

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE

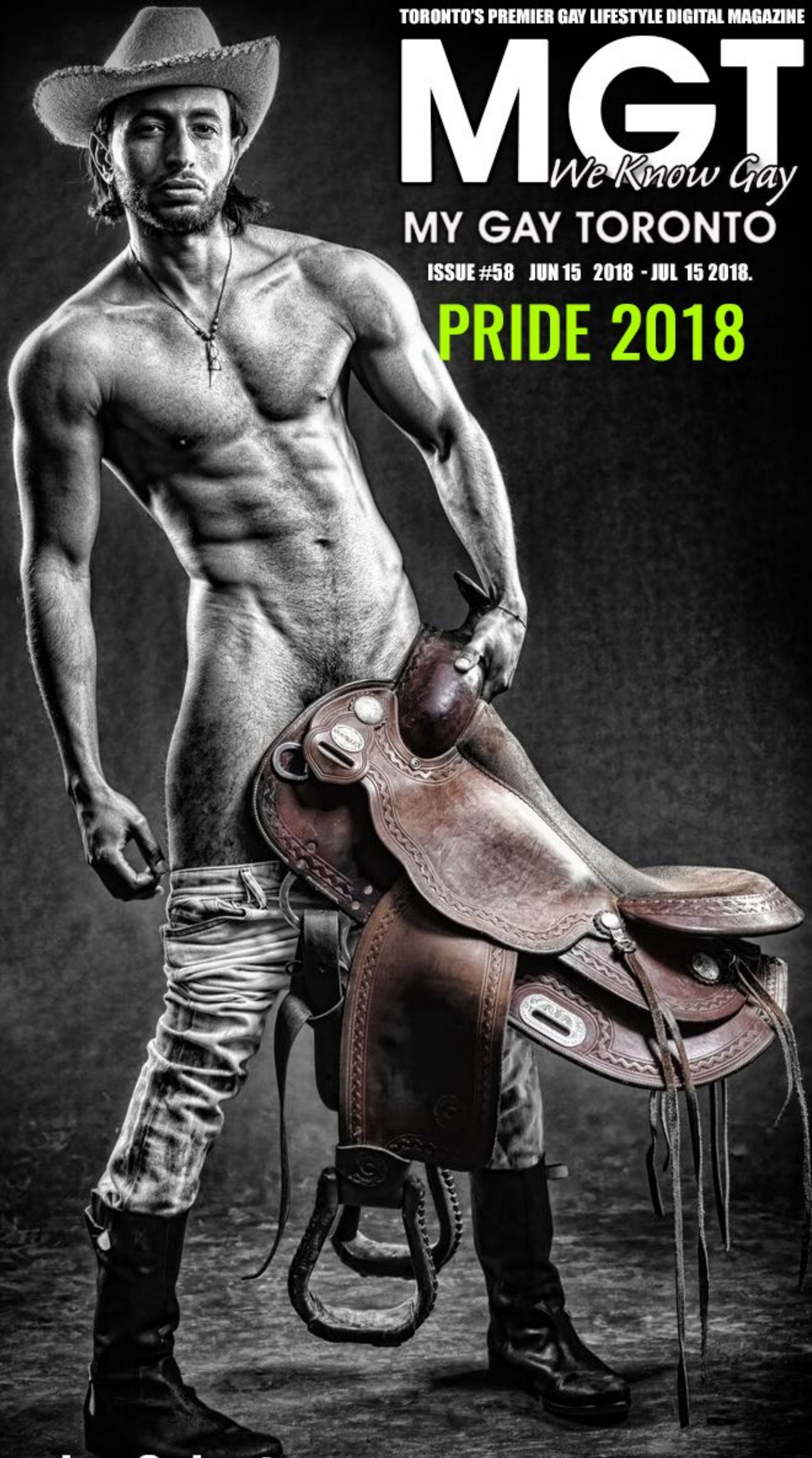
MGT

We Know Gay

MY GAY TORONTO

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PRIDE 2018



Alexander Schmitt



MGT DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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June 1–24
2018

Festival
June
22–24

Pride

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Pride
TORONTO





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RAYMOND HELKIO

Top 10 Ways To Get Your Pride ON



#1 QueerPride

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre | JUNE 8-24, 2018

Events not to miss include; **Tallulah's** weekend Pride parties, the aerial acrobatics of Whole, **Oasis Love's** one-man musical/comedy/drama, **Elvira Kurt's** hysterical Fired Up! and the B-Girlz's **Homo Night in Canada**. [More info](#).

#2 Cabana Pool Party | THURSDAY JUNE 14, 6-11PM

Groove to the sounds of **Ticky Ty** along with performers **Bendelacreme** and hosted by the glamorous **Tynomi Banks**. [More info](#).

#3 Friday Night Live at the ROM | FRIDAY JUNE 15, 7-Midnight

The museum get transformed into a massive queer nightclub. Expect fiery DJs, drag queens, performers, and artists, 19+. [More info](#).

#4 Nuit Rose Art Crawl, | SATURDAY JUNE 16, 7PM until late

Free queer art crawl includes installations, performances and music. Various locations. [More info](#).

#5 'Til Sunrise party at the island | SUNDAY JUNE 17, 1-9PM

Go back to where Pride began for this all-day dance party and celebration at Gibraltar Point with DJs **Phil Villeneuve**, **Djon**, **John Caffery** and **Phillipe**. More info. <http://www.pridetoronto.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018-Pride-Guide.pdf>

#6 Street Fair in and around the village | JUNE 22 -24

This year the fair has been extended from Carlton Street down to Dundas, plus you can walk around with your beer. Enough said. [More info](#).

#7 Yohomo Pride Stage at the South stage | SATURDAY JUNE 23, 2-11PM

LGBTQ+ arts, culture, and nightlife scene. DJs from **Trade**, **As If**, **Tapette**, **Jelly**, and **Daddy Next Door**. A full day and night of sounds plus city's finest parties, live performers, and drag queens/kings. [More info](#).

#8 Drag Ball at Yonge-Dundas Stage | SATURDAY JUNE 23, 6-11PM

Big hair, big moves, fierce outfits, and tight tucks. Expect a non-stop on-stage parade of the city's best drag queens and kings, **DJ Kitty Glitter** and ending with a surprise guest performance and a drag contest of epic proportions. [More info](#).

#9 Blockorama at the Wellesley stage | SUNDAY JUNE 24, 12-11PM

Celebrating 20 years of activism and partying, **Blackness Yes!** and Blockorama make a huge return with thier Black, Caribbean, and African party which remains one of Pride's biggest and busiest stages. And for good reason. [More info](#).

#10 Trans March | SUNDAY JUNE 24, rally at 7PM, march at 8PM

Trans intersectionality begins at the intersection of Church & Hayden. [More info](#).

Luminato presents RIOT! And theatre, dance, music & magic

DREW ROWSOME



Entering its second decade, the Luminato Festival is exploding in intriguing directions. The festival's motto is ambitious if vague - "Toronto's international arts festival dedicated to performance, media and visual arts, and programming that cuts across traditional artform boundaries" -which gives it leeway to help develop and present unique works of art from around the world. A quick browse of the glossy festival guide tempts with more than a few must-sees.

Who could resist "a disorderly cocktail of party and politics from Ireland's greatest artistic hooligans, RIOT combines dance, drag, circus, gut-punching spoken word and comedy?" The company THISISPOPBABY promises to "rip up the space between popular culture, counter culture, queer culture and high art." With Panti Bliss, Ireland's notorious activist drag queen and theatrical legend, front and centre, entertainment and provocation are guaranteed.



The troupe also includes the comedy/circus/dance - and clothing-averse - duo Lords of Strut who scandalized, and almost won, Britain's Got Talent. RIOT was more successful in the prize sweepstakes, being named Best Production at the Dublin Fringe Festival. The emphasis on queer is refreshing when so much high art is coded, and anything billing itself as "flashy, trashy, and fused with social commentary" and "brilliant, brazen and downright bizarre" is going to have to live up to it.



More intense is Burning Doors presented by Belarus Free Theatre, a company composed of Russian refugee artists. The company is banned from performing in Russia. An exploration of artists persecuted for dealing with issues, including but not limited to homosexuality, the company brings with it a special guest in Pussy Riot's Maria Alyokhina. It too trails a list of international awards and a stark warning that Burning Doors contains "nudity and scenes of violence and torture."



Luminato is also dedicated to putting Canadian artists into the mix and there are two queer-identified performers in the forefront. Vivek Shraya is one of the four panelists leading No Going Back a "town hall meeting" discussing the future of feminism. (They promise to be as riveting and glamorous as Amal Clooney who is also "in conversation" in a special festival event.) Yolanda Bonnell ([The Crackwalker](#)) has the world premiere of her one woman performance piece but that was workshopped at Rhubarb.



There is also Canadian content of the best kind with musical performances from Justin Nozuka and Tika, both of whom are expanding the spectrum of what Canadian pop, what pop music as an entity, means. Outside the March ([Mr Burns a Post-Electric Play](#)) and The Musical Stage Company ([Fun Home](#), [Onegin](#), [Falsettos](#)) team up with hot theatre artists Anika and Britta Johnson for *Dr Silver: A Celebration of Life*. The musical work in progress or “experience” is shrouded in secrecy to the point where it is performed at an undisclosed location only to be revealed to those with tickets. With the pedigree of those involved, it is worth risking winding up in whatever environment they deem necessary to create the proper ambiance.



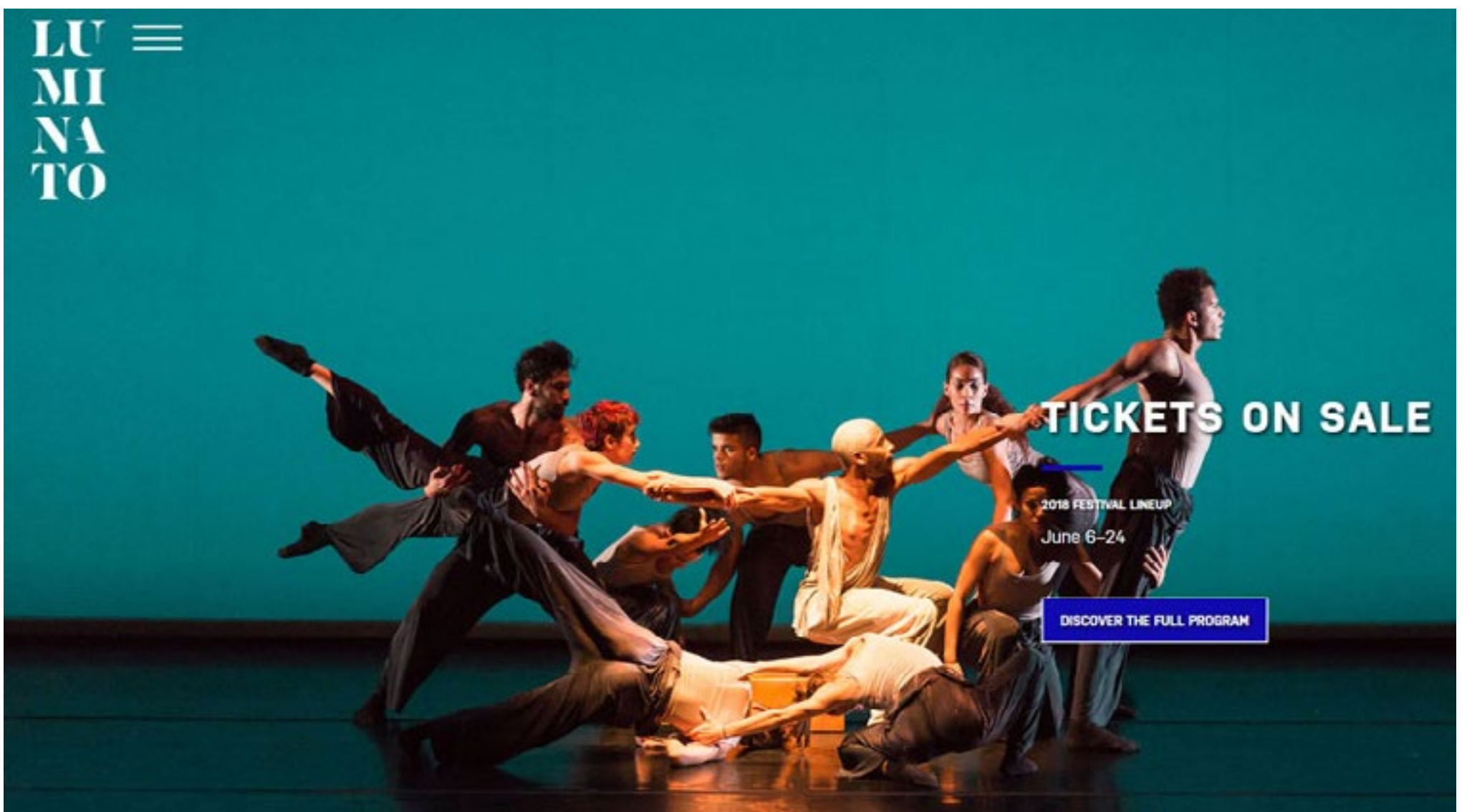
Stephin Merritt is celebrating his first half-century on the planet with *50 Song Memoir*. Spread over two nights, 25 songs a night, Merritt will be accompanied by an expanded version of The Magnetic Fields. The staging includes short films and presumably 50 of Merritt’s eccentricities. Merritt created the sublime *69 Love Songs*, has mixed theatre and pop music to startling effect, and was an openly gay pop musician way before that was even conceivable. He is an acquired taste but one that is addictive.

At the high priced and exclusive end of Luminato is the 24 seats a night *At the Illusionist's Table*. Illusionist Scott Silven hosts an evening of fine dining, mentalism, magic and whisky tasting in a private lounge. Performed at Casa Loma, the soiree will undoubtedly be mysterious as “guests won’t believe their eyes, ears, or taste buds as candles flicker, whisky flows, and conversation stirs.” An intimate dinner with a sexy illusionist with unkempt hair, piercing eyes and deft hands? And whisky? Sounds like a hot ticket.



The most physical and erotic of the arts is represented by a “raw interpretation” of *Swan Lake* from Ireland’s Michael Keegan-Doolan, and the fiery latin jazz of Cuba’s *Malpaso Dance*. But why leave it to the professionals when dance is, at its best, participatory? Four hundred Torontonians have been rehearsing for three months to star in *Le Grand Continental*, an ecstatic extravaganza taking place, for free, at Nathan Phillips Square. And its followed by a “post show dance party.” With any luck, Panti Bliss and the Lords of Strut will show up making it a dance RIOT.

Luminato runs from Wed, June 6 to Sun, June 24 at various venues across the downtown core. luminatofestival.com



RAYMOND HELKIO

QUEEN STREET WEST BIA

PRESENTS ITS INAUGURAL **PRIDE EVENT:**

DRAGON QUEEN

LIVE
DRAG
SHOW!

**SATURDAY
JUNE 23**

QUEEN STREET WEST
& DENISON AVENUE

6:30PM - 9:30PM

One of Toronto's hottest shopping fashion destination, Queen Street West, will be hosting a celebration called *Drag on Queen* on **Saturday, June 23, 2018** from 6:30-9:30pm. Bright colours, music, and excitement will take place on the stage of the new public space at Queen Street West and Denison Avenue.

This is the first of its kind Queen Street West event that is in conjunction with Pride celebrations across Toronto. Spectacular performances from **Robyn DeCradle**, **Dyna Thirst**, and **Donnarama** round-out this fundraiser for the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. The organization promotes the human rights of people living with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS in Canada and on an international level.

About Queen Street West

Internationally renowned as a must-visit Toronto destination, Queen Street West is a place where art meets commerce. It's the historic area that spearheaded the growth in Toronto's cultural life in the 1980s and '90s and is still known for its mixture of fashion shops, galleries and indie music bars. The eastern part of Queen Street West has become a major shopping district while the western half retains its unconventional roots, and looking closely, one can spot the original façades that capture the historic look and feel of Toronto's DNA. Located just south of the Ontario College of Art and Design and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Queen Street West between Simcoe and Bathurst is the neighbourhood that nurtured young artists for decades.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/QueenStWestBIA/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/QueenStWestBIA/

Twitter: www.twitter.com/queenstwestbia?lang=en

[GET TICKETS HERE!](#)

SKY GILBERT

Let them eat cake



So it's come to this! Everyone is in a tizzy because the Supreme Court has ruled in favour of the baker who refused to bake a 'gay wedding cake.' The lawyer defending the baker used the 'freedom of religion argument.' It was felt that the state — when trying to persuade the baker to bake this cake — denigrated the baker's religion.

The baker says that weddings are “religious” — which means marriage is sacred, Christian, and between men and women only. He also says ‘I don't create cakes for Halloween’ — considered by fundamentalists to be a pagan holiday. There's no doubt about it, he is a Christian fundamentalist. Charlie Craig — one member of the gay couple — said about the baker: “I want him to have his own religious beliefs and his own experiences and his own ideas....But you cannot practice your religion in a way that denigrates others or excludes them from full participation in public life.”

I agree but — can't this couple actually take a stand — rather than back away from a frontal attack? The couple are trying to present themselves as not 'anti-religious' just 'anti-discrimination.' But this is ignoring the truth. The fact of the matter is that all fundamentalist religions are homophobic; in their teachings and in their actions. It doesn't matter whether you're a fundamentalist Jew, or Muslim, or Christian — most fundamentalists would rather see us dead.

And in their defence, the fundamentalists use the specious and dangerous 'freedom of religion' argument.

It's this 'freedom of religion' argument that needs to be obliterated at the core. Freedom of religion *should* mean the freedom to write about your religion, and speak about your religion, and worship in a church/temple/mosque of your choice. That's all. It doesn't mean you can bring your discrimination and hate into the public square. There is probably a religion somewhere that believes that women must be beaten every day with a big stick. Should we be 'tolerant' and 'respectful' of that?

President Trump is gradually filling American courts with right wing fundamentalist activists. These young right wing judges will live for a long time — many of the rights and freedoms that gays and women take for granted (women, you can say goodbye to abortion!) will disappear in the USA — no matter who the future president is.

And it will happen in Canada too (witness the popularity of Doug Ford in Ontario!). The only answer is to confront the phony issue of 'religious freedom' head on. Instead of worrying about wedding cakes, worry about the mental health of gay men in a 'post-AIDS' era — in what is still a dreadfully homophobic culture, fuelled by Christian fundamentalists like this nutty baker. That means attacking this falsely pious man for his fundamentalism, and telling him exactly where he can shove his 'religious' wedding cakes.

Period.

#AIDSVigil: Honour, Celebrate, Remember

RAYMOND HELKIO



To celebrate the 34th AIDS Candlelight Vigil this year's theme is "Strengths in Communities," honouring HIV/AIDS activism, support and compassion within community groups.

Just after dusk on Tuesday, June 19, hundreds of queer community members and allies will remember, honour and celebrate those who have passed from AIDS/HIV-related illnesses. "Since its inception, the AIDS Candlelight Vigil has served as the annual community event for people living with HIV/AIDS, friends, family, allies and the broader communities to honour the lives lost to the disease, and to celebrate those who live with the virus," says Karen Cohen, AIDS Vigil Committee of Toronto Co-Chair.

At the end of 2014, the estimated number of persons living with HIV in Canada was 75,500. It is estimated that 1 in every 5 Canadians infected with HIV has not been diagnosed (Public Health Canada, 2014). "The fight against HIV is not over, and we cannot be complacent when an average of 6.4 new HIV diagnoses are given daily." (Canadian AIDS Society, 2016)

The evening is hosted by Kay Roesslein and Haran Vijayanathan, and will include performances from LGBTQ2S+ chorus group Singing Out, cabaret trio Deaf That!, soprano Alexa Frankian and bass Wesley Hui. The event will close with a reading of the names of those who have passed from HIV/AIDS or AIDS related illnesses, followed by a candle lighting ceremony. The names read prior to the candle lighting ceremony will be engraved on the long-standing AIDS Memorial in the heart of Barbara Hall Park.

AIDS
CANDLELIGHT
VIGIL

34th Annual Toronto AIDS Candlelight Vigil
June 19, 2018 at 9 pm
Barbara Hall Park, 519 Church Street
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AIDSVigilTor>

Paul goes to Hollywood

DREW ROWSOME



Relax, don't do it
When you want to go to it
Relax, don't do it
When you want to come

Eighties pop gifted us with an assortment of gay camp icons that, like the fashions they wore and we copied, are seared in our memories. For every [Freddie Mercury](#), Boy George, [George Michael](#) and Jimmy Somerville, there are hugely influential artists who never became mainstream superstars: Marc Almond, Fred Schneider, Klaus Nomi and Scott Walker. For every one-hit wonder in pop, there was a brief and explosive fashion trend. Wham's "Choose Life" slogan shirts designed by Katherine E Hamnett morphed into "Frankie Says Relax," morphed into kitchen rags in a matter of months.

Frankie Goes to Hollywood's career was as meteoric. "Relax" was simultaneously banned and a number one hit. The combo, and the relentless beats and slick production, made it ubiquitous and unforgettable. It was also blatantly gay. The video, also banned, featured hunky back-up singer and pseudo-clone Paul Rutherford luring lead singer Holly Johnson into an S&M bar boasting drag queens, a tiger, and a Roman emperor. When the band, which like many '80s acts was borderline manufactured, broke up, Rutherford released a few singles and one album before fading out of the public eye.

But like the best '80s pop and porn, Rutherford is back as the inspiration for a fashion collection from Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979. More artists than designers, Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979 release collections on an irregular schedule and operate under the guidance of a manifesto that wouldn't be out of place guiding a lesbian collective or eco-activist organization.



My Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979 is established in 2015, the concept is a mix of men`s independent fashion and the art of freedom.

All the collection sets are produced in the small factories or workshops around Finland and in the USA. My Lost Uncle respects the environmental issues as good as he can do.

Garments and accessories are inspired by the forgotten memories, bizarreness of Northern Hemisphere, the popular culture and especially various stereotypes of modern man.



Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979 are based in Helsinki, Finland and are fabulously queer. Their main distribution is through the Tom of Finland store which is well worth a visit for not only Tom of Finland products, but also designs by Bruce LaBruce. Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979's own website's "shop" page is currently empty, but their Tumblr is packed with artsy photography and fabulous past collections like Macho Candy (Icelandic sweaters knitted by authentic Finnish artisans and seniors) and a future one inspired by Japanese boybands.

Astoundingly, there are a few pieces from Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979's legendary Hustler White Unidentified collection still for sale at the Tom of Finland store. Most of it sold out very quickly. As will the Paul Goes to Hollywood collection when, whenever, it arrives.

The publicity photos, ballet dancer/choreographer Aapo Siikala who is no stranger to being a homoerotic wet dream, are irresistible. Exclusive fashion inspired by a gay icon is also irresistible. As Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979 explains in their Finnish-inflected English:



Digitally printed collection is an homage to the dancer and singer Paul Rutherford and the 1980s music videos, zine magazines, xerox copied flyers and the club culture which was ahead of time back then. We can always remember Rutherford as a doorman at the apocalyptic club in Frankie Goes to Hollywood's Relax video. He's got the power to invite quests to the fantasies of pleasuredome. The legacy of all this still lives in the underground culture and fascinates the new generations.



Whether Rutherford will be wearing the collection - he is now a hunky DILF living in New Zealand - or promoting it is an unanswered question. Lost Uncle - MissingSince1979's marketing plan is

someone may find Xerox posters or stickers in places such as Lars Homestead in Tatooine or U.F.O. sighting spot in Nivala, Finland and over Banksy's street art in the UK.

As the inspirational lyrics go:

Relax, don't do it
When you want to go to it
Relax, don't do it
When you want to come

Live those dreams
Scheme those schemes
Got to hit me (hit me!) Hit me (hit me!)
Hit me with those laser beams

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RAYMOND HELKIO

Want To Walk Around With Your Drink at Pride? Here's what it'll cost you



Pride Toronto's Drinks On The Go program is supposed to allow people to move freely with their alcoholic beverages, but it'll cost you.

A One Day Pass is \$12.80 (\$10.00 + \$0.59 Processing fee + \$1.38 HST + \$0.83 Service charge) or a **Weekend Pass at \$30.59** (\$25.00 + \$1.03 Processing fee + \$3.38 HST + \$1.18 Service charge). Alcohol not included.

According to a Pride Toronto Facebook post, the cost of the wristbands "covers the additional infrastructure required to provide an outdoor licensed space." Which does not include spaces such as The 519 Green Space. More troublesome is that purchasing a wristband comes with a contract to honour all of [Pride's Terms & Conditions](#) which include being subject to ID and bag checks at any time by security and/or police.

Other items include; drinks may **only leave the establishment** and may not be brought into any establishment or beverage garden (ie. you can walk out with your beer, but not in); wristband owners must not resist the direction of and search by the event security guards including, but not limited to, bags, purses, and they will confiscate any prohibited items, at their sole discretion. Confiscated items will not be returned. By purchasing a Pride wristband, the terms and conditions also bar you from bringing prohibited items into Pride, among the banned are (which read much like a drag queen's outfit, than dangerous items):

- Water guns or misters
- Unsealed over the counter medications/vitamins (prescription drugs in non-approved containers must be turned over to Medical)
- Bicycles, scooters, go carts, or ATVs
- Pets (unless it is a service animal)

- Coolers
- Multi-pocket backpacks larger than 24" x 12" (cinch packs are permitted)
- Large backpacks
- Luggage
- Push carts
- Sports equipment (including frisbees)
- Camera tripods
- Chinese lanterns

Pride also tossed in a few 'prohibited acts' which include distributing flyers or posters on or near the event site. They've also included wording that gives them language control over anything they deem inappropriate at the discretion of event staff or security personnel including display signs, texts, symbols, images, gestures, clothing or articles of dress.

If you are okay agreeing to this contract so you can walk out of a beer garden with half a beer, then these passes are for you. But for a less complicated Pride that doesn't include extra searches, contracts and fees, just skip the wristband and show up.



creating tactile photographs of men who are mystical but somehow approachable

ALEXANDER SCHMITT

DREW ROWSOME

DigitalDesignTeam's Alexander Schmitt has photographed every Christopher Street Day celebration/demonstration in Stuttgart for 14 years. Christopher Street Day is the German and Swiss equivalent of a Pride parade, which qualifies Schmitt specifically for *MGT's* Pride issue. He also produces stunning images of male beauty which qualifies him at any time.



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



"It makes me proud that so many people contribute and work together for our cause," says Schmitt about Pride/Christopher Street Day.

"We have already achieved a lot, but there is so much more to achieve. We should each fight and get involved whether artistically, politically or even in a very different way. It is important that we do it together and worldwide."

Schmitt says that, "Even as a child I would go alone with the camera and take nature shots. That continued and so I became a photographer. I started with analog photography. It fascinated me to work in the darkroom and how a photo emerges on the white paper after being exposed. At that time I began to photograph and develop film myself. After that I went to the darkroom and made the paper prints from it. Of course, it is much easier now with digital photography. But you still have to have an artistic vein so that the viewer is attracted by the photo. A model still has to look mystical but somehow approachable."

ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM

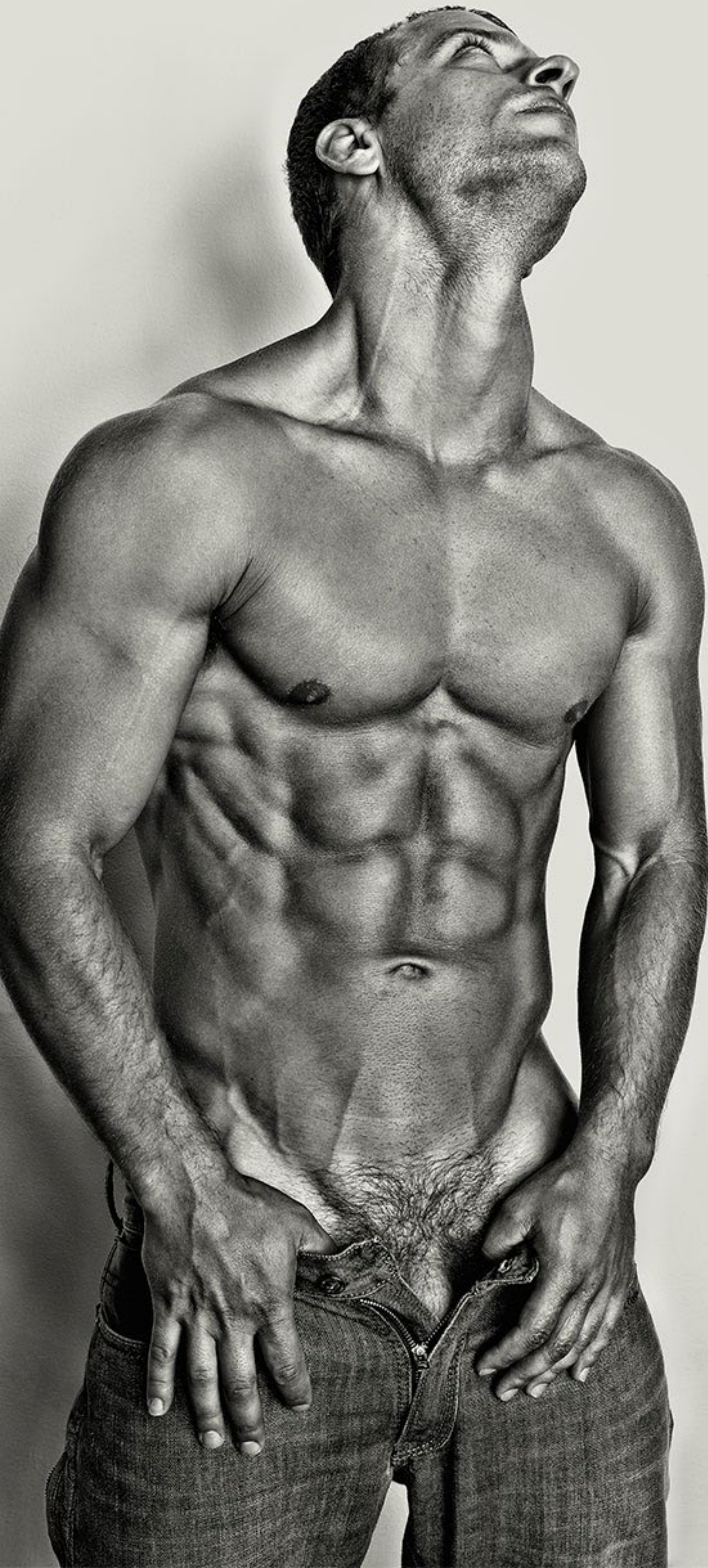




ALEXANDER SCHMITT
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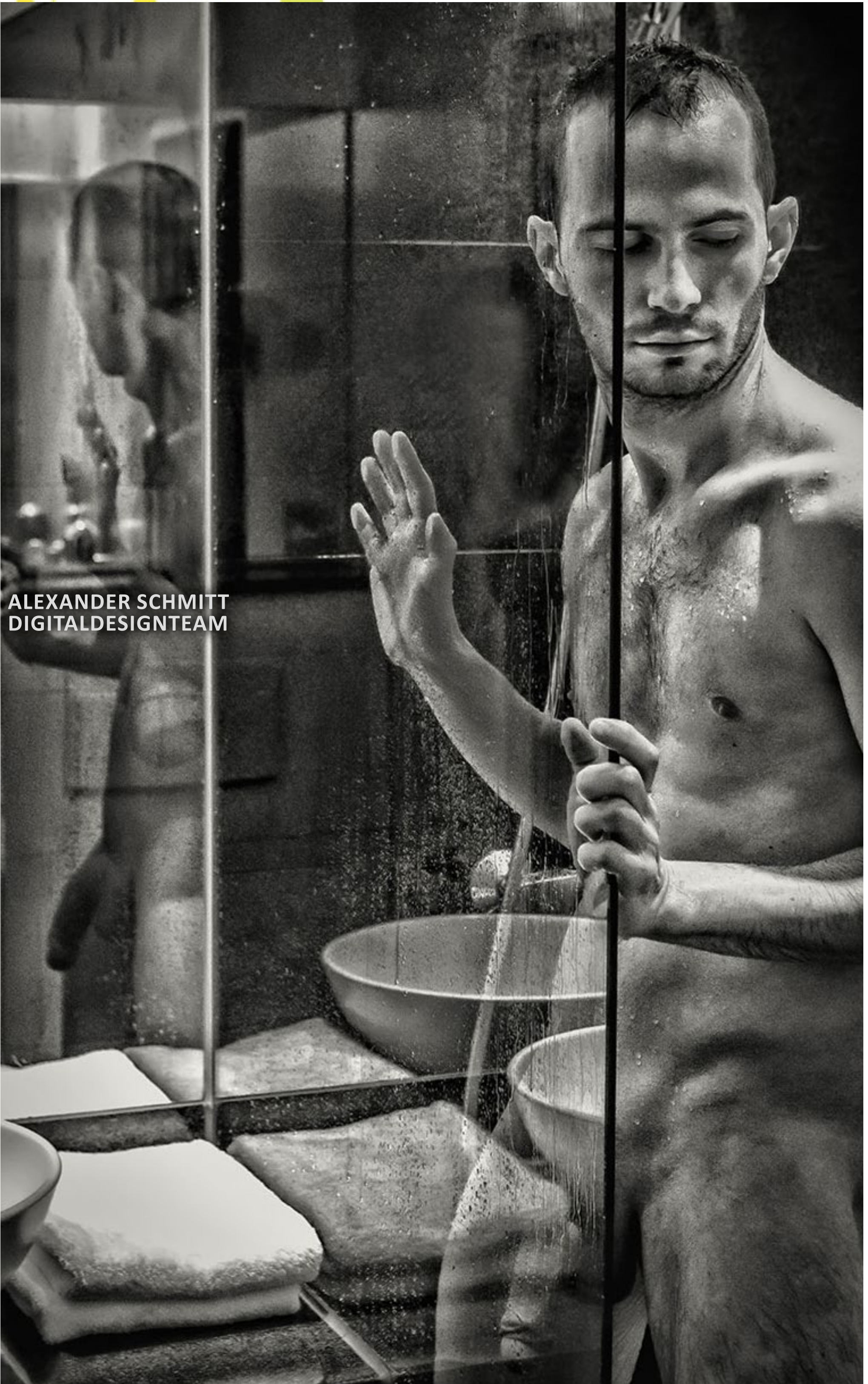
In 2003 he and his partner formed the company DigitalDesignTeam and they, as well as documenting the Stuttgart gay scene, create striking commercial photography. As enticing as that work is, it is Schmitt's photographs of men that have brought him renown.

"I try to do a lot of freelance work to differentiate myself from the business shoots," he says. *"That way I can live my own creativity."*

That creativity is startlingly tactile, not only the defined abs and biceps, but also the delicate whorls or bristles of hair, and the light within a model's eyes.

"The image editing is another part after the shooting. Above all, I work with microcontrasts, which dissolve the skin plasticly, almost three-dimensionally. This has the effect that one can almost touch the models."

**ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM**



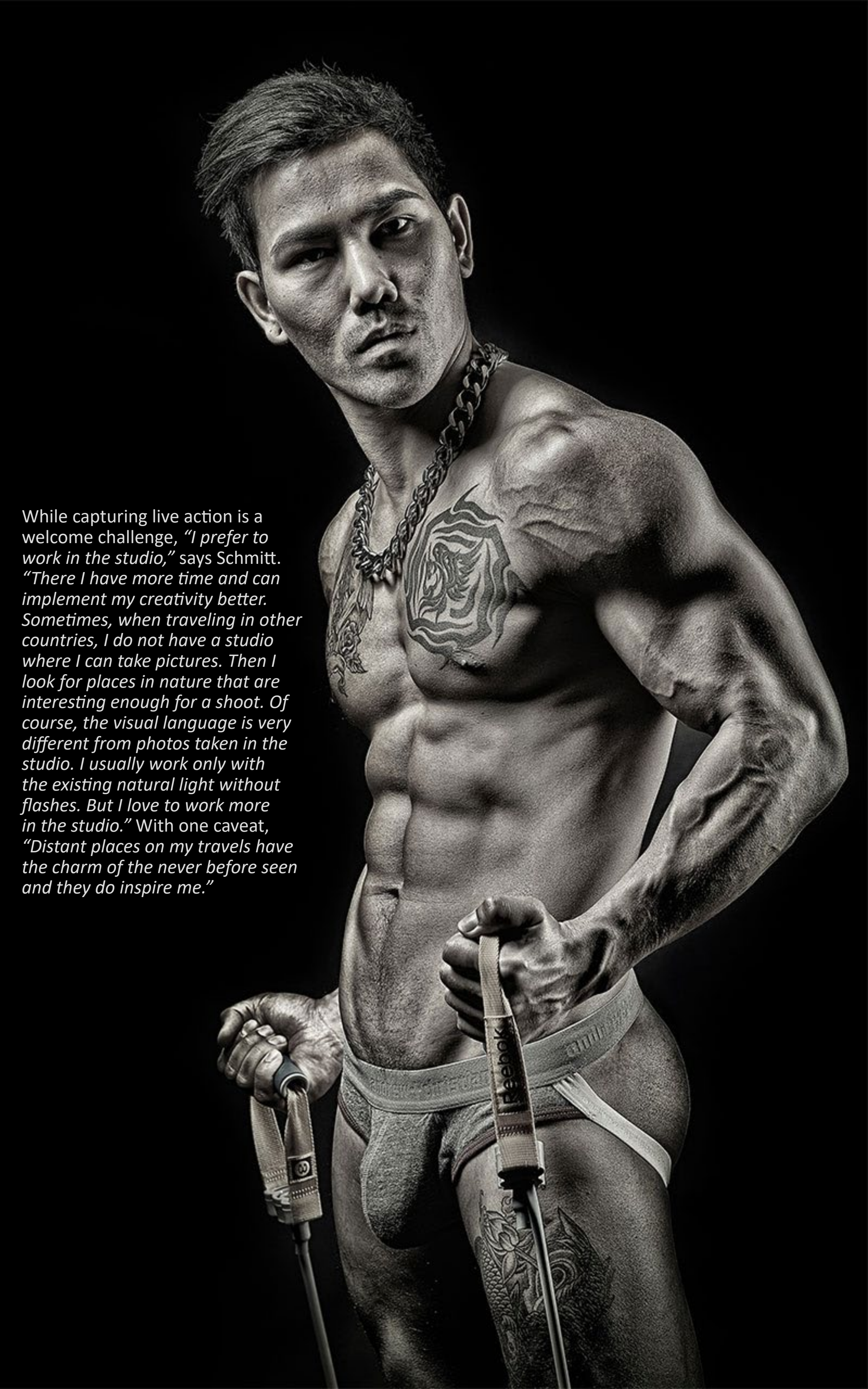
ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM

The results certainly do beg to be touched. *"I try to give the models a personal touch,"* says Schmitt of the broad range of masculine ideals he uses. *"Giving each model the same treatment each time would be pretty boring. The different facets are exciting and fascinate again and again. I give the viewer an insight into a model that has never been seen before. That's what makes a photo eye-catching."* And a basic criteria, *"The physical conditions must fit, that means absolute fitness and a trendy appearance."*



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM





While capturing live action is a welcome challenge, *"I prefer to work in the studio,"* says Schmitt. *"There I have more time and can implement my creativity better. Sometimes, when traveling in other countries, I do not have a studio where I can take pictures. Then I look for places in nature that are interesting enough for a shoot. Of course, the visual language is very different from photos taken in the studio. I usually work only with the existing natural light without flashes. But I love to work more in the studio."* With one caveat, *"Distant places on my travels have the charm of the never before seen and they do inspire me."*

**ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM**



Schmitt looks for models who *“Are confident of themselves and are not afraid to cross boundaries.”* He cites the work of Henning von Berg as an inspiration. That made Logan McCree a natural fit for a series of portraits showcasing the soul of the man behind the tattooed flesh. *“Porn models are naturally very well trained and have a good body sense,”* says Schmitt. *“Of course, they also have little fear of getting naked in front of the camera.”*



Schmitt creates photos that are erotic but not gratuitous. He explains it as, *“Nudes are ok if done tastefully.”* The abundant male nudity in Schmitt’s photographs may be explicit but it is never prurient. *“The portrayal of naked people is always a balancing act between the erotic, art and porn. I like it when the physical proportions of a model are expressive, that includes the penis in a man. That is then a tasteful presentation to the viewer.”*

Working with nudity, *“Requires a lot of tact and years of work with models. I create a quiet and pleasant atmosphere. We discuss exactly what we want to shoot beforehand. The model can concentrate on the shoot without being distracted by anything. I give some instructions to the poses, the rest is the personality of the model. I try to elicit the personality of the model and then capture in a photo.”*



Schmitt believes that male beauty includes penises, but that progressive attitude may reflect his European sensibility more than the mainstream. He sends a copy of a photo that he is particularly proud of and laments, *"My favourite photo but I can't publish it on Instagram, Model Mayhem or Facebook. Anywhere."* The photo in question is the torso of a man, his hands cupping and covering his testicles, while a semi-erect penis arches floppily across his stomach. (you can see that photo on next page)

It is an extraordinarily brazen and vulnerable photo. The cropping is tight and classical while the light gives incredible definition and detail to every hair, vein, and fold of skin. It is erotic, whimsical and matter of fact. Definitely art and not porn.





ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM

**ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM**

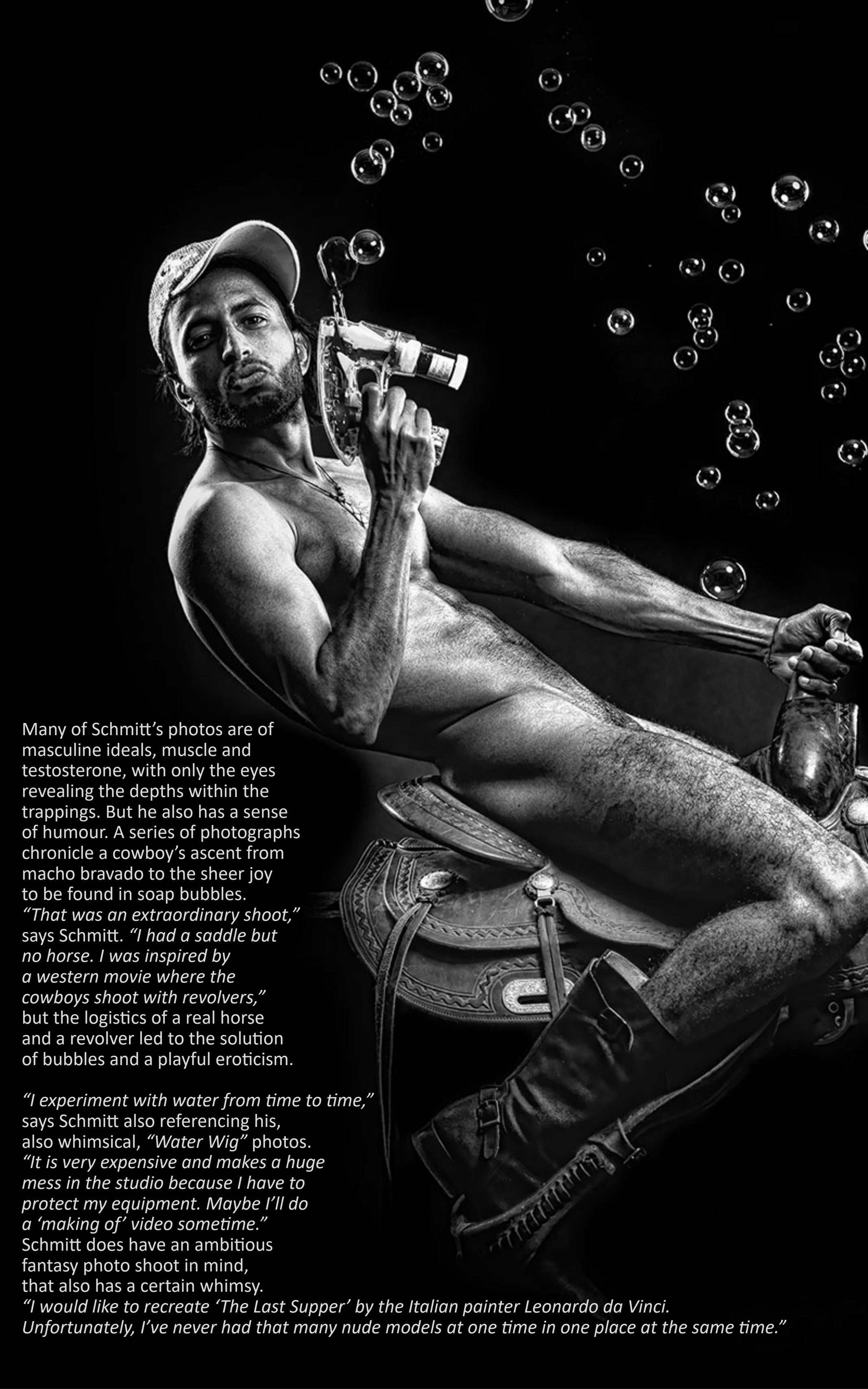


**ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM**





**ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM**



Many of Schmitt's photos are of masculine ideals, muscle and testosterone, with only the eyes revealing the depths within the trappings. But he also has a sense of humour. A series of photographs chronicle a cowboy's ascent from macho bravado to the sheer joy to be found in soap bubbles.

"That was an extraordinary shoot," says Schmitt. *"I had a saddle but no horse. I was inspired by a western movie where the cowboys shoot with revolvers,"* but the logistics of a real horse and a revolver led to the solution of bubbles and a playful eroticism.

"I experiment with water from time to time," says Schmitt also referencing his, also whimsical, *"Water Wig"* photos. *"It is very expensive and makes a huge mess in the studio because I have to protect my equipment. Maybe I'll do a 'making of' video sometime."*

Schmitt does have an ambitious fantasy photo shoot in mind, that also has a certain whimsy.

"I would like to recreate 'The Last Supper' by the Italian painter Leonardo da Vinci. Unfortunately, I've never had that many nude models at one time in one place at the same time."

**ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM**



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



Christopher Street Day number 15 is fast approaching and Schmitt will tear himself away from his studio to capture the excitement of the festivities and activism. He sees similarities between the two photographic styles, *"It is about the same if you have a drag queen or a fitness model in front of the camera,"* he says. *"Every situation is unique and always new."* But of course he has to point out that, *"The fitness model needs a completely different illumination than the drag queen."*





ALEXANDER SCHMITT
DIGITALDESIGNTEAM



Prints of Alexander Schmitt's photos can be ordered on his website digitaldesignteam.de

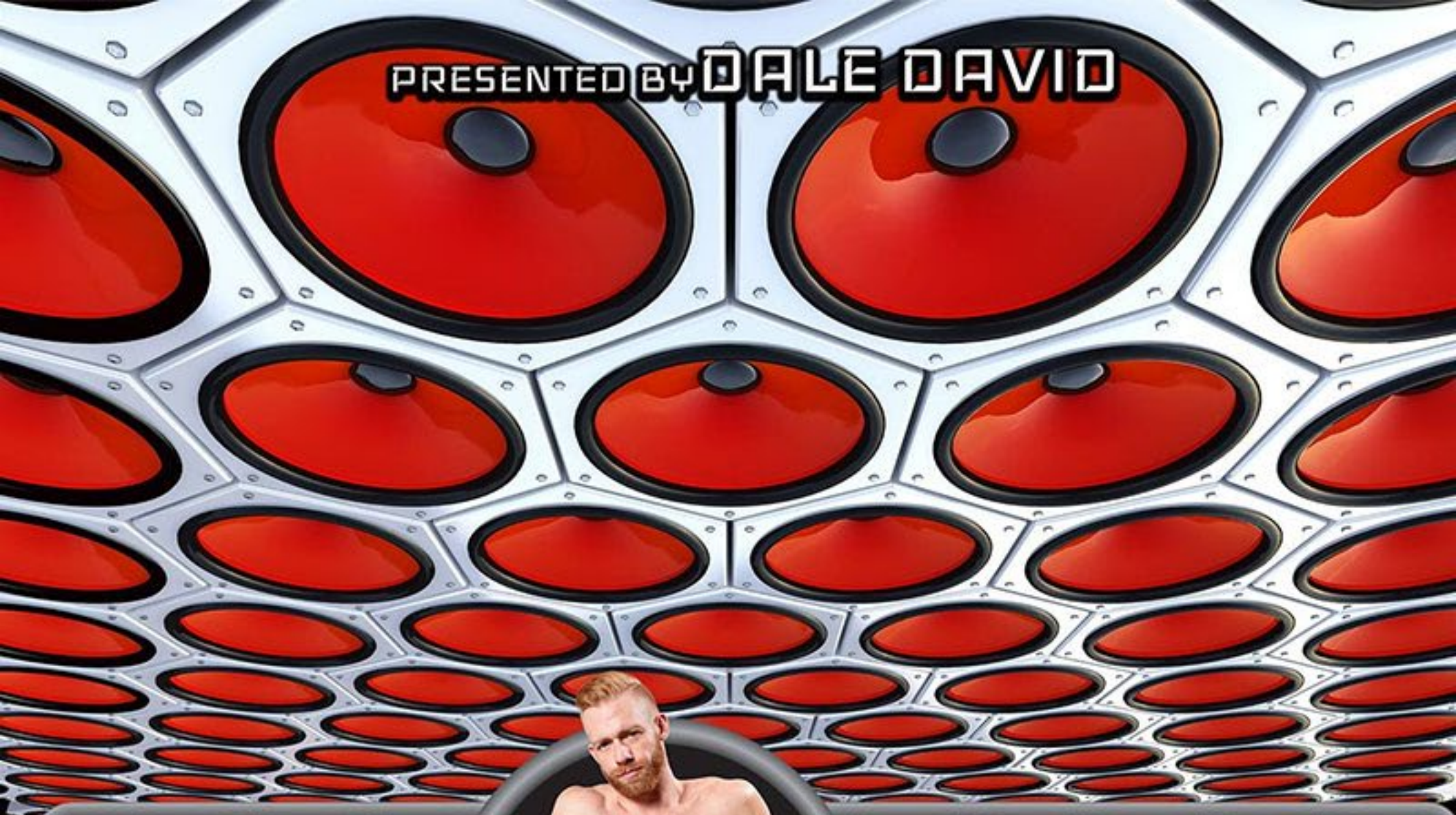
or through his Instagram

[instagram.com/alexdigitaldesignteam](https://www.instagram.com/alexdigitaldesignteam)

Or works, particularly the ones featuring full-frontals, can be bought through Galerie Nieser in Stuttgart

galerie-nieser.de

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DREW ROWSOME



The play's the thing: Shakespeare in High Park, The Fringe Festival SummerWorks and Gay Play Day

Pride is the theatrical event - in terms of drama, spectacle and sheer numbers - of the summer. But hard on her high heels comes a series of theatrical festivals that are also not to be missed. After recovering from marching, partying and being the gods' gift to the world, a few hours in the darkened tabernacle of the theatre is another way to celebrate culture.

There is just time to catch one's breath before Shakespeare in High Park begins its run under the stars. From Thursday, June 28 to Sunday, September 2, the bisexual bard's best gets a crowd-pleasing airing in the magical amphitheatre close to the traditional cruising grounds of the west end. Tanja Jacobs ([Love and Information](#), [La Bete](#)) returns after last year's riotous Twelfth Night, to direct *A Midsummer's Night Dream* set "in a stylish Fellini-inspired production set in a Roman amusement park in the early 1950s." Frank Cox-O'Connell crosses the footlights from playing [Hamlet](#) to directing *Romeo and Juliet*. The star-crossed lovers meet amidst a soccer hooligan culture, "a culture poisoned by masculinity."

If that isn't enough inducement, the cast performing the plays in repertory, is stellar including sex symbol Jason Cadieux ([Love and Information](#), [The Wedding Party](#), [King Lear](#)), Rachel Cairns ([Bunny](#), [Hamlet](#)), the irrepressible Peter Fernandes ([Love and Information](#), [Onegin](#), [King Lear](#)), Naomi Wright ([Kiss](#), [Julius Caesar](#), [A Room of One's Own](#)) the intense and hunky David Patrick Flemming ([What a Young Wife Ought to Know](#)), Amaka Umeh ([James and the Giant Peach](#), [This Is For You Anna](#), [Sister Act](#), [Jesus Christ Superstar](#)), and the always mesmerizing Jakob Ehman ([The Circle](#), [Nature of the Beast](#), [Cockfight](#), [Donors](#), [Firebrand](#)). Shakespeare will sizzle this summer.



The Toronto Fringe Festival running from Wednesday, July 4 to Sunday, July 15 has 159 ticketed shows and over 50 free events. It is, frankly, overwhelming. Best to hunker down with the program guide (available in .pdf format at fringetoronto.com) and pick out anything that catches your attention. And inevitably, as word of mouth and social media rev up, there will be unexpected pleasures to be found. Here are just a few, arranged in no particular order, that caught my eye.

The Bird Killer is an “updated and gender-bent” version of Chekhov’s *The Seagull* which sounds intriguing. Then I discovered that Michael Ricci ([Pippi](#) [The Strongest Girl in the World](#), [Circles](#)) is part of the cast. Now it is a must-see.

[Paradise Lost](#) is Paul Van Dyck’s dazzling retelling of John Milton’s poem. If you didn’t get to see it in its previous limited run, this is your chance.

The Pansy Craze: A New Musical tells the tale of “the unsung tale of queer artists struggling to find sanctuary in the early 1930s.” Musicals, queer and an alluring title, are a combination dear to my heart.

Movin’ Melvin Brown - A Man, A Magic, A Music brings the rhythm and blues to the stage for a one man song and dance extravaganza.

Anatomy of a Dancer has an 11 member cast interpreting the Gene Kelly quote “You dance love, you dance joy, and you dance dreams. And I know if I can make you smile by jumping over a couple of couches or running through a rainstorm, then I’ll be very glad to be a song and dance man.” Kelly was, in my opinion, the sexiest triple threat of Hollywood’s golden age and if they capture a quarter of his magnetism, it will be riveting.



IN THE FUTURE EVERYONE



WILL BE FAMOUS FOR 15 MINUTES

Andy Warhol Musical: In Rehearsal has an anonymous (?!?) ensemble of 13 going behind the scenes at the creation of a musical about The Factory. Very Warhol concept by a company calling itself Josie’s Pussy Cats.

Birds Make Me Think of Freedom tells the stories of people institutionalized for having developmental disabilities. Both the stories of the incarcerated and the ones who facilitated the incarceration.

Save the Date has Morro and Jasp ([9 - 5](#), [Stupefaction](#)) throwing a clown wedding. An invite not to be declined, RSVP immediately.



[Flooded: A Show and Sail Around the Toronto Islands](#) is a seafaring rare experience that, if you missed it last summer, don't miss it this time around.



Carmilla interprets the classic lesbian vampire potboiler through burlesque, song, dance and cabaret. Hot.

The Cockwhisperer - A Love Story is unfortunately from the heterosexual perspective of Colette Kendall, but I'm sure all can relate.



The Ding Dong Girls is the sure bet of the entire Fringe and if you want tickets, get them fast. A drag musical based on “the mostly untrue legend of a cross-dressing misfit who gathers around him four other young gay men to form a madcap, politically-motivated drag troupe” is written by wits Gordon Bowness and Christopher Richards, and the cast includes some fierce dragsters and the delectable Oscar Moreno ([Thank You for Being a Friend](#)). La cage aux fabulous.

Circus Shop of Horrors sounds like it was created specifically for moi - “an eclectic musical revue, paying homage to beloved horror films, by melding the grotesque, with acrobatics, circus, dance, drag, and illusion” - but I suspect there are a lot of other queer horror musical circus fans out there. At least I, and cast member/secret weapon Phil Skala ([Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story](#), [Rent](#), [Avenue Q](#), [Rent](#)), fervently believe so.



The SummerWorks Performance Festival running Thursday, August 9 to Sunday, August 19 is still far enough away that there hasn't been a concrete announcement of their programming. However some of the names of the participating artists have leaked and include such luminaries as Graham Isador ([Situational Anarchy](#)), Mark Aikman ([Family Story](#)), Michaela Washburn ([La Bete](#), [Animal Farm](#)), Molly Johnson, Rob Kempson ([The Way Back to Thursday](#)), Susanna Fournier ([Lulu v7](#)), Tom Arthur Davis ([Situational Anarchy](#), [They Say He Fell](#)), ted witzel ([Lulu v7](#), [The Marquise of O](#), [All's Well That Ends Well](#), [La Ronde](#)) and FADO Performance Art Centre ([Lost in TRANS](#)).

However SummerWorks is dedicated to presenting what they call “cutting-edge, exciting, professional theatre” which translates into theatre that is shaping theatre, or, theatre that is embryonic or that you will not see anywhere else. Past festivals have brought us the wonders of [Gash!](#), [Paradise Red](#), [X](#), [Pearle Harbour's Chautauqua](#), [Delicacy](#), and [To Myself at 28](#). All of the

artists involved in those shows have gone on to create more extraordinary work and we'll be able to type the same sentence next year. SummerWorks really is, as billed, "the breeding ground for the mainstage shows of the future."



Explicitly a mainstage show of the future is the Outside the March ([Mr Burns A Post Apocalyptic Play](#)) and The Musical Stage Company ([Fun Home](#), [Onegin](#), [Once On This Island](#), [Elegies](#), [Falsettos](#)) are presenting *Dr Silver: A Celebration of Life* which is being workshopped at [Luminato](#), and undoubtedly has a full theatrical run in its near future.

And by then it will be September and we can get start getting prepared for the Gay Play Day festival on Friday, September 7 and Saturday, September 8 featuring new works from Steven Elliott Jackson ([The Seat Next to the King](#), [Threesome](#), [Real Life Superhero](#)) and Philip Cairns. Buddies new season. will also launch and there will be theatre and drama all the way until next Pride.

Shakespeare in High Park runs from Thurs, June 28 through Sunday, Sept 2 at the High Park Ampitheatre, 1873 Bloor St W. [canadianstage.com](#)

The Toronto Fringe Festival runs Wed, July 4 through Sun, July 15 at multiple venues across the city. [fringetoronto.com](#)

The SummerWorks Performance Festival runs Thurs, Aug 9 through Sun, Aug 19 at multiple venues centred around the Theatre Centre, 1115 Queen St W. [summerworks.ca](#)

Gay Play Day runs Fri, Sept 7 and Sat, Sept 8 at Alumnae Theatre, 70 Berkeley St. [gayplayday.blogspot.com](#)





INKED
KENNY
PHOTOGRAPHY

RAYMOND HELKIO

Porch Dancing, It's A Thing



PORCH VIEW DANCES IS AN AWARD-WINNING COMMUNITY DANCE FESTIVAL THAT ENGAGES EVERYDAY PEOPLE AS CREATORS AND STORYTELLERS, PERFORMING THEIR STORIES IN THE FRONT YARDS AND PORCHES OF THEIR OWN HOMES.

The award-winning Porch View Dances (PVD) showcases people dancing in real spaces. This year, PVD's theme is inclusivity with a focus on diversity in dance creation and performance. Karen Kaeja, co-artistic director, explains, "I love that through our common language of movement, we have this intimate and focused experience together that serves the day and the dance and continues the story." As a community dance festival, this project engages everyday people as creators, storytellers, and performers and brings audiences on a walking tour of Seaton Village in Toronto's Annex area.

Hosting participants from all over Toronto gather on porches and lawns throughout the neighbourhood, and for the event's finale, audience members are invited to join in *Flock Landing*, a large participatory dance experience fully accessible to all ages and abilities. Porch View Dances was conceived by Karen Kaeja and developed with Allen Kaeja.

The event starts at [595 Palmerston Avenue](#) with several stops including:

PORCH 1

Choreographed by Kathleen Rea

A team of participants who come from neighbourhoods from across Toronto. This group of performers with diverse abilities will unite in their shared love of movement, dance, and community, bringing their various talents to the table, including: yoga, wheelchair dance, aerial circus, and contact dance.

PORCH 2

Choreographed by Andrea Nann with Michelle Silagy

Four housemates with multi-exceptionalities who love dancing together. They believe creativity should have no physical boundaries and restrictions.

PORCH 3

Choreographed by Karen and Allen Kaeja

Jim and Owen Adams are an Indigenous father/son team returning to PVD series for their second year to explore teachings from the Medicine Wheel. This year's theme will focus on the father/son relationship that embodies the Indigenous values of truth, love and respect.

PORCH VIEW DANCES:

July 18-22, 2018 - Wed-Sat at 7pm, Sunday at 1pm - Starts at [595 Palmerston Avenue](#) - PWYC

MORE INFO: <https://www.kaeja.org/pvd2018>

PHOTOS BY SEAN LEBER

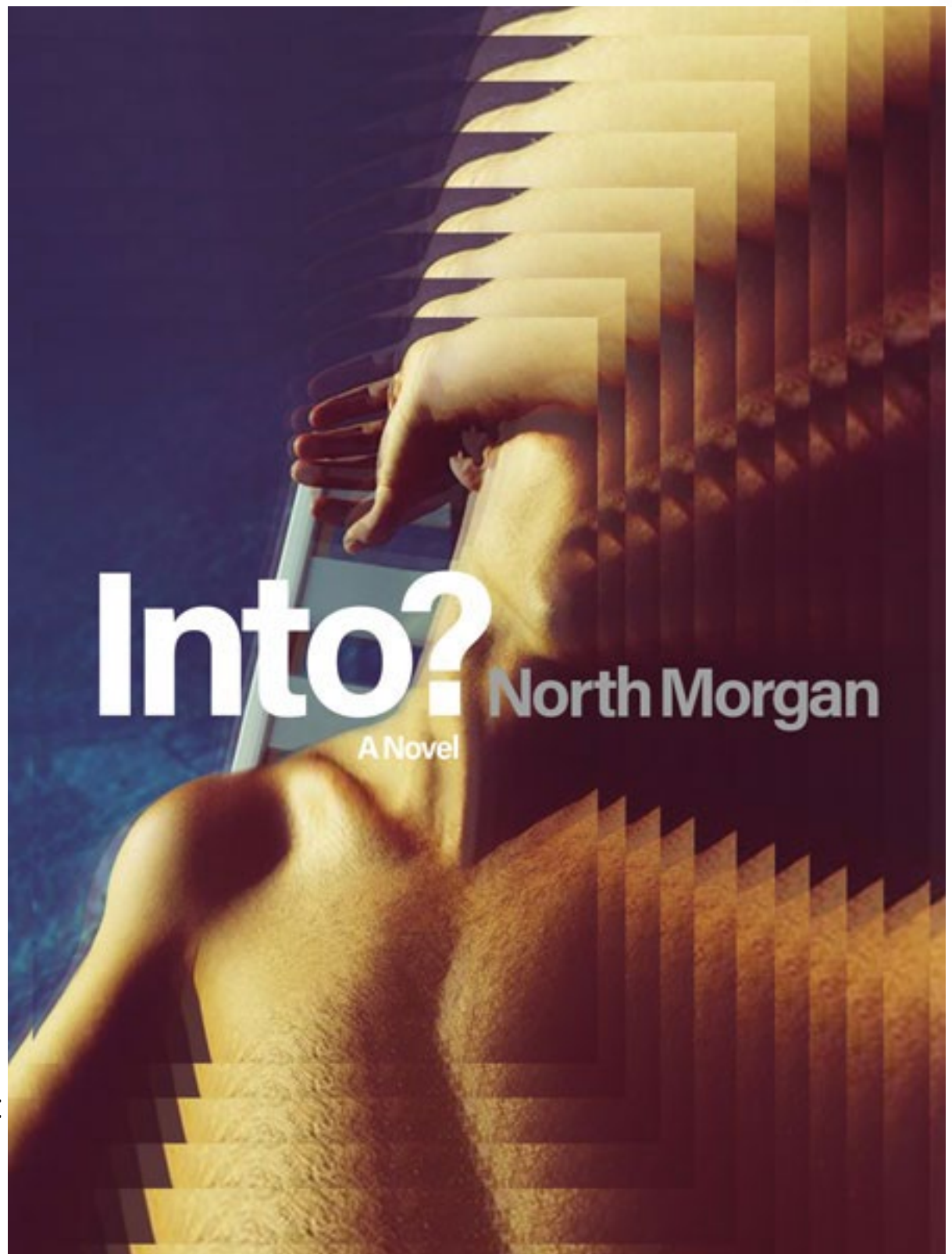
My GayToronto



DREW ROWSOME ★★☆☆

Into? is a hilarious, deeply disturbing comedy of manners. That it is a satire, or perhaps a scathing portrait, of gay men and their foibles, may explain my deeply divided reaction to reading it. I read quickly, drawn on by the rapid-fire prose composed in high gay patter (a translation into Polari would take minutes). I laughed frequently, shook my head ruefully often, blushed in recognition more times than I would like to admit, and on occasion was consumed with anger. I enjoyed it immensely and I intensely hate it.

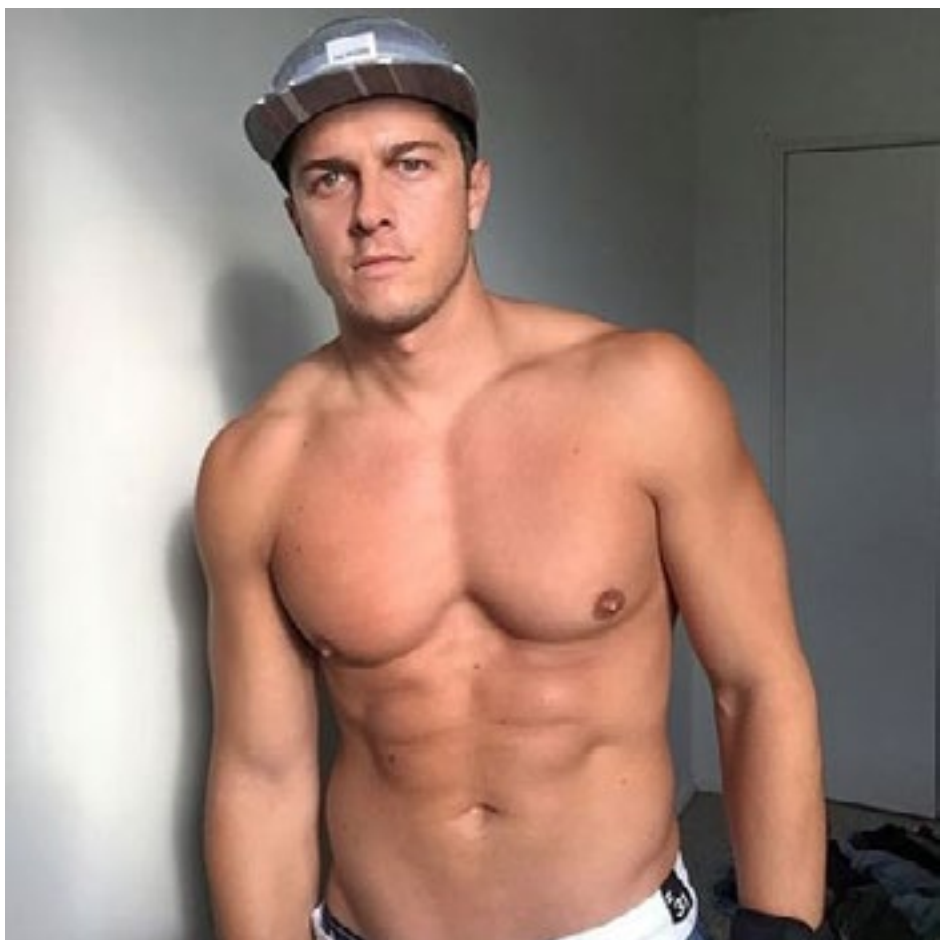
Konrad Platt, our narrator and protagonist, has just been dumped by his boyfriend so he leaves London, England for Los Angeles. Platt is unlucky in love but blessed in that he has seemingly endless amounts of money earned for minimal work, looks good enough for the constant posting of shirtless and/or nude xxx photos and videos, access to an endless supply of drugs, and, the most important part, a revolving cast of thousands of friends on multiple social media platforms. Platt is an aging circuit boy who insists he is looking for a relationship and to settle down and get out of the scene.



His inability to do so forms the bulk of Into?

Author North Morgan takes a real chance in presenting us with such an unsympathetic main character. This self-proclaimed Cinderella searching for his prince is shallow, vindictive, desperate, self-loathing, self-pitying and only rarely self-aware. It's hard to root for his quest when one wants to warn the objects of his desire to run. And the loathsome quality of his targets is questionable as we are only seeing them through Konrad's eyes. Konrad insists he wants a boyfriend, if not a husband, and he expresses it through the desires of his friend who is, another nebulous occupation, an ex-go-go dancer

...he's tired of all this drama and the sleeping around and he wants to find a boyfriend and go out much less, if at all, but everyone is really shallow and not relationship-oriented and they just want to have sex with him and then move on to the next person and why can't he find someone who is as mature and over it as he is and wants the same thing?



Konrad does have criteria beyond his husband having the desire to be a husband. Quite a lot of criteria, all of it physical. He is attracted to muscle, square jaws and, distressingly, seemingly only caucasians. He finds men online, often travels great distances to meet them, and then they turn out to be sluts, or uninterested, or shallow. And of course,

As always, and this is my biggest failing as a human being, once a hot guy arrives within my visual range all my other functions are paralyzed, my cognitive ability becomes incapacitated, and there's only one thought that my stupid, gay brain is able to form on repeat sequence: I want him so bad, I want him so bad, I want him so bad.

Konrad suffers from the common gay - and human - affliction of always looking for something better. Never settling. He also is only attracted to men who are masculine, "masc," to the point of self-flagellation where he knows they will not return his affection, may be straight (he often hopes they are straight), or are an ideal he cannot live up to. I wish I could write honestly that that is an unusual gay male affliction. I wish I could write that I don't fall into that category on occasion.

Morgan does give Konrad a bit of self-awareness as he is touched, after uncharacteristically watching the news, by the murder of a bullied gay boy. Unfortunately, while the insight is incisive, it is hard to believe it is coming from Konrad and feels like Morgan editorializing. Heteronormativity as a protective device mutating into masc as being sexually alluring is a philosophical/psychological insight that has been noted and needs to be debated further, but it is jarring coming from Konrad.

When not cruising for his dream masc bros online, Konrad goes to the gym - the majority of Into? consists of visits to the gym, partying, and wallowing in the depths of despair drugged in front of the television or laptop - to cruise, even though maintaining his physique is important. But not as important as documenting maintaining his physique. When Konrad does find a man, in Buffalo of all places, who fits his criteria and claims to be looking for a long term relationship as well, they set up house and things proceed to fall apart.



northmorgan • Follow

northmorgan I'm, like, an instagram dad. Sure, I don't look as good as the young people doing this, and god knows there's no spirit left in there, but you guys are like: You go, dad! We support you for being desperate enough to post this. Hang in there!

Load more comments

internalex88 'Avuncular' might sound good too 🐶🔥🐶

markyagu very sexy very attractive very strong

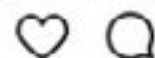
@northmorgan

jamiezoob Actually looking good.

humb3rto_r Gorgeous

kirkmanjordan Good shape brother! Keep it up. What do you weigh btw?

aeorae aatsha 🙄



3,873 likes

MAY 4

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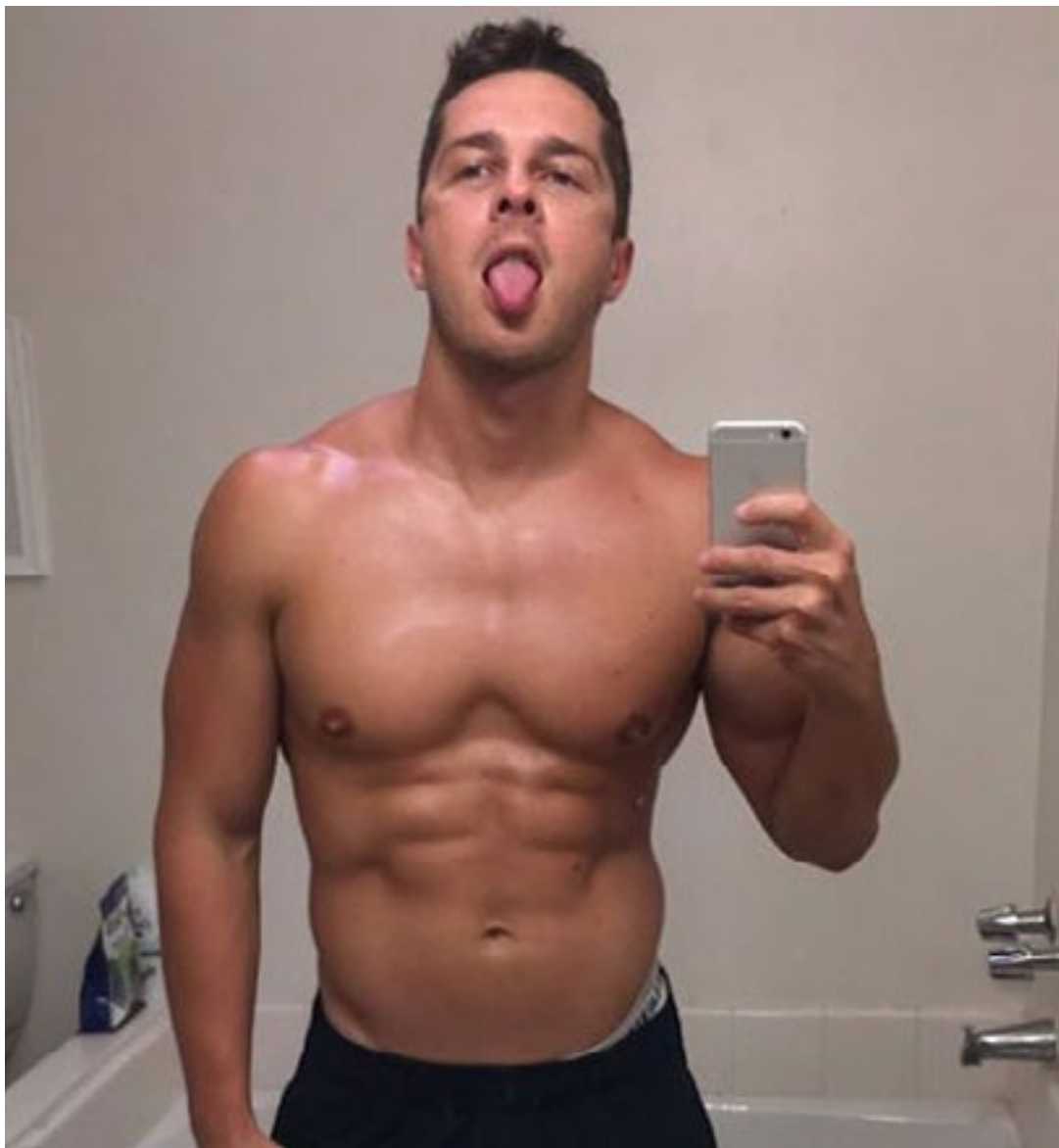


That episode leads to the funniest, most farcical section of *Into?* Having broken up, the two are sleeping in separate rooms when they cruise each other on Grindr. It is high farce but also so sadly familiar. Konrad has no problem finding sexual partners but it is never very satisfactory. Morgan supplies few details and there are no explosive orgasms or huge spurts of cum. Sex is as drily notated as the number of repetitions accomplished at the gym. Even the gym rarely provides a burn. It is the same with descriptions of the men. Konrad has body parts he obsesses over but never once is a cock described or admired (despite sending and receiving multiple naked photos), or a personality, or hirsuteness, or . . . Only twice is eye colour mentioned and both times it is blue.

Of course Konrad believes he is self-aware - after all he makes playlists of moody '80s pop and can be quite cutting about other people's flaws (and occasionally his own) - but that too may be a construct. In a very telling passage he coaches his friend Peter (whose progression from an attraction to extremely masc men to extreme masochism, provides a barely explored counterpoint) in creating a profile that works. The key is a "Unique Selling Point," a USP.

I explain to Peter that he needs to decide who the person that he is is, and drive it home, via social media. What's my USP? I ask him. I'm tragic and beautiful. I'm like those dumb worked-out people, but I'm just so smart and tortured you know?

Morgan seems to be exploring the harsh truth that gay men have moved so far online that they are no longer capable of connecting in person. Utterly disconnected from reality and trying to live an image they have created for themselves. Konrad is an expert at using Facebook, Grindr and Instagram to stalk and capture his dream man, he just does not know what to do with them once he captures them. Gay men are online shopping for husbands but are purchasing flashy fast food instead of searching out hearty meals. It is a sad but quite probably accurate thesis.



Morgan is delivering a harsh truth in a lightly comic manner. The best analogy I can come up with is Jane Austen mashed thematically with Larry Kramer's *Faggots* in the tone of *Sex and the City*. If Morgan had Austen's plotting and dryness, and/or Kramer's operatic passionate flood of words and sexuality, *Into?* would be a masterpiece. But it wouldn't be as contemporary as it is. And of course Carrie Bradshaw was also a completely unsympathetic character yet we were all absorbed in her doomed quest.

As much as we look down on and mock all those characters, and claim with revulsion that we are nothing like Konrad, I wonder. I can't pretend that my severe reaction to *Into?* - pleasure at being entertained, horror at having to insist it is a funhouse mirror - isn't personal. While my life and experiences have not been equivalent to Konrad's, I suspect that if I were rich, in possession of a fabulous perfectable body, and weren't cursed with actual self-awareness (or the belief that I am self-aware and intelligent)

and an appreciation for and attraction to the wabi-sabi, I would be Konrad.

In many ways, all of us are. And Morgan drives that point home by listing his Instagram account on the back cover as a main promotional tool. And his account is full of, of course, shirtless photos.

DREW ROWSOME

Gays on the big screen: Angels in America National Theatre Live and The Birdcage



Pride month is in full swing and [Inside Out](#) has just ended, but gay cineastes have a chance to revisit two very different classics on the big screen. Or maybe not so different, both were, in their time, shockingly gay and lovingly embraced by mainstream audiences.

Angels in America took flight in 1991, fuelled by anger over the escalating AIDS plague and the mass indifference it was being met with. As the second part of the title, "A Gay Fantasia on National Themes," states, playwright Tony Kushner had not written just an AIDS play, or even just a gay play, he was writing about the human soul. *Angels in America* is intellectually rigorous and wildly entertaining, extravagant in ideas, insights and emotional impact. It was a major Broadway hit, despite its considerable length spread over two parts, as have been subsequent stage productions and the HBO movie version.

On the play's 25th anniversary, Britain's National Theatre produced a version of *Angels in America* featuring an all-star, and very openly gay, cast. It too was a huge hit (as is the transfer to Broadway) and was filmed for the National Theatre Live ([Follies](#)) series. It is this version that is being shown several times during Pride Month.

The Birdcage is an English remake of the subversive hit French film *La Cage aux Folles*. Released in 1996 it is not concerned with the AIDS epidemic but is determined to make gays lovable, nonthreatening and equal. It is a lot of fun and the jokes at the expense of gays are gentle and, for the most part, accurate. Co-star Robin Williams was at his zenith coming off *Mrs Doubtfire* and he gives a warm non-mannered performance that never winks at or denies the character's sexuality. He is ably supported by what now looks like a stunt cast consisting of Dianne Wiest, Gene Hackman, Claiста Flockhart and the incandescent Christine Baranski.



The Birdcage never hits the heights of Broadway's *La Cage aux Folles* and the anthem "I Am What I Am," but it probably did more outreach in multiplexes. And a live theatre experience is more emotionally visceral, most of the time.

That is the beauty of this *Angels in America*. The thousands of us who didn't get to cross the ocean and sit in the dark for this epic production, can experience the next best thing. I have seen *Angels in America* on stage twice, re-read the script three times, and watched the HBO movie twice. This version, and it should be noted that I was watching a screener rather than on a big screen, is riveting and powerful and shook me to the core. Part of that is the incredible cast. Russell Tovey ([Looking](#)) is a gay sex symbol/role model who is also a mesmerizing thespian by any standards. Andrew Garfield is charming and slides into the role of Prior Walter seamlessly. Denise Gough and Amanda Lawrence are Streepian. And as the pivotal Belize, Nathan Stewart-Jarrett nails the camp and heartbreak with precision.

The cast member linking the two films is Nathan Lane. He is glorious in *The Birdcage*, the sweet bitter queen we all love, fear and admire. It is a stereotype, but one with heart and Lane is irresistible. We have seen him do this before on [Modern Family](#), multiple other character actor bit parts, and his short-lived sitcom (cancelled because audiences wouldn't accept a gay lead when in actuality it just wasn't very good), but anyone who has seen him on stage knows there is an eye-catching vibrancy that he radiates. I was lucky enough to see him in *Love! Valour! Compassion!* on Broadway and he tucked the show under his apron and walked away with it despite a tour de force scene by John Glover as twins and the upstaging often on display prodigious penis of Randy Becker.

In *Angels in America*, Lane gets to soar. His Roy Cohn is vicious, tragic, evil, comedic and breathtaking. He also provides an unintended link between these two films: outing himself to Tovey's Prior Walter by lambasting and then praising the musical *La Cage aux Folles*. He tells a matron she won't like it because it is so gay and not very good, then tells Tovey that it is the best thing on Broadway, "Maybe ever." A mini-Nathan Lane film festival for Pride is a very intriguing idea, and *The Birdcage* and *Angels in America* are two of his best, maybe ever.

Both texts are of a certain age, which is why it is rare to see them on a big screen (and for Tovey's nude scene and Hank Azaria's abs and double-takes, a big screen is a distinct advantage). While *Angels in America* can't help but resonate with current events (from Cohn to Giuliani is not a big leap), *The Birdcage* is trickier and after the screener a lively debate ensued about whether gay



life and attitudes towards it have changed. There was no debate after the *Angels in America* screener, just awe.

Angels in America, Part One: The Millennium Approaches screens on Tues, June 12 and Tues, June 19.

Angels in America, Part Two: Perestroika screens on Thurs, June 14 and Thurs, June 26.

The Birdcage screens on Fri, June 15, Sat, June 16, and Sun, June 17.

All screenings are at multiple Cineplex theatres including Yonge-Dundas. cineplex.com



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DREW ROWSOME

Make Trouble: JOHN WATTERS goes from pervert to preacher

During the course of his illustrious career, [John Waters](#) has conquered film, theatre, literature and become a notorious, instantly recognizable celebrity. Now he's adding a new accomplishment to his resumé: self-help guru.

Waters was invited to give a commencement address to the graduating class of the Rhode Island School of Design. What initially seems a perhaps unorthodox choice, turned out to be prescient, the speech instantly went viral and contains lots of thoughtful, intelligent advice. Of course, being John Waters, it was also deliriously funny and deliberately provocative. For those who missed it, and it is readily available all over the web in various forms, the speech has now been published in a handsomely packaged book or in various audio formats, entitled *Make Trouble*.

Buyer beware that *Make Trouble* is a very slim book - it was a concise and tight speech - even with the addition of decorative line drawings by illustrator Eric Hanson. It is not the fabulous immersive read that [Carsick](#) is, and we are still going to have to wait for the actual autobiography which we are all fervently hoping he is working on.

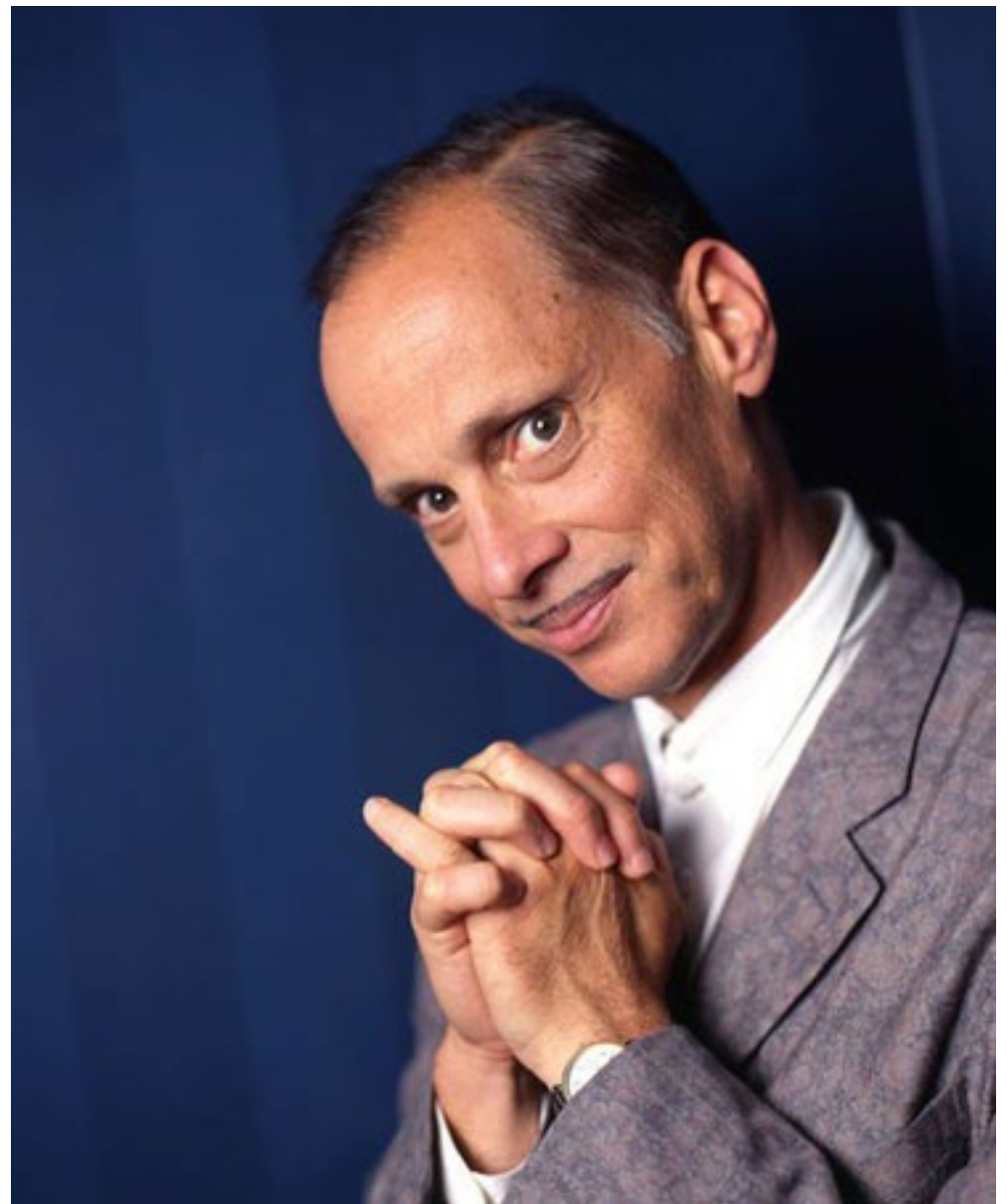
But I suspect that Waters' motives are less opportunistic than they are practical. Breaking the speech into bite-size pages - few are more than a sentence, some as small as a single word - forces the reader to actually think. Forces the reader to pause and reflect even if just for the amount of time it takes to turn or swipe the page. I had read and watched the speech online and quite enjoyed and admired it. But actually reading, and at an enforced contemplative pace, allows Waters' blatantly subversive words time to sink in.

Waters' thesis is (and please note the sparseness of the prose leaves infinite room for interpretation depending on one's intellectual, emotional and artistic leanings) that working in the arts is a real possibility and a real responsibility. Waters' tongue never leaves his cheek as he describes his checkered career in vague terms,

I was suspended from high school, then kicked out of college in the first marijuana scandal ever on a university campus. I've been arrested several times. I've been known to dress in ludicrous fashions. I've also built a career out

HAA!

The final irony—
a creatively crazy person
who finally gets power.

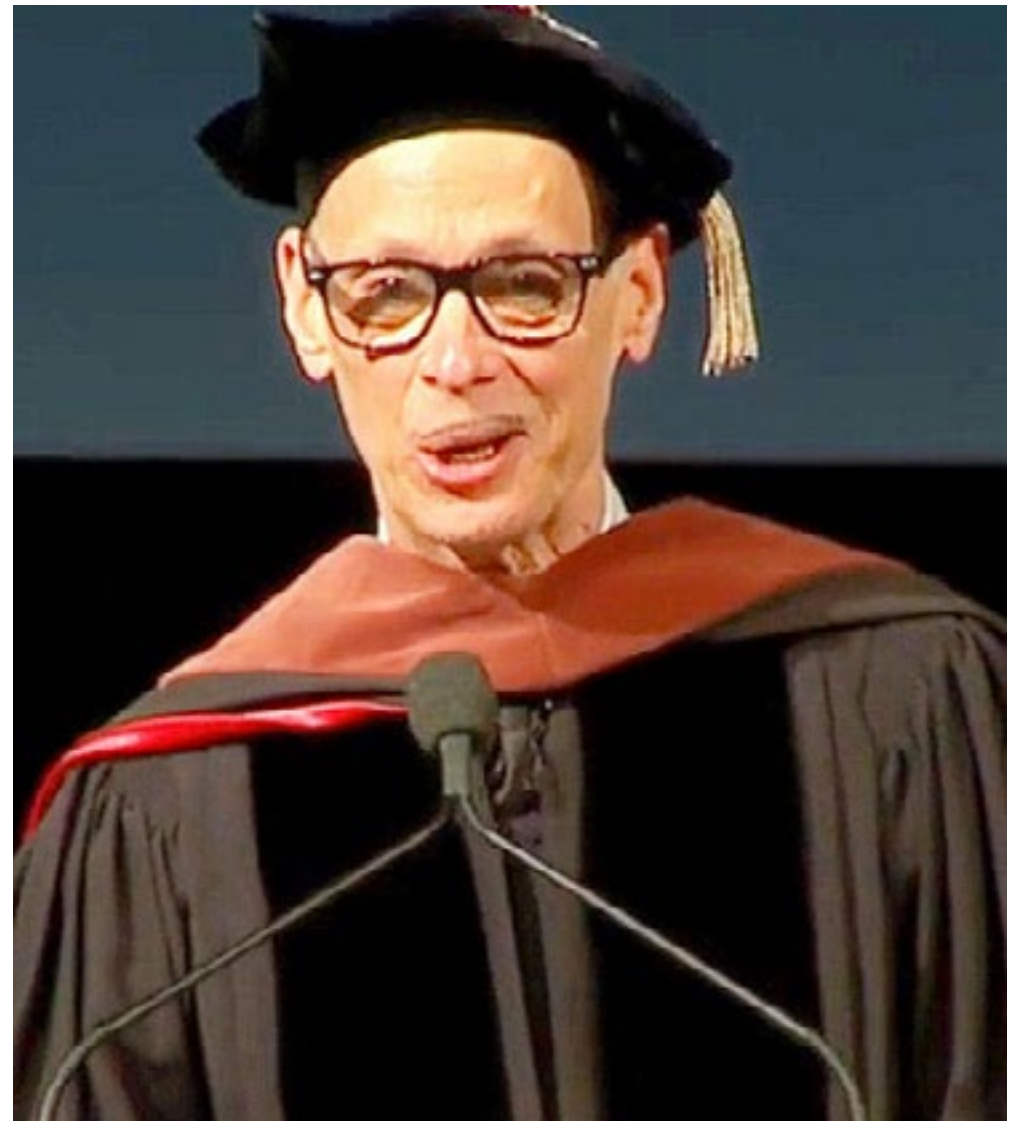


of negative reviews, and have been called “the prince of puke” by the press. And most recently a title I’m really proud of: “the people’s pervert” . . .

OK, I’m supposed to inspire you. How’s this? Somehow I’ve been able to make a living doing what I love best for 50 years without ever having to get a real job . . . my job is to get up every day at 6am Monday to Friday and think up insane stuff.

He doesn’t deny that a lot of hard work went into building his career but he also doesn’t mention the disappointments other than the very smart note that,

Hopefully you have been taught never to fear rejection in the workplace. Remember, a no is free. Ask for the world and pay no mind if you are initially turned down. A career in the arts is like a hitchhiking trip: All you need is one person to say “Get in” and off you go.



He emphasizes that being true to himself and his vision paid off, but also admits that changing times and mores took him from being a cult figure right into the mainstream. And that is where *Make Trouble* and *Waters* really excel, as a cry to arms for subverting the mainstream. And, like this speech, book or audio recording, doing by using humour. Waters revels, deservedly, in the success of the shameless entertainment *Hairspray* - a truly subversive work in terms of racism, sexism, body shaming, homophobia, etc - on Broadway, but neglects to mention that it was also a [major network television special in prime time](#).

Of course Waters is on book tour promoting *Make Trouble* but it would be much more exciting, for me, if he were to hold Tony Robbins-style rallies, or flood the airwaves with tacky infomercials. But he really doesn't want us to follow or emulate him, his career is a unique one, he just wants to inspire us to change the world for the better through art. Just the way he has.

I'm sure the old John Waters would, considering the price tag, encourage people to shoplift the book or CD, and the contemporary Waters is snickering at the concept of perusing online. But the canny canny self-help showman that he is, would probably prefer to have you buy a book or CD and participate in, and be inspired by, his current art project.

John Waters signs copies of Make Trouble and is "in conversation" on Thurs, July 12 at the Harbourfront Centre Theatre, 231 Queens Quay W. harbourfrontcentre.com

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WATERS**

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JULY 12
7:30PM

AT HARBOURFRONT
CENTRE THEATRE

The Filial Bond of Princess Leia and Unsinkable Tammy in Hell

AUL BELLINI



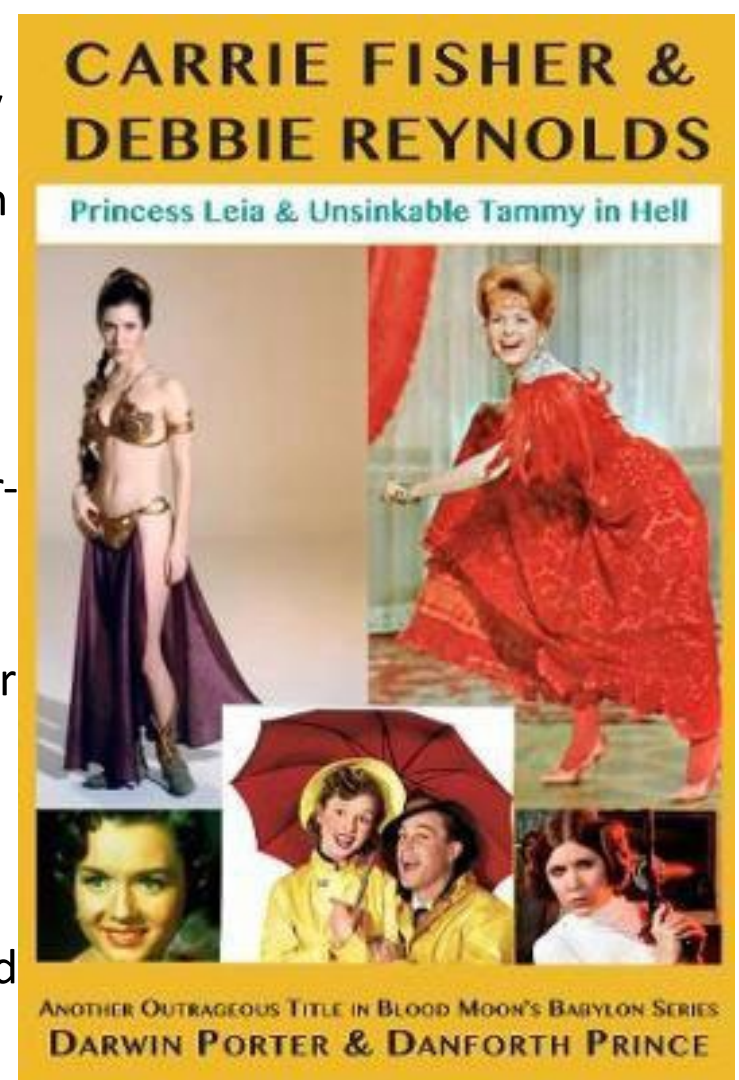
With the exception of Judy and Liza, thank you, there is no more famous mother-daughter combination than Debbie Reynolds and Carrie Fisher. They were even the subject of a fictional film, *Postcards from the Edge*, based on Carrie's own novel, in which Shirley MacLaine gamely played the over-the-top Debbie and Meryl Streep did the long-suffering Carrie.

Both women had iconic roles. Debbie was in the greatest movie musical ever made, *Singin' in the Rain*, and Carrie was Princess Leia. Now, they are the subjects of the twin biography *Princess Leia and Unsinkable Tammy in Hell*, by Darwin Porter and Danforth Prince of Blood Moon Productions. It's a fascinating story, and the only sane thing to do as it is impossible to discuss either woman's life without the context of the other. And the fact that they died a day apart, in December 2016, gives the whole story a mystical quality.

Born in El Paso, Debbie's family moved to Burbank where she won a beauty pageant and a Warner Bros contract. She got an Oscar nomination for her work in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, and she ended her illustrious career portraying Liberace's mom in *Behind the Candelabra*. Apparently, Liberace had once proposed marriage to Debbie, which might have been a good thing as she had already married three of the shittiest men on earth.

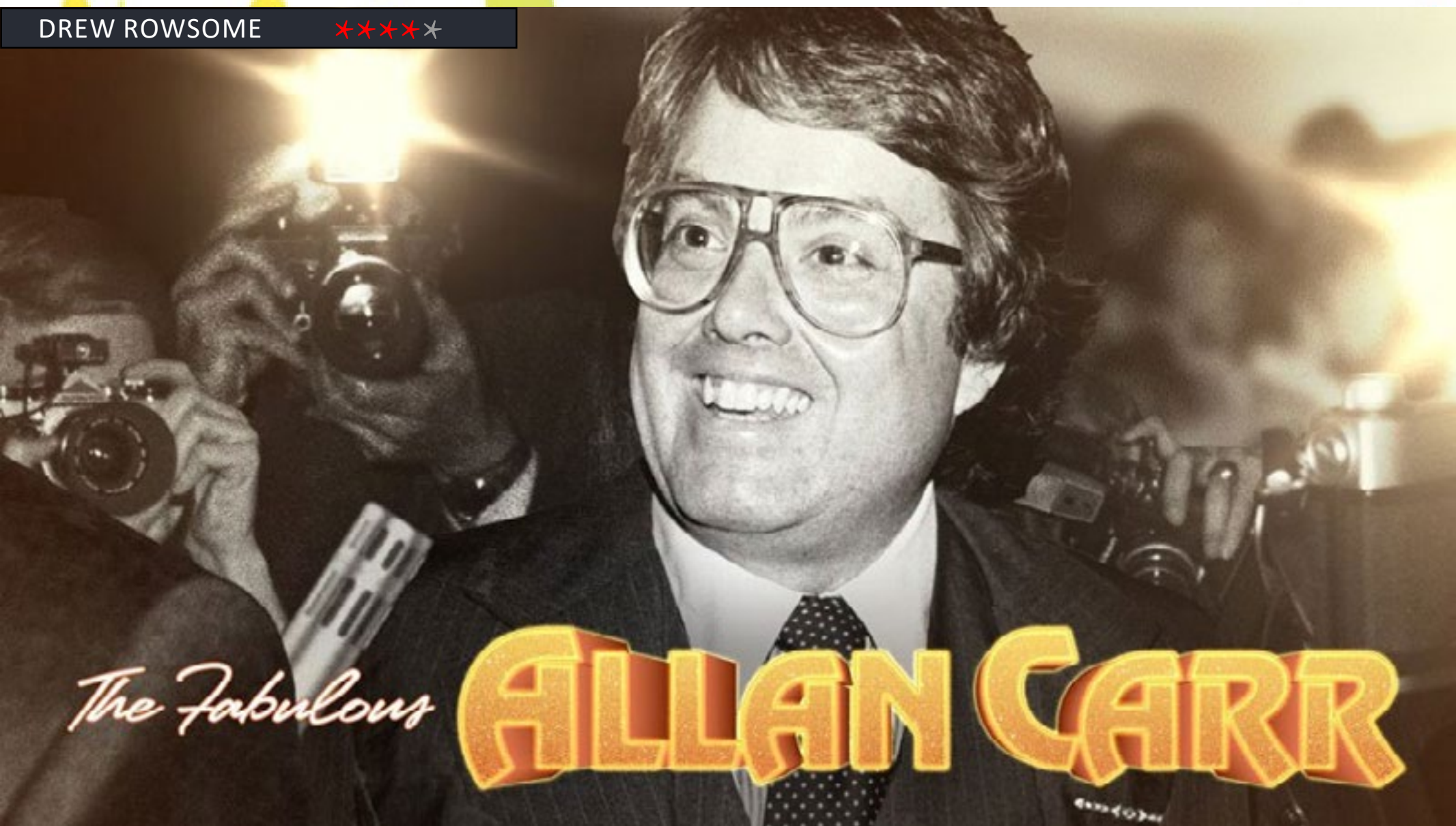
As always, I go to Darwin and Danforth to find out who was gay in Hollywood. The rumours about Debbie are dismissed as a smear campaign by Eddie Fisher, who was clearly unhappy with their marriage. But I was delighted to find out that the Singing Nun, Jeannine Deckers, whose hit "Dominique" formed the basis of one of Debbie's biggest roles, was a dyke. The dyke part never made it into the movie, however.

Far from a tragic Hollywood tell-all, the story of Debbie and Carrie is refreshing and fun. True, it wasn't all roses. Debbie's second husband squandered her fortune and the third tried to kill her. Carrie always struggled with drug use, but she also knew every major rock star and comedian on earth and never lost her joie de vivre. The two of them lead charmed lives. (Porter was well acquainted with Debbie from when they shot several television commercials together in the early '60s.) The book was released on Mother's Day, an opportune tie-in, but a symbolic one as well, because the two women clearly loved each other. It's a good read, an example of how sometimes even Hollywood cannot corrupt the filial bond.



DREW ROWSOME

★★★★★



Fabulous.

I had the good fortune to see *The Fabulous Allan Carr* when it was unveiled at the 2017 Inside Out Festival. I enjoyed it immensely. So when the publicist requested a review before the video on demand (iTunes, etc) on Tuesday, June 5, I jumped at the chance for a screener. The film is even better the second time around.

The Fabulous Allan Carr is, on the surface, a biographical portrait of the larger-than-life Hollywood producer Allan Carr. It charts his rise from a middle class childhood to the toast of Tinsel Town to shattered recluse. The film is fast, breezy and packed with celebrities. Carr was obsessed with old style Hollywood glamour - he got his start producing an ill-fated theatrical tour of Bette Davis and Gary Merrill - and dedicated his life to emulating it. One talking head explains that Carr wanted to live in an MGM musical.



There are so many juicy anecdotes provided during the story of Carr's rise that it is almost overwhelming, and I will not ruin the fun by listing them here. The film's director Jeffrey Schwarz (who also directed *I Am Divine* and *Tab Hunter Confidential*, both of which have been added to my Amazon wish list) adds to the propulsive pace with the use of jump cuts, wipes and thousands of archival photos that spill across the screen. There is also some very amusing animation - a riff on the clean Palm Springs style of *SHAG* (Jeff Agle) - by Sean Nadeau. The stylistic flourishes suit the subject perfectly and as another talking head states ominously, "You come into Hollywood as a cartoon, you become known as the fat guy in the dress."



Style meets content at another point with even more devastating results. Photos of the tanned and beautiful boys who attended Carr's infamous pool parties, the ones who hung around to fuck after the stars and straights had left (there is a particularly hilarious animated segment illustrating that collision), create an erotic nostalgia that is palpable. Then the montage is repeated, after Carr's downfall and as the AIDS epidemic begins to destroy all that beauty. It is wrenching. And who would have thought that Lorna Luft could bring me to the verge of tears?



That is the subtext of *The Fabulous Allan Carr*. The history of gay from the '70s to the late '90s. The fat boy fits in at school by throwing parties for the jocks he secretly lusts after. He becomes their "mascot." He changes his name from Alan Solomon to Allan Carr because it "rhymes with star." Carr applied his savvy skills to show business and it led to a massive success. He was known as a career doctor and he resuscitated or discovered Marlo Thomas, Rosalind Russell, Tony Curtis, Peter Sellers, Marvin Hamlisch, Dyan Cannon, Michelle Pfeiffer, Maxwell Caulfield, Joe Namath, Mama Cass and, most crucially as she was the only one to stick with him at the end, Ann-Margret.

Carr invented the concept of limited release "for your consideration" promotion for *The Deer Hunter*, turning an underdog into an award-winning hit. He threw lavish premiere parties that, like

the one for Tommy in a New York subway station, are still talked about. He produced the smash hit film *Grease*, the less successful *Can't Stop the Music* and *Grease 2*, and the massively successful (at least financially) exploitation spectacle *Survive*. He bought many houses and installed a disco in his main abode. His parties were legendary and attended by anyone who was anyone, beautiful boys looking for a break, and cocaine consumers and dispensers: it was the Studio 54 of the west coast.



Carr also produced the Broadway smash *La Cage aux Folles* with its gay anthem that announced to the mainstream that "I Am What I Am." He deserves to be immortalized just for assembling the creative triumvirate of titans - Jerry Herman, Harvey Fierstein and Arthur Laurent - who made *La Cage aux Folles* soar. Then, after finally achieving grudging respect, he was charged with producing the 61st annual Academy Awards telecast. It was over-the-top, tacky, spectacular, camp and is well worth searching out on YouTube. It is my favourite Academy Awards ever. It was not a critical success - it was also the gayest Academy Awards ever which, being the Academy Awards, is saying a mouthful - and Carr was, overnight, a pariah.

Though Schwarz doesn't harp on it, he's too busy artfully weaving the glittery strands that are Carr's epic story into a dazzling tapestry, *The Fabulous Allan Carr* charts the gay story of the 20th century. It's all there: the nerdy fat boy reinventing himself as The Fabulous Allan Carr, the



tentative coming out and testing of the strictures of heteronormativity, the explosion of the disco era where gay was tolerated for its entertainment value but still confined to the underground, the retreat to respectability tinged with defiance, the plague that destroyed it all before the trial by fire led to an even stronger rebirth. A rebirth that Carr sadly didn't get to participate in. There is no doubt that he would have made something fabulous out of it.



A second viewing reveals delights that I, too captivated by the main narrative, missed the first time around. Cher almost played the Valerie Perrine role in *Can't Stop the Music*. Lots of dish on Nancy Walker. The horrors of having a weight problem. The horrors of kaftans. Just how androgynously stunning John Travolta was. The bonkers but bizarrely successful Baskin Robbins tie-in with the flavour *Can't Stop the Nuts*. The ache-inducing allure of late century gay male pulchritude. That watching clips would make me want to re-watch the 61st annual Academy Awards, *Can't Stop the Music*, *Grease 2* and maybe even, but probably not, *Grease*.

Carr will be forever enshrined as the egalitarian who changed the award show phrase "and the winner is" to "and the Oscar (or Tony or Emmy or etc) goes to," but in this case, the winner is *The Fabulous Allan Carr*.



The Fabulous Allan Carr is released on VOD platforms on Tuesday, June 5.

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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Hooked and the myths of sex work

PAUL BERLLINI



I've known a lot of male sex workers in my time, and although they are prone to doing outrageous things, none of them are like the hustler in the new movie *Hooked*, who do tricks like sucking a fat woman's tits while wearing a diaper. I mean, really.

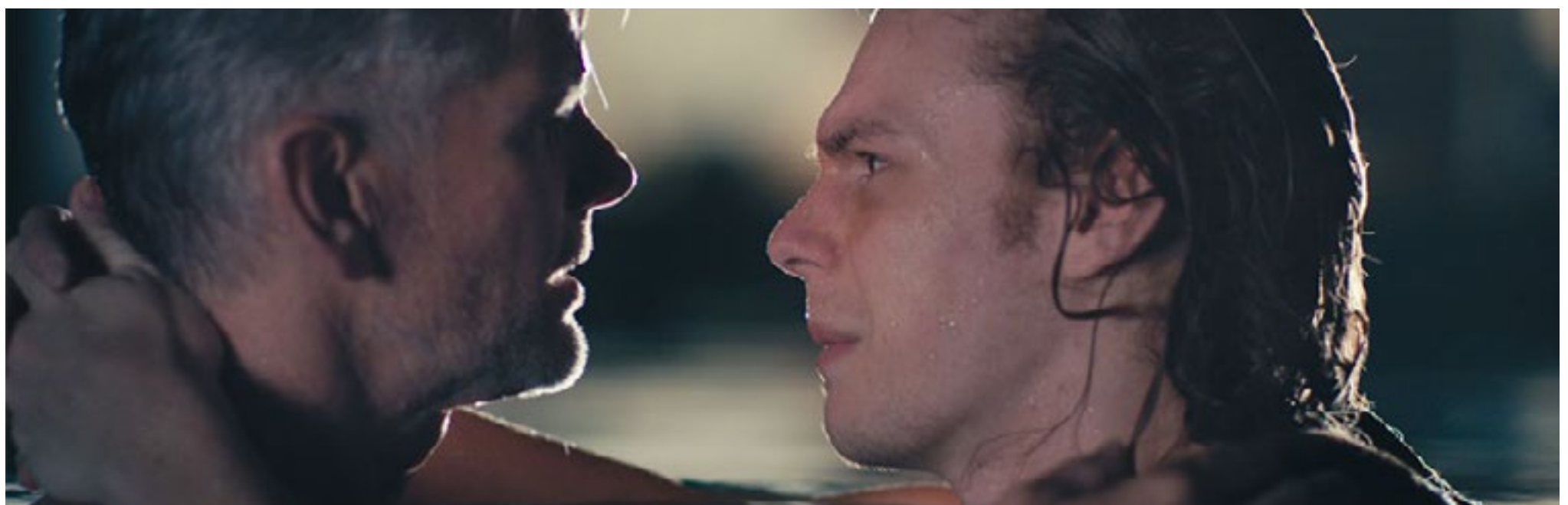
The story concerns a young hustler named Jack who is a total asshole, an unbelievably unlikable protagonist. If his attitude isn't bad enough, there's his hair, a big shoulder-length mane that belongs on a sloppy girl. If I paid for him, it would be to shave off that shitty hairdo.

His boyfriend is a young photographer who works with one of those black trans characters who has an answer for everything. Meanwhile, there's an older silver fox who looks sort of like the Trivago guy. He's married with an infant, but he desires young men instead. So Trivago Guy takes Jack to Florida for a vacation, where he shows Jack a picture of his infant daughter just before taking out a mirror stocked with lines of coke. The drugs do the trick. They fuck, and get so intimate that Jack says he doesn't even want the money, which is the ultimate *Pretty Woman* fantasy. Just when it looks like love, Jack panics, steals a gun and goes on the run.

Of course Jack is lured into gay porn. There's a curious scene where the evil pornographer, who does everything but twirl a dastardly moustache, is negotiating with Jack when an irate female bystander gets all his face for being a pig. Ultimately, Jack proves to be lousy at both porn and prostitution. The evil pornographer whores him out to someone called Date-Rape Dan, who all the other hustlers fear but who I found kind of hot. (The actor who plays Dan, Jay Alan Christianson, gives the only really enjoyable performance in the whole movie.) Jack gets date-raped, and Trivago Guy and the photographer boyfriend barge in at just the right moment and the boyfriend shoots Date-Rape Dan. Jack takes the rap, calling it in to the cops and saying, "It was self defense, I think".

The film is written and directed by Max Emerson. Aside from being a film director, Emerson is also an Instagram model, one of those hunks who never seems to own a shirt. Emerson says he was motivated by the plight of homeless queer youth, and 50% of the profits from the film will be donated to the cause. That's nice, a truly generous move that deserves recognition. But *Hooked* is such a turd it's a shame. Is it just me, or is the acting absolutely terrible? (This is "Tommy Wiseau's *The Room*" level of shitty acting. Compare the two mother characters in each movie and try to tell me I'm wrong.)

As I said earlier, I know a lot of male sex workers, and the one thing they deserve, other than some respect, is better depictions in movies. *Hooked* may be helping homeless queer youth, but it does nothing to dispel silly myths about male prostitution.



DREW ROWSOME

★★★★☆

La Bete:

riotous comedy that vivisects theatre, culture and the contemporary



Though *La Bete* was written in 1991 and is set in 1634, it could be torn from today's Twitter feed. Kudos to Soulepper, director Tanja Jacobs and lively cast for driving the point home without ever once dropping a topical reference for a quick laugh or political jab. Instead they let the words pierce through the froth to float as pretty poison as potent as the clown Valere's frequent flatulence.



Yes, there are fart jokes. But crude is to be expected from a street performer whose claim to fame is the dramatic tour de force, *The Dying Clown*. His art is lauded by the Princess Conti who says, "I cried. He showed that clowns have feelings too." And when asked to perform an excerpt, Valere demurs claiming, "Without the cow, they wouldn't understand." Of course he is persuaded, more coerced, and the results are not only hysterically funny but also a nasty satire on self-indulgent performance art, clowning and theatre in general.

The basic premise is the Elomire, yes it is an anagram, runs an artistically successful, commercially

failing, theatre troupe, supported financially by the Princess Conti. The princess has discovered Valere and thinks his brash comedy might be just the thing to kick-start the theatre company out of its rut. She arranges, more commands, a meeting between Elomire and Valere and the fireworks begin. The conflict is not only between two forms of theatre - high brow and intellectual versus popular and vulgar - but also between classes, social mores and, in this production, the sexes.

Valere states his case first and it is a grandstanding moment for Gregory Prest. He preens, cajoles, brags, is utterly self-centred, contradicts himself, flatters, whines and somehow remains oddly charming despite ragged stained clothes, the aforementioned flatulence, and an unfortunate but bizarrely sexy mullet. He is a white trash arriviste eager to prove himself in any way he can, and is willing to say and do anything for attention and success. The parallels to two current political horrors are blatant. Prest takes a flamboyant, showstopping role and plays it close to the edge, always in motion but never crossing the line where the lewd or crass becomes deplorable.



Sarah Wilson as Elomire has the difficult task of staying engaged while Prest's near-monologue romps for close to 40 hilarious minutes. She is forced to comment and contradict using only small gestures and facial expressions. She does so admirably, reserving her biting scorn and lacerating wit for when she can interject. Her condescension is red hot and she even manages to almost navigate a long near-monologue towards the end, where she must justify protecting art from the predations of vulgar popular culture.

And she has to do it in a 17th century theatrespeak and in rhyming couplets.

La Bete is written in a fast-paced rhyme structure that mashes Shakespeare and Dr Seuss. This provides many jokes but also a huge challenge for the cast, particularly when the sentences overlap between characters. It also provides even more satire on theatre as an entity, and on just how language influences the way the world or a topic are perceived. Of course it also provides an energetic rhythm that the cast gets to ride, disrupt and subtly wink at. Author David Hirson is clever with his wordplay and rhymes, only occasionally giving in to a flourish that calls attention to

itself. And those are uproariously funny.



But theatre as an artform can't resist calling attention to itself, and the thespians in the troupe are a motley lot, all theatrical stereotypes and realities. Michaela Washburn ([Animal Farm](#)) relies on her voluptuousness, Paolo Santalucia ([Animal Farm](#), [The Goat or Who is Sylvia?](#), [The Taming of the Shrew](#)) dispenses rapid fire bitter queen insults, James Smith is a clueless stud, and Raquel Duffy ([Animal Farm](#), [The Goat or Who is Sylvia?](#)) and Ghazal Azarbad pose and preen in a hopeless attempt to compete with Valere. They have very little time to make an individual impression but are a unified troupe far more dedicated and talented than poor Elomire's.



And it is here that Jacobs ([Love and Information](#)) et al, turn Hirson on his head. The troupe joins Valere in a production of one of his plays, a riotous farce that ends in chaos. Valere is the modern disruptor, the populist, and he has a point. *La Bete* never gives us a sample of Elomire's art, that would not be as entertaining. It would be very easy to slant *La Bete* so that Valere would be, for all his crassness, the salvation of theatre and culture. Criticism receives much badinage, not only when Valere says (I am paraphrasing as rhyming couplets are devilishly hard to quote correctly as they fly by), "We give them apples and they show us the worms," but also as a need to dig deep in the shallows.



That is the dark heart of *La Bete*. How much of what we see is interpreted or parsed for deeper meaning? Is a fluffy comedy well executed of equal value to an fierce drama that just misses the mark? Are good intentions even of importance? The Princess Conti, the regal and firm Rachel Jones ([Late Night](#), [Hamlet/All's Well That Ends Well](#)), finds deep resonance in the unsubtle ravings of Valere. She marvels that the setting and caricature actually apply to her kingdom, and it is not a leap for the audience to apply it, and *La Bete*, to contemporary times.

Even the voice of reason, Oliver Dennis ([Animal Farm](#)), used as a sight gag even though his reactions and double takes are priceless and subtle, turns to the path of least resistance. He gives up art and embraces the inevitable. It is a heartbreaking moment in what is otherwise pure comedy glossing over pain unless played for laughs. Success at the cost of one's soul is metaphorically embodied by the maid Dorine who opens and closes *La Bete* with clowning of her own invention or imagination. She is a superfluous character saddled with comic wordplay that is the only place that Hirson fails. Fortunately Dorine is essayed by Fiona Sauder ([Peter Pan](#), [The Taming of the Shrew](#)) and she is a clown without Valere's duplicitness. Wide-eyed and physically eloquent, Sauders turns a climactic moment that is a stretch, into a thoughtful rumination on ambition.

Photos by Cylla von Tiedemann

La Bete continues until Fri, June 22 at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, 50 Tank House Lane, Distillery District. soulpepper.ca

MARK TARA

CIUT 89.5FM

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Jazz Recording Artist

Brad Fraser
Playwright

Louis Molnar
Gender Fluid Community Advocate
& Pride Board Member

Jacob Gal
York Pride



CIUT 89.5FM rainbow country | LGBT Perspectives
image by KENIGMA



Rainbow Country's 102nd episode "LGBT Perspectives" consisted of a rousing roundtable chat on issues affecting Toronto's LGBT community. Topics covered included alleged serial killer Bruce McArthur, Pride, the Toronto police department, Pride and the Toronto police department, and many more contentious items. Assembled for the roundtable was a stellar group of activists and artists: musician Patricia Wilson, jazz artist Adi Braun, playwright and provocateur Brad Fraser, genderfluid activist and Pride Toronto board member Louis Molnar, and York Pride's Jacob Gal. Hosted by Mark Tara the discussion was heated and passionate. If you missed it, you can hear it here and now at MyGayToronto.

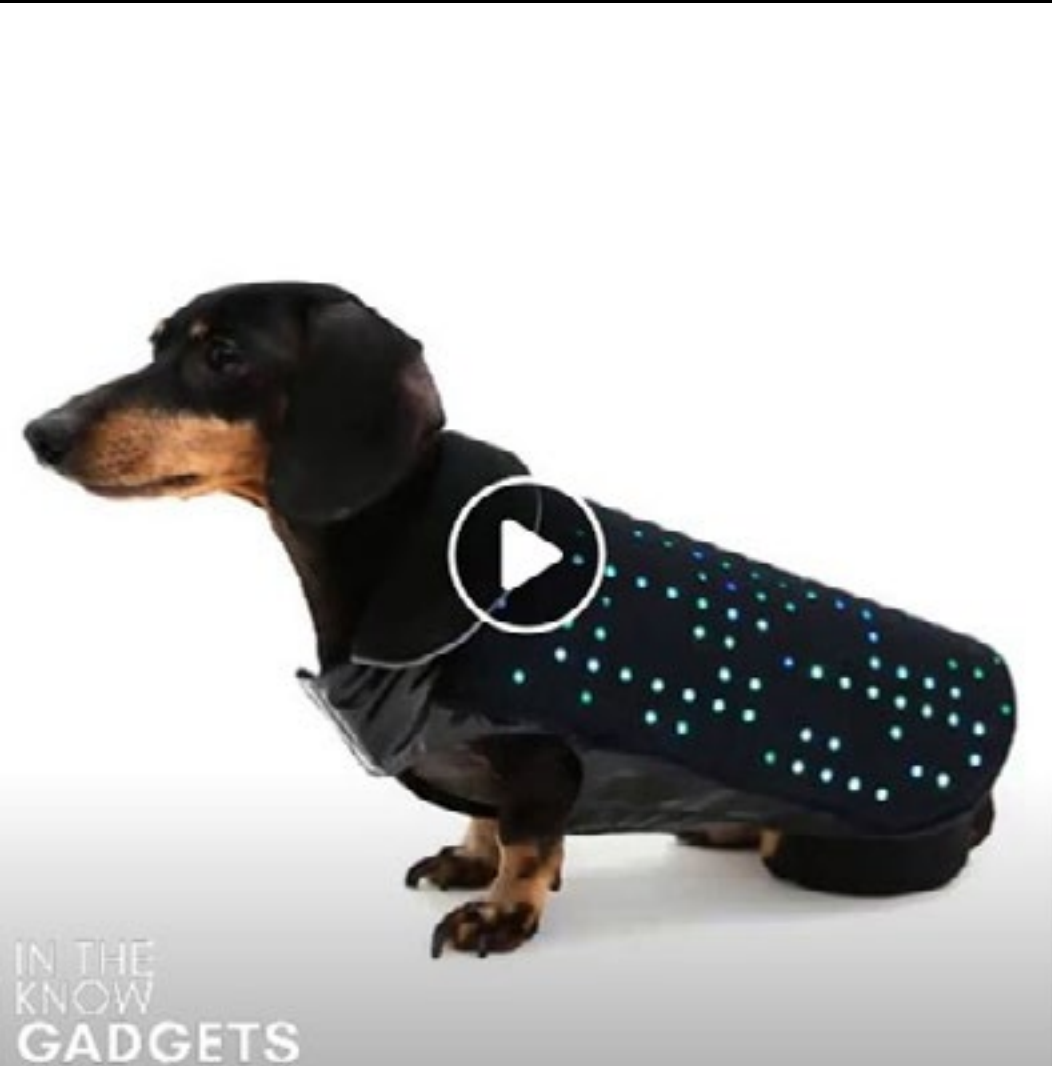


MARK TARA

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2 George Hislop Park ♿	10 OLG Central Stage ♿
3 North Stage ♿	11 Family Pride ♿
4 Norman Jewison Park ♿	12 Garden Stage ♿
5 James Canning Gardens	13 Loblaws Canteen Stage ♿
6 Barbara Hall Park ♿	14 Allan Gardens ♿
7 Clean, Sober & Proud Place ♿	15 South Stage ♿
8 TD Village Stage ♿	16 Yonge & Dundas Stage ♿
17 GirlPlay Sunday T-Dance/The Bicycle Club (only on June 24)	18 Alexander Parkette ♿

Festival Area

- Street Festival
- Licensed Street Area
- Art, Eco, Wellness
- Park

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- **T** Trans Pride March
Fri., June 22, 8pm
- **D** Dyke March
Sat., June 23, 2pm
- **P** Pride Parade
Sun., June 24, 2pm

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💧 Water Truck	ATM ATM	🚇 Subway
♿ Trans* Pride Space	lyft Lyft Pickup/Dropoff Stations	

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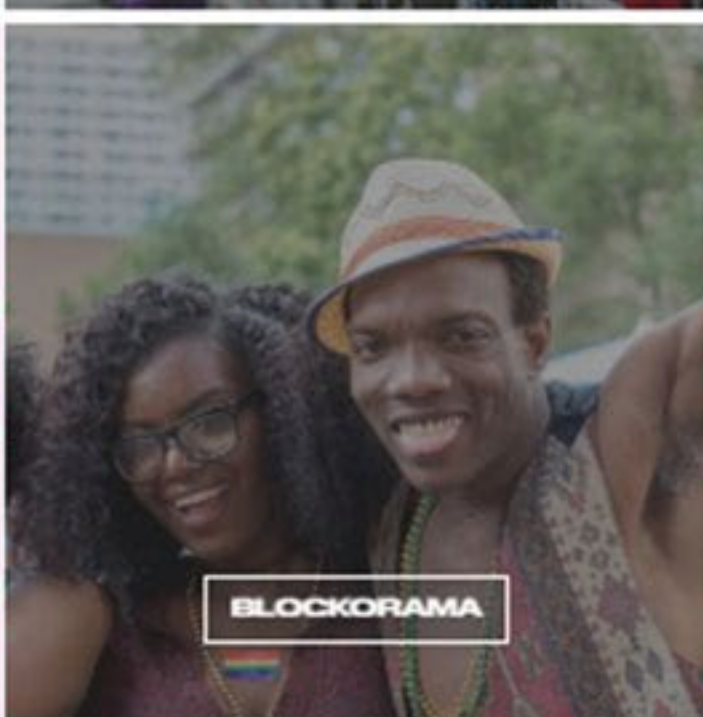
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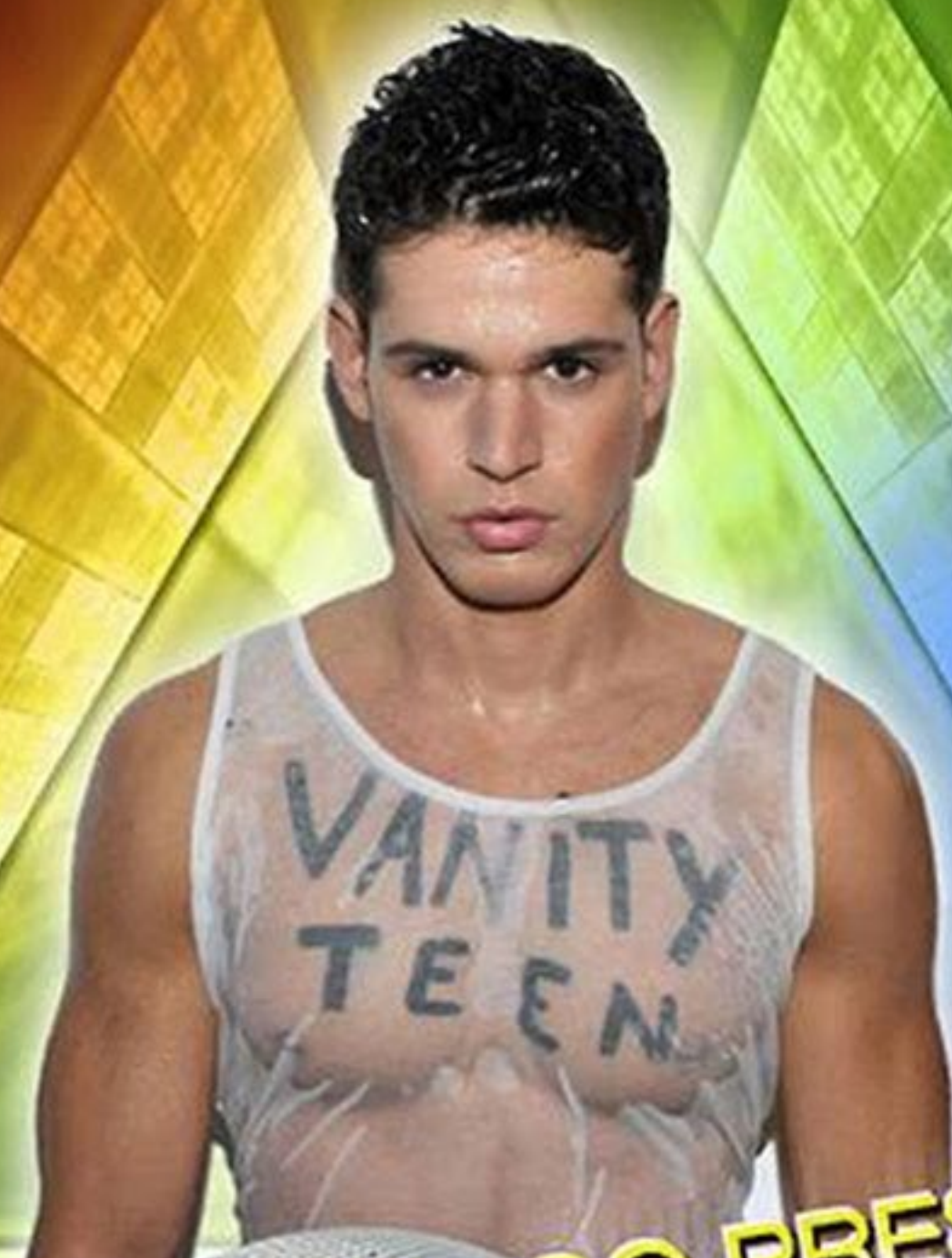


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SUNDAYS

EVERYONE

SUNDAYS

We Know Gay



Drew Rowsome - MGT Editor, a writer, reviewer, musician and the lead singer of Crackpuppy.
drewrowsome.blogspot.ca.



Sean Leber - Founder, MGT Creative Director.



Raymond Helkio - is an author, director and award-winning filmmaker. He cofounded TheReadingSalon.ca



Paul Bellini was a writer for The Kids in the Hall and a producer for This Hour Has 22 Minutes, and columnist at Fab Magazine...



Bil Antoniou - is an actor and play writer. He is also movie reviewer who has been writing for myoldaddiction.com



Sky Gilbert - Canadian writer, actor, academic and drag performer.
skygilbert.blogspot.ca



Mark Tara radio host 'Rainbow Country' CIUT 85.9 FM and personality. marktara.com



Rolyn Chabers was a fab columnist and currently social columnist for Daily Xtra!



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