

the

RAGE

monthly

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
MAY 2023

IT'S KISMET FOR
BELINDA CARLISLE

ICONIC MUSICAL 1776
RETURNS WITH A DIVERSE TWIST

A CLOSER LOOK
AT THE RISE OF THE
OUT ACTORS

**ORAN
STAINBROOK**

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June 23



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PRIDE

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Directed by Ruben Santiago-Hudson

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May 19 – June 25 • Tickets start at \$29

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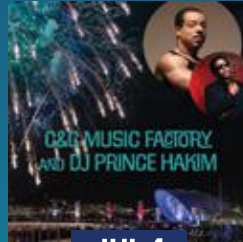
JUN 30

Summer 2023 Opening Night:
Rafael Payare & Pacho Flores



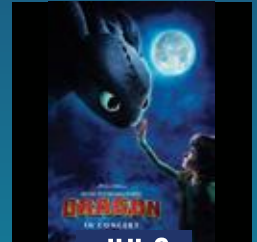
JUL 2

ARETHA: A Tribute



JUL 4

San Diego's 4th of July Dance
Party: C&C Music Factory
and DJ Prince Hakim*



JUL 9

How to Train Your Dragon
In Concert

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JUL 16

The Jacksons & Village People*



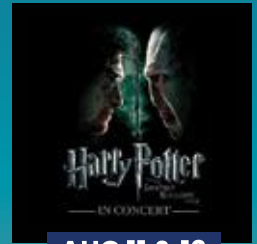
JUL 29

Guster with the San Diego
Symphony Orchestra



AUG 5

The Trailblazing Music of
Joni Mitchell, Carole King
and Carly Simon**



AUG 11 & 12

Harry Potter and the
Deathly Hallows™ Part 2
In Concert

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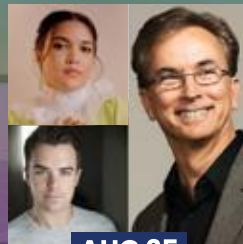
AUG 18

Judy Collins & Madeleine Peyroux
with the San Diego Symphony



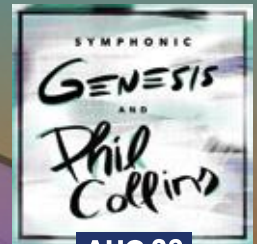
AUG 19

Gladys Knight & Patti LaBelle*



AUG 25

Broadway Romance



AUG 26

In the Air Tonight:
A Symphonic Celebration
of Genesis and Phil Collins***

For a complete listing of
performers and descriptions,
visit our website:

TheShell.org

*The San Diego Symphony does not appear on these programs.

**Neither Joni Mitchell, Carole King nor Carly Simon will be appearing at this concert.

***Neither Phil Collins, Peter Gabriel nor any past member of Genesis will be appearing at this concert.

ALL ARTISTS, DATES, PROGRAMS AND PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park

SAN DIEGO SYMPHONY

DRAG ISN'T DANGEROUS

A coalition of LGBTQ media groups and companies is teaming up to fight back against harmful political and media narratives about drag performers and trans people. The “Drag Isn’t Dangerous” campaign aims to raise money and awareness for LGBTQ causes and organizations that support drag and trans performers, especially in areas that are under attack.

Led by Producer Entertainment Group (PEG), GLAAD, Q.Digital, OUTtv, Five Senses Reeling, Trixie Cosmetics, SERV Vodka and other companies, the “Drag Isn’t Dangerous” campaign kicked off with a social media and digital awareness campaign. The campaign’s website, dragisntdangerous.com, offers resources and information on how to support local drag performers and LGBTQ causes.

The highlight of the campaign will be a telethon on **Sunday, May 7**, at moment.co/dangerous. Hosted by a wide range of drag performers and celebrities, the telethon will feature a mix of live and pre-taped performances, appearances and testimonials from drag performers, LGBTQ entertainers and straight celebrity allies.

“We are sick of it. These bans are not just about trans people or drag performers. It is a systematic subjugation of LGBTQ people,” said **Jacob Slane** of Producer Entertainment Group, the management company behind many of the world’s top drag artists. “Through the ‘Drag Isn’t Dangerous’ campaign, we want to show that drag performers are not dangerous groomers, sexual deviants, criminals or whatever is the latest evangelical slur du jour. We want to raise awareness and funds to make a difference in the lives of LGBTQ people who are under attack.”

Anthony Allen Ramos, GLAAD vice president of communications and talent, said: “In a time when bans and attacks on the LGBTQ community continue to escalate, it is more crucial than ever to remind the world that drag is art, drag is inspiring, and the politicians spreading lies about drag are only seeking cheap political points. Not only do our beloved drag performers have to be protected, but they should also be celebrated.”

All net proceeds from the telethon will be divided among approved charities that support LGBTQ causes and drag performers in need, especially in states where they face discrimination and bans. None of the performers or organizers are taking fees for their work on the campaign.

MORE LGBTQ EVENTS ARE ON THE WAY!

The 1980 blockbuster hit comedy **Airplane** is a delight to watch with an audience. Particularly **FilmOut** audiences. Robert Hays and Julie Hagerty star in this now-iconic cult film. The cast includes Leslie Nielsen, Robert Stack, Lloyd Bridges, Peter Graves, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Lorna Patterson. This pastiche of the catastrophe film genre references numerous disaster films from the 1970s. It also includes visual and verbal puns, fast-paced slapstick comedy, gags, running jokes and odd humor. Plus, see how much of the dialogue is ingrained in popular culture. Come bust your belly at Landmark Hillcrest Cinemas in San Diego on **Wednesday, May 10**. filmoutsandiego.com



Join San Diego LGBT Community Center on **Friday, May 12** at the **Harvey Milk Diversity Breakfast** as we gather in person again to celebrate the work of our LGBTQ movement and commit to the work that lies ahead. Established in 2009, the breakfast brings together diverse San Diegans who support equality and justice — to celebrate the memory of this influential civil-rights activist. Proceeds benefit the programs and services of The Center. thecentersd.org

On **Saturday, May 13**, members of the LGBTQ community and their allies will gather at the **Los Angeles County Fair** for a special Pride event. Wear your favorite Pride/rainbow colors and for a day of food, rides and visibility. Those who purchase a special Pride ticket can attend a dance party featuring Ray Rhodes, with performances from 8 to 11 p.m. **Out on The Mountain** is sponsoring this event. outonthemountain.com/fair



It is time to prepare for one of the season’s most important events. On **Saturday, June 3**, at the Turnip Rose Promenade in Costa Mesa, the **Radiant Health Centers Annual Gala** will be an enchanting evening of celebration under the stars. The outdoor venue will provide the perfect setting to showcase the theme, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Enter an enchanted Shakespearean forest surrounded by nymphs, fairies, royalty and mere mortals as they raise money for a cause near and dear to all our hearts: advancing LGBTQ healthcare equity and HIV care in our community. radianthealthcenters.org

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HIRAGE READERS!

Back when *The RAGE Monthly* magazine was born, I was a proud lesbian student writer, submitting brief articles. I was also writing for *The Pride*, California State University San Marcos' student newspaper of the time. (Go Cougars!) Mostly, I was just a "Baby Dyke" sneaking off to the safety of Hillcrest whenever I could. Today, I am thrilled to be a 39-year North Countian and the founding writer of *The RAGE Monthly's* new column: North County Happenings.

I get to represent my favorite areas including Encinitas, Carlsbad, Oceanside, Vista, San Marcos, Escondido and Valley Center. Ahh, the "78 Corridor." Oh, and San Diego friends, I'm calling you out. If we can drive south and back for all things Hillcrest, you can make the trek north to see us once in a while. No whining. Let's hear it for North County: from Bates Nut Farm in Valley Center to the Oceanside Pier, there are queers here!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: PRIDE BY THE BEACH DIRECTOR **ROXANNE DEATHERAGE**

After swapping pictures of our dogs, and chatting about her and her wife's five teenagers (think Lesbian Brady Bunch), the new North County Pride by the Beach Director Roxanne Deatherage shared this year's theme, **Free to Be Me in 2023**. Deatherage stepped into the role shortly after past director Lisa Nava became the director of operations for the North County LGBTQ Resource Center.

"I am thankful to have Lisa [Nava] as a mentor," Deatherage said. "I am also excited for all the community support we have received in putting this event together, including Thermal Fisher, Mission Federal, Kaiser Permanente and Agua Fresca Drinks. My favorite thing about Pride by the Beach, I love to see all of us together. Last year we surpassed 10,000 people. I am passionate about our LGBTQ young people having a safe place. This is a day of joy, a day to celebrate and to be 100% yourself."

For the foodies and snackers out there, Deatherage said, "We have food trucks ranging from hot dogs to pizza, to grill cheese, coffee, Mexican food and sweet treats! There are all kinds of booths, giveaways

and entertainment. We have two stages, the main stage and a community stage. This year, we had over 50 acts audition and accepted 15 from a variety of genres... Oh, you don't want to miss Drag Queen Story Hour! Yes, we're doing it. We support all of our drag queens and kings!"

"Our emcee this year is DJ Inspire. She is an Oceanside native who is doing big things in L.A. now. I am so excited she is taking the time to come down for our event. We also appreciate Fernando Lopez, director of San Diego Pride, for being this year's keynote speaker," Deatherage said.

Additional highlights: A blessing of the land by Strong Hearted Native Women and a youth area with a giant slide, face painting, letters of love, and make your own flag. In the education zone, there is a three-part exhibit: 1. The Rights We Fought For; 2. The Rights We Got (and How!); and 3. The Rights We Are Losing (that keep our community safe). Never rest on your laurels, friends!

Some tips: I love this relaxed, sobriety friendly, FREE, outdoor Pride festival in Oceanside. It has expanded by several blocks in the last few years, but the main stage, with ASL interpreters, remains the closest to Pacific Coast Highway. In finding the event, the obvious landmarks are the Civic Center Fountain and the Oceanside Library. Bring sunblock and plan to make a day of it. Add in a walk over to the beach. There are also lots of good restaurants within blocks of the event, and some are featuring North County Pride dinner menus and drink specials. Parking is available in the Civic Center parking garage and on side streets off Ditmar.

P.S. I've been told this year's after-party (21+) is at the Coco Cabana Roof Top Bar on Pier View way.

North County Pride by the Beach will take place in downtown Oceanside on **Saturday, June 3** from noon to 6 p.m.
pridebythebeach.org



NORTH COUNTY RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Girl Scouts honor: I will only share restaurants here for two reasons: 1. They are LGBTQ owned/themed/allied. 2. I have personally been there at least 10 times because they have incredible food with a welcoming staff.

That Boy Good by Miss Kim in Oceanside has fantastic barbecue, is a fantastic community ally, and the restaurant will be closing its doors forever at the end of May. Come show Miss Kim and her fabulous crew some love! Insider tip: A Blues Night dance party is coming up on the evening of May 4! thatboygoodbbq.com



DRAG TAKEOVER: DISNEY EDITION

Grab a seat for the fourth annual Drag Takeover: Disney Edition on **Tuesday, May 23** at The Belly Up in Solana Beach. Enjoy magical and not too naughty Evil Queens and Pretty Princesses as they perform all your favorite Disney tunes. Miriam T. will host the show, featuring *RuPaul's Drag Race All-Stars* Season 1 winner Chad Michaels, Dolly Levi, Kickxy Vixen, Paris Sukomi Max, Naomi Daniels, Big Dee and Penny Dreadful. Age 21+. Proceeds will benefit Pride by the Beach, a free Pride festival in downtown Oceanside. bellyup.com

MORE DISNEY-THEMED PRIDE!

And while this isn't happening in North County... it's more magical news for Disnerds like me! Disneyland now has (an officially sanctioned) **Pride Nite** as part of their Disney After Dark series. Disneyland will host Pride Nite on **Tuesday, June 13** and **Thursday, June 15** from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Tickets are now on sale. I imagine they will go quickly, "my little poopsies!" (That's a riff on Ursula, the Sea Witch, in *The Little Mermaid*, in case you have been living above the sea and under a beach rock.) Don't forget to wear red! disneyland.com

MAY'S NOTABLE NORTH COUNTIAN: LAURA JANE

Each month I'll honor someone doing good in the gayborhood. Let's celebrate our diverse North County LGBTQ community. So, for May, I will give a shout-out to North County's own **Laura Jane Willcock Yearsley**, of *Fish on a Stick Talent* fame. You probably know her... and you probably know her heart. It has been a rough road for so many creatives. Performers and artists are just recently getting back to work. It is going to take some time for them to get above treading water. So, North County peeps: Do you have an event, wedding or private party and need a DJ/emcee/officiant? Give Laura Jane a jingle! 619.729.0925. She has given so much time and talent to so many local charities and LGBTQ Pride events and fundraisers for more than 20 years. Please give back to this kind soul by giving her gigs. *Thank you, beautiful people!*



THROUGH SCIENCE, QUEER LIBERATION

Magnus Hirschfeld was a Jewish-German scientist who pioneered the study of sexuality and gender over 100 years ago. In 1896, Hirschfeld was practicing natural and preventative medicine in Berlin, yet his attention was acutely and repeatedly pulled to the homosexual community. An alarming number of his gay patients were taking their own lives, and Hirschfeld found that he spent much of his time giving them reasons to live. One patient in particular left an indelible mark; on the eve of his wedding, a young army officer he was treating for depression died by suicide, leaving a note for Hirschfeld detailing that despite his efforts, he could not break his desire for other men. Unable to even utter the words “gay” or “homosexual,” he concluded his note with this heartbreaking appeal: “The thought that you could contribute to a future where the German fatherland will think of us in more just terms sweetens the hour of my death.”

Hirschfeld knew gay liberation was more urgent than ever, and with that he co-founded the world’s first LGBT-rights organization in May 1897, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. The mantra “Through science toward justice” reflected Hirschfeld’s belief that a greater scientific understanding of homosexuality could eradicate prejudice.

In 1919, Hirschfeld parlayed the committee into a physical manifestation of his vision with the opening of Berlin’s Institute for the Science of Sexuality. The world’s first sexology research center would become the premier hub for sex and gender studies worldwide. With its holistic commitment to “research, teaching, healing and refuge,” the institute was not only a research facility, but also a unique resource for community and educational services. Among its offerings were treatment for alcoholism, women’s health services, sex counseling, treatment for venereal diseases, and access to contraceptives. It also offered educational seminars on many of these matters to health professionals and community members.

Hirschfeld soon developed a theory of what he called “sexual intermediaries,” a notion which held that an entire spectrum of naturally occurring variations in sexuality and gender existed across the entire human species. Arguing that “what is natural cannot be immoral,” he delved completely into work that humanized many who had historically been demonized and denigrated in the name of science. Decades ahead of his time, Hirschfeld’s work validated the natural existence of homosexuality, bisexuality, asexuality, gender nonconformity, and

intersex and trans individuals — all people who were “in accordance with their nature,” as Hirschfeld said, “not against it.”

The institute broke major ground in the advancement of not only trans studies, but also trans advocacy. To provide protection from the law, the Institute issued government-approved identification cards that allowed trans and gender nonconforming individuals to dress according to their gender identity without the threat of incarceration. When the desire to live fully as the opposite sex was significant, Hirschfeld believed that science should provide a means of transition. The institute offered some of the earliest iterations of hormone therapy and gender-affirming care, including the first recorded case of complete gender-affirming surgery.

Hirschfeld left Germany in 1930 on a speaking tour. He would never return. On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of

Germany. The Institute for the Science of Sexuality was soon raided and pillaged by Nazi youth, who incinerated all its contents. Hirschfeld — who was Jewish, gay and outspokenly progressive — represented everything the National Socialist regime despised. He watched from abroad as his entire life’s work was destroyed: 25,000 books, journals and photos, all irreplaceable artifacts of queer history and progress, gone. Hirschfeld, in exile from his country, died of a heart attack two years later.

But if the Nazis thought that they were extinguishing

the flame that Hirschfeld sparked, they were too late. Though his life’s work had tragically been laid to waste, it had already begun inspiring subsequent queer-rights organizations a decade prior. In 1924, the Society for Human Rights, modeled after Hirschfeld’s Scientific Humanitarian Committee, opened in Chicago. It was the first queer-rights organization in the United States and led to the founding of the Mattachine Society in 1950, which would become one of the most influential LGBT rights organizations in history.

Though the unprecedented queer haven Hirschfeld built was destroyed, a throughline of its influence can be traced all the way to queer-focused movements worldwide today. It may be impossible to fathom, then, the scope of just how many queer lives Hirschfeld’s work has not only improved, but saved, with the seeds of advocacy and scientific understanding he planted in his time. There is a saying in Judaism that a single life destroyed is a world destroyed. But whoever saves a single life, it is said, has saved an entire world. Because of the foundation Hirschfeld laid for the community a century ago, we are no doubt walking among many more queer worlds today.



photo courtesy of the Magnus-Hirschfeld Gesellschaft

Magnus Hirschfeld pictured below second from right

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NEW YORK MAGAZINE

1776

THE MUSICAL



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 **MANCE CREATIVE**

THE RISE OF THE OUT ACTORS

On paper, the title of this month's column sounds like the subtitle to something that Marvel Studios might churn out. But if you think about it, aren't out actors who are living in the spotlight of their true identities a variety of superhero? Doing so in the name of truth, justice and the American gay, shucking the "don't ask, don't tell" rules that applied to Hollywood of yesterday, with nary a skeleton in their closet, or having a closet to store said cadavers in, for that matter.

The new crop of up-and-coming actors, in both film and on TV, are akin to the 1970s Marlo Thomas record and TV special *Free to be... You and Me*. Here's a look at some newcomers, what they've been in, are currently starring on, and what's coming up for them.



BUZZWORTHY PERFORMANCES

Jasmin Savoy Brown is back for new episodes of Showtime's second season of *Yellowjackets*, on which she plays the teenage version of Taissa Turner (played as an adult by Tawny Cypress) — as the show flashes back and forth between the younger and older women on the amazing series. Yeah, I'm an unofficial cheerleader for *Yellowjackets* — be aggressive, b-e aggressive! Or is that b-e-e aggressive?

Regardless, as one of the survivors of a plane crash that strands a girls soccer team in the wilderness, the *Yellowjackets* star player has her fair share of secrets, like a penchant for eating dirt — I'm not sure if that counts as a protein or not, but it's most definitely gluten free- and having some gnarly sleepwalking episodes. She is also a lesbian in love with teammate Van Palmer (Liv Hewson).

Brown is an out actor who most recently returned to her role in *Scream VI* as Mindy Meeks-Martin. And she has quite the off-screen relationship with Hewson, including co-hosting the podcast *The Homo Schedule* together, and featuring her, ahem, on-the-same-team co-star, in the video for her song "goddamnit."

And speaking of Hewson, audiences will remember her from the canceled-too-soon Netflix show *Santa Clarita Diet*. The Australian thespian brings a bit of humor to the current series, given that it can get pretty dark at times. We'll just say that her tenure as the daughter of zombies Drew Barrymore and Timothy Olyphant was good research for her current role. IYKYK, as the kids say, which translates to If You Know You Know. You're welcome! This year sees the addition of *Six Feet Under* alum Lauren Ambrose playing the grown version of Van and we're here for it — as the kids also say. Damn, kids sure say a lot of things, especially with acronyms! IKR?

GUY CANDY

Another series that has more than its fair share of supernatural moments is *American Horror Story*, and last season's *NYC* installment included two fresh faces, **Isaac Cole Powell** and **Matthew William Bishop**.

Powell first entered the **Ryan Murphyverse** — yes, that's a thing — appearing on Season 10 of *American Horror Story: Double Feature*, where he was abducted by aliens. Cue the expected anal probe joke here. For Season 11, he played photographer Theo Graves, who is among a group of gay men fearing for their lives from a serial killer in 1980s New York City. On the big screen, he has previously co-starred in the movie adaptation of *Dear Evan Hansen* — the less said about that, the better — and was in the psychological thriller *Cat Person* this year and can next be seen starring alongside **Billy Porter** and **Luke Evans** in the drama *Our Son*.

OK, readers get your drool buckets ready... Powell's onscreen nemesis was **Bishop** as Big Daddy, who represented the human manifestation of the AIDS virus that was also running rampant in New York City. So, it gives very mixed feelings on being attracted to him, in his ensemble of a leather hood and a harness that shows off the fact he's also a competitive bodybuilder. Thanks a lot, *American Horror Story*! Bishop ditched his corporate public relations job to take a, well, stab at acting, of which *AHS* was his debut.

Another show created by Murphy and Brad Falchuk is Fox's *9-1-1: Lone Star*. There must be something in the water on set, because the series features not one, not two, but three out actors playing LGBT characters! If I were good at math, that would be a high ratio or something. **Brian Michael Smith**, **Rafael Silva** and **Ronen Rubinstein** are a trio of rescue workers who get to work under their captain, played by **Rob Lowe**. I want to work under Lowe, but in a different capacity! Also, I'd like to know his exact pact with the devil for remaining so youthful looking.

The latter two portray **Carlos Reyes** and **T.K. Strand**, the couple known as "Tarlos" in the series. Way to stay on brangelina, boys. I mean on brand. Of note, Rubinstein plays Lowe's son. Wish he were my daddy. OK, I'll stop. Rubinstein, who had previously been on *Orange is the New Black*, came out as bisexual last year and Reyes — who appeared on *The Corps* — have shared some fiery sex scenes on the show. Somebody call 9-1-1! Oh wait. And Smith became the first Black trans man to land a regular series role on network television after being cast as Paul Strickland in September 2019 and has also appeared on *Queen Sugar* and *The L Word: Generation Q*, and has three

upcoming films in the works.

HBO Max alum **Lukas Gage** made head, or rather head waves, on the first season of *The White Lotus* as Dillon, a resort staff member who is a literal kiss ass to boss Armond (**Murray Bartlett**), played Tyler on *Euphoria*, and had a shower of the golden variety on Netflix's *You*. Next up, Gage will be on Season 5 of FX's *Fargo* with **Jon Hamm** and appears in the remake of *Roadhouse* with **Jake Gyllenhaal**. However, it's his love life that's been garnering a great deal of attention after he confirmed his relationship with celebrity hairstylist **Chris Appleton** on *The Today Show* in March.

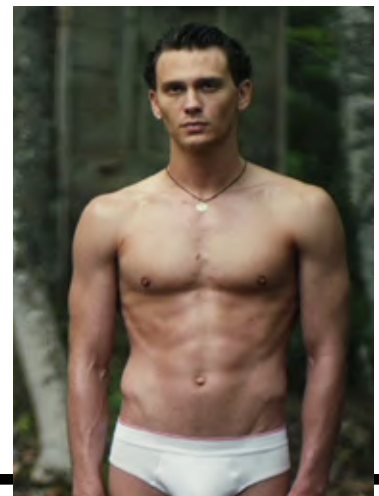
Before he came out, **Connor Jessup** had a starring role in the ironically titled *Closet Monster* in 2015, playing a gay teen who is haunted by childhood trauma. Jessup came out in 2019, and the next year began a 28-episode run as Tyler Locke in Netflix's creepy comic book adaptation *Locke & Key*, which is not returning for a fourth season. Boo!

Meanwhile on the big screen, if there was *A Knock at the Cabin* and it was the film's co-star **Ben Aldridge** on the other side of the door, you had better believe I'd invite him in! The English actor has made a name for himself by being involved with both movies, like the aforementioned thriller, and in last year's *Spoiler Alert*, as well as portraying Batman's dad on *Pennyworth* for the small screen. And who could forget his turn as "Arsehole Guy" on *Fleabag*?

Aaron Holliday certainly likes a good straddle. Well, likes to straddle the line between TV and film work, that is. Geez, get your minds out of the gutter! I'll see if I can first, of course. He has had prominent roles on two HBO Max shows, *Sharp Objects* and *Euphoria*, and made a big screen splash — or would that be snort? — in *Cocaine Bear*. Holliday has an upcoming film, *Crush It*, that explores the differences in what masculinity means between a son and his estranged father. I didn't know they were making a movie about my life!

Cooper Koch has been busy cutting his acting eye teeth on horror films. In *Swallowed* — Must. Use. Restraint. — a body horror affair spirals out of control after a drug run goes bad as two friends must contend with drugs, bugs and horrific intimacy — oh my! Sounds positively nightmarish! So, it makes sense that *A Nightmare on Elm Street 2: Freddy's Revenge* scream queen **Mark Patton** is a co-star.

In *They/Them*, he was one of the two-fold unhappy campers at a gay conversion camp beset by a killer. And the film had plenty of representation to spare with a slew of non-binary actors, which brings us to...





ACTING OUT!

The next four actors whose star meters are on the uptick identify as such. **Jesse James Keitel** made history as one of the first non-binary actors to play a regular in the series *Big Sky* and portrayed the standout character Ruthie on the reboot of Peacock's *Queer as Folk* last year.

There's no question that **Bella Ramsey** is an acting force to be reckoned with on HBO Max's *The Last of Us*; her role of Ellie is equal parts sass and, well, more sass. The 19-year-old first became a blip on audiences' radar in *Game of Thrones* and will next be lending her voice to *Chicken Run: The Dawn of Nugget* — I see what they did there, someone drank that clever juice, Shelby.

Ramsey will be starring in the post-production vehicle *Monstrous Beauty* as Barbara, a young woman born with the rare condition of being entirely covered in hair. I would offer a one-word bit of advice for that condition: Nair! However, the film is a period piece set in the 1600s and that product hadn't been invented yet. Sorry 'bout that.

Mae Martin is based in the UK, but hails from Canada. Are you following all that geography? I knew you would. The stand-up comedian splits time in front of and behind the camera on projects, like writing for IFC's *Baroness Von Sketch Show*, acting on six episodes of HBO Max's *The Flight Attendant* as Gracie. She has also created and starred in the Netflix series *Feel Good*. Next up for Martin on the streamer is the miniseries *Tall Pines*, which is a sinister town that serves as the backdrop for an exploration into generational divides.

As Theo Putnam, one of Sabrina Spellman's Fright Club friends on Netflix's *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, **Lachlan Watson** had one of the show's biggest character arcs by identifying as a trans male and then played twins Glen and Glenda on *Chucky* last season. Next up for the 22-year-old is starring in two recently released horror films, *The Unheard* on Shudder and *Only the Good Survive*. Horror is definitely in Watson's wheelhouse, and I love a good theme!

Two more Netflix stars, **Emma Corrin** and **Jonathan Bailey**, have become audience favorites with their star-making roles on *The Crown* and *Bridgerton*, respectively. Corrin, who falls into the non-binary category, played Princess Diana in the fourth season of the popular

show, was **Harry Styles'** wife in *My Policeman* and will appear with **Ryan Reynolds** in next year's *Deadpool 3*. Bailey inhabits a straight body — no, not like that — as Lord Anthony Bridgerton and is living every gay actor's fantasy by being cast as Fiyero in the film adaptation of *Wicked*. Werk!

Dua Saleh, who is trans, appears on the streamer's series *Sex Education* as Cal, and is also a recognized musician. Her co-star **Ncuti Gatwa** recently announced that he will be leaving the coming-of-age series, where he portrays gay teen Eric, after the upcoming fourth season. However, Gatwa has two distinctions on his resume; he is the first black actor to be cast as *Doctor Who* for the show's 60th anniversary season and will also appear in this summer's gayest movie, *Barbie*. Like literal little pink shoes gay.

Another Netflix gay teen, and *Heartstopper* star, **Kit Connor** could have easily been included in the Guy Candy section as he has gotten swole as of late. However, he's only 19, and since I don't have a windowless white van, I opted to feature him here.

His recent transformation has the rumor mill speculating that he could be preparing for a role as Hulkling in Marvel's *Young Avengers*. You may recall that he felt pressured to disclose his sexuality and came out as bisexual last year via a tweet. Y'all better back it up, he may Hulk smash you!

Did you know that HBO Max's *Hacks* star **Hannah Einbinder** — who is bisexual — is the daughter of *SNL* alum Laraine Newman? Well, now you do! On the show, Einbinder is nobody's second banana in her co-starring role of Ava, the sarcastic comedy writer for **Jean Smart's** Deborah Vance, for which Einbinder has received two Primetime Emmy nominations. Another actor representin' on the streamer is trans actor and model **Hunter Schafer**, who co-stars on HBO Max's *Euphoria* as Jules. She has a starring role in the horror flick *Cuckoo*, whose plot is being kept under wraps, so it could be a deep dive into the dark side of Cocoa Puffs cartoon mascot Sonny the Cuckoo Bird. Stay tuned! Schafer will be featured in the prequel for *The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.

CUT. PRINT. THAT'S A WRAP!

As you can see, gone are the days where actors must mask their true identities, like stars of yesteryear Rock Hudson and Barbara Stanwyck, as a for example. And with the wealth of roles available being varied, it looks like the acting world is their oyster. Until next time, that's all the news that's fit to print.

**JOIN JAMES HOLJES - MR. PALM SPRINGS LEATHER
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HAPPY MAY!

The year is flying by, triple-digit temps are back, and the social scene is just as hot. Happy Cinco de Mayo. Happy Mother's Day. Happy White Party. Happy Memorial Day weekend.

The drag4drag rally held recently was a huge success with hundreds attending and nonstop energy, excitement and message of drag support locally and solidarity everywhere, especially with anti-drag and anti-LGBTQ legislation in many states. The city of Palm Springs proclaimed the day of the rally Drag Celebration Day. Ron deHarte, president of Greater Palm Springs Pride, announced at the rally that the November Pride celebration theme would be **Drag Now. Drag Forever.** And that Palm Springs is designated a Drag Sanctuary City. The greater Palm Springs area knows how to appreciate drag! pspride.org

Palm Springs Hot Rodeo, hosted by the Palm Springs chapter of the Golden State Gay Rodeo Association, sanctioned by the International Gay Rodeo Association, will be **May 4-7** at A. C. Dysart Equestrian Park in Banning. hotrodeo.org



Braille Institute Coachella Valley will hold a free community open house **Thursday, May 4** at the organization's new Palm Desert facility in El Paseo Plaza. There will be tours and demonstrations of their many free services. Check the website for more details and to RSVP for the event. brailleinstitute.org

Concerts in the Park are every Thursday evening in May at Palm Desert Civic Center Park amphitheatre starting **May 4** with Upstream, Caribbean music group. We Belong will perform **May 11**, a tribute to Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo. Food trucks will be there, or guests can bring their picnic baskets, blankets or lawn chairs. palmdesert.gov

Coming to **The Purple Room Palm Springs** will be Randy Roberts, One Of The Girls, Who's One Of The Boys, **Friday, May 5**; Tina Turner Tribute by Debby Holiday, **Saturday, May 6**; Elvis: The Early Years, with Scot Bruce, **Sunday, May 21**; Ann Hampton Calloway and Liz Calloway—Broadway, The Calloway, **May 26-28**. purpleroompalmsprings.com.

Concerts In The Park LaQuinta will present L.A.vation, billed as the world's greatest tribute band to U2, **Saturday, May 6** at Silverrock Park. playinlaquinta.com

The men's vocal ensemble, **A Cabbello**, will perform their spring concert **May 6, 7** and **13** at PS Underground. acabbello.org

The production, **The Boys In The Band** by Mart Crowley, will continue through **May 7**, presented by The Bent Theater group (Palm Springs' new LGBTQ theatre) in association with Palm Springs Cultural Center at the Camelot Theatres. thebent.org



Catch **Thirsty Burlington** in "Cher 1975" at Toucan's Tiki Lounge **May 6** and **13**. reactionshows.com.



Harvey Milk Coachella Valley Diversity Breakfast will be **Thursday, May 11** at Palm Springs Convention Center. **Nicole Murray Ramirez**, Queen Mother of the Americas, International Imperial Court System, will be the Harvey B. Milk Legacy Award honoree.

Ricardo Lara, California's eighth insurance commissioner, will be recognized with the Harvey B. Milk Leadership award. Lara made history by becoming the first openly gay person elected to statewide office in California's history. Twelve-hundred people are expected to attend. pspride.org

Arthur Lyon's Film Noir Festival, with an eclectic mix of classic film noir "B" movies, will be presented **May 11-14** at Palm Springs Cultural Center. psculturalcenter.org

An evening of movie music, part of the **Live Music at the VIP Lounge**, is **Friday, May 12** at Palm Springs Cultural Center with Jeff Barnett, Charles Herrera, Heather Joy, Katherine Lench Meyer and pianist Chip Prince. psculturalcenter.org.



White Party Global Palm Springs will return **May 12-14**. Dance music legends Cece Peniston, Robin S, Inaya Day and Crystal Waters perform at the world-famous Sunday T-dance. whitepartyglobal.com

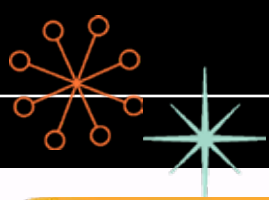
PS Underground will present **Labor Pains, Mother's Day Brunch** with humorous and heartfelt musical look at the joys, memories, trials and tribulations of motherhood **Sunday, May 14**. **Sharon McNight** stars in Songs to Offend almost Everyone comedic cabaret performance **Saturday, May 20**. psunderground.com

The **Chamber of Commerce** annual joint mixer will be **Wednesday, May 17** at Palm Springs Air Museum. Celebrating memberships in Thousand Palms, Palm Springs, Desert Business Association, So Cal Black, Desert Hispanic, Palm Desert Area, Greater Coachella Valley, Rancho Mirage, and Indian Wells Chamber organizations. More than 600 attendees are expected for this valley-wide networking event. Contact one of the organizations to purchase entry wristbands in advance to avoid lines.

Free movies in the downtown park, presented by Palm Springs Cultural Center, will continue with **The Girl Can't Help It** on **Wednesday, May 17** and **Funny Face** on **Wednesday, May 31**. psculturalcenter.org

The 21st annual spring **Joshua Tree Music Festival** will take place **May 18-21**. joshuatreemusicfestival.com.





Australia's **Thunder From Down Under**, the No. 1 male revue in the world, will be at The Show at Agua Caliente Resort Casino in Rancho Mirage, **Friday, May 19**. aguacalientecasinos.com.

Richmond/Ermet Aid Foundation (REAF) will present a special fundraising event **Saturday, May 20**, titled White Lotus Hawaii, at a private Palm Springs estate. This is a benefit for the Transgender Services of the LGBTQ Community Center. Entertainment will be provided by Garrett Clayton and Debby Holiday, with DJ Modgirl. reaf.org

Palm Springs Dance Project will present the **Communities' Finest Dance Showcase**, a pre-professional, non-competitive event **Saturday, May 20** at Palm Springs Cultural Center. palmspringsdance.org

Season 3 of **Vanity Halston's Drag Star Challenge** will premiere **Sunday, May 21** at One Eleven Bar. You can apply to compete at vanitydragstarchallenge.com.

Jerry Keller will receive his star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars **Tuesday, May 23** in front of Lulu California Bistro. walkofthestars.com

Miss Bea Haven's Pop Up monthly drag showcase will premiere **Tuesday, May 23** at AMP Sports Lounge. Her new show welcomes drag queens and kings where she will call them up to perform. First timers are welcome. ampcatcity.com

Miss Toucan's drag pageant will be **Wednesday, May 24**. This drag competition is a one-night event. Twelve contestants will be judged on tiki wear, talent, evening gown and question/answer. toucanstikilounge.com

Chad Michaels' Dreamgirls Revue with Dolly Levi, Jasmine Masters, Trinna Model and Mayhem Miller will be **Thursday, May 25** at Oscar's Palm Springs. Jackie Beat, Sherry Vine, Mario Diaz, Nadya Ginsburg and original cast member Danny Pintauro will present **Who's 'Da Boss? Live!** on **Friday, May 26**. A *Dallas* television show cast reunion with Patrick Duffy, Linda Gray, Steve Kanaly, Charlene Tilton, Audrey Landers and Joan Van Ark will be **Tuesday, June 13**, when Oscar's debuts their new, expanded courtyard. oscarpalmsprings.com

The Memorial Day weekend **Sun Vibes Pool Party** will take place **Saturday, May 27** at Margaritaville Resort and features DJ duo, Thunderpuss. margaritavilleresorts.com. The celebration will continue with the nighttime nightclub party, **Euphoria**, at the new Reforma Nightclub. reformamaps.com

People of Colibri will present **Glitz, Glam + Disco: A Studio 54 Drag Extravaganza** on

Sunday, May 28 at Desert Island Country Club in Rancho Mirage. The show, **Parlour Queens**, will be held at the club on Wednesdays. Check the website for performers and details. di71.com

Ross Mathews and his evening of standup comedy, *I Gotchu, Gurl!* will happen at Hotel Zoso **Saturday, June 3**. zosofun.thundertix.com/events

The **Palm Springs Plaza Theatre Foundation** will host free open houses to display plans and renderings of the renovations to the historic building every Tuesday evening through **June 6**. savetheplazatheatreps.org.

The free art exhibitions **Desert X**, at multiple sites throughout the Coachella Valley, will run through **May 7**. Ace Hotel & Swim Club, Palm Springs, is the official cultural partner and lead hotel. Maps and programs are available on the app, website and hub at Ace Hotel. desertx.org

To beat the heat, check out the new **Berger Foundation Iceplex** for ice skating and hockey activities. bergerfoundationiceplex.com. For all sorts of programs and activities, check out the **Desert Recreation District**. myrecreationdistrict.com

PLAN AHEAD. GET YOUR TICKETS.

Diana Ross will appear at The Show at Agua Caliente Resort Casino in Rancho Mirage, **Saturday, June 10**. **LeAnn Rimes** will be there **Saturday, July 1**. **Rupaul's Drag Race Weraq the World Tour 2023** will be **Saturday, July 15**. showranchomirage.org

The McCallum Theatre's new season has a huge list of entertainment, including **The Lettermen, November 19; The Cher Show**, a new musical with three actresses playing her, **November 24-26; Les Misérables, November 28-December 3;**

The Manhattan Transfer, December 9; Barry Manilow's A Gift of Love IV, five Christmas concerts benefitting 20 charities, **December 12, 13, 15, 16, 17**. mccallumtheatre.org

Coming to Acrisure Arena will be **Madonna, The Celebration Tour**, with special guest **Bob, the Drag Queen** on **Thursday, January 11**. acrisurearena.com



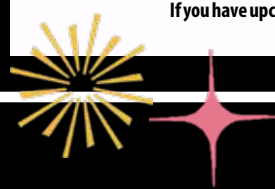
HERE ARE DATES OF UPCOMING PRIDE FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS TO PLAN AHEAD WITH YOUR SCHEDULE.

WeHo Pride is the City of West Hollywood's LGBTQ Pride celebration. They kick off 40 days of the WeHo Pride Arts Festival **Monday, May 22** with the special Pride weekend **June 2-4**. wehopride.com

LA Pride in the Park is **June 9-10** at LA State Historic Park and features Megan Thee Stallion and Mariah Carey. lapride.org

Pride Under The Pines in Idyllwild takes place **Saturday, October 7**. prideunderthepines.com

If you have upcoming social events, benefits, charities and local happenings, email delicdivas@dc.rr.com.



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ALTERED PERCEPTIONS REVEALS THE NAKED TRUTH

What would YOU do if you were gay, a global pandemic was raging, and you were freaking out over the future of humanity? Well, you probably don't have to think too hard since that was our real-life situation just a couple of years ago! Now, we have a movie that reflects the LGBTQ community's lingering concerns.

Altered Perceptions by veteran indie filmmaker Jorge Ameer (*Sabor Tropical, Oasis, The Family Tree*) will have its world premiere this month at the Cannes Film Festival. It will screen in Southern California as the Opening Night attraction at the Marina del Rey Film Festival on **Thursday, June 8**.

In this contemporary psychological thriller, the United States is on the brink of a potential Civil War. Things further deteriorate when the perceptions of many seemingly normal people begin to change dramatically, causing alterations in reality and behaviors that cannot be explained medically. Suicides, homicides and mass murders begin to increase at an alarming rate. A renowned neurologist and his team begin to unravel what appears to be the root of these behaviors: rapid aging of the brain. It is unclear how it's being spread.

Politicians and others on the conservative fringe begin to falsely claim this disease is affecting only LGBTQ and Black people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19. This misinformation quickly becomes a hot political issue with some calling for these groups of people to be rounded up, quarantined and exterminated. Suddenly, a man who claims to be from the future arrives to convince the neurologist's gay son Alex that his father is key to finding the answer to this plague. But is it too late for this mysterious — and intriguingly unclothed — man to help us save ourselves?

Altered Perceptions turns out to be a timely, sexy, sci-fi mind-bender featuring a strong cast that includes Oscar nominees Eric Roberts and Sally Kirkland. It is director Ameer's most ambitious and provocative film to date. Interestingly, the screenplay was written by clinical neuropsychologist Wayne Dees.

The movie also stars talented young actor **Oran Stainbrook**, making his feature film debut as Alex. This interview was conducted by email, and some of his responses have been edited for length or clarity.

You make quite an impression in *Altered Perceptions*, which I understand is your first feature or starring role.

So, I impulsively moved to Los Angeles for the first time in summer of 2021 without any semblance of a plan, a job or a place to live. I had about \$1,000 to my name and lived out of my old, beat-up '98 Jeep Cherokee for the first few weeks, until I found a cheap room to rent in a fairly run-down house in a not-so-great neighborhood right next to the freeway in East Hollywood. I didn't have an agent or any idea of how to get an agent, so I started self-submitting to everything I could find on sites like Actors Access and Casting Networks.

When Jorge Ameer asked to meet in person regarding my self-tape for his film, I assumed it was a routine callback. I arrived to our meeting and it was just the two of us; no waiting room full of guys that looked like me, no casting director or cameras. Jorge simply offered me the role and I thought for sure I was being scammed or pranked. I'd been in town less than six months — it all seemed too good to be true. Now, here we are on the other side of making this film and honestly, I'm still pinching myself!

What was the experience of making this unique, intense film like?

It was a peak-life experience for sure. I couldn't have imagined a better opportunity; my biggest childhood dream being realized, with such an original script, in such awesome company. I had an absolute blast. I did feel like a bit of an impostor and put a lot of pressure on myself, which led to some anxiety. But Jorge and Dr. Wayne Dees could not have been more supportive and encouraging. Jorge's excitement about the film and his confidence in me really helped me to chill out, enjoy the experience, and settle into a mental place from which I could give my best performance. Getting to work with so many Hollywood legends and up-and-coming talents was also very educational and inspiring. I absorbed so much just being on set and observing everyone else.

Part of what makes the film so original and interesting is the fact that it's made by a bunch of outsiders. Wayne is the farthest thing from a Hollywood screenwriter; he's a neuropsychologist from Texas! He wrote the script from his real-life knowledge, based on a lifetime of experience studying the brain and practicing psychology. Then, the film is directed by a self-made filmmaker from Panama! Jorge's own journey as a filmmaker is really inspiring. He came to Hollywood from Panama with nothing but dreams, grit and determination, and built himself a career over the course of decades without any special favors or connections.

Do I understand correctly that your "day job" in Utah is primarily architecture or real estate? What do you do when you aren't acting?

Yeah, sort of a combination of the two, I guess, and at the same time neither? My degree is in architecture but most of my work experience is as a self-employed designer-builder. After finishing school in Portland, Oregon, I cut my teeth in the Bay Area as a freelancer designing and building chicken coops, garden sheds, tiny houses, that sort of thing. I also spent some time working with Habitat for Humanity doing neighborhood revitalization and home repairs.

Then, in 2018, I realized my other childhood dream and — again, somewhat impulsively — bought a dilapidated old building in a tiny, rural mountain town in the central Utah desert. This 10,000-square-foot, 115-year-old general store building was originally the social and economic center of a now nearly defunct former coal mining camp. I've been renovating this place (with occasional help from my partner, friends and family) since then with a vision of establishing a creative retreat. I have a variety of spaces here now available for short- or long-term rent. All are welcome to come spend some time here at "The Store."

How did your upbringing prepare you, if at all, to help tell an unusual story like *Altered Perceptions*?

Like most people, I loved playing make-believe when I was a kid. I loved creating and inhabiting my own worlds of fantasy. That spirit of playfulness and freedom of self-expression is something I have protected and nurtured my whole life. It led to me doing a lot of theatre in school, and eventually writing short stories and making short films with friends. I did abandon all that sort of stuff while I was in university, due to the time constraints and financial pressures of working my way through school and all the time I spent exploring other interests: art, architecture and gardening, primarily. In the end, I'm glad I spent a solid 15 years away from acting pursuits because coming back to it in my mid-30s has been a really joyful process of rediscovery.

I'm grateful for having had a really well-rounded life experience so far. I think great art — whether comedy, acting or architecture — is often informed by a unique combination of life experiences had by the artist. Having a theatre background actually heavily informed my approach to architecture in school. I always thought of buildings and spaces as theatrical experiences. Experiencing architecture makes you both the viewer and the star of the show. Architecture tells you a story and allows you to inhabit that story in the first person.

You play a gay character, Alex Feretti, and there is plenty of other LGBTQ content in the film. How did your personal sexual orientation or experience inform your performance?

So, I grew up Mormon and was taught from a very young age that homosexuality was wrong, was a sin, and something you would burn in hell for eternity for practicing. Coming to terms with my own complicated sexuality and witnessing some of my friends do the same was one of the biggest weights that "broke my shelf," as we "ex-Mos" like to say. Finding my way out of Mormonism — a years-long process from about age 15-20 — was an intellectual journey that just completely shattered my whole model of reality and forced me to build a new one from scratch. It was incredibly disturbing to uncover the truth about the Mormon church's

connection to gay-conversion therapy practices and see first-hand how the religion's oppressive ideology led to an epidemic of LGBTQ youth being rejected by their families and communities, sometimes being made homeless and/or leading to substance abuse, addiction and suicide.

Needless to say, I feel extremely protective of the LGBTQ community in the face of all this, which made getting into character pretty effortless. Alex is extremely conflicted about working for a politician whose values are not in alignment with his own but does the job believing that, if he can work his way up to a place of influence, he can make positive change within the system. Alex is highly motivated in his



mission because his father and stepfather are the only family he has. His love for them is what gives him the strength to ultimately do what is necessary in the face of evil.

What was it like working with the very hot and perpetually naked Joseph DeMatteo (who plays the film's visitor from the future)?

Joseph is indeed very hot and very naked in the film. You'd be surprised how sweet and endearing the man underneath all that muscle is! I think it's generally rude to gawk and ogle people's bodies, so I tried not to stare. But just being in the presence of that man's physique was, umm... some kind of spiritual awakening? Definitely inspired me to get into the gym myself more. All that sexiness aside, I really like Joseph and enjoyed our time together.

Jorge and Wayne tell a very serious story in *Altered Perceptions*, one which seems to grow more timely every day in the USA. What positive/constructive message(s) or meaning(s) do you hope viewers will take away from the film?

Aside from being entertaining and thought-provoking, this film is very timely considering the stakes of the upcoming U.S. elections and some of the cultural issues being battled over in this country and the world. I think the themes of the film will resonate widely. At first, they might seem like a horrifying what-if scenario but afterwards you get a "oh wait, this is already happening" kind of gut-punch feeling.

I hope viewers walk away from this film feeling more keenly aware of the consequences of what happens when we all lose our minds as a result of giving in to fear. The current paradigm of for-profit media companies and news networks is designed to encourage fear, hate and division. There is a kind of rabid insanity that has taken over both the left and right ends of the political/ideological spectrum, encouraging extremism that shames and shuns dissenters, moderates and freethinkers into silence and compliance. Psychopaths and bullies on both sides are being allowed to control the narrative and dominate everyone else.

We need a profound shift of perspective and values. I like the phrase "the future is non-binary" because it applies to a number of things. Obviously, gender identity and sexual practice is part of it but so too is political ideology. Look to nature for the design solutions. We should strive for complexity and diversity, real diversity of thought, opinion and self-expression. I say reject the two-party system. Reject division. Reject groupthink. Be original. Be a freethinker. Be a revolutionary. That is what will make humanity as a whole resilient to evil and allow us to thrive going into what could be a truly awesome and beautiful future.

Anything else you would like my readers to know about you and/or the film?

Thank you, guys, so much for featuring me and the film. It's quite an honor. I'm proud of my own and everyone else's work on this film, and stoked to see it go out into the world and take on a life of its own. It is having its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival and should have a lengthy festival circuit showing after that. We're also very honored that it was selected as the Opening Night film of the Marina del Rey Film Festival. So, you can catch me and Jorge and much of the other cast and crew there on June 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Cinemark 18 in the Howard



Hughes shopping center.

With the film industry being so saturated with formulaic blockbusters and reboots, original indie films like this ought to be supported and celebrated! At the end of the day, it's a work of art, and art is meant to make you feel something and get you talking with other people about it. *Altered Perceptions* is sure to do both of those things.

What's next for you?

Just following my bliss and continuing to juggle all of those things! I love acting and being involved in filmmaking, but equally love and enjoy architectural design, construction, community building, practicing permaculture and making graphic and sculptural art. I've worked really hard to get to a place in life where I'm able to do what I love every single day and am

feeling really happy and fulfilled – my wellbeing has never been better.

As for my upcoming plans, I'm working on acquiring another property to develop into a second creative retreat - this time in southern Indiana. I recently explored the Louisville area – Louisville is right on the Ohio River which is the border between Kentucky and Indiana – and fell in love with the city and that whole part of the country. I think a lot of Californians would migrate out there if they had any idea what they were missing or the quality of life they could enjoy for a fraction of the cost.

The only other thing I have on my mind in terms of future plans is considering a run for president in 2028. I think once this Biden-Trump era of division and darkness comes to an end, there will be a need for a new type of leader. I'm interested in exploring how I might be of service to the country running as a non-partisan Independent candidate. I think that just getting into the race could be beneficial in terms of adding to the conversation and influencing the national political discourse. Of course I will need a lot of help and support to even launch a campaign. I will also need to spend the next four years learning an enormous amount and becoming the best version of myself that I can be. I know it's a long shot, but I have nothing to lose and think campaigning would be an incredible experience that would only further my ability to be effective in doing the rural revitalization work that I intend to spend the rest of my life working on.

I've also come around to feeling that maybe I should become somewhat active in the Mormon church again – just enough to claim my membership status and try to be a leader in that space in order to effect positive change. I can't really do anything to help shift the culture from the outside, but working on the inside may be the best way that I could change the narrative and put some pressure on the institution to be more inclusive to LGBT folks. I think ultimately the church needs to change to allow same-sex couples to enjoy full acceptance and all the blessings of "eternal marriage" through a sealing ceremony in the temple. I think the church also needs to own up to and apologize for its past mistakes rather than try to whitewash history. Until there is a reckoning around the racist themes of their foundational scriptures and theology, they will have a very difficult time retaining their membership going forward – especially the younger generations.

alteredperceptionsmovie.com and marinadelreyfilmfestival.com

May 19
19 de mayo

NATIONAL ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY



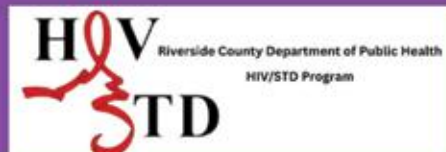
Together, we can **#StopHIVStigma** in Asian & Pacific Islander communities by talking about HIV prevention options such as getting tested and knowing your status. Learn how you can get tested and combat stigma.

Juntos, podemos detener el estigma del VIH en las comunidades asiáticas e isleñas del Pacífico hablando sobre las opciones de prevención del VIH, como hacerse la prueba y conocer su estado.

Aprenda cómo puede hacerse la prueba y combatir el estigma.

Scan QR code to learn more about HIV self-testing options

Escanee el código QR para obtener más información sobre las opciones de autodiagnóstico del VIH



TONY AWARD-NOMINATED *XANADU THE MUSICAL* ROLLS INTO SAN DIEGO

Put on your roller skates, turn up the glitter and get down with the muses in *Xanadu the Musical*, the musical adaptation of the 1980 film starring Olivia Newton John. This Tony Award-nominated, uproarious, roller skating, musical adventure about pursuing one's ambitions despite the limitations set by others is a rare musical with a large heart, an even bigger sense of humor and a tongue stuck firmly in its cheek. It follows the voyage of Kira, a youthful and attractive Greek muse, as she descends from Mount Olympus with her sisters to Venice Beach, California in 1980 on a mission to inspire struggling artist Sonny Malone to achieve the greatest artistic creation of all time: the first roller disco! This story is certain to have the audience in fits of laughter as they tap their feet to chart-topping songs from the 1980s!

The RAGE Monthly interviewed Jason Blitman, the show's director, to get the scoop on this production.

Is this your first time directing for San Diego Musical Theatre (SDMT)?

This is my first time directing for San Diego Musical Theatre. My husband and I actually only moved to San Diego in May of 2020 from New York City, so I'm excited to have this opportunity now that the world is coming back to normal a bit. And I'm grateful that they've welcomed me with open arms.

What drew you to want to be a part of this production?

I saw *Xanadu* on Broadway 15 years ago and had no idea what I was getting myself into — someone offered me free tickets and 98% of the time, when you're offered free tickets to a Broadway show, you go. Turned out it was one of the most fun nights I had in the theatre in a long time. Then when Jill Townsend, artistic director at SDMT, was telling me about her plans for the upcoming season, *Xanadu* jumped out as a project because it was a piece I loved and was excited to revisit. It's a small cast and in turn works nicely in their intimate theatre, AND I'm a sucker for camp and irreverent humor, which this show is filled with. I've directed a couple shows for San Diego Junior Theatre now, but this piece is an opportunity to really put more of



myself into the show.

It seems like a fantastic cast, so please tell us more about them.

Ugh, the cast. I want to say they're untalented hacks and nobody should ever hire them, just so each one of them is available for any project I ever do in the future. Truly, it's the loveliest group of people who happen to be insanely talented. I often say that I'd rather work with the nicest people in the room even if they're not the most talented, but I've really lucked out here in that they're both. There are folks who've recently moved to San Diego, San Diego natives, we have someone doing their first show in 13 years, and everything in between!

Each performer is so unique and brings their individual personalities to the show. It's been such a collaborative process and so I feel like I've gotten to know all 11 of them (nine on stage, two offstage singers) pretty well. I have to shout out Krista Feallock, who plays Clio/Kira (the Olivia Newton John role), who is simply out of this world (maybe she really is a Greek muse?!). I cannot wait for audiences to experience all of these performances.

I also have to shout out the fantastic design team — each one pulling out all the stops. Our costume designer Chong Mi Land (who has designed for a bunch of local drag queens, no less!) has handmade each dress in the show.

How is this production bringing something new to the story?

I'm a firm believer in the fact that any time a show goes into rehearsal it's inherently new. This group of people has never come together to tell this story before, so we get to bring ourselves to the piece. There's so much of my humor as well as each performer and designer throughout. We also have a female-identifying performer playing a traditionally male-identifying character, so there's a dynamic shift there, too. We've talked a lot about queer culture in the '80s and in the '40s/'50s (where a flashback takes place).

Why do you believe *Xanadu* remains so popular, and a "cult classic" in the gay community in particular?

We love high camp, over-the-top humor, and larger-than-life characters (*Mommie Dearest*, *Rocky Horror*, *Hedwig*, *Showgirls*, musical theatre in general) and so combine all of that with icon Olivia Newton John (may she rest in peace) you basically have gay cotton candy! And I guess there are also relatable themes of self-expression, finding one's voice, and the transformative power of art to bring joy and meaning to our lives is in there somewhere, too. Oh and short shorts. And roller skates. And thighs and butts in short shorts while on roller skates.

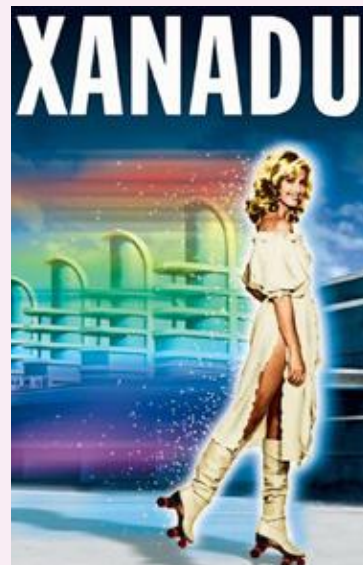
What do you prefer to do in your leisure time?

By day I actually do arts and culture programming for a NYC-based community center producing all sorts of events as well as producing and hosting their podcast, 76West. Reading is a new-found passion of mine, eating as many tacos as my cholesterol levels will allow, getting to know San Diego better — my husband actually just got his sailing license, so it's been fun exploring San Diego by the water, too.

What do you hope the audience will take away from this new production of *Xanadu*?

Xanadu the Musical is the ultimate musical theatre escapism and so I really hope folks just come and have fun we all can use 90 minutes of laughter these days, right? If it also subconsciously inspires creativity, or is the sign a person is looking for to create something that may initially seem ridiculous, that's a bonus. But it's 90 minutes, no intermissions of camp, joy, huge talents, and fun... who could ask for anything more?

***Xanadu the Musical* runs from Friday, May 5 through Sunday, June 4 at the San Diego Musical Theatre stage in Kearny Mesa. sdmt.org / 858.560.5740**



Gene Kelly, in his autobiography, wrote that even though he thought that *Xanadu* was a lousy picture, working with Olivia Newton-John made the experience enjoyable.

Xanadu was Kelly's last movie and the final film in which he danced.

Michael Beck, who played Sonny Malone in the film, once said, "The Warriors (1979) opened a lot of doors for me in film, which *Xanadu* (1980) then closed."

While *Xanadu* flopped at the time, the film did result in some good news for two significant persons on the set. It was where Newton-John met her first husband, Matt Lattanzi, who played Young Danny McGuire and a *Xanadu* dancer.

Although audiences weren't blown away by the film, Newton-John's performance of "Magic" from the film spent four weeks at the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart in August 1980.

When the film-inspired musical *Xanadu* premiered on Broadway in 2007, it earned all of the praise that the film did not. The narrative of the original film was revamped for the musical, which included several of the original film's popular songs. It was an instant hit with critics and audiences, and it was nominated for four Tony Awards. After 49 pre-views and 513 performances, the show ended in 2008.





1776 REMINDS US THAT HISTORY IS OURS TO CREATE

Traveling the world in your debut Broadway performance in a reimagining of the writing of the Declaration of Independence is nerve-racking, but **Ariella Serur (she/they)** and **Sav Souza (they/them)** have the fortune of doing it all as a couple and documenting the experience along the way.

After initially meeting at a concert in February 2020, Serur and Souza kept tabs on each other and began their relationship in August 2020. Souza was already cast in the production of *1776* as Dr. Josiah Bartlett at the time, but the show was postponed for a few years due to the pandemic. When auditions reopened in 2022, Serur auditioned and landed the role of Judge James Wilson.

"It's been really sweet to enter into this production already in this partnership, especially now while we're on tour and we got to have our Broadway debuts together in the same show," Serur told *The RAGE Monthly*. "The fact we've been able to do this together, it was kind of beyond our wildest imaginations for this."

While on tour, the two created a TikTok account together (@savandariella) that chronicles a musical they're writing, "We Start in Manhattan," as well as their experiencing traveling in *1776*.

The show, which premiered in 1969, is now entirely "made up of bodies that were not allowed in the room when the Declaration of Independence was being written and signed, nor have been really allowed on stage to tell the story since," Souza said.

"There's kind of a different experience for the audience to hold this kind of like hypocrisy paradox in place while viewing the

show, which allows it to have a bit more of a contemporary lens and to allow the audience to kind of connect puzzle pieces between what happened in 1776 and what's happening now in our country," Serur said.

With the current climate being what it is, Souza said that after a Breitbart article came out with a transphobic rant attacking their style on stage, they approached the *1776* upper management with the experience to help educate and engage audiences.

"I believe in their [the audience's] good intentions and their ability to learn," Souza said. "So, we ended up collaborating amongst myself and the other gender expressive folk in the cast and company, and with the roundabout team, and we ended up making this insert that was kind of a Gender 101 pamphlet that was printed out and inserted in all of the playbills throughout the rest of the Broadway run. And then on tour, it's actually now been implemented as like a solid printed-out page in the playbill itself at every location that we go to."

While also looking forward to tour stops like Nashville and how the show as a whole can help those affected by the drag bans, Serur said, "There are a lot of conversations around safety and around distance of hotel to theatre and transportation back and forth, and people have to have security at the stage door. Because we are such diverse company, we have to make sure that we are safe in all the places that we're going to."

The cast and crew have tightened their bond while traveling and experiencing discrimination face-first. "This is a company that is aware that the fight is never finished.

So anytime we see an injustice where we are, we kind of band together and figure out how to brainstorm and make the theatre industry better," Serur said.

Part of the statement within the show about trans inclusion is a sheer shirt worn by Souza that displays their top surgery scars, so they are visibly trans on stage. "It's just so plain and clear that they are trying to eradicate people that have always been here and using excuses that it is new, or that it's a fad, or, you know that the population of trans people is suddenly blossoming," Souza said. "I'm hopeful that people, you know, seeing trans and non-binary people on this stage, I hope that they're able to understand that we have always been here, and we are also not going anywhere."

"What this piece does is humanizes the Founding Fathers in a way that makes them fallible," Serur said. "And I hope that the audience questions what it is that's written. And I think that the other big question is whether the foundations that this country was born on are really ones that we should be clinging to, at least to the extent that this country clings to them."

On that note, Souza concluded, "This country was written up with some words by a bunch of guys that then edited it down until they felt that it was good enough. To think that this country was written into existence, it feels silly not to think that it can continue to be edited, as it should be."

Broadway San Diego will present the new production of the Tony Award-winning Best Musical *1776* at the Civic Theatre from Tuesday, May 9 to Sunday, May 14. broadwaysd.com/619.564.3000

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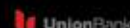
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WORLD PREMIERE MUSICAL TO DEBUT IN LOS ANGELES

A Transparent Musical will make its world premiere at Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum from **Saturday, May 20 through Sunday, June 25**. It's from the creators of the hit Amazon series, a groundbreaking and timely new musical that is delightfully queer, unapologetically Jewish and radically joyful.

"When we planned the 2022-2023 season, we knew that *A Transparent Musical* was an important story to be shared on the Mark Taper Forum stage. Coupled with this stellar cast, under the helm of Tina Landau and James Alsop, and current events, this musical is something that we all need," Center Theatre Group **Associate Artistic Director Kelley Kirkpatrick** said. "*A Transparent Musical* marks the first time that a story written by transgender and nonbinary artists — Joey Soloway, MJ Kaufman and Faith Soloway — will be at the Taper reflecting a community and a moment that has never been told on our stages."

Audiences will follow the story through the Pfefferman family's youngest child Ali, played by Adina Verson, as they navigate the ups and downs of self-discovery. Ali's Los Angeles Jewish family is filled with secrets, but when their parent, Maura — played by Daya Curley — transitions to the transgender matriarch she always knew she was, the family is forced to confront their own identities and navigate their relationships with each other. Through a revelatory story of acceptance and self-expression, *A Transparent Musical* explores the intersection of Jewish and queer history while celebrating the imperfectly human and startlingly familiar aspects of a universally relatable family.

centertheatregroup.org

SAN DIEGO PREMIERE OF HEAD OVER HEELS AT DIVERSIONARY

From the creators of *Avenue Q*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* and *Spring Awakening* comes a daring new Broadway musical fantasy in which Once Upon a Time collides with the present.

In the mythical Arcadia, the royal family is challenged to set out on a journey to save their beloved kingdom from extinction. Through their adventure, gender roles are upended, relationships liberated and love is discovered in the most surprising of ways. *Head Over Heels* joyfully uncovers a route to a new world where diversity is celebrated with unconditional love and acceptance of yourself and everyone you know, no matter their gender or sexual identity.

Set to the iconic music of the 1980s all-female rock band The Go-Go's, the show includes the hit songs "We Got the Beat," "Our Lips Are Sealed," "Vacation" and Belinda Carlisle's "Heaven is a Place on Earth."

"*Head Over Heels* bravely confronts the rapidly changing social, sexual and gender dynamic of our day," **Diversionsary Theatre Co-Director Matt M. Morrow** said. "I love that this story is told in verse, paying homage to its roots in Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia. And even though it's a jukebox musical, The Go-Go's songs are interwoven so fluidly with intelligence and heart, that it feels like they were written for this story specifically. The mash up of rock music and verse create an altogether fresh and new mode of storytelling that is an explosion of pure joy."

The cast features **Gerilyn Brault** returning to the Diversionsary stage as Pamela, **Faith Carrion** as Pythio, **Berto Fernández** as Dametas, **Joey Kirkpatrick** as Musidorous, **Adelaida Martinez** as Philoclea, **Amanda Naughton** making her Diversionsary debut as Gynecia, **Lauren King Thompson** returning to Diversionsary as Mopso, and **Alyssa Junious**, **Sutheshna Mani** and **Kevin Phan** as Ensemble.

Catch the show at the Diversionsary Theatre in San Diego from **Thursday, May 25 through Sunday, June 25**. diversionary.org





TWO LONG-TIME SAN DIEGO ARTISTS COLLABORATE FOR A SWINGING GOOD TIME

San Diego Ballet Artistic Director Javier Velasco and San Diego’s favorite “Queen of Boogie Woogie” Sue Palmer last worked together in 2011 on the world premiere of *The Toughest Girl Alive* featuring Candye Kane at Moxie Theatre.

The old friends have kept in touch and get a chance to collaborate again on San Diego Ballet’s upcoming two-part jazz and dance show at Balboa Theatre. The long-overdue creative partnership will culminate in *Eight to the Barre*, for two shows only, **Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21.**

Beloved by jazz aficionados, swing dancers and San Diego’s LGBTQ community, **Sue Palmer** and her Motel Swing Orchestra will take center stage for the first half of the program surrounded by San Diego’s finest classical dancers. This suite of dances will feature seven musicians on stage and eight San Diego Ballet company dancers. *Eight to the Bar* means eight beats to the measure, which means one thing — boogie woogie — so audiences will be “seriously swinging.”

Palmer has amazed audiences all over the world with her unique energetic performance style. She has been a presence on the music scene in San Diego and the world for over 30 years. She was inducted into the San Diego Music Hall of Fame in 2018, had a day named after her by the city in 2008, and won numerous San Diego Music Awards for her bands and albums.

The second half of the program features **Artistic Director Javier Velasco’s** seminal salute to Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman, *Opus ... Swing!* First presented over 20 years ago, *Opus ... Swing!* features 23 dancers in three sections. This ballet takes work from three of the greatest big bands and arranges them into what overall would be a classical concerto.

“*Opus ... Swing!* was one of our first non-story ballets, and it was our first melding of jazz and ballet. It helped build and define the style of the company and many elements of the original work still echo in the work we do today,” Velasco said.

The two-part program is one valued part of the profile and identity of San Diego Ballet and its commitment to creating vibrant work that resonates with its audience. It’s a commitment that is highlighted by two different initiatives. The first is to create work to Latin themes and music. The second is to create work to jazz music. Velasco has worked with some of the amazing artists who call San Diego home. That has included commissioned works from resident composers Charles McPherson and Gilbert Castellanos, as well as works by Kamau Kenyatta and blues singer Candye Kane.

“This program gets at the heart of what makes San Diego Ballet special and a true hometown company. We are coming full circle with the restaging of *Opus ... Swing!* and my creative collaboration with long-time friend Sue Palmer, and I know the program will have meaning as well as enjoyment,” Velasco said.

sandiegoballet.org

KAREN ZACARIAS’ DESTINY OF DESIRE

Destiny of Desire – An Unapologetic Telenovela for the Stage is a smart, contemporary comedy written by Helen Hayes Award winner Karen Zacarias and directed by Tony Award winner and Academy Award nominee Ruben Santiago-Hudson.

Zacarias and Santiago-Hudson return to the San Diego after their critically acclaimed productions of *Native Gardens* and August Wilson’s *Jitney*, respectively. Performances will run **Friday, May 19 through Sunday, June 25** on the Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage at The Old Globe in Balboa Park.

This hilarious tribute to the telenovela brings all the joys, tribulations and plot twists of an epic love story to the stage. On a stormy night in Bellarica, Mexico, two babies are born — one into a life of outlandish wealth, and one into a life of poverty. When the newborns are swapped by a ruthless ex-beauty queen, the stage is set for two outrageous misfortunes to grow into an extraordinary destiny. *Destiny of Desire* explores the emotional roller coaster and social commentary that make the telenovela the most popular form of storytelling on the planet.

“*Destiny of Desire* is a joyous work of theatre: funny, outlandish and daring,” **Artistic Director Barry Edelstein** said. “It also manages to be about some big ideas, from family to identity to the power of story itself to reframe and refashion our lives. Karen Zacarias, who is a close friend of The Old Globe, is doing something unique and fresh with it, and her partner in this work is the great Ruben Santiago-Hudson, another Globe friend and one of the giants in the American theatre. They have drawn an uncommonly gifted company of actors to San Diego to join them in their merry mayhem, and I cannot wait for audiences to experience the fun that’s in store.”

theoldglobe.org



IT'S KISMET FOR BELINDA CARLISLE

With her first EP album of English-speaking pop songs in over 20 years and the collaboration and stunning songwriting from Diane Warren, Belinda Carlisle had fate land in front of her in such a fortuitous way. The results on *Kismet* — releasing on **Friday, May 12** — are truly an enjoyable carpet ride of music. Here, she talks about the new release, her upcoming “Decades” tour this summer (with a date in Anaheim on **Saturday, August 26** at the Honda Center) and just for fun... what it means to be “Head Over Heels” with happiness.

The CD title of *Kismet*. The first thing I thought of was that you titled it as such because of running into Diane Warren in a coffee shop, as “kismet” means fate or destiny. Will you share your thoughts and intention for giving this name to the five-song EP?

Well, I love the word “kismet.” It has a magic to it, and it does mean fate or destiny and that was exactly how this whole project came about. A chance meeting of my son [James Duke Mason] and Diane in a coffee shop. She asked him, “What is your mom doing?” And they called me. She said, “Come to the studio. I have some songs for you.”

I had to think twice about it as it is a big commitment, but when I heard the songs... I knew they were right for me. The whole thing was strange and magical.

What sparks flew in an emotional way when you first heard Diane Warren’s music and lyrics for these songs? The EP is so enjoyable just to hear you sing such well-written songs in such a vibrant and beautiful way after over 20 years of not recording a solo English album in the studio.

I know right away if something is right for me. First the melody has to be right — I tend to love melancholic and complicated melodies; that’s always been my thing. I never thought I would sing English-speaking pop again because I couldn’t imagine finding anything that would resonate with me, and I am super fussy. So this was such an amazing experience as every one of those songs I felt were very me. It was totally unexpected.

Personally, I think the song that rings so well from you vocally is “I Couldn’t Do That to Me.” In a way, I thought you put a little bit of that dramatic vibe of excellence from *Voila*, in that I truly feel your emotional pull coming through. As well, I love Warren’s lyrical skill and at changing the last lyric to “You couldn’t that to you.” Your rendition is brilliant. What was it like getting that song done the way you wanted to present it during recording it and your impressions of the song?

I loved that song instantly. We (Mati Gavriel and I) weren’t sure of the approach so I just went ahead and did my lead vocal, but when I started to the background vocals, it started to take shape. It became obvious what it should be — a simple ballad, really. In some ways it reminded me of “Nothing Compares.” This song was the hardest to get right in terms of mixing it. It needed to maintain simplicity while being dramatic.

As far as your recording of “Sanity,” I stepped away from my “digital” and thought I heard the lyrics “Guinevere and Kennedy” (i.e. Camelot times) in the lyrics. So, went back in our home and tripped out again as to the actual lyrics, and your delivery of “Sanity oh

sanity, why did you abandon me?” Easy mistake to make from too far away, huh? I mean heck, Diane’s lyrics could be “Sandra Dee” with the flavoring of your “oh, oh, oh, oh” in the mix. This one has a classic “pop music” groove in the intro and throughout until the end, in a powerful way with the tempo. Wanted to hear what this song meant for you to record it and the way you really let go on your vocals of it?

I love this song, and it’s the weirdest one in the bunch. I loved it right away. It’s very eccentric. I think it is one of the hardest songs I have ever sung in my career. It’s really a very complicated melody, especially the chorus. I think it’s a little classical/opera, Sandra Dee, and also there is something about it that reminds me of Jay and The Americans, which is weird I know... And the end reminds me of the monkeys in *The Wizard of Oz*. Hopefully, this description will make people curious enough to want to hear it. [laughter]

It’s a fantastic song. The Decades U.S. Tour: Will you please share what you have in store for the audiences on your tour and possibly any special guest stars on the road from Georgia to The Greek Theatre in Los Angeles?

No plans for any guest stars at the moment, but that doesn’t mean there won’t be any. I will be performing material from most of my solo albums and also something from the new EP and of course, I will do a few Go-Go’s songs.

Here’s just a fun thought for you to smile or laugh at before my last question. Here’s a quote: “I may dance around in my underwear in my living room like Madonna. That doesn’t make me Madonna. Never will.” (Joan Cusack in *Working Girl*) Belinda, I used to dance in the gay nightclubs like you! It’s from that video from “Head Over Heels.” Didn’t have the hoop earrings or the shoulder-showing sweater but I used your moves. Too much fun!

That is very funny. That video sort of defined me in that whole ‘80s era — the haircut, hoops and dance. It’s OK, I love it!

You are a gem in so many ways. Is there anything you would like to add about your life now and the Animal People Alliance or anything else for our readers? After all these years, you still do something to me with your talent, strength and beauty. Just a solid compliment from me to you. The very best to you, your family and the gals of The Go-Go’s.

Thank you so much! I think you covered everything. I do have a wonderful life and it’s well lived for sure. I have this career that I’m grateful for and I get to sing the most amazing songs. I really couldn’t ask for anything more.

[facebook.com/BelindaCarlisleOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/BelindaCarlisleOfficial)

“I never thought I would sing English-speaking pop again because I couldn't imagine finding anything that would resonate with me, and I am super fussy.”

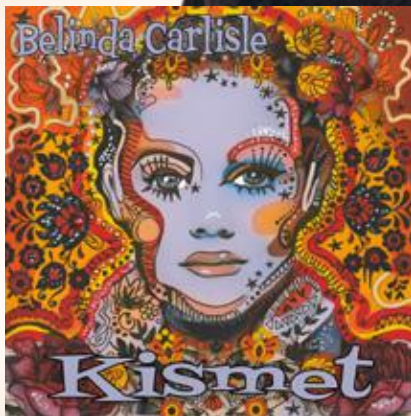


photo by nic spanos

A SIZZLING SUMMER AT THE RADY SHELL

The Rady Shell at Jacob Park will once again host summer performances by the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. The waterfront performance space debuted in August 2021 and has garnered international notice for its breathtaking views and state-of-the-art musical experience.

Performances will begin in June and continue through September. The Opening Night Concert celebration will feature Music Director Rafael Payare and the San Diego Symphony. This season will bring some of the world's finest artists to San Diego, performing classical concerts, movies in cinema, jazz, R&B, Broadway and rock.

"I am always heartened to meet people from all over our region, and indeed visitors to San Diego, who reflect on their first and repeated experiences at this venue," symphony CEO Martha Gilmer said. "Our wish for this year is that many will return again and again, and that even more individuals will find their way to The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park as a place they belong, and as a place that belongs to everyone."

Payare and the orchestra will kick off the season with **Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances** and the West Coast premiere of Roberto Sierra's **Salseando** featuring trumpet player **Pacho Flores**. The following night, San Diego rock 'n' roll favorites **The Beach Boys** will once again grace The Rady Shell in a hit-filled presentation that's sure to have you dancing along and ready to have "fun, fun, fun" all summer.

Rounding out the opening weekend is the symphony's presentation of **ARETHA: A Tribute**, taking fans through the repertoire of one of music's greatest artists, featuring a star-studded guest artist lineup performing with the orchestra.

In celebration of the 40th anniversary of their self-titled debut album, **Violent Femmes** will play the album in its entirety with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra on **Wednesday, May 10**. The Force is strong when **Star Wars: A New Hope** will take over on **Saturday and Sunday, May 13 and 14**.

On **Sunday, June 11**, the **Music Legacy Tour 2023** will include No. 1 smash singles from **Diana Ross** in her solo career as well as her time as the lead vocalist of The Supremes. Miss Ross will move audiences with her deep, heartfelt vocals and magnetic stage presence. Expect timeless anthems like "Ain't No Mountain High Enough," "Stop! In the Name of Love," "Upside Down," "I'm Coming Out," "Reach Out and Touch" and "Endless Love." theshell.org



RENÉE ELISE GOLDSBERRY & THE PACIFIC SYMPHONY

Renée Elise Goldsberry, award-winning diva and a Carnegie Mellon University alumna, will perform with the Pacific Symphony. She rose to fame by originating the role of Angelica Schuyler in the Broadway production of *Hamilton*.

Goldsberry will perform fan favorites from this iconic musical as well as selections from musicals such as *The Lion King* and *Rent*.

Goldsberry has appeared on television in *The Good Wife* and *One Life to Live*. Broadway also cheered her in *Rent* and *The Color Purple*. She has won a Tony and a Grammy. On **Friday and Saturday, June 9 and 10**, hear her golden voice fill Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall in a collection of showstoppers as only she can sing them. pacificsymphony.org



LINES 40TH

Alonzo King LINES Ballet is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. To commemorate this milestone, the company is bringing new works of illuminating beauty to Southern California.

King, founder and artistic director of the dance company, has been called a visionary choreographer who is altering the way we look and think about movement. He calls his works "thought

structures" and draws on a diverse set of deeply rooted cultural traditions, imbuing classical ballet with new expressive potential. Collaborating with noted composers, musicians, writers and visual artists from around the world, King creates an unforgettable dialogue between movement and music.

Glorious on stage, Alonzo King LINES Ballet is a must-see live performance experience that will take place **Saturday, May 27** at Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa. scfta.org



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ROSS MATHEWS “I GOTCHU, GURL!” AN EVENING OF STANDUP COMEDY

In addition to his role as a judge and producer on MTV’s highly acclaimed, Emmy-winning series *RuPaul’s Drag Race*, Ross Mathews co-hosts Drew Barrymore’s daily syndicated chat program *The Drew Barrymore Show* (now in its third season). He has also co-hosted E!’s *Live from the Red Carpet* and was a frequent guest on *Chelsea Lately* and *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno. In addition to being a podcaster (Hello, Ross!) and a spokesman for *Weight Watchers*, he has written

two bestselling novels (*Man Up* and *Name Drop*).

His standup comedy show will take place on **Sunday, June 4** at *Live and Up Close* at Sycuan Casino Resort, part of Sycuan’s **Summer of Pride** weekend celebration. Pool parties, drag performances, brunch and *Babette’s Bad Bingo* are among the other events.

sycuan.com



COACHELLA VALLEY REPERTORY’S SUMMER CABARET SERIES

Coachella Valley Repertory’s 2023 Summer Cabaret Series will be presented in CVRep’s casual, intimate setting every Thursday evening from **May 4** through **August 24**. Each performer is a captivating storyteller, using music, personal experiences and passions to take audiences on memorable journeys.

The series will open with **No One Is Alone – Melissa Errico Remembers Stephen Sondheim**. The Broadway star, Tony Award nominee, actress, singer and author will perform her very personal one-woman tribute to the late, great genius of American musical theatre. She will sing many of the Sondheim standards, interspersed with stories and insights from her decades-long relationship with him.

Steve Ross will return to Coachella Valley Repertory with **An Evening with Steve Ross**. The “Crown Prince of New York Cabaret,” per *The New York Times*, will bring his personal tribute to Fred Astaire. He’ll perform classics by music titans George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Stephen Sondheim and Noel Coward.

Other highlights will include performances by **Teri Ralston and Alix Korey**, two evenings with **Glenn Rosenblum** and guest artists such as **Christiane Noll, Maximo Marcuso, Christia Mantzke Lisa Vroman** and **Mark Evans**. cvrep.org

US PREMIERE OF L.A. DANCE PROJECT *ROMEO & JULIET SUITE*

Seegerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa will host the American premiere of L.A. Dance Project’s *Romeo & Juliet Suite*, choreographed by Benjamin Millepied to music by Sergei Prokofiev. Running for three performances, **Friday, May 12** and **Saturday, May 13**.

With his dazzling new production, Millepied will offer a contemporary vision of Prokofiev’s masterpiece *Romeo & Juliet* — a mythical take through a modern and original prism further embellished by its beautiful music. The choreographer will navigate between cinema, dance and theatre, reinterpreting Shakespeare’s star-crossed lovers as young adults in an urban environment where social norms prevent them from living out their love story.

On stage and off, the plot unfolds using a unique projection system. Tableaux are broadcast in real time, from unexpected places inside the theatre and backstage. The dancers, filmed live, pass from stage to screen. Each performance features a different cast and highlights diverse couples — male/female, male/male, female/female — making this version of *Romeo & Juliet* a universal celebration of love.

“I love the idea of using dance, live performance and cinematographic images to express a timeless story that really speaks to the audience,” Millepied said. “This production creates a comprehensive artistic experience while echoing current social issues, all with a cast that changes night by night.”

Roslyn Sulcas in *The New York Times* wrote: “There are three casts playing the title roles: a heterosexual couple, two men and two women. It’s a simple idea but a powerful one to see represented in a ballet. Millepied hasn’t altered the choreography or the partnering for the couples. And although there were inevitably differences of movement — the overall sense of the work and its central tragedy felt unchanged.”

LA Dance Project is a boundary-expanding nonprofit dance company in Los Angeles and led by Millepied, founder and artistic director. The company’s repertory is comprised of new creations from Millepied, historic reconstructions, and a collection of multidisciplinary collaborations with visual artists, musicians, designers, filmmakers and composers. scfta.org





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LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING

Produced by Bungalow Media + Entertainment for CNN Films and HBO Max, in association with Rolling Stone Films, director Lisa Cortés' 2023 Sundance Film Festival opening night documentary *Little Richard: I Am Everything* tells the story of the Black queer origins of rock 'n' roll, exploding the whitewashed canon of American pop music to reveal the innovator — the originator — Richard Penniman.

Through a wealth of archive and performance that brings us into Richard's complicated inner world, the film unspools the icon's life story with all its switchbacks and contradictions. In interviews with family, musicians and cutting-edge Black and queer scholars, the film reveals how Richard created an art form for ultimate self-expression, yet what he gave to the world he was never able to give to himself. Throughout his life, Richard careened like a shiny cracked pinball between God, sex and rock 'n' roll. The world tried to put him in a box, but Richard was an omni being who contained multitudes — he was unabashedly everything. Streaming everywhere. littlericharddocumentary.com



SMOTHERED

The short form series *Smothered* (each episode is under 7 minutes) from creators Jason Stuart and Mitch Hara is back for its second season in May on all major streaming services including Amazon. *Smothered* was named "one of the best comedy series" by Amazon and nominated for the Spotlight Award at the Indie Series Awards. Season 2 promises to be even bigger and better and boasts an impressive cast of guest stars that include **Amanda Bearse** (*Married... with Children*), **Jai Rodriguez** (*Bros*), **Carole White** (*Laverne & Shirley*) and **Scott Krinsky** (*Chuck*). *Smothered* follows an entitled bickering boomer-age gay couple (Stuart and Hara) who can't afford to get a divorce and try to salvage their hideous relationship in therapy hell before they kill each other and everyone else. smotheredtv.com



HANNAH GADSBY: SOMETHING SPECIAL

Emmy and Peabody winning comedian Hannah Gadsby is back for their third Netflix comedy special on **Tuesday, May 9**. In this smart and feel-good set, the comedian talks about a wedding (theirs!), more than one traumatic encounter with a bunny and more. The special was filmed at the Sydney Opera House in fall 2022. Gadsby filmed the 2018 comedy sensation *Nanette* at the Opera House, which won a Peabody Award and a Primetime Emmy. Their follow-up, *Douglas*, was nominated for two Primetime Emmys and won an AACTA Award. hannahgadsby.com.au



SUMMONING SYLVIA

The Horror Collective recently announced the North American theatrical and TVOD release of their LGBTQ horror comedy *Summoning Sylvia*. The hair-raising romp tells the story of a gay bachelor party that takes a spooky turn when sinister spirits are suddenly summoned.

Larry has been kidnapped by his three best friends for a bachelor weekend getaway at a haunted house. As they sashay through the dusty corridors, the comrades recount the house's legend from a hundred years ago: a murderous woman named Sylvia slaughtered her son and buried him beneath the house's floorboards. But then Larry remembers that he was supposed to spend the weekend bonding with Harrison, his mysterious future brother-in-law. Horrified at his oversight, Larry invites the army-uniformed, hetero Harrison to join his gaggle's gaycation, neglecting to run it by his friends. Later, as they hold a high-spirited séance to summon the sinister Sylvia, the group ends up welcoming more houseguests than they bargained for. The cast includes **Travis Coles** (*Superstore*), **Michael Urie** (*Younger*), **Frankie Grande** (*Henry Danger*), **Nicholas Logan** (*I Care a Lot*), **Troy Iwata** (*Dash & Lily*), **Noah Ricketts** (*American Gods*), and **Veanne Cox** (*You've Got Mail*) as the titular specter. thehorrorcollective.com/film/summoning-sylvia



BEHIND THE DRAG QUEEN OF THE YEAR COMPETITION AWARD CONTEST COMPETITION

OUTtv presents a new docu-series that goes behind the scenes of legendary drag queens Alaska Thunderf*ck and Lola LeCroix's Drag Queen of The Year contest.

The docu-series provides a detailed look into the planning and creativity that occurs backstage of drag competitions, and closely follows the duo as they come up against challenges and setbacks, including a nightmare in tech rehearsals with just hours until showtime. Contestants include Andrew Barret Cox, Bambi Banks-Couleé, DvvsK, Militia Scunt, Neon Calypso, Ramona Slick and Twink Trash.

Alaska Thunderf*ck and Lola LeCroix added: "Our goal with The Drag Queen of the Year Pageant Competition Award Contest Competition is to provide a platform for drag artists who come from a variety of unique drag perspectives. In a time where the art form of drag is under attack, amplifying queer voices is more important than ever, and we're looking forward to continuing this pageant's legacy. We're grateful to all of the incredible 2022 DQOY contestants, our crew behind the scenes, and to OUTtv and Froot.tv who, through this series, will show the pageant from all sides — capturing the stressful, chaotic and ultimately inspirational essence of Drag Queen of the Year."

The six-episode series is available exclusively on the OUTtv Apple TV Channel, the OUTtv Roku Channel and OUTtv.com in the U.S.

And now, flying in the face of a catastrophic political landscape in many parts of the nation, The Drag Queen of the Year Pageant Competition Award Contest Competition is returning for its fifth incarnation on **Sunday, May 14** live and in-person at The Montalban Theatre in Hollywood. This year's pageant features eight stunning contestants, carefully selected by a mysterious panel of anonymous Drag Elders — this collection of outstanding drag artists will compete for a chance to win.

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LEARN TO LOVE BEING PRETTY DAMNED HEALTHY, IT'S SOOOO FETCH!

Back in March, I had the fortune of catching the *Mean Girls* musical at Civic Theatre in San Diego with some arm candy (he knows who he is!)

As I watched, I thought to myself, "Everyone has to absolutely **love** what they're doing!" It's clear they pour their hearts and souls into singing loud and proud (especially Karen, bless her sweet heart), moving effortlessly in choreographed dance routines, and even tap dancing!

And my mind kept going. If **they** love what they're doing, then (hopefully) that means each of us loves whatever **we're** doing. It has to be sooo **FETCH** to us or **WTH** are we doing it for, right?

And my mind kept on going. If you love what you're doing, then you're also doing what you love, which should translate into you not "working" a day in your life, right? Except maybe Regina, of course, because, well, Regina.

We see collegiate and professional athletes **PLAYING** (not working) sports they absolutely love — and they're **VERY** fit and embody healthy: soccer, football, baseball, basketball, rugby, swimming, snowboarding, skiing, surfing, you name it. I see you looking at those uniforms, bro!

We see people **GOING** (not working) through workout routines they **love** — and many of them are very fit and embody health as well: professional bodybuilders, Olympic lifters, physique competitors, and even a few normal, everyday folks. I see you looking at those bodies, bruh!

So what happened to the rest of us who aren't as fit or as healthy? Is it because we just don't care? Is it because we don't like (much less love) physical activity? Is it because we've fallen out of love with the things we used to do? Or worse, is it because we've never been **IN** love with the thought of being healthier?

It's now May, which means summer is right around the corner. Undoubtedly more than just a few of us are getting ready for the "Season of Sun" like

Olympians preparing for the Games. Some of us are maybe undecided, but we've stepped up our game, if just by a little bit. And the rest of us? Perfectly comfortable right where we're at, for better or for worse.

To my Olympian readers out there, you go gurl, keep on! To those who are OK with the status quo, good or bad, you go gurl as well, keep on! This column is for those of you in the middle, teetering on the brink of making your own magic happen **OR** teetering on the brink of succumbing to making absolutely **NO** magic happen.

Those in the middle are trying to decide if they want to fall back in love, are afraid to fall in love, have recently fallen out of love, have commitment issues, and/or don't know if she's worth all the time, effort and energy. Sound familiar?

If it does, then consider this for just a minute: **I love being pretty damned healthy!** How does that strike you? Some probably had a negative reaction, right? "Oh, she just full of herself, isn't she?" I assure you, it's not a Regina thing.

I said "I love being pretty damned healthy" because those in the middle, struggling to decide, balancing on the gymnastics beam, afraid to fall left or right or those on the trail to Black's Beach, afraid to fall off a cliff (or have one fall **ON** you) — you can move **forward** confidently and say the same thing too.

And I said "**pretty damned healthy**" because for most of us, pursuing perfect health is not only unrealistic, but can be tedious and downright boring **AF!** For most of us, bestie let's be honest, some fun every now and then keeps life interesting. Just ask those who've joined me for 15,000 steps at Spin Nightclub.

You can learn to say "I love being **pretty damned healthy**" **AND** be OK saying it to yourself. I know this because I've been teaching and training others to do just that for almost 12 years now.

So, love making healthier food choices **AND** love the cardio you choose to do (and then do it for at least 150 minutes weekly *hint*) **AND** love the idea of coming in for your complimentary **SPRING THAW** fitness assessment at **thatgaytrainer.com** ... we'll steer you straight (figuratively, speaking).

Learn to love and be OK with being "**pretty damned healthy**." Trust me, it's **sooo fetch!**

Happy almost summertime!





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SALT & FIN

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Harrah's Resort Southern California brings the exciting casino life to our region without the tedious drive to Las Vegas. For me, it has all the bells and whistles with 1,500 slot machines, over 50 table games ranging from blackjack to pai gow to Roll to Win eCraps, and all the classics in between. A unique feature is that table games team members can join the "Impressive Progressive," California's first all-table progressive jackpot.

As far as the accommodations, the standard rooms are quite sizable and comfortable with deep soaker tubs. Since we visit almost monthly, our go-to room is the Sweet Suite, which boasts 882 square feet. The amenities include a luxurious and private king bedroom complete with workstation, plus a cozy living and dining area with the perfect napping couch and a view of the hillside. The large bathroom includes a deep soaking Jacuzzi tub, plus a separate roomy rain shower with two separate sink areas and two restrooms. The suites get more and more elaborate and spacious from there.

Salt & Fin is the latest eatery to join the ranks of delicious restaurants at Harrah's SoCal. Each one is excellent in its own right. The Café, which serves a variety of delicious classics, and fast-casual options such as Smash Burger, Earl of Sandwich and Rita's Cantina Food Truck & Restaurant. KJ Chinese Restaurant is always tasty, with authentic selections from various regions of Asia. And my previous restaurant review was on Hell's Kitchen, and it was phenomenal!

Salt & Fin now occupies the previous Fiore and Oyster Bar restaurant space. I was curious about the transformation since the restaurant had great bones. They basically repainted the interior, replaced the fixtures and updated the décor. The seating and bars remain original and in the same locations. The anticipation of the new menu and vibe was exciting.

When seated on Valentine's evening, we were immediately greeted by our server Antonio. He remained attentive and

concerned through our dining experience. He took our drink orders, a Spicy Margarita for me and a glass of Chardonnay for my love. We were then greeted by the general manager, Ryan Poley, who was born and raised in upstate New York. After graduating high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps as a "food service specialist" (aka "cook"). After exiting the Marines, he reenlisted in the California Army National Guard and completed one deployment to Iraq and another to the southwest border in California in conjunction with the U.S. Border Patrol. After the military, he worked in the civilian sector, working his way up from dishwashing and prep to executive chef. He was a featured chef at the 2015 Temecula Balloon & Wine Festival. In late 2015, Poley took a restaurant management role with a corporate sushi restaurant. He said he enjoys managing and giving culinary input at the new Salt & Fin, and we sensed his dedication while watching him expedite.

The new menu dives deep into new mouth-watering treasures from the sea including Oceanic Seafood Towers and Ocean Water Poached Chilled Shellfish. For appetizers, we ordered the **Southern Fried Calamari** with cherry peppers, lemon and pickled cucumber Ranch dipping sauce. They were nice and crispy. We also had a **Salt & Fin Crab Cake** with bayonnaise, fennel and citrus salad. What I liked about the crab cake is that it was more crab than cake, which was a nice change from the norm. We moved on to the **Lobster Bisque**, with poached lobster, cheddar biscuits and a brandied Chantilly

cream. My biggest complaint about this yummy soup was the very small portion size. The cheddar biscuits were actually two croutons, and the poached lobster were two tiny pieces. I advise that they be more generous with the serving size.

For entrées, they offer a lovely variety of fresh fish, like the branzino European seabass, halibut, salmon, cioppino, fish and chips, and jumbo shrimp. Under the Salt of the Earth options, a handful of options include steak tartar, pasture raised chicken and flat iron steak.

We ordered the **Branzino European Seabass**, grilled and accompanied with carrot puree, Frog's Hollow pears, fennel salad, herbs and garlic chips. It was well prepared. Although we were told the fish was fileted, be mindful because there were unexpected bones. With that, we shared the special, **Lobster Thermidor**, a whole lobster with roasted aromatics, slathered with Gruyere cheese and herbed hollandaise on a bed of roasted carrots. This was an interesting dish, as I have never really had cheese on my lobster before. It was good, but I think I prefer my lobster butter poached (which is on the menu). We had a side of Truffle Mac & Cheese, and it was absolutely divine. Salt & Fin is a new restaurant and I think in time will be a very special place to enjoy dinner.

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