

FEBRUARY 18, 2025 VOL XVI • ISSUE#2

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GRAB FRANK

Under the disco ball: An interview with Frank DeCaro

By Gregg Shapiro

Has there ever been a musical genre more deserving of a glorious coffee table book than disco? In his new book “Disco: Music, Movies, and Mania Under the Disco Ball” (Rizzoli, 2024), gay writer Frank DeCaro answers that question with this stunning portrait of the cultural phenomenon that was central to lives of so many, including the LGBTQ community. DeCaro deftly explores disco’s influence which still resonates strongly today. Covering every imaginable aspect of the musical style, DeCaro respectfully and affectionately provides readers with a history lesson as informative as it is entertaining, from fashion to film, from venues to the wide variety of performers, from dance steps to missteps, from devotion to backlash. Frank was generous enough to make time for an interview in early 2025.

Gregg Shapiro: Why was now the time to write your book “Disco: Music, Movies, and Mania Under the Disco Ball”?

Frank DeCaro: I began thinking about writing “Disco” as soon as I finished my 2019 book, “Drag: Combing Through the Big Wigs of Show Business.” During interviews to promote that book, people said I was shining a light on something that deserved more respect than it had ever gotten before. That got me thinking – what else do I love that deserves to be taken more seriously and deserves to be given its flowers? I decided that I wanted to tell the story of disco because the music seemed to be in the DNA of all the dance-pop we were hearing and continue to hear on the radio. Disco was having a revival moment, one that really ramped up during the COVID lockdown. We weren’t going out, but we turned to upbeat music

to get ourselves through those lonely days. “I Feel Love” was the 2019 Christmas song for Target, “I Will Survive” and other songs were on commercials. We were all listening to disco at home. Sophie Ellis Bextor, the “Murder on the Dancefloor” singer, began doing “Kitchen Disco”

streams on social media. It was all just bubbling up again, the way it did during the AIDS crisis in the late eighties and early nineties. Disco was there for us then, and it was there for us during Covid. Then, when I watched the Bee Gees documentary “How Do You Mend a Broken Heart,” I knew I had to tell disco’s story from a queer pop culture perspective. One man in the film described “Disco Demolition Night,” that awful radio promotion event in 1979 in Chicago when records by black artists were blown up, as a “racist, homophobic book burning.” I knew I had to do this book. Disco wasn’t just a fun pop culture era – although I do celebrate that in the book – but it was also a watershed moment for people of color, strong women, and the queer community. Disco was largely made by, consumed by, and



Photo By Erica Berger

enjoyed by members of those groups. That side of the disco story needed to be told.

GS: How long did it take from start to finish?

FD: My entire life [laughs] – but really the last five years! It really is a sort of one-man-band project when you do a book like this. First, you’re a salesman trying to sell a book proposal to a publisher, then you’re the researcher, then the writer of the manuscript, then the editor. Once you’ve gotten the words down, you become the photo editor, then you play lawyer securing rights to those photos. When the book comes out, you become the chief publicist and social media coordinator, then you’re the talent hawking it on TV. You certainly have help along the way, but you really do have to do a lot of it yourself. At this point, I’ve

been living in a disco wonderland for years, but I'm not complaining. It's a dream job. I love the music and the people and the entire ethos of the "Just Say Yes" disco era, and I'm always happy to go down a disco rabbit hole and learn more about the subject.

GS: What was involved in your selection process for the interview subjects you included?

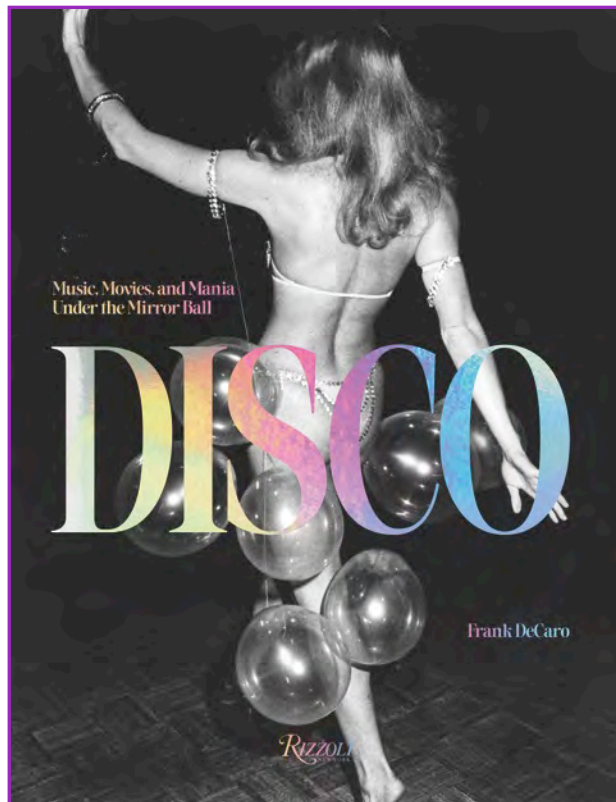
FD: I started with people I knew like Felipe Rose and David Hodo, my two favorites of the original Village People. Felipe put me in touch with his friend Gloria Gaynor. Then, an acquaintance said, "You know I'm friends with Cory Daye of Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band," and then she and I did an interview that went so well we became friends. One person led me to another. As I say in the book – and RuPaul likes to say – it takes a village, people.

GS: Was there a dream interview subject that you were unable to get for the book?

FD: I would have liked to talk to the Bee Gees. Barry Gibb is still around, but I couldn't reach him, and his brothers are gone. Sylvester has been gone so long, but I would have liked to have talked to him. I did see the Bee Gees and Sylvester live back in the day, which helped in writing the book. One dream interview that did happen was with Donna Summer. I had lunch with her in 1999 and the great bulk of what we discussed was never published before this book. At first, I couldn't find any notes. But after much searching in my archives, I found two microcassettes of my interview with her. I digitized those and transcribed them, and it turned out to be quite a wonderful interview if I say so myself. It really ends the book beautifully. She remains the Queen of Disco – even if Sylvester did think he was the Queen of Disco and not her – so it was appropriate

that my interview with her is the book's "finale," if you will.

GS: As you mentioned, "Disco: Music, Movies, and Mania Under The Disco Ball" includes an interview with gay, original Village People members David Hodo and Felipe Rose. The book came out before the recent hubbub over "YMCA" and remaining original member, straight Victor Willis not only performing at the Trump inaugural with the latest iteration



of VP but also claiming there is nothing gay about the song. What are your thoughts about that?

FD: I don't want Victor to sue me for saying this, but I don't think the song "YMCA" is about playing pickle ball. There are pickles and balls involved, but I've already said too much! The unfortunate thing about the band playing the inauguration is that many people who rightfully condemned Willis used photos of the original Village People in their posts and articles. Believe me, the other original members of Village People are not on board with any of his

doings. Any longtime fan of the group knows that the current lineup is like a Village People tribute band. But, hey, if they make people happy, good for them. But at this point, they're like the Eiffel Tower on the Strip in Las Vegas, not the genuine one in Paris.

GS: Earlier, you mentioned the hate-filled 1979 Disco Demolition, which is referenced numerous times in your book. Regardless, disco, or as the kids call it "dance

music," survived in ways that shock jock Steve Dahl hasn't. Meanwhile, Star Vista's Ultimate Disco Cruise continues to be one of its most popular cruises, disco is often prominently featured in musicals on Broadway and on tour, festivals such as the house music focused Arc in Chicago and the EDM-oriented Ultra in Miami regularly draw large crowds, gay bars such as Hunters in Wilton Manors host weekly classic disco events, and 2025 Album of the Year Grammy-nominees Chappel Roan, Charli XCX, and Billie Eilish all incorporated dance music on their albums. This is a long way of asking what you think it means that disco survived, and disco's detractors have been relegated to the

dustbin of history.

FD: To quote Lizzo, "It's About Damn Time." We're only now understanding the history of disco and showing the throughline from disco to the music of today. I wanted to help people understand that disco, back in the day, was as big as hip-hop. It colored everything we wore, listened to, watched at the movies, and on TV. Disco was all-consuming. We can see now that the "disco sucks movement of the seventies was what we today call "toxic masculinity." Disco Demolition Night was like a MAGA rally when you look back on it.

Disco was about diversity and inclusion – a message that still resonates with at least half the country – and that never really went away. Disco influenced all the music that came after it – hip-hop and new wave especially – and gave way to house music and EDM, as we call Electronic Dance Music. You couldn't have Lizzo without Chic, or Dua Lipa without Donna Summer. My favorite thing is now you hear classic disco at the grocery store. There's nothing more fun than hearing "More, More, More" while you're reaching for a box of spaghetti at Safeway [laughs]!

GS: Would you agree that there is something ironic about the Disco Demolition taking place in Chicago which also turned out to be the birthplace of House Music?

FD: It is ironic, isn't it? What I like is that the original Comiskey Park where Disco Demolition Night was held was torn down decades ago, but disco and house just keep hustling along. Toot toot, hey, beep beep!

GS: While you were attending Northwestern, did you ever go to the Bistro, Chicago's answer to Studio 54?

FD: We had a group of six of us that someone dubbed the Northwestern Army. We were all out and proud – and this was in the Midwest in 1980! – and we'd go with our fake IDs to the Bistro. None of us knew that we were in what would later be called the Studio 54 of Chicago. We just knew it was THE fun place to be young and gay. We'd go on fifty-cent drink night – Thursdays, if I remember correctly – and stay out all night and *still* get up for class on Friday morning. I'm still friends with the whole gang, although we haven't been dancing together in decades [laughs]! I'll have to remedy that!



GS: I'm glad you included "Must-Hear Disco Playlists," ranging from 1970 to 2024. If you had to pick one song from those lists that you would consider to be the most must-heard, what would it be?

FD: The greatest disco song is "I Feel Love" by Donna Summer. The story of how it came to be that the cowriter and coproducer Pete Bellotte tells in the book gives me goosebumps every time I think of it. That song still sounds like the future almost fifty years after it was recorded.

GS: My husband and I have had the pleasure of going on the Ultimate Disco Cruise a couple of times, and some of your interview subjects, such as Linda Clifford, France Joli, Nicky Siano, and Deney Terrio, have been among the entertainers. Is there any chance you might board one of the upcoming cruises to talk about your book to an ocean liner

full of disco fans?

FD: I want to be invited on the cruise to host panels and do a disco history presentation so badly! Who do you know? Hook a sister up!

GS: I love that you featured journalist and long-time ally Ann Powers, in your book. I recently interviewed her about her Joni Mitchell book. Have you read it?

FD: I haven't read it, but I admire Ann and, of course, Joni Mitchell, so I'll have to!

GS: Have you started thinking about or working on your next book project?

FD: I've set my sights on Italian-American. I want to explore how pop culture shaped our notions of what it means to be proudly Italian American, whether it's Tony Soprano or Lady Gaga or Chef Boyardee. Let's see what kind of "Sunday gravy" I can make out of all those ingredients!



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GRAB MARGARET



Photo By Nick Spanos

Her “Lucky” days: An interview with Margaret Cho

By Gregg Shapiro

The year has just begun, but 2025 is turning out to be a fantastic one for queer multi-hyphenate **Margaret Cho**. In January, Cho appeared on “Celebrity Jeopardy” where she left fellow contestants Rachel Brosnahan and Seth Green in her dust, winning more than \$50k for her charity of choice, Friendly House, and advanced to the semi-finals level of competition. Her successful Live and Livid comedy concert tour, now in its second year, has a selection of new dates. She has numerous movie and TV projects forthcoming. As if that wasn’t enough, Cho is releasing her third music album titled “Lucky Gift.” Even with such a busy schedule, Margaret was gracious enough to make time for an interview.

Gregg Shapiro: Margaret, I want to begin by congratulating you on your “Celebrity Jeopardy” appearance which aired a week before this interview. I loved the way you dominated the “Global Pride” category.

Margaret Cho: Thank you [laughs]!

G.S.: Then you ultimately advanced

to the semi-finals, winning more than \$50,000 for your charity, Friendly House. What was the experience like for you?

M.C.: Thank you so much! That was incredible because I love the show. I’ve been playing it in my mind for all of this time. It was exciting to actually be on the set and then to meet Ken Jennings and then just to be able to do what I’ve been fantasizing about for such a long time. I loved being part of that.

G.S.: “Lucky Gift” is your third music album. What do you get personally from making music that differs from doing comedy?

M.C.: It’s just a different form of expression. With comedy you have words, but with music you have instruments, you have chords, you have tones, you have a voice, you have all sorts of different ways to approach art and communicating with music that comedy doesn’t quite do. For me, it’s really gratifying. I also just love to make music. I do it every day anyway, just like I do comedy every day. It’s just a big part of who I am.

G.S.: Apart from the title track and “Boyfriend From China,” for which you received sole writing credit, you collaborated with Garrison Starr and Roger Rocha on the remaining tunes. What are the individual attributes of Garrison and Roger that make them good co-songwriters for you?

M.C.: They’re both, musically, just genius. They have different approaches, and I really love working with both of them. I think they just bring out the best in me sonically. The intricacy of Roger’s musicality – he’s phenomenal. Then Garrison comes at the writing with so much heart. She has a direct line to emotional truths with the way that she writes. I’m grateful. They’re very different and unique as artists. I love working with them.

G.S.: Do you think you’ll continue to collaborate with Garrison and Roger?

M.C.: Yes, for sure. Always.

G.S.: The keyboards and the handclaps on “Sisyphus” give the song an ‘80s vibe. Of all the music you’ve listened to during your

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lifetime, where does music from the 1980s rank on your list?

M.C.: It's huge! If I were to stick with one era, it would be the '80s. I think it was such a great time for music because we had technology really changing the way that musicians were working and writing. Using synthesizers in a different way. Using all sorts of computers in a different way. I love New Wave! I think that era was so powerful. I also have had a chance to work with my favorite artists from the era, whether that's Blondie, Cyndi Lauper, or Joan Jett on the True Colors Tour.

G.S.: I remember seeing that tour in Chicago.

M.C.: I'm so lucky to be able to have worked with my divas from the '80s who are still amazing. Of course, I think The Go-Go's are it! That was the first concert that I ever went to and they're all friends of mine. They're artists that just keep on giving. They keep on doing it, and I love that.

G.S.: I was excited to hear your cover of Freur's "Doot Doot," which is not a song that has been covered by many other artists. Why did you choose to include that song?

M.C.: I love that song! That's like the ultimate blend of '80s technology and the new idea of where we're going to approach rock and roll. I find that song to be so moving. You can kind of paint any situation onto it. We don't really know what it's about. It could be anything, and I love that about that song.

G.S.: "Funny Man" and its accompanying music video are a loving tribute to Robin Williams. There's a line in the song that

goes, "you always got my name wrong." Can you please say something about that?

M.C.: He thought my name was Margaret Chow, which is so funny. He did so for about 40 years. He had it stuck in his mind that that's what it

didn't always feel so funny on the inside." Do you think there's a public misconception about the performer they see on stage and what that performer's life is like offstage?

M.C.: Yes. I think, especially for comedians, the idea is that we're relied upon to be funny and always be on. The fact is that comedy or a sense of humor is a coping mechanism. Oftentimes people are really funny, but they also have a lot to cope with. They have that sense of humor because they've had to deal with so much trauma throughout their lives. People have an idea that comedy is about happiness and it's kind of not. It's really interesting. I want to spread that idea.

G.S.: My personal favorite song on the album is "You Can Be You," on which you are joined vocally by Garrison Starr. Please tell the readers about how that song came to be.

M.C.: That song was written on the day that Nex Benedict died. Nex Benedict was a non-binary, gender non-conforming teen from Oklahoma who was failed by the state of Oklahoma, the Board of Education, the

students, the teachers, and the staff at the school they attended. The incredible inhumanity of people, the constant misgendering, the constant mockery of this young person's life really made me so angry. I wanted to write a song that spoke to non-binary youth, non-binary teens, queer teens, trans teens, who are struggling with the onslaught of homophobia and transphobia from our current administration and the country at large. It's a terrible time. I wanted to have a song that was speaking to them; that was about



Photo By Nick Spanos

was. It was so hilarious. I guess he thought I was Italian. I love him. I miss him. I want people to remember him. We don't talk about his legacy in comedy enough, I think because of the terrifying, uncomfortable way that he decided to leave. This is a good way to remind everybody of him and what he meant. Also, to talk about funny people who don't necessarily feel great.

G.S.: I'm glad you mentioned that because you describe the song as "an anthem to the funny guys who

letting them be themselves, allowing them to be them. That was a really important thing to me. Embracing pronouns. Embracing the idea that they don't have to be gender-conforming. You can be yourself. There was such a feeling of hopelessness after Nex's death, that I didn't know how to address it. The song is meant for that.

G.S: Your "Live and Livid" tour is now in its second year. Would you say that in early 2025 you are as livid as you were or livider than ever?

M.C: I'm so livider. I'm so livided [laughs]! It's so scary. But I think we have to have more hope than ever. Through humor, there is hope. Laughter is resistance. There's a way to talk about things so that we can survive that. I'm putting all of my effort into writing about what's happening, talking about what's happening. Making sure that we can fight this injustice, this homophobia, this hatred, this transphobia. It's a nightmare, but I think we have to use humor to get through it.

G.S: Do you plan to incorporate songs from "Lucky Gift" into your show, or are there plans for a



Photo By Nick Spanos

separate concert tour?

M.C: I want to do something separate. I haven't exactly figured out what that is. For me, it's so different, so I would love to try to figure that out. I'm just in the process of doing that. There's some music shows that I'm doing now and that will expand as we go along. Right now, the record is just coming out, so I want to see what happens. But I definitely want to do music, and of course, comedy.

G.S: Earlier we talked about '80s music, and I was wondering if you recorded another music album, might you include a cover of the Greg Kihn Band song "Jeopardy" in honor of your recent game show triumph?

M.C: Ooh! I would love that. That would be great. I loved him. He's a San Francisco hometown rocker. I think that would be absolutely perfect!

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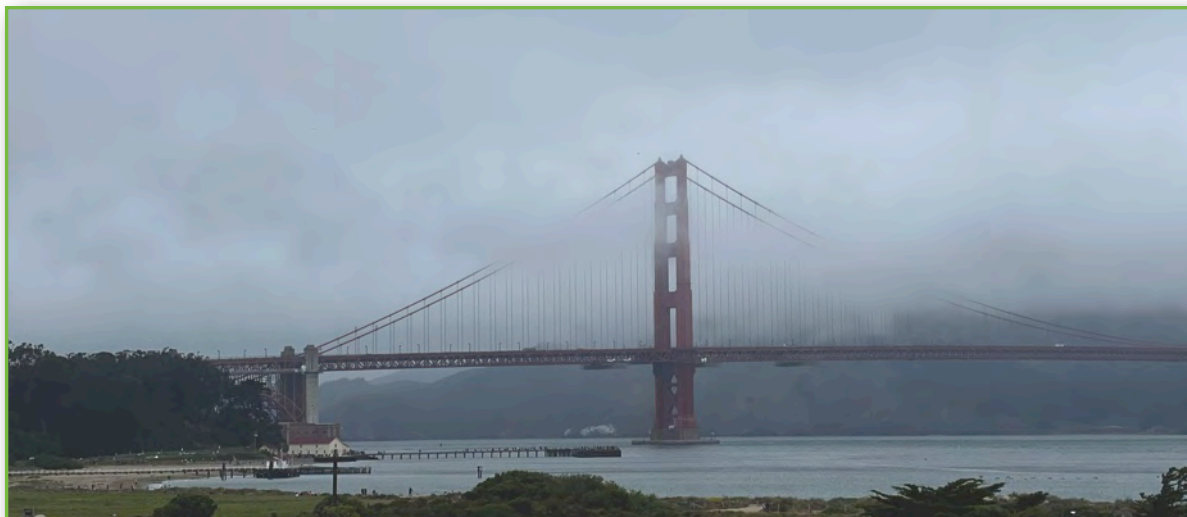
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GRAB A PLANE



Your San Francisco Weekend: Waymo Driverless Taxis and the Iconic Castro

By Bill Malcolm

You cannot beat a weekend in San Francisco, the city by the Bay. The homeless situation has improved, they have a new mayor, and it is the city of the future. Employees of high tech companies now live in “the City” and take premium buses to their jobs on the Peninsula. Rents are sky high. The drought is over. And there’s so much to do. You may not leave your heart in SF, but if you follow my tips, you won’t leave your wallet there either.

GETTING THERE

I took Southwest through Denver to SFO. The flight was late as rain and fog slows operations at SFO, but Southwest put me on an earlier flight without giving me the third degree. I ran into the band SoLo on the flight out which was playing that night at the Bill Graham Civic Theater.

I checked out the Harvey Milk exhibit in the Harvey Milk Terminal as well as the SFO Museum (which was featuring on the now defunct Virgin American Airlines). (Harvey Milk was slain in 1978 while serving as a Supervisor on the Board of Supervisors as was Mayor George Moscone. The killer was fellow

supervisor Dan White.)

On the way back, Delta rerouted me through Oakland Airport which does not suffer the weather delays that SFO does. They even offered to put me on the United nonstop. I love their new purple uniforms and in flight entertainment (I streamed Matlock) plus free internet and free streaming of Paramount. DL is the best. (I connected through the new terminal in Salt Lake City.) Unfortunately, the city of Oakland has challenges.

Getting around San Francisco, I walked, took Muni Metro (the city light rail and subway) and of course the regional subway known as BART (which serves both airports and now extends to North San Jose).

WHAT TO DO

Walk or run with the Frontrunners. They meet Saturday at 9 a.m. in Golden Gate Park. The walkers do two loops around Stowe Lake. Pick up the free shuttle there to go anywhere in the park (De Young Museum, Asian Museum, Botanical Gardens, Pacific Ocean beaches). It’s friendly group (the Frontrunners). We went to the

fabulous Crepevine on 624 Irving brunch. Try the turkey sandwich with fries.

Hike with the San Francisco Hiking Club. (I co-founded it and was the first President). They meet at the Whole Foods on Market near the Safeway Saturdays and hike in the many parks around the Bay. I led a hike while I was there which featured Corona Heights, Randall Museum, and Buena Vista Park followed by a ride on the Historic F Line Street cars to the Ferry Building for lunch and enjoyed scenic views of the San Francisco Bay. Details at SFHikingClub.com.

Explore the many neighborhoods. The Castro is the gayborhood. Over the hill, you can explore the too cute Noe Valley. Try Erics for great Chinese Food (on Church Street). The West Portal is also very cute and just a 10-minute subway ride away from the Castro.

Enjoy the nightlife in the many bars in the Castro. I like the Midnight Sun, Toad Hall, Moby Dick, The Overlook, and Beaux. Beaux has a fun drag weekend brunch. High Tops is a fun sports bar at 2247 Market and serve food. A new lesbian sports bar opens

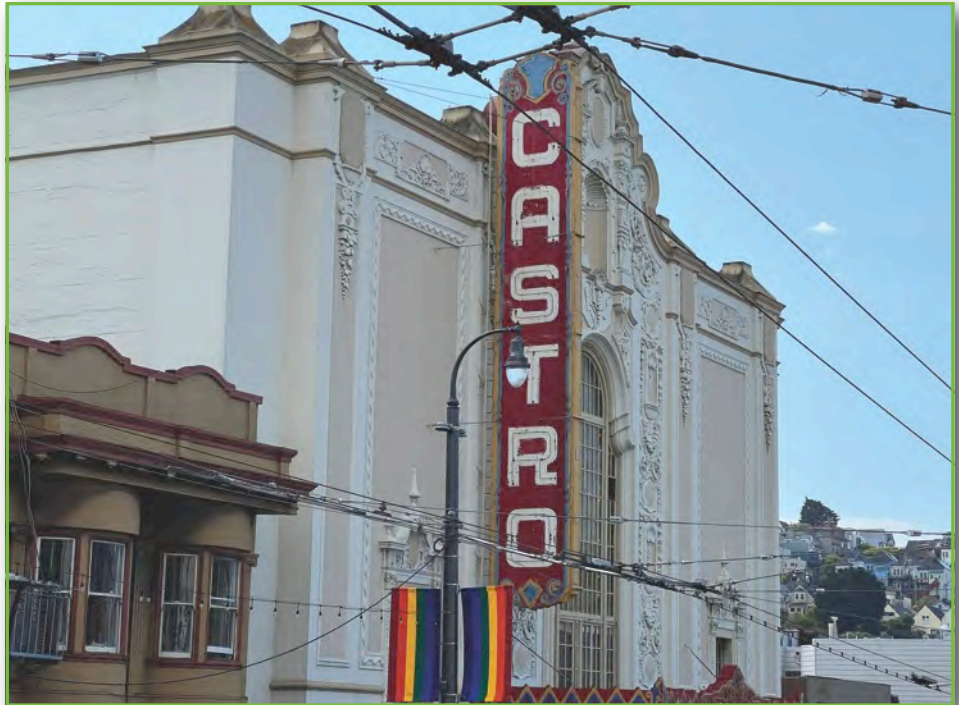
soon across the street from Beck's on Market Street as well.

Work out with the Hotties at a class at Barrys, Learn about the history of LGBT culture in SF at the LGBT History Museum. Grab coffee or a sandwich at the new Epicurean Trader (2240 Market). They also have fresh baked goods. While in SF, enjoy an It's It ice cream sandwich (a SF tradition). It's graham crackers with ice cream in the middle covered with a light coating of chocolate.

Grab a carrot juice and freshly made sandwich at Courtney Produce, 101 Castro.

WHERE TO STAY

I always stay at the Beck's Motor Lodge on Market. It offers free parking (although you don't need a car to visit SF), cute, updated Motel style rooms. Peets Coffee is across the street and there are many bars and restaurants just steps away. You will find them at Sanchez and Market Streets. Tell owner Brittany that Bill sent you.



Other lodgings are mostly around Union Square and environs, a short Muni ride from the Castro. There is also one other hotel (with no staff) across from Mollie Brown's Natural Food Store on 18th Street near Castro. There are also B&Bs close.

OTHER FUN FACTS

The Gloss, Bay Area Reporter and SF Bay Times are the three publications in print and online.

Spring is a perfect time to visit: the hills are emerald green and there are wildflowers everywhere, including the native California poppies.

And look out for the driverless

Waymo cars. They are everywhere. My friends take them and like that you don't have to tip (unlike UBER and LYFT), and the fares are comparable. Download the Waymo app to schedule a ride (or save your money and walk, take MUNI, or take BART). PS: They do not go to either airport at this time.

I always enjoy a visit to San Francisco and this time was no exception.

Bill Malcolm is North America's only syndicated LGBTQ value travel columnist. He received no compensation of any kind for this trip and his views are his own. A former resident of the Castro, he co-founded and was the first President of the SF Hiking Club which is still going strong today. He is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz.





Photos By Anthony Meade





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GRAB ALEXANDER



Alexander the Great Alexander Ananasso stars as Marco in the LGBTQ romance film Sex Love Venice

By Gerard Passaro

Alexander Ananasso brings his signature blend of soulful intensity and Italian charm to the role of Marco in the eagerly awaited queer romance film, *Sex Love Venice*. The Rome-born out actor delivers a spellbinding performance as the charismatic Venetian who guides Michael, a man jaded by hookup culture, toward rediscovering intimacy and love. Set against Venice's enchanting canals and iconic architecture, the film explores themes of desire, patience, and self-discovery, with Ananasso's portrayal anchoring its emotional core.

Garard Passaro: It's been a long road to this point. How excited are you about the release of *Sex Love Venice*?

Alexander Ananasso: I can't wait to see myself on the big screen and I'm so hopeful that moviegoers will love the film as much as I do!

GP: What initially attracted you to the role of Marco?

AA: Marco is very different from the man I am and he presented a

challenge that I felt up for. He gave me the opportunity to turn on my magnetism and charm, but also tap into my vulnerability and quirkiness. I couldn't make him come across as too self-assured! I think Marco's playful and curious, which I am too.

GP: Marco believes in the transformative power of cultivating desire, maintaining that the things we long for most are infinitely sweeter when savored with patience and intention. Do you agree with him?

AA: Yes, I do. I'm a very patient person. If something or someone is worth it, I can wait and put my energy into preparing and building up to a climax.

GP: Have you tried the transformative power of cultivating desire in real life?

AA: I think I have. Not sure I was as disciplined and determined as Marco is, though.

GP: As an out actor, what does it

mean to bring authentic representation to the screen in a love-themed film?

AA: It is great to see real LGBT people on screen portraying LGBT characters. It is inspiring and motivational, and makes me feel like I belong when, at times, I often feel like I don't. As an actor, it's not only a privilege to be the one chosen for a role, but also an honor. It's incredible to think that someone out there might be inspired and touched by what I do and say on screen.

GP: What was the most memorable moment on set during filming?

AA: There were many! One scene I really enjoyed filming was the one we shot in the famous book shop, Libreria Acqua Alta. It is often visited by tourists, so we weren't sure we were going to be able to get permission to shoot there, but that day they opened the shop a half-hour earlier and kept the customers outside for us to shoot. The scene we shot wasn't the one we originally



had planned on doing. The dialogue wasn't in the script! Daniel and I were able to improvise with each other and create on the spot, which was fun.

GP: I'm surprise you didn't say the bed scene.

AA: Well, yes, I suppose if I had to pick one really memorable moment in the film, the bed scene would be it. It was really beautiful and powerful.

GP: You and Daniel have wonderful on-screen chemistry. If you could pick any celebrity to star alongside you in your next romantic film, who would you choose?

AA: Andrew Scott. He's my favorite actor. He communicates vulnerability and emotions so specifically and powerfully. I love

watching his work.

GP: What do you hope audiences —both LGBTQ+ and beyond—take away from Sex Love Venice?

AA: I hope the film stimulates them beyond their regular way of thinking and that it challenges them to be more open-minded and open-hearted when meeting new people, whether they be potential friends, colleagues or lovers.

GP: What's next on the horizon for you?

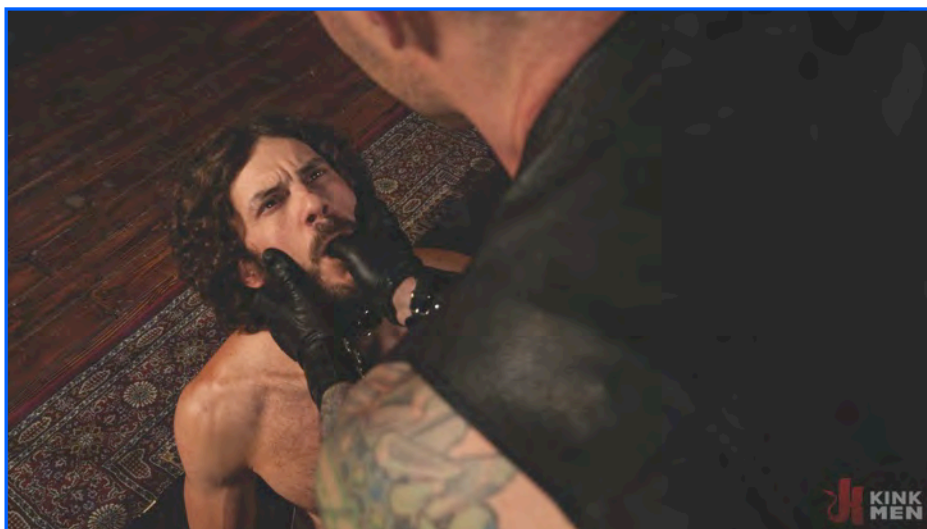
AA: I love theatre and I would love to bring my solo show *A God Who Can Speak* to the states. I'm also writing a new piece about online dating and mental health.

GP: Is mental health important to you?

AA: Everything I do has to do with healing and personal growth. I'm a big believer in self-discovery and awareness.

Sex Love Venice opened in select theatres on Friday, February 14, as well as on streaming platforms including Amazon Prime and Apple TV.

GRAB VANDER



Vander's Pump Rules

Vander Pulaski Calls the Shots in KinkMen's *Do What I Say*

By Spencer White

Vander Pulaski, a bona fide star in the adult film industry known for his charisma and versatility, is making a bold move into the world of kink with his latest role in KinkMen's *Do What I Say*. In the intense film that delves into the realms of domination and submission – and explores the dynamics of control and obedience – Pulaski teams up with Greg Hollywood. Together, the men add a new dimension to kink, showcasing their willingness to push boundaries and embrace the edgier side of adult entertainment. Vander Pulaski explains more from his rural and remote home in Oregon.

Spencer White: Are you originally from Oregon?

Vander Pulaski: No, I'm from Pennsylvania. I grew up in a suburban neighborhood north of Pittsburgh. My dad was a family doctor and my mom was a physical therapist. They used to share an office. I have a lot of memories of being in their offices as a kid, including one of my dad showing me how a sigmoidoscope is used to look inside a person's colon.

SW: Were you a jock?

20

GRAB Magazine

V.P: I wouldn't have considered myself a jock at the time, but I did swim competitively from about ages 10 until 17.

S.W: When did you have your first same sex experience?

V.P: I was 15 the first time I had sex. I bottomed for a friend on the swim team. I had experienced oral sex at a park near me before then, though. I had heard it was "cruisy" in AOL chatrooms so I checked it out. I met an older guy leaning against a tree.

S.W: What led to your pursuing a career in adult film?

V.P: I have always been a bit of an exhibitionist. I am rather introverted by nature, but am paradoxically more comfortable when I am naked. I also was looking for a way to make decent money while I was pursuing my career goals in biology. I didn't consider porn as a career path until fan sites became viable. They have allowed me more flexibility and self-determination in the industry while also challenging my previous assumption that I would age out of the industry sooner than now.

S.W: What are the best parts of the job?

V.P: Having sex with incredibly hot guys.

S.W: How has being a porn star impacted your dating life?

V.P: I have had partners who had difficulty accepting my career. Most recently, with the fan sites, it has been difficult at times balancing how much to share with fans. I don't want to monetize every sexual experience I have, nor can I perform on demand. It is still a constant question of how much of myself I want to keep private for me and my real-life partners.

S.W: When did you first discover kink?

V.P: It depends how you define a kink. As for bondage, I was first tied up by a friend when I was 19. He introduced me to both dom/sub power dynamics as well as a few specific kinks, including rope bondage, watersports, and CBT.

S.W: Do you like pain?

V.P: Not generally. But some pain begins to feel good, like gas with CBT. Or when the pain is a tribute

February 18, 2025

to the power dynamic at play, I like that.

S.W: Do you find pleasure in being disciplined?

V.P: Yes, sir.

S.W: The scene in KinkMen's "Do What I Say" is literally Greg Hollywood beating your balls... that had to hurt!

V.P: Beating my balls hurts in a really good way. I like it!

S.W: Were the screams real?

V.P: If I'm screaming, it's real. I am a pretty terrible actor. Directors often encourage me to react and play up what is happening in a scene. I prefer to have the reactions be legitimate. It also encourages the tops to increase their intensity!

S.W: How did the director keep things from getting out of hand on set?

V.P: There are always safe words. I have never had to use them.

S.W: Do you prefer being the dom or sub?

V.P: Generally, I prefer being submissive. Though I do think there is a bit of an age/maturity component to that. As I get older and become more of a daddy, domming has seemed more natural.

S.W: Will you play the dom role in an upcoming KinkMen film?

V.P: I played the dom role in my scene with Buck Richards! I have not filmed another scene as a dom since then, but who knows what the future holds. I would definitely be willing!

S.W: What is something fans would be surprised to know about you?

V.P: I have a master's degree in biology and professionally, I am a cannabis breeder, agronomist, and mycologist.

S.W: What is the biggest misconception about Vander Pulaski that you would like to clear up once and for all?

V.P: People may be surprised that I often go through phases in sexual desire. While I can at times have an insatiable sexual appetite, it is not infrequent that I have little interest in sex for weeks at a time. I am always



down to bate it, though.

S.W: What makes you smile?

V.P: Good times with family, friends, and nature. Good music. Tropical beaches and forests. Reaching a personal goal. What makes you angry?

V.P: Right-wing politics and environmental destruction.

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

V.P: A society where wage-labor is obsolete, and humans have moved beyond capitalism. A world that has solved the most pressing environmental issues. And lastly, I want people to be free and happy to choose their own destiny, whatever that entails, constrained only by the limitations of our reality and without

any influence of dogmatic religions and state power, as long as they do not interfere with the rights of others.

S.W: Which celebrity would you most like to slide into your DMs?

V.P: Ilana Glazer or Sarah Silverman.

S.W: You're about to be hit by a truck (sorry). What flashes before your eyes?

V.P: That I had a good run while it lasted!

S.W: What does your gravestone read?

V.P: Lived life by the load.

*Vander Pulaski stars in KinkMen's "Do What I Say", available now on **KinkMen.com***

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GRAB YOUR FRIENDS

Daily Specials;

MONDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor), Everyday Specials: \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlies:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **Hydrate:** Lips and Mascara Doors at 8pm Show at 10pm.. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Well Drinks. **Shakers on Clark:** Comedy Night \$1 off Well Drinks and Well Shots. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Musical Monday Show Tunes 8pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Every 3rd Monday TM4M (Trans Men For Men) 8pm-2am. **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm-4am. Horny Bastards A Night for those who just didn't get enough over the weekend. ClubRoom Opens at 6pm, 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock. Club Room Open!

TUESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: . \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Game Night with Tony. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlies:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025 **Hydrate:** TatTuesday XXL Doors open at 8pm. **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. Open auditions for male dancers 7pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts. Happy Hour Specials 5pm-8pm: \$5 Stoli Mules (all flavors). Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Canned Beers, Seltzers & Ciders. **Shakers on Clark:** \$3 Domestic Beers. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Trivia Tuesday 8-10pm, TRL Tuesday: Totally Rad Line-up of 90's-to-Now Music Videos 10pm-2am, OUTspoken LGBTQ+ Storytelling 1st Tuesday of the month from 7-9pm. **Steamworks:** Every Tuesday 4 pm – 4 am Guys Under 25 Get In Free* (*Free 30 day membership and free locker). **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 Amsterdam Cocktails, \$5 Tallboys Everyday Specials:, \$5Jager, \$5 Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. Hardcore Cruisin' No Cell Phones/Wifi. 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock. 3/4 Hardcore Mardi Gras.

WEDNESDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$ New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Tallboy Beers Specials: Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlies:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **Jackhammer:** \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons, Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$4Miller Lite Drafts, \$5 Stolis (All Flavors). Happy Hour Specials 7pm-10pm: \$6 Any BIG drafts Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am \$5 Lagunitas Draft & Cans. **Shakers on Clark:** Karaoke Night \$1 Off Long Islands. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, All Things Taylor 1st Wed of month, All Things Beyoncé 2nd Wed of month, All Things Gaga 3rd Wed of month, All Things Dua & Ariana last Wed of month: all 9pm-2am. **Steamworks:** Bear Hump Every second Wednesday 6-9pm A monthly mid-week gathering of Furry Men. **The Sofo Tap:** \$3 House Shots, \$5 Tito's Cocktails, \$7 Big Miller Lite Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's) FreeDarts **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. Jockstrap Night Free Clothing Check. 6-9pm \$3 Well Drinks \$1 Off call-imports, \$3 PBR/Rolling Rock. 2/12 Full Moon Jockstrap Night Free Pants Check.

THURSDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes & Bourbons . Everyday Specials:\$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (BuschLight, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, RuPaul Drag Race All Stars 6 Viewing Party - 7pm. **Charlies:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Miller Lit Tallboys Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers(Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open at 6pm. Dancers at 8pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$6 Tito Cocktails, Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$5 Deep Eddy Cocktails. **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off All Call Liquor Mixed Drinks, Karaoke 10pm-1am. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, Let's Go Thursday! Pop Music Videos in Glass/Side Bars 9pm-2am, Pink Pony Club 1st Thur of month in Main Bar, All Things K-Pop other Thursdays in Main Bar. **Steamworks:** Lights Out Thursdays, The Club goes Dark Every Thursday 4pm-4am. **The Sofo Tap:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails\$5 Tallboy Beers Everyday Specials: , \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR,Hamm's)Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 5pm - 4am. Throwback Thursdays 70's & 80's Music and Porn by Bijou Video.

Daily Specials;

FRIDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts \$3 House Shots. Happy Hour Specials: 3pm-6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Chicago Handshakes. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 6-8pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 4pm-2am. **Charlie's:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **Jackhammer:** \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys \$8 New Amsterdam & Redbull Happy Hour Specials 5-9pm: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons \$5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Happy Hour 5-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Sidetrack:** Open at 3pm, TGIF Show Tunes 4-9pm, Friday Night Dance Party 9pm-2am. **The Sofa Tap:** \$3 House Shots, \$7.50 Big Miller Lite Drafts Happy Hour Specials: 3pm-6pm: \$4 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tall Boys Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Darts. **Touche:** 2/21 Cowboy Round Up with ILGRA, 2/28 MARDI GRAS WEEKEND KICK OFF PARTY!, 3/14 Wild Irish Full Moon Party & Contest

SATURDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$6 Lagunitas IPADrafts. Happy Hour Specials: 1/2 Off All Drafts \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$5 Well Cocktails & Draft Beer 3pm-5pm, Dancers 10pm-1am. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors open at 6pm, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-3am. **Charlie's:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025. **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys Happy Hour Specials 5-9pm: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons \$5 Chicago Handshake Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Jackhammer:** \$3 House Shots \$5 Miller Lite Tallboys Happy Hour Specials: \$5 Whiskeys, Ryes and Bourbons. Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$5 Signature Margaritas Happy Hour Specials. 2pm-5pm: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$12 Mimosa Carafes, Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 11am-2pm. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Post-Brunch Saturday Fun 1pm-6pm, Saturday Night Dance Party 9pm-3am, Dog Day 1st Saturday of the month 1-5pm. **The Sofa Tap:** \$5 Lost Coast Tangerine Wheat, \$5 Signature Margaritas, Happy Hour Specials: 12pm-3pm: 1/2 Off All Drafts Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort, \$4 Tall Boy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's) Free Darts. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 5am. 2/22 Full Moon Ripe Party, Dim Lights, Deep Beats Go-Go Dudes DJ Harry T, 3/1 Vers, Booze and Beads Party. 3/15 Gear Night with Bluf Chicago Annual Best Kilt Legs Contest Make your Own Kilt at Touche

SUNDAY FUNDAY

2 Bears Tavern Uptown: \$5 Signature Margaritas, \$6 Chicago Handshakes Happy Hour Specials 2pm-5pm \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails Everyday Specials: \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR, Hamm's), Free Pinball & Darts. **@mosphere:** \$6 Jack Products, \$4 Domestic Draft, House Shots \$2. **Baton Show Lounge:** Doors Open at 11am, Shows at 7:30pm, 9:30pm & 11:30pm. **Cell Block:** Open 2pm-2am **Charlie's:** Closed for Renovations will reopen Spring 2025 **Hydrate:** Doors open at 2pm Northalsted's Official after Brunch party. **Jackhammer:** \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails \$7 Jackhammered Long Islands Happy Hour Specials :1st Sunday: \$7 Planter's Punch 2nd Sunday: \$5 Dog Bowls (Premium Well) 3rd Sunday: \$3 Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's Tallboy Beers 4th Sunday: \$5 Stoli Cocktails (Any Flavor) 5th Sunday: \$6 New Amsterdam & Red Bull Everyday Specials: \$5 Fireball, Jager & Malort Shots, \$4 Tallboy Beers (Busch Light, PBR & Hamm's). **Kit Kat Lounge:** Divalicious brunch 11am-3pm, Happy Hour 4-7pm \$8.95 Martinis. **Lucky Horseshoe:** Open with dancers at 3pm. \$5 drink specials. **Meeting House Tavern:** \$3 House Shots, \$12 Mimosa Carafes. Happy Hour Specials: 7pm-10pm: \$5 New Amsterdam Cocktails. Everyday Specials \$5 Jager, Fireball & Malort. Free Darts & Pool. **North End:** Open at 11am, \$3 Miller Lite Drafts 7-10pm **Shakers on Clark:** \$1 off Bloody Mary's, \$1 off Mules: Vodka, Tequila, or Whiskey. And \$1 off all Revolution beers. **Sidetrack:** Open at 1pm, Sunday Funday Show Tunes 4-9pm, Sunday Funday After Dark Dance Party 9pm-2am. **Touche:** Open 2pm - 4am. Beer Bust \$2 Bud Light Drafts, \$2 Sodas, Clubroom Opens 6pm, Movie Night 7pm. 3/17 Irish Buffet 4-6pm.

The Next Issue of GRAB hits the streets and online Tuesday March 18th reserve your space today Call 773-707-2660 or email GRABStacy@gmail.com

GRAB A HIT

Top 30 Dance Chart For the First week of February 2025



Visit nexusradio.fm

	Artist	Title
1	Tsha	Drive Ft. Ingrid Witt
2	Thierry Von Der Warth X Voltage	Back In Love (Radio Edit)
3	Andromedik	Air Ft. Lauren L'aimant
4	Lavern x Sigala	Like Sunshine
5	Sasson	Energy feat. Drea (Radio Edit)
6	Shygirl	F Me Ft. Yseult
7	Ookay X Linney	Drive Away Slow
8	TELYKAST & Sam Gray	Surrender Your Love
9	Hayla	Visions Of You (Radio Edit)
10	Martin Garrix	Told You So ft. Jex
11	Zeds Dead	Heartbeat ft. Minke
12	Sub Focus f. Katy B	Push The Tempo
13	Frank Walker	Crossfire Ft. Alexander Stewart
14	Rob Le Duc	Joyride (Radio Edit)
15	Martin Garrix X Jex	Told You So (Agents Of Time Remix)
16	Dombresky	Hi Life
17	Mr. Belt & Wezol x Qobra	Keep It Exciting (Radio Edit)
18	Audien	Living In Color ft. Jeoff Harris
19	Will Sass	Into The Blue ft. Kamille
20	Slushii & Hyo	Money
21	Kygo & Imagine Dragons	Stars Will Align (Zerb Remix)
22	Netsky	California Ft. Cloves
23	Dom Dolla & Tove Lo	Cave (Clean)
24	David Guetta x Alphaville & Ava Max	Forever Young (Don Diablo Remix)
25	Steve Aoki & Sam Feldt & XANDRA With Nile Rodgers & Zak Abel	I'm Going Out
26	Martin Jensen X Sommer Ray	No Sleep (Radio Edit)
27	Ben Renna	Falling Ft. Emma Lx (Mind Electric Remix)
28	JADE	Fantasy
29	Love Harder	Nightlife
30	Noizu & Annaca	Dancing In The Dark

MARDI GRAS WEEKEND AT TOUCHE

FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 4

\$6 ABITA PURPLE HAZE PINTS
AND HURRICANES

BEARS, BOOZE & BEADS PARTY
SATURDAY, MARCH 1

BIG EASY BEER BUST
\$2 DRAUGHTS + SODAS
SUNDAY, MARCH 2

HARDCORE MARDI GRAS
TUESDAY, MARCH 4

\$6 PUB-CANS / GUINNESS,
HARP + SMITHWICKS
\$1 OFF ALL IRISH WHISKEYS

**WILD IRISH FULL MOON
PARTY + CONTEST**
FRIDAY, MARCH 14

**GEAR NIGHT WITH BLUF CHICAGO
ANNUAL BEST KILT LEGS CONTEST
MAKE YOUR OWN KILT AT TOUCHE!**
SATURDAY, MARCH 15

SUNDAY BEER BUST
\$2 DRAUGHTS + SODAS
IRISH BUFFET 4-6PM
SUNDAY, MARCH 16

**Touché**

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY
MARCH 14-17 WEEKEND**

GRAB ROGER

Estate Planning to Protect Pets

By Roger V. McCaffrey-Boss, Esq.

Q: I am getting up in years and I don't have a partner or spouse to leave my property to. I have two dogs that I want to make sure are taken care of if something happens to me. What can I do to protect my pets?

A: Unfortunately, pets cannot be beneficiaries of a will. The law still considers pets to be property. Every state in the U.S. now has a statute that authorizes pet trusts, although the restrictions vary. Pet trusts often are incorporated into a person's will or revocable (or "living" trust).

In Illinois, the Illinois Trusts and Trustees Act provides that a trust for the care of one or more designated domestic or pet animals is valid. You can create a Domestic Animal Trust for the pets you designate ("all dogs I own at my death"). You can provide in the trust, that no portion of the trust may be used by the trustee for a use other than the trust's purposes or for the benefit of a covered pet.

The trust can appoint a custodian for your pets. You should

consult with the custodian and confirm that the custodian will be willing and able to care for your pets. The trust should provide for the selection of alternate custodians if the initial custodian (or a successor) fails or ceases to serve. The custodian can be the same as the trustee; however, there will be less oversight over the care of the pet. It is better to have different people serve as trustee and custodian.

The custodian should be required to arrange for at least annual veterinary care and checkups. The trustee should be required to review reports, or otherwise inquire as to the pet's health at least annually, if not more often.

The trust should provide for compensation for the custodian. The amount of compensation depends on the circumstances, and what else the custodian receives from the trust.

You could direct in your will that your executor arrange for the adoption of your pet. Some organizations will take the pet and

arrange for its adoption free of charge or in exchange for a contribution. When selecting a shelter to place the animal in, determine whether the shelter requires or recommends a gift of a certain amount and their placement rate.

Just be careful about how much money you leave in trust. The domestic animal trust statute permits the court to reduce the amount of property transferred if it determines that the amount is excessive.

Also, plan for your incapacity. Carry with you a wallet card with contact information for emergency caretakers. A pet card provides, at a minimum, information that there is a pet in your



house that needs emergency care and who should be contacted in case you are injured while away from home.

I also recommend having an ICE (In Case of Emergency) entry in the address book of your cell phone. That listing can help the paramedics call your partner or friend that you chose, if needed, while you are riding to the hospital in the ambulance. Also, make sure your apartment building, has updated contact information for you.

A more detailed pet care document should also be prepared and left in an obvious location in your house with copies given to any emergency caretakers. A pet care document might include instructions for the care of the animals, medical information, and veterinarian information.

I would also suggest that you have a Statutory Power of Attorney for Property prepared to permit your agent to expend money for the care of your pets. You can authorize your agent to arrange for the care of your animals and to pay all expenses associated with the care of your pets, including feeding, dog walking, veterinary costs, kennel charges and grooming.

Roger McCaffrey-Boss is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota, and is a member of the Chicago Bar Association. You can email him at RVMLawyer@aol.com. He suggests that you consult your own lawyer for any specific questions regarding the issues raised in this column.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR YOUTH You Are Not Alone 

It's time to take action if you notice these signs in family or friends:

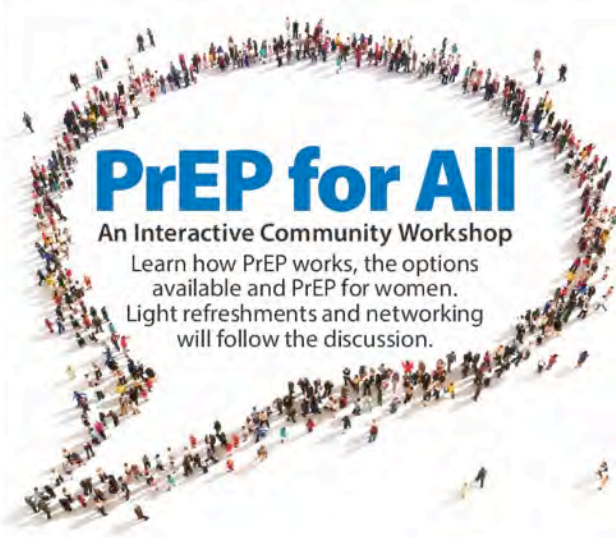
1. Talking about or making plans for suicide.
2. Expressing hopelessness about the future.
3. Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress.
4. Showing worrisome changes in behavior, particularly in combination with the warning signs above, including significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing social connections/situations.
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased).
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context.
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.

If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.

Text or call **988** or chat 988lifeline.org, or reach out to a mental health professional.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

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Learn how PrEP works, the options available and PrEP for women. Light refreshments and networking will follow the discussion.

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Samantha A. Devlin, MS

RESEARCH PROJECT MANAGER, PACT, UIC MEDICINE

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Funding by the Third Coast Center for AIDS Research in Chicago, an NIH-supported collaboration between Northwestern University, the University of Chicago and Community Partners.

CHER & LIZ



MOONSTRUCK
(1987)
Feb 14
11 PM



CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
(1958)
Feb 21-24
11 PM

THE LOGAN THEATRE

The Next Issue of GRAB hits the streets and online Tuesday March 18th reserve your space today Call 773-707-2660 or email GRABStacy@gmail.com

GRAB HOLLY

The Will of Marduk Revealed

By Holly Maholm

Penelope, Queen of the Unicorns, was describing to me the door by which Evil came into the world, after which the Species Human was forevermore in the thrall of that Evil, whereas the Species Unicorn resumed their journey through this world unaccompanied by their former soulmates.

Penelope explained how the first humans to master “writing” repeatedly insisted that humanity’s first crude and enigmatic texts were nothing less than the Complete, Inerrant and Unquestionable ‘Revealed Word’ of their Invisible (but All-Powerful) deity, whom Gruk (his self-appointed priest) had named “Marduk.”

Coincidentally, Gruk went on to insist that Marduk demanded sacrifices from the people of the village (sacrifices consisting of the most delicious cuts of the game harvested by the hunters), and that all such sacrifices must be offered up to Marduk in care of the sole High Priest of Marduk, Gruk (who was only an indifferent hunter, but who had a taste for steaks and roasts).

Notwithstanding his apparent good fortune, Gruk could not be certain the villagers would continue to provide him with these sacrifices, and accordingly, Gruk searched for some “ploy” (we might say “scam”) by which

he might cement his entitlement to those tasty cuts. This is what he did...

“Listen carefully,” Penelope began. “I must make you aware of certain all-too-human characteristics which – while they still exist today – are not often encountered in our developed, technological age, though many thousands of years ago – in the time of Gruk – these foibles of the Species Human were well known to all.

“Humans of that time survived by hunting. The men of the village would go out into the wilderness to hunt game animals – usually deer, boar, antelope and other ruminants, and it often happened that among that band of hunters was one young man who was on his first hunt; who had not yet participated in bringing down any prey. Though fitted out with a spear or bow and arrows, he had never yet targeted an animal.

“Now, even today there is among hunters an affliction called ‘buck fever.’ This syndrome occurs among novice hunters, and consists of this: Though the young man is near to his prey and well-positioned to strike a killing blow, he ‘freezes up’ and is unable to strike. You see, there is in each of you humans a deep-seated reluctance to kill another living creature. This is such a common, powerful emotion that the older, experienced hunters had to find a way to help that youngster move beyond his revulsion.

“Here is what they devised to overcome that novice hunter’s repugnance to the act of killing: They performed a sort of ‘blood ritual’ by which they honored that young man for spilling the blood of his first kill. They dipped their fingers in the animal’s blood and marked his face and hands with streaks of that blood, all the while telling him ‘Now you are a man! A powerful hunter! Henceforth you will be One-of-Us who face our fears and do what must be done to keep our village fed.’

“Thus it came about that Gruk – having sole access to alleged ‘divine revelations,’ and seeking to cement his claim to delicious sacrifices – realized that this blood ritual might be made to serve his purposes. Gruk calculated that if the villagers could be



induced to perform the ‘ultimate blood ritual’ (using human blood in that ceremony) then by the power of that ritual the villagers would seal their commitment to provide Marduk – and his High Priest – with sacrifices worthy of such a powerful – and sometimes merciless – deity.

“Accordingly, Gruk looked among the humans of his village to see if there was anyone whom he could place in the position of ‘prey.’ Soon, he realized he would need to seek his prey from among those humans who were a weak and powerless minority, a group who made the majority of the villagers feel ‘uncomfortable,’ and who could easily be singled out.

“It was late in the evening, when all were gathered around the fire, that Gruk unrolled the skin upon which was written the Book of Marduk, and reading from that holy text, Gruk revealed that according to the Will of Marduk, all those residing in that place – both humans and unicorns – were commanded to carry out a Sacred Ceremony... a ceremony incorporating a Blood Ritual in accordance with which Those Who Have Sinned Against Marduk must be sacrificed.

“Gruk announced that those villagers who were known to be same-sex attracted – who were, he assured the illiterate villagers, Sinners Against Marduk – must be exiled from the village and sent into the wilderness (where all knew they would surely die).

Penelope proudly recounted the next act in that ancient drama: “Whereupon, having heard that commandment taken from the Word of Marduk, the Queen of that frolic of unicorns replied: ‘Tell Marduk to go fuck himself.’”

(To be continued)

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman living in Cleveland, Ohio. Look for Holly’s book Offered Magic: My Life Among the Unicorns (now available on Amazon) which collects the first 126 episodes of Holly’s adventures involving both magical unicorns and

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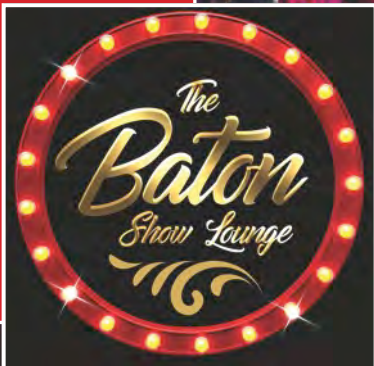
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Photos By Anthony Meade



GRAB A BOOK

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

“Cher: The Memoir Part One”

by Cher c.2024, Dey St.\$36.00
413 pages



Mother knows best.

At least that’s what she’d like you to think because she said it a hundred times while you were growing up, until you actually believed. One day, though, if you were lucky, you learned that Mother didn’t always know best, but she did her best – like in the new book “Cher: The Memoir Part One” by Cher, when Mom helped make a star.

Though she doesn’t remember it, little Cheryl Sarkisian spent a few weeks in a Catholic Charities orphanage when she was tiny, because her father had disappeared and her mother couldn’t afford to take care of her. “Cheryl,” by the way, was the name on her birth certificate, although her mother meant to name her “Cherilyn.”

That first time wasn’t the last time little Cher was left with someone other than her mother, Jackie Jean, a beautiful, talented struggling singer-actress who’d been born into poverty and stayed there much of her life. When money was tight, she temporarily dropped her daughter off with friends or family, or the little family moved from house to house and state to state. Along the way, relocating in and out of California gave Cher opportunities to act, sing, and to learn the art of performance, which is what she loved best.

In the meantime, Jackie Jean married and married again, five or six husbands in all; she changed her name to Georgia, worked in the movies and on TV, and she gave Cher a little sister, moved the family again, landed odd jobs, and did what it took to keep the lights on.

As Cher grew up in the shadow of her glamorous mother, she gained a bit of glam herself, becoming sassy and independent, and prone to separation anxiety, which she blamed on her abandonment as a small child. In her mother’s shadow, she’d always been surrounded by movie and TV

stars and, taking acting classes, she met even more.

And then she met Salvatore “Sonny” Bono, who was a friend before he was a lover....

So, here’s the very, very happy surprise: “Cher: The Memoir Part One” is a downright fun book to read.

If you’ve ever seen author Cher in interviews or on late night TV, what you saw is what you get here: bald-faced truth, sarcastic humor, sass, and no pity-partying. She tells a good story, ending this book with her nascent movie career, and she leaves readers hanging in anticipation of the stories she’ll tell in her next book.

The other happy surprise is that this memoir isn’t just about her. Cher spends a good amount of the first half writing about her mother and her grandmother, both complicated women who fought to keep their heads and those of their offspring above water. Readers looking between the lines will be enthralled.

Surely, “Cher: The Memoir Part One” is a fan’s delight, but it’s also a great memoir for anyone who particularly loves the genre and doesn’t mind a bit of profanity. If that’s you, then you got this, babe.

“The Loves of My Life: A Sex Memoir” by Edmund White
c.2025, Bloomsbury \$27.99 256 pages



These days, you’re awfully distracted.

You can’t think right, can’t stay focused, you daydream and fantasize and imagine. You’re completely twitterpated and feeling the best kind of despair and happiness together. Face it: you’re hopelessly in love – again – and as in the new memoir, “The Loves of My Life” by Edmund White, it’s glorious.

When an accomplished novelist reaches the middle of his eighth decade, he should state what’s been most important in his life. For Edmund White, it’s the “thousands of sex partners” he’s had since he was a mere child.

He was ten years old or thereabouts when he fell in love with a

boy he alternately calls Nick and Cam. They spent a lot of after-school time together, wrestling and roughhousing, as boys do, and it eventually became sexual.

Six years later, White was working for his father and making enough money to hire men for sex, mostly straight men who hailed from Kentucky, just across the border from White’s Ohio home. Sometimes, doing so put him in danger because being gay then was something shameful and undiscussed.

At around this time, he met an older, “camp” man who taught him the slang of gay life.

He met some of his lovers on Craigslist and some while traveling with a man he calls his “first husband.” He sought therapy, hoping to be “cured” of homosexuality, and he briefly fell in love with a woman, thinking he’d get married and raise a family. He loved younger men and older men, from Madrid, Boston, Scotland, at bathhouses, at parties, and he’s had several love-of-his-life romances. Sex, says White, was always linked with love.

He’s watched too many men die of AIDS. He had “AYOR” sex (“at your own risk”). He’s slept with men around the world and once, he got poison ivy for it.

All this was fun then, he says, but “Now in the cold polar heart of old age,” he looks back at it all “as comical and pointless, repetitious and dishonorable.”

Considering that “The Loves of My Life” is subtitled as it is, it’s not as explicit as you might think it would be. Yes, this memoir will steam up a window right quick, but the heat is tempered by author Edmund White’s sense of humor and wry outlook.

Those two aspects tend to give a reader a break in what would otherwise be a long string of fast-and-furious romps and a litany of randomness. Break intact, stories connect but you can enjoy each for its own merits of exploration and joie de vivre, accompanied by straightforwardness and what feels like honest soul-searching without much gratuitousness. White also freely admits to a few mistakes in his lifetime, further endearing himself to readers.

It shouldn’t need to be said that there’s profanity inside this book – you should expect it from its subtitle – but beware, if you’re looking for pearls to clutch. For readers who don’t care about that and want a decent memoir, “The Loves of My Life” is a very pleasant distraction.



Photos By
Anthony
Meade



DIFFA CHICAGO WILL HOST IT'S ANNUAL LIP SYNC FOR LIFE EVENT ON THURSDAY MARCH 13

The event will feature jaw-dropping, pre-recorded performances from individuals and teams from the Chicagoland area competing to win the Lip Sync For Life 2025 Crown and be dubbed the Fan Favorite 2025, as well as live entertainment from Chicago's best drag talent! Winners will be determined based on crowd cheering and teams' fundraising collections.

The event tickets are \$125 and include cocktails, appetizers, and, of course, a night of fabulous

entertainment. Proceeds from the event benefit DIFFA's Excellence in Care grants program, which aims to address the most pressing community needs and close the gap left by insufficient and declining government funding for HIV/AIDS. Funds Raised at DIFFA Chicago's Lip Sync for Life Will Support Local Organizations Serving Those Affected By HIV/AIDS. Tickets can be purchased through GiveSmart. <https://e.givesmart.com/events/v2K/>



VILLIAN ARTS PRESENTS THE 15TH ANNUAL CHICAGO TATTOO ARTS FESTIVAL MARCH 28-30



From March 28th to 30th, the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center will host hundreds of tattoo artists ready to do some excellent work. Connect with skilled artists (and even a few piercers) from across the U.S. and around the globe, specializing in all kinds of unique styles - from bold traditional, to fine line 'micro' tattoos, intricate black-and-grey realism, glitter tattoos, blackwork, even challenging coverups.

A Villain Arts show is about more than just getting tattooed; we also offer unforgettable entertainment, including thrilling side show, human suspension acts, captivating burlesque, and even clowns and

contortionists! Plus, explore our wide range of vendors selling everything from unique clothing and jewelry, to fascinating oddities you won't find anywhere else. Want to show off your new tattoos or older ink? Enter one of our tattoo contests for a chance to win a trophy and bragging rights!

Whether you're inked from head to toe or still need to get your first tattoo, this festival has something for everyone. Don't miss your chance to be part of this unforgettable weekend - mark your calendar for March 28th-30th and join the fun at the 15th Annual Chicago Tattoo Arts Festival! \$25 for a 1-Day Pass or \$50 for a 3-Day Pass.

www.villainarts.com

THE 2025 GRABBY AWARDS CELEBRATES 26 YEARS with COHOSTS Chi Chi LaRue and Morgan McMICHAELS SATURDAY MAY 24TH AT METRO THEATER



The annual GRABBYS Award Show highlighting top talent and performances in the gay erotic film industry will take place in Chicago on Saturday, May 24.

Celebrating its 26th anniversary, the GRABBYS are excited to announce cohosts **Chi Chi LaRue** and the incredible **Morgan**

McMichaels from "RuPaul's Drag Race." A new category is also being presented this year: Favorite Female-To-Male (FTM) Performer.

At www.GrabbyAwards.com, nominations launched on February 10 and run through February 24. Voting for the award nominees will be open March 3-17. Tickets will be available for purchase online at www.GrabbyAwards.com or by calling 773-707-2660 beginning April 1st

The show will once again be held at the Metro Theater, 3730 N. Clark Street. Doors open at 6 p.m. with the show starting promptly at 7 p.m. There will be cash bar prior to and during the show. Numerous parties and events surround the GRABBYS and will be announced this spring.

The Presenting Sponsor this year is JustForFans.com. Also returning as sponsors are Swiss Navy Lube, Squirt.org, Steamworks Baths, ASGMax and Carnal+. New this year is PeterFever.



TATTOO FESTIVAL



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RASHO'S *DUMMY IN DIASPORA*,
FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 23
AT THE BROADWAY ARMORY
PARK**



Jackalope's 17th season continues with the United States premiere of one of the hits of the 2024 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, *Dummy in Diaspora*, February 26 - March 23, written and performed by Esho Rasho and directed by Karina Patel, at the Broadway Armory Park, *Dummy in Diaspora* is a coming-of-age solo play written and performed by **Esho Rasho** about a Middle Eastern American boy, Essa, whose parents are refugees

During its most recent run in the 2024 Edinburgh Festival, The Scotsman in its four-star review said *Dummy in Diaspora* is "brutally honest" and "chilling."

Essa confesses the experience of growing up in a country that doesn't have a place for him. He navigates sexuality, the demands of a religion passed onto him from his parents, learning the English language, the fleetingness of youth and a nicotine demon that won't leave him alone.

Tickets are now Available at JackalopeTheatre.org or call/text the box office at 773-340-2543.

**MUSIC THEATER WORKS
ANNOUNCES THE CAST AND
CREATIVE TEAM FOR *GUYS AND
DOLLS*, MARCH 6 - 30, AT THE
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Music Theater Works' season kicks off with what many believe is the "perfect musical" with every song in its score a part of the American musical canon.

Guys and Dolls whisks audiences from Manhattan to Havana and back again with career gambler Sky Masterson, "Save-A-Soul" missionary Sarah Brown, Adelaide, Nathan Detroit and others in this exuberant, big, brassy musical. Join Music Theater Works at the Hot Box Club onstage for an unforgettable time.

Guys and Dolls, with music and lyrics by **Frank Loesser** and book by **Jo Swerling** and **Abe Burrows**, is directed by **Sasha Gerritson**, choreographed by **Clayton Cross** and music directed by **Linda Madonia**. Tickets are now on sale at MusicTheaterWorks.com or by calling the Music Theater Works box office at the North Shore Center, 847.673.6300.

**AT THE WAKE OF A DEAD DRAG
QUEEN APRIL 26-MAY 11 AT
RAVEN THEATRE**



The Story Theatre to kick off Season V with a reimagined production of *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* by Governing Ensemble member and Joseph Jefferson Award-winning playwright **Terry Guest**, directed by Joseph Jefferson Award-winning director **Mikael Burke**. This critically-acclaimed play about Black queer life, death and drag in the rural South will run April 26 - May 11, 2025 on Raven Theatre's Schwartz Stage, 6157 N. Clark St (at Granville) in Chicago.

Courtney Berringers would like to welcome you to her wake! But—make no mistake—this ain't your grandma's funeral. Loosely based on the life and death of playwright Terry Guest's Uncle Anthony, *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* is a one-act, two-hander play set in 2004 that centers Blackness, southern queerness and the fine art of drag. From African gods and goddesses to Trina and Whitney Houston, *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* thoughtfully uses storytelling, drama and drag to explore identity, illness and the narratives we construct for ourselves. Come party at the wake. Bring your own heels!

Tickets on sale at thestorytheatre.org/tickets or by calling (773) 338-2177.

**STEPPENWOLF THEATRE
COMPANY ANNOUNCES
LOOKOUT SPRING**



LookOut, Steppenwolf Theatre's performance series that presents the work of local artists and companies across genre and form, proudly announces its Spring 2025 Season, showcasing the eclectic work of Chicago's dynamic community of dancers, choreographers and performance artists. Highlights from the lineup of nine unique engagements include: Knockout, a dynamic and daringly athletic duet from Kara Brody and Erin Kilmurray; a reverent new work venerating Queer history and representation from Darling Squire; and The Uncanny Attic, a cult-favorite celebration of the work of gothic illustrator Edward Gorey.

Additionally, the LookOut Series is thrilled to announce the return of its curatorial residency program. Celebrated drag artist and self-proclaimed "Bollywood Barbie" Abhijeet will curate two drag programs investigating the culture of idol-worship in Bollywood films, featuring an ensemble of bold South Asian drag artists.

This annual curatorial residency program offers an opportunity for a Chicago performance practitioner to curate a series of shows over a two-week span. Previous curatorial residents include Amanda Maraist, Kara Brody and Helen Lee.

are now on sale by visiting steppenwolf.org/lookout or by calling the Box Office at (312) 335-1650.

STEPPENWOLF

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CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

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