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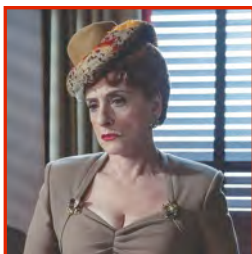
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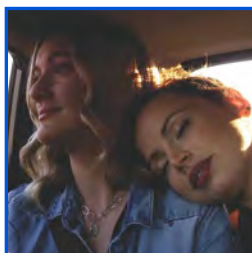


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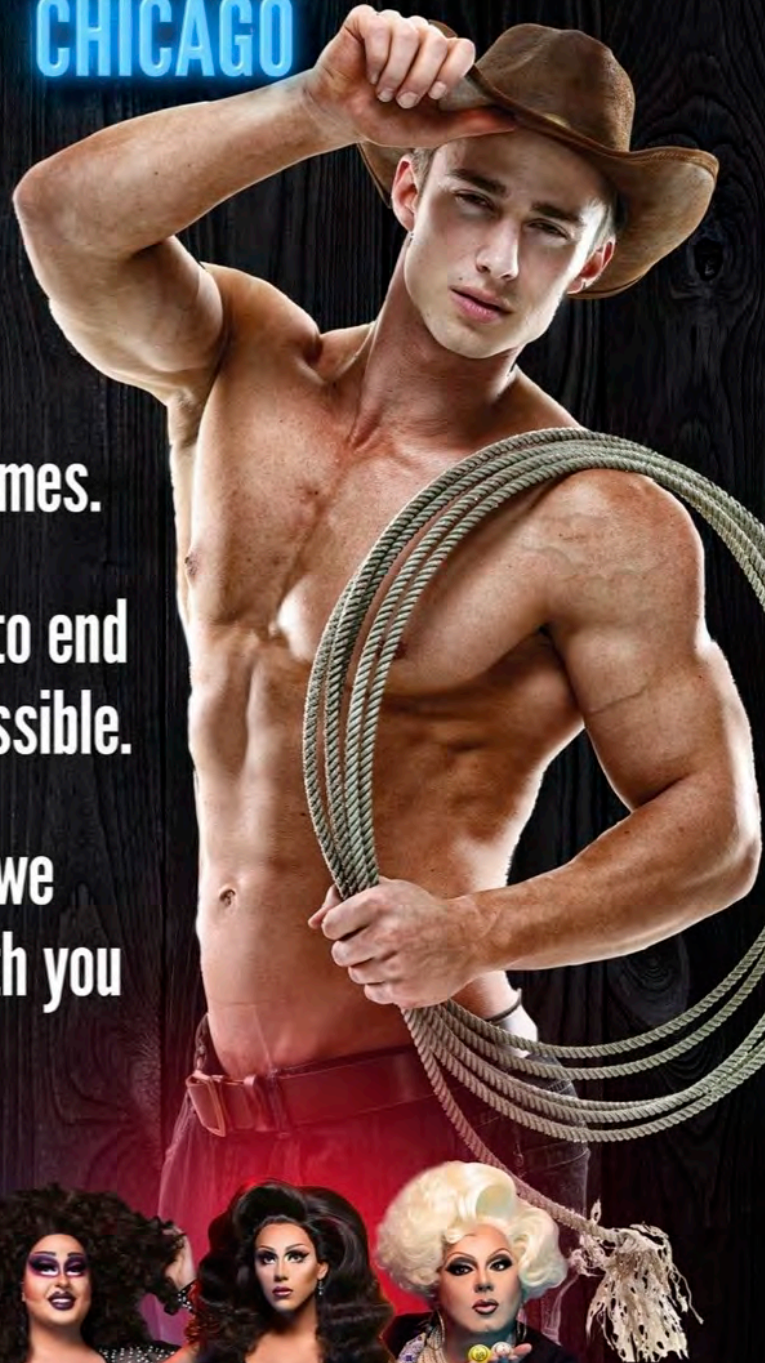
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GRAB RICK & GRIFF

Two Kings of Hearts The Men of *Rick and the Griffopotamus* Launch a New Online Adventure

By John Stein

The sky's the limit for Rick Twombly and Griff King, better known to their 700,000 social media followers as Rick and the Griffopotamus.

In addition to spending their time in quarantine growing their social media platforms — including their very popular Onlyfans page — the guys have been hard at work preparing Two Kings Unlimited, their very own online shop that will feature exclusive erotic Rick and Griff merchandise. Among the offerings: pajama onesies, playing cards, a gorgeous coffee table book, and a line of phallic sex toys molded from, well, you guessed it. We spoke with the husbands from their Atlanta home.

John Stein: *Have you both always*

been exhibitionists?

Griff: We haven't always been exhibitionists, but we do have a history that made exhibitionism comfortable for us. Rick comes from a background in entertainment as a professional dancer and aerialist so he has been



comfortable with nudity and showing it off.

Rick: Griff, on the other hand, had to evolve into his exhibitionist self. He, as a younger man, was overweight and struggled with his image. What changed it all was a visit to his doctor, where he was told, if he didn't change his lifestyle habits, he would be dead from a heart attack before the age of 40. Since then he has dedicated his life to health and wellness.

JS: *Did you imagine Rick and The Griffopotamus would become the social media phenomenon that it has become?*

Griff: We never thought that Rick and the Griffopotamus would become what it is today. We were just having fun and never imagined so many people would want to join along for the ride. But for every hundred people who love what we do, there's one who wants to criticize or find



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something to dislike. We pay little attention to the latter, and focus our energies onto those who love what we do.

JS: Who gets the most fan mail?

Griff: We are pretty evenly tied with getting fan mail. Most people follow us as a couple, so the majority of the mail is directed to us both.

JS: Whose dildo is selling the best?

Rick: Technically, the Griff dildo has sold a few more models, but as Griff will tell you, it takes a brave and dedicated soul to accommodate mine on a regular basis.

JS: Whose idea was it to craft dildoes from the real things?

Rick: We were getting requests from fans and one happened to work in the movie industry as a makeup artist, specializing in prosthetics. We began a dialogue and before you know it, he came and made molds and a prototype.

JS: Did he have to pour plaster around your penises to grab the mold?

Griff: The dildo making process isn't as complicated as you'd think. First off, the artist mixes a compound with water to create the material used for the mold. He quickly pours the solution into 2-liter bottle, cut in half and we stick it into the solution. The challenge was staying fully erect and as girthy as possible while the cold, wet gel cured. After about five minutes, the artist carefully removed the mold and, voila, it's done!

JS: The dildoes are the first offerings from your new merchandise collection, Two Kings Unlimited. Where did you come up with the name?

Rick: Two Kings is a combination of our last names. Our hyphenated last name is the Twombly-Kings, which by pure



chance becomes Two Kings when abbreviated.

Griff: We designed our logo to reflect that, two K's back to back with a crown symbol over top. The backs of the K's in the center actually form the Roman numeral for Two, as well.

JS: Are you excited for the coffee table book?

Rick: Yes! I've always been a fan of Madonna and her 'Sex'

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book. It's become an integral part of shaping my idea of self-love, sex positivity, and owning my power. **Griff:** We wanted to put forth a book that showcased two gay, married men, who love each other, are shaking the ideals of heteronormativity within the gay world, and pushing the idea of loving yourself as you are, owning your sexuality, and taking your power away from society and owning it for yourself.

JS: Are there any parts of your relationship that you keep from fans?

Rick: In reality, our fans see about one percent of our actual lives. On social media we present a heightened reality, a fantasy, and sprinkle in just a glimpse of what actually goes on when the cameras are off. I mean who wants to see us take out the trash, clean out the litter boxes, or pop each other's zits in the shower?

JS: Does jealousy ever rear its ugly head into your relationship?

Griff: Jealousy doesn't enter our relationship on any level. Long before we ever considered a more adventurous sex life, we spent a year and a half developing a solid foundation in our relationship. Of all the things we argue about, our sex life or other men has never been one of them.

For more Visit <http://www.TwoKingsUnlimited.com> Follow



Rick and Griff on Instagram @Rick_and_the_Griffopotamus and on their individual Instagram accounts @Two_Kings_Unlimited and @The_Griffopotamus. They are also on OnlyFans @RickAndGriff.

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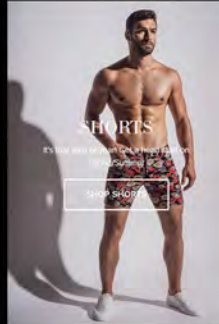
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GRAB PATTI

NETFLIX



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Patti LuPone: A Comeback in Quarantine

Stage icon talks *Hollywood*, her basement videos and why ‘Ladies Who Lunch’ will never be the same

By Chris Azzopardi

In Ryan Murphy’s *Hollywood*, the wife becomes the boss, the “black screenwriter” is simply a screenwriter, and the gay leading man is just himself. Naturally, it stars Broadway icon Patti LuPone, who, in conversations like the one we had recently, thrives on brazen authenticity.

In the seven-episode Netflix series, LuPone portrays Avis Amberg, the wife of a studio head whose work is relegated to the kitchen. But not for long, thanks to Murphy’s 1940s corrective where power dynamics shift in favor of the underdogs and outsiders in this alternate reality, a fantasy depiction of Tinseltown’s Golden Age reimagined as diverse, inclusive and unabashedly queer.

That LuPone, 71, portrays a grand Hollywood dame and housewife-turned-studio head – in, of course, only the most glam fur-fringed couture – should be no surprise given how she’s been commanding the stage through a variety

of extravagant personas for a half century. In 1979, as Eva Perón, she won her first Tony for *Evita*; her second win came in 2008, for her portrayal of Rose in *Gypsy*. She’s also been nominated for roles in *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *War Paint*, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* and *Anything Goes*.

On Broadway is where she was throwing back martinis in Stephen Sondheim’s 1970 musical *Company*, as Joanne, until the pandemic lockdown forced theaters to shut down.

Now quarantined in rural Connecticut with her husband, Matthew Johnston, and son Josh, LuPone has been doling out delicious bits on social media. In one video she posted to Twitter, she channeled Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*, making a dramatic entrance from her basement steps (when Glenn Close got the role for the Broadway run of the show in 1994, LuPone said she reacted by trashing a

dressing room). Other at-home videos of LuPone involve her giving aptly chaotic, hungover tours of her treasure-filled basement.

When we connect via phone, I tell LuPone that she might actually be happy that, for once, this conversation is occurring between phone lines, not on Zoom. “You’re right,” she says, roaring with laughter. “It really is the Brady Bunch.”

Chris Azzopardi: Do you have any more basement videos in the works?

Patti LuPone: My problem right now is focus and structure. If I don’t do something in the morning, I’m in bed till 4:30 in the afternoon. So my kid – we’ve come up with a couple more. We just have to get down to it. We have to get up in the morning and go, “OK, now we’re gonna do the video.” We have two plans. So we’ll see.

The problem, Chris, is it has to be spontaneous. It’s the only way it’s funny.



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The day after my birthday when I was so hungover I went, half-asleep, (slurring, drowsy) “Let’s ... go ... make ... a ... video, I’m ... re—a-dy.” (Laughs.)

CA: *If it weren’t for COVID, you’d be throwing back martinis on Broadway in ‘Company’. So I’m happy to hear you’re still throwing back martinis – or something!*

PL: Well, last night we had frozen strawberry daiquiris, but that was really the first time, because I was texting with a friend of mine and she said, “Go have a daiquiri,” and I went, “You know what? That sounds like a good idea.” And we seem to have all the fixings for it! So my kid made daiquiris for my husband, himself and me. Then I had red wine, which wasn’t too smart. What I’m drinking a lot of right now is red wine. And I’m just trying ... you know it’s really easy to let yourself go!

CA: *Have you completely let yourself go?*

PL: No! No! I’m holding it together. I have to! (Laughs.) Years ago a friend of mine, when he was on unemployment, I said, “What are you doing, Tony?” He said I’m preparing for my comeback! So, Chris, I’m prepping my comeback!

CA: *You made me teary when you recently sang “Anyone Can Whistle” for Stephen Sondheim’s virtual 90th birthday party. Do you like performing virtually?*

PL: What was difficult about it was the technical aspect. My kid was filming it and I had one AirPods in and I’m going, “I can’t really hear,” and then my kid said, “You’re pitchy,” and I was like, “WHAT DO YOU MEAN I’M PITCHY. I’M NEVER pitchy!”

There’s always the fear that, you know, you’re gonna sound like shit. And Stephen’s thanking everybody who partook, and I wrote him back and I said, “The rub is that we all wish we could’ve done better.” It’s true. I’m sure everybody thought, “Damn, if only I was in costume and makeup and on the stage at the Philharmonic with a full orchestra behind me.”

CA: *You were singing “The Ladies Who Lunch” in ‘Company’ which Meryl Streep, Christine Baranski and Audra McDonald performed during that same birthday celebration. What did you think of their version?*

PL: (Explodes into a thunderous, dragged out cackle.) When it was over, I went, “I’ll never be able to sing ‘Ladies Who Lunch’ again!”

CA: *Yeah? Because they set the bar?*

PL: No. I don’t think they set the bar – I think they trashed the number!

CA: *They set the bar for trashing the number?*

PL: Yeah, exactly! That’s what I think! I mean, I say that with great humor, but I’m not going to be able to sing it without thinking of them doing it. (Laughs.) This is all joke, by the way! This is all humor!

CA: *Let’s talk about ‘Hollywood’. Does it feel good to be part of a project that’s beaming with hopefulness in a time when hope seems harder and harder to find?*

PL: Yes, yes, yes. And I hope that is translated across the board. It’s hard. It’s really, really hard. I mean, I’m having a hard time. We all are. I’m not unique. And my problem is, I don’t know who to believe anymore. I’m so confused by what everybody’s saying. It’s just ... I just ... ahh. And you can’t stick your head in the sand because any minute now we’ll be “hi Hitler”-ing (President Trump). So I’m just really confused. I’m confused, I’m lost.

CA: *So how do you keep your mind*



Photo Courtesy of Netflix

straight? By drinking strawberry daiquiris?

PL: (Laughs.) How do I keep my mind straight? That's the question! Because my problem has been structure, and I'm the kind of person that goes, "OK, you have to be on the set or you have to be at the theater – OK, great. I know what my schedule is." But without a schedule, I'm lost. I'm going, "I don't know what to do." I guess I am my work.

CA: For structure, what's the first thing you do in the morning?

PL: I started working out remotely with my trainer. Just to do something, just to feel like something is done. And then as soon as the weather gets really nice I'm gonna walk up our road, which is part of a mountain, and walk back down. And I have shows coming up, unless they're going to be canceled, in January. I haven't done them in a while, so what I started to do, because the weather still isn't that great where I am right now, I'm listening to the shows that I have to sing in January, just to remember them. I haven't sung them in a while. Then I'll feel like I've accomplished something in the day and it hasn't been – this is our lives! And our lives are being wasted! Not that work is the only thing, but if we

can't figure out what to do in the time that we have been given, that's pathetic! It's a blessing, really!

CA: If you were running Hollywood right now, what changes would you make?

PL: I would listen to the artists, I would listen to the writers. And I would not greenlight pictures because of statistics. I would ignore the statistics, and I would greenlight films and television shows that I thought were going to be beneficial for education and for parents as opposed to, "Well, that was a big hit; let's make 9,000 more of those Marvel comics."

CA: Would you let them make another 'Mamma Mia!' movie?

PL: (Deliberates, speaks flatly, deadpans.) No.

CA: We don't need a third?

PL: I hate ABBA. I have *always* hated ABBA. I will not go see *Mamma Mia!* because I hate ABBA. And I've hated ABBA since I was a kid, because I'm a closet rocker; when ABBA came out, I went, "Oh, you've got to be kidding." My favorite band is The Band, and so if you're a rocker, and if you're a rocker and The Band is your favorite band and

ABBA comes along, there's no way. And so I don't support ABBA at all.

CA: So you haven't even seen the 'Mamma Mia!' movies?

PL: No. Can't support ABBA!

CA: Is 'Hollywood' the gayest thing you've ever been a part of?

PL: Is it? Let me think.

CA: Consider that pool party scene – all those naked men, penises hanging out.

PL: Yeah! And the thing that was kind of distressing to me when I was shooting it was: Why am I going home?! Why is Avis going home?!

CA: Yeah. Why doesn't Avis get to go to the party?

PL: (Feigns weeping.) Why couldn't she just sit there and ogle the penises? No. I go home early.

CA: Didn't you talk to Ryan about that?

PL: Trust me, I thought about that. But no, I didn't. That was in the script and I went, "OK, I gotta leave the party." But I'm trying to think – is that the gayest thing? Maybe it is. I'm trying to think of anything I've done. I can't remember



Photo Courtesy of Netflix

anything that I do and that I've done. Maybe. I don't know.

CA: That party that Avis doesn't get to go to – have you ever gone to an industry party like that in your life?

PL: No. I mean, I've gone to pool parties with tons of Broadway dancers who were gay, but they kept their clothes on.

CA: That seems less fun.

PL: Well, their bodies were incredible to look at, but they were all clothed. Well, barely clothed! Everybody had a speedo on!

CA: If someone decides to reimagine your life in 70 years, what parts of it would you ask that they keep factually intact and which parts would you allow them to reimagine?

PL: All of it! I think they should keep it all factually intact! It's been a rebellious life. And it's been interesting. I hope it's not over – the rebellion part, and the interesting part. No – they don't have to reimagine anything. It's been a lot of fun.

CA: You've turned down diva roles in the past, like one that Ryan offered you on 'Glee'. Avis does have some diva qualities, though. What about her divaness made you say yes to

playing her?

PL: I hadn't read any scripts when Ryan pitched it to me. All Ryan said was that I was going to be the wife of a studio head and I would inherit the studio and make movies for gays, minorities and women. That's all he told me. But Ryan is such a champion, and I'm not offered a lot of roles, and I'm not going to turn down Ryan or a role that he offers me. He expanded the role for me in the process, and of course it's the most stunning era for women. Every time I would go to a costume fitting I was reeling with delight because the stuff was stunning. You feel so glamorous in that time period. I felt really, really glamorous, and I'm just thrilled.

I'll tell you, even though I knew from a very early age that I was born for the Broadway musical stage, I was one of those kids who wanted to go to Hollywood and be a movie star. Who doesn't? If you're in the business, who doesn't want to be a movie star, especially when you go to a movie theater and see your idols up on the silver screen? When I was 12, I saw Disney's *Swiss Family Robinson* with Tommy Kirk and marched out of that movie theater determined to go to Hollywood and be his leading lady. At 12!

CA: To be challenging the patriarchy like Avis does – was that cathartic for you?

PL: Yeah, I think so. Any time a woman gets to push back on any kind of male authority, it's cathartic. Push back and succeed. But I seem to have done that all my life, just in life, and then in my career. But I've always kind of pushed back because authority needs to be explained to me. I need to understand, "Why do you have authority? If it's something you want me to do as a human being, I'll do it; but if you are authoritarian about it, I need to understand why."

CA: When in your career have you felt slighted or like you didn't get what you deserved because you're a woman?

PL: Hmm. A lot of times. I would say the majority of my career – not necessarily on the musical stage. You know, I think I got what I deserve as far as roles are concerned. I think I've had a varied career. But in the development of them, I think that I've been stifled because I was a woman. The opinion that you have is not valued because you're a woman. That kind of stuff. I've always questioned authority and I've always

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spoken up for what I perceived as injustice. Always. I think it's just in my DNA. That's just how I thought. And it has nothing to do with being a woman or a man – it has to do with me being Patti.

CA: It was different to watch you have that rough sex scene with actor David Corenswet because I was like, "Oh, wait – we don't typically see this." We don't get to see a woman over 50 go at it in full view like you two do.

PL: Yeah!

CA: Did you relish that moment because for whatever stupid reason it's still so rare to see that onscreen?

PL: Yep, are you kidding? Gimme more Gina, as they say! I had a sex scene with Dylan McDermott that was rougher but that was cut! Yeah. That was sad.

(Laughs.)

CA: What advice did the intimacy coach give you? How does that even work?

PL: He was a great guy. And he was always there to make us comfortable. I don't know what other intimacy coaches do, but I don't think I need an intimacy coach. I think I know what I'm doing. I'm certainly not uncomfortable, and if I was uncomfortable, I would talk to the director or the actor I was working with. As long as the coaches don't interfere with acting, I'm fine with them. But if they start to interpret for us, then I'm not happy.

CA: As we near the upcoming presidential election, I was curious: What advice do you have for LGBTQ people who struggle with the fact that some of their family members

are still voting for Trump?

PL: Oh, I'm having a real hard time with that, Chris. I don't have family members necessarily that I discuss it with, so I don't know if they do. But I have close friends and I actually had to cut one loose. It's heartbreaking. But I'm thinking of my own mental health and I'm not going to get into an argument with anybody about that Piece. Of. Shit. I'm just not. I can't. I have very dear friends; they're Republicans; it's really hard. It's really hard to talk to people. I don't even want to talk to these people.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the 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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GRAB A MOVIE

FILM

Wendy Jo Carlton talks about the digital release of her latest feature film *Good Kisser*

By Michel Khordoc

Wolfe Video, the largest exclusive distributor of gay and lesbian films, announced the early digital release of award-winning writer/director Wendy Jo Carlton's critically acclaimed feature film, *Good Kisser*.

Written and directed by Wendy Jo Carlton, who has been making female-oriented queer movies for two decades, *Good Kisser* features an ensemble cast starring *Kari Alison Hodge*, *Julia Eriinger*, *Courtney McCullough*, and the feature debut of *Rachel Paulson* (younger sister of actor, Sarah Paulson).

Good Kisser tells the story of a lesbian couple who expose the faults in their relationship when they invite another woman into their bed. Effectively breaking the stigma associated with polyamory, Carlton gives insight on a taboo topic that's typically exaggerated and portrayed with ignorance.



It is a unique sort of relationship drama because it takes the "hook-up" or "one-night stand" narrative to another level of emotional complexity.

Wendy Jo Carlton is also an Associate Producer on the award-winning documentary, *Circus of Books*, executive produced by *Ryan Murphy*, on Netflix (2020).

We sat down with the talented filmmaker to talk about her film.

Michael Khordoc: How did the idea

for *Good Kisser* come to life?

Wendy Jo Carlton: I love to write about physical chemistry, and about women who are in the midst of emotional clarity, or breakdowns!

When I was writing *Good Kisser*, one thing I knew for sure was that Jenna, the protagonist, struggles with low self-esteem and she often has social anxiety attacks.

Jenna is a complex character in that she is creative and open-minded, but she hasn't recognized her own strengths yet. She is on the verge of a

breakthrough, and I want to watch Jenna "wake up" in nearly real time.

Good Kisser is about the joy of organic sexual attraction, and also about the power of intellectual connection with someone, as we watch Jenna fall in and out of love several times! Ultimately, she stands up for herself, but in surprising ways.

MK: Why was it important for you to make this movie?

WJC: I'm obsessed with





chemistry and attraction, and the different ways attraction informs our choices, good or bad.

How we deceive ourselves, and the people we care about, which is human. Interpersonal communication and how we navigate that, and sometimes manipulate dynamics.

MK: In your opinion, what makes this film a MUST-SEE?

WJC: Good Kisser has a steady simmering beat of sexual tension and emotional drama between three complex women, that's definitely worth watching. Plus popsicles.

MK: What was it like wearing the hats of both writer and director?

WJC: It's fairly easy to flow from writing the screenplay and directing the movie because it takes a chunk of time between accomplishing the writing and raising the money and the gathering the film production team. I wrote and directed the features, *Jamie & Jessie are Not Together*, two seasons of "Easy Abby" web series and a dozen short films before that. So, it's become natural for me to imagine who and what I'm looking for in casting actors for the characters and what physical and emotional qualities instinctively "fit" to me.

MK: What would you like the audience to take away from Good Kisser?

WJC: Hopefully, viewers will be entertained, drawn into the drama and walk away feeling a bit turned on and hopeful!

Follow @goodkissermovie on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for the latest release updates.

Watch Good Kisser Trailer: <https://youtu.be/ISmcJqlpUNG>

ISmcJqlpUNG

Pre-Order on WolfeOnDemand.com: <https://bit.ly/3dRZZt0>

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	Artist	Title
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2	Robin Schulz	In Your Eyes ft. Alida (Charlie Lane Radio Mix)
3	Galantis & Hook N Sling	Never Felt A Love Like This ft. Dotan (VIP Edit)
4	Da Buzz	Touch My Soul
5	San Holo	Honest ft. BROODS (Midnight Kids Remix)
6	Tom Ferry & Kiesza	I Think That I Like You
7	Marc Benjamin & DNMKG	Horizons ft. Able Faces
8	OMI	I Want You
9	Gorgon City & DRAMA	Nobody
10	Alan Walker x Ava Max	Alone Pt. II (RetroVision Radio Remix)
11	JLV	Breath by Breath ft. Clara Sofie
12	Alok & Hugel	I Don't Wanna Talk ft. Amber Van Day
13	Jax Jones & Ella Henderson	This Is Real
14	Doja Cat	Say So (Jax Jones Midnight Snack Remix)
15	Asher Postman x Disero x Annelisa Franklin	Say (Kastrá Remix)



Sukie de la Croix and Owen Keehnen need your assistance once again!

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GRAB SOME BUBBLY

Barefoot's Limited-Edition Pride Packaging Collection Celebrates the Strength and Resilience of the LGBTQ+ Community

Continuing to #MarchOnward as a longtime ally to the LGBTQ+ community, Barefoot proudly launches its new, limited-edition Pride Packaging Collection. The collection comes in four unique designs, with each design honoring the strength and resilience of the LGBTQ+ community.

A portion of the proceeds, up to \$60,000, will benefit Free Mom Hugs, a non-profit organization consisting of parents and allies who love the LGBTQ+ community and work toward full affirmation and equality for all. Free Mom Hugs was founded by Sara Cunningham, who became an accidental activist when she wore a homemade button with the words "Free Mom Hugs" to a Pride parade to support her gay son. She received hundreds of hugs from attendees whose parents abandoned them when they came out. She later had a social media post go viral when she volunteered to be a "stand-in mom" at LGBTQ+ weddings.

In addition to the many educational programs Free Mom Hugs hosts annually, the organization embarks on its signature Free Mom Hugs Tour visiting cities and sites of historical significance to the LGBTQ+ community. This year, Barefoot will be a proud supporter as the tour becomes a virtual experience to celebrate Pride during the 2020 season.

"Free Mom Hugs is overjoyed to have a partner in Barefoot, a brand deeply committed to celebrating the LGBTQ+ community and supporting our mission to advocate for and advance equality and acceptance for all. This donation allows us to continue providing educational resources and training programs to support the LGBTQ+ community and their families. The needs have exponentially increased

during this challenging year for the LGBTQ+ community. We are looking forward to when we can hug again," says Sara Cunningham, Founder of Free Mom Hugs.

Each of Barefoot's four new vibrant Pride Packaging Collection designs celebrates those who have made a significant impact on the community during Barefoot's 30+ year history of allyship and will be featured on packaging of Barefoot Brut Rosé Bubbly bottles and Barefoot Rosé Spritzer cans. Each Pride Packaging Collection design pays tribute to distinct groups of people or organizations, including:

Community members and allies who have fought for marriage equality

LGBTQ+ trailblazers around the world who publicly use their voices to celebrate the community and advocate for LGBTQ+ causes

The decades-long efforts of the heroic service organizations who have fought the HIV and AIDS epidemic and supported those impacted

Pride celebrations around the world that bring millions of people together to honor the



community and advocate for equality

“As a longstanding LGBTQ+ ally, our unique and fun limited-edition Pride Packaging Collection serves as a tribute to the LGBTQ+ community,” says Anna Bell, Vice President of Marketing at Barefoot.

“We are so honored to provide support to a wonderful and necessary organization, Free Mom Hugs,” adds Bell. “Barefoot is inspired by the work that this organization does to advocate for, and celebrate, the LGBTQ+ community. This is especially true this year when we know how important it is to connect to our communities.”

Four-packs of Barefoot Brut Rosé Bubbly featuring the limited-edition Pride Packaging Collection designs are now available to purchase on The Barrel Room (<https://www.thebarrelroom.com/wines>). The full collection is available to purchase in stores nationwide.

About Free Mom Hugs

This mission of Free Mom Hugs is to



empower the world to celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community through visibility, education and conversation...and yes, we still give hugs. The registered non-profit organization is made up of parents and allies who love the LGBTQ+ community unconditionally and are working toward full affirmation and

equality for all through its 50 chapters throughout the United States. Philanthropic gifts of all sizes support efforts to advocate for equality for the LGBTQ+ community by providing resources, education, and support at community events. To learn more, visit <http://www.freemomhugs.org>.

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GRAB LINDA

Love story: An Interview with Award- Winning Actress and Singer Linda Lavin

By Gregg Shapiro

Award-winning theater and television veteran vet Linda Lavin isn't showing any signs of slowing down. Not that we would ever want her to. At almost 83 years of age, Lavin has just released a marvelous new album, *Love Notes* (Club 44), on which she performs a number of classics from the American songbook, as well as the new Joel Lindsey and Wayne Haun composition "Stars Would Fall". Additionally, Lavin has been appearing regularly on TV shows such as *Mom*, *The Santa Clarita Diet* and *Madam Secretary*, to mention just a few. She is also scheduled to appear in the new Off-Broadway musical *The Bedwetter*, co-written by Sarah Silverman, Adam Schlesinger, and Joshua Harmon.

Of course, for many people, Lavin will, first and foremost, always be the title character from the beloved CBS sitcom *Alice*. I had the pleasure of speaking with her shortly before the release of *Love Notes*.

Gregg Shapiro: *Linda, I'd like to begin by thanking you for singing the brilliant song "The Boy from..." in the off-Broadway musical revue The Mad Show. It's one of my favorites.*

Linda Lavin: The *Mad Show* was in the winter of 1965, and at that time our country was imbued with Brazilian music because of (the song) "The Girl from Ipanema" (which was) a platinum million seller. I was in rehearsal for *The Mad Show*, which was just supposed to be a Christmas entertainment of a few weeks and it turned out to be a huge hit. It was playing in a tiny little theater in New York City above a very famous nightclub called Arthur. Dick Libertini, Jo Anne Worley, Paul Sand and I, were



Photo By Bill Westmoreland

a small company of performers doing all this satirical material from *Mad Magazine*. The writers were from the magazine. One day, Mary Rodgers, who was the composer, with Marshall Barer, of most of the songs, came in with a song, a piece of sheet music, and she handed it to me. She said, "This is going to be your song. I wrote it with Steve." Steve being Stephen Sondheim. I looked at it and it was a satire of "The Girl from Ipanema" called "The Boy from..." That's the story! It gave me a chance to satirize Astrud Gilberto and the Bossa Nova music we were all falling in love with. It's a piece of its time. It's about a girl who was hopelessly in love with a boy and she

doesn't understand why he's not requiring her adoration for him. It plays very well in most of the clubs I play. It's a lot of fun to do!

GS: *For many people, especially those who didn't get to New York to see Broadway shows, the sitcom Alice became the vehicle by which you became a household name and familiar face. Alice was based on the Martin Scorsese movie Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore. Were you a fan of the movie before taking on the role in the series?*

LL: I loved the movie! Absolutely! It was a unique movie whose time had come to tell the story about single



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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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Photo By Bill Westmoreland

mothers, working women. The right place for it (Alice) was to be on television, which as you know, is a place where the audience was huge. We had more than 40 million people a week watching us. So many women identified with the character, the person of Alice because they, in fact, were Alice. They were single mothers and working women. She represented 80% of the women who work in this country and she still does. Women who are still not getting equal pay for the equal quality of work they do. It was a huge success, not only because it was in a great time slot, but because it was something that everybody in America, families and working people, identified with the characters and the situation. It was a very powerful experience for me, for all of us. To have a nine-year hit in television is very rare and I was very grateful for it. It changed my life in many ways.

GS: What can you tell me about the experience of working with Billy Stritch on your new album *Love Notes*?

LL: Billy and I have worked together on my club act for about 15 years. He's a consummate, extraordinary musician

with amazing chops. He understands me and he has a great knowledge of the American songbook. He's a great pianist and singer and a wonderful collaborator. We have a lot of fun together. He produced this album and we created this album together from the club act I've done with him. These songs are songs that I love, American songbook songs. We do a Jobim, "No More Blues". We do a tribute to Bobby Short. We do Rodgers and Hart, we do Cole Porter. It's a fun album and so much fun to listen to. It's emotional, tender, loving and sophisticated. The lyrics, the storytelling in it; I'm very thrilled with the quality of this album.

The president of Club 44 Records came to me and said he wanted to sign me to a deal and asked me to do an album. There's nothing I love better than going into a studio and recording.

GS: You included a pair of tunes from the late 1970s, Steely Dan's "Black Cow" and the Eagles' "I Can't Tell You Why". Why did you want to include those songs alongside tunes by Cole Porter, the Gershwins, Rodgers and Hart, Duke Ellington and Cy Coleman?

LL: Well, thank you for that! I've been singing Donald Fagen's songs for several years. I recorded "Walk Between the Raindrops" on my earlier album. The material I choose is the book that I refuse to write. These songs are about me, my history, the songs I love, the songs that moved me to tell my story. They make me feel like they're a personal story of mine, written by somebody else. "Black Cow" has to do with a particular part of my life and it's so much fun to sing. The Eagles' songs I've loved ever since I moved to California in the mid-1970s to do Alice. I love "I Can't Tell You Why". I often think of songs that belong together even though they weren't written by the same people; songs, sometimes, as conversation. They tell the story of a relationship, of a love story. The album is, after all, called *Love Notes*, about the varying degrees of love and relationships and the difficulty of communication. It's the most creative I know how to be without writing. I use what other people have written to explain how I feel or what I've been through or what I hope for.

GS: You perform a cover of "You Must Believe in Spring", a song co-written

by Michel Legrand. I recently interviewed Melissa Errico who had a special working relationship with Legrand. Did you ever have a chance to meet him yourself?

LL: No, but I met Marilyn and Alan Bergman who wrote the lyrics to that song. They wrote the theme song to Alice ("New Girl in Town"), that's how I met them. They've been a big part of my life.

GS: Portland, Maine, where you were born, is also the birthplace of fellow Tony Award-winning actress Andrea Martin. Do you think there might be something in the water in Portland to have produced such talented performers?

LL: [Laughs] that's very sweet of you! I know she's enormously talented. I'm very fond of Andrea. We often bump into each other. We actually lived in the same hotel in Los Angeles last year. The water's very good in Maine, I'll tell you that! We were always very proud of the fact that we could drink the water right out of the tap. I grew up in Portland, Maine, the daughter of a mother who had enormous talent as an opera singer. She had a brief but dazzling career in New York in the opera world. My mother, who was first generation, was born in Portland. She married my father who came from Maine by way of Massachusetts. Portland has for sure given birth to a few talented actors and musicians along the way.

Photo By Bill Westmoreland



GS: Finally, I write for several LGBTQ publications and I wanted to ask you to say something about what the gay people in your life mean to you; from working with Billy on the new album to the work you did with gay playwrights Charles Busch, Nicky Silver and Jon Robin Baitz to co-starring with Sean Hayes in his sitcom Sean Saves The World.

LL: I'm not sure I can isolate what gay people

mean to me any more than what Jews or Blacks or Irish or women or men or tall or short people mean to me. We are a community of creative people.

What people mean to me is if they are fun to work with and kind and talented and generous. I've lived through a lot of changes. The women's movement, gay rights activism. I've lived in a time where the social and political scene has been challenged by the strictures and the possibilities of what this country can do for its people. My main focus, because of Alice, has been on equal rights and equal rights for women. The communities that have joined with me in that struggle have given me great hope for the future.

GRAB HOLLY

OK, Boomer, OK

By Holly Maholm

Though we had reached a critical point in my plan to provide housing for five of the workers at Donut Time, we were at an even more critical point in our efforts to launch our new business venture – home delivery of donuts and coffee by horse-drawn chariot. The “initiation” of that venture was just one day away, and I could see that everyone at Donut Time – most especially Xandra (Chief Donut Officer of our little LLC) – was suffering from “pre-launch anxiety” (a condition which often results in “premature initiation,” to the disappointment of all).

I woke up in my bed at the stables, and when I came out into the corridor, Sassy Pants called me aside. “Holly,” she whispered, “come speak with me, please.” We went back into my room. “So,” she began, “our Queen asked me to check on your preparations for the launch of your new business. She is concerned that everything possible be done to ensure the launch is successful.” “Well,” I answered, “I think we’re prepared for every reasonably foreseeable eventuality, but then... there’s always the ‘unexpected.’”

“Quite so,” she agreed. I went on, “Dot has been training the Outlaws on

how to drive a chariot safely in traffic, and Glitter says the rescue horses we intend to use are fully accustomed to pulling the chariots, and have learned to give their trust to the drivers.” “All true,” Sassy agreed, “Still, you must be prepared for the unexpected. I will report what you have said to our Queen, and seek her guidance.”

I exited the stables and headed off for Donut Time, but as I drew near I saw that something was amiss. By this time in the morning, Cindy should have brought one of the horses from the stable over for a thorough curry-combing by the Retirees. Thus, I had expected to see the Retirees crowding the benches near Donut Time, surrounding some famous racehorse (a unicorn in disguise). But no one was there.

I went inside, where Aly promptly greeted me from behind the counter. “They’re all back in the kitchen. You should go in.”

I slipped into the kitchen, where I found that an unexpected – and potentially explosive – confrontation was under way. On one side were Xandra and Cindy (standing should-to-shoulder, their backs pressed against one of the ovens), seeming to have been backed into a corner from which there was no escape. When they saw me, their faces registered profound relief at having been rescued from an unreasoning and threatening mob.

Confronting Xandra and Cindy were the following: Six Retirees, among whom were those most devoted to the rescue horses (recipients of the coveted “Golden Currycomb Award” for most consecutive days brushing their coats, affixing bows to their forelocks, and braiding their manes); two of the Lunch Ladies from the high school (who had taken vacation days to be here, and who had long dreamed of learning the secret to Xandra’s flakey pastry crusts by baking elbow-to-elbow with her in her own kitchen), and finally, the High Priestess of Athena, Goddess of Wisdom (or as we knew her, Phyllis Munn, retired English teacher).

When I entered the kitchen, all fell silent, but before I could gather my wits to speak, the High Priestess commenced her remarks. “Good morning, Holly. I’m glad you are here. The others asked that I explain why we have come.

“We are here to



volunteer; to take on whatever work Xandra – or anyone else at Donut Time – may have for us. We learned, obviously, that you are launching your new business tomorrow, and we want to do whatever we can to ensure its success.

“You see, Donut Time has provided us – all of us ‘Boomers,’ OK? – with a safe and welcoming shelter; one that has made our lives richer and given us renewed purpose and ambition in our remaining years. These things we do not want to lose. Nevertheless, we are all aware that not only we but also you – you ‘Three Trannies’ of your little LLC – may well lose everything, should your new venture ultimately fail.

“Last but not least,” she finished up, motioning in the direction of the Lunch Ladies, “your friends, here, from the high school are equally grateful for all you have done for them, and they want to help, too.”

When she finished her speech, Xandra and Cindy rushed forward to bestow grateful hugs upon the High Priestess, the Lunch Ladies, and the others. What came next was one of those “pivotal moments” which are so often recognized (but only in retrospect) to have enabled the Bold, the Brave and the Venturesome (and only they) to overcome impossible odds and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

Cindy pulled Xandra and me aside and – lowering her voice to reach our ears only – instructed us on what we must do.

(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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GRAB A GETAWAY

TRAVEL



Virtual vacations and travel tips for the ages

By Bill Malcolm

There has never been a better time to plan your future travels. Even if you don't go there, it is still fun to read about what is going on in other cities. Especially if you are sitting at home.

In this column, I explore armchair travel, give some good websites of my fellow LGBTQ travel writers, and suggest some ideas of where to go when travel resumes. Plus I share my value travel secrets.

Your first website should of course be The International Lesbian Gay Travel Association (iglta.org) where under Blogs you will find travel blogs including my columns on Washington, D.C., Phoenix, Chicago, Paris, Detroit and other cities. Check out all the columns I've written at

<https://muckrack.com/bill-malcolm/articles>.

Another column is written by another writer on Meridia, Mexico.

More recently there is a piece from a writer for Edge Media Networks posted on seven museums to explore

from home.

I interviewed IGLTA President *John Tanzella* recently. To ensure a reliable trip (and tour operator) John recommends buying travel insurance, paying with a credit card, using a member friendly to our community, and more.

He notes that not everything is cancelled including Prides. Palm Springs and Atlanta have theirs in the fall and are still on for now.

Where to go once travel resumes? He notes that Hungary, Slovenia, Brazil, South Africa, Columbia and Mexico City were emerging new travel destinations for the LGBTQ community.

I asked him about where your dollar goes the furthest. In addition to Canada (where your dollar is now worth \$1.40) and Mexico, South Africa is a great value (at least once you are there). This is especially true if you stay at an African hotel, he said. He also noted Brazil is a very good bargain.

I also interviewed travel writer Joey

Amato who maintains the LGBTQ travel website, *PrideJourneys*. His favorite city right now is Oklahoma City which has great food, a gayborhood (39th Street), a canal, white water rafting, wall climbing and more. "There is so much to do," Joey said.

His next trip will be to Monterey, California. Check *PrideJourneys.com* for his reviews of cities near and far as well as the Aspen Gay Ski Week.

Joey likes the smaller hotel chains like 21C (which typically develops a museum themed hotel) and Kimpton. You can find his travel posts at <http://www.PrideJourneys.com> and photos of cities he has reviewed at *JoeyAmato_33* on Instagram.

Finally I asked my friend for tour operator recommendations. Richard in San Francisco says Rick Steve's tours are great. He went on one in northern Italy.

Before I close out what may be a final column for a while, here are my value travel tips:

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day of arrival? Marriott and Hilton are the worst offenders here.

Best idea - Buy a CITY PASS to see all the attractions at a fraction of the cost. In Chicago, you get your own line to enter the Field Museum and Shed Aquarium. They are a deal.

Best travel tip when you get there - Try local transit. It's cheap, frequent, and you mingle with the locals. Most cities have great service to the airport.

When to visit - October is great for Paris. Skip the crowds. Plus the Louvre is free on Sunday during the winter. Ditto for San Francisco. The weather is

actually better in the winter. April and May in Seattle are great as there are no cruise ships yet which cause the hotels to fill up and the rates to soar. In a word, off season or shoulder season are great.

Best time to travel - The period after Thanksgiving and before Christmas. It's dead as the kids are in school and everyone is out shopping or going to holiday parties.

For other travel tips, reviews, and more, check out these LGBTQ websites -

TravelingIQ.com - Ivan Quintalla of NYC does a great travel **blog**.

TravelRight.today is Toronto based Doug Wallace's website.

NomadicBoys.com - A couple writes this blog which is recommended by Ivan.

So happy arm chair travelling until we meet again which may be a while.

Bill Malcolm is America's only LGBTQ syndicated value travel writer. He focuses on affordable trips using value hotels, public transit, and going where the locals go. He is based in Indianapolis. He does this as a hobby. You can find him on Facebook. His 2020 travels included Detroit, Puerto Vallarta, Washington, Denver, Phoenix and Columbus. Due to the pandemic, he is taking a break from travel writing.

Best airline - Southwest. No bag fee. No ticket change fee.

Best legacy airline - Tie: Delta (love their new long haul economy premium service) and American (consistently good). (Sorry United but you charge for carry on in your Basic Economy fares)

Best hotel chain - CHOICE Hotels. Especially the Comfort Inn brand. All you need at an affordable price.

Hotels to avoid - Any that charge "resort" or "amenity" fee. These sneaky fees for things like use of the hotel gym are disclosed at the end of booking or lumped in with taxes to make it appear the government requires the fee. Avoid all hotels that charge them and the following cities where all hotels charge them: New York City, Portland OR (downtown hotels only), Las Vegas, and Honolulu.

Hotels to avoid #2 - Any that have a new 48 hour cancellation policy. My plans change all the time. What happened to cancel by 6 p.m.



Darcelle XV of Portland

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LADY GAGA ANNOUNCES MAY 29 RELEASE DATE FOR *CHROMATICA*



Lady Gaga announced that her highly anticipated sixth studio album *Chromatica* will be released on May 29th via Interscope Records.

The album features collaborations with **Ariana Grande**, **Elton John** and **Blackpink**. The album is executive produced by **BloodPop@** and **Lady Gaga**.

Chromatica will be available in a variety of physical formats including standard CD, vinyl in various colors, and cassettes in various colors. In addition, Lady Gaga has launched an array of new merchandise and an exclusive vinyl color at <http://www.ladygaga.com>.

The first single from the album, “*Stupid Love*,” which debuted at #1 on iTunes in 58 countries, has 300 million streams worldwide since release and marks Lady Gaga’s 16th Billboard Top 10.

The video, which was shot entirely on an iPhone 11 Pro, skyrocketed to number #1 trending on YouTube worldwide upon release and currently has more than 70 million views.

For more information visit: <http://www.ladygaga.com>

PET SHOP BOYS ANNOUNCE BRAND NEW SINGLE ‘I DON’T WANNA’



The ‘*I don’t wanna*’ single packages include remixes by **Mano Le Tough** and **David Jackson** and also a bonus song, ‘*New boy*’, originally written by Pet Shop Boys in 1984 and recently finished and recorded.

‘*I don’t wanna*’ is taken from the recent album ‘*Hotspot*’, which was released to widespread critical acclaim in February. The album entered the UK album chart at number 3, matching the chart entries of its predecessors in the trilogy of albums produced by **Stuart Price**. It is Pet Shop Boys’ 17th top ten album in the UK. It also reached number 3 in the German and Spanish album charts and number 1 in the USA on Billboard’s Top Dance/Electronic Albums chart, making it the fourth Pet Shop Boys album to accomplish this.

On March 19 the classic books *Pet Shop Boys*, *Literally* and *Pet Shop Boys versus America* were reissued by Heinemann publishers. The books, written by **Chris Heath**, were originally published in the early 90s and each documents the group on their 1989 and 1991 tours

respectively. *Pet Shop Boys versus America* also features on-tour photography by legendary rock photographer **Pennie Smith**. These reissued volumes include new introductions from **Neil Tennant** and **Chris Lowe** and new afterwords by **Chris Heath**.

The BFI has also announced it is to release a restored version of Pet Shop Boys’ 1988 feature film *It Couldn’t Happen Here*, directed by **Jack Bond** and starring **Neil Tennant** and **Chris Lowe** alongside **Joss Ackland** and **Barbara Windsor**.

Unavailable worldwide for the last 30 years, the film has been newly remastered by the BFI from a 4K scan for release as a limited-edition Blu-ray/DVD on June 15.

For more information visit <https://www.petshopboys.co.uk/>

TONI BRAXTON RETURNS WITH NEW SINGLE “DO IT” OUT NOW



Multimillion-selling R&B/pop pioneer and seven-time Grammy Award-winner, **Toni Braxton** returns with her new song “*Do It*,” via Island Records. Back with her timeless and mesmerizing vocals, Braxton’s latest single serves as advice for anyone struggling with the decision to end an unhealthy relationship. Drawing from her own experiences, Braxton urges

“he ain’t gonna change, if you take him back it’s gonna be the same, just do what you need to do.”

“I wrote this song about a year ago when a friend was going through the struggles of trying to end a relationship that wasn’t good for her. We have all been through situations like this, when there is really nothing more to say, you know he’s not right and you just need to do what you need to do. There is also an element of hope in the song, that after you do what you need to do things will get better,” explains Toni Braxton. She continues, “During these unprecedented times, make the most of your time indoors with some self-reflection. Now might be a good time to quarantine your heart as well in order to examine what it really needs.”

The release also comes with announcing Toni Braxton’s new label deal with legendary record label Island Records. On partnering with Braxton, Island Records President/CEO **Darcus Beese** states “It’s an honor and pleasure to welcome the

incomparable Toni Braxton to the Island Records family. Her legendary catalogue, unique sound and extraordinary artistry continues to set her apart and we look forward to the world hearing the new music.” “*Do It*” is the latest single from Braxton following her multi-Grammy nominated album *Sex & Cigarettes*. Released in 2018, the album features hit single “*Long As I Live*” which shot to #1 on the Billboard Adult R&B chart and top 10 on the R&B charts. Last year, Braxton embarked on her “*Long As I Live*” tour visiting 21 cities in addition to South Africa and for the first time in 22 years, the United Kingdom. In late 2019, Braxton graced the stage at the American Music Awards for a breathtaking performance of her iconic song, “*Un-Break My Heart*,” which marked the 25th anniversary of her first appearance on the show which become one of the most talked about moments from the evening.

For more information visit <http://www.tonibraxton.com/>

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AFC'S NEW LOGO AND BRAND IDENTITY CENTER RACE EQUITY AND BOLD DESIGN



After a year of research and development, AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC) is proud to launch its new brand and identity. In early 2019, AFC engaged People Who Care, a Chicago-based consultancy comprising all Black, LGBTQ+ identified designers, strategists and directors, to lead the rebranding effort. AFC and People Who Care consulted with a wide array of stakeholders, including nonprofit partners, community members, Board members, staff and advocates through focus groups, interviews and surveys. This process engaged the community in a meaningful way and ultimately inspired AFC's new brand direction.

"From start to finish, we at People Who Care (PWC) worked hard to capture the feelings, needs, and dreams of AFC's core community. Instead of focusing primarily on the future, we allowed the organization's legacy to guide our design process. We wanted to develop an identity that was accessible, brave and pioneering," said Elijah McKinnon, Creative Director at People Who Care.

Surveys and focus groups revealed a strong affection and belief in AFC's work and drove PWC to a concept that would balance the strong legacy and bold future of the organization. Upon conceiving the new direction, AFC and PWC brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in a branding taskforce that ultimately led to the new design.

AFC initially revealed the new logo to its community at its Annual Meeting on March 5, 2020, but then put a full rollout on hold as the organization transitioned to remote work and providing new and continued services to help those impacted by the new coronavirus (COVID-19).

"We're at a turning point – we now know that we can end the HIV epidemic in Illinois in ten years," said John Peller, AFC President/CEO, at the Annual Meeting. "We needed a new look that better reflects who we are today. The new identity's foundation is the imperfect circle. We're embracing the beauty of imperfection through this circle. Imperfection is humanity – it's our greatest strength. Perfectionism is unachievable and drives discontentment. It is a product of white

supremacy culture, which must be dismantled before we can truly embrace racial equity and achieve our mission. AFC represents the coming together of people – this process is imperfect; all people are imperfect; this is where our power lies."

"We knew from the beginning for our new brand to truly advance AFC's mission that the communities most impacted by HIV, Black and Latino/Latinx communities, must be leading and centered throughout the rebranding process. Having the leadership of People Who Care, an all-Black LGBTQ+ owned and operated agency, was pivotal," said Edward Wagner, AFC's Chief Officer of External Relations.

For more information on the AIDS Foundation visit <http://www.AidsChicago.org>

CHICAGO SINFONIETTA – ANNOUNCES THE APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BLAKE-ANTHONY JOHNSON



Heading into its 33rd year, Chicago Sinfonietta, the nation's most diverse orchestra, today announced the historic appointment of **Blake-Anthony Johnson** as Chief Executive Officer. Johnson will officially replace **Jim Hirsch**, who held the position for fifteen years, beginning June 1, 2020. A leader in the classical music industry having worked with several orchestras and organizations including the New World Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and more, Johnson's multifaceted career to date encompasses work as an administrator, performer, and educator. An internationally recognized and award-winning cellist, he started his career in the arts as a professional cellist performing throughout the U.S. and abroad as an orchestral musician and soloist.

"We are excited to welcome Blake-Anthony Johnson to the Chicago Sinfonietta family," said **Jim Hirsch**, outgoing Chief Executive Officer, Chicago Sinfonietta. "There are only a

few places where we can come together with all of our differences to celebrate arts and culture and the uniqueness of what we each bring to the community, and Chicago Sinfonietta has always embraced that notion. I am delighted to pass the baton to Blake-Anthony as his extensive experience with various orchestral institutions will help continue pushing Chicago Sinfonietta's mission forward. I look forward to watching how Chicago Sinfonietta progresses under his leadership and am confident that the organization will attain great success for many years to come."

Coming to *Chicago Sinfonietta* from Louisville, Kentucky, Johnson most recently worked as the Louisville Orchestra Director of Learning & Community. In the role, he was charged with institutional development, musician advancement and the organization's efforts in connecting a broad and diverse audience to symphonic music.

"The Louisville Orchestra family is overjoyed to see Blake-Anthony lead such a prestigious organization as the Chicago Sinfonietta. His visionary leadership will advance its mission of creating bold and innovative symphonic experiences that will embrace the broader community," said John Malloy, Board Chairman, Louisville Orchestra.

Johnson's work focused on the management and reach of the organization's programming aimed to increase and enhance the public's access to, understanding of and engagement with the orchestra and saw numerous successes including the opening of Paristown Hall, involvement on the citywide consortium Violins of Hope Project and more. He was responsible for 17 education and community engagement programs which aligned with these efforts.

"I am thrilled to be part of the Chicago Sinfonietta team," said Blake-Anthony Johnson, Chief Executive Officer-elect, Chicago Sinfonietta. "Chicago Sinfonietta is a national treasure, that over the past 32 seasons has contributed a great deal to our field and the city of Chicago. The vision of Maestro Paul Freeman has created an incredible organization that has been unmatched in the representation and celebration of equity, diversity and inclusion in a meaningful way. It is a legacy and tradition that I'm honored to continue with our amazing musicians, staff, board, and Music Director Mei-Ann Chen."

For more information about Chicago Sinfonietta, visit www.chicagosinfonietta.org.

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)

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WASHINGTON DC <i>DIK Bar</i> - 202-328-0100 1637 17th Street NW <i>Annie's Paramount Steakhouse</i> - 202-232-0395 1609 17th Street NW



58
Devon

Hollywood Beach

Foster

Lawrence

Wilson

Montrose

11

7

8

Devon

Clark

61

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12

13

14

48

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16

Clark

70

52

53

6

10

Broadway

Ridge

Bryn Mawr

15

Foster

Lawrence

6

6

6

6

6

6

6



Ashland Ave.

Fullerton Ave.

2

North Ave.

Chicago Ave.

Grand Ave.

5



WRIGLEY FIELD

Addison

Clark

Belmont

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E 71st St.

S Jeffrey Blvd

GRAB MAGAZINE MAPS

- GRAB a Bite
- GRAB a Drink
- GRAB Some Sleep
- GRAB Some Culture
- GRAB a Towel

GRAB CLASSIFIEDS

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Be sure to download the next issue of GRAB for an Interview with Pam Tillis

Photo By Matt Spicher



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