

TORONTO'S PREMIER GAY LIFESTYLE DIGITAL MAGAZINE

MGT

We Know Gay

MY GAY TORONTO

HOLIDAY ISSUE #62 DEC- JAN 2018.



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MGT DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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2019

nickmesh.com



**Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year!**

PAUL BELLINI

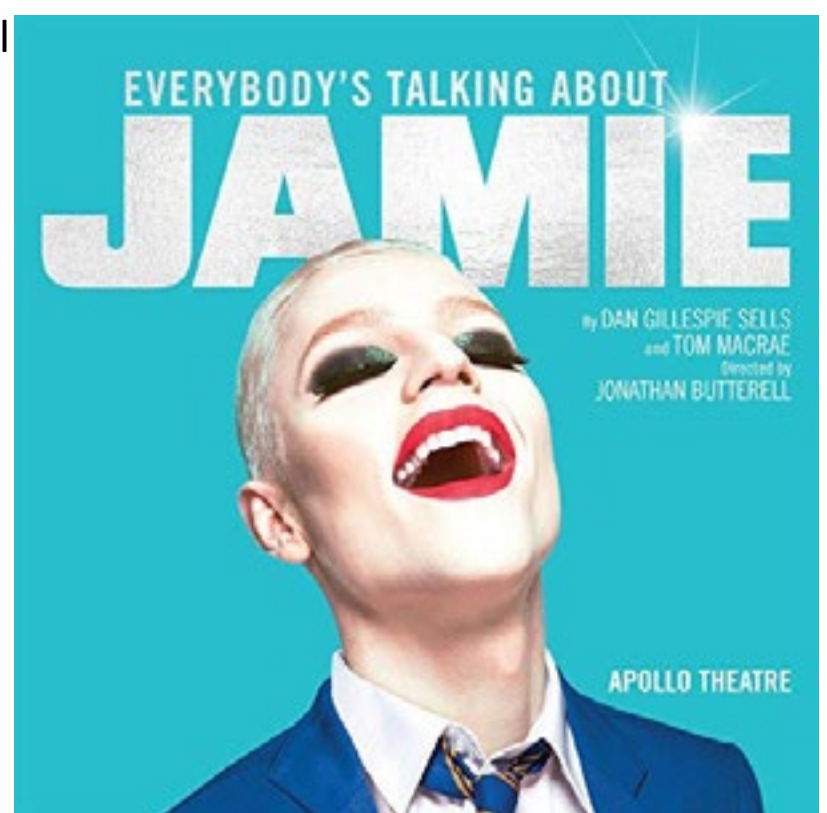
Everybody's Talking About Jamie and his sheer fabulousness



Everybody's Talking About Jamie is a bright new British musical with music by Dan Gillespie Sells and book and lyrics by Tom MacRae. It's about a 16-year-old boy whose ambition is to become a drag queen. For his birthday, his enabling mother buys him red pumps. His father, unfortunately, is one of those unapologetic homophobes who disowns the boy with ladles of disgust. His school teacher is also a total twunt who won't let him attend the prom in a dress, but he has the love and support of his classmates, a bubbling diversity crew that sings harder and faster than the whole cast of *Glee*.

Described as the gay *Billy Elliott*, the backers of this five-time Olivier Award nominated West End hit have high hopes. They hope to make it to Broadway, and they've already announced an upcoming film version. This is a show that brims with empowerment. And it's woke! You go, girl.

Cineplex Events is screening the show starting November 15. It's a live taping of a performance from London's Apollo Theatre, directed by Jonathan Butterell and starring John McCrea as Jamie. The story - a misfit whose sheer fabulousness wins over most detractors - is very familiar, but the thing that intrigued me the most is the characterization of the bully. Why is the actor playing him so cute? I was conflicted, as usual. Are we supposed to desire him or despise him? In the end, Jamie's unbelievable gay energy wins over the bully, of course. It helps that Jamie looks bitching in a dress. I couldn't help but think that the bully is mean and disses poor Jamie because he secretly wants some head. Now that would be a terrific production number.



Slava's Snowshow storms into town



Slava Polunin is a legendary Russian clown. In 1968 he started a pantomime theatre and by 1988 his company had created five successful shows. To celebrate their 20th anniversary, they shut down and held their own funeral, culminating in a flaming coffin floating down the Neva River. Slava likes spectacle.

In 1994 he created *Slava's Snowshow*, a touring theatrical show that has landed in over 80 countries and is still going strong. It made its last Toronto appearance in 1996, where it played for six weeks. The show is successful in all the major markets, and played Montreal twice in one year. People love Slava's spectacles.

"Once you see it, you have to see it again," said Svetlana Dvoretzky, founder of ShowOne Productions, who are bringing Slava and company back to Toronto just in time for the holidays. "Slava has created a property that doesn't age. He may be aging but he is still strong. And every detail has to be approved by Slava. The entire crew has to be approved by Slava. It's amazing, the man still has his hand on every detail."

The show is awesome for children as well as adults, but Svetlana does suggest that children be at least eight years old. "You have to be at an age where you can process the story and sit through the very quiet gentle moments as well." But don't worry, there are a lot more *not* gentle moments to enjoy, like when they unleash an awesome blizzard inside the theatre. Slava's magic is not digital - it's actual. I wondered if it might be a bit messy? "No," assures Svetlana. "It's certainly not like in *Evil Dead: The Musical* where everyone is given raincoats and splashed with red paint."

Slava's Snowshow combines clown, comedy, pathos, magic, mirth, and dazzling theatrical effects. It's been around over 20 years now. See it before its founder holds a funeral for it. Although I would give anything to see a flaming coffin float down some lazy river.

Slava's Snowshow plays December 7 to 16, 2018 at the Bluma Appel Theatre



PAUL BELLINI

Young, Gay and Restless

Thom Bierdz has had one of those 'fascinating' careers. A super cute guy, he became an actor in 1986 playing the role of Phillip Chancellor III on *The Young & The Restless*. At the time, I was still watching soaps, mooning over hunks like Grant Show on *Ryan's Hope* or Brian Bloom on *As The World Turns*, but the most gorgeous was Phillip Chancellor III. After three years, Bierdz left the show to pursue other acting opportunities. Unfortunately, they did not come.

I interviewed Bierdz years ago, when he released his first book, *Forgiving Troy*. This new volume considerably ups the ante. In recent years, he grew tired of Hollywood bullshit and retreated to a gorgeous cabin in the woods on Lake Arrowhead where he continues to paint. The book is lots of fun and there are many photos. The ones at the back of the book are real jaw-dropping. There are several full frontal nudes. How do I put this delicately? Bierdz's cock is huge. He does admit to having penis enlargement surgery 26 years ago, and it seems to have worked. Though he's flaccid in all the pictures, it is still something to behold.

His memoir *Young, Gay and Restless* presents us with a long list of hot guys he did it with. In fact, it's probably the most sexually explicit book written by a non-porn celebrity. There are other fun stories, like how he dated a Village Person or rubbed shoulders with Jeffrey Dahmer in a Milwaukee bar. But then tragedies struck. First, his schizophrenic brother Troy killed his mother and went on the lam, leading police to believe that he was coming for Bierdz next. Troy was eventually caught, and over time Bierdz was able to visit him in prison and forgive him. Just as bad, his other brother Gregg, distraught over a relationship, shot himself. Bierdz retreated by becoming a painter, eventually winning awards and supporting himself with his art. He was most famous for his paintings of cows, but he also did a very amusing series consisting of heterosexual Hollywood hunks depicted as gay couples. The one of Leonardo DiCaprio and Justin Timberlake mooning over a picture of Ryan Reynolds is hilarious.

Young, Gay and Restless is terrific good fun. If you've ever wondered about the exploits of a gay soap opera hunk, here it is. As an actor and a painter, Bierdz is charming and inventive. As a writer, he is both honest and humble. Plus, there's those pictures ...



TO DO LIST

- ✓ cowboy
- ✓ waiter
- ✓ cop with mustache
- ✓ billionaire
- ✓ bishop
- ✓ movie star
- ✓ florist
- ✓ Village Person
- ✓ soap opera fans
- ✓ doctor
- ✓ bisexual
- ✓ giant and/or dwarf
- ✓ 3-way
- ✓ penis augmentation
- ✓ strangers in gym showers
- ✓ air force sergeant
- ✓ porn star
- ✓ psycho
- ✓ soulmate

Since 1986, a hundred million people have watched Thom Bierdz in *The Young & The Restless* (Phillip Chancellor III), *Melrose Place*, *Old Dogs New Tricks*...

While president of AmericanArtAwards.com and winning 12 awards (actor, painter, filmmaker and author for his previous memoir, *Forgiving Troy*) Thom's roller coaster crashes as often as it soars.

Sexual assaults, romantic break-ups, unpredictable finances and social anxiety do not cripple the innate optimist, who is further put to the test with his mother's murder at the hands of his paranoid schizophrenic brother, and a family suicide.

Leaving Hollywood for a cabin in the woods, the seeker finds peace and humorously examines 40 years of scandalous sex adventures in the most explicit memoir a celebrity has ever penned. **Nude pics.**

PAUL BELLINI

Pamela Des Barres: inspirational groupie

When I was 16 growing up in Timmins, my theatre arts teacher Marjorie Bryce gave me a pile of records someone left behind in the theatre room. One of those records was *Permanent Damage* by The GTOs. I recognized the name of the band from reading *Creem* magazine. The GTOs were a collection of Los Angeles groupies who slept with rock stars. I hurried home to play the record, and of course it transformed me for life.

A collection of short, brilliant songs interspersed with catchy spoken word poetry, its frankness and sexuality were perfect for my burgeoning gay ears. Here were girls who gave head and had adventures with famous people. That record fuelled a hundred fantasies, and I've listened to it often over the decades. I couldn't wait to grow up and become a BTO!

In the late '80s, the group's leader Pamela Des Barres wrote a confessional autobiography called *I'm With the Band*. With blunt honesty she detailed her friendships with the musicians in bands like The Who, The Doors, and The Flying Burrito Brothers. She was a groupie before the term was even invented. I had crushes on the same guys, so her book blew my mind. Then last night, I got to meet Miss Pamela. She was at Tequila Bookworm launching her latest book, *Let It Bleed: How To Write A Rockin' Memoir* (TarcherPerigee Books, 2018). She just turned 70 but still looks like a young girl. Her face adorned with glitter appliqu , she entertained the crowd with her tales.



Several times during her reading, she declared that groupies would 'give back' to the musicians whose work filled their lives with hope and beauty. Back then, it was possible to do so because popular music actually meant something.

Afterwards, I got her to sign my copy of the book and pose for a picture (which flatters neither of us, but so what?). Sadly, I also tried to impress her by singing one of her songs, "The Captain's Fat Teresa Shoes," to her. Poor thing, she forced a smile for my measly efforts. She's the greatest.

There are some things that remain touchstones throughout one's entire life. For me, one of those things is *Permanent Damage*, produced by Frank Zappa with music by Lowell George and lyrics by Miss Pamela and her cohorts Miss Christine and Miss Sparky. The record is one of the greatest ever, and deserves to stand alongside things like Faberge eggs and the Taj Mahal. Miss Pamela, you have my heart forever. It was such a pleasure to finally meet you.

You can listen to the entire GTOs album at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4fM9WIPfNM>



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Deborah Cox

to receive Luminary Award

The University of the West Indies today announced that Deborah Cox, Canadian Grammy nominated, multi-platinum R&B/Pop recording artist and actress will receive the Luminary Award at the 10th annual UWI Toronto Benefit Gala, on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at The Ritz-Carlton, Toronto.

The Luminary Award is given to people of Caribbean Heritage who are outstanding achievers on an international scale in their respective fields or people who have brought prominence to the Caribbean or to issues which affect the Region.

Deborah Cox is the fifth musical artist to receive the Luminary Award. Deborah Cox was born in Toronto to Guyanese parents, growing up in Flemingdon Park and Scarborough. She attended Claude Watson School for the Performing Arts at Earl Haig Secondary School and Humber College before embarking on her professional artistic career. Cox has recorded a total of six award winning and critically-acclaimed albums and received numerous awards and nominations for her work. Her double platinum single, Nobody's Supposed to be Here, from her second CD *One Wish*, held the record for the longest running #1 R&B single. To date, Cox has also had 12 Number One singles on Billboard's Hot Dance Play chart. An acclaimed actress, she made her *Broadway* debut in the Elton John - Tim Rice musical *Aida* and also starred in the musicals *Jekyll and Hyde*, *The Bodyguard* and *Josephine*. In addition to her busy artistic career, Cox is an advocate for the LGBTQ community and is affiliated with World



Vision Canada in many parts of Africa. She was recognized for her advocacy work, receiving the Out Music Pillar Award, the California State Senate Award, The Civil Rights Award from the New York Senate and she was honoured by The Harvey Milk Foundation at the 2015 Diversity Honors for all of her efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the LGBTQ community. In 2016, Cox was given the Liberty Bell and Proclamation in Philadelphia. In 2008, her hometown community of Scarborough honoured her on the Scarborough Town Centre Walk of Fame.

Tickets for the 10th annual University of the West Indies are on sale now and can be purchased by contacting Toni Spooner by email at toni@uwitorontogala.com.

The UWI Toronto Gala is a signature event that honours Canadian/Caribbean individuals and organizations as well as global citizens whose body of work has impacted the Caribbean. The event is also the largest fundraiser for the UWI, in Canada.

For more information on the ninth annual University of the West Indies Toronto Benefit Gala log on to: www.uwitorontogala.org.

DREW ROWSOME

Rising starlet Sugarbum stars in The Wizard of Oz



On the eve of her headlining debut as the star of Ross Petty's annual pantomime, this year *The Wizard of Oz : a Toto-ly Twistered Family Musical*, Sugarbum graciously agreed to answer a few questions about her meteoric rise in the theatre world. Despite an exhausting and punishing rehearsal schedule, the triple-threat - quadruple if you count the endorsement deals sure to come - appears to be just as bubbly, beautiful and vivacious as her public persona. Toronto, and the merry old land of Oz, may be just a pitstop on her way to Broadway, the West End, the Emerald City Interdimensional Theatre and/or Hollywood, but she seems as down to earth as such an unearthly glittery mega-star can be.

Drew Rowsome: Despite being "Plumbum's younger, prettier and more audacious younger sister," do you have any trepidation about filling Plumbum's pumps?

Sugarbum: Oh I have no trepidation because I brought my own shoes! I love a silver Ked with a flower detail. I want to do my sister Plumbum proud, however for this round it's Sugarbum's turn. And I'm ready to get my steps in on the yellow brick road.

How did you come to be cast in this role? Did Plumbum suffer a Showgirls-esque tumble?

Sugarbum: No, no marbles have been tossed on this production...yet. My sister missed her flight from Transylvania, I understand there was a fishnet related emergency that tied her up and so her people called my people and 5, 6, 7, 8 ...Sugarbum's a star.

What is your role in The Wizard of Oz?

Sugarbum: Well I'm playing the role of the Good Witch of the North, the GWOTN for short. But it's not your traditional version of The Wizard of Oz. I'll be going on the journey down the YBR with the four friends. There's something I need from the Wizard too...



Do you regret not getting to play the Wicked Witch of the West which is the iconic role to gay men?

Sugarbum: *No no no. The GWOTN is wicked enough for me. However Sarah-Jeanne Hosie as the Wicked Witch of the West is ferociously funny, she does the gay men who revere her proud.*

It's a very high-powered cast. Are they all learning from you?

Sugarbum: *We all have things to learn from each other on this. Really, we all learn from Eddie Glen, through his DIY approach to comedy, we all emerge funnier.*

All of the interviews I've done with Ross Petty panto cast members have been full of gushing about how wonderful and fun the experience is. Is that true or are there just very strict non-disclosure agreements signed upon being cast?

Sugarbum: *I can't give away too much, but there is a magic to every day at 'work.' This is a well-oiled machine. It puts my cousin Sulphura's Feverator to shame. But more on that when you see the show.*

WC Fields famously advised "Never work with children or animals." Are you nervous about Toto or the hordes of children who will be in attendance and some even on stage?

Sugarbum: *Toto (Olive) is incredible, she's gonna be just fine. The little rascal loves the attention. A little behind the scenes info: Camille who plays Dorothy is Olive's Mom. So no matter what... Toto will be safe*

Plumbum has a notoriously overdriven libido. Is it a family trait? Who is your love interest in the show? Who would you like to be your love interest off stage?

Sugarbum: *We in the Bum family nurse a healthy libido. And we always appreciate the male form. However my love interest in this show is myself, I have to learn to love myself a little more, so that's what I'm working on. I will say prior to coming back to Oz, I spent an afternoon running through the hallways of the Hilton, desperately searching for the disarmingly handsome Ross Petty. There may or may not be footage of that in our show.*

What is your favourite number in the show?

Sugarbum: *It's hard to compliment my cousin Sulphura...but unlike her I can be the bigger person and acknowledge that she kills the song "Hot Stuff." Please don't tell her I said that.*

Your favourite fashionable outfit?

Sugarbum: *Listen honey, more is more. I love a petticoat. I love a rhinestone. And I love pink. Let me say that again: PINK. I like anything that shows off my calves, while offering a hint of 'saloon.'*

Does performing over the holiday season interfere with your usual celebrations? What does Christmas mean to Sugarbum?

Sugarbum: *If anything it improves my holiday season! It means I get to meet families and people of all kinds and share my heart with them. If that's not what the holidays are about, then I don't know what! Christmas, and every holiday, means I get to wear my best rhinestone petticoat and roast some chestnuts on an open fire. What can I say except that I love to make the Yule tide gay!*

Will it be hard to leave Oz and return to grey and slushy Toronto?

Sugarbum: *Yes. Yes it will. Our transportation system in Oz does in fact have a relief line, which makes winter travel far more ideal. Also, parts of Oz contain trees that are every colour you can think of, including PINK, so... I miss seeing that when I'm here in the TO for too long. I will say though, when the streets of Toronto are quiet and the snow is falling perfectly, and all the lights are twinkling, I feel like I'm back in Oz.*

How do you like travelling by tornado on a nightly basis?

Sugarbum: *Oh honey I'm too old for that. I live in Oz, so only Dorothy has to do the tornado travel. And bless her heart for doing that. It was in my contract that I wouldn't have to jump between dimensions every night. It wreaks havoc on my hair. And my clothes don't travel well in a cyclone situation.*

Is rehearsing and working so close to the Eaton's Centre dangerous for your finances? It will be easy for your Christmas shopping but what is Sugarbum hoping that Santa will bring her?

Sugarbum: *Cory Sincennes doesn't have his designs in the Eaton Centre yet. Only he can dress me. He knows how to show off all I've got. So if he opens a store, my credit cards will take a huge hit. But it's worth it to support his genius.*

As for Santa . . . his wife and I actually went to college together, we're great friends still. So I hope he brings her down to Oz for a holiday visit, that way me and the Mrs can hit the Ozview casino, crack a bottle of Chardonnay and make some bad decisions. Just like old times.





You have a very close relationship with the talented Michael De Rose who is having a banner year with *Grease*, *Merrily We Roll Along* and *Jukebox Hero*. What does he have planned next? What do you have planned next?

Sugarbum: *Don't you just love him? He's got a few things coming up that he has to be tight-lipped about. But let's just say there are more shows in his future. One based on a hit Lindsay Lohan/Jamie Lee Curtis Disney film (itself a remake of a Jodie Foster film). But shhhh. Don't tell. As for me . . . well when you see the show you'll understand, I'm about to become very busy in the land of Oz.*

Is there anything else that you would like your soon to be devoted fans to know?

Sugarbum: *Only that I love them.*

And that I'm working on making the interdimensional travel much easier between Earth and Oz, that way I can see them on a more regular basis. My fans are so loyal, I just want to keep singing and shimmering for them. I hope I'm a beacon of pink rhinestoned hope for these troubled times.



The Wizard of Oz runs Fri, Nov 30 to Sat, Jan 5 at the Elgin Theatre, 189 Yonge St. rosspetty.com



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SKY GILBERT

I'm Afraid of "Woke People"



for Vivek Shraya

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because they divide humanity into either 'us' or 'them.'

I'm afraid of "Woke People" because they taught me to fear being gay. It was something that I worked very hard to be proud of, and now — once again — I am ashamed.

When I go to a theatre event or a sexuality conference, I am carefully not to dress in a sexual way, because I know that for many 'Woke People' it fits an evil gay stereotype.

When I go online I brace myself for the postings about how politically insensitive, hyper-sexual and super-rich gay men are.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because they can't see that I'm gay, but only that I'm a man.

When I send 'Woke People' emails, I have to go out of my way not to appear too gay, too sexual, or too irreverent. I do not want to offend them.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because if I mistakenly use the wrong pronoun to describe them, they may become furious and never forgive me.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because, for them, good intentions are not enough.

When I dress in drag, I fear I will be 'dressed down' by a "Woke Person," screamed at for enjoying appropriated music, for making fun of trans people, and for my camp sense of humour.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because when I appeal to them for generosity and kindness they see it as trying to make them weak.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because I am worried they will measure my lack of privilege against theirs and find it wanting.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because they have said to me 'your time is up.'

When I see a group of 'Woke People' laughing and tittering in a corner, I can't help but imagine they are laughing about me.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because my intersectionality does not have enough intersections.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because our very human imaginations may not be able to survive the rigorous scrutiny of social justice.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People' because I'm afraid they will kill art.

You see I believe (gulp!) that we should try and love everyone, even (gulp!) the people who hate us.

I'm afraid of 'Woke People,' because — I'm sorry.

Because I'm sorry I exist.

RAYMOND HELKIO

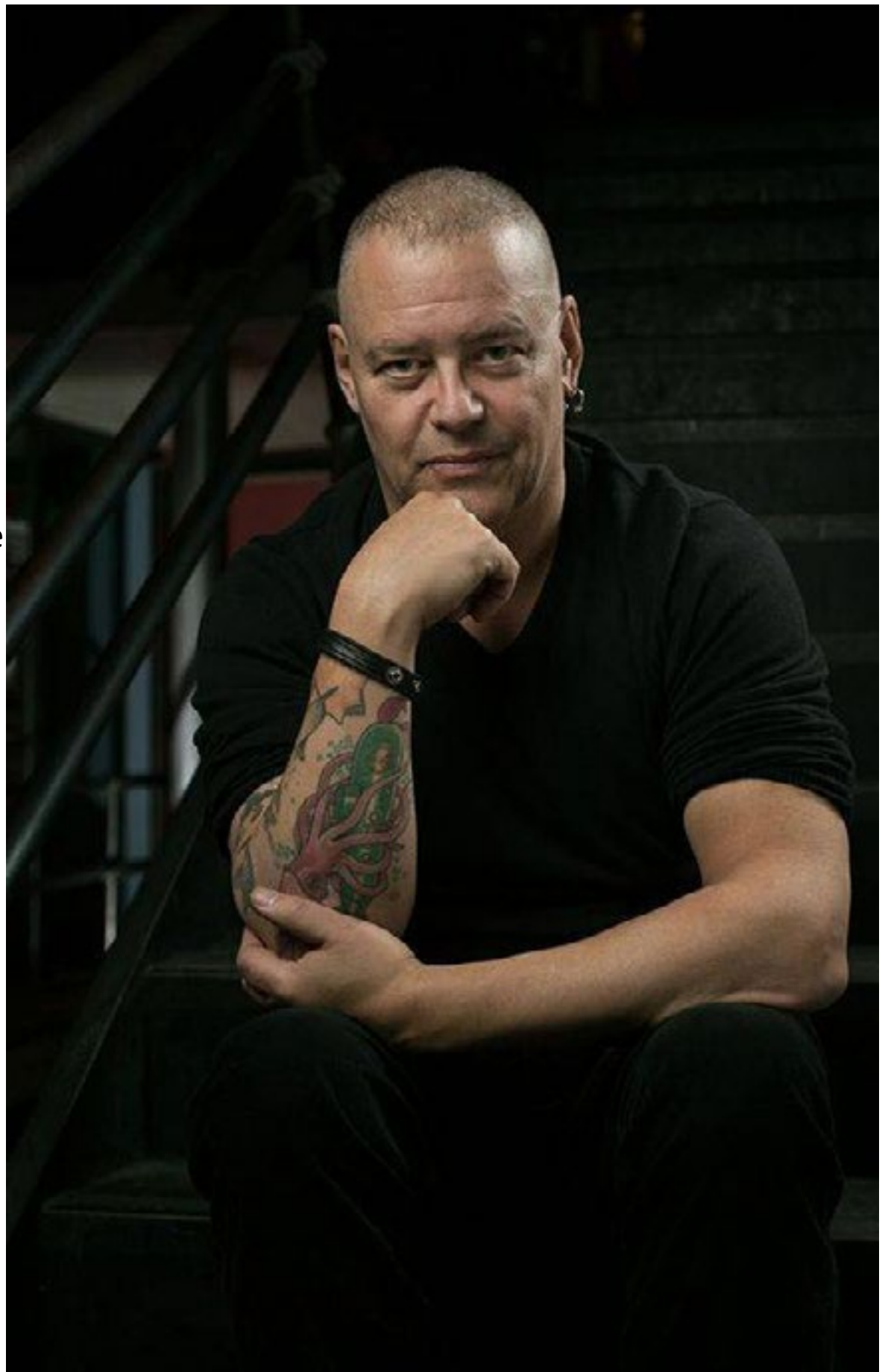
Buddies In Bad Times Theatre: Lost In Outer Space



Is it true that the beloved Buddies In Bad Times Theatre is trying its hand at censorship by cancelling a show by Sky Gilbert?

According to an open letter from Buddies, it's not actually Sky's show *Drag Queens From Outer Space* that triggered the cancellation, rather it was because he "posted a highly problematic poem on his website (see previous page)." With just a few days from the November 19th show date, the cancellation is meant as a message to Sky and the Buddies audience, but what exactly is that message?

Sky Gilbert has always been a gay man, a drag queen and a sexual activist. These characteristics are what inform much of his experience and thus his work, so it's not that of all queer people. And we need his voice, as much as we need every other voice out there if we have any intention of hearing what the other is saying. We don't have to personally take on everyone's point of view, or bend our own, but it's critical we allow people space for their opinions. Opinions shift over time, just like our cultural attitudes, and should look forward to a world with far more space given to queer women, people of colour, indigenous and different abilities because that's



who we are as a community. But cancelling one narrative under the pretext of giving voice to another becomes a trade-off, instead of an expansion of collective realities.

Is there more to the story? Perhaps, during conversations between Sky and Buddies something else went down. Perhaps this has been transpiring as long as we've been adding letters to the LGBTQIA+ rainbow. Or perhaps we've stopped focusing on the individuality of the droplets within our rainbow, and have begun focusing on the mirage of the overall rainbow itself.

As the founder of Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, Sky no longer works for the organization but regularly shows his creative work there, which is always sexual, political and generally not in line with the status quo. So to suddenly yank a performance and silence him over those very things is hard to comprehend. It's not clear from reading Buddies [open letter](#) to Sky or or [Sky's open letter](#) to Vivek, why Buddies got involved in the first place, but they've drawn a connection to him having been founder with the implication being that he should forever act as an agency ambassador.

Sky's blog post is not about Buddies and so to punish him for his words suggests that Vivek's ideas are so fragile that she requires protection. Oppressing someone by silencing them is the opposite of wanting to hold space for difficult conversations. It goes along with the ever-expanding view of what being queer is, and today's queers must agree with each other or there will be penalties. This could just be history on repeat, the oppressed becoming the oppressor, or it's a history lesson that cannot be appreciated until some time in the future. Either way, there are too many letters in the communities' acronym to not at least acknowledge that individual differences is what gives us strength.

What Buddies programs into their schedule matters because it's where we get to see ourselves but in no way should every show conform to how each of us view the world. Buddies continues to provide thoughtful programming so when a show get silenced at the last minute, it creates an uneasy feeling. Times are changing and some people are changing with it, some are trying to change, and some won't make any effort at all. And we need all of these voices so we can reflect back our many different realities. We don't have to take every reality on for ourselves, we just have to acknowledge that most will be different than our own. And that's okay.



Vivek's book is a disagreement with status quo thinking, which makes her views all the more compelling, as are Sky's assertions. While we are fighting over who should take up more space, could we at least continue to acknowledge those who already do? Difference is an intersection where we can learn from one another, or instead we can use this difference of opinion to shut each other down. Silencing narratives we don't like, in favour of ones we do, creates a situation where we all miss out. This is also true when we shut people down by calling them homophobic or transphobic because they've expressed something that goes against what we believe. A *phobia* is a *fear* of something we don't understand and it's often expressed as hostility towards the other, and this is not that.

When an author publishes a book, and another criticizes it, it's not a phobia or act of hostility but a viewpoint which includes Sky's satirical [poem](#) for at Vivek Shraya, author of *I'm Afraid of Men*. As a person who has lived her life as male and now female, Vivek offers a unique perspective of the impact of how masculinity is imposed on us. Much of her ideas I agree with, and some, not so much. Sky Gilbert also offers a unique perspective as a radical gay male whose experience has been influenced by drag, sexual politics and the era of AIDS. Much of his ideas I agree with, and some, not so much. Since both hold a range of concepts to be true, why pick and choose when both actually do exist? In Sky's words, "our very human imaginations may not be able to survive the rigorous scrutiny of social justice."

SKY GILBERT

Goodbye to Buddies



Photo credit: University of Toronto

I am withdrawing the workshop of my opera *Shakespeare's Criminal* (composed by Dustin Peters) from the 40th anniversary season of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. It's time for me to go. Listening to people at the 'Long Table,' it became clear to me that Buddies is no longer a Gay and Lesbian Theatre, as it was when I was the artistic director. It has evolved into a space for a new generation of people challenging the mainstream in a new way. In order for those who have been wounded by the white colonial capitalist patriarchy to heal, they need their own home, and they must take power in that home.

Buddies is now a home for people representing a range of intersectional genders and identities. This is a wonderful thing and I applaud it. I have no doubt that in the future Buddies will produce plays which will have powerful messages. And also, significantly, Buddies will host concerts, speeches, films, rallies, wakes, celebrations, demonstrations, protests and 'Long Tables.' There will be laughter, there will be tears, there will be rage, and there will be redemption — all for important causes. Social justice, trans activism, reconciliation issues and the rights of people of colour, importantly define the youth of today — and our youth is our future.

I took over Buddies in Bad Times Theatre from George Luscombe of Toronto Workshop Productions in 1994. George Luscombe was also a social activist and pioneer — a socialist whose idol was Joan Littlewood (a disciple of Brecht). We had very different artistic visions, but we both saw ourselves on the 'left' of things. George Luscombe handed the space over to us acknowledging that we were the rightful heirs. I wish to do the same now. I no longer want my name, my voice, my essays, my ideas, my plays, my novels, my poems, my art — or anything about me — to be associated with Buddies. I'm happy to make space for others. Someday I'm sure, Evalyn will do the same.

As for me, I will continue to fight for what is important to me (and hopefully not to me alone): freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and the rights of gay men and drag queens — the rights of sex-positive people of all genders, sexualities and colours.

I stand for effeminate sexual men, s/m dykes, sex trade workers, sexual spaces (like bath houses, porn shops and strip clubs), HIV and sexual health activists, gender and sexual outlaws, sexual liberation, the fetish community and all those who explore alternatives to monogamy and marriage.

I will fight for freedom of speech because I think 'art' is very different from 'politics.' Both must be nurtured, but nurtured separately. Poetry must not bear the weight of society's approval or disapproval.

Poetry must be free.

Gay Refugees Of The Caravan



Photo credit: Giullero Aria, AFP

There are thousands of people in the caravan traveling towards the United States, all of which are in dire need of refuge. And within this collective there are some that will find it much harder than others to be granted safety (if at all) because they are LGBT. Like Roxsana Hernández, an HIV+ trans person who, [according to The Guardian](#), died after five days in custody because of the facilities freezing temperatures.

The situation is further complicated by the intolerance LGBT people face from within the caravan itself. Like César Mejía, the gay man from Honduras who fled homophobic violence at home only to be confronted by it again. [National Public Radio](#) ran a story which quoted him as saying, “Whenever we arrived at a stopping point, the LGBT community was the last to be taken into account in every way. So our goal was to change that and say, ‘This time, we are going to be first,’ so we left.” So when 120 LGBT people left the 3600 person caravan in Mexico City, they sought asylum in Tijuana, but what they found was more homophobia, this time from local residents who opposed LGBT people renting in their neighbourhood.

This is all the more reason that we in Canada should do everything we we can to support LGBT refugees. Organizations like the [Rainbow Railroad](#) who facilitate the expensive process of safely relocating someone is a great place to donate to, or connect with to offer up a temporary place to stay. The fight for equality of LGBT people has come a long way in our country and so it’s our obligation to share it with our brothers and sisters who are living a drastically different reality.

RAYMOND HELKIO

Gays Not Allowed



Photo by Stewart Borden

I'm walking through Times Square taking in all of the holiday noise, when I look up to see "No Gays Allowed" on a large flat-screen billboard. I stare for a moment, trying to make out who the ad is from, but it changes to "No Lesbians Allowed," then "No Bisexuals Allowed" and then "No Trans Allowed. What am I seeing? Does anyone else see this?

And just like that, I'm faced with more ads, but now they are *regular* ads; a cable company, a bank, two car ads, a daytime talk show and a Broadway musical. There were so many of these new ads that I started to doubt what I originally saw.

Perhaps I misread the headline, maybe it said "Now Gays Allowed," which kinda makes more sense in these times right? I notice the subway entrance across the street and decide to head home, and then just like that, the billboard flashes the ad I'm waiting for. And this time I'm paying attention.

The ad campaign, *No Gays Allowed* was created by a group of queer people under the name Citizens for Transparency which takes aim at Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a highly influential anti-LGBT lobby group. ADF spends \$50 million a year pushing anti-LGBT policies in courts and legislatures around the world and according to the Citizens for Transparency, the "ADF has extreme, out-of-touch, and dangerous views about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. And they're forcing those views on others."

Some have criticized the *No Gays Allowed* campaign because the when the ads do come up, they cycle through very quick making it difficult to understand the headline's context. But by being brash, the campaign shines light on the ADF by dismantling and attacking their narrative of being an "alliance defending freedom."

The campaign against ADF has created a stir, but more importantly it has put a spotlight on the queer-phobic agenda behind ADF. ADF responded to the campaign against them in an open post titled [About That Times Square Billboard](#) where, instead of addressing the claims made against them, they try and discredit Citizens for Transparency by calling them an anonymous group. But it doesn't matter who is behind Citizens for Transparency, because ADF's active anti-gay stance speaks for itself.

<https://nogaysallowed.org>

RAYMOND HELKIO

Get The Athlete In Your Life Some Peace On Earth



Don't Buy Guns For Christmas

Who wants to talk about mass shootings over the holidays? Instead of talking about yet another shooting, we can stop supporting the companies that support the gun manufacturers and their lobbyists. **Bell** bike helmets and gear, **Giro** ski goggles and equipment, **Blackburn** bike bags, **CamelBak** and the eyewear brand **Bollé** are brands under Vista Outdoor and BRG Action Sports who also manufacture guns and ammo and because of their ties to the National Rifle Association (NRA), they have become the target of a boycott. This Christmas, don't buy from brands that support looser gun laws.

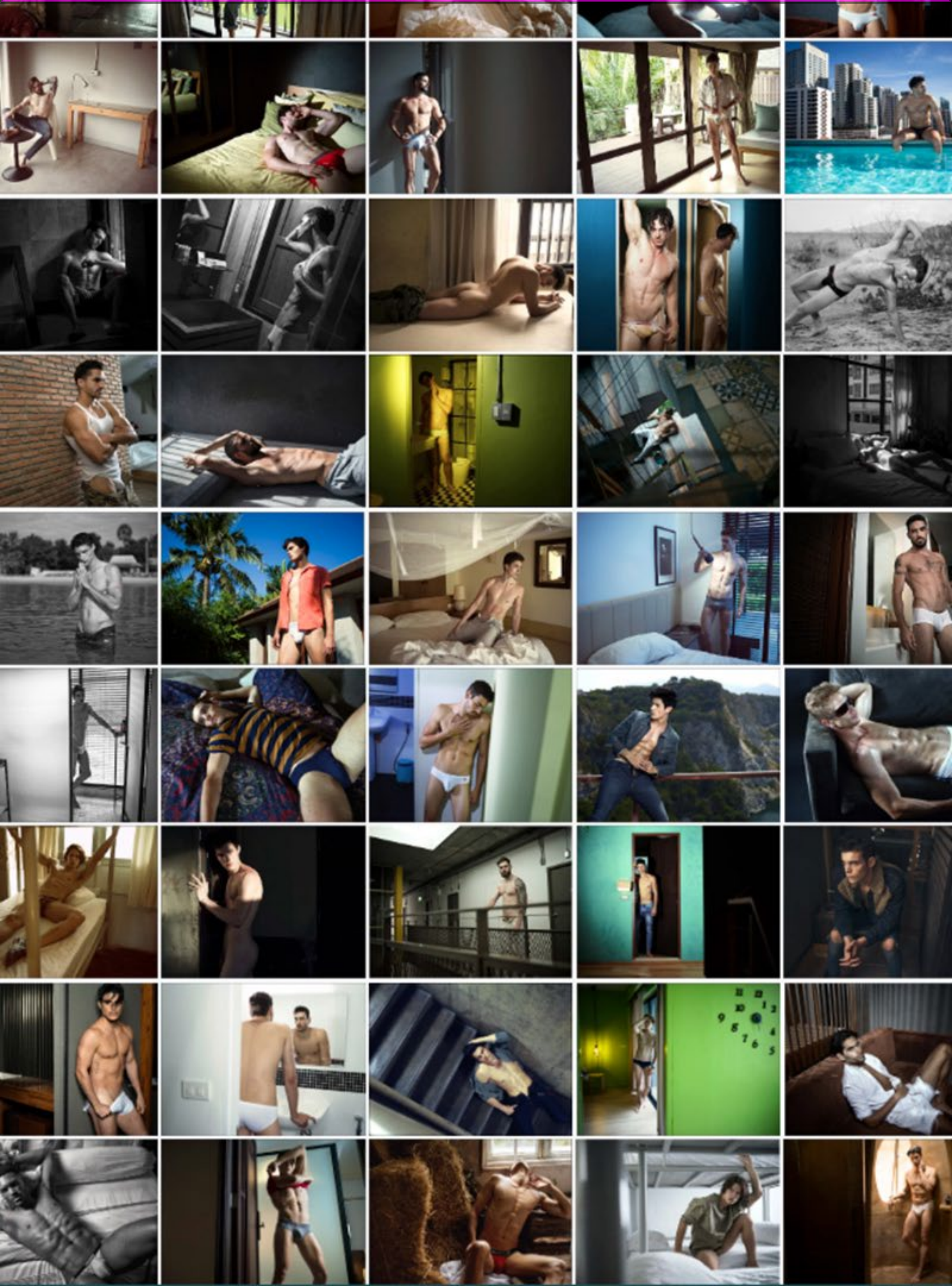
Forgo Fargo

While there are no **Wells Fargo** bank branches in Canada, they do have five offices (two of which are in the GTA) so if you have a Wells Fargo card, use a different one for your purchases. Since the Sandy Hook massacre back in December 2012 Wells Fargo had provided \$431,000,000.00 to the gun industry. Then in October, 2018, they forked over another \$40,000,000.00 to Sturm Ruger, an assault rifle manufacturer. Wells Fargo has been under fire for its other dealings, most notably with regard to the Keystone Pipeline. The American Federation of Teachers, the country's largest teachers' union, dropped Wells Fargo for its huge mortgage business because of their funding of the gun industry. Still, they stand by the NRA. This Christmas, use your purchasing power to take stand for peace!

DREW ROWSOME

Qzise

MGT's cover photographer with a sexy filmic sensibility





“Being a film lover, my shooting style is somewhat cinematic,” says photographer Qsize. *“I create a story and ask my models to play the role. I always tell the models that I am not a fashion photographer and I don’t photograph them like models, but as actors.”* It shows in Qsize’s work. The men appear to be living in a movie still, immersed in an emotion or in transit to another experience. Of course they are also framed and shot seductively, whether they are seducing the camera or unaware of it.

There is also, usually, a sense of place, of a lived-in or mysterious environment that the men exist in. *“To be honest, locations give me inspiration,”* says Qsize. *“When I see an interesting place, it creates a story in my mind. Even when I have a very good looking model with me, if I cannot find a good location that arouses me to shoot, it means nothing.”*

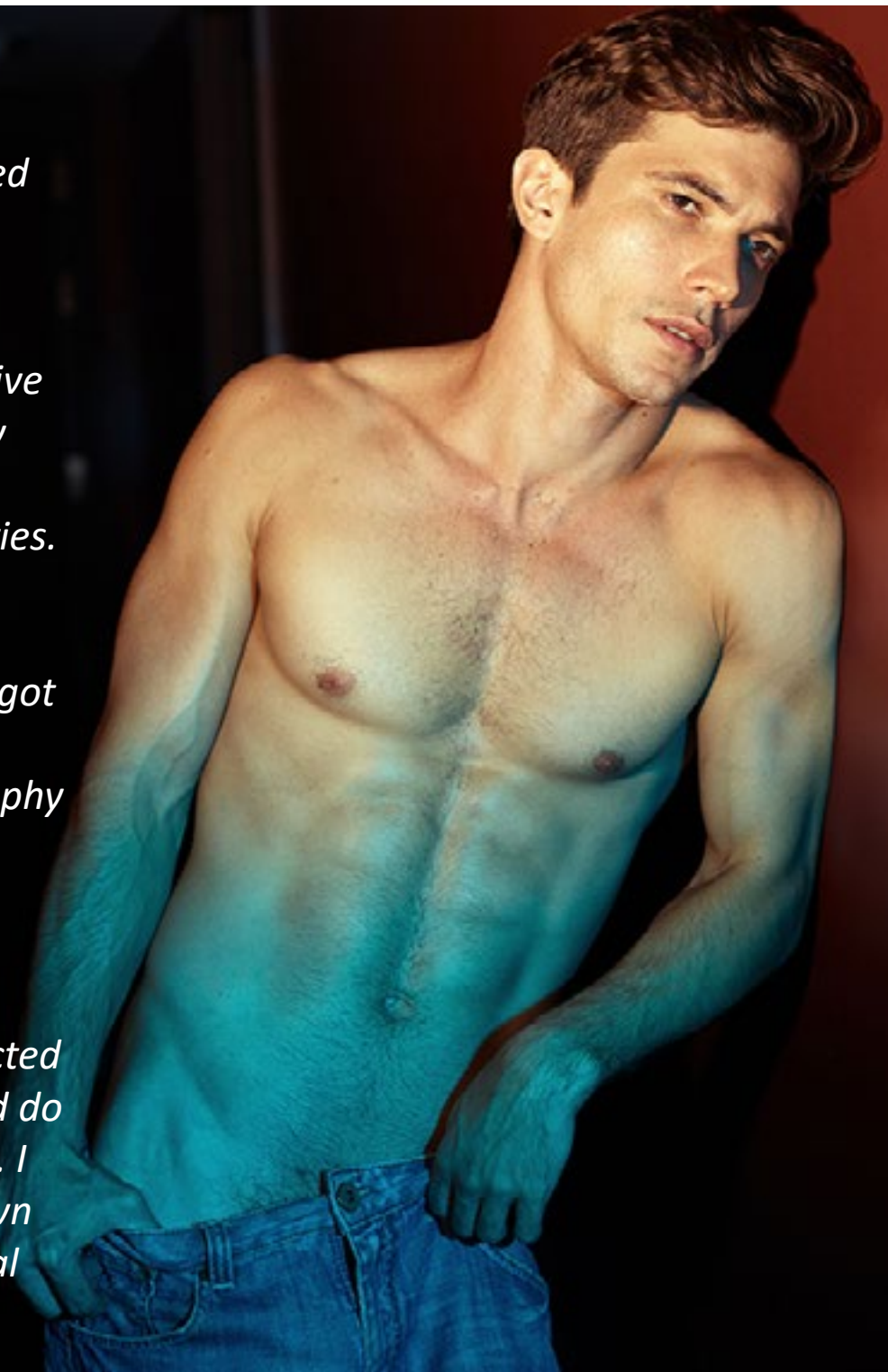
Qsize does amend that statement. *“Some models inspire me as well. It depends on the situation and my mood at that moment. I admit that originally I loved shooting good-looking models with Superman-like bodies, but now that quality is just a part of what I look for. I realized that there are more important things than just appearance. A good attitude is the thing I now expect.”*

He knows exactly what is required, *“To work with me, models should come with a trust in me and know what they are doing. As you can see from my portfolio, some models were skinny, but it was not a problem for me at all. I worked with them because I believe that each individual has their own unique character. My challenge, my task is to bring out their character and show the viewers how special this model is.”*



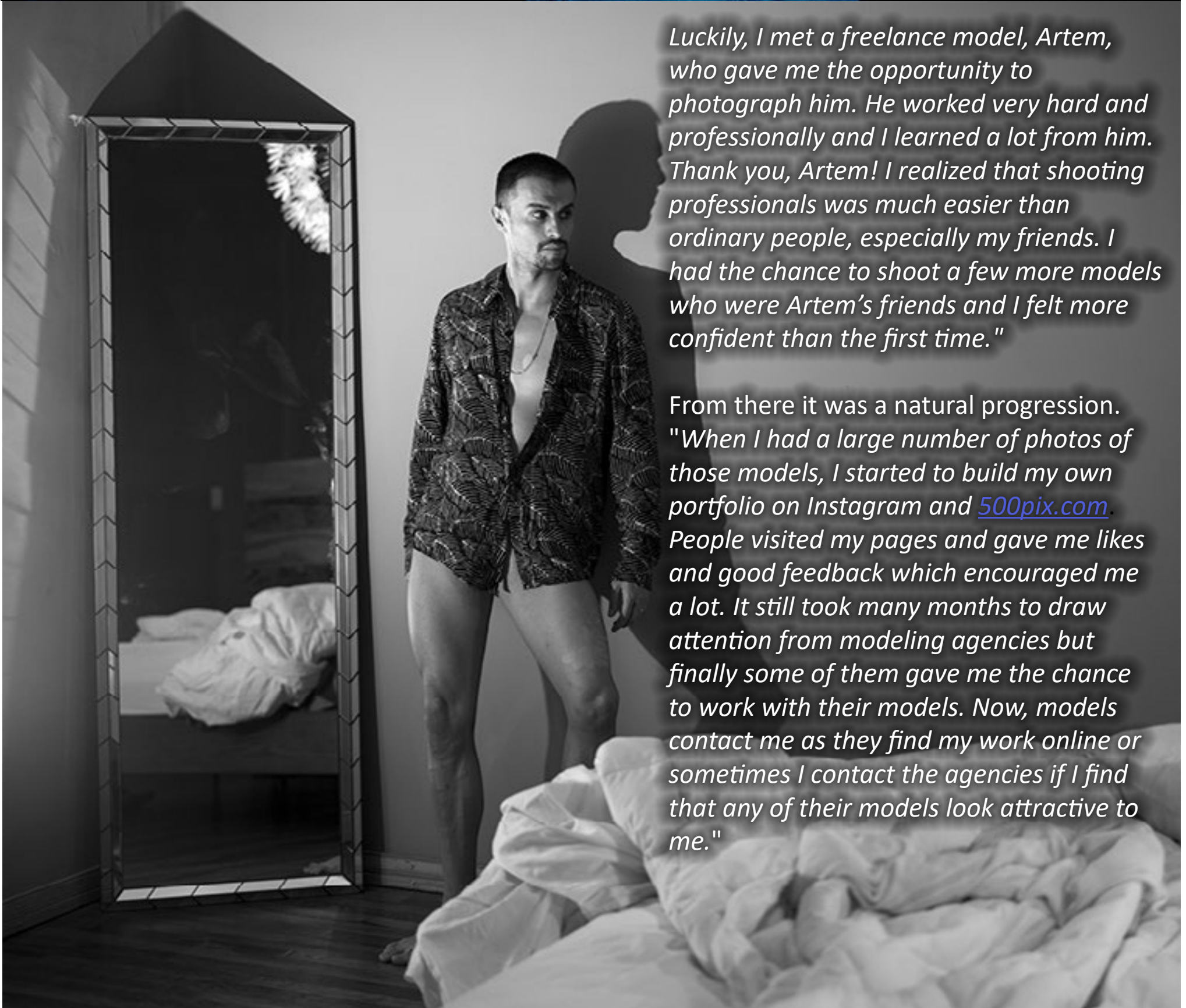
Qzise began shooting landscapes, a byproduct of his love of travelling. *"Many of my friends told me that they liked the photos of people that I photographed during my trips,"* says Qzise. Then friends asked him to do some *"pre-wedding photography for them. After a lot of positive feedback, I started seriously learning how to shoot portraits and I found that there were a lot of challenges and new discoveries. I studied the work of many famous photographers who inspire me, learned techniques from books and YouTube, and got support from my family and friends. From thereon, my passion for portrait photography quickly changed into an obsession."*

Some of the challenges were practical matters. *"When I first started to shoot models, real professional-models, I contacted the modeling agencies and asked if I could do test shoots. Sadly, the answer was silence. I could understand that as I was an unknown photographer and I did not have an official portfolio to show them."*



Luckily, I met a freelance model, Artem, who gave me the opportunity to photograph him. He worked very hard and professionally and I learned a lot from him. Thank you, Artem! I realized that shooting professionals was much easier than ordinary people, especially my friends. I had the chance to shoot a few more models who were Artem's friends and I felt more confident than the first time."

From there it was a natural progression. *"When I had a large number of photos of those models, I started to build my own portfolio on Instagram and [500pix.com](https://www.500pix.com). People visited my pages and gave me likes and good feedback which encouraged me a lot. It still took many months to draw attention from modeling agencies but finally some of them gave me the chance to work with their models. Now, models contact me as they find my work online or sometimes I contact the agencies if I find that any of their models look attractive to me."*





The only problem with professional models was that *"some of them didn't understand what I wanted. They posed like fashion models trying to present clothes, shoes and fashion accessories. I had to remind them from time to time that they were actors. And sometimes even show them pictures from other sources that match the story."*

Qzise believes that *"communication is the key. Every time, before I start to work with a model, I show him my work,. I make sure that they know and understand what I would like to do. Of course my shooting style is kind of sexy and the model must know this first. If he is not comfortable with that, I won't force him to take the job. But if he is okay with it - mostly they are - we talk about the shooting concept in advance."*

Once shooting is underway, *"Respect is the thing I always give to my models. I keep talking to the model in order to make him comfortable and relaxed. Another key to make it easy to shoot sexy is that I normally work alone, just me and the model, no other staff involved during the shoot."* Qzise is frank with the models. *"Yes, I intend the photos to be erotic, based on my personal taste. My work is 100 percent homemade. I have no team and assistance. Sometimes, I cannot do what I intend to do because of limited resources, but I'm fine with that. This is the reason why my brand is called Q(ueen) Size, not King Size."*

And he wants to make sure that the viewer, and the models, are aware that despite the deeply erotic and sensual imagery in his work, *"I am not shooting porn style, so please don't expect to get to see that kind of picture in my work."*

On Qzise's 500pix.com page he describes himself as a "part-time photographer," belying the commercial slickness and quality of his work. *"I should have described myself as a non-commercial photographer because I work just for my own pleasure,"* he says. *"Despite it being just my hobby, I was contacted by some companies to work for their campaigns and projects, but I refused because I could not work full time. And, unfortunately, the concepts they offered to me did not fit my interest. It's good for me to work on my own as I can fully create what I really want to present through my lens. However I'm always open to working with other people if our working concept is similar."*



Working solo with the models sometimes gives a sense of brooding or melancholy to Qzise's photos, making the stills appear to be from what we would call foreign art films. But the men, costuming (emphasis on underwear) and bulges are reminiscent of the longing camera caresses of Gus Van Sant or David DeCouteau. Qzise says that he is not trying to entice the viewer, *"It is my enticement."* Again Qzise emphasizes that the idea comes first, before the model or even the location. *"Definitely, without it my photos would look like snapshots."*

Qzise's photos are truly international despite his home base. *"Honestly, it is not easy to find the right locations suitable for my shooting style in Bangkok. Bangkok is a beautiful and charming place with lots of fun of activities to do, but I shoot sexy and I don't want to represent my home city as in anyway erotic, the culture here is not open to it. You might notice that nothing in any of my photos show the signs or visual signatures of Bangkok or Thailand. Bangkok itself does not inspire me. Instead, my inspiration mostly comes from the movies and my personal imagination."*

But not always. When told that an atypical photo of Qzise's, "Chang," is my personal favourite, he agrees. *"That's one of my most favorite photos too. The difficulty was we could not control the elephant well and he did not co-operate during the shoot. He tried to push my model off his back. I could have asked the elephant owner to force his baby to stay still, but I and my model didn't want that happening. We were looking for something natural and real and let the cutie be what it was. Thanks to my model for being so brave and patient."*

It is the photo that Qzise says he is most proud of. *"Some of my photographer friends from other countries asked me for information about the shoot, location and technique. They love this photo as it inspired them to discover Thailand."* Even if Qzise has other destination dreams. *"If everything was possible, I would like to us a Hollywood movie studio as my shooting location."* He laughs and says, *"Wake up Jay!"* then explaining, *"My name is Jay, but Qzise is my brand name and I prefer people to recognize my brand, instead of my name. My Instagram is Qzise and everyone is always welcome to visit. I have also occasionally set my work to be published in online magazines like HUF, Adon, VOLANT, Art of Portrait, etc."*

And now MGT.



MGT Holiday Gift Ideas

DREW ROWSOME

ComeNPlay.ca gifts that keep giving



Remember when Christmas meant ecstatic excitement about the new toys that Santa was going to bring? ComeNPlay.ca wants to help you give that gift to others. With a tantalizing twist.

ComeNPlay.ca is a family business, founded by Jennifer (one name like Madonna and Cher) and her husband. “We began this business because we were getting stale in the bedroom, so we looked to sex toys to help us,” says Jennifer. That candour is reflected in the website with not only over 6,000 helpful and horn-inducing products, but also a blog full of information, fascinating facts and advice. “As first timers, our most exciting discovery was the vibrating cock ring, then we went on to try dildos, and of course we went onto restraints. It took a while to find the right toy for us, because just like a good pair of jeans, not every brand fits the same way. This was the whole basis of us wanting to start our business. Being available for people to ask questions and helping them make the best decision based on their needs.”

ComeNPlay.ca answers emails and phone calls promptly, and also offers an online chat feature for questions one wants to keep anonymous. “We definitely cannot test run all our items, we would never be able to come out of our bedroom,” says Jennifer laughing. “We do however, look at stats and read reviews on new and upcoming toys. We need to make sure there is something for everyone, including those with dysfunctions, like ED.”

Though they are still eagerly awaiting their first LGBT “Pleasure Party,” they have already partnered with Proud FM, Oasis Aqua Lounge and now MyGayToronto.com, in order to be more inclusive. “While our site does seem like it is geared towards heterosexual couples, we do have a lot of toys for couples and singles of all orientations,” says Jennifer. “We believe that sex is sex, love is love, and everyone deserves to be happy. Getting an orgasm can make people very happy, and we can help with that!”

It is just not a business, it is a mission. “I hope that we can educate people enough to allow them to be open,” says Jennifer. “To be confident in themselves and feel beautiful. If as an individual you

do not have confidence, you will never enjoy you work life, home life, or sex life. You cannot expect your partner to know what you like, or what turns you on. You have to be confident enough to tell your partner what you like, and your partner has to be confident enough to accept your input, not as criticism, but as information that could actually help both parties to achieve their goals . . . whatever that may be.”



CN ComeNPlay
THE PLEASURE IS OURS
www.comenplay.ca

Exclusive 15% discount to MGT readers
Please use coupon code: **MGT15** at checkout
valid until Dec 31, 2018

ComeNPlay.ca is a fun place to browse but the size of the inventory is a little overwhelming. There are gift options for everyone from your naughty workmate to your maiden aunt who could use a practical bedroom tool. We decided to concentrate on gifts for gay men to give gay men, and Jennifer helpfully provided their top five suggestions. However, perusing the site, we found five more that also tickled our libido:

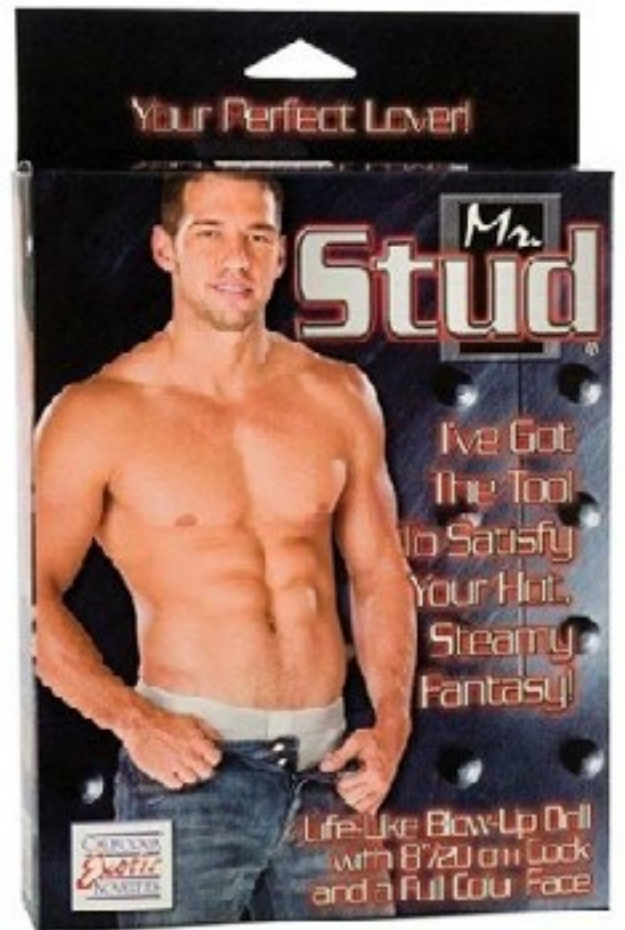
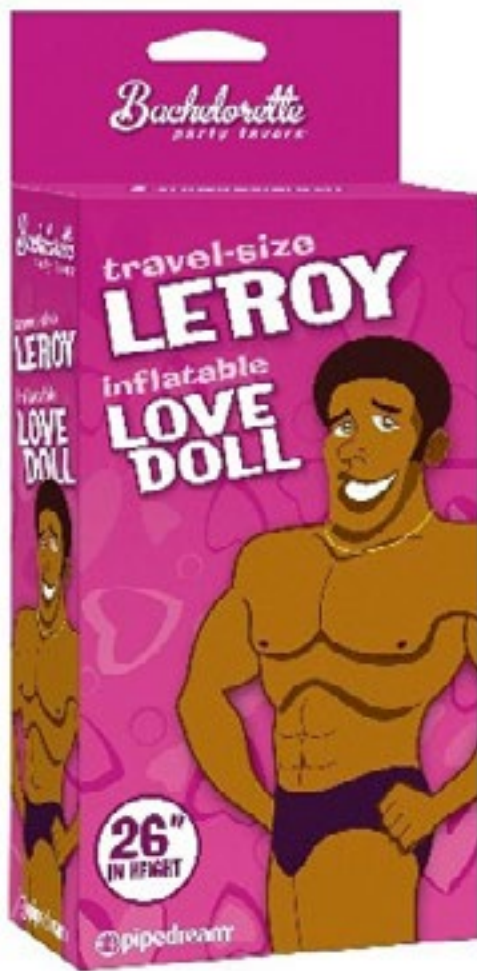
1. **the Rainbow Pumped Silicone Dildo** (9.75 colourful inches of Pride)



2. the Rainbow Unicorn Tails Silicone Butt Plug (to wear to Pride)



3. a trio of inflatable hunks (the Travel Size Leroy Inflatable Love Doll, the Filthy Fireman, and, of course, Mr Stud)



4. the cross-species F#ck-a-Duck (MyGayToronto's publisher Sean's choice for anyone who is looking for a gift for him)





5. **the miniature erotic masterpiece Cyberskin Virtual Boyfriend Dark** (an “ass stroker is shaped like a man deep in the throes of passion; His arched back and narrow waist fits comfortably in the palm of your hand; Broad chest, chiseled muscles and realistic cock are delicious eye candy; His hand painted cock and realistic balls slam against you with every stroke; His tight ass spreads to accommodate you then returns to its original shape and size;” and like any perfect boyfriend “Open ended and easy to clean.”)

And if you have a special message, many of the products, particularly dildos, can be engraved. Sort of personalized ribbing. But Jennifer, who notes that she and ComeNPlay have now been offering sex and gift advice for 10 years as opposed to my fantasy shopping spree across their website, has her suggestions.



1. **The Mangina** – Vanilla by Doc Johnson

The Mangina is a top and a bottom, a three in one toy perfect for male couples or solo play. The entry to this masturbator widens to 1.8 inches in diameter on the inside, and once lubed with a water-based lubricant, the user can slide themselves in easily while the Mangina grips the penis nice and tight. There are a series of pleasure bumps designed to stimulate and massage the glans. It can also be used as a dildo which feels pretty realistic and firm with realistic veins providing texture. Last but not least, the Mangina can be used as a sleeve to enhance the length and girth of the penis.



2. **Fetish Fantasy Series** - Shock Therapy Pleasure Probe

Welcome to the world of Electro Sex! This product is designed for those new to Shock Therapy. The 3” torpedo shaped probe provides thrilling stimulation for anal play. This product comes with a controller for the user to control the strength of the impulse and the frequency of the electronic current. With a click of the switch, the controller can also be used alone as a hand massager.



3. **Road Warrior** – Fetish Fantasy Lingerie for Men

This bold chest-and-waist harness is made to play hard. The waist harness shows off your manly assets while the cuffs keep your hands in place – a must-have for all your master/slave fantasies. The outfit includes a soft spandex hood, heavy duty vinyl wrist cuffs with neoprene lining, and a full adjustable heavy duty vinyl chest and waist harness.



4. **Doc Johnson OptiMALE DUO C-Ring & P-Massager**

Designed for intense dual stimulation, the silicone OptiMALE™ DUO C-Ring and P-Massager is engineered for precision control and ease of use. The c-ring delays ejaculation and prolongs erections while the p-massager simultaneously stimulates the prostate, offering an intense experience with multiple proven health benefits. The soft, pliable material and ergonomic design of

the Duo optimizes comfort, while the slim joystick-style handle offers improved control and effortless removal.



5. ManLine The Master's Door Jam Restraints

This is a great travel item that can easily be set up on any doorway. No installation required, just slip the sturdy and comfortable straps over the door and close. Use cuffs on top of the door for wrists or under the door for ankles. Take control as your partner succumbs to your every desire. This product is even better with blind folds to increase excitement and awaken the other senses.

And of course after browsing at ComeNPlay.ca, you'll come up with the perfect pleasurable gift for at least five lucky recipients.



Exclusive 15% discount to MGT readers

Please use coupon code: *MGT15* at checkout

valid until Dec 31, 2018

NickMesh.com

[MGT cover photographer Nick Mesh](#) offers more naked gorgeous men in more formats that is imaginable. There are books, calendars, greeting cards and prints that any red-blooded gay man would be delighted to own, but there are also more tactile gifts. Wrap a loved one in sheets emblazoned with men loving men, cover a wall with an erotic tapestry, inspire soapy frolics with shower curtains, and make dating/cruising apps comparisons easy with phone cases. There are also throw pillows, clocks, mugs, paperweights for the office (ideal for Secret Santa gifting), and t-shirts. Your gift will make a homo home happily horny.





nickmesh.com



nickmesh.com



nickmesh.com

2019



nickmesh.com

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nickmesh.com



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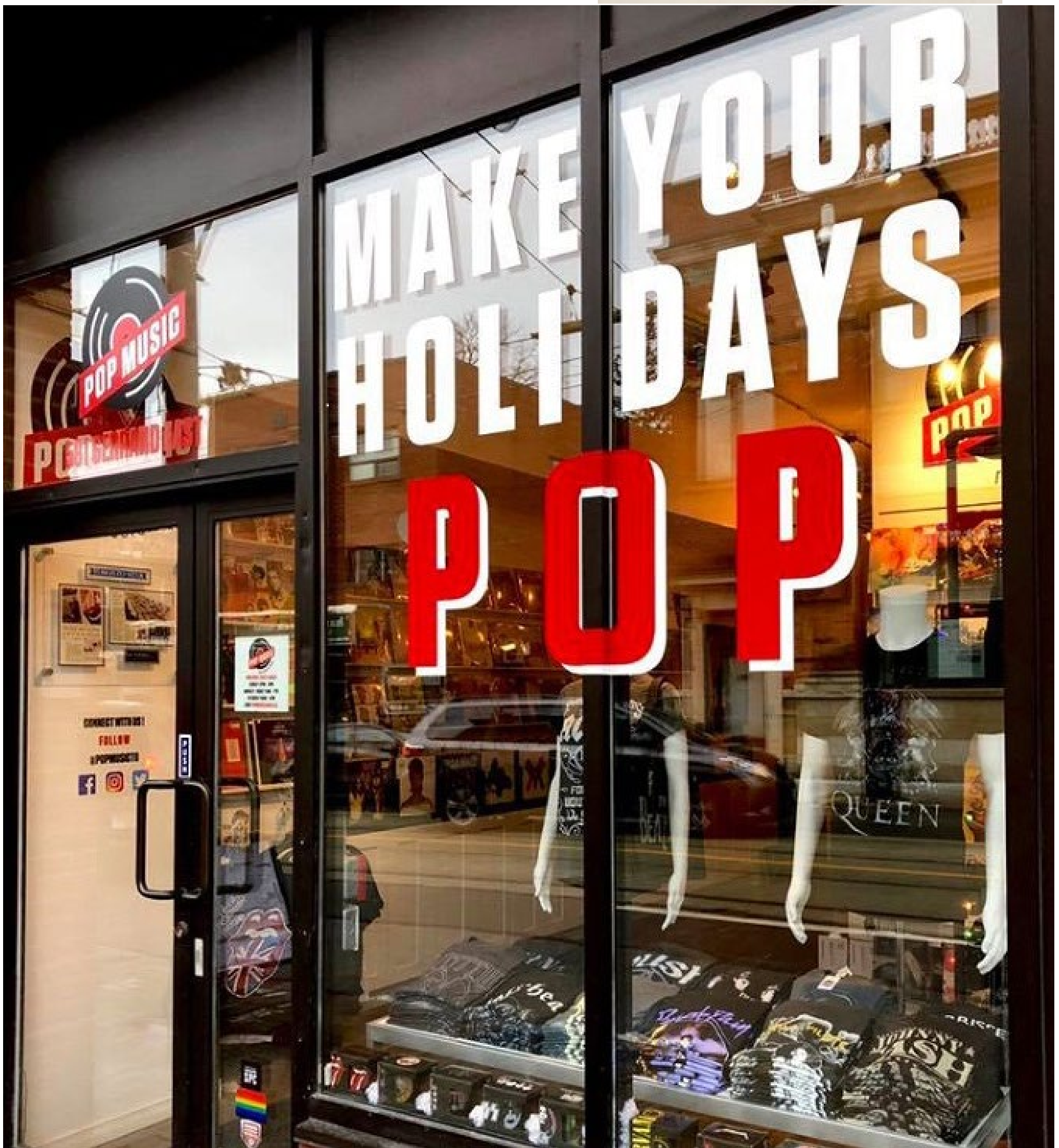
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Pop Music

Christmas carols make me cringe if not outright scream in horror. However there are people on my gift shopping list who love the saccharine sentiments of "All I Want for Christmas is You" and worship at the altar of *These Are Special Times*. Music is a wonderful gift but it is a gift so the temptation to inflict one's own tastes onto the less sophisticated or discerning, must be avoided. There are two solutions. 1. Pop into [Pop Music](#) and Derek Antonio will help you find the ideal musical gift, or, 2. You can purchase a Pop Music gift card and let your lucky giftee choose whatever their heart and ears desire.

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MGT cover photographer Guillaume Deperrois's art books of both his *Shadow & Light* and *Men & textures* exhibits will be welcome on any coffee table. He also offers sumptuous prints in various formats - photo print, canvas, plexiglass, pvc - and sizes. The prints include not only the homoerotic but also stunning visuals suitable for any family member or age. The "Jellyfish" is particularly vibrant and ideal for those with a taste for the aquatic. Environmentally astute as well as chic, is a tote bag featuring prints adding sensual visual texture to the 100% cotton.

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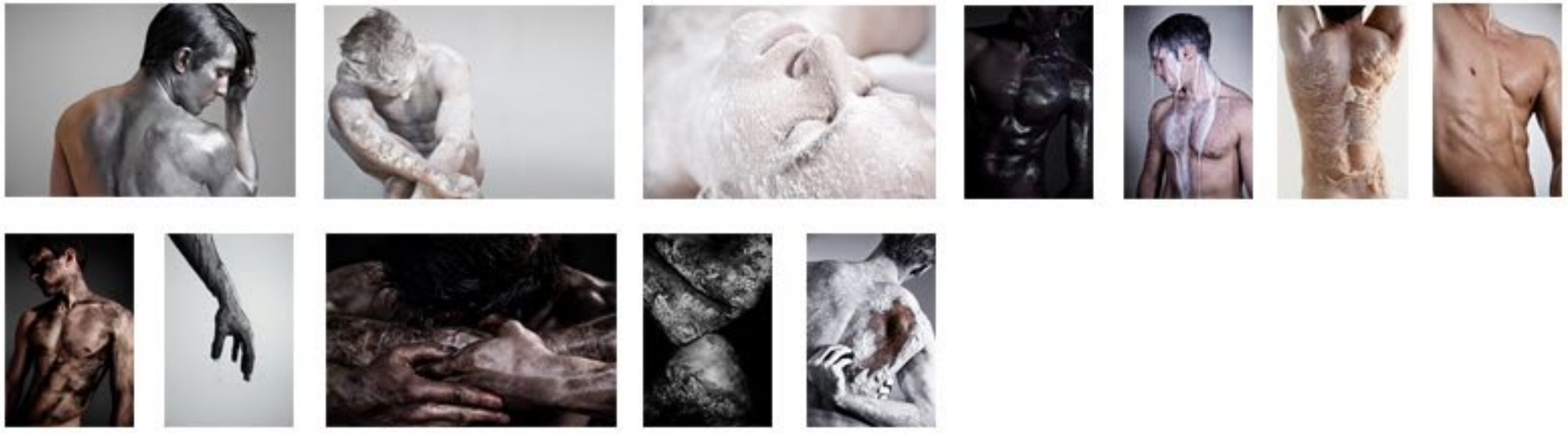


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Every year Retro Festive unleashes a new flood of ornaments, decorations and gifts with the accent on camp, to supplement their annual favourites. [Last year I purchased a gorgeous Krampus ornament for our tree](#) ([Krampusnacht](#) is my personal highlight of the season), this year there is a Krampus Pop! Vinyl Figure by Funko (\$14.99) that would look great under the tree. Last year also saw the acquisition of the [highly recommended for every gay tree](#), Wizard of Oz Ruby Slippers Christmas Tree Ornament (\$9.99). This year I have a nephew who is well deserving of a Rudolph's Bumble "I'm Just Here for the Presents" T-Shirt (\$19.99) to replace his designer ugly Christmas sweater, though Retro Festive has a huge variety of those as well.

retrofestive.ca





David Vance at redbubble.com

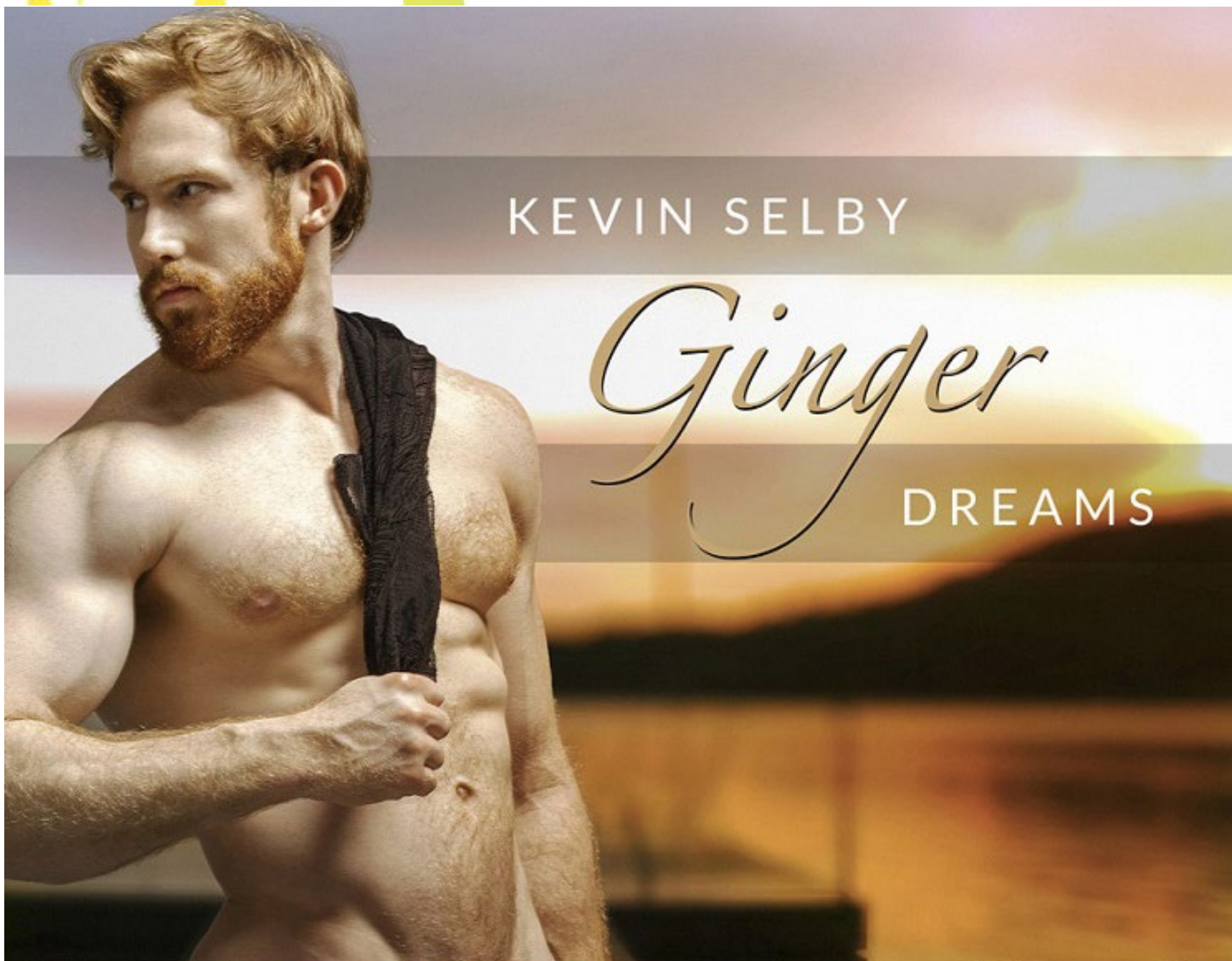
[MGT](http://MGT.com) cover photographer [David Vance](http://DavidVance.com) offers a wide selection of books and prints at davidvanceprints.com, and new this year is a red hot calendar *Ginger Dreams* featuring Vance's hunky muse Kevin Selby. The 12 months of delectable inspiring photos can be purchased at zazzle.com. But at redbubble.com, there is a treasure trove of Vance's most famous and coveted prints on every fashion and home decor product imaginable. For your fag hag: a mini skirt. For your aunt: a scarf. For your tardy friend: a clock.



And for anyone who doesn't get warm just viewing Vance's art, there are plush hoodies. As well as photographic nudes, all products can also be purchased from several other categories including "Flowers," "Gods and Myth," and, of course "Kevin Selby." There are even women and celebrities for the heterosexual men in your life who would appreciate a personalized t-shirt that is more art and less gay.

redbubble.com/people/dmvance





KEVIN SELBY

Ginger

DREAMS



Photography by
DAVID VANCE



Raw Studio Designs

"We gay men do like our underwear and we do tend to show them off more." If you have a man on your list who is a bit of a show off, or you're hoping to get him to show off, (or you want to show off for), [Raw Studio Designs](#) has the perfect undergarment to make his assets pop. And his eyes pop when opens the package. Jockstraps, mesh, the infamous socks ("sort of push-up bras for your junk. Everything is up and out but they're comfortable, they don't leave lines. You can go commando and still have a little bit of support and it just feels like you're more of yourself."), cock rings in a rainbow of colours and styles, ball stretchers, and, yes, sexy underwear.

[RawStudioDesigns.com](#), [JockstrapCentral.com](#),



OnlyFans.com/VernerDegray

[MGT cover photographer issue #60 Verner Degray](#) has a lot of treats under wraps at his onlyfans site. If you're looking for a gift for an adult - over the age of 18! - with an appreciation for male pulchritude and explicit eroticism, a gift membership will provide a feast of mythical proportions. What Degray has planned for Christmas itself, and the new year, is a tantalizing mystery, but his latest discovery, Dylan, will certainly put your giftee in a festive mood.

onlyfans.com/vernerdegray





VD

www.vernerdagray.com







Unicorn Poop For Christmas?

It's a real thing, and it's delicious! This rainbow, marshmallow gum makes a perfect stocking stuffer at \$29.99 (US) for twelve small bags from www.candy.com. I've picked up individual bags for about \$5 at the notoriously gay Winners at Carlton and Yonge in their checkout maze of small gift.

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The activated bamboo charcoal neutralizes even stubborn smells, such as those caused by smoke, pet urine, cat litter boxes, wet dogs, gym shoes and more. The Breathe Green Charcoal Bag is also excellent for use in damp, musty environments, where it will absorb excess moisture to prevent mold, mildew and bacteria from forming.

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The new operating system maintains the familiar structure of the old one and gives access to all the previous files. Not to mention that it comes with the favorite programs which allowing the user to browse the web, send and receive emails, listen to music and watch favourite videos and more!

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PHOTOS BY SEAN LEBER

MyGayToronto



DREW ROWSOME

Obaaberima

sashaying towards the future

Production photos by Jeremy Mimmagh, publicity photo by Tanja Tiziana

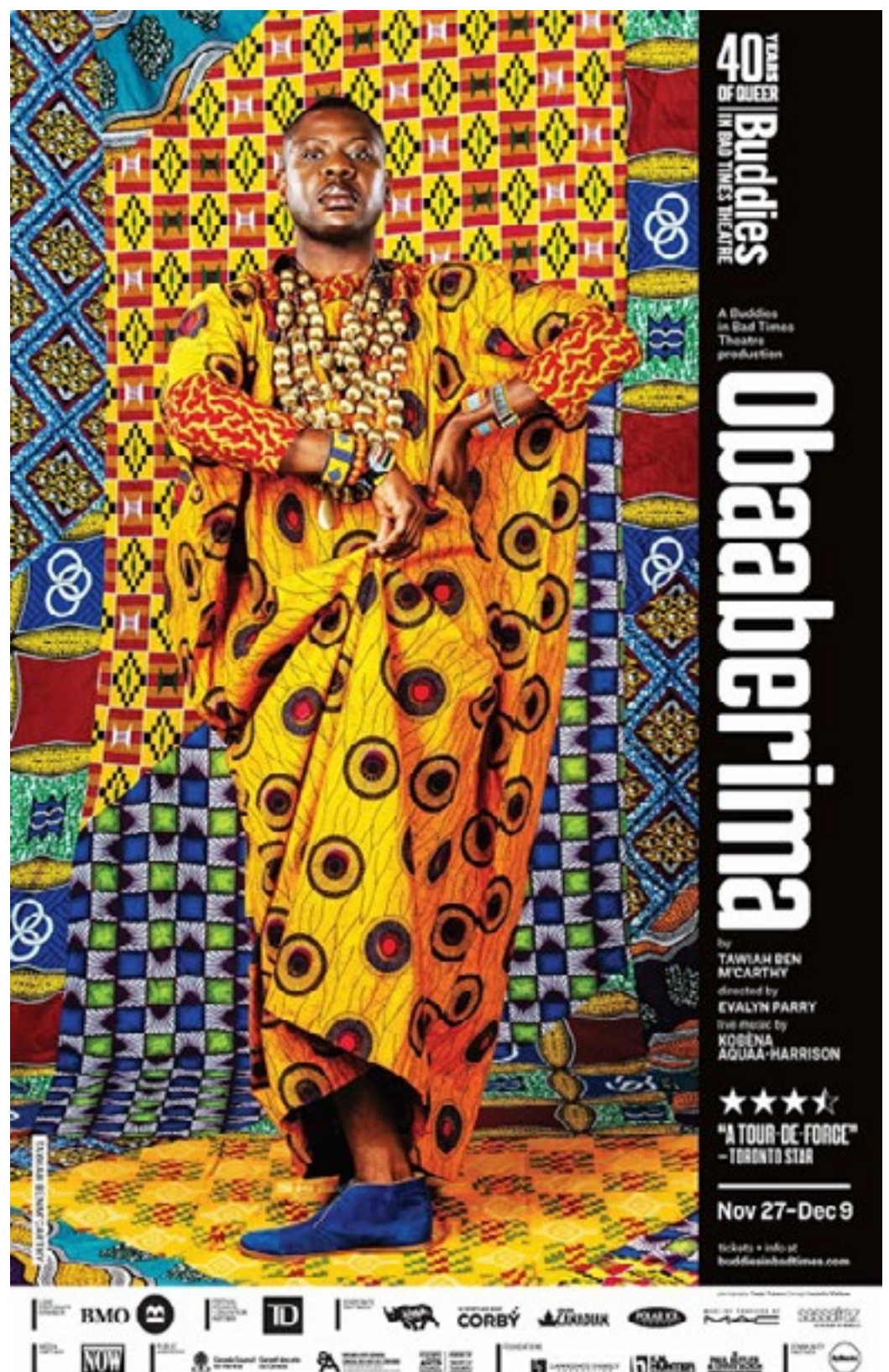


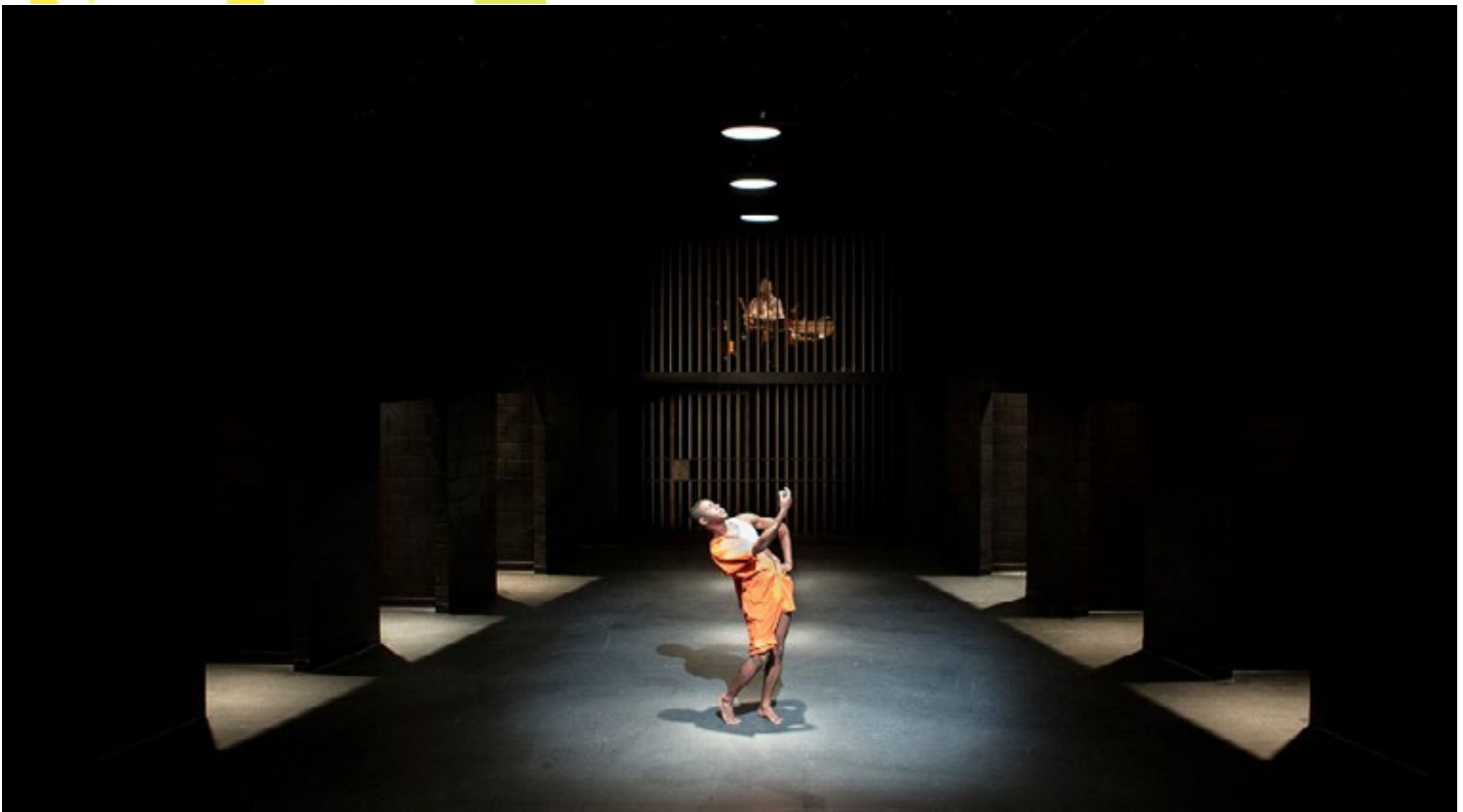
Obaaberima is a cleverly constructed play anchored by an extraordinary performance by Tawiah Ben M'Carthy ([Black Boys](#)). The author M'Carthy has created a specific individual story that radiates outwards to embrace the universal. The actor M'Carthy conjures the dozen or so characters required to tell the story in a way that is breathtaking but never showy. It is only after, during *Obaaberima* one is too raptly involved, that one marvels at the skill and passion it takes to harness so many ideas and distinct personas in order to present them vividly and indelibly.

I'm still puzzling over how M'Carthy seemed to make his actual facial structure morph. Powerful theatrical magic.

Obaaberima begins in a prison and with our first introduction to the sassy and defiant Agyeman. From there the play travels back in time and, in a chronological biographical format, we find out how Agyeman came to find who they are. Every time a segment has a familiar ring - a young boy trying on his mother's dress and high heels, a tentative gay romance, life on the downlow - it is spun into an unexpected direction and/or rendered fresh by M'Carthy's expressive eyes, limber physicality and vocal depth.

There are scenes punctuated with shrewdly placed laughs, scenes that make the audience squirm with either recognition or eroticism or both, and when the final pieces of the double parallel structure snap into place, a triumphant catharsis. To reveal any of the twists would be criminal as the discovery is part





of the delight, but suffice to say that whatever one expects, *Obaaberima* delivers more. And on its own terms. M'Carthy is demonstrating that gender, sexuality and race are not either or, it is a scale that one has to slide on before deciding where one belongs. In a meta-theatrical way he emphasizes his point by donning and discarding so many characters of all genders, sexualities and races. And refusing to let the final moment become fixed in anything but a sashay towards what comes next.

M'Carthy may be, aside from musical accompanist/scene partner Kobena Aquaa-Harrison, alone on stage, but he has much subtle assistance from the lighting by [Michelle Ramsay](#) ([No Strings Attached](#)), [Gertrude and Alice](#)) and director [Evalyn Parry](#) ([Gertrude and Alice](#), [Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools](#)) who have borrowed from the aesthetic of Da Da Kamera. The lights, sounds and M'Carthy flow in perfect unison or counterpoint to create enough support for an illusion to be created, a reality to be painted, or a transition to become seamless. All is deceptively simple and minimal, the effect is maximal and emotional pointed.

Obaaberima is also notable for its commitment to honesty. While not strictly autobiographical, M'Carthy explores the character's relationships to sexuality, gender and race fearlessly, mixing the comic bravado of a drag queen with the depth of a confessional and the macho facade of a stud, then adding fear, confusion and anger as needed. There is an undercurrent of joy that animates M'Carthy's performance, not a wink or a strut, but an acknowledgement that he is sharing something and it gives him great pleasure. *Obaaberima* despite not shying from the grim and painful, gives the audience great pleasure as well.



Obaaberima continues until Sun, Dec 9 at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St.
buddiesinbadtimes.com

DREW ROWSOME

Thomas Gough is Scrooge

(but he's acting)



Theatre-goers will already have been treated to a Thomas Gough performance, the actor has had many roles in many productions including [Donors](#), [Bent](#) and [The Crucible](#). Casting Gough as Ebenezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* is a clever idea: Gough likes to present himself on social media as a curmudgeon but there is a contradictory comic sensibility bubbling underneath. [I had the good fortune to interview Gough in person](#) and was impressed by not only his fierce intelligence, dedication to his craft, mellifluous voice, and the twinkle in his eye that belied his more serious or self-effacing statements.

Due to unfortunate time constraints on both sides, this interview was conducted by email. Reflecting his status as a retired teacher - education's loss was theatre's gain - his answers were complete, grammatically impeccable, and fascinating with a very moving analysis of the Christmas spirit that should be required reading for Scrooges, Grinches and assorted political and cultural figures. As such, I have done little to no editing, finding it best to let the thespian speak for himself.

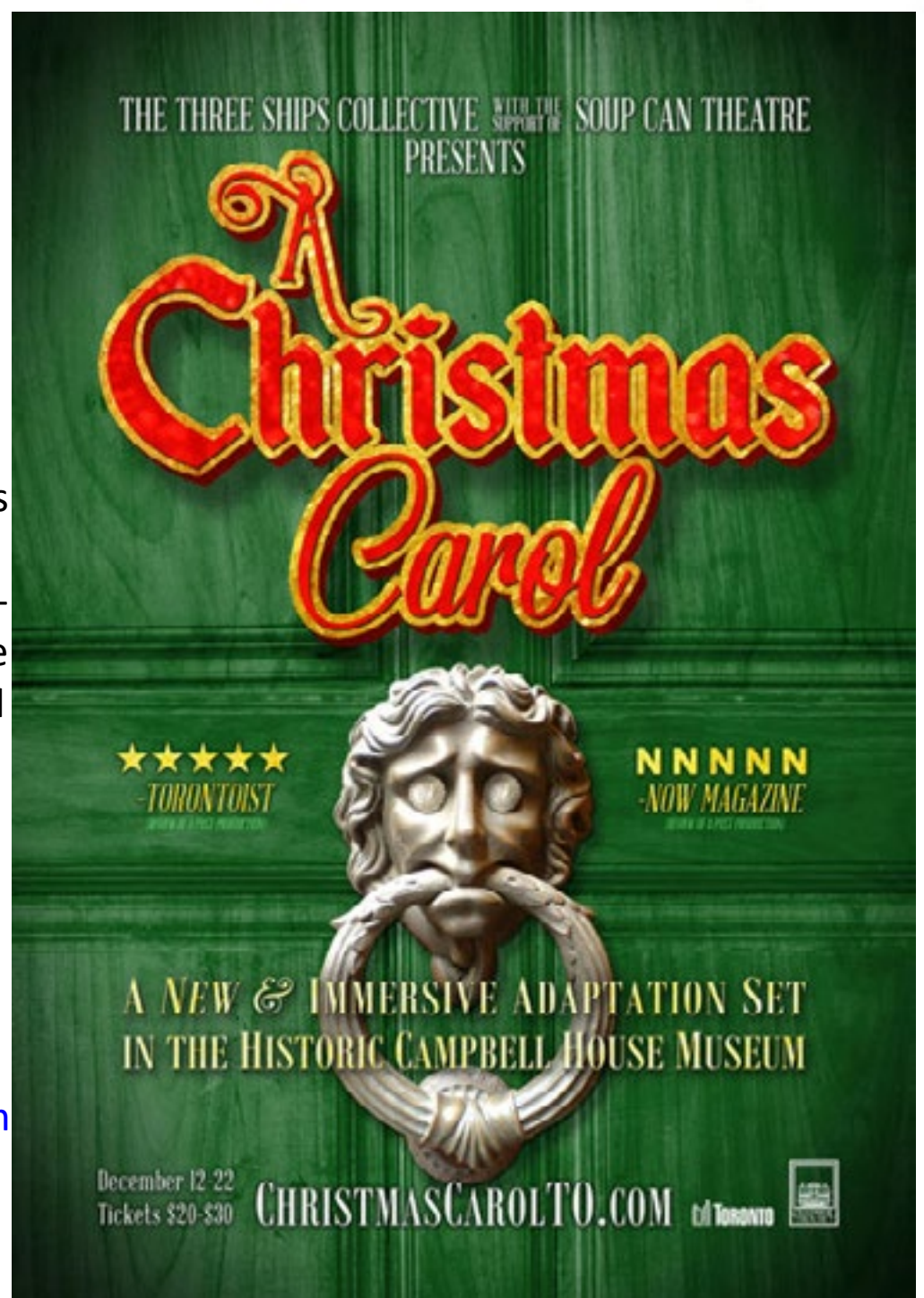
Drew Rowsome: [A Christmas Carol](#) is so ubiquitous in the zeitgeist this time of year, what fresh take is this production bringing to the classic tale?

Thomas Gough: This is difficult for me to answer, because I know no other version of the story except the book. I understand, however, that some versions have been melodramatic and over-acted. I haven't

actually asked the producers about this, but I think they'll agree with me when I say that we want this to be a believable story about real people. Dickens has a message for real people in *A Christmas Carol*, and Justin Haigh's script preserves it.

I think also that the setting will bring a great deal to this production. Campbell House was built when Dickens was about ten years old, so it's a house that some of the more prosperous characters in this story might have lived in. The intimacy of the space and the size of the audience - no more than twenty-eight per show - allow the actors to feel that they're in their own houses talking to their own friends and neighbours. And we hope that audience-members will feel the same: that they're guests in a real house where an interesting family drama is being played out.

[Ebenezer Scrooge is a role that has been done many times - from Alastair Sim, Patrick Stewart and Simon Callow to Bill Murray, even Roseanne and Jim Carrey. How do you clear the clutter to create your own interpretation? Is there a version that you are particularly fond of?](#)



Thomas Gough: I'm beginning to feel that I ought to be embarrassed by this question. I read the book about thirty years ago, but I've never seen any acted version, on stage or on screen, famous or obscure. This argues a lamentable degree of cultural illiteracy on my part, but for me as an actor it's a good thing, because I don't want other actors' work getting in the way. Working out how to present a coherent believable character is already complicated, and having ineradicable visions of someone else's work - good or bad - on the same project just adds to the difficulty. So I'm happy to say that I don't have any clutter to clear.

[Immersive theatre is a sometimes great adventure and the Campbell House is a great venue \(I've seen multiple productions there\). How do you adjust from a proscenium to being so close to an audience? What are the challenges and rewards?](#)

Thomas Gough: I love being that close to the audience. I find that the necessary adjustments are generally simplifications. You can forget about reaching the back of the auditorium with your voice, you can forget about exaggerating gestures and facial expressions, and you can achieve a much greater subtlety, a greater range of fine nuance, than you can when the audience is, at its nearest, fifteen or twenty feet away. So the great reward is that performance feels so natural in such a setting.

The challenge, of course, is that it's much harder to hide your mistakes; everything is audible; everything is visible. It can also be difficult to avoid occasionally making eye-contact with a member of the audience, or to avoid identifying particular people in the audience. This doesn't cause me a lot of trouble, but it makes some actors very nervous. You're really exposed. And, of course, one doesn't expect every member of the audience to have an actor's sense of spatial relationships, so there's often someone who doesn't realize that standing in a doorway is probably not a good idea, or something like that. But we know those things will happen, and we work around them.

[Do you get inspiration from also being immersed in an environment instead of a set?](#)

Thomas Gough: Certainly, and especially so as I am by now very familiar with Campbell House, as this is my third or fourth production there. The staff there are wonderfully welcoming and endlessly

accommodating, which makes everything comfortable right from the start. There's a clear sense that they actually like having us there. I'm very sensitive to my physical surroundings. Badly-proportioned rooms painted in ugly colours, with no woodwork, no books, and no windows (which ought to be illegal) depress me. Most of the people who build schools should be shot for the lasting damage they do to the aesthetic sensibilities of the young. But Campbell House is a graceful building, built when architects still remembered things like Golden Proportion, so it's a very comfortable place to work in. I find it very easy to think myself into character in such a setting.

There's also a much more personal attraction for me. When Campbell House was built the population of York was still well under 2,000, and the self-appointed leaders would all have known each other. Two of my great-great-great grandfathers and the father-in-law of one of them were members of the mafia - I beg your pardon, I mean the Family Compact - and would have known Sir William Campbell, and would almost certainly have dined in his house. So I have in an odd way a real sense of belonging there.

[What is the most fun aspect of playing Scrooge? The most difficult?](#)

Thomas Gough: The most fun is working with all these wonderful people. Quite apart from the enormous talent in this group, I've felt at home with them all from the first day. The most difficult part, which is also great fun - there's not a lot of point, for me as an actor, in working on something that isn't difficult - is working out the transition from Scrooge at the beginning of the story to Scrooge at the end of the story. It's easy to transform him from one one-dimensional character into a miraculously altered second one-dimensional character, but we don't want this to be melodrama. Scrooge's transformation has to be believable, and because it's so complete and takes place in such a short time, it's a challenge allowing the stages of change to be seen. Justin Haigh's script gives opportunity for the transition to be made in palpable stages, and Sarah Thorpe's sensitive and articulate perceptions are tremendously helpful here. Sarah has already pointed out numerous things about Scrooge that I'd never have seen on my own.



The most unpleasant part, so far, has been nearly breaking Christopher Fowler's nose in rehearsal. He was incredibly sweet and forgiving about it, but I'd really hurt him. I did not enjoy that moment at all.

[Do you normally listen to ghosts? Fear them?](#)

Thomas Gough: This is a tough question to answer, partly because I take it seriously. I've never encountered a ghost of the demonic-howling-and-clanking-chains school, and I'm not certain that I've ever encountered a ghost at all. But I am an almost entirely intuitive performer and I rarely know where my ideas come from. Are they deliberately planted in my head by some mysterious external intelligence? I don't know. But I do have a favourite daydream about it. One of the senior members of Shakespeare's company, Robert Goughe, had the same name as my father. Gough is a common name

in England, so it's not likely that there's any connexion, but I'd love to think that Shakespeare's Gough whispers to me in my sleep sometimes. Possibly I'm just terribly confused.

You describe *A Christmas Carol* as "ridiculously heart-warming." Will it infuse the audience with the spirit of Christmas? How does it avoid being saccharine at this the most cynical time of year for many of us?

Thomas Gough: Well, if the spirit of Christmas is a spirit of generosity and community, I hope it will. You'd have to be completely heartless not to delight in the end of this story. You might think it's contrived or deliberately sentimental or too good to be true, but only a monster could oppose it. We're doing our best not to be saccharine, but to evoke the real sweetness that lies at the bottom of the story. You will find it very difficult not to be charmed by Makenna Beatty and Chloë Bradt, who are sharing the role of Tim. And William Matthews is a heart-breakingly sad and defeated but endlessly kind and loving Bob Cratchit. He's really making me feel Scrooge's cruelty before the happy ending, and I hope the audience will have the same feeling.

How do we avoid being saccharine? Well, maybe we won't. Maybe we'll fail. But we do it, if we're successful, by doing what actors always do. We look for truth in the fiction we're playing. And I'm afraid that's as far as I can go; I don't know how to explain how an actor expresses the truth found in fiction. It's the essential mystery of acting, and I don't know how it works. But if our production does infuse that spirit in a few people; if a few people are a little kinder, a little gentler, a little quieter, a little happier after seeing this show, even for a very short time, then we will have found the truth and conveyed it adequately.

A Christmas Carol has a very blunt message but, despite so many productions and variations, we still have rampant greed and inequality this time of year and all year. Who would you like to send three ghosts to?

Thomas Gough: Where do I start?

I think I'd like to send them to a certain big businessman who "can't afford" to pay his employees a living wage, and to the others of his kind. And if I were the employer of the ghosts they'd be run off their spectral feet visiting self-serving political figures who lie to their followers in order to sustain their own destructive power. Perhaps I'd benefit from their visits myself.

The creatives feature a musical director, Pratik Gandhi, will there be song and dance? Knowing you are a classical music aficionado, will we finally get to hear you sing?

Thomas Gough: There will be song and dance. We learnt the first song a couple of days ago, and I thought the cast picked it up very quickly and sounded very good within about fifteen minutes. But you don't want to hear me sing. While I am addicted to music, I have absolutely no musical ability of any kind. If you've ever heard an elderly crow with a fishbone stuck in its throat angrily denouncing the Corn Laws or something, you've heard me sing. It's not an experience anyone wants to have twice.



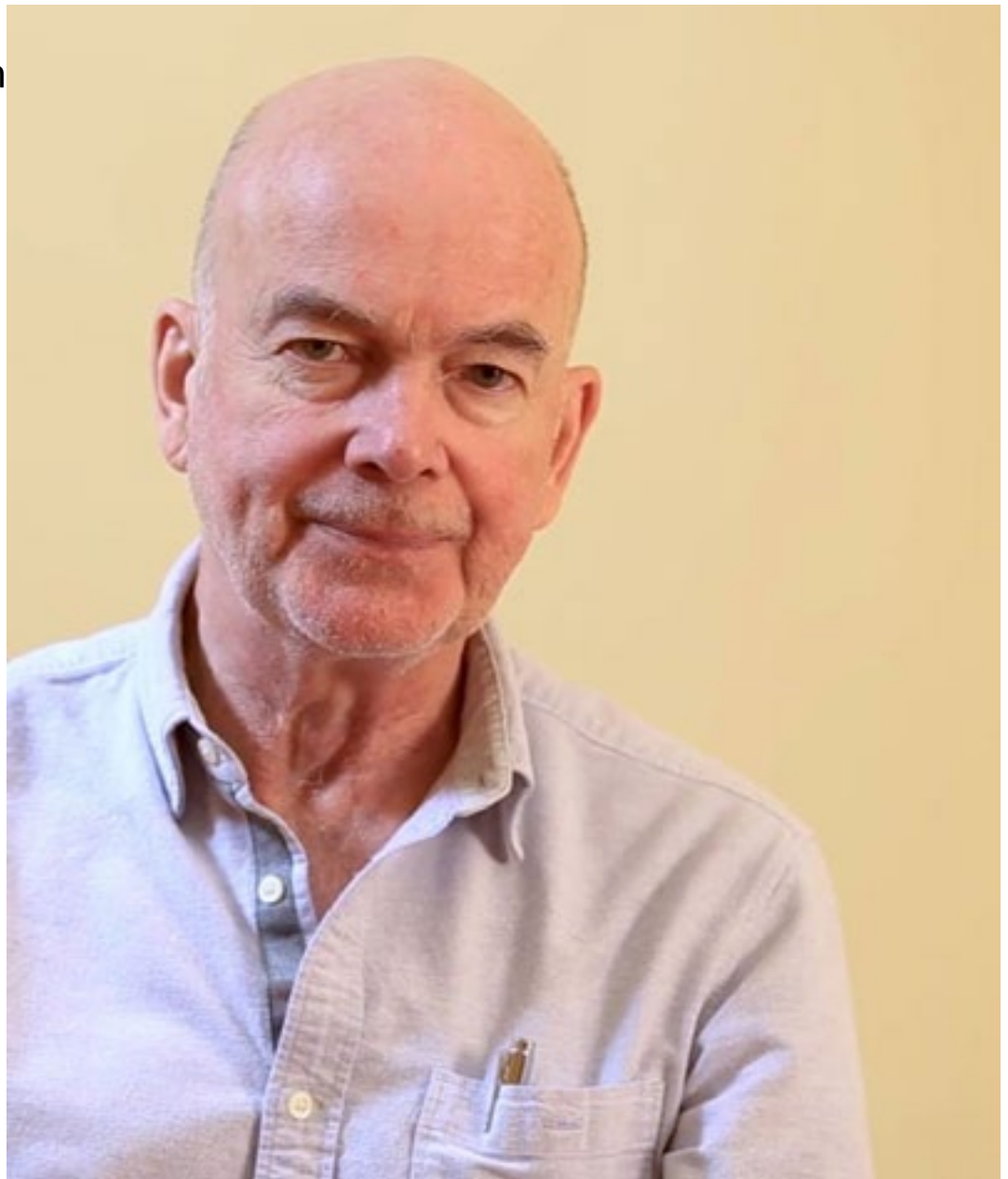
Sarah Thorpe and Justin Haigh ([Circle Jerk](#)) have done a lot of interesting work over the years. How did you come to be involved with this production?

Thomas Gough: I've worked with Sarah and Justin before; the first Soup Can show I did was *Antigone*, in the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2012. I'm also scheduled to be Lear in their production of Edward Bond's *Lear* as soon as the funding is in place. Sarah invited me to be Scrooge, which is flattering and a great pleasure, because the whole Soup Can gang are tremendous fun: smart, sweet-tempered, funny, talented people. They are also sufficiently widely admired that they attract good actors. There was a day-long parade of exciting talent through the drawing-room at Campbell House, where the auditions were held. I'd already been cast so I was able to read with the auditioners and I'm glad I didn't have to do the choosing. It must have been very difficult.

What would your Christmas message to the world be? Ebenezer's?

Thomas Gough: I think my own message would be "Calm down, people, for Heaven's sake! It's really not necessary to get so excited about everything."

Our rather battered species has many problems, most of its own making; we really won't get them solved by running around in circles screaming at each other. And I have to say I get very tired of people with grand schemes for fixing everything at once. I think it is a very rare person who can do more than keep his or her own backyard clean, and perhaps help a bit from time to time with someone else's. Unfortunately the big seemingly insoluble problems attract most of our attention because we can have a lovely time going to meetings and feeling superior and raising money and being in Parliament and expounding our ideologies and telling everybody the one sure-fire solution and so on. Whereas the solution to the mess in your own backyard is often obvious, so you actually have to do it. And no one wants that. So I would say clean up your own backyard and make your own apologies and accept your own responsibilities before you start trying to bring Heaven down to earth. Cleaning up our own mess is more than enough of a challenge for most of us.



But at this time of year I would say especially: take some time to enjoy your life. Pour yourself a glass of wine and really savour it. Read a story to an enchanted child. Cuddle the dog that adores you. Make love to the person who still wants you to. Spend an entire afternoon soaking yourself in music that really makes you feel something. Pay attention, even if it's only for a while, to all the wonderful people around you, to all the magical phenomena of our existence. Human life is not a contest. It really isn't.

And I think Scrooge's message is clear and obvious: as long as you're still breathing, there's time to fix things. But only as long as you're still breathing, and no longer.

A Christmas Carol runs Wed, Dec 12 to Sat, Dec 22 at The Campbell House, 160 Queen St W.
[ChristmasCarolTO.com](#)



Mary Poppins

anything can happen. If you let it

Production Photos by Cylla von Tiedemann and Ali Sultani



Once upon a time, as a child I saw the movie version of *Mary Poppins* and was enchanted. I saw it several times, played the soundtrack relentlessly on my close and play record player, and was very proud to be able to recite/sing “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” and occasionally manage it backwards. At a more jaded age I attended a theatrical re-release and wound up staying through three screenings in a row. More recently, [Saving Mr Banks](#) inspired me to watch the film yet again. And there was a [deliciously dark production of the Broadway version at the LOT](#).

Multiple viewings invoked multiple reactions but which always entertained. Which is a longwinded way of stating that I’m not sure how to approach the Young People’s Theatre production of *Mary Poppins*. Entertaining is a brief way of expressing how brisk and buoyant it is, zipping along in 90 minutes that feel like half that. But is it fair to compare it to the source material which is now part of most of our DNA? I’m going to say not, simply because the source material of the film was, in the opinion of the author PL Travers herself, bastardized and butchered by Disney.

Classics are always open, almost eager for, re-interpretation and exploration. Even musicals are not immune with changing mores, musical styles and politics influencing how characters sing, present and are received. Director [Thom Allison](#) ([Killjoys](#), [Elegies](#)), no slouch of a performer himself with his role in *Outrageous* being one of the most extraordinary I have ever seen, charts a middle route through the material. The constraints of this production being explicitly recommended for “ages 5 & up,” means that the subversive elements of the text - the evils of capitalism and class systems, emotional abuse, toxic masculinity, etc - must be layered in as subtext rather than foregrounded.



So the tale of a cheerful dominatrix of a nanny who teaches a father how to live, loses some of its intriguing sub-plots - feminism, drug addiction, sex work, etc - in favour of the main through line. And it works. Mr Banks' transformation is a bit expedient and is accomplished by one of Ms Poppins' supernatural interventions, but it still packs an emotional wallop. (Which makes it odd that the insipid "Anything Can Happen" has replaced the, pun intended, soaring "Let's Go Fly a Kite" as a finale) And Allison and a powerhouse of a cast are not all flash and swagger, though strut, sing and dance their hearts out they do.

The clever set is a Victorian cuckoo clock with doors that open and close with tight precision. It is within that haunted rigidity and stuffiness that Mary Poppins arrives to create a fever dream. Not all of the effects are seamless but when they work there is magic afoot. And when they don't quite work, they make theatrical sense, a tug on the suspension of disbelief and a satisfying cerebral caress. All of the characters except Mary Poppins, Bert and the children do multiple duty adding to the dreamlike quality.



The chimney sweeps lurk around the various tiers of the set and are unobtrusively efficient at making lightning quick set changes. Bert becomes less a foil and more of a narrator, which is a shame as Kyle Blair has a loose-limbed lilt to his dancing and an engaging smile that charms. When Mary Poppins cockteases him with, "You'd never think of pressing your advantage/Forbearance is the hallmark of your creed/A lady needn't fear when you are near/Your sweet gentility is crystal clear," we feel his pain. And why wouldn't we? Vanessa Sears ([The Wizard of Oz](#)) is captivating, an ice queen who can melt glaciers with the passion in her voice, a tight-lipped superior smirk belied by twinkling eyes.



Adding to the classical framing is the choice for the voices to be more operatic than pop theatrical. It is refreshing to hear Jewelle Blackman ([Andy Warhol Musical: In Rehearsal](#), [Once on This Island](#)) fill the air with crystal clear flawless tones that somehow ache with emotion. It makes Mrs Banks's journey plausible instead of a plot device, she slices off her corset with notes that cut like knives or soften into a maternal or erotic embrace. Shane Carty is a gruff ol' bear of a Mr Banks but also reappears as a camp baker and a Queen Victoria statue come to life. The symbolism may be confusing - though the drag element delighted a tyke a row ahead of us - but Carty's crack comic timing, mobile face and rich baritone never miss a beat.





Starr Domingue rips into the flashiest and most colourful role. Her Mrs Corry, wielding a fractured French accent to emphasize her distance from the straitlaced British life of the Banks, presides over a bakery that is a riot of colour, sight gags and the best dry self-referential moment of the production when Mary Poppins chooses a cookie that is an "X." Domingue takes full advantage and fully earns the camp couture costume reveal that almost stops the show.





There is vaudevillian level slapstick from Kyle Golemba ([A Christmas Carol](#)) as a big blissfully brain-dead hunk of a manservant, and Hailey Lewis ([Grease](#)) has the comic gusto to make Michael Banks endearing instead of annoying. The dance acrobatics go to Jak Barradell as Neleus as does the quick change Ludlam award. But everyone, except for Sears, is upstaged by the swirling cape and magnificent malevolence of Sarah Lynn Strange's Miss Andrew. After her brief tour de force "Brimstone and Treacle," she deserved a more melodramatic and memorable death scene when, having been poisoned by Mary Poppins, she exits stage left.

A lot of care and resources have been lavished on this production and it is a crowd pleaser. Even the *Stomp*-lite fused with tap "Step In Time" that never quite achieved lift off, can't help but impress just by sheer force of energy and numbers of fleet feet. The promo touts this *Mary Poppins* as "The Broadway Musical" and Young People's Theatre does appear to want to dazzle. But where a Broadway musical - more accurately a wannabe Broadway musical - often pummels the audience into submission with effects, emotional modulations, bombast, and showstopping melisma or held notes, this *Mary Poppins* aims for the heart, the hopeful centre, of the story.

Constrained by the necessity of a speedy narrative and the post-Sherman brothers' songs that aren't as memorable, the fairy tale qualities come to the fore to patch up any niggling doubts or confusion. When *Mary Poppins* makes her second entrance, in a clever bit of sleight of hand that makes up for her budget and insurance induced inability to fly, tears of joy and wonder filled my eyes. Her retort, also the finale number title, "Anything can happen. If you let it," was made viscerally true. The cast sings in the finale, "If you reach for the stars all you get are the stars/But we've found a whole new spin/If you reach for the heavens you get the stars thrown in." We may still have left singing "Let's go fly a kite." But it was a kite that was definitely among the stars and close to heaven.

Mary Poppins continues until Sun, Jan 6 at Young People's Theatre, 165 Front St E.
youngpeoplestheatre.ca

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Bohemian Rhapsody

entertaining and infuriating

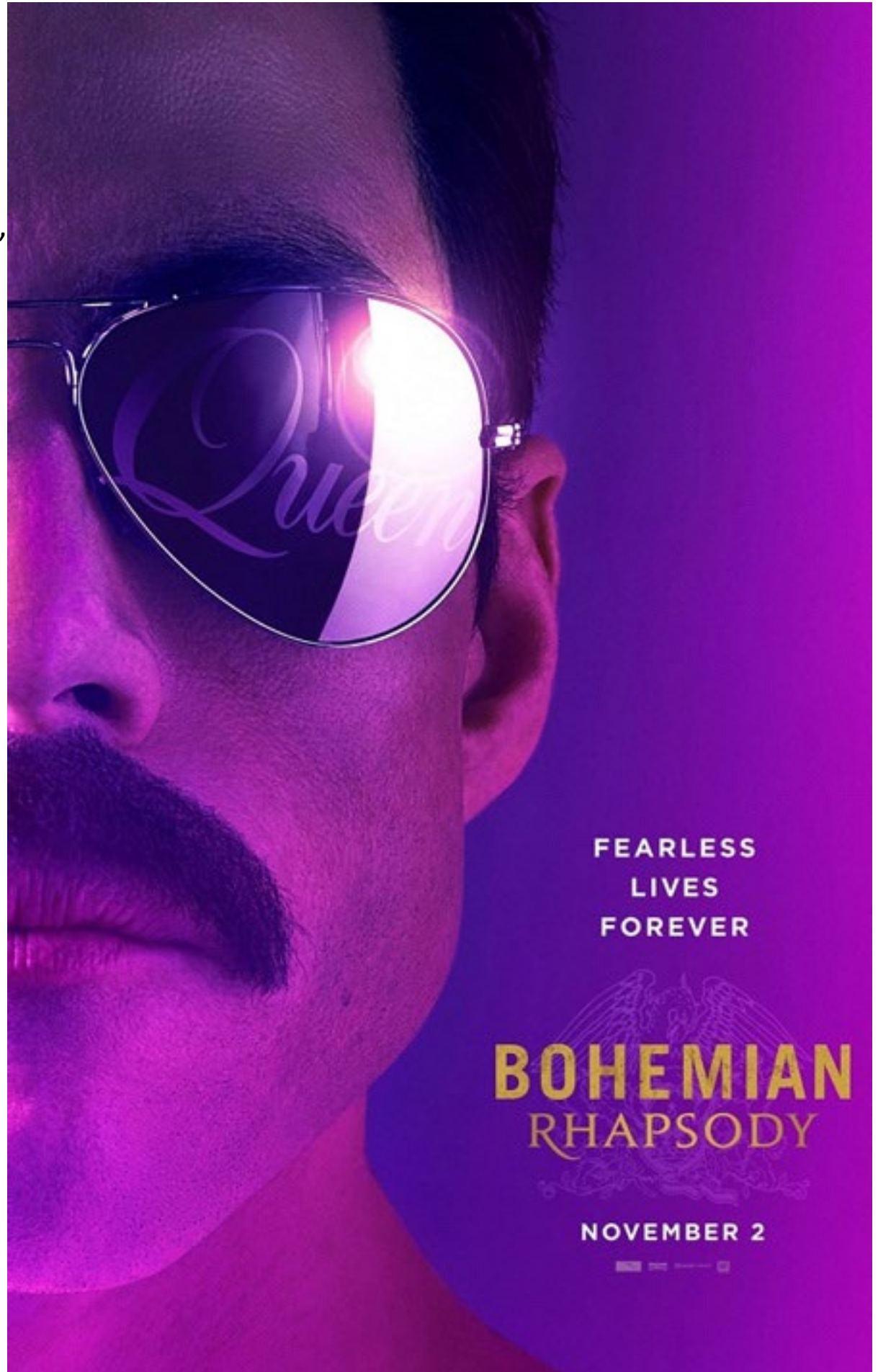
One should never walk out of a shamelessly manipulative film full of sterling rock n roll muttering, "Well that was problematic."

As *Bohemian Rhapsody* reached its climax, I longed to burst into tears, to achieve the emotional catharsis that was so obviously intended. I tried. But I was too busy fuming, overwhelmed with anger, hurt and baffled puzzlement. And I am an easy mark for shamelessly manipulative films, I love musicals. As a gay man they are part of my DNA.

There are three simple reasons that *Bohemian Rhapsody* failed to grip and/or move me. Firstly, it is, as was feared, virulently homophobic. There are multiple cringeworthy moments. The young Freddie Mercury is cruised discreetly by two gay men and it is portrayed as a virtual assault. In the same tracking shot Mercury picks up Mary Austen (Lucy Boynton) by using a verbal assault and it is portrayed as charming. Mercury fights his desires and doesn't follow (or does he? The film is also prudently coy as if gay sex is something unseemly) a trucker, Adam Lambert in a witty cameo, into a men's room.

There are speeches about "those people" and "fruit flies" feasting on dead flesh (the latter in a rain storm). Austen is the one who gently tells Mercury he is gay and it is a shock to him. The montage where Mercury descends into the hell of homosexuality through the use of leathermen imagery would be uproariously hilarious in the style of a wonky 1950's morality film, if it weren't presented as factual. And horrifying. Poor Paul Prenter practically twirls his moustache as an evil, predatory gay who lures Mercury into the homosexual lifestyle of drugs, leather, promiscuity, and of course, an inevitable death by AIDS.

Of course Mercury is supposedly saved by the love of a good man, Aaron McCusker as a bearish as opposed to in any way feminine or flamboyant version of Jim Hutton. Mercury and Hutton meet after a tame but supposedly shocking party, where Hutton was a waiter. Mercury is a stereotypical lonely gay man who Hutton offers to befriend instead of hopping into bed with. Mercury tracks him down, years later, and promptly takes him home to meet the parents (perhaps the screenwriter was thinking of stereotypical lesbian u-haul relationships) and then to Live Aid where Hutton gets the seal of approval



from Austen.



And that leads to the second problem. Little of it happened that way. As a bio-pic of Freddie Mercury, *Bohemian Rhapsody* doesn't hesitate to distort the timeline, change facts and generally create a character instead of a portrait. Of course that is only a problem because *Bohemian Rhapsody* is marketed as being the Freddie Mercury story. Or is it? The official, and also highly problematic, 20th Century Fox press release says,

Bohemian Rhapsody is a foot-stomping celebration of Queen, their music and their extraordinary lead singer Freddie Mercury. Freddie defied stereotypes and shattered convention to become one of the most beloved entertainers on the planet. The film traces the meteoric rise of the band through their iconic songs and revolutionary sound. They reach unparalleled success, but in an unexpected turn Freddie, surrounded by darker influences, shuns Queen in pursuit of his solo career. Having suffered





greatly without the collaboration of Queen, Freddie manages to reunite with his bandmates just in time for Live Aid. While bravely facing a recent AIDS diagnosis, Freddie leads the band in one of the greatest performances in the history of rock music. Queen cements a legacy that continues to inspire outsiders, dreamers and music lovers to this day.

A “celebration of Queen, their music and” . . . Freddie Mercury. *Bohemian Rhapsody* is a bio-pic about Queen except that, of course, Mercury is the most interesting part of Queen. Events are stacked in favour of the band. Mercury is portrayed as a genius but only because of the band. Mercury is slammed for his solo records ostensibly breaking up the band, but all of the members released solo records, it’s just that Mercury’s were the only successful ones. The band never actually broke up. Mercury never told the band about his “AIDS diagnosis” so that they could bravely forgive him. Live Aid was far from their last performance. Don’t even get me started on the “darker influences” reference.



I am a Queen fan. But like most, I am foremost a Freddie Mercury fan. I had the good fortune to see the band live twice and it was the Freddie Mercury with Queen show (and he was mesmerizing, just extraordinary). I have blogged about two of the biographies I have read: roadie [Peter Hince's Queen Unseen](#) and [Jim Hutton's Mercury and Me](#). I won't pretend to be an expert on Queen's history or inner workings but I know when I am being fed propaganda. And propaganda mixed with homophobia is even worse.



That is not to say that there aren't intriguing moments in *Bohemian Rhapsody*, though most of them are because of Queen's music as opposed to the film. The Live Aid finale is a braava piece of filmmaking with performances, special effects, camera work and editing combining to create a dazzlingly realistic recreation. There are a few moments of stylized thematic filmmaking that stand out - an opening montage of preparing for a concert, the band's progression and success in America told through Mercury poses in flaming neon, the aforementioned leather bar extravaganza, a Mike Myers riff - and the rest is well shot, edited and acted.

Queen and Mercury were known for their technically advanced videos so the visual flair moments stand out. One can't help but wonder if Bryan Singer, who was fired from the production and lost the final edit, who usually - [American Gods](#) being a prime example - exhibits a mise en scene that is eye-popping



but integrated, had more planned. Of course Singer is also the architect behind the *X-Men* franchise which is a thinly disguised examination of the gay experience under persecution, so it is hard to imagine that he would have allowed the homophobia that exists in *Bohemian Rhapsody* to reach the screen. Unless he speaks up, or we get a director's cut, we'll never know.

And that brings us to the third and most fatal mistake. Rami Malek is very good as Freddie Mercury. The teeth and twitchiness are somewhat distracting, but he is sincere, suitably fey and witty/bitchy, and has expressive eyes that are powerfully communicative. He also captures much of Mercury's physicality in an uncanny way. It is whoever was in charge of continuity that lets Malek down. What is going on with his chest hair? Mercury used his masculinity as a counterpoint to his flamboyance and his chest hair peeking out of androgynous costuming was a crucial element, as it was for the hirsute butch clone look he adopted later on. Malek's chest hair comes and goes and it is distracting and definitive proof that Mercury is being subordinated to the rest of Queen's revisionist egos.



The music is still powerful but any of the many Queen or Freddie Mercury DVD compilations will give a better and more astounding experience. I had the good fortune to attend a screening of *Hungarian Rhapsody: Queen Live in Budapest* and, on a big screen, it made *Bohemian Rhapsody* seem like a pale imitation of the real thing. But *Bohemian Rhapsody* is a big hit. The mainstream loves Queen's music and to prove they are liberal and hip by crying over fags dying of AIDS. In a better world *Bohemian Rhapsody* would become a camp hit as beloved, entertaining and historically accurate as [Mommie Dearest](#), [54](#), [Lizstomania](#) and [Showgirls](#).

Freddie is either laughing uproariously in heaven or flouncing in his grave.



DREW ROWSOME



Who Will Save the Roses?: a love story for the ages

Whimsical, passionate and ultimately heartbreaking, *Who Will Save the Roses?* is an epic love story told in an extraordinarily intimate way. All of the relationships and plotlines are subordinate to the emotional bond between Guilio and Claudio, two elderly gay men. Claudio has been ill and confined to his bed for eight years while Guilio cares for him and maintains the fiction that they are still financially flush and with a support staff.

The interaction between the men is delightful and as Guilio, the luminous Carlo Delle Piane, goes about his days of deception and labours of love during the opening portion of the film, *Who Will Save the Roses?* creates a breathtaking tension between laughter and intense sorrow. Piane has a distinctive face with large liquid eyes that don't require the subtitles. When Claudio, Lando Buzzanca, tries to explain Guilio's appeal, we understand on a gut level, we have already been charmed into submission.

The director, Cesare Furesi, is after more than a humorous portrait of two gay men in their twilight years and there are complications. Guilio's estranged daughter Valeria, Caterina Murino, and grandson, Antonio Careddu, are called in to help as Guilio has lost all their money gambling. From there *Who Will Save the Roses?* expands fancifully and occasionally confusing, with high stakes poker games, the attempted revival of a hotel, and lots of poetic conversations about love and the meaning of family. It is much like being dropped into the middle of a long-running telenovela with the background information assumed to have already been explained.



But whenever Piane commands the screen, the logistics no longer matter, he has full control of conjuring a full history with a glance. A musing on roses, a dominant metaphor though the title is never explained just mentioned, is a tour de force monologue that explains the depth of his love for Claudio without once directly referencing it. He also has to explain the mystical aspects of poker and it is only afterwards that one questions him. He has us in the palm of his hand from the opening shot, a long

amble towards the camera that ends in a mystery that is later resolved.



There are moments that tip towards magic realist preciousness - the “selling of sunsets,” the power the queen card has over the deck - but Piante and Buzzanca ground the overarching storyline so solidly, and so realistically, that all is forgiven and just accepted. The melodramatic elements prevent any fear of the proceedings becoming cloying. We never find out much information about the world outside the bond between the two men, but then that is just how Giulio plans it and lives it. Love is all.

That is not to slight the other actors. Murino is fiery and vulnerable within instants, and her character’s story is another complete and compelling film waiting to be created. But she loves her dads and never questions that emotion even when it interferes with her own passions. Careddu has a tougher job with a thinly sketched character that has to carry the full weight of the gambling metaphor. Disguised behind thick spectacles, he exudes the same appeal of Marcello Mastroianni, making an ostensible nerd a sex symbol. The poker game, which in another sort of film would be the suspenseful climax or comic set piece, is hosted by the villain or savior, an irascible semi-gangster played with a twinkle in his eye by Phillippe Leroy.



The plot and passions fade in importance as *Who Will Save the Roses?* moves amiably forward through the gorgeously shot scenery of Sardinia. What endures is a portrait of the love between two men and how it radiates out to embrace all around. Giulio accepts his duties and fate in two harrowing scenes but the deep emotion that Piante allows to suffuse his face and physicality, show such resiliency that it is inspiring and, as stated, ultimately heartbreaking. Older gay men are so often objects of ridicule - portrayed as bitchy and bitter - or of pity, that it is unforgettable to be invited into this love story. And to be so moved by it.

Who Will Save the Roses? is available for purchase or to stream on Amazon Prime and iTunes as well as other video on demand platforms and is released theatrically in Los Angeles.



The Marriage



The Marriage, or *Martesa*, will be Kosovo's official entry for Best Foreign Film at next year's Academy Awards, and I think it stands a chance. It's a very good movie, well directed by a woman named Blerta Zeqiri, and it stars one of Kosovo's biggest singers, Genc Salihu. I realize this means nothing to most readers. That is, until after you see the movie.

It's about a hunk named Bekim, two weeks away from getting married to a nice blonde girl named Anita. They bump into Nol, a popular musician who has been living in France. Bekim and Nol are old friends, so the three get drunk together.

Eventually we find out that Nol and Bekim used to fuck, and Nol, likely the bottom, wants more. Bekim is happy to deliver, but he's still going to get married. Anita may be pregnant, and their families really want to see this happy union take place. Nol is devastated and shows up at the wedding wearing a spurned facial expression. I won't give away the ending. Let's just say hard choices are made.

Life in Kosovo will make you delighted to be living in Toronto. People stand around and wait for dead bodies to be returned from the war zone. Anita is waiting to hear about her parents, but her aunts already know that they are dead so they decide to wait until after the wedding to tell her because, hey, it's already been years since they've been missing. The streets look cold, the colour palate of the movie is blueish grey, the food doesn't look that great. In some ways, *The Marriage* is as bleak as most Canadian movies.

There's an interesting scene where the two guys sing a jazzy version of Gershwin's *You Can't Take That Away From Me* and one of them does a robust Satchmo impersonation, and I felt so happy that this actor is worlds away from being hampered by nonsense about cultural appropriation. This is why I go to European films. That, and the boys. I always found Eastern bloc guys kind of hot. If there is anything that annoyed me, and it only did a little bit, was the director's choice of weird inappropriate jump cuts every now and then. Or maybe that was a glitch in the digital transfer. Who can tell nowadays?

There is a very telling moment as the lovers lie in bed. Nol says, "The only thing that would unite the Serbs and Albanians is this: eradicate us," he says, meaning gays. After a pause, Bekim replies "They can all suck our dicks." The two of them enjoy a good laugh, and a kiss. It's at moments like those that one realizes that gay men are the same all over the world.

The Marriage will be released Dec. 7 on VOD. It is distributed by Uncork'd Entertainment.



DREW ROWSOME



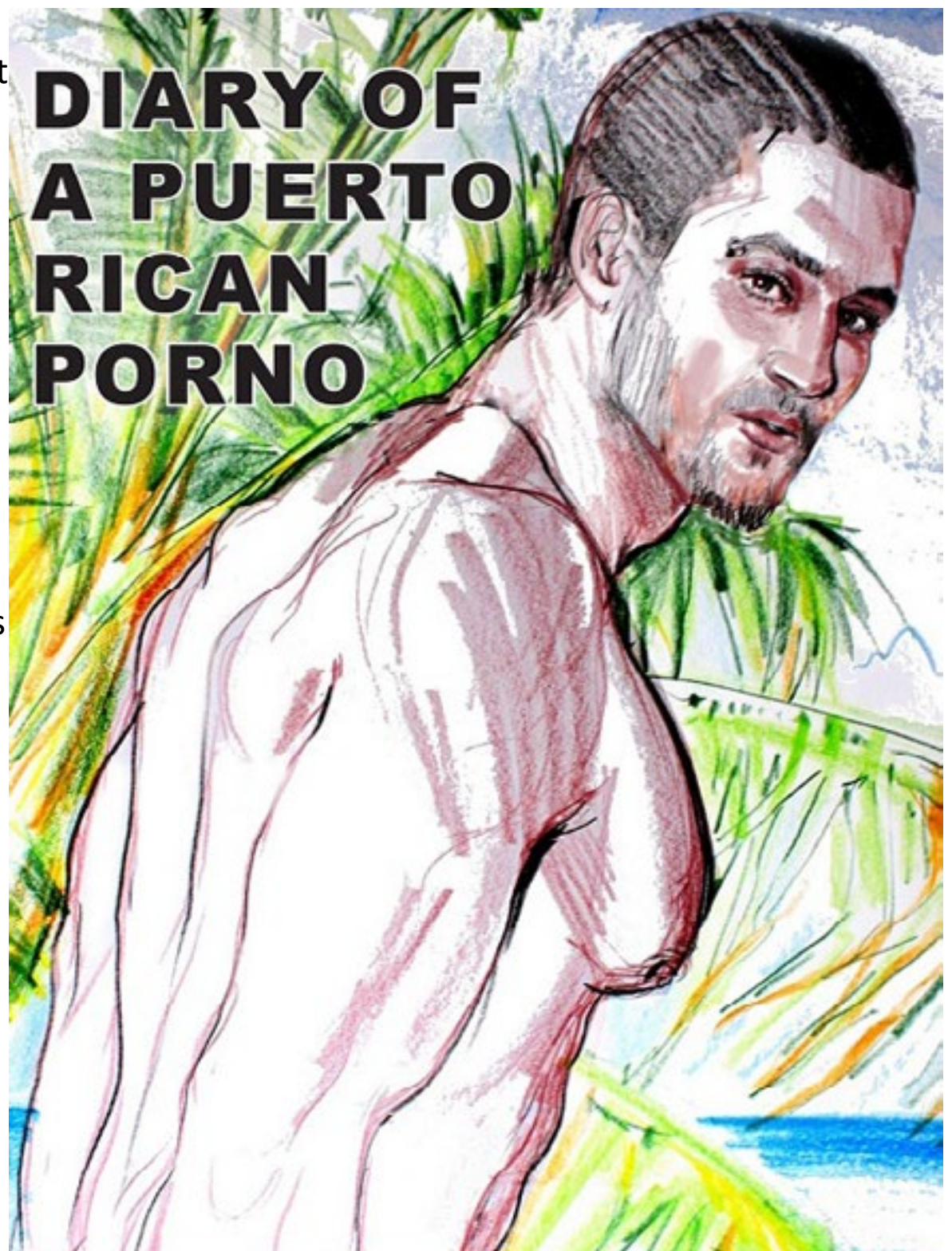
Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno: a steamy comic adventure



Porn is an integral facet of the gay, the human, experience. Consumed for the most part in private, it is also a matter of public debate whether condemnation, prurient interest, promotion of even politics. Or just fascination about the inner workings. While [my foray into the business](#) was brief, I am always eager to read memoirs like Chi Chi Larue's [Making It Big](#) or Christopher Daniel's [Money's on the Dresser](#), biographies like [Boy in the Sand](#), interviews and even articles about demographics and finances of the industry. I am still eagerly awaiting [Paul Bellini's](#) recounting of his days working bringing fantasies to life.

So when I received an invitation from a publicist to a book launch for Phil St John's *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porn* and a screening of the documentary feature *The Classic Porn of Phil St. John*, I was excited. Alas the event was at the Tom of Finland Foundation's TOM House in Los Angeles. It probably would have been worth the trip. I emailed my regrets and expressed an interest in reading and reviewing the book.

A month and a half later, Canada Post delivered a torn brown paper package sealed in a clear plastic envelope. This must be standard policy for items that the postal service somehow nearly destroys, as an



PHIL ST. JOHN
INCLUDES BOBBY BACON'S EPILOGUE

apology for mangling was printed right on the plastic. Inside the plastic, and then the paper, was a bent and water damaged but readable copy of *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno*. It was a weird minor metaphor for the content of the book, a tortuous comical route to the ecstatic pay-off.

Phil St John is the “nom de porn” of filmmaker Phil Tarley who is a member of the Photographic Arts Council and an artist member of the Los Angeles Art Association as well as the first fellow of the American Film Institute to be inducted into the Gay Porn Hall of Fame. He has acted in porn, directed porn, and is also a prolific writer and art curator. *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno* is from what is sincerely hoped to be a much larger collection of stories in progress, entitled *Chased, Assaulted, Bitten, Bruised and Laughing My Ass Off*.

That title is echoed in the second paragraph of *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno* after the most disturbingly comic first paragraph in recent history has hooked the reader. St John’s style is breezy, deadpan and unapologetic. The story recounts St John’s attempts to film two gay porn films on the island of Puerto Rico. The first, perhaps the only one finished as there are mishaps and misadventures galore, is the classic epic *Foreskin Island*.

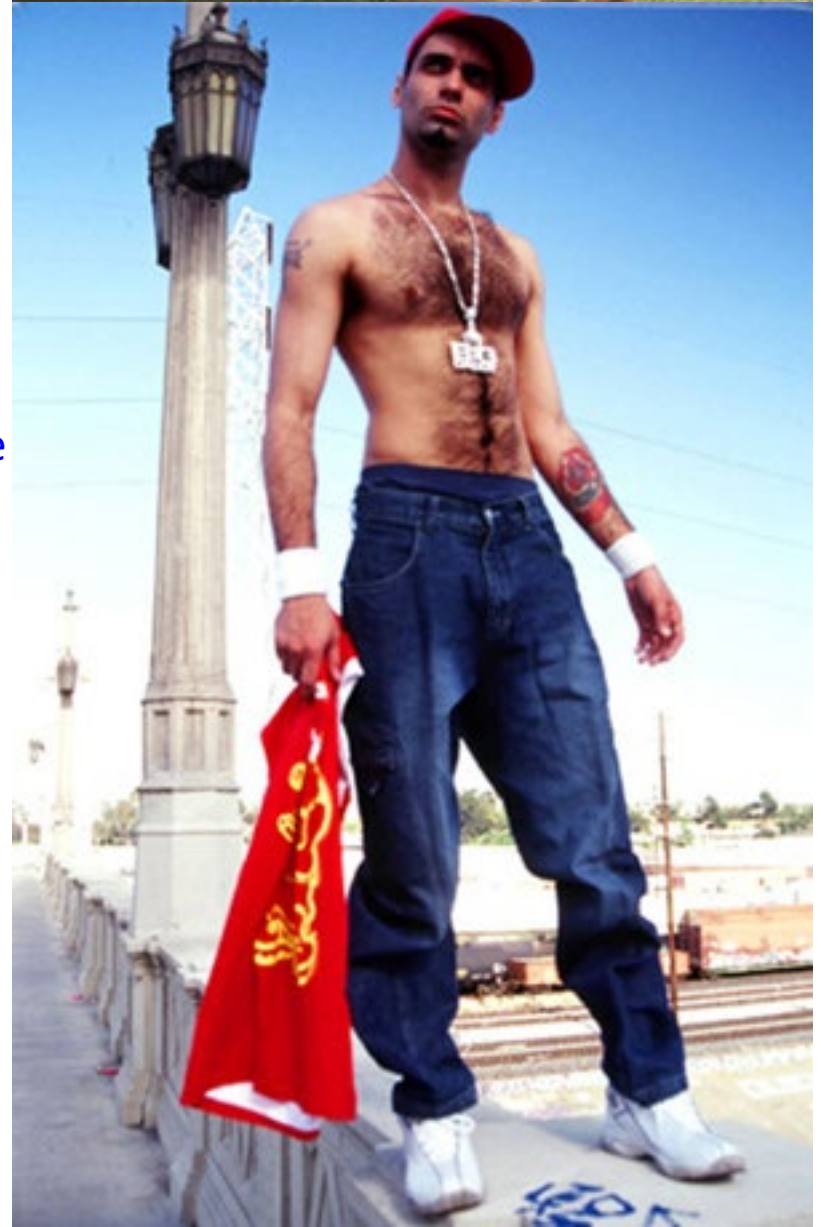
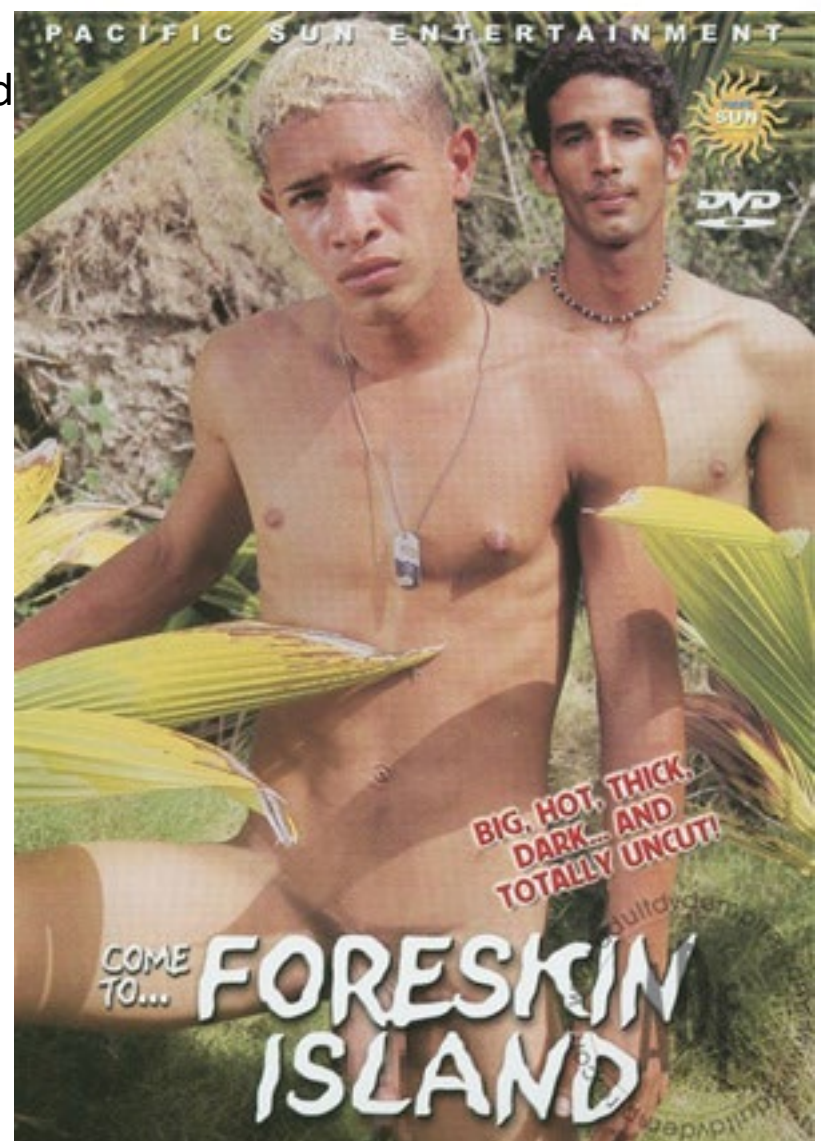
The island of big dicks, the place they worship ‘skin’, the land of huge brown meat, come to . . . Foreskin Island! You will be busy . . . pleased . . . and very glad you indulged on this male erotic adventure! Come To Foreskin Island!

While the film still holds up - the opening tracking shot down a forest path superimposed over a remarkably lengthy foreskin being rolled up and down a remarkably large penis is high camp artistic erotica - the story of how the filming was created is uproarious and harrowing. St John writes about his intentions,

The steamy island of Puerto Rico, about a thousand miles southeast of Miami, is really a size queen’s paradise—the perfect place to shoot a sex video. Big dicks drive the gay porn market. You could say, “The bigger the dick, the bigger the porn star, and the bigger the movie.” There is a whole Big-Dick-Puerto-Rican porn genre, but all those videos are shot in the Bronx, with New York Ricans, or Nuyoricans. I want to go to Puerto Rico to shoot these boys *in situ*, like sexy natives in the wild.

Along with the giant *pingas*, that’s Puerto Rican for dick, another of the island’s famous draws is the *bugarones*, the “straight” men who love to screw other men. Since they are tops only, I have to bring a bottom with me.

What follows is a saga that includes, amongst much more, cruising for talent, auditioning talent, shooting talent, having sex with talent, drug smuggling, managing divas, exhibitionist underwater sex on a coral reef, STDs, monster mosquitoes, monster cocks, mental breakdowns, lust and love, and being chased on the beach by a lesbian thug with a machete. I personally wish that St John had spent more time on the actual filming process, but, after 25 years in the business, the mechanics of sex for the camera must leave him somewhat blasé. He does write once of being aroused but that involves a romance - add “falling in love with talent” to the initial list.



What St John does exceptionally well is bring characters to life. With a Hemingway-esque swagger he introduces us to the two porn star bottoms, a pimp, various drug dealers, a sardonic bartender, and his friend and sometimes long-term lover “Bobby” who is a married heterosexual with a wandering eye. Each character is hilarious, fleshed-out and pinned to the page in economical prose. Economical is the only other complaint about *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno*, it is a very slim book. There is a bonus story about further adventures with Bobby that is a fascinating delight, but hopefully the wait for *Chased, Assaulted, Bitten, Bruised and Laughing My Ass Off* will not be a long one.

The appeal of *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno*, beyond the voyeuristic and salacious, is that it documents gay life. Not just a sliver of gay life but the way gay men relate to the world: the slang, the sexual freedom, the thin line between fetishism and racism, the sense of adventure and *savoir faire*. That is not to say that all gay men would, like St John, set off to have sex with and film the biggest *pingas* to be found, but there is a universal gay voice, an attitude, that St John captures and distills. And for the majority of gay men it would be at least a fantasy bucket list item. Making *Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno* not only a historical document but as entertaining and wish fulfilling as a really well-made porn.

Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno is available at tomoffinlandstore.com and bookstores everywhere if, like I am now, you are a little dubious of Canada Post.



PHIL ST. JOHN, a *nom de porn*, acted in gay adult movies while he went to film school in San Francisco. Later, in the East Village, in Manhattan, St. John freelanced for United Artists writing literary script coverage by day and making porn loops for the mob's Times Square, peep shows, at night. After working in the Italian movie industry, St. John attended The American Film Institute on a scholarship, in Los Angeles. His first major porno, *Getting It*, in 1985, was distributed by Falcon Films. It was shot on 16mm film and had the largest cast of the day.



Self Portrait

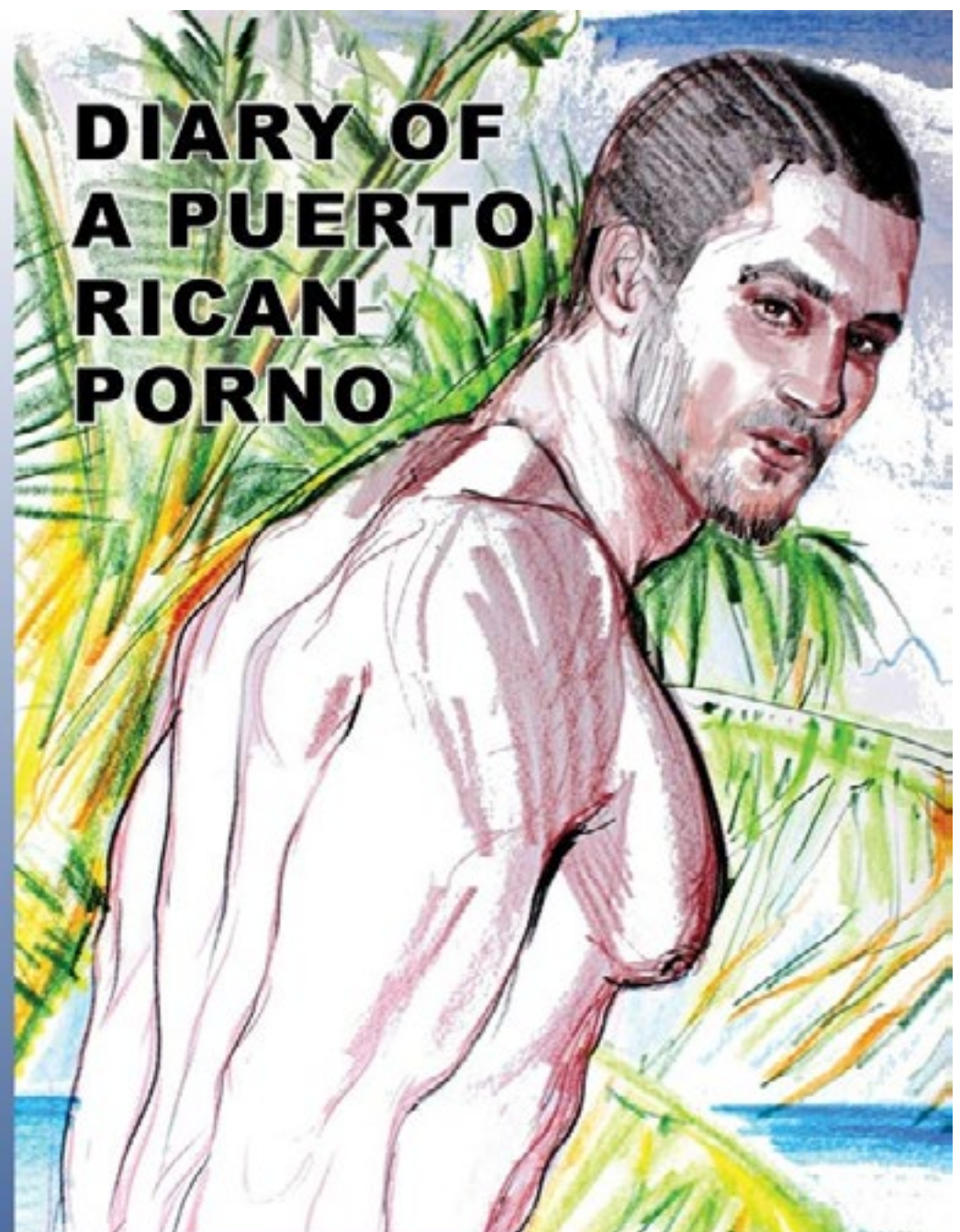
St. John discovered and named Chad Douglas, and starred him in *Below the Belt*, which had the first double penetration in a gay film—that became St. John's signature. He shot the first all DP movie called *Double Delights*, which earned a gay porn Oscar. Some of his other big movies were *Getting It At The Rave*, *Taggers*, *South Beach Heat*, and the first gay skateboard film, *Skateboard Sliders*. He also started the Titan Fresh line, in the Czech Republic. In 2009, he was inducted into the Gay Porn Hall of Fame for producing and directing some of the artiest gay adult films in the industry.

His personal series of LGBTQ political and ethnographic videos is housed in the permanent collection of the New York Public Library and has screened in film festivals and museums like the American Film Institute and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. His writing and photography have appeared in the *LA Times*, the *LA Weekly*, *The WOW Report*, *The Advocate*, *Out*, *Genre*, *Adventure Journal*, *Spunk* and *American Photo Magazine*.

Cover Art: Miguel Angel Reyes

"I thought filming porn in Puerto Rico would be fun; a glamorous and exotic movie making experience. I didn't know I'd be chased, assaulted, bitten, and bruised. Worst of all – I fell in love with a beautiful Puerto Rican boy. Sometimes real life can feel like an edge-of-your-seat-action-thriller and high adventure becomes both your curse and your reward." -Phil St. John

Diary of a Puerto Rican Porno, is a true-life, action-adventure, erotic comedy. This is St. John's sexually outrageous filmmaking journey, where he takes his boyfriend and a porn star bottom to the land of the big tops to make *Foreskin Island* and *Return to Foreskin Island* - two tropical dick movies shot back-to-back in the jungles near San Juan. The director's moviemaking is fraught with knife fights, sexual intrigue, nervous breakdowns, tropical depressions, secret marijuana smuggling, and true cinematic, pornographic love.



PHIL ST. JOHN



Elevation

a Stephen King fable for troubled times

Somehow Stephen King always manages to deliver just what we didn't know we needed just when we need it. The [hit movie](#) inspired me to re-read [It](#) and reminded me of just how powerful King can be as an artist. The *Dark Tower* movie may have flopped, but [the books remain an immersive oddball experience](#) that is part psychedelic fantasy/horror and part intensely personal confessional. [On Writing](#) is a timeless resource book I keep close at hand. His most recent novel [The Outsider](#) is a return to form fusing the [Bill Hodges Trilogy](#) noirs with his unique brand of epic horror. His twitter feud with the Donald Trump-led right wing nastiness is a near-daily source of common sense joy.

So I picked up a copy of *Elevation* on the day it was released. King floats like a spooky red balloon on the zeitgeist and even his mis-steps (with so much writing to his credit, it is surprising how few there are) hold intrigue and clues to where we are as people. Art is a barometer of our emotional state and horror is the most sensitive genre of all.

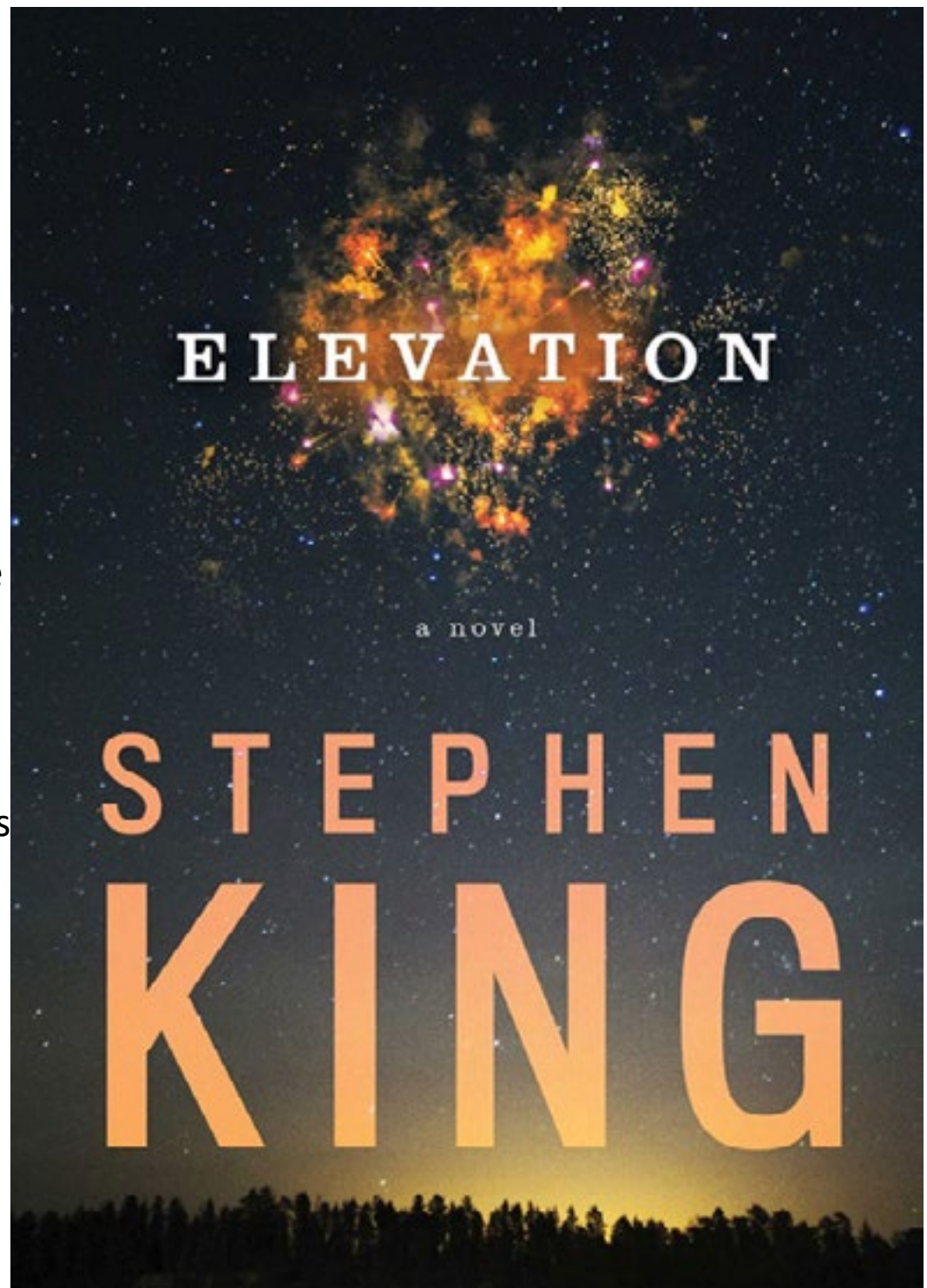
Holding the book in my hands, my first reaction was disappointment. *Elevation* is a slim book, a hardcover but the size of a mass market

paperback. Hoping for another doorstopper of an epic, I was going to have to settle for a novella that could have been prudently saved for his next collection. That gut reaction disappeared as soon as I began to read. *Elevation* is of the moment but also timeless.

Elevation is an unabashed fable, a gentle cry from the heart about how intolerant we seem to have become. Beginning with a supernatural mystery that riffs on [Thinner](#), *Elevation* soon ambles into a small town story about acceptance and redemption. Of course that town is [Castle Rock](#), so the weird and unexplainable is always lurking just below the surface. Structured around the holy trinity of holidays - Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas - and borrowing imagery from all three, King tells the tale of a man whose neighbours are married lesbian restaurateurs having trouble being embraced by the Castle Rockians.

Restaurant owners and a man losing weight at an alarming pace make for a nice parallel, but King keeps the symbolism grounded in small town life. There is a tendency towards cuteness and just a whiff of the straight white man savior complex wafting off the pages. However the prejudice is rendered bluntly and in all its complications, the issue is not so much what happens behind closed doors but that the doors are not kept tightly shut. The main protagonist gets an education and the entire town benefits from it.

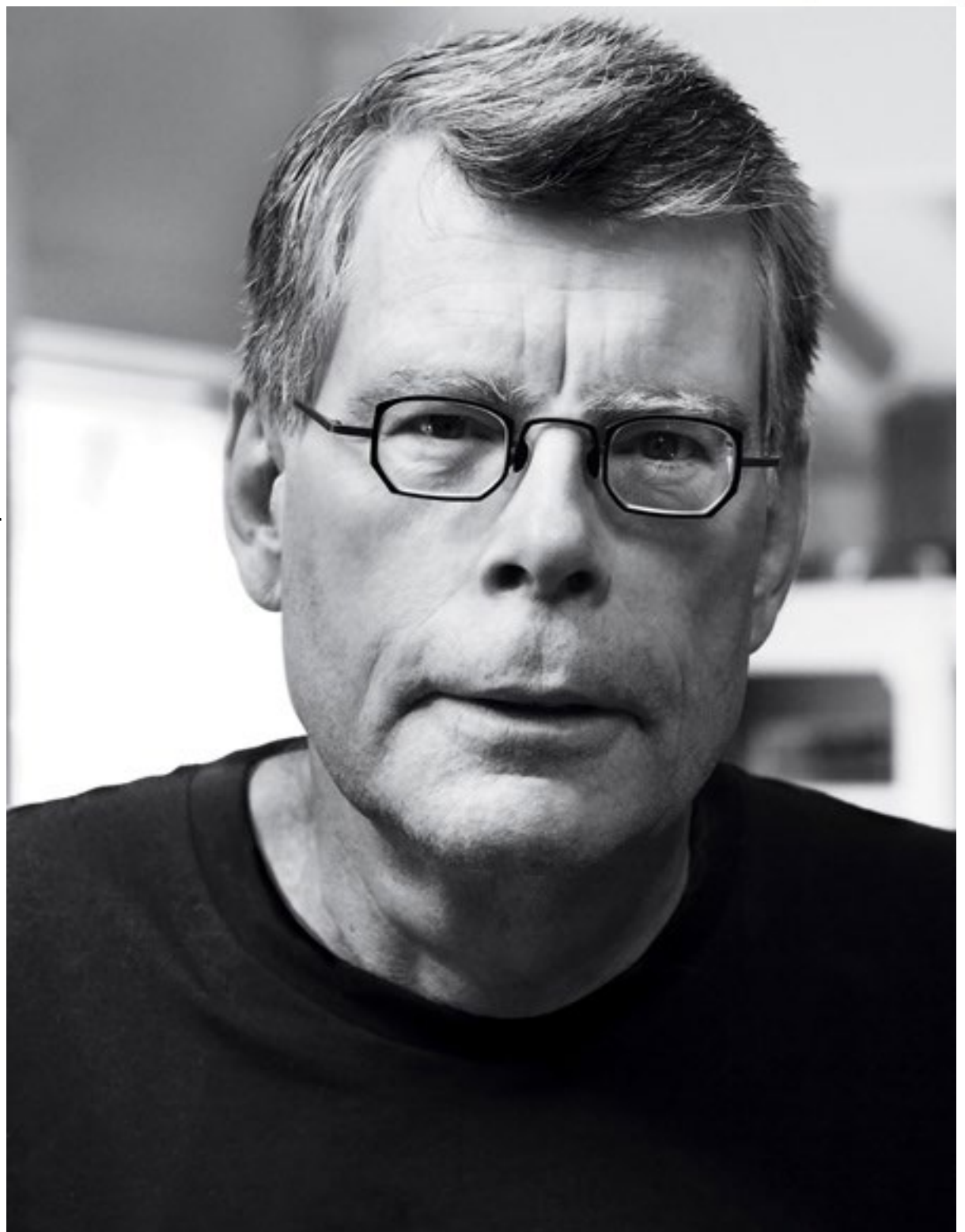
The horror, aside from the twisted weight loss premise, is minimal and King has the protagonist embrace his predicament - instead of trying to destroy or understand the monster, he makes peace with



it. Much like King wishes we all would with our demons. *Elevation* is a polite rebuke to Trump's divisive politics and a million times more eloquent than the alt-right's most passionate arguments.

Yes, I wish *Elevation* were longer. I would even have been satisfied with padding, with the minor characters - I'm thinking particularly of Bill D Cat, Mike Bandalamente the book store owner, Bull Neck the homophobe, and Patsy the diner owner - having their stories and back stories explored. But quite possibly that would be wish fulfillment over function, the novella format allows King to cut to the core, to escalate the plot and tension quickly and tautly. I read *Elevation* in two approximately one hour sessions and by the time I reached the climax, I was choking back cathartic tears. Tears that have resurfaced as I type this.

And it is only in hindsight that I realize how smoothly King's prose eased me into an outlandish premise in service of what should be a very basic moral lesson.



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LEGENDARY Sundays - LEST WE FORGET ★ Interested

The Drink - Coffee · Whiskey · Social · Toronto

Charles and Gilles

Dean Odorico
14 hrs · 🌐



Raw Studio Designs
November 10 at 9:48 PM · ⚙️

Raw Studio Designs: the essence of masculinity.
Shop <https://rawstudiodesigns.com>
Thanks @cteelfoto and thanks @kitten_bear



2019

nickmesh.com

Happy New Year!

2019



nickmesh.com

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2			
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31		1	2			
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
30						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2			
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

GAYSTATION

GAMING NIGHT - EVERY TUESDAY 8PM - NO COVER

**6 SCREENS
TO PLAY ON**

**PS4, SWITCH,
XBOX ONE & RETRO**



BLACK EAGLE

5\$ BUD & BUD LIGHT DRAFT

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/GAYSTATIONEAGLE
457CHURCHST - BLACKEAGLETORONTO.COM

LGBT Upcoming Hot Events

http://www.mygaytoronto.com/events_hot/

GLOW JOB

Saturday NOV 17th

DJ Josh Karmin

\$5 before 11 PM and \$10 AFTER

EAGLE

WOLF DADDY PRESENTS

WOLFPACK GET RUGGED

DEKO-ZE NEILL MACLEOD

SATURDAY NOV 17TH 2018 10PM TO 4AM

SUNKER

NO BEFORE MIDNITE, 10 AFTER NO CALL AHEAD WITH WOLF DADDY

HYDRE MUSIQ, HIT DADDIES & DADDY CHASEES

DND

NYE 2019

MONDAY DEC 31 10PM

SPECIAL GUEST WITH **MICHAEL ROMAN**

FEATURING **DJ DWAYNE MINARD**

WITH **MIKEYB**

WITH **DO MIKEYB**

WITH **ROBERT MILLER**

EAGLE

CHAMPAGNE AT MIDNIGHT!

NOV 13

WOLFPACK GET RUGGED

DEKO-ZE NEILL MACLEOD

SATURDAY NOV 17TH 2018 10PM TO 4AM

SUNKER

NOV 17

GLOW JOB

Saturday NOV 17th

DJ Josh Karmin

\$5 before 11 PM and \$10 AFTER

EAGLE

Dec

Flash

2019 MEMBERSHIP

NOW AVAILABLE AT MEMBER SERVICES DESK.

\$50

FREE ADMISSION Valid from date of purchase until December 31, 2019

MEMBER SPECIALS ALL YEAR

463 CHURCH ST

Backstreet

Dec 31

DND

NYE 2019

MONDAY DEC 31 10PM

SPECIAL GUEST WITH **MICHAEL ROMAN**

FEATURING **DJ DWAYNE MINARD**

WITH **MIKEYB**

WITH **ROBERT MILLER**

EAGLE

CHAMPAGNE AT MIDNIGHT!

MONDAYS

Crews Tingos

MONDAY NIGHT MADNESS

DONKARIMA

BOB

WITH MUSIC BY **DI RELENTLESS**

SHOWS @ 11 PM & 1 AM

No Cover, Always A Good Time

#feelsleepcrewsrepeat

MONDAYS

Magic MONDAYS

AN INDUSTRY NIGHT EVERY WEEK

\$5

EMERSONS

MONDAYS

KATINKA & CARLOTTA

TUESDAYS

SAY STATION

8 SCREENS TO PLAY ON

PSA, SHOWER, 1800 DICK & RETO

EAGLE

TUESDAYS

Ghetto Glam

DUMMA TENSION

engopen tuesdays

TUESDAYS

TUNEFUL TUESDAY

WEEKLY 8:30P M. - 12:30A M.

TUESDAYS

RELENTLESS REWIND

80s RETRO EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT

boutique

WEDNESDAYS

BoBo Show

WEEKLY DRAG AND VARIETY SHOW WITH FANTASTIC GUESTS.

EVERY WEDNESDAY | 10PM-2AM

487 CHURCH ST. TORONTO | 416-989-0407

WEDNESDAYS

WEDNESDAYS DRAG NIGHT QUEENS

DRAG SPECIALS ALL NIGHT LONG!

WEDNESDAYS

Crews Tingos

Corona

SOUL SISTAS

THURSDAYS

Open Mic

EVERY F***ING THURSDAY!

HOSTED BY: DONAYON LENASAT & JAMIE BIRD

Thursdays | 10PM

487 Church St. / No Cover

THURSDAYS

THURSDAYS

MEN'S BEST CHEST CONTEST AND SHOW

STILL THE BIG DADDY!

THURSDAYS

MUSIC THURSDAY

THURSDAYS

Crews Tingos

VOCAL REHAB KARAOKE

SHOW US YOUR INNER DIVA

THURSDAYS 10PM - 2AM

WITH YOUR FEARLESS KARAOKE LEADER **FIVE**

FRIDAYS

BEAR NIGHT

FRIDAYS

Striker

FRIDAYS

Crews

FRIDAYS

FRIDAYS

SATURDAYS

SATURDAYS

SWEET ASS SATURDAYS

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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HOUSE MUSIC, HOT DADDIES & DADDY CHASERS

DND

NYE 2019

MONDAY
DEC 31 10PM



SPECIAL GUEST HOST
MICHAEL ROMAN
PORN SUPERSTAR
TWITTER @ROMANMICHAELXXX

FEATURING
DJ DWAYNE MINARD
HEADLINER
MIXCLOUD.COM/
DWAYNEMINARD

WITH
DJ MIKEYB
OPENING SET
MIXCLOUD.COM/
ITSMIKEYBOY

GO-GO DADDY
ROBERT MILLER
TWITTER @SIR_TORONTO

\$10 COVER ADVANCE
\$15 AT DOOR

BLACK EAGLE

My Gay Toronto.com

SWISH EMBASSY

The UPS Store

CHAMPAGNE AT MIDNIGHT!

