and songs while touching on a lot of the inner arguments I have with myself about morality, existentialism, and chaos. It will be lots of fun!

**Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of a 2012 episode of Curious and Unusual Deaths. Any special memories of that freshman production?**

Wow... feels like a lifetime ago now! If I recall correctly, we shot the entire episode in one day, and it was VERY physically demanding. The character called for wrestling as that was what the "unusual death" was all about. I think I wrestled for upwards of four hours and rode on a stationary bike in a sweatsuit for a few more hours. So, for the last shot of the day when my character "shuffles off this mortal coil," I was lying on the ground of the gym to shoot my death scene and fell asleep as they shot it! I mean OUT COLD. I woke up to "THAT'S A WRAP!"

**Aside from an illustrious acting career, you are also a nationally ranked Black Belt martial artist, as well as a stuntman. Inquiring minds want to know how you fit enough hours into the day to carry such an impressive workload? Is there truth in the old adage of 'doing what you love, love what you do'?**

We should chat more often—this is great for my self-esteem! I'll slip you a 50 when we're done here...

I mean, espresso, mostly. Really, though, I've just never been great at sitting still. What did Einstein say... "To keep your balance, you must keep moving." Once you find the stuff you love doing and learning, it just becomes a time management thing. There is definitely truth in that old adage. It's just a matter of finding what you love, I suppose.

**Speaking of having a passion for your work, you have also launched your very own production company called Half-a-Plan; congrats! Can you talk about how Half-a-Plan came about and what sort of projects this production house specializes in?**

Thank you! It's been a LONG time coming.

I think I just got to a point many other people have arrived at as well—I wanted to tell and be a part of certain stories I just wasn't seeing or being cast in—simple as that. And I'm now at a point in my life where I have the words, and Half-a-Plan, to start properly telling these stories.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Hail Caesar, Barton Fink, Swimming with Sharks, The Player, or Living in Oblivion?**

I LOVE this question, I hope you don't mind if I go rogue for a few reasons. 1—I can't pick! 2—I think my choice pays homage to the same genre. 3—It's based on a true story. 4—I am writing another script and can't help but think of this film as I write mine:

"Argo f#\$% yourself."



# Presley Alexander





**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed and incredibly talented actor Presley Alexander; greetings and salutations Presley and thank you for taking time off from a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the proverbial Q&A celluloid mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Thank you so much for having me! 2025 has been a whirlwind in the best way. I've been fortunate to be busy on different projects, and I've been working a lot on my physical health. 25 has always been my lucky number, and so far it's living up to the expectation!

**Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the eagerly-anticipated Amazon/MGM sequel The Accountant 2 which is set to roar into cinemas the world over on April 25! Starting at the top, and for benefit of anyone late to the party, can you explain what The Accountant 2 is about and how your character of Lane figures into the proceedings?**

Thank you! The Accountant 2 picks up a few years after the original, and without spoiling too much, it deepens the bond between Christian and Braxton. As someone with a little brother, their relationship was spot on. My character, Lane, is a student at Harbor Neuroscience, which Christian has been funding to help neurodivergent youths have a better chance than he did. The students at Harbor are his people, and when he needs something hacked into, that's where Lane and the team of autistic hacking geniuses come in.

**Did you know as soon as the screenplay for The Accountant 2 crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of? Were you a fan of the first film?**

I actually was interviewed about my autism before I even got to read the script, and that made a really good impression on me. From the start, they were focused on telling authentic stories. I was definitely a fan of the first movie and Christian's character specifically. He reminds me a lot of myself when I'm not masking – very awkward, introverted, and logical.

**You work with such an amazing cast in The Accountant 2, including the likes of Ben Affleck, Jon Bernthal, Cynthia Addai-Robinson, and J.K. Simmons among others! What was it like flexing your own**

**considerable acting chops alongside this stellar ensemble?**

The cast is absolutely incredible and so kind, and I'm honored to be among them. I learned from my years of doing interviews to never think of the people I work with as "celebrities." They're just people doing their job. But it's also hard not to be a little starstruck when they're right next to you.

**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like working with The Accountant 2 director Gavin O'Connor? Is he what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

Gavin is definitely an "actor's director." He's so wonderfully committed to giving an accurate representation of everything on screen. My first day on set was just him asking me how I would do things naturally, and he built the scene around that. He also hired several experts in things like hacking and combat to make sure he got them right. It was a very collaborative experience, and I loved it.

**How are you similar to your character of Lane in The Accountant 2? How are you different?**

Lane and I share a lot, partially because their character was based pretty strongly on me. We both love bugs, computers, and flipping people off. The biggest difference is that they have Harbor. They understood how their brain worked a lot earlier than I did, and that's allowed them to become the geniuses they are now.

**Hot on the heels of the April 25 release of The Accountant 2, can you give fans a hint or three as to where they can catch you next on the big or small screen? Do you have a pretty full dance card?**

Without breaking any NDAs... yes, there are a couple of projects on the horizon that I'm excited about. I'm filming a horror movie this fall where I play a feral little girl, and I may have a TV appearance coming up soon.

**How did you land upon the pathway of wanting to be an actor? Is there an E! True Hollywood Story secret origin you can share with our ever-inquisitive readers?**

My story is actually really boring! I became an actor by accident. I did YouTube for many years and ended up moving to LA because of that. While I was here, I figured I'd try acting out as a hobby, and then I just never got bored of it. It's a perfect solution to my restlessness, really. I would

constantly change what I wanted to do with my life and would never be happy following just one path. With acting, I can be anyone and try out every identity I want.

**Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of 2015's short film Happy Birthday, Ada! Any special memories of that freshman production?**

Happy Birthday, Ada! was made before I even considered acting! It was an animated short film for Ada Lovelace's birthday. It's fitting you brought it up, because she was the mother of computer programming! Ada has always been one of my biggest inspirations, and I loved every second of working on it. It was recorded in my living room with my dad holding up a blanket behind me to mask the sound.

**You have been a welcome ray of advocacy sunshine for people who typically don't have much of a voice in the entertainment industry; thank you! Can you talk about your own journey as a queer, non-binary, and autistic actor and how your experiences have informed your own advocacy?**

Thank you for that. I think visibility especially important right now, and for me that means showing up in this industry exactly as I am—queer, non-binary, autistic, messy, and proud. Advocacy doesn't always have to be loud; sometimes it's just being in the room and refusing to be edited into something palatable. I want kids like me to know that there's a place for them in this industry without having to mask or dilute who they are. And that I do, in fact, pay taxes, hold a job, and write poems.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood, Hail Caesar, Hollywood Shuffle or The Player?**

American Movie (1999)! It's hard to describe how brilliant it is without watching it. It's a little like watching a train wreck in slow motion, but it also makes me more proud of filmmaking than ever.

**Photography**

Cathryn Farnsworth

**Stylist**

Stylist Nicholas Sauer





Photo Credit : DANNY COONEY

# Andy Dispensa

**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor, writer, and filmmaker Andy Dispensa; greetings and salutations Andy and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid mosh-pit, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Hey there! Thanks for having me Vents! I have to say, my 2025 has been pretty good so far. The world is in a bit of a tumultuous place it seems right now but I'm rocking and a rolling with all of it. Staying inspired and keeping focused on my creative endeavors and goals. I did the keto diet for the first three months of the year for some mental gains and have been hitting the gym like a freak. I feel like I'm in the best physical shape of my life which ain't too shabby. Bring on the mosh!!!

**Major kudos and accolades on your star turn in the Paramount+ series 1923: A Yellowstone Origin Story! Starting at the tip-top, can you explain for any stragglers who might have missed the amazing first season what 1923 is about and how your character of Luca figures into the proceedings going forward in season two?**

Thank you so much! Sure thing. So Taylor Sheridan, the god of television (close to twelve shows either on TV or in production at the moment), created the Yellowstone Universe which follows a fictional family: The Duttons. They own a ranch, the Yellowstone, based on a real ranch in Montana.

The flagship show takes place in present day, but 1923 is a prequel which follows the great ancestors of the Duttons in Yellowstone. It is very meticulously crafted historical fiction. When you watch the show, you learn and feel what it was like for these characters living in the 1920's, dealing with the struggles of the time, new technology, the elements. It's a history lesson, but one with the best acting and writing you'll see anywhere. There are three main storylines. 1. Jacob and Cara Dutton (played by the grandmasters, Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren) fighting to keep their ranch in Montana. 2. Their nephew Spencer Dutton, a lion hunter in Africa (played by the incomparable Brandon Sklenar). And 3. Teonna Rainwater, a Native American girl who must battle brutal nuns in a Native American school (played by the insanely talented Aminah Nieves, we actually went to drama school together, fun fact). Luca arrives in episode one of season two, encountering Spencer on a boat on route from Sicily destined for America. Spencer's attempting to make his way back to help defend his family's ranch, which is under attack. He's just been separated from his wife. Luca's mother has sent him away from Mussolini's rule in the hopes of finding a better life in America. Spencer and Luca are both working the engine of the ship, shoveling coal, but something truly horrific happens which brings them closer together. I won't say much else because I feel you really need to see what happens to appreciate the story, but it's intense.

**Word 'round industry campfire has it that, initially, you auditioned for another role entirely for 1923 before scoring the plum part of Luca! Which role were you originally aiming for and what led the creative folks behind 1923's casting to see you in this altogether different character?**

Yes this is true! I originally auditioned for the role of Sal Maceo, the mafia boss and cousin of Luca in episode two. I was definitely too young looking and small in stature for it. Gilles Marini who they chose for Sal was perfect, and we really do look like cousins. He's this tall, handsomely sophisticated French/Italian dude and a crazy good actor. John, Emily and the entire team at Automatic Sweat (casting agency) know exactly what they're doing. When they pivoted and the Luca audition came into my email box it really hit me hard. I just felt "oh yeah this fits like a glove, this is a role that was meant for me to play." I felt very connected, very quickly. Like I knew the character intimately after picking up the pages for the first time. That doesn't happen very often, for me at least. Usually it takes the hard work to figure it all out. When it's right, it's right. I've had so many people tell me after watching the show, "you look exactly like an immigrant fresh off the boat from Italy. Even your arms look skinny strong, like you've been working in a ship's coal room." Even people at the after party on



premiere night couldn't believe I was American. That's the magic of great casting. They found their guy!

**You work with a master class of thespians in 1923, including the likes of the high legendary Harrison Ford, Helen Mirren, not to mention the amazing ensemble of thespians comprised of Darren Mann, Brandon Sklenar, Julia Schlaepfer, Jennifer Carpenter, Aminah Nieves and Sebastian Roché, among others! What's it been like showing up on set and honing your own craft and exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside these amazing talents?**

The cast has some of the best actors out there on it. It was really an honor to work on this show, with the talent level as such. Walking onto season two of a highly anticipated show isn't exactly easy. You gotta stay really focused on your work and character, but the process was amazing. Most of my scenes were with Brandon Sklenar, who is just a terribly awesome guy. Seriously, it's awful how great he is. Very generous in his work and presence. Steel sharpens steel as they say. It's going to be hard whoever my next scene partner is. They better bring it! Or I'll chew them to bits!!!! No just kidding, but really, if every actor I work with going forward is as committed as those I worked with on 1923, I will be happy as a pig in slop.

**Speaking of collaborations, what has it been like for you to work with such talented directors as Ben Richardson in 1923? Is Ben what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'? And for that matter, what has it been like as an actor to have the gift of Taylor Sheridan's beautiful scripts and words to draw upon?**

Exactly. Ben is indeed an actor's director. The best directors I've worked with find the right balance of letting the actors do their thing, and then sprinkling in some suggestions to elevate the scene. Ben knew exactly what to say to pull a scene in a given direction. There were things I definitely struggled with, and Ben would come in and give the perfect note to bring me where I needed to be. And his cinematography is insane. His shots are gorgeous. When you have a director who knows how to work with actors and is as technically savvy as he is, I mean you see the product. There's a reason episode one just broke the Paramount+ streaming record.

It all starts with the writing. You said it. Truly a gift to work on Taylor's writing. For him to dream up my character... man it makes me emotional even thinking about it. It's a rare type he's written. Some actors go through their entire career without getting to work on a character this good. The epic scope of how he sees this story, connecting these characters through generations and separate series, it's nothing short of genius. My favorite parts of the show are where he peppers in the characters wrestling with new technology, like thinking about having a refrigerator in the house or a phone for the first time. It really makes you think. There are so many things we take for granted. He's a special writer to be able to create characters the way he does and illuminate the mind like that. It makes you appreciate the world we live in so much more.

**Did you do any off the books research in preparation for 1923 as far as immersing yourself in that era? In other words, how Method did you go in your role as Luca?**

I did a ton of research on the period. I bought a book called Mussolini's Italy which really helped me immerse myself in the time. I do speak Italian fluently, but I brushed up on lessons with my dad's Italian teacher Annasole Podesta. She's a brilliant teacher and actor. She coached me on the accent too. I try to make things as real as possible when I work on a role, especially for something as layered as this. I did only have two weeks to prepare from audition to filming though so I really had to block everything else out and go as deep as possible in the short amount of time. I watched Italian movies, listened to Italian music, and walked around the city speaking in my accent to really lock it in. I don't know if that's the method or not, but yeah sure, I tried to be as authentic as possible approaching Luca. Once you do that work, then finally get into the costume, it all comes alive.

**Along with being a gifted actor, you're also a respected writer and director, having written and helmed no less than three short films: Feeling at Home, The Funny Thing and BQE Resolutions. Can fans look forward to even more directing and writing from you in the future, perhaps eventually in a feature film?**

Yes indeedy! I have a few projects on the docket, in this order. I have my second full length play I'm attempting to produce. Tweet Tweet is a psychological comedy about 'what we can control and what we don't know we can't.' It's one of the best things I've written and very current. I'm close to raising all the funding for it and I plan to put it on at the gorgeous Hudson Theatre on Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles. I will be playing one of the lead roles in that aside from producing and directing. I also have a short film I've written called The Rosewood Interview. It's a drama about this down-on-his-luck 30 year old who gets a chance to interview at a tech company helmed by an old highschool friend. The tagline is: What will get in the way of your future?

As for feature film! Jazz n' Mo is the first feature length screenplay I've written with an independent budget in mind. From a story and acting perspective it's the project I'm most excited about at the moment. It's a dark comedy about two dating con artists who are trying to pull one last job to retire. It's also about two people who have been scraping by most their lives, what that does to a person and how your job becomes you whether you identify with it or not. It's set in Jacksonville, Florida and I'm going to be reaching out to investors there soon to see if I can utilize some local incentives to make it happen. I'd rather not direct it because I really want to focus on playing the titular role, but I'm hoping to attach a director who can make it fly.

**How did you wind up on the pathway to being such an accomplished actor? Is there an E! True Hollywood Story origin which you could share with readers?**

Oh boy. It's been a journey, let me attempt to follow the breadcrumbs backwards here. I was bitten by the acting bug after taking an

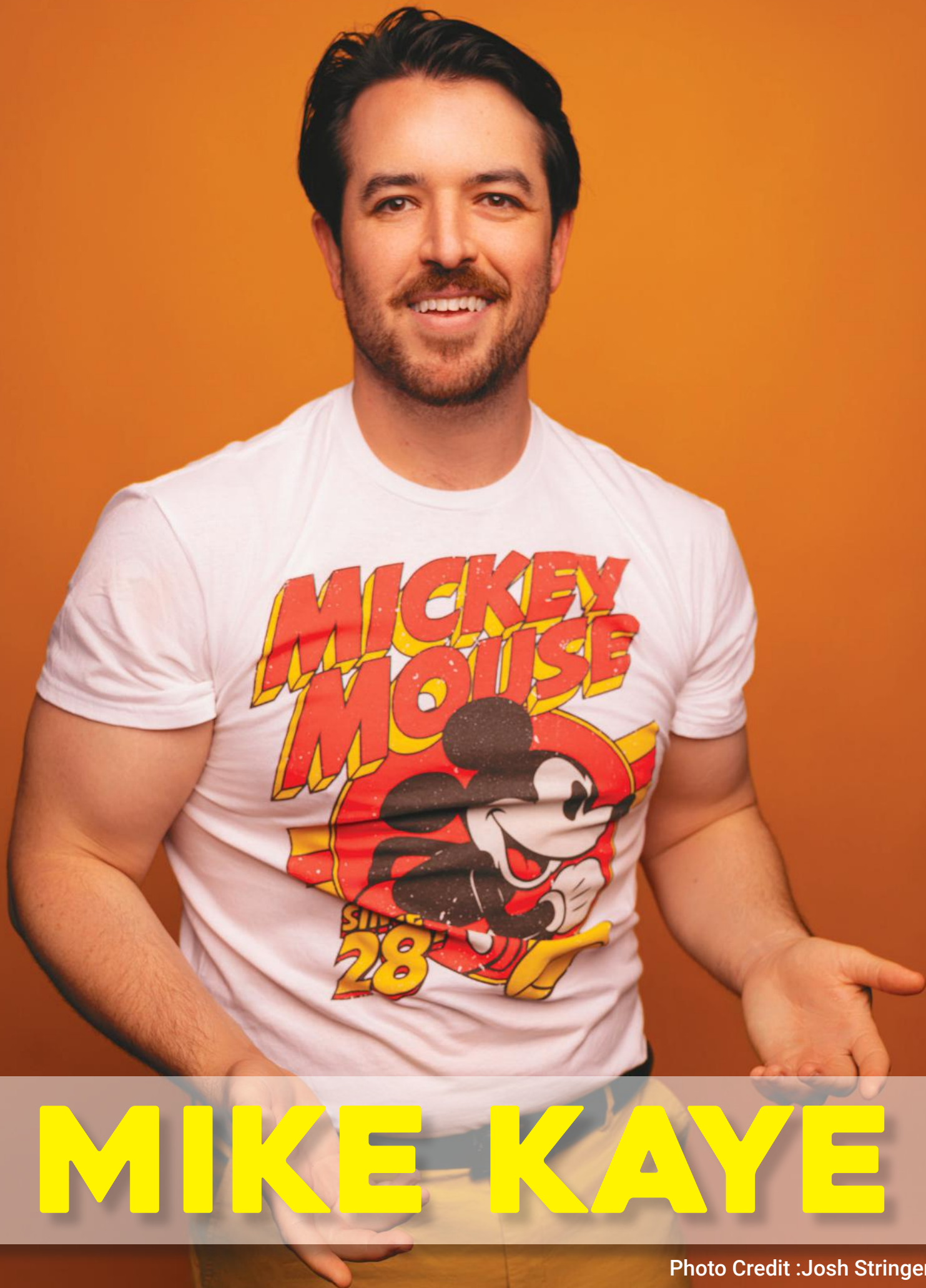
acting-for-non-majors class at university. Then I went to drama school for three years. I worked intensely in theater for four more years after that. Film and TV auditions in New Orleans and LA for 5 years after that. I have always just tried to act as much as possible to get better and better. I was very nervous when I started out. I still have nerves but I understand them better now. The business side is a whole other beast. Luckily I've had agents and managers along the way (Garry Purdy, Jordan Holtzer, Brenda Netzberger) who saw my talent and wanted to help push my career along. I'm a mad dog when it comes to opportunity and the craft. I just want to keep doing it, to see if I can do it well, and tackle challenges. Phillip Seymour Hoffman said, "When I'm acting, all my problems go away." I understand that completely. When you're in a scene, there's a freedom that comes over you. All the BS gets filtered out if you're working properly. So as to E! true Hollywood origin story, I wish I could say "Steven Spielberg spotted me in the mall and now I'm a star in his next movie about humanity's fight against evil AI overlords!" (Mr. Spielberg if you're reading this, I am open to discussion on any idea resembling that), but no. It's been a series of small grinding steps and successes along the way. I've always allowed my passion for creativity to lead me and I hope it continues to burn bright. I'm still working towards several goals that aren't accomplished yet but I feel I'm on my way.

**Can you give readers a hint or three as to what you have coming up in the future as far as acting goes?**

Starting March 27th, Part 1 of The Chosen Season 5 will be in theaters for a special engagement. I play Dion on the show and will be in episode two this season. It's another really well made program. You can check it in IMAX if you like! Aside from that, I'm just auditioning when they come in. The future is wide open, you never know what is coming down the pike. There is an independent film that I'm slated to play the lead in which is supposed to film over the summer. They're still raising money at the moment so nothing is set in stone. It's a really great script by a very talented LA based screenwriter from Iowa named Mokotsi Rukundo. It's about a true conflict between brewers and prohibitionists in the late 1800's in Iowa City. It's like the Departed meets Gangs of New York... with beer!

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, Ed Wood, Barton Fink, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood or Hollywood Shuffle**

Love this question. Alright I hope you don't mind if I add my own choice because I've only seen Once Upon A Time in Hollywood and Barton Fink a very long time ago. 8 1/2 by Federico Fellini is by far my favorite movie about the making of movies. Marcello Mastroianni is effortless cool. I think it encapsulates the madness that goes into filmmaking and how life often bleeds into art and vice versa. One of my top 5 favorites of all time! I would love to live in a Fellini film. They capture my heart and soul!



# MIKE KAYE

Photo Credit :Josh Stringer



**We're excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor Mike Kaye; greetings and salutations Mike and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 treating you and yours so far?**

Thanks! 2025 is doing alright. It's been a long year since we started filming the show, I've been super excited for people to see it.

**Major congratulations on your upcoming bravura turn in the eagerly-anticipated new Amazon Prime and Blumhouse Televisions drama-thriller series THE BONDSMAN which is set to premiere this April 3! Starting at the top, can you explain to anyone not in the know what the series is about and how your character of Tater figures into the proceedings?**

It's about the complications that come with being an undead bounty hunter for the devil. Turns out it doesn't stop with the job, it bleeds over (sometimes literally) into the family drama and the rest of the town these demons pop up in. Tater is a guy just going about his business trying to make a living. I think he's a little chaotic neutral. He's definitely got some theories about what's going on, but it's tough for people to take him seriously because he's a bit of a lackey.

**Did you know as soon as the first THE BONDSMAN script from creator Grainger David crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?**

So I only got a couple of scenes to audition from, but they were a blast. I've seen so many parts of scripts that you can tell when something is good. It feels like you read it twice and you're already imagining the world they've created. I also think I got to showcase a good amount of the comedic potential of the role in my audition.

**What has it been like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside the likes of Kevin Bacon, Damon Herrimana and Jennifer Nettles while working on THE BONDSMAN?**

Fortunately I was invited to the table read of the first episode, and got to meet them beforehand at a little lunch afterwards. Everyone is so down to earth and kind - I can't imagine how I would have felt stepping blindly onto set without that happening. I spent the first day of filming just me and Kev - he was really collaborative and generous. Damon - the guy is so talented and funny. We just had a lot of laughs together and that friendship off set really made things so seamless when the cameras were rolling. Jennifer I only worked with for a few days - but my goodness, watching her sing just feet away? Absurd. She's really sweet.

Beth and Jolene are also just the bee's knees. Made me feel at home from that first table read day. Couldn't thank them more.

**Speaking of collaborations, what has it been like working with such amazing directors as Sanaa Hamri, Thor Freudenthal, and Lauren Wolkstein on THE BONDSMAN? Are they what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

Sanaa has so many great stories from her career, it was so fun to listen to her. I think when you're the person across from KB, he's getting most of the focus and direction - you just have to adapt. We worked out a lot of particulars and I think we got some super cool stuff done.

Thor is a madman. I only worked with him for a day but I love the way he's so good at building suspense and really dialing in pacing as a part of that. Definitely one of my favorite days on set.

Unfortunately didn't work with Lauren! But Kat was great - if I had a suggestion, she'd say, "Great, let's try both". Tough to ask for anything more than that.

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates THE BONDSMAN from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 television scene?**

I think there's a couple of great dark comedies that have been around the last few years. I love Fallout, Barry, Mr. Inbetween, etc. I think what Bondsman offers is a little more slice of Americana, a little bit procedural, a GOOD bit gory, and it's just fun.

**Who have been some of your big inspirations, both in and out of the world of acting?**

My parents are a big inspiration of mine and showed me Monty Python (pops is a lovely cynical Brit). I loved it. My mom and her dad do a great job of walking that love/hard ass line that New Yorkers have. I think a mix of those personalities got passed down to me pretty good.

Watching Jim Carrey growing up in Ace Ventura then watching Eternal Sunshine. Mark Duplass doing The League and Togetherness. Aubrey Plaza in Safety Not Guaranteed and Parks and Rec. I'm always in awe of people. I watched people on The Bondsman from video village and I'd be like "whoa, did you see that, that was so good!".

**Your first credited work as an actor on screen came in the form of the 2017 short film The Fear in You. Any special memories of that freshman production?**

I think I played a guy in a full red mask doing a bunch of lurking around and being scary. It's before I really had dialed in anything, but you have to take every opportunity when you're starting.

**When you're not acting, what do you enjoy doing for fun?**

Well, I'm a bit of a gamer - PC and TCG. Goofy but fairly athletic rec sports - pickleball, ultimate frisbee, ping pong. Writing some things. Walking the beltline. Talking to people. Making good cocktails, eating good food. The simple stuff.

**Final - SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies - The Big Picture (starring your new acting partner, Kevin Bacon!), Living in Oblivion, The Player or Barton Fink?**

Is it okay if I divert slightly and say my favorite "inside baseball" show is Extras? Big Gervais fan here. But I'll have to talk to Kev about The Big Picture next time I see him.



**We're very excited to be speaking today with acclaimed production designer Liz Bischof; greetings and salutations Liz and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive down the Q&A celluloid rabbit hole, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Thanks for the question, we are doing well. Glad that spring is around the corner!

**Major kudos and accolades on your beautiful work in the rightly lauded feature film A Nice Indian Boy which is currently wowing audiences and critics in theatres around the world! Starting at the top, and for anyone not in the know, can you explain what A Nice Indian Boy is about?**

A Nice Indian Boy is a RomCom where Naveen (a gay Indian doctor) meets Jay (a white photographer) and brings him home to meet his Indian family. It is a movie about love, family expectations and the acceptance.

**What attracted you as both a production designer and as a cinephile to director Roshan Sethi's take on Madhuri Shekar's famed play A Nice Indian Boy? What was it about this material which specifically spoke to you?**

I loved the script. I teared up while reading it. I found the parents very relatable; they remind me of my own parents. I also loved the 80's and 90's Romcoms where family had their own story line. Stories like Moonstruck and My Big Fat Greek Wedding where the family plays a role in the couple's story. Feels very second-generation immigrant. Something that I am also.

**What challenges did the limited budget of A Nice Indian Boy present to you as a production designer?**

It was very challenging to create 2 Indian weddings on this budget. Indian weddings run tens of thousands of dollars which I did not have at all. Also finding an actual wedding venue during spring in Vancouver that we could shoot for a week and dress over 2 weekends. Almost every venue was booked up for real weddings. In the end we rented 2 tents and had the weddings there. It was challenging to have tent weddings for lots of reasons. I would have loved to have a much bigger venue to design but we also did not have the money for enough extras so I had to try to make it look extravagant and large but also full with people.

**What was it like collaborating with director Roshan Sethi on A Nice Indian Boy? Did he have some very definitive thoughts on how he wanted the film to look?**

I love working with Roshan, this is our 2nd project together. He and I are always on the same wavelength when it comes to design. I feel I have a lot of creative freedom working with him and he tells me some of

# LIZ BISCHOF



his initial thoughts and I try to find the best way to creatively execute them.

**How much research did you put into creating not one, but two Indian weddings for A Nice Indian Boy?**

I looked at a lot of mandap designs but wanted ours to reflect the design of the story. I created a frame symbolic of the movie frame with a backdrop of mustard flowers like in Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ) I created a raked stage with the mustard flowers spilling out of the frame as if the film was spilling out into real life.

**What sort of steps did you take to ensure that your designs on A Nice Indian Boy were both functional and visually appealing?**

I worked with an amazing decorator who really understood the memo that 'more is always more'. I feel it is always better to start with layers upon layers and peel back than to dress the set with too little. The characters are developed by their surroundings, it provides their back story.

**What can you tell our ever-inquisitive readers about another film which showcases your unerring production design, the upcoming Getaway?**

It is a black comedy thriller starring Jason Biggs, Meaghan Rath and Anna Konkle. It is Jason Biggs directorial debut. I can't really say much yet as it isn't released, but there is blood and lots of taxidermy!

**How did you land upon the pathway of becoming a highly respected production designer? And**

**who were some of the people both in and out of that world who pushed your own creative needle forward?**

I think there are quite a few! I had a mentor named Fina MacDonell a props builder in Toronto when I was in my teens who pushed me to study design in Montreal at National Theatre School. She was also the main reason I went to Europe working in England and the Netherlands. I learned a lot about problem solving from her. When I joined the guild, I worked as an art director for many fabulous designers who taught me a lot. I always feel that you learn something every show it could be creative, political, logistics. As long as I keep learning I will keep doing this job.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, The Player, Barton Fink, The Big Picture or Hollywood Shuffle?**

One of the most impactful films I saw was the Belgian film Man Bites Dog (C'est Arrivé Près de Chez Vous) which was a black comedy and one of the first mock documentaries made. It is about a film crew following a serial murderer. Eventually the crew become involved with his crimes. It was impactful because it was shot in documentary style which creates a kind of realism in its interviews which was increasingly uncomfortable to watch as the story went on and the crew became more and more involved. It made me question the line between truth and fiction and how the format can affect that. I knew it was fiction but somehow the format made me question it. Great filmmaking!



# THE HAPTICS



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

Thanks for having us! I (Jin, singer) am doing quite well. Really enjoying the transition to spring and warmer weather. It's a welcome improvement from the grey, drizzly winter we'd been having.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

We recently released our single, Masquerade. It's sort of a story song: the lyrics portray a costumed ball where everyone sheds their skins and inhibitions and joins together in an ecstatic place where everyone is wearing disguises. On a deeper level, it's about embracing anonymity in a crowd and expressing yourself without the fear of discovery.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

It's always fun with my boys. Cam usually brings in the melodies and tentative song structure on his own – he does a lot of prep outside of practice – and I wrote the vocal lyrics and melody to fit, bringing in my own idea of what the song is about. We recorded it in our studio with the help of our bass player and producer, Mike. We're really lucky to have these guys who are so talented.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

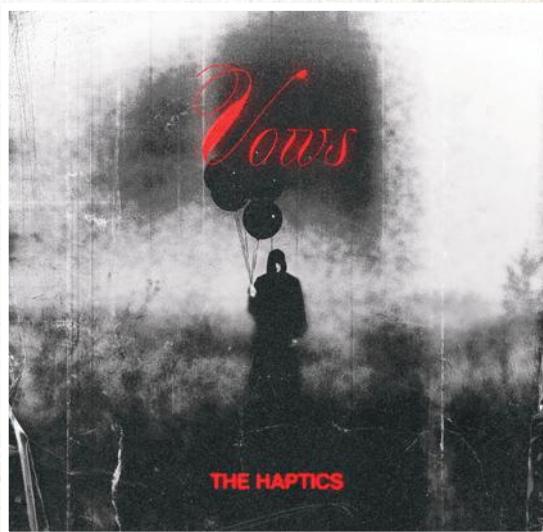
We jammed the melody out for a while and I had this vision of strangers moving in unison at a costumed ball lit with dimly flickering candles. I've always liked songs and lyrics that tell a story and thought it was a great opportunity to portray something sort of exotic.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Still planning the summer, fall, and winter plans. It's been super fun to get on the road together so yeah, I'd welcome that!

**What else is happening next in your world?**

We've got an album coming out in June and are doing an album release show at The Astoria in Vancouver. I'm really excited about the songs on this album and can't wait for everyone to hear it. We run a lot of updates on our Instagram where we're @the.haptics. Stay tuned!





# Jeff Gladstone





**We're very excited to be speaking today with acclaimed actor Jeff Gladstone; greetings and salutations Jeff and thank you for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the proverbial celluloid pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Thank you! 2025 is off to a good start thanks so much.

**Major kudos and accolades on your bravura turn in the freshly-minted new horror thriller Kryptic which is playing to both packed select theaters as well as the omnipresent VOD! Starting at the top, can you explain to our ever-inquisitive reading audience what Kryptic is about and how your character of Morgan figures into the proceedings?**

I see Kryptic as a psychological horror, and it really lives up to its name, in that it probably leaves you with more questions than answers. Kay Hall is a woman who, after a strange encounter on Krypto Peak, loses her memory and identity. Before long, she's on the trail of a monster hunter who went missing, Barb Valentine. The journey takes her all the way to Barb's former home and husband, Morgan. Thus begins the third act leading up to the climax of the film.

**Did you know as soon as the Kryptic screenplay from writer Paul Bromley crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?**

Absolutely. Working in film and television, it's not very often you get a script that's so unusual, ambiguous and haunting. I was pulled in immediately, just with some of the poetry in the audition scenes. Once I looked up Kourtney Roy's photography and previous short films, I could really see the vision that was at play.

**You work with such a talented ensemble in Kryptic, including the likes of Chloe Pirrie, Jason Deline, and Ali Rusu-Tahir, among others. What was it like exercising your own considerable acting chops alongside this amazing lot of thespians?**

Because Morgan makes up the third act, I only really worked with Chloe. I had seen her work in Under the Banner of Heaven and the Queens Gambit, so I was very excited to work with her. And naturally a bit nervous! She's an incredibly talented and focused actor, and we actually had a lot of fun just diving into the weirdness of it all. Trust is paramount when working with material like this, which we established early on, thanks to the support of Kourtney, the producer team, and a very talented Intimacy Coordinator. I got to meet the rest of the cast at the wrap party, and of course seeing the film, they all do such wonderful work. Ali is incredible as Sasha, it's one of my favourite scenes. I know Patti Allen who plays Sally Antoine from theatre in Vancouver, I just love her performance.

**Speaking of collaborations, what was it like collaborating alongside Kryptic director Kourtney Roy? Is Kourtney what some actors might refer to as 'an actor's director'?**

Kourtney was so collaborative, and fun to work with. She gave us lots of room to explore, but also knew what she wanted and could be ex-



tremely detailed when need be. I felt very safe to take big risks, and that's important to me as an actor. I can't wait to see what Kourtney does next!

**Along with the May 9 release of Kryptic, you have two other projects waiting in the wings: Love and Money and The Bearded Girl; congrats! Can you give readers a hint or three as to what they can expect and look forward to with these two upcoming feature films?**

Love and Money was a feature film directed by David Ray, and completely improvised from start to end. I play a character named Mouse, and the fun part was knowing that my scene partner Andrew had no idea who I was or what would happen in the scene. So as an improviser and actor, it was great fun! I saw a cut of the film, and I think people will really enjoy it. In The Bearded Girl by Jody Wilson I got to play scenes with Jessica Pare, of whom I'm a huge fan. I play Dick, definitely a villain in the piece. There are some fun scenes we shot with my sidekicks that used a lot of improv. It will premiere at Fantasia Film Festival in Montreal this summer.

**Your first credited onscreen work came in the form of the 2001 TV movie Anatomy of a Hate Crime. Any special memories of that freshman production?**

Haha that was one scene, but the first time I ever did ADR which is when you overdub dialogue on a scene. I had no idea what I was doing, and it took me 30-some takes for the one line.

But actually my first film gig was a show called Almost America, a Canadian-Italian co-produc-

tion. To book the role, I told them I could ride a motorcycle, which was a total lie. I luckily had a family friend who taught me over the summer to prep for the scene. In the end they did have a stunt man for me, who almost spun out on the bike. That maybe saved my life!

**How did you land upon the pathway of being such an accomplished actor? Is there an E! True Hollywood Story you could share with our ever-rascally readers?**

Well I have to shout out some amazing teachers I've had along the way. Keith Johnstone was my improv mentor, and I learned so much from him that has helped me build my career, and gave me confidence and freedom to "try the opposite". There's no easy path to becoming an actor, especially in Canada, so I've performed in improv, children's theatre, Shakespeare, short films, anyone that would take me! My advice to young actors is to just keep working, take everything especially at the beginning, and don't be afraid to fail because that's where you learn the most!

**You're also a respected teacher of improvisation, and you've served as Artistic Director of the International Theatresports Institute and is Co-Founder of Tightrope Impro Theatre. Is improvisation as an actor something which should come naturally, or can it be taught?**

It can definitely be taught! For sure some people have a gift for it, and pretty much all children are natural improvisers. But what holds most people back in improv, is judging and editing themselves. They think they're "not creative" but they're just saying no to most of the ideas that pop into their head. When you learn that imagination can be as effortless as perception, you realize everyone is creative.

**You've also worn a producer and a composer's fedora in your long and distinguished career. Is this something you enjoyed, and will you be doing more of this in the future?**

Yes I'm hoping to get more into producing. I'm very passionate to tell Canadian stories, and to create more content that can be a reprieve from all the superhero movies out there. I've taken a bit of a break from music as I focus on my film acting projects, but I'd love to take on a project that brings these skills together again.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies- Living in Oblivion, The Player, Hollywood Shuffle, Barton Fink, or Ed Wood?**

Oh I love this question. I absolutely love Ed Wood, and watched all his films after seeing the Tim Burton biopic. I also just recently watched Inland Empire and was blown away. What can I say, I love the weird!

*Photo Credit : Kirstine Cofsky*

# Host of the Month

# THE YAGAS



Photo Credit : Franco Vogt

**We're super-excited to have some time today with alt rock band The Yagas; greetings and salutations everybody and thank you for taking the time out of a very busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the proverbial Q&A mosh-pit, could you introduce our ever-inquisitive readers to the lineup of The Yagas?**

Thank you for your time. We appreciate you and your interest in talking to us. There's always time to talk music, life can wait!

We are...

Vera Farmiga – Vocals, synths

Renn Hawkey – Synths, sound design, producer

Jason Bowman – Drums

Mark Visconti – Guitar

Mike Davis – Bass

**What's the VH1 -Behind the Music secret origin story on how The Yagas came into being?**

(Renn) Your VH-1 reference brings me comfort in knowing that I'm talking to a peer! It all started in a dusty unpaved parking lot at a children's music school in Woodstock NY called The Rock Academy. We all have children in the program, so

ritualistically we would congregate outside while our children were inside this sacred music clubhouse, rehearsing, learning the songs of the legends, forging friendships, writing on walls, and chasing each other around with drum sticks and empty pringles containers. Little did we know they had an adult program, which someone as a prank signed me up for. I think I know which brat it was! Vera and I decided to give it a chance. Mark, our fellow parking lot brother in arms, decided to follow suit. Jason, our drummer, owns The Rock Academy with his wife Acacia Ludwig. Jason participates in and directs the program. I guess you could call him our teacher? Let's refer to him as Mr. Bowman from now on.

Through natural selection we gravitated towards one another. Mike later joined The Rock Academy and the band was complete. Once we all decided to write original material together, the songs came pretty quickly, especially for weekend warriors. Within 6 months or so, we had 13 songs.

To be noted, we are a DIY project. We have no label, no money, no infrastructure. We use the tools we have available to us, and in some cases, "the best tool for the job is

the one closest to you." So, I took on the role of producing and we recorded at our friend's studio, Dreamland Studios in Woodstock. Originally, we intended to record 6 songs in two days. We ended up recording 13, which raised the stakes for us. What was supposed to be a 6 song EP that we lowkey release to friends and family became a full-fledged album that would change the next year of our lives.

**Major kudos and accolades on the release of the debut album from The Yagas, Midnight Minuet, which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving globe when it premieres this April 25! Starting at the tip-top, can you talk about all that went into inspiring one of the very best LPs of 2025?**

(Renn) First of all, thank you for the ego boost! As I mentioned, there was no plan. This wasn't even supposed to happen, but it's completely found its way to the forefront of all our lives. I think it was just the perfect timing for us to come together. We are all at this point in our lives, when you realize you still have a lot to offer, but the difference now is we are making it for us. The beauty of getting older is letting go of what others think. You get to be truly authentic to yourself. So, to answer your question... "what went into inspiring it"? — Everything! We threw an accumulation of over 250 yrs of life experience into this bubbling cauldron and this is what we got...MIDNIGHT MINUET!

**Vera, your better-half and keyboardist bar none Renn Hawkey did the producing honors on Midnight Minuet! What was it like collaborating with Renn in that specific regard while fashioning and shaping the debut album for The Yagas?**

Yeaaaah... he is my much, much better half. My half looks so strong only 'cause Renn's holding me up, wiping tears and whispering sweet nothings into my ear. Renn is the Shaman-wizard behind The Yagas curtain. There was no one else for the job. Only Renn could produce these Yaga sonic ointments. Nobody else could have mustered the brawn, patience, and monster sense of humor that it took, given our batshit crazy schedules,



idiosyncrasies, and budget. There's the music production - Renn's the magic fingers behind our Protocols, but he's also the guy making the calls, booking the crew, wiping the trailer floors, carrying the couches, ordering the meals, unclogging the porta potty toilets. He's the everything. There is no Yagas, without Renn. You gotta know, Renn and I collaborate on everything. We grow humans together, we grow our own food, we build commercial real estate...we do a lot. All that we do would break most couples in two. But not my Loverboy. He's my hero, he's my BFF. So damn cute, after all these years. The guy just takes my breath away. He feels music deeply. He knows when something tingles. And he knows how to bottle it into a Yaga tincture.

**Speaking of collaborations, Grammy nominee Brian Virtue did the mixing on the eagerly anticipated debut LP, *Midnight Minuet*. What was it like having someone of Brian's card-carrying stature onboard for this freshman album?**

(Renn) I have actually been working with Brian Virtue for several decades now. Brian engineered and mixed the last Deadsy record *Phantasmagore*, which was my previous band of 25 years. When I decided to produce this record, I knew Brian would be my right-hand guy. I leaned on him quite a bit during production. I simply couldn't have done this without his guidance. He also has great taste in music and, beyond having a shorthand with him, he understands my sonic references. He's also a synth nerd like me so that helps. He was a Godsend to this project.

**We're big admirers of the tune "The Crying Room," which was the debut single release from The Yagas and which stands proudly front-and-center on *Midnight Minuet*! What was the genesis of this LP-opening stunner?**

(Jason) We were out on tour with the Rock Academy kids and playing in an abandoned Catholic church somewhere in Vermont. Inside the church was a walled-off partition with the words "crying room" above the door. Acacia called Vera and said, "You won't believe what I'm looking at right now." Then she wrote some lyrics on the bus. Mark and Renn had been cooking an odd musical idea where none of the parts repeated. Normally, a song goes verse, chorus, verse, chorus, etc. but this one just morphs into new plateaus. After a bit of trial and error, "The Crying Room" was born.

**Vera, you directed the companion music video for "She's Walking Down," yet another gem of a ditty which audiophiles can listen to as both a single and as a part of the whole album experience of *Midnight Minuet*. What was that experience like for you?**

Making videos for Yagas songs is my favorite sport in this whole adventure. I kinda had to direct the "She's Walking Down" video. The concept for the song came from the spooky attic of my subconscious where everything is stowed away in big Tupperware bins littered with flying squirrel shit and nothing is labelled, hehe.

The song is about a nightmare I had about my kid being abducted - which you know, is every parent's least favorite REM cycle. So, in positive, restless Vera fashion, I said let's make art out of it!

The experience was cathartic and hypothermic. We found this warehouse in Milton, NY that felt like a meat locker. We filmed on what felt like the coldest day of our lives. Renn had three 150,000 BTU propane tanks firing, yet everybody's thoughts froze mid-sentence. Everybody's headbangs froze mid-bang. At one point I gave a note to Aoife Bronston, who plays the young abducted girl who stumbles upon The Yagas in the warehouse. I tried to say, "more anguish!" It came out "march penguin!" Nobody noticed, the crew's ears were frozen deaf. At another point, we brought out some cockroaches and doobie roaches and had them crawl all over my face when I had the white eyes. The white eyes represented "clairvoyance." my pupils literally elsewhere watching the girl escape her trauma. The bugs represented the aggressor. Anyway, they enjoyed my body heat so much, they didn't move. My cheeks were Ibiza to them. They just parked themselves in the lounge chair crevice of my eyebags and had themselves a pina colada. They never made the cut.

In a weird way, that deep freeze helped, the sense of suffering and being out of your body matched the emotional disorientation and frustrating rage of the song. What a solid, heroic, invincible crew. Led by our superhero cinematographer, Jack Shanahan. Our videos are nothing without Jack...

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates The Yagas debut album *Midnight Minuet* from the distinguished competition on the 2025 music scene?**

(Renn) There's not a lot of room for humility in this question. I hate to think of music as being competitive, but it is as competitive as the NFL these days. So, I'll be bold in saying that The Yagas are stepping into new territory, perhaps we are at the dawn of a new genre? ALT, INDUSTRIAL, THRASH, GOTH, SYNTH, CARPATHIAN PSYCHEDELIC METAL!

**In the wake of the April 25 release of *Midnight Minuet*, can fans look forward to catching The Yagas on the touring/performing circuit?**

(Renn) Yes, but it will be a slow ramp up with isolated shows smattered around the globe.

**At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-listen to the debut album from The Yagas, *Midnight Minuet*?**

(Renn) My hope is that, like the good old days, someone can just put the album on and take it in its entirety. It's the only way to digest all the different spices we throw into this soup. Up to now, we have released three songs, all very different from one another, but in the context of the album they all make great sense. When I listen to this album, I hear love. Love in all forms... abundant love, unrequited love and grief, the loss and absence of love. Buckle up cause it's beautiful at times, sometimes harsh, sometimes painful, very heavy, and sometimes it's just raw... But it is entirely unapologetic and authentic to who we are as a group of misfits.





# KURT DEIMER



**We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed and fast-rising rocker extraordinaire – as well as a lauded actor, songwriter and film producer - Kurt Deimer; greetings and salutations Kurt and thank you for taking the time to speak with us here at Vents Magazine today! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, how is 2025 treating you and yours?**

2025 has been a good year so far, and really great things are happening with our new album *And So It Begins...* coming out in May. I've also got three movies that will be released over the next year, and I am currently in pre-production to shoot another one. The band is touring like crazy and we are meeting new fans in every city we play!! So, all in all, 2025 has been very productive. We will continue to work hard, continue to build our fan base, and I'll continue creating. As long as I'm doing that, every day is a great day.

**Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted debut full-length album, *And So It Begins...* which is set to light up record charts across the ever-loving globe when it premieres this May 9th! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired one of the very best LP releases of '25?**

In late 2019/early 2020, I brought my demo to LA. That is when I was introduced to and met with Chris Lord-Alge. He listened and decided that he wanted to work with me and took me under his wing. We've been working on all these songs all these years, and there's still more on the way. The inspiration for creating a physical album came from my early days. I remembered and loved when I could visit a record store and get an album from my favorite band. Often, it was a gatefold where you could open it up, see the lyrics, and read about the band. The vinyl itself was a collectible piece of art and music that you could play on a record player. It was an experience. So, I decided to put it out on vinyl, CD, and cassette, and that's just kind of how it all started. The process has been a lot of work, but I wanted it to be right. The second album shouldn't take long to come out after, and we're already working on the third one.

**And So It Begins...was produced by five-time GRAMMY-winning producer Chris Lord-Alge of Green Day and Breaking Benjamin fame! What did your in-studio collaboration with Chris look like while fashioning and shaping this gem of an album?**

Working and creating music with Chris in the studio is great. He is a musical genius, and creatively we have a mutual respect for one another. During the course of our working relationship, we have also become the best of friends. When we aren't in the studio, we do a lot together socially, such as trips, concerts, going out to good restaurants, and it's just like two bros working on a project together that are truly friends. During our four-year friendship, it's been quite a ride, and we're very proud of what we put together.

**Speaking of collaborations, you co-wrote the *And So It Begins...LP* with famed Bon Jovi guitarist Phil X. What was that experience like for you?**

Working with Phil X is and was amazing. He is such a talented guitar player, singer, writer, and all-around great human being. During the making of the album, I would write lyrics, and he would really be on the same page for the vibe that I was looking for in each song. I think we wrote some very magical songs together. I love Phil X to death and appreciate everything he's done in our friendship and partnership in writing this music because without him, we wouldn't have *And So It Begins...*, the debut double album coming out.

**We're big admirers of the tune "Sunset Boulevard" which stands front-and-center on the upcoming *And So It Begins...LP* and which has also been released as a single. What's the story behind this beautiful ditty?**



Well, speaking of Phil X, he asked me to write some lyrics about my experience on Sunset Boulevard. Such as, whenever I am in LA, my home away from home is the infamous Sunset Marquis Hotel, aka the rock and roll hotel. I've also played some iconic venues on the Sunset Strip, like The Rainbow for their 50th Anniversary, the Whisky a Go-Go at least twice, and recently we played a sold-out show at The Viper Room. I've always wanted to experience the rich history of the Strip, so I wrote down some lyrics, but Phil X, being the great storyteller that he is, drew inspiration from my lyrics and handcrafted the musical story, which is "Sunset Boulevard." Phil X deserves all the credit in the world; without him, we would have no "Sunset Boulevard" the way it is today. So, give 100% of the credit to Phil X for interpreting what we worked on together initially, but then crafting it into a classic Phil X-style tune celebrating the legendary Sunset Boulevard.

**In your humble opinion, what differentiates And So It Begins...from the distinguished competition on the 2025 music scene?**

Well, I think what distinguishes Kurt Deimer and my debut double album And So It Begins... is I'm only gonna do rock 'n' roll or country or country rock or whatever I do the way Kurt Deimer does it! I have a unique voice and a positive message. What you're gonna get is rock 'n' roll the way we do it, kind of like when AC/DC came out or Van Halen came out. We've got our own sound. We're not gonna sound like everybody else, and that is intentional. But when you hear the album or you come see us live, we're gonna slam it right in your faces. We're gonna have a great time, and I'm gonna get to share all the thoughts that come out of my brain with the rest of the world. I truly care about people and I'm big about being positive, kind, and helping others. I can promise that you're gonna get a whole new rock experience with And So It Begins.... If you like it, great. If you don't, great. We all don't like the same music, and that's okay. I will always work and stay true to Kurt Deimer, me, and the band.

**In the wake of the May 9th release of your debut album And So It Begins..., can fans look forward to catching you on the touring/performing circuit?**

Oh yeah, we're always out on the road touring! We just played some Tesla shows and recently the Monsters of Rock Cruise in March. We're currently out on the road in Canada with Steel Panther and Buckcherry, through May 22. Then I go shoot my fourth film called "Relapse" out in LA, and once that's wrapped, I head back to the East Coast for several shows with Tesla in June. We also have some exciting things coming up for the fall, but I am not able to share that at the moment, so stay tuned.

**You hail from the bustling burg of Cincinnati, Ohio! How do those specific stomping grounds inform you not only as an artist, but also as a person?**

Well, Cincinnati, Ohio, is where I was born. It's where I ended up raising my kids. My parents met in high school. They were high school sweethearts, got married, and they were married for over 55 years together, so Cincinnati keeps me humble and grounded. I learned all my morals and principles from my family. Unfortunately, they all passed, including my sister, who passed away at 45 from ovarian cancer, but every night I go out, I talk to them. My grandmother was from Cincinnati, and she passed away at the age of 106 during COVID because nobody could visit her. Cincinnati is deep in my heart. It's family to me, and it's a great family town. I've got deep roots there, and when I'm traveling all over the world, I know I can always count on the fact that Cincinnati is there for me no matter what.

**As we noted at the top, you're also a well-regarded actor. Have you drawn inspiration from other actors who have also pursued their musical muse such as Keanu Reeves, Kevin Costner, Russell Crowe, and Kevin Bacon?**

Oh, I'm a big Keanu Reeves fan. I think he's wonderful not only as an actor, first and foremost, but also as a musician and as a human being. I'm a lot like him in many ways: I'm humble, I'd rather give more to others because I've been lucky and blessed to do what I've done in my life, and I'm all about being low-key, chill, and just enjoying life without having a bunch of extravagant items in my life, that stresses me out. Kevin Costner, I love him. I met him at the Sunset Marquis probably three months ago. What a humble human being! He came over, sat down, and actually took the time to talk to me. We introduced ourselves to each other, and what we do, obviously, I know what he does. He's a very polite and kind human being. So yes, they've inspired me very much. Another actor who has inspired me and with whom I have the privilege of starring alongside in the upcoming soon-to-be-released film "Scared To Death" is Bill Moseley. He's an amazing human being. We're great friends now, and Lin Shaye, who I star alongside in the movie with as well. We have become great friends. She's just a down-to-earth, humble human being, and that's what I look for in friendships. Whether I am shooting movies or out on the road playing music, I like to surround myself with kind and caring people.

**At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-listen to your stunning debut album And So It Begins...?**

I hope listeners will walk away going, "OK, who is Kurt Deimer?" and that they research and discover more about who I am as a person. I hope the music inspires them to spread the word all over the world, because it takes a village, and that they walk away maybe with a tear in their eye or they are pumped because they just, you know, rocked the fuck out, or maybe they resonate when they hear the song "My Dad," and it helps them get through a death in the family or that of a friend. I hope people can tell my lyrics come from my heart and tell a story from my life that the listeners can learn things from. I want them to know as fans that I'm here for them because without them, I am nothing, and that's why I thought of And So It Begins.... It's just the beginning of me being there for the people of the world and providing them with my style of music that hopefully they will dig and love and want to continue on this musical journey with me for many years to come.





# FRIVY





**We're excited to chat with you today, Friyie! Welcome to Vents Magazine. Before we dive in, how has 2025 been treating you so far?**

Thank you for having me, Vents Magazine. 2025 has been amazing so far. We started the first quarter focused on strategizing, locking in timelines, and making sure our team was set up for success. Right now, we're executing all those plans. We've got my project *Off The Map* dropping on April 24, and then my first headlining show in Toronto on May 1. We're putting everything into making sure both are a major success.

**Congrats on your new album *Off the Map*! With its release coming up on April 24, can you share what inspired this project and what it means to you?**

"Off The Map" is special to me because I've been working on it for two years. This project means a lot—it's personal. When I was creating it, I was physically and mentally in isolation, traveling, away from my people, and really off the map. The whole project captures what it feels like to be an emerging artist, going through transitions, and adjusting to a new lifestyle.

**Who produced *Off the Map*, and what was the creative process like in the studio? How did that collaboration shape the final sound of the album?**

The project came together through a creative studio collaboration. I worked with multiple producers—Ok Taylor from Ontario, God Flow on post-production, Kaleb from Toronto, and a producer/engineer from Miami. A lot of the project was recorded in a hotel room at The Gabriel in South Beach. My engineers were rolling with me, so the sound was raw, natural, and real. The creative process was about picking beats, telling my story in the moment, and just locking in. When it came to the final product, we got everything professionally mixed and mastered, but the essence of the raw sessions stayed intact.

**One track that stands out is *50/50*—can you tell us the story behind it? What inspired the song, and how did it come together?**

I made "50/50" at The Outlet Studios with producer Shizzy. That record came from a place of reflection—thinking about all the work, the investments, and the journey. It's about understanding the value of my art and making sure it's recognized. The whole *Off The Map* project carries that energy—it tells my story, the ups and downs, the grind. "50/50" is a self-reflective track that sets the mood for the whole project.

**How does *Off the Map* compare to your earlier work, like *ANF: Ain't Nothing Free*? What's evolved in your sound and approach since then?**

*Ain't Nothing Free* was more like a playlist—a collection of songs I made throughout my come-up. It was my first album, so I just put my best work together and threw some features on it. But *Off The Map* is different. This project is

intentional. Every track and every concept was carefully chosen. I started making this album from a clean slate, which makes it a completely different experience from my earlier work.

It's been six years since I dropped something like this. I started *ANF* back in 2016-2017, so we're talking nearly nine years of work, studio sessions, and traveling. Being around professionals, and constantly evolving my sound—this project reflects that growth. You're about to hear the most seasoned version of Friyie yet.

I'm dropping the album on April 24, and a week later, on May 1, I'm headlining my first show in Toronto. After that, I'm hitting the road with Seven Entertainment for a tour through May and June. This tour is all about giving fans a real experience, bringing the music to life on stage, and letting people connect with it in a whole new way.

**What sets *Off the Map* apart from other albums hitting the scene this year? What makes it uniquely you?**

*Off The Map* is different because I feel like a completely new artist right now. I stand out because I can sing, rap, and write my music. My sound is hip-hop, but my African roots are deeply embedded in it. The intro track, "Accra Dreams," is a great example—it's inspired by my trip to Ghana, where I reconnected with my culture. The production blends traditional African drums with hip-hop, creating something unique. That's the essence of this project—fusing my influences and giving people something real.

**Who are some of your biggest influences, both inside and outside the music industry?**

Beyond music, I draw inspiration from visionaries and leaders—people who shape the world in big ways. African leaders, like the current leader of Mali and my friend Nana Freedom, who ran for president in Ghana, inspire me. Seeing how they bring visions to life pushes me to do the same with my music. If they can build cities, I can create music that lives in people's hearts.

My team also influences me—just being around people who work hard and push for greatness keeps me motivated. Musically, I'm influenced by Afrobeats, gospel, and R&B legends like Sade. I grew up on music that's rich in instrumentation and melody, and that foundation still shapes my sound.

**Anything you'd like to share with fans about *Off the Map* before its release on April 24?**

I just want to emphasize—*Off The Map* is going to be one of the greatest albums you'll hear this year. The time, effort, and detail that went into the production, mixing, and mastering are unmatched. We put everything into it, and I can't wait for people to experience it.

***Listen to the project, pull up to my Toronto show on May 1, and catch me on tour. If you're a fan of real hip-hop and storytelling, this project is for you. Mark your calendars—April 24, and May 1—the *Off The Map* campaign is here.***





Photo credit: Yellow Belly Photography

# Alex Grech

**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed actor and stuntman Alex Grech; greetings and salutations Alex and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the proverbial Q&A celluloid pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Thank you for the lovely introduction; 2025 has been an exciting and busy year so far but I've always preferred it that way. In all honesty, the release of 'Juliet and Romeo' on May 9th has given my parents a good excuse to travel over from Australia and watch it with me on the big screen.

**Major congratulations on your bravura turn in the eagerly anticipated independent musical feature film Juliet & Romeo which is set to premiere this May 9 at theatres everywhere! Starting at the top, can you explain to anyone late to the Shakespearean party what Juliet & Romeo is about and how your character of Tommaso figures into the proceedings?**

Of course. Let me start with all the spoiler free differences between this feature film musical of 'Juliet & Romeo' and Shakespeare's classic tragedy. Obvious place to begin is the title inversion from the original play, leading

with Juliet's name as opposed to Romeo's, alluding to the fact that in this reimagining of Verona, the home city of the Montague and Capulet families, we see Juliet as a more independent and self-assured character as opposed to the previous portrayals. We see all the characters featured and mentioned in Shakespeare's original fleshed out in more depth, and with more care than we've seen them before; plus, there are some original characters to boot. This is where my role as Tommaso comes in. Tommaso is an original character created by (director/writer) Tim Scott Bogart who worked very closely with me to bring this character to life. Tommaso is Romeo's younger cousin, like Leopold and Benvolio. In the beginning of the film, Tommaso is a loyal member of the Montague clan who admires his adoptive cousin Mercutio and believes conflict with the Capulets, or Rome, is – to some degree – inevitable. By the end of the film Tommaso has been left with a heavy sense of responsibility to continue the fight for the Montague name but has been inspired by Romeo's passion to find more to life than the state of conflict that all the children of this Verona are products of.

**Did you know as soon as the script from Juliet & Romeo writer/director Timothy Scott Bogart and some piker called William Shakespeare crossed your professional desk that this was a production you wanted to be a part of?**

Everyone knows about the tragedy of Juliet and her Romeo, even if they haven't read the play or seen any number of adaptations. This story, this musical world of 'Juliet & Romeo,' is a rich and vibrant original reimagining of this classical story that I was immediately excited to have the potential of being a part of as soon as I first heard about it. Something Tim Bogart has said repeatedly throughout the process, and in the early stages of discussing this piece, is that the music is an extension of the world for these characters, in a similar way to Shakespeare's iambic pentameter. The set of all original music is a modern poetry that allows audiences to experience an inner world of the characters that they can relate to, without necessitating the study of Shakespearean verse. And I love that idea, as I think the unfamiliar verse of Shakespeare's writing often scares people away from looking at it too closely. I was immensely excited to have the opportunity to work on something that could introduce a classical work to new audiences who might otherwise never have considered Shakespearean material approachable.

**Was there a bit of an intimidation factor in approaching Juliet & Romeo from a creative standpoint for yourself after so many renditions of Shakespeare's famous play has made the rounds both on the screen and on the stage over the years?**

Not particularly, in all honesty. From the very early days of the project, I've always believed in the material. Tim has such a captivating new vision of the world in this film, and as an actor I took great confidence in that, which in turn makes it easier to trust what the material and work uncover. It's a daring reimagining of a story that we think we know in its entirety. I was, more than anything, grateful and extremely excited to have the opportunity to be a part of bringing this new material to life and sharing it with audiences. Now, that's not to say that I don't occasionally feel a twinge of angst as to how wider audiences will receive my performance, or the bold commitment to using Shakespeare's poetry as more of a reference for the dialogue – in favour of using musicality and song to give audiences a deeper look at the internal states of our characters and their world.

**You stand alongside a wonderful cast in Juliet & Romeo, including the likes of Rebel Wilson, Rupert Everett, Jason Issacs and so many others! What was it like working alongside these acting stalwarts?**

Incredible! It felt very surreal at times and even looking back on the experience, I'm honored to have shared the space with such a powerful cast. Having the chance to work with fellow Australian's Rebel Wilson and Jamie Ward, who play Lady Capulet and Romeo respectively, was an additional pleasure as it's always nice to hear a familiar accent when you're working overseas for extended periods. I had the pleasure of working very closely with Jason Issacs, our Lord Montague, and Derek Jacobi, who plays the Friar. Both of whom are actors I've seen in performances both on stage and on



the big screen all my life. In working with them I was so focused on doing my job and getting it right that I almost forgot to have fun and absorb as much as I could. It was so surreal that I didn't really comprehend how crazy it was to be performing alongside such incredibly talented and acclaimed actors. For someone like me, who is just starting out in this business, it was a humbling and inspiring experience that taught me a great lesson in what it means to have longevity in this industry.

**As we noted above, your director on Juliet & Romeo is the insanely talented Timothy Scott Bogart. What was your collaboration process like in working with Timothy on this film?**

Tim Bogart was an absolute joy to collaborate with. He certainly felt like a director for the actor in all our conversations. As I mentioned earlier, Tomasso is an original character, which afforded me the opportunity to work rather closely with Tim to create the Tomasso you will see on the big screen from scratch. Tim gave me a brilliant sandbox to play in with Tomasso and the world of Verona that he was building for the film. As an actor, it was my job to dive in to play and discover new things about the character. I'm a very direct person by nature (I've had a lot of rather old school instructors) and so I appreciate direct direction, which is something I think Tim and I identified early in our communication – and something, to my knowledge, that he also appreciated. I really pride myself on being helpful, on doing what it takes to get the job done right, and this is ultimately a big part of what I believe secured my opportunity to work with Jamie Ward, as his primary Romeo stunt double, as well as my own work supporting him in the cast as Tomasso. Tim was adamant that he wanted the actors doing as much of the fighting, horse riding and stunt work as possible. So, when Jamie unfortunately injured his leg during the rehearsal period production, the team felt that they could trust me with the responsibility of working closely with Jamie to make sure that the physicality of his Romeo wouldn't be lost. I'm extremely grateful to Tim and the rest of the production team on 'Juliet & Romeo' for trusting me, not only as an actor, but as a varied performer willing to utilize all my skills.

**How did you ultimately land upon the pathway of wanting to become an actor? Is there an E! True Hollywood Story you could share with our ever-inquisitive readers on your acting journey as well as your foray into stunt work?**

Absolutely. I first started acting when I was six years old with a company in Australia called the Victoria Youth Theatre. I continued engaging in theatre and dabbled in film work throughout high school before spending eleven months traveling around the world on a circuit of the globe that took me through thirteen countries. During that year of travel, I decided that if I was going to commit my life to making a career as an actor and creative, I needed to study at the best schools and conservatories available to me. My trip had me in New York for two months over 2019, and I thought, while there, I'd audition at NYU's Tisch School of Performing Arts as a way of getting good audition experience for these sorts of programs. I didn't really know what to expect but assumed the likelihood of me getting in on my first try was pretty slim, so I went and gave it my all at my audition. Before I even arrived back in Australia later that same year, I got news that I'd been accepted and that I would be starting the NYU Tisch Actors Programme in the fall of 2020. I moved to New York during COVID and spent four years at NYU studying at the Experimental Theatre Wing and at The Lee Strasberg Institute taking other courses in Shakespearean verse, classical texts, dramaturgy, avant-garde theatre, stage combat, stunts, dialects, etcetera, until I graduated in May of 2024. I've been living in New York ever since working as an actor, stuntman, and stunt coordinator.

**What does your acting dance card look like in the wake of the upcoming release of Juliet & Romeo? How do you possibly follow up such an amazing film?**

I've been doing a lot of traveling recently for this film and am honestly more excited than anything to get back to New York and give more of my time to the theatrical world as I continue the never-ending search for projects that inspire me.

**Word 'round campfire has it that when you're not wowing audiences with your acting, you're quite passionate about both environmentalism and stumping for more research in the medical field. Can you talk about these two passions and why they mean so much to you?**

Well, I'll start by saying that I'm not an environmental scientist or a medical professional – I'm an actor, so when I speak on these sorts of topics I can only really speak from my own frame of reference. Part of that frame of reference regarding environmentalism was molded by my time as a volunteer at a public radio station when I was younger. It was called '3WBC Your Planet Needs You'. There were about two or three hosts, and we'd have an hour-long live show where each host would present an environmentally themed story that was most commonly about some new incident or policy, or an interview with a business trying to do things differently, (nothing clickbaity) and everything had to have clear connections to reliable research. It was focused on creating awareness and instilling passion in listeners to take even the smallest steps in helping the environmental cause. I loved my time on that station, and it's continued to inspire me to use whatever platform available to try and do the same. I'm an avid hiker and rock climber, and I believe that protecting as well as nurturing the wild places of earth is one of human civilizations greatest responsibilities. My passion for medical research is specific to the field of neurology. I'm fascinated by the human brain and only wish we understood it more. Individuals close to me have suffered from certain neurological diseases, and I wish there was more we knew about those diseases. My interest in neurological research is more personally connected to my own experiences of battling with mental health, and trying to understand what that means in a field that is currently riddled with outdated definitions as well as an underdeveloped appreciation for the complexity of everyone. It is my belief that by understanding more about how the brain works we can hopefully move beyond the various kinds of mental health stigma that still permeate both inside and outside the medical field.

**Final – SILLY! - Question: Favorite movie about the making of movies – Living in Oblivion, Swimming with Sharks, Bowfinger, Hail Caesar, or Once Upon a Time in Hollywood?**

Personally, I'd have to say that for different reasons it would have to be 'Living in Oblivion' and 'Once upon a Time in Hollywood.' Loved 'Hail Caesar' and am a big fan of the Coen's brothers work, but if I'm talking about a movie about the making of a movie, then it's hard to go past Steve Buscemi's performance in 'Living in Oblivion.' When it comes to the reimagining of a world, or the retelling of a story that people know but from a new and/or never-before-considered perspective, then Quentin Tarantino's work is surely somewhere in the top tiers of most people's lists. For this reason, I must include 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' – it brought a new life and a new vision of that era of Hollywood to audiences in a way that I had never seen before, and that is reason enough for it to get a mention.





# BRODY BUSTER



**We're very excited to have some time today with acclaimed Blues musician and multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Brody Buster; greetings and salutations Brody and thanks for taking time out of a busy schedule to speak with us here at Vents Magazine! Before we meander down the proverbial Q&A musical pathway, how is 2025 finding you and yours?**

Hello, thank you so much for having me. Things are going great. Only getting better. I am really looking forward to the album drop and we got some pretty fun shows coming up.

**Major kudos and accolades on your eagerly-anticipated new album Redemption which is set to light up record charts across the ever-lovin' world when it officially drops this April 20! Starting at the top, can you talk about what inspired this stunning and beautifully raw new LP?**

Thank you! It wasn't inspired by any one particular thing. It naturally came about. As I started my recovery process, I started to write music again. I write in the moment so whatever feelings or thoughts that I have, I put down. All and all each song on Redemption is telling the story of my recovery process.

**Who did the producing honors on the Redemption LP and what did the in-studio collaboration between artist and producer look like while fashioning and shaping the new LP?**

The one and only Jacque Garoutte produced Redemption. The process started about a month and a half before recording. I had the songs written and an idea. I asked Jacque to produce it because, frankly, I love making music with him and he gets me. He understood what I was trying to convey both lyrically and musically. We got together once a week with the



drummer, Ian Pond, to practice. In the final two weeks we brought in Jackie Myers. After we were well rehearsed, we went in bright and shiny New Years Day and recorded in 3 days. It was amazing to work with Jacque in this context.

**We're big admirers of the tune Can You Hear Me which stands front-and-center on the upcoming Redemption album! What inspired this gem of a ditty?**

I wrote Can You Hear Me in the car on the way home from a gig. I felt really good after the show. The audience was engaged and loving it. It was a true feeling of "I'm back." That feeling inspired me to write a song about it. Despite my past drug use and unruly behavior, I was able to pull myself back together. It felt great and I felt it was time for the public to know that I acknowledged my past and was ready to move forward, with hopes that they would come with me. The first verse tells the story of my drug use. The second about how it feels to come back. The third the lessons I've learned.

**As you noted at the top, you went through trials and tribulations to ultimately get to the point where you finally saw daylight in your personal life. Congratulations for pulling yourself out of that spiral and a sincere welcome back. With all of that stated, was it at all painful to relive some of those low points while working on the new Redemption LP, or do you consider this a catharsis, a part of your recovery process?**

Thank you so much. That truly means a lot. No, it wasn't painful. Honestly it made me feel really good to get it all out. I spent a lot of years knowing, rightfully, that people were judging me. I consider that in the past now. It made me ready to tell my story, in the only real way I know how. Music.

**In the wake of the April 20 release of Redemption, can fans look forward to catching you on the touring/performing circuit?**

I play very often in the Kansas City area, both as my band and One Man Band. I have some things that I am very much looking forward to. The One Man Band is headed to

Durango, CO for the Durango Blues Train. I'll also be headed to Montana for Riverfront Blues Festival. The band has a few runs to South Dakota and Arkansas along with having the great pleasure to open for Danielle Nicole at Knuckleheads here in Kansas City. Just recently we added Paola Roots Festival, I grew up in Paola, so this one is near and dear to me. I am extremely thankful for all of my gigs and every venue that books me.

**Who are some of your North Stars and Green Lights both in and out of the world of music who have informed and inspired you as both an artist and as a person?**

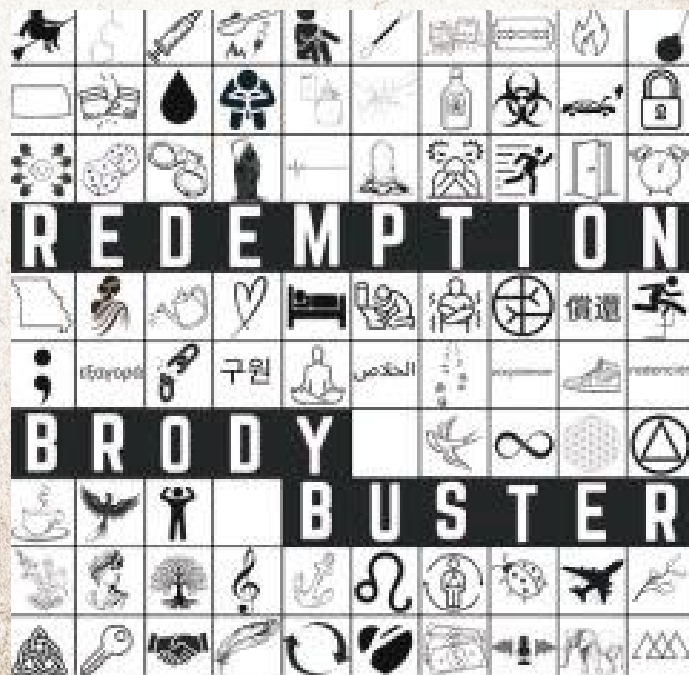
Legendary Kansas City musicians Eugene Smiley and Billy Woods. They are both deceased now. One of my regrets was being so strung out that I never properly thanked them for everything they did for me before they were gone. When I was a child I worked with them for years. They taught me everything I know musically. I owe them a great deal. I put one song of each of theirs on Redemption. On a personal level is my children. They are my biggest reason for getting clean and getting my life back together.

**Can you introduce our ever-inquisitive readers to the amazing musicians who lent their own musical wares to make Redemption a flesh and blood reality?**

Id love to! I'm blessed to have such an amazing team of musicians behind me. First we've got Jacque Garoutte, he does rhythm guitar, and background vocals on the album, he is best known for his work in Levee Town. Ian Pond on drums. He is a major of Jazz Studies at UMKC. He is an all around amazing drummer and person. On organ and piano is Jackie Myers, she has band, Jackie Myers Trio. She recently released a Jazz album of her own. Jackie is always super fun to work with. On slide guitar is Howard Mahan of The Howard Mahan Band, he has a good following around town. I am thankful he took the time to lay down a track with me. Terry Dry on bass. Terry drives two hours each way to play with me right now. He has played with a lot of high profile bands throughout the years. Danielle Nicole Schneblen-Miller of Danielle Nicole was gracious enough to lend me her amazing voice for background in two tracks. I've had such a great time working with every one of them.

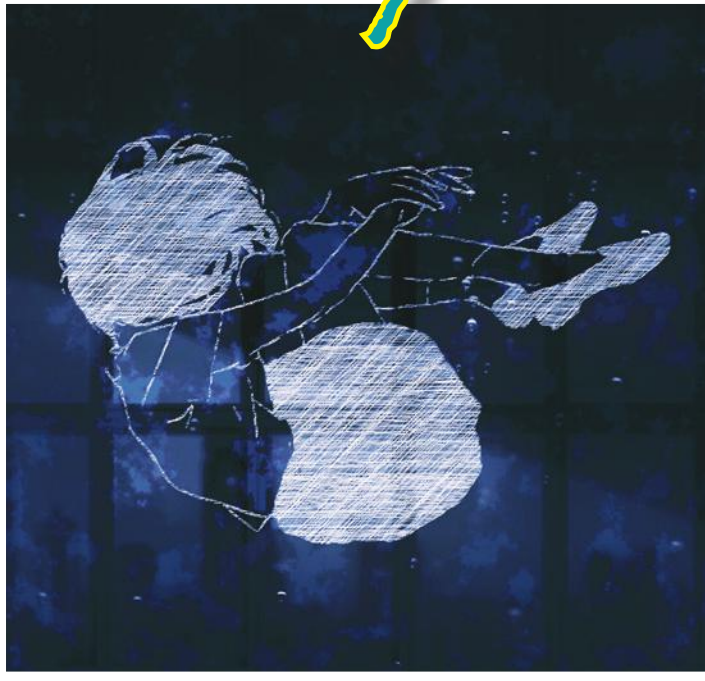
**At the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-spin to the best album of 2025, Redemption?**

I hope that anyone and everyone who listens to Redemption says "those are some quality musicians making quality music" For me, the songs are powerful. I hope that everyone who listens to it has those feelings as well.





# Diip Silence



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

Appreciate the welcome. Hope you are doing well. Recently I've been deep in the Atmos studio building process. Meanwhile working on creating music for sure, low sleep, but high output.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

My latest track's called "SAFE & SOUND". It's a question I kept asking myself while making it. How long do I chase a feeling before it slips? How would I react to the old friends that I haven't seen for a long while? Am I still me after all these years? It's ambient, it's emotional. It's running at 170 BPM because sometimes feelings hit fast even if the vibe stays slow. It's a reinterpretation, a reflection—like looking back at an old photo but hearing it instead.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

My works are usually started from field recordings, this one as well. I built it from backyard rain, chopsticks on bowls, even some warped modular synth tones that sound like alien birds. Then we twisted those into something that barely sounds like the source. The vocal came last, this is the first time that I tried to use virtual singer, it's pretty fun, I like Synth V. It's like the final puzzle piece that was under the couch the whole time, I can write things without thinking too much about the vocal range since I know the virtual singer will be able to hit it anyway. There was a lot of "what if I recorded a real singer and rebuilt the song backwards" energy in the process of production. At last I'm moving forward to just put it out.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

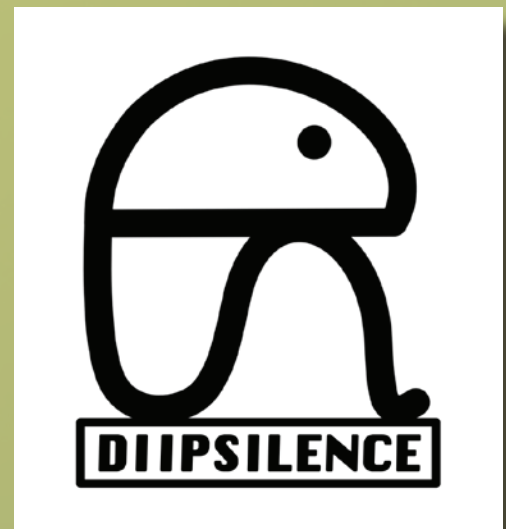
The inspiration of the lyrics started from reading ancient Chinese poets. Not for clout but just to tap into a different way of thinking. The way those old poets wrote was so concise and artistic, it's like they were sampling silence, letting space do half the talking. So I started writing little verses in that mindset—minimal, emotional, loaded with meaning between the lines. Now the chorus of the song is in ancient Chinese poet format. I think it's fun to combine modern language with ancient language together.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Probably not coz I'm in the zone of building up my new studio! It's been several months already but the acoustic installation will require some good amount of time to work on. But hey, I'll always release music no matter what, so stay tuned, ears peeled.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

Always cooking. The next single is almost done—it's a collaboration with a good artist friend – Brianna Young. It's a sonic journal that we've plotting on for two years, stitched together from her voice and the weird sound design that we always do. Also, the new studio will be a cave to experiment with spatial audio. I also have some collabs in the works, and diving deeper into designing instruments from raw recordings.





# JOLLY ROX



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

Hi thank you so much for having us here! All good here busy busy busy but we keep pushing forward so no complain!

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

The title itself Creeper from the Dust is a representation of the personality of the main character, an outcast searching for some kind of twisted redemption. Creeper is also a reference to Jeepers Creeper so the Creeper itself is some kind of monster but in our view you must always be careful to give labels because, like in many cases is real life, if you change a bit the point of view everything changes and the prey become the predator or vice versa. The main character is not just a monster, he know he is one and he not just accept it but also he is fascinated by it.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

They writing process was extremely long because musically this song came out during a very dark time but the it also arrived the Covid Pandemic that put everything to a forced stop. Only thanks to the effort of the producer

Lorenzo Piscopo the song finally saw its final version as you can hear it today.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

The music was inspired by the music box melodies and the lullaby melodies because they express at the same time sweetness, restlessness and sadness and this mix of different flavors, fascinating and mesmerizing, this helped Joey to dive into the imaginary world we all carry within ourselves and conceive this dark fairytale.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

We have a few dates cooking up for summer but our main effort is toward a European tour we will be doing by the end of October. At the moment I can't be more specific as the thing is still under construction but our idea is to touch as many country as we can in the continental Europe.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

Our world is always busy! We will be releasing two more singles by the end of summer with two videoclip. But we are also putting down new material.... The goal will be to release a full album next year.



We're super-excited to have some time today with acclaimed Goth-Folk duo Charming Disaster; greetings and salutations and welcome to Vents Magazine! Before we dive into the Q&A mosh-pit, could you two say 'hi' and introduce yourselves to our ever-inquisitive readers?

Oh hello. We are Ellia Bisker and Jeff Morris. In Charming Disaster Ellia sings and plays ukulele, and Jeff sings and plays guitar. In our live shows Jeff also plays a suitcase kick drum and Ellia plays a hi hat. In addition we both play the piano sometimes, which you can hear in our recordings. We grew up in neighboring towns in the NYC suburbs, though we didn't know each other then. When we first met in 2012, we each had a large band of our own (Ellia's Sweet Soubrette and Jeff's Kotorino), but Charming Disaster eventually consumed those projects. We both live in Brooklyn now, where we each have a black cat and a gray cat (all four cats are siblings).

**Major kudos and accolades on your freshly-minted full-length album *The Double* which is set to light up record charts and put a smile on music lover's faces all over the ever-lovin' world when it drops this May 16! Ellia, can you talk about what inspired the best LP release of 2025?**

Thank you! We're so excited to finally be able to share this record. We've been accumulating the songs that are on *The Double* over the past several years, so it's a bit like a glimpse into our subconscious, or a scrapbook of ideas we've been collecting. The songs reflect the preoccupations we keep returning to: plants and the natural world, magic and ritual, dark humor, and stories about two people in some kind of trouble. Two of the songs are inspired by specific artists or works: "Trick of the Light," our reimagining of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*; and "Vitriol," a tribute to the contemporary artist Thomas Little, a modern-day alchemist who turns guns into ink. The thread that connects everything is the idea of an alternate world that lies beyond the everyday. In *The Double*, we invite our listeners to step across the threshold with us.

# Charming Disaster



Photo Credit :Shervin Lainez

**Jeff, you, Ellia and longtime Charming Disaster collaborator Don Godwin did the producing honors on *The Double*; congrats! Can you talk about what the pros are to serving as your own producers? And what was the experience like in reteaming with Don on the new album?**

Being our own producers enabled us to play with sounds, instruments, and arrangements pretty freely. We had all of the songs finished by the time we got in the studio for tracking, but I'd say we only had 50% of the arrangements fleshed out. Some songs were obvious: "Trick of the Light" is a song about *Dracula*, so we knew it needed to have organ on it. Others choices were not so straightforward, which is why it was great working with Don—besides sharing our musical references and vocabulary, he could lay down drums, bass, or horn tracks right on the spot. Because we've been working with Don for a long time, we've been able to develop a certain comfort level with the unknown, with not knowing what to do and experimenting with ideas that might or might not work. For "Scavengers," a song inspired by decomposition in the forest, we wanted a really organic sound for the percussion. Don tried out a bunch of different drums, but in the end the main rhythmic sounds came from Ellia's feet swishing back and forth on the studio floor. We never would have arrived at that solution working with anyone else, plus he's so good natured, patient and easy to work with. He made the whole tracking process a pleasure.



**Ellia, we're big admirers of the track Black Locust which stands front-and-center on the upcoming The Double album! What's the story behind this gem of a tune?**

In 2021 we went away together for a week to work on some new songs, holed up at my parents' house in the NYC suburbs while they were out of town. It was the early part of the summer, when the air starts to get muggy and you can smell the flowering trees in the air, and we were in this dreamy kind of headspace—there was something magical, but also almost melancholy about it. Even though summer had only just started, you could somehow feel how quickly it was going to pass. Sort of like a day, or a whole life. We wanted to capture that feeling, the suspended moment. It took us another two years to finish writing the song, and what we ended up with was this sort of mortality lullaby.

**Jeff, in your humble opinion what differentiates The Double LP from the Distinguished Competition on the 2025 music scene?**

We don't see the practice of making music as a competition. But there are some things about The Double that perhaps make it different from other music of this moment. For one thing, all the sounds you hear on the album are real, meaning they were all made by physical instruments or other objects moving air through space: our breath, our hands clapping, our feet on the floor, our hands on the strings or the piano keys. Where we wanted sounds we couldn't make ourselves, we recruited other musicians (like Lung's Kate Wakefield, whose cello appears on "Scavengers" and "Beautiful Night"). This makes for an organic quality that's a little bit imperfect—in a time when everything can be created digitally and sound perfectly clean and slick, it was important to us that this record would sound like something made by humans.

**Ellia, in the wake of the May 16 release of The Double, can fans look forward to catching Charming Disaster on the touring/performing circuit?**

Yes! We're celebrating the album release in NYC on May 15 with a show at Caveat, then a week later our tour kicks off in the Midwest before eventually heading back

East—we'll be playing Columbus, OH; Ann Arbor, MI; Jackson, MI; Milwaukee, WI; St. Paul, MN; Madison, WI; Chicago, IL; Lansing, MI; Cleveland, OH; Buffalo, NY; Ithaca, NY; and Kingston, NY. And we've got more shows in the works for summer and fall. Our tour schedule is up on our website at [charmingdisaster.com/shows](http://charmingdisaster.com/shows) (also, Bandsintown, Songkick, and our social media channels).

**A question for the both of you: Who are some of the key influences on you, both in and out of the world of music?**

Ellia: PJ Harvey has always been a big musical inspiration, and I'd also mention Stephin Merritt of the Magnetic Fields, legendary novelty songwriter Tom Lehrer, and the brilliant Joanna Newsom. Outside of music, the cartoonist Lynda Barry is an incredible storyteller whose approach to creativity has made a huge impact on me. Comics writer Grant Morrison's Doom Patrol and The Invisibles were gateway drugs to a lot of other intellectual discoveries when I was younger. I imprinted early on Edward Gorey's visual aesthetic and dark humor, which probably comes as no surprise to anyone. Visual artists Remedios Varo, Frida Kahlo, Annette Messager. Writers Virginia Woolf, David Mitchell, Kelly Link, John Crowley, far too many other authors to name.

Jeff: PJ Harvey, Led Zeppelin, Captain Beefheart, Sly and the Family Stone, Neil Young, David Bowie, The Fall, Tom Waits, more prog rock bands than I'd like to list here but King Crimson and Yes still mean a lot to me. Outside of music, I'm into film: the French New Wave, filmmakers Akira Kurosawa, the French New Wave, Fritz Lang, David Lean, Wes Anderson, and of course Alfred Hitchcock. Visual artists I'm into right now include Leonora Carrington, Leonor Fini, Bruegel (the elder), Jean-Michel Basquiat, John Dee, and Egon Schiele. Writers Susanna Clarke, Angela Carter, Jorge Borges, Jose Saramago, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Charles Dickens, and many more.

**Jeff, Charming Disaster is based out of the bustling burg of Brooklyn, NY! How do these stomping grounds inform the sound and energy which comes through as clear as a bell in the upcoming The Double LP?**

This release (every release, actually) is the product of our preoccupations, travels, meals eaten, lack of sleep, books read, and conversations had, as well as our physical surroundings. Living in a large city, we see trees coming up through the broken cracks of the sidewalk, we perform rituals to protect ourselves, we hear a cacophony of car horns right outside the door. Those are just a few concrete examples that have made their way into The Double.

**Ellia, The Double marks the seventh full length album release from Charming Disaster; congrats again! How is this seventh outing similar to some of the past music which you and Jeff have created? How is it different?**

We have a lot of consistent obsessions (plants! vampires! magic! crime!), so the subject matter of the songs on The Double will likely feel familiar to listeners who know our past work. And we've roped in some of our friends on strings, horns, bass and drums, as we often do when we're in the recording studio. But there are some new experiments here too. We explore new sounds and textures on this album, from the lush, Low-influenced sound of "New Moon" to the organic percussion sounds on "Scavengers" and "Green Things." Every new album also sees us get a little more into nonstandard time signatures and polyrhythms, which is challenging and fun and makes our brains feel good.

**Jeff, at the end of the day, what do you hope listeners walk away with after giving many-a-listen to the new Charming Disaster album The Double?**

We hope that after compulsively repeating The Double for the visceral pleasure of it (paleomammalian brain activity), listeners will become curious about some of the subjects we explore and do some further research (prefrontal cortex brain activity). Because it is a compulsive curiosity about the world that has motivated us to make this music, and is one of the great joys of life.



# TOMI PERRAKOSKI



**VENTS MAGAZINE: Hi guys, welcome to VENTS!  
How have you been?**

I am very good thanks, new singles and albums coming now and have been very busy with them but now all is ready to just wait that they come out to peoples ears, also I just had 70:th episode of My Metal madness weekly apple podcast!

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

The Jackal from my soloproject tells the mysterious story of The Animal Jackal and also its influenced from The Great tv series "the day of the Jackal"

**How was the recording and writing process?**

It was cool, i made the song in two days just got the flow and inspiration going on and it goes from there as my all songs and lyrics.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

I have a very creative mind and ideas for songs just come to mind and if i have the inspiration to make it it just goes there until its finished.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Its possible, not sure yeat, more likely 2026

**What else is happening next in your world?**

3 albums from my bands/projects coming very soon!  
(Magnadur Punishment of Hamlet 10.6(june), Morbid Children Morbid Legacy 20.6(june) and from my solo-project has also new album coming soon called Diary of insanity(11.7)

Thanks for this interview!

Tomi Perrakoski  
(Solo,Magnadur,Morbid children,Houruva and Metal madness weekly podcast(apple) )



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# POSITION OAK



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

“Replay” is about burnout, routine, and the slow realization that time keeps moving—even when you feel like you’re standing still. The song explores the repetition and dullness of modern life, particularly the daily grind of work and social media the way people fall into mindless routines, feeling disconnected despite constant digital interaction. Even if you’re winning the rat race, you’re still stuck in traffic, moving nowhere fast. “Replay” is a reflection of modern life’s suffocating predictability and a wake-up call for those who feel like they’re running in place

**How was the recording and writing process?**

The song initial came about from Adrian playing around with the intro Bass riff. We just sort of jammed around it before we actually decided to make it into a song. We

came up with a version, recorded a demo, then looked back on and decided we could make it better change some parts and recorded a second demo and sent it to our producer Brock Weston. We then went to Brisbane Queensland, to record the song with him. Which was pretty a straight ahead process and we when got back to Townsville I (James) added some piano and harmonies to sort make it come alive a little more.

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

Adrian came up with the theme for the song lyrics. Obviously from his own life, he presented James with the lyrics who then changed up some of the lines rhythmically, and re-shaped words to make it more metaphorically etc.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Not as of yet, as we have a few things on our jobs list to get done first.



# SWEET CRYSTAL



**Hi guys, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?**

So nice to be back on the very sweet pages of VENTS (see what we did there?). We have been extremely busy as we just finished celebrating our Golden Jubilee Anniversary tour meaning the band just reached our 50th year together! That's right: 5 decades of the music, message, mission and ministry of who we are and what we offer! Not too many bands can claim that accomplishment we're thinking.

**What can you tell us about the title and meaning behind your most recent release?**

"This Way Forever (Pearl Sound Remix)" is exactly that: a rerecording and remixing of a classic SWEET CRYSTAL song that was brought back to an even more dynamic life thanks to the band reconnecting with super engineer/producer Charles "Chuck" Alkazian (Pearl Sound Studios, Canton, MI). The song is based on the story of the Prodigal Son but told from the prodigal's point of view.

**How was the recording and writing process?**

I (Q) am the main source of starting and arranging our songs as well as the main lyricist. I had the musical and melodic ideas to this tune and presented it to the guys. We recorded the keyboards and main vocals at our personal studio facility and then went over to Pearl Sound Studios (just down the road as a matter of fact) and recorded the drums and guitars there to make the song...well, even sweeter. Chuck (recording/mix engineer) added the 'oomph' (musical term) to the song and we decided it would be the second single released from our next full album '8', following the very successful launch of last year's 'Whatever Is Needed, Whatever It Takes' (which you also covered for us - thank you).

**Where did you guys find the inspiration for the song and lyrics?**

As we said earlier, the song is based on the story of the Prodigal Son but told from the prodigal's point of view. What we've discovered that in all of our lives (and probably in the majority of your readers' lives), there was a time when we made a decision to 'go our separate ways', and as ill-advised as that decision may have been, we did it anyway. How that turns out is anyone's guess, but this song has the prodigal coming to their senses and then to getting back to where they really should be. Hopefully that's the same result for all of us.

**Will you be hitting the road this year?**

Absolutely! Best way to keep up with all our appearances is to join the email blast lists either at our website ([www.sweetcrystal.com](http://www.sweetcrystal.com)), our ReverbNation page ([www.reverbnation.com/sweetcrystal](http://www.reverbnation.com/sweetcrystal)) or even our Bands In Town page (<https://www.bandsintown.com/a/556340-sweet-crystal>). Festivals, church dedications, clubs and concerts all on the calendar.

**What else is happening next in your world?**

Band is excited about finishing our eighth release aptly entitled '8'. Actually, the cover will be a crystalized infinity sign when you look at it one way... but rotate 90 degrees and voila' (another musical term), it's an 8! New toys in the studio, new toys on stage...never too old to appreciate what fresh gear can do for the musical soul. With 26 Detroit Music Awards under our belt, it's probably time to aim for some Dove and Grammy Awards. Basically, we plan to remain ex-actly who we are for as long as can.



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