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MAGAZINE

CHICAGO'S BIWEEKLY LGBTQ PUBLICATION

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A close-up portrait of actor Sean Hayes, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He has dark hair and light-colored eyes, and is wearing a dark leather jacket over a grey V-neck shirt.

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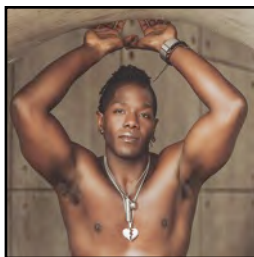
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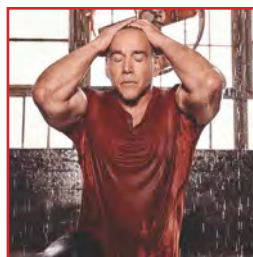


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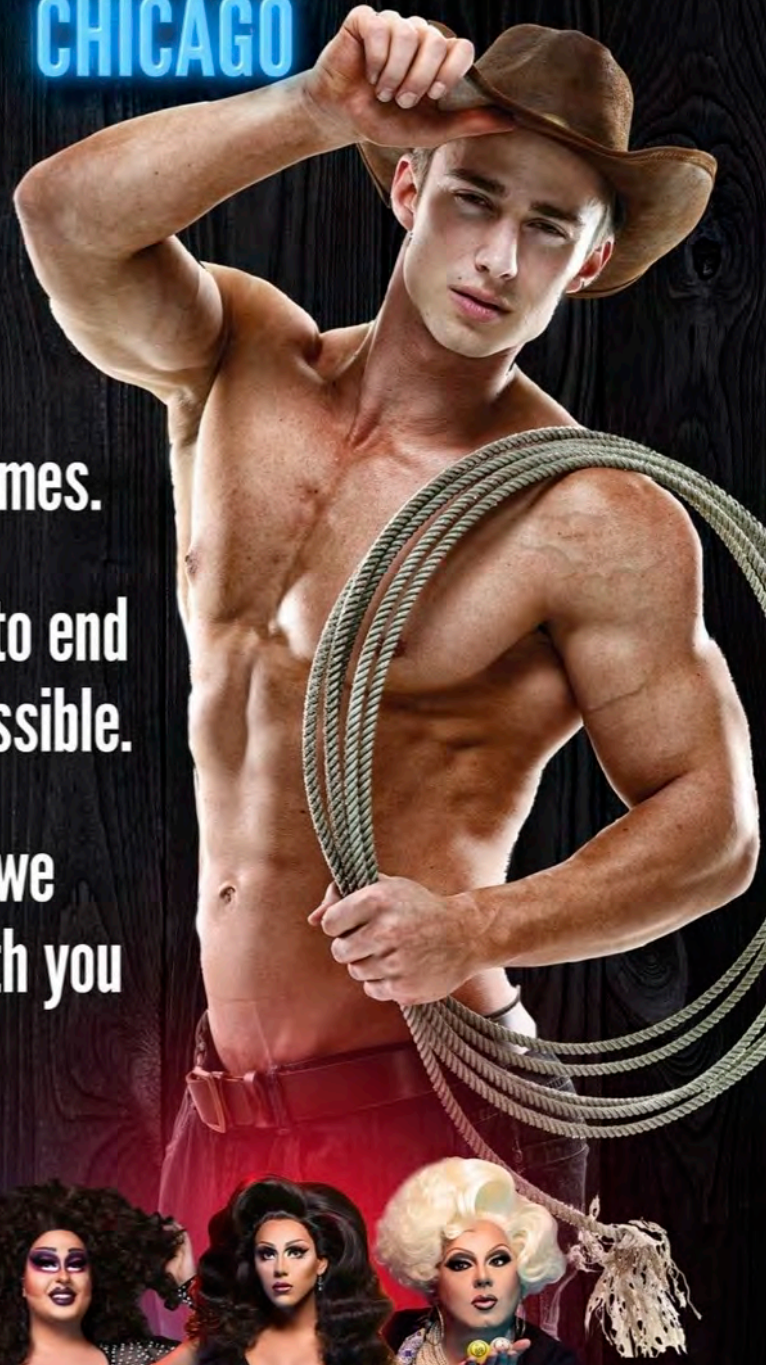
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GRAB SEAN

Sean Hayes Wants You to Meet (Lazy) Susan

Lazy Susan actor on playing a woman in earnest, *Will & Grace* ending and his upcoming Netflix show

By Chris Azzopardi

Under any other conditions, it might seem strange to tell Sean Hayes what I'm wearing. Given that Hayes slips into some sweats to play a do-nothing cisgender woman named Susan O'Connell – hence the movie's name, *Lazy Susan* – it makes some sense that I tell the Emmy-winning *Will & Grace* star that I'm lounging in athleisure like a lazy Susan. (And, well, he *did* ask me if I was working from home – our new not-normal normal)

Where do you go with Hayes from there? Everywhere: from developing Susan to why it was time to end *Will & Grace* (for real this time) and how his best lazy days involve his husband and Sigourney Weaver.

Chris Azzopardi: *What's a lazy day in your life like?*

Sean Hayes: A lazy day in my life is usually Sundays. My husband Scotty and I don't do anything and we call it Cinema Sunday. We pick a movie out and we just sit there on the couch and watch it, and we usually have the doors open to the backyard and we take naps. Or I'll put on *This Old House*. I love that show so much.

CA: *So you guys will watch that together or you'll do the movie and then you'll nap?*

SH: Yeah. Doesn't that sound exciting? (Laughs.)

CA: *What was your last Cinema Sunday flick?*

SH: The original *Alien*. There's nothing more relaxing than *Alien*. Nothing more relaxing than watching somebody's stomach burst open.

CA: *I've read that Susan is based on a character you initially developed for an audition for a sketch show years ago. Is that true?*

SH: No – yes, of course! I just like to make things up! No, it was. I had a call

from my agent when I was 21 years old living in Chicago to come in and audition to replace quote-unquote “the white guy” in *In Living Color*, which was Jim Carrey because I guess he was leaving the show. So I go into the audition with a bag full of wigs and props and just tons of stuff to do, tons of characters. One of those characters was Susan, and I did it and that's the story.

And so here we are decades later, and at the suggestion of my very good friend Reyna Larson, who I went to high school and college with. She was like, “You should do something with that character you did but name her Lazy Susan.” I thought, “That's such a great title,” and then I worked backward from the title and that character. I wrote a TV pilot in one day. It was awesome. It was so fun. It just came out of me.

Then after I shared it with my friend Darlene Hunt, a prolific TV writer who created *The Big C* on Showtime, she was like, “Honey, I think this is a movie,” and I was like, “Really?” She goes, “Yeah, this script is the first act of the movie.” And I was like, “That's really interesting.” And so there we go. Then I brought it to Carrie Aizley, who's another good friend – they're all good friends – and Carrie also read the pilot and she came up with some really witty, amazing dialogue for the rest of the characters. So we all three sat down and wrote it together.

CA: *It's good to know people – otherwise Susan might've still been dormant.*

SH: I think she wakes up dormant!

CA: *Oh, touché!*

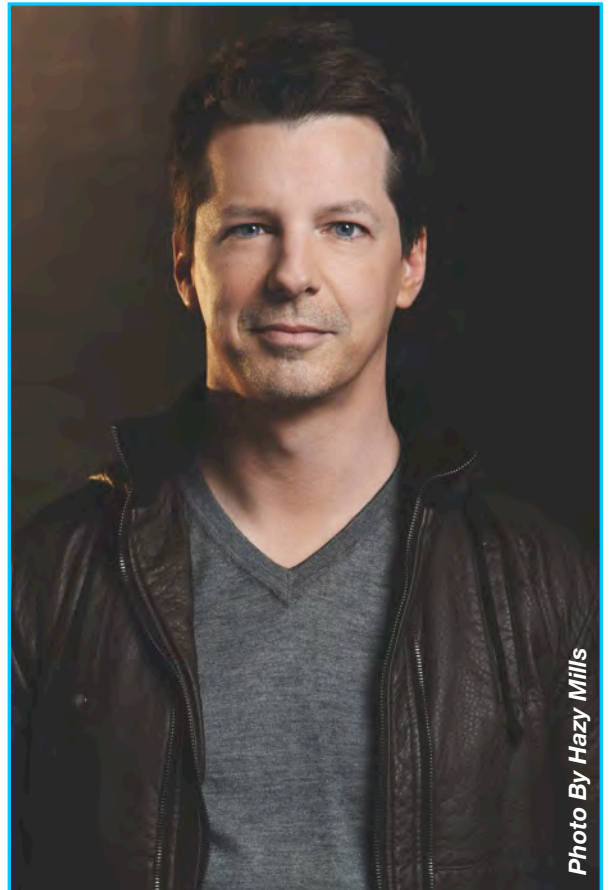


Photo By Hazy Mills

SH: But Darlene I've known since I was 27 years old. I got her her first writing gig on *Will & Grace*. So I've known her for years and years. And Carrie too. I was a guest star on (the 2006-2007 Oxygen comedy) *Campus Ladies*, which she was a star of.

But back to Susan: I didn't want the joke to be a man playing a woman, as we've seen so many times. I wanted it as an acting challenge. I thought it'd be really interesting to feel extremely uncomfortable in woman's clothes but acting like I'm not.

CA: *This character might've played differently 15, 20 years ago.*

SH: Sure.

CA: *But now there's heightened sensitivity around who is playing what. For instance, I read a comment on your Twitter that asked: “With a guy playing a cisgender woman, does this not fall into the same issue of caucasian actors playing Asian characters or cis actors playing trans characters?”*

SH: I don't have time for any of those people. That's my answer. Those people are way overthinking all of this.

CA: *You mentioned not playing her gender as a joke, like it was in films*

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like 'Some Like It Hot', 'Tootsie' and 'Mrs. Doubtfire'. In those films, the joke was a man, or men, in a dress.

SH: They were men playing a woman to reach a certain goal as a man. This is not that movie. This is a character that I'm playing, just like Jared Leto, who I think is a brilliant actor and who won an Oscar for playing a trans character (in *Dallas Buyers Club*).

That's why we're actors. We like to play different parts, period. We shouldn't be thrown into the social conversation of what's right or wrong when it comes to the craft of acting.

CA: How did Susan initially come to you? Is she based on anyone in particular?

SH: Yes, but I can't say who. (Laughs.) It's based on a few people. By the way, men and women.

CA: Famous people?

SH: Maybe, maybe not.

CA: Like Jack, she's pretty self-absorbed. Do you see any similarities?

SH: I don't see them that similar at all. I think Jack is very put together, and when given a task very responsible, shows up, has a bunch of different jobs. Susan can't even get out of bed.

CA: What's the message that you hope people take away from 'Lazy Susan'?

SH: You know, I haven't thought of that. I hope people enjoy the film, period. You know, there's a lot of movies with

something deep to say and what I love about this film is, sure, if you connect with it and find something for yourself to pull from, great. But my intention was just to entertain.

CA: It's a Cinema Sunday flick.

SH: It's a Cinema Sunday film. I really, really have an incredible affinity for those films from the '90s that were Sundance or independent films and film festival films.

CA: You mean the ones we don't really see anymore?

Photo Courtesy of Shout! Studios



Photo Courtesy of Shout! Studios



SH: Right, exactly. And so the Oscars have become an independent film festival, that's all. But I love *Welcome to the Dollhouse* and I loved *Napoleon Dynamite* and I loved all those films. Now it's huge studio films that open these film festivals when it's like, what about the little films that we all used to go to discover at independent film festivals? I wanted to make one of those. I mean, hopefully we succeeded. I think we did. But those are close to my heart. Probably because that's what started my career too (Hayes starred in the 1998 gay-themed rom-com *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss*).

CA: As far as 'Will & Grace' goes, after its recent revival, it's been said that it will absolutely not return, ever.

SH: There will be no more. That is 100 percent for sure.

CA: How did you and the rest of the cast reach the decision to end it for good?

SH: It's time. We were supposed to come back for 10 episodes and that's it, and then because of the response we just kept making season after season. I think we ended up making something like 52, 53 episodes and it was so fun and I'm so, so grateful and honored and privileged to have that

experience again, but everybody knows when it's time to move on. I thought eight seasons was long. Then here we are with three seasons. I mean, they weren't quote-unquote "full" seasons like they used to be, but in the world we live in three seasons seems to be plenty.

CA: It had nothing to do with any cast member feuds on set? Because my heart was hurting when I read about that as a possibility for the show ending.

SH: Yeah. Look at you. The hard-hitting-questions journalist getting in there.

CA: No, no, no. I was just like, I hope it's not true. I don't want it to be true because I grew up with these characters.

SH: No, no, no, no. It was a very mutual decision between the cast and the producers together.

CA: I've grown up with all of you – you guys changed my life as a little gay boy.

SH: I love that.

CA: What boundaries are you proud of breaking with the 'Will & Grace' revival?

SH: I think our jobs are never done as a society and a gay culture to educate America. It's never done. It's never done to educate people about diversity and inclusion, so for that reason I'm sad the show is over, because somebody needs to do it and somebody needs to do it in a big way for lots of eyeballs and ears to see and hear.

CA: The last time we spoke we talked about how much of "the slap" between you and Megan Mullally is really kind of a dance. How much of "Just Jack" was improv?

SH: Well, the hand gestures were me. On paper it just says "Just Jack," but we had the best writers in television ever on the show, in my opinion, and at the same time I had a director that's the best director in television. He was the best for many reasons, one of which is letting me experiment with physical comedy. So that's where some of that comes from – just experimenting.

CA: You don't count yourself as an activist, but do you think you'll see a gay president in your lifetime?

SH: I have to believe we will, yes. And I have to believe that he will be referred to as a president, not a gay president. That's the other thing: I would never

Photo Courtesy of Shout! Studios



say you are a gay journalist or I'm a gay actor. I'm an actor. You're a journalist. Why do we have to preface every single title with our sexual orientation?

CA: What's next for you?

SH: What I've been working on is the Netflix series *Q Force*, which is (laughs) ... you know, OK, the short description is "gay James Bond." (Laughs.)

CA: But, Sean, we can't preface it with "gay."

SH: (Laughs.) I KNOW. That's why I'm laughing because I just said that. But in that sense, you have to because it's the person's name, not the title: gay James Bond. I wouldn't say gay spy or gay agent. That's the short answer. Gabe Liedman – he runs *PEN15*, which is such a funny show – is the creator and showrunner of *Q Force*, and Mike Schur is supervising producer. Mike Schur created *Parks and Rec* and *Brooklyn 99* and *Good Place* and wrote on *Saturday Night Live*. So we're surrounded by incredible talent and then incredible writers, but it's really ... I can't wait for people to see this show. It's super, super fun. And it's a great cast – but I can't say who it is yet. But

you, of all people, your mind will be blown.

CA: You weren't out during the first part of your career, and so much has changed just in the years since then. What do you appreciate most about this current moment for LGBTQ actors?

SH: Just to clarify, the first part of my career I was out. I just wasn't out to the press. Had we met at a cafe, I'd be like, "Yeah, I'm out and proud!" But you can read all about my issues about that online.

Anyways, I think the tide continues to change in the favor of being historically on the right side, in that I think finally people in decision-making roles are becoming aware of the sensitivities that they should have had years prior. I mean, I'm a fan of "best actor gets the part," no matter what. No matter what. No matter if you're gay, straight, bi, lesbian, LGBTQ, black, Asian, whatever.

CA: So is it OK that someone like Scarlett Johansson play a trans character?

SH: (Hesitates.) I don't know. I don't know. I mean ... I mean... I don't know.

It's such a good question. What do you think?

CA: I think that there aren't enough roles for trans people and that there are plenty of trans actors who can play those roles, so until they're being cast in those roles, I think no.

SH: OK, then that's what I think then.

CA: Yeah?

SH: (Laughs.) I'm on the fence, you know. As an actor we want to challenge ourselves and we want to play different parts and that's why we're actors. But on the other hand, there should be plenty of parts to challenge yourself that don't take away jobs from people that are entitled to be given the opportunity.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Vanity Fair, GQ and Billboard. Reach him via Twitter @chrisazzopardi.



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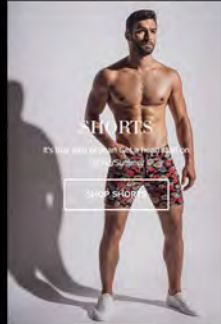
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GRAB JAY

MUSIC



Maq Attack Singer Jay Maq is Back with “No Love”

By Paul Hutnick

Jay Maq grew up the son of a preacher man in the deep south. He recalls his childhood being on constant loop between church and school. He came out to his parents at 14 and upon hearing the news, his mother punched him in the chest. The next day at church she cried on the altar during prayer. A young Jay feared his mother would stop loving him or maybe even kick him out on the street but she didn't. Today, she is one of the biggest supporters of his music.

A majority of the topics Jay Maq explores in his songs have to do with love and the journey to finding it. That includes the longing for love, healing after being cheated on and the conflict of falling in love with people who are unavailable. His latest, “No Love,” is a chilled island, dancehall track that

cautions listeners to stop chasing after people who don't give you the love that you deserve. We spoke with sexy young singer from his home in Los Angeles.

Paul Hutnick: We remember you from EchoV, the world's first all-gay boy band! What happened to the group?

Jay Maq: I left to focus on getting different parts of my life in order. There are so many challenges with being an independent artist and I had to take a step back.

PH: “No Love” is the first single off of your new album. Would you call it an un-love song?

JM: The song talks about situations I have found myself in. Things like chasing after someone when the person

was not interested or simply jumping into a relationship because I didn't want to be alone.

PH: You acknowledge that you have made mistakes in relationships.

JM: I've definitely treated lovers poorly.

PH: How so?

JM: There was this guy I messed around with one summer that wanted to try dating. I turned him down because I was still healing from the trauma of an abusive relationship. He was heartbroken and it was sad because our chemistry was amazing. I ran into him years later and he seemed jaded and I felt responsible.

PH: Are you willing to share more about the abusive relationship?

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JM: I was in a physically and mentally abusive relationship. I met the guy online and things were normal at first. He was fun, bubbly, and frank, which are qualities I appreciate in a guy. About a month into our relationship, he began having housing issues. I allowed him to move him into my place and within three weeks, shit started to hit the fan. He hated all of my friends. If I went out and did not respond to his calls, he would threaten to destroy my stuff or even kill himself. He took pills once and had to be rushed to the ER. I left him there and moved all of his stuff out. But like a fool, I allowed him back in and it was nine months of hell that didn't end until he was arrested for threatening one of my friends with a weapon.

PH: *That sounds like a mistake you make only once.*

JM: Love is complicated and truly subjective and ever changing. In relationships now, I'm always evaluating my needs. I ask myself: What am I happy with? What is not being fulfilled? Whose job is it to provide what I need? What am I insecure about and why? It helps keep me in line.

PH: *What's your ultimate message with "No Love"?*

JM: Do not let yourself get tangled up in love knots with people that are not ready when you are not ready, and don't force situations that are not meant to be.

PH: *What is your current situation?*

JM: I'm partnered and thankful. We make an amazing team.

PH: *What's your favorite way to relax and chill?*

JM: I love going to the gym, meditating, rollerblading in Venice, playing with my dog, listening to music, cooking something new, and spending time with friends. Due to quarantine, I've fallen in love with Animal Crossing on the



Nintendo Switch. My partner got it for me and I can't put it down.

PH: *What is your guiltiest pleasure?*

JM: Sweets! Cake, cookies, chocolate, pies... you name it! As long as it's vegan, I'm here for it.

PH: *What makes you smile?*

JM: When I hear a new track and come up with a line that I can't get out of my head.

PH: *If you could switch lives with someone for a day, who would it be?*

JM: I don't think I'd really want to switch lives with anyone. Instead I'd like to spend a week with Missy Elliot. From the outside looking in, Missy carries herself with this confidence, passion, and drive that shakes the industry whenever something is released. She also seems to just have the game on lock as an artist and business women. When I grow up, I wanna be like Miss.

Jay Maq's "No Love" featuring Macc is being distributed through Distrokid and is available on all digital platforms. Follow Jay Maq on Instagram and Facebook @jaymaqmusiq.



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GRAB MICHAEL

MUSIC

Rock of Ages Michael Fairman Says It's Never Too Late to Rock Out

By Paul Hutnick

Michael Fairman is after what his name implies: a fair chance in the music industry.

"For years now, I have been told, 'You're doing music? You sing?' when what was really meant was 'good luck with that boomer, you're too old for the music industry,'" he laments.

In his latest single, "Other Side," a track he wrote with Kyle Mangels, Fairman sings about ageism, personal struggles, and finding ones inner-strength to face adversity and ultimately triumph. It's a song for anyone who has ever felt disconnected, alone, or has broken out of a relationship and is trying to come terms with it. "It's meant as a reminder that it is ok to feel down, to hurt and cry," he explains, "but eventually we all need to rise up and fight whatever life throws our way." We spoke with Michael Fairman from his Los Angeles home.

Paul Hutnick: What inspired you to write and record "Other Side"?

Michael Fairman: I wanted to write a universal-themed fight song that says no matter what you're going through right now, you will get through to the other side of it. It's important to weather storms. Whether it be someone leaving you in a relationship for a younger, slicker model, or your body not doing what it used to do as you grow older, or people telling you that you will never attain what you want...I hope my song lifts people up in their darkest times. Listen, we need a song like this, especially now, as we fight to get to the other side of the Coronavirus pandemic that has changed life as we knew it.

PH: Most people don't feel like their chronological age. What age do you feel like you are?

MF: I feel like I have the mind of someone in their late twenties. Physically, that's another story. I do try to stay in as good a shape as possible, and working out has always been a part of my life, but it's no joke that as you



Photo By Brian Kaminski

get older, you feel every ache and pain along the way.

PH: Are you happy with the man that you see in the mirror?

MF: You're talking with someone who is very hyper-critical of himself, but that being said, I can look in the mirror and be happy with the man I am today. I am learning to embrace my outward imperfections.

PH: If you could give advice to your younger self, what would it be?

MF: Don't let others derail you from your aspirations and dreams.

PH: You were pursuing a singing career in your twenties. Was it a mistake to give up on it?

MF: Yes, it was. I worked tirelessly and was single-minded in my efforts in my teens, twenties and early thirties. It was exhausting and I needed a break to decompress but I should have taken a short break, not a several decades break! Things happened that drew me towards TV producing and journalism

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and I thought I could be happy and fulfilled with it all. I was wrong, because I could not squelch the desire to sing and write.

PH: What made you decide to go for it now?

MF: I found the right collaborators to bring my music and the sound I wanted to life.

PH: What have been some of your biggest obstacles along the way?

MF: Getting people who follow me on my social media platforms to accept and understand me as an artist. Many people have told me that due to my age, I will never stand a chance at being played on pop radio.

PH: What do you want people to think when listening to "Other Side"?

MF: "Hey this guy is really good!"

PH: Beyonce, Billie (Eilish), Barbra (Streisand)... who is the real queen B?

MF: Queen Bey is amazing: her voice, her beauty, her live performances, just her. Queen Billie is the youngest reigning Grammy queen and has a bright future ahead of her with a very unique sound. But I would pick Barbra. When you watch all of what she has done – now there's a star! Also, one of the greatest nights of my life was

seeing her in concert at the Staples Center. She has that voice that is so rare and remarkable in its range and substance.

PH: What do you say to those who would have expected you to answer Barbra?

MF: They were right! Yup! I went with Babs. And it has nothing to do with age. As much as Beyonce has it all going on, Barbra, to me, is still the true reigning all-time queen.

MF: What is something fans would be surprised to know about you?

That I am sports junkie and you can test my knowledge of NBA, NFL, MLB, College hoops and football. Bring it on!

PH: What superstitions do you believe in?

MF: Every time I see a ladder, I am afraid to walk under it.

PH: Who is the unlikeliest person that you follow on Twitter?

MF: New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees. I love Drew. He is a fantastic quarterback, and look, he just donated five million dollars for Coronavirus relief efforts in Louisiana! I have a crush on him.

PH: What makes you smile?

MF: A great acceptance speech from anyone who is being recognized for an achievement they deserve.

PH: What makes you angry?

MF: When people say something can't be done instead of trying to find solutions to make it work.

PH: Who are your heroes?

MF: When I was nine, I met Reggie Jackson, the former Oakland A's and New York Yankees slugger. He posed for a photo with me for the Milwaukee Sentinel and it was that moment where the person you idolize turns out to be just as you imagined. Everyone always says that he was a jerk, but to me, he was the kindest guy.

PH: Which celebrity would you most like to slide into your DMs?

MF: Dua Lipa. I love her voice and I would love to sing a duet with her.

PH: You find a magic genie bottle. What are your three wishes?

MF: Get my music on the charts and kick this career into high gear. Second: stop the bullying of our LBTBQ youth and put an end to the murders of trans people. Third: rid the world of the coronavirus so that we can all go back to our lives.

Michael Fairman's "Other Side" is being distributed independently and is available on all major music digital platforms. Follow Michael Fairman on Instagram @ michaelfairmantv.



Photo By Brian Kaminski



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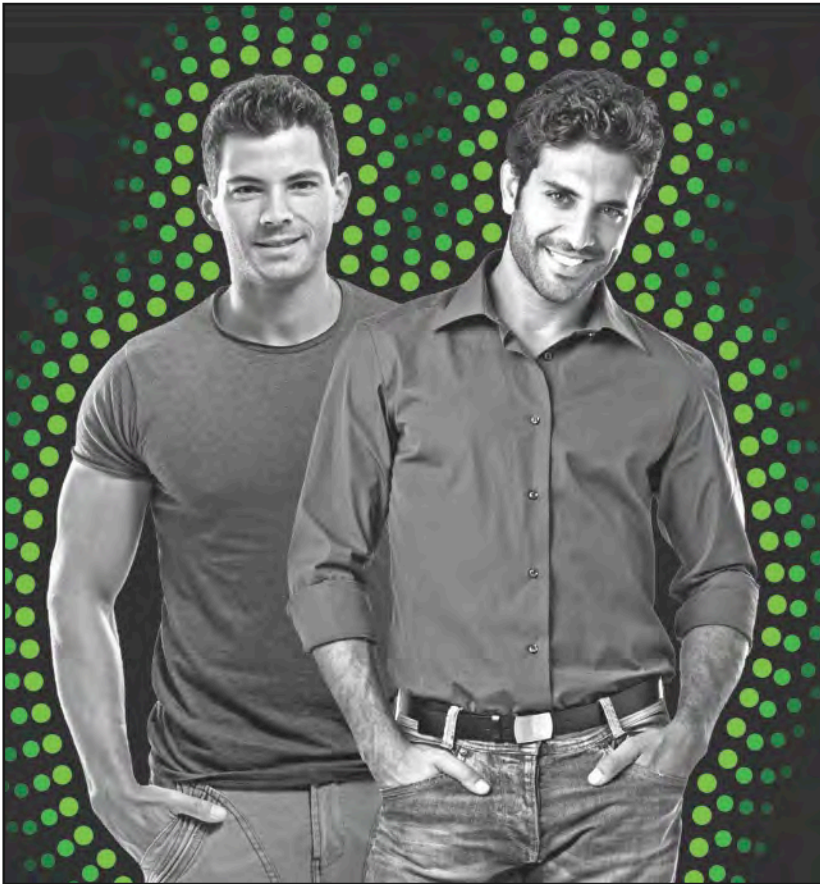
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	Artist	Title
1	ONEDUO	Human ft. Anthony Flammia
2	Fenix & Chris Willis	Feelings for you (Radio Edit)
3	Asher Postman x Disero x Annelisa Franklin	Say (Kastras Remix)
4	Luca Debonaire	I Found You (Dark Intensity Radio Edit)
5	Paige	You'll Be There (Radio Edit)
6	Meduza	Born to Love ft. SHELLS
7	Dua Lipa	Dont Start Now (Pink Panda Remix)
8	Elderbrook & Rudimental	Something About You (VIP Radio Edit)
9	ManyFew vs. Marcus Santoro	For You ft. Hayley May
10	Win and Woo	Sleepwalking ft. Kyan Palmer
11	INViDA x Alicia Madison	Back To You
12	Xanti x Tim Bell & Elenoir	Queen Of Love
13	DJ Licious	Atmosphere
14	Lady Gaga	Stupid Love
15	Bonka	All Your Love ft. The Romantic Era

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Due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, Touché was initially forced to close its doors on March 16th through the 30th. We accepted that fact for the wellbeing of our staff and customers.

But it seems this crisis has not yet reached its limit and as the uptick in infections continues, the order to close has already been extended and will most likely be extended even further.

You all know that besides their wages, the guys have always relied on the tips you passed along to them when they served you at the bar. And for the past two weeks and now into an uncertain future, those lost tips will make or break their ability to survive this crisis.

Some of you have already asked how you may help our staff during this time of closure. So Touché is launching a GoFundMe page where you can "tip" the guys and help us take care of them all – bartenders, barback, security and more. All proceeds of this virtual "tip jar" will be split among the staff.

We look forward to thanking you in person for your generous support when we return to serving you again.

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GRAB FORTUNE

Funny Fortune: An interview with comedian Fortune Feimster

By Gregg Shapiro

Comedian and actress Fortune Feimster is practically everywhere! Her hilarious Netflix special *Fortune Feimster: Sweet & Salty* premiered in January 2020 and is so funny you may find yourself repeatedly falling out of your seat. She provides the voice of Brenda on the animated Fox series *Bless the Harts* and can be seen as Heather in Prime Video's *The L Word* reboot *The L Word: Generation Q*. Fortune also has two new movies scheduled to open in theaters this year, *Deported* and *Friendsgiving*. Additionally, Fortune is embarking on a multi-city comedy concert tour. Busy as she is, she was kind enough to spare a few minutes for an interview.

Gregg Shapiro: *Fortune, I interviewed you in 2018 before your performance at Pridefest Milwaukee. What do you enjoy most about performing at a Pride festival?*

Fortune Feimster: I like it because to me it's a big celebration. The community comes together to be proud of who they are and to celebrate with each other, how far we've come and to remember what work needs to be done still. To get to be part of it is a really special thing because I remember how important the Pride festivals were when I was first coming out. How good it felt to finally find my own community, where I felt like I fit in.

GS: *Since the last time we spoke, you have been increasingly busy, beginning with your Netflix stand-up comedy special *Sweet & Salty*. Your mother does your introduction for *Sweet & Salty* and she also figures prominently in your stand-up. Does she have a good sense of humor?*

FF: Oh, 100 percent. My entire family has a really great sense of humor. I don't know where that stems from. I guess my parents liked to joke and they passed that down to us. When life would get difficult or there were challenges – money was always an

issue, paying bills was hard, tragedy would happen or losing a loved one – somehow my family managed to find the silver lining in it or we would crack a joke to break the tension or the sadness. No matter what we were going through, there was always somebody in my family who would make a joke or try to make people happy. I think that I just naturally got that from growing up that way. Now that I'm a comedian my mother loves the jokes, even if [laughs] she's the butt of the jokes sometimes. She knows it comes from a place of love. She's able to laugh with everybody else. She comes to my stand-up shows when she can. I'll tell jokes and people will look at her like, "Is that true?" and she's like, "Yeah, it's all true!" She wears that stuff as a badge of honor.

GS: *Has anyone at Chili's or Hooters corporate reached out to you after your shout-outs to their dining establishments in your special?*

FF: [Laughs] Chili's has reached out because for a couple of years now I have expressed my love of Chili's. Their social media person has been acquainted with me and would send me stuff from Chili's. They saw my special and sent me a package with tequila and margarita mix and Chili's margarita



glasses saying they enjoyed my special and the margaritas are for celebrating the sweet and salt. That was really nice. I like that they have a good sense of humor, too. But I haven't heard from Hooters! I can't believe it because I've talked about them everywhere, even on the Colbert show. And nothing! I don't know where their social media person is, but they need to hook a girl up with some chicken wings.

GS: *Your coming out story is a part of *Sweet and Salty* and you also mentioned being raised Methodist. That church has been in the news lately due to the split over gay marriage. How do you feel about that?*

FF: That vote was a tough one. I always looked that the Methodist church as being a bit more open and accepting than some of the other denominations. I was hoping that they would lead the way in being more inclusive. People in the congregation are split over it. There's talk of it dividing the church with

people starting their own part of the denomination. I'm not sure what will happen. I was obviously very disappointed. My mom said she's not sure if she wants to keep going to church there because if that's how they feel she doesn't want to be a part of that. In my opinion, I say that having someone like my mom who is inclusive and open-minded, who is showing people how to be in the South, (it) is more important that she is there. Then she's helping change minds one-on-one. She's showing them, here's how you do it. To me, that's powerful and maybe, in the end, can make a big difference. If everyone says they're leaving, then they're not forced to face the decision they made. If you love the church for many other reasons, stay there and keep being a good advocate for us. Maybe in the end, that will end up being what makes the change.

GS: In Sweet and Salty, you talk about how "representation matters". Kate McKinnon, who got her start on

Logo's Big Gay Sketch Show, along with Bowen Yang, are breaking ground as out cast members on SNL. What would it mean to you to be invited to be a guest host on SNL?

FF: That would be an amazing thing! I tested twice for that show. They flew me out to New York in 2009 and 2010. I think any comedian grows up watching that show and it was a big part of their love of comedy and where they learned a lot about comedy. Yes, that would be a huge honor to get to do that. I don't know that I'm close to getting to do that, but if it ever happened one day, obviously that would be the dream.

GS: You are playing one of three Fairy Gay Mothers along with Margaret Cho and Wanda Sykes in the upcoming movie Friendsgiving, written and directed by Nicol Paone, another of TheBig Gay Sketch Show alums. What was that experience like for you?

FF: That was fun! I've known Nicole for years. She asked if I'd come and do it. I

was happy to do it just because Margaret and Wanda are both buddies of mine and comics that I respect. To get to do something like that was fun. We were in and out in one day. We weren't a big part of the movie, but it was cool to pop up and play this silly part in the company of two great performers like that. It was awesome.

GS: You have also been on 'The L Word: Generation Q' as Heather. What has that been like for you?

FF: I was such a fan of the original show because, going back to representation matters, they were iconic in that not a lot of people had seen a show like that when it came out. I certainly hadn't. I wasn't out yet when it first came out, so to see women in relationships and dating and doing all kinds of things, it blew my mind. It certainly had an effect on me back when I first watched it. Then to come full circle, now I'm out, I'm an out comedian. I'm hopefully being a part of someone else's representation experience. I was such a tiny part of it; honestly it was just a cameo. But for me it was cool to be on set. It's cool to be a part of a show that's having another moment with a new generation.

GS: Sweet and Salty was filmed in Charlotte, North Carolina and you are a Belmont, North Carolina native and longtime resident. What makes that area so appealing to you?

FF: I really wanted to do my special there because I think when people think of the South they have a preconceived notion of what that's going to look like and what people are like there. I just wanted to show that there are people like that, but there are also people like me there. Here's my experience as a Southern person. I think that's an important story to tell and see because you forget that there are all kinds of people in every part of the country. I wanted to represent my area in that way as an out gay person. Also, it was important to me because the story is autobiographical, and it made sense to tell stories about my childhood 30 minutes from where I grew up. I wanted my family to be there but also the people in my hometown of Belmont have been so supportive of me and so accepting of me from day one. I've never gotten any negativity from my hometown for being gay. Long before I was hired to do comedy, they would let me perform in the back of bars. A hundred of them would pay five dollars to watch this newbie stand-up practice being a comic. They supported me long before anybody cared, and it felt right to share that big moment with them.

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GRAB LEE

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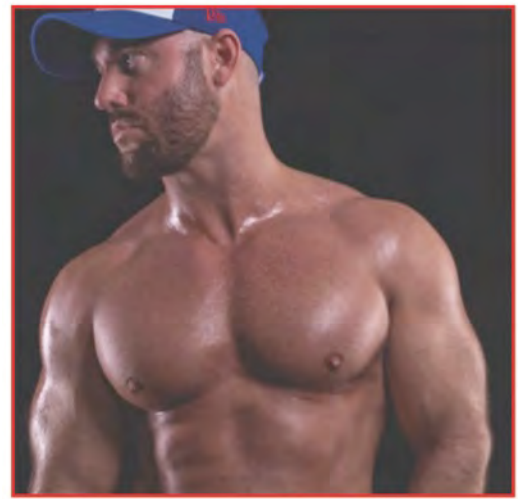
By Lee Gonzalez

The past few weeks have been pretty rough on us regular gym goers, especially the ones that stick to a heavy weight-lifting regimen like myself. All gyms have been officially closed, until the government wants to stop playing martial law and instilling fear into society. But it's all good; we can overcome their games and stay strong for ourselves. First thing I knew I had to do was to stay active during this time.

Mental health is just as important as physical health, and physical fitness plays a huge key in both! I immediately started a whole new fitness program for

myself. I have no access to real weights, and I knew atrophy (muscle loss) would soon be kicking in. I mentally prepared in my own way for this and I'm actually not that distraught in losing muscle mass. There's more important things I'm focused on and the #SwollLife is not one of them at this time.

I have found a new love in running. I have noticed my endurance getting better as the weeks go by. The pounding on the pavement is also great for the calves! There's something peaceful yet challenging



about running through nature. When I get to my outdoor workout destination, I start my new routine, here are some of my favorites:

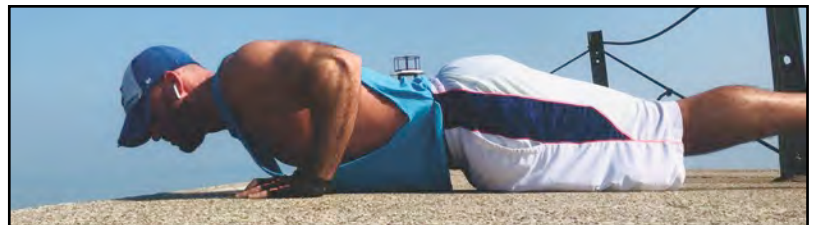


1. Step-Ups: These are great for legs! I find a high step that gives a good stretch. 11-15 step-up reps each leg. 5-7 sets. If you're someone who is staying indoor, you can use a sturdy chair for these.

2. Walking Lunges: I love doing these at the lakefront. Sometimes there's even ducks and birds greeting me =). Make sure your step forward is long enough so your knee doesn't bend past your toes. These can be done indoor by not walking but going back to starting position then repeat.



3. Rocks: These are great for dumbbell replacement while working outdoor! I've been using them for shoulder press, shoulder raises and holding a nice size rock to my chest while doing squats!



4. Push-Ups: One of the most effective workouts bc it works chest, shoulders and core! You can do these with your hand shaped like a diamond in the center of your chest to target your triceps!

I have found a new love in fitness under this challenging time. It's literally endless on what you can do outdoors. I've even found tree branches I can do pull-ups on! Try to stay active as much as you can during this time, and be creative! Your physical and mental health is too important to stay inactive due to fear.

One More Tip: Use a bucket with a nice handle for bicep curls! Fill it with water or canned food and beans for weight desired. If you have any questions, feel free to email me through my website www.TheLeeGonzalez.com

Note: Lee Gonzalez is not a doctor. If you have any questions about your health, exercise or these tips please consult your physician. Lee Gonzalez Illinois A/P Diploma, Obsessed Fitness Owner. To Contact Lee Email: TheLeeGonzalez@gmail.com

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GRAB HOLLY

A Gingerbread Whorehouse

By Holly Maholm

I stood on the sidewalk, looking up at No. 9, Wellington Square. There was a "For Rent" sign posted out front, so I called the number provided. The cheerful young woman who answered promised to tell her boss I was interested, and she asked me to wait there. I was seeking accommodations for five of the workers at Donut Time, and this house was certainly big enough, but would they be willing to move in?

The building was old – early 1900s – and would best be described as "Victorian Gingerbread." That is, it was built in the Victorian style, and was decorated with multiple pieces of "gingerbread trim" adorning its every architectural feature. (Meaning: Its every wall and window, every cornice, plinth and pilaster, every joint and pillar and corbel, were embellished with ornamental woodwork featuring spirals, curlicues and whimsical floral designs.)

The house was three floors in total, with a wrap-around porch across the front and down one side. The upper floors supported multiple gables, cupolas and balconies, and surmounting all was a steeply pitched roof pierced on three

sides by circular turrets and overhanging balusters of dubious structural integrity. Many window openings had been boarded up, though others retained what must have been the original stained glass depicting the virtues of Industry, Charity, Frugality and Thrift.

Finally (in testament to its history as a mortuary), the entire edifice – a cacophony of intersecting angles, curvatures and protuberances – had been painted a dull and cheerless black.

I was soon joined by my friend, Gary, vice president at the local bank. We exchanged greetings, and Gary explained. "So, this is No. 9. It's pretty well-known around here. The previous owner stopped making payments, so now the bank owns it. Are you interested?" I replied, "I'm looking for a place to house most of the workers at Donut Time, and I would actually prefer a place on the Square."

Gary took a deep breath and began. "Well, okay. But you need to know the history of No. 9. It was – as its number suggests – the ninth structure built on the Square." "Wait!" I interrupted. "How can Donut Time be No. 5? This house is older." "Yes," Gary agreed, "but Donut Time was built on the site of an earlier building that burned down. They just kept the number.

"Anyway," he continued, "No. 9 was built by a wealthy man who owned a machine shop. He and his wife lived here for decades, but they were childless, and when his wife died he moved his mistress in with him.

"She was a lot younger than he was, and when he died she had to find an income to support herself and this house. So she started... not to be shy about it... a whorehouse. And despite being both infamous and illegal, it was also – as everyone acknowledged – an honest, dependable and 'neighborly' sort of whorehouse. So... in those days, the people of the town (even the ones who never admitted to patronizing the place) kind of just 'looked the other way' where this house was concerned.

"After a few years Prohibition came along, and – as you might imagine – serving alcohol suddenly became the most profitable part of the business. Accordingly, the mistress turned the whole first floor of the house into a speakeasy, which was very profitable, and would have supported her and the



other girls all through Prohibition, except, later, the Depression hit and killed the business. So the house was boarded up and stood empty.

"That's when old man Hauserman got the idea of moving his mortuary chapel and funeral home out of his building on the edge of town to a prominent place on the Square. When he moved in, he constructed a cinder-block building out back, where he prepared the bodies for burial. He also constructed a crematorium, which was not appreciated by the neighbors – the ones who wanted to leave their windows open. He thought having his mortuary on the Square sort of 'elevated it' in the eyes of society. No one else thought that, but he did.

"He ran the funeral home until about eight years ago, when he got too old and stopped making payments on the note. The bank boarded up the house, but we didn't notice when some... 'squatters' moved in. At first they didn't cause problems, but later the police informed me they had turned the building into a crack house. They were selling meth and crack out the back door, and most of the squatters were either drug dealers or crack whores. So maybe the house has come full circle.

"Look, Holly," he apologized, "I wouldn't blame you if you decided the reputation of this house is something you don't want to inflict on your LGBT workers." I answered, "We'll have to see. I'll ask them and let them decide."

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Volume 2 of What Would a Unicorn Do? (now available on Amazon) which contains additional episodes of Holly's on-going story of her life among the unicorns, plus additional articles and a short story of a transgender woman confronted by Satan! Send a message to Holly www.hollymaholm.com.

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What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes, COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic>.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



[cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

GRAB A GETAWAY

TRAVEL



Columbus, Ohio Short North and German Village – The Two Gayborhoods Portland Only Better? C-Bus is Perfect for a Visit (and You Can Drive There)

By Bill Malcolm

What's the fourth fastest growing city in the country, the fastest growing city in the Midwest, and the biggest city in Ohio? A city that has not one but two gayborhoods?

That would be Columbus, Ohio – another millennial magnet and hangout for the urban hipsters. It's also a fashion capital. Combine that with Midwest friendliness and affordability (and the huge student scene at The Ohio State University) and you are in for a great long weekend or week long vacation. And best of all, it is drivable from many cities.

(The two neighborhoods are the Short North Arts District north of downtown and Historic Germantown Village south of downtown.)

WHAT TO DO

Don't miss the North Market, an indoor farmers' market with great specialty shops like Jeni's Splendid Ice

Creams. Also inside the Market is Stauf's Coffee which makes a strong Moka Java blend. North Market has been in operation since 1876. You will find them at 59 Spruce Street.

Nearby is Goodale Park (also in Short North), perfect for a stroll.

Back on High Street in the Short North, you can design your own candle at the Candle Lab where you scent your own gourmet candle creations. Also check out Torso.

You will not want to miss the ground breaking exhibit, Art After Stonewall: 1969-1989, at the Columbus Museum of Art. CMOA is at 480 E. Broad Street. It features art and artists including Divine and Andy Warhol in the era after Stonewall.

In Germantown south of downtown, you can enjoy the brick streets. Walk among the life size structures at Topiary Park at 480 East

Town Street. Get lost in the Book Loft's 32 rooms of books.

(www.bookloft.com). Take a stroll in Schiller Park after your book browsing.

GETTING THERE

Columbus is a short or medium length drive from many cities.

The John Glenn International Airport has nonstops from around the country. (It's a little over a 5 hour drive from Downtown Chicago.)

WHERE TO EAT

Ray Ray's barbeque food truck outside the Land Grant Brewing Company allows you to enjoy the best BBQ in town with the local IPAs. My favorite was the Experimental IPA.

The Kitchen (231 E. Livingston Avenue) is a great group experience which it calls participatory dining.

Barcelona in German Village has three kinds of paella including vegetarian. It's located in an old



Paella at Barcelona in Columbus

German social hall in use since the mid-1890s (barcelonacolumbus.com). Check out the patio. It's where metropolitan chic meets old world charm. You will find it at 263 E. Whittier Street.

Also in German Village is *Ambrose and Eve* which makes a perfect brunch spot. Try the perch sandwich. The brioche homemade bread with pepper jack cheese is to die for. You will find it at 716 S. High. After brunch, check out the Antiques on High.

The Service Bar in the Short North (1230 N. Courtland) has unique menu creations. Try the brussel sprouts salad as well as it's version of a taco. The Middle West Spirits Bar inside the restaurant also features craft vodka and whiskey for purchase (www.middlewestspirits.com).

Also in Short North is the *Guild House Restaurant* which features farm to table creations by Cameron Mitchell.

Goodale Station Restaurant downtown has a great rooftop scene. Try the cheese plate. You will find it in the Canopy Hotel at 77 E. Nationwide Boulevard.

Also downtown is *The Keep Kitchen and Liquor Bar* which is perfect for brunch. It is located in Columbus' art deco high rise, LeVeque Lincoln Tower which now includes a hotel. It was built in the 1927 as the headquarters of an insurance company. The unique terra cotta exterior is rarely found in the Midwest. The art deco murals in the lobby are a treasure.

NIGHTLIFE

In Germantown, you will find excellent cocktails at the *Tremont Lounge* (708 S. High) while you can enjoy the piano bar and neighborhood friendliness at the *Club Diversity* (4941 S. High). Enjoy the sexy dancers and

drag queens at *Boscoe's Bar* (224 S. High). Make your first stop the *Union Café* at 782 N. High. It's Columbus' original video bar and is lots of fun.

Across the street is the *Axis Nightclub* at 775 N. High. Both are in the Short North. Enjoy the drag show Friday nights at the Axis. I hear they also have

dancers and a Sunday T-dance. Downtown, you will find *Slammers*, a Columbus lesbian bar where everyone is welcome.

WHERE TO STAY

I stayed at the new *Moxy Hotel* by Marriott in the Short North Neighborhood (just north of downtown at 808 N. High). The Moxy is Marriott's millennial brand – boutique and affordable (and fun). You check in at the bar (and get a free drink coupon). The rooms are fun and functional but you will want to hang out in the lobby or in the new *Town House Restaurant* (which opens soon). It's near the bars and shopping in the Short North. If you forgot anything, the United Dairy Farmers convenience store at 900 N. High has food to go, great ice cream, liquor and more. The Moxy features a nice fitness center on the sixth floor as well as well as a balcony with great views.

Also is Short North is the new *Graduate Hotel*, a small chain found in Big Ten cities throughout the Midwest and beyond. Short North also has a *Meridien Hotel* and a *Hampton Inn*.

I have also

stayed at the *Red Roof Inn Downtown*, a hotel version of the brand which is very affordable. The *Westin Southern Hotel* is another favorite. All the major chains are downtown.

FOR MORE INSIDER TRAVEL TIPS

PRIZM Magazine published bimonthly is Ohio's LGBTQ magazine. It's full of local news and upcoming events and on line at PrizmNews.com.

Stop by the *Stonewall Columbus Community Center* at 1160 N. High for travel tips or read its calendar online at www.stonewallcolumbus.org.

Experience Columbus publishes *Out In Columbus* which is online at www.outincbus.com.

(614) is a monthly magazine about Columbus which has travel tips as is *Columbus Monthly*.

Columbus is full of surprises and fun. Consider a trip today. You won't be disappointed.

Bill Malcolm is America's only LGBTQ syndicated value travel columnist. He is based in Indianapolis. Special thanks to Experience Columbus for its hospitality. His publication is or has been carried in LGBTQ publications from Charlotte to Los Angeles. It is also posted on the IGLTA travel blog. You can find him on Facebook.



Columbus Museum of Art

GRAB JADE

The Finest Jade Pretty Poison's Lead Singer Reflects on Thirty of Years of the Band's Preeminent Single

By John Stein

Pretty Poison's #1 Dance/Pop/R&B smash, "Catch Me (I'm Falling)," sold over a million records and was certified Gold in 1989, during its initial release. Thirty years later, the song is making a major bounce-back, prominently appearing in two Netflix Shows, *AJ and the Queen*, starring RuPaul, and *Cheer*, a docu-series about the sport of competitive college cheerleading featuring the Navarro College Cheer team.

"I fell out of my chair when I watched RuPaul performing the song on *AJ and the Queen*," says Jade Starling, the award-winning singer and songwriter who is still churning out the hits. Her latest single, "Fired Up" climbed to number 3 on the Billboard club charts last year. Next up will be "Got a Love for You," a remake of the 1990 smash by Jomanda.

Starling says she didn't know about "Catch Me (I'm Falling)" being in *AJ and the Queen* until a few weeks ago, when friends started texting her about it, but she couldn't be happier. "Ru absolutely slayed with his impersonation of me! I could tell he studied the original "Catch Me" video. I especially loved the fringe gloves!"

We caught up with the pop star in her NYC home.

John Stein: *Thirty years after its release, "Catch Me (I'm Falling)" continues to be as popular as ever!*

Jade Starling: The song keeps reinventing itself! It has been featured in dozens of TV shows including the final season of *Breaking Bad* and in films like *The Big Sick*, *You Don't Mess with the Zohan* and *Hiding Out*.

JS: *Did you know right away the song would be a hit?*

Jade: I was in England when they mixed the original song in the late eighties. This was before mp3s and



emails, so I had to hear it over the phone! They overnighted it to me for approval and when I put in the CD, my peeps in England were all jamming to it. I think I knew then that we had a hit on our hands.

JS: *Do you remember the first time you heard "Catch Me (I'm Falling)" on the radio?*

Jade: I was driving across the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, heading into Philadelphia, listening to the top 40 station, when it came on radio. I got so excited; I nearly crashed my car! I felt a rush from my head to my toes. It was truly surreal. I must admit the first time was the best time!

JS: *It went on to sell over a million copies, hitting #1 on the Billboard dance chart, #8 on Billboard Pop and #13 on Billboard R&B.*

Jade: We were in some very impressive company. George Harrison, George Michael, Richard Marx and Michael Jackson all had songs on the chart at the time. It was certainly rarified air to be in. We were also performing on countdown shows like *Solid Gold*, *Soul Train*, *Top of the Pops* and *American Bandstand*.

JS: *Oh, yes, the countdown TV shows! It was a magical time in music...*

Jade: Of all of the artists we got to



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meet, Prince ranks as my number one. He dropped in to our recording session at Sunset Sound to meet us. We were recording with Andre Cymone who was Prince's bass player and collaborator on the first three Prince LPs. It was amazing to sip coffee with him and get to know the musical genius.

JS: What was the true relationship between the groups Poison and Pretty Poison?

Jade: There was some confusion back in the day with the group Poison and my group Pretty Poison. The lore states that Poison was originally called Pretty Poison but that we actually owned and trademarked the Pretty Poison name and hit the charts first with our single, "Nighttime," so they dropped Pretty and became simply, Poison. It worked out well for them. I remember Brett Michaels came out to see us when we played in his hometown of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. We took photos together that ended up in all the trade magazines with the headline "Poison meets Pretty Poison." He was very cool.

JS: Do you still tour the world performing songs from Pretty Poison?

Jade: I'm predominantly a solo artist now but I still tour with Pretty Poison. The group is a duo consisting of Whey Cooler and me. We are currently on several arena tours including the Freestyle Explosion that includes Stevie B, Lisa Lisa, Shannon and other artists. Last week we played



for ten thousand screaming fans at the Don Haskins Arena in El Paso. I'm excited because I just learned that Pretty Poison will be in the 80s in the Sand tour this summer with a killer lineup that includes Billy Idol, Cheap Trick,

Belinda Carlyle, and Sheena Easton. Can't wait!

Visit Jadestarling.com. Follow Jade Starling on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @jadestarling

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