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Cover Photo: Courtesy of FOX

Published by

INspired Media Inc.

Operating: INspired Creative, Publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and The Local Biz Magazine. Producers of On the Couch

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www.PinkPlayMags.com

www.thepinkpagesdirectory.com

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The Editor

Greetings and salutations!

Our cover feature this issue is with Queen Latifah, who currently has a lead role in the new FOX television series, *Star*, which has just been renewed for a second season and can be seen here in Canada on Netflix. Our writer Jerry Nunn chatted with Latifah about her role as Carlotta Brown, the owner of an Atlanta beauty salon, her trans daughter Cotton (played by Amiyah Scott), and the wonderful wigs she wears.

Our second feature is a spotlight on up and coming Kitchener musician, Aylsha Brilla, who's new album, *Humans*, has been getting regular play on CBC radio. She discusses the challenges of being a female in the male dominated music industry, her community work, and her love of Amy Winehouse and Bob Marley. Cat Grant skips this issue of her *She Beat* column, and RuPaul protege Shangela steps in to tell us all about the upcoming Queens WERQ The World tour kicking off in Toronto on May 26.

Our Wiggled Out column this issue is written by Lady-Bear-Extraordinaire, Fay Slift, who is teacher by day and drag sensation by night, and has combined the two in a very unique reading series for children called, *Reading is FUNdamental*. Paul Bellini spoke with writer Steve Keil, who recently published his latest book of poetry, *Dishpan Hands and Heart*, which will have its official book launch May 5 at Glad Day Bookshop.

Boyd Kodak interviewed trans DJ and show host Lina Bradford, who discusses music, fashion and pop culture with her celebrity friends on *In The Dollhouse With Lina*. Raymond Helkio spoke with Fatima Mechtub (aka Miss F), Marketing Director and Event Producer at Oasis Aqualounge, about the variety of programming that goes on at this sex-positive house of fun.

Finally, Sherry Sylvain has compiled her BUZZPICKS, a selection of top events across the city and beyond, and our designer Mychol Scully once again gave us a great lay-out.

Thanks for picking us up. Enjoy the read!

Bryen Dunn
Editor-in-Chief
bryen@thebuzzmag.ca



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SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 21ST, 2017



Queen Latifah

By Jerry Nunn

Wishes on a *Star*

Queen Latifah rules the entertainment kingdom with her acting and writing accolades, and she was also the first hip hop artist to gain a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2006.



After her acting debut on Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever*, she garnered praise with Golden Globe nominations for the musical *Chicago*, the life story of HIV positive Ana Wallace in *Life Support*, and blues singer Bessie Smith in *Bessie*. On television she not only starred in her own talk show, but had a hit with *Living Single* for many years, and in the music world she has six Grammy nominations under her belt.

Her latest endeavour, *Star*, is a musical drama based in Atlanta that revolves around three talented singers. Latifah plays Carlotta Brown the owner of an Atlanta beauty salon. Her daughter Cotton on the show is played by Amiyah Scott, the second openly trans person to play a major recurring trans role on a scripted television series, after Laverne Cox (*Orange Is the New Black*)

I had the opportunity to chat with Latifah about her latest television venture.

What drew you in to the character of Carlotta in the first place?

I think it was how much she's been through and how many mistakes she's made in life, but also how gifted she is at the same time. She's a character who is extremely flawed, who's been hurt, and who's made mistakes that have had dramatic consequences on her life and her future. She still has a huge capacity to love, and she never gives up. She still wanted to be redeemed in many ways. She's never all the way there, but she never gives up. Carlotta never stops trying. She never just completely gives in to one side. She always keeps

trying to challenge and grow and change, yet it doesn't necessarily look like it because she may play it real cool and calm sometimes, but she's always going through a lot underneath.

I think she's much more complicated and much more challenging for me as an actor to play than people might think, because there are so many layers underneath what Carlotta is feeling, that I have to find so many angles into her at all times. When Lee (Daniels) throws in twists and turns, which is always fun, I have to find more angles into her. It's fun, it's challenging, and it's exciting for an actor. I don't get bored doing it.

Can you talk about having a trans daughter on *Star* and what that has meant to you?

That was also one of the big draws of Carlotta, the fact that she has a trans daughter. Carlotta, completely different between Queen Latifah, but they cross over in certain ways. The topic of being trans or having a trans child, or becoming trans later in life, these things are very topical. More importantly, the thing that Lee and I talked about when we developed the concept of this show, and what we were interested in about this, was the fact that not everybody knows the right thing to say. It's a new experience for a lot of people, and if we could only communicate about it, we could grow to understand each other.

You'll find that theme along a lot of lines in this show, but this particular topic is very important to us, especially since our whole relationship to begin

this whole movement began after we were at the after-party for *Precious*. We kind of hung around and got on the topic of *Paris is Burning*, and how much we both loved that movie and how some of the people in that movie were high school classmates of mine, or friends that I knew from hanging out in the clubs in my teenage years. Lee kind of crossed a lot for the same places in his younger years, and we wanted to build on that understanding.

At the same time, you can't always fault people for what they don't understand. You always have to try to build a bridge. We wanted to show the conversation. We hear about those conversations, especially when Bruce Jenner became Caitlyn. It became a huge topic of conversation, and some of it was sort of trivialized, stereotyped or overblown, but what was missing was the actual conversation that was had to get from point A to point Z.

We wanted to show those actual conversations, what challenges people go through, what Cotton is feeling. Let's just start with what Cotton is feeling, and why Cotton feels this way, and what Cotton is going through. Then, let's deal with Carlotta and what she's feeling, and what she's going through, and how can a mother and child build a bridge between each other when they both love each other, but they're worlds apart on so many other things.

Those were the things that were important to us to really show, and not just show in one episode, but really to carry it through a whole season, carry it through a whole arc and really, really get down and dirty with it. Not just show the pretty sides of it, but show the uglier sides of it so that everybody can gain a better understanding on their own, and form their own opinions.

We're not trying to answer every question for everyone. We're just trying to show what the situation can really be like. I think that's a more interesting way to show it, rather than just say here's the perfect politically correct answer to everything, and let's go with that. Lee isn't afraid to tackle those subjects, which is why I love him, and because I'm not afraid to tackle those subjects either, especially when it's coming through the talent of his lens.

How much input did you put in for the wigs you wear on *Star*?

The idea definitely came from Lee. Carlotta is not a stereotype. She is someone we know, but the women we know love to spend time on their hair. Hair is very

important, particularly in the Black community. Even though she's busy running a business and has many hairstylists around, she doesn't really have time to really do her own hair like that, so wigs are a way of her changing up her look, expressing herself, doing something a little different, and keeping it fresh.

Part of how she gets to let out a lot of expression and difference inside of her is through these wigs. She's not afraid to take chances on it. It's also maybe a little advertisement, a little display of what the shop can do and connecting to the community. These wigs are not primarily very expensive wigs. I think if anything costs over \$20, then Lee will pretty much call me and tell me to take it off because he makes sure that we connect to a community that is really shopping in the right price point, but still wants to look good and still wants to express themselves even if they don't have a lot of money. That's something people connect to. This is still a way of her feeling special even in the midst of everything in disarray around her.

Thank you so much for marrying many of the gay community at the Grammy's. It meant so much to people and must have been a great experience for you, too.

You know, it was a great experience, and two of my best friends got married, and I didn't even know they were getting married until they wanted to have my name on their marriage certificate. That situation has the same gravitas that I'm talking about in this situation by having a trans daughter on *Star*. I wish you could see behind the scenes, and all the things that I thought about and went through to actually do that. These are the kind of conversations that are important to have to really allow everyone to move everything forward, and to have real conversations all along the way.

Look for Queen Latifah and her co-star Amiyah Scott on season two of *Star* on FOX in the USA, and Netflix in Canada. www.fox.com/star.

Chicago based Jerry Nunn is a contributor and photographer for the Windy City Times, GoPride.com, and Edge Media.

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Alysha Brilla

Mixing Music with Art and Activism

Alysha Brilla hails from Kitchener, Ontario, and her melodic mix of music stemming from her Indian-Tanzanian-Canadian heritage has gained her much deserved recognition.

Growing up in an environment with an interesting discourse around the arts and social politics, as well as a mixed race and religious household, presented an interesting perspective on concepts like nationalism, religious pride, and family. “I believe my interest in inclusivity, feminism and human rights was a slow build”, she says.

Her third self-produced album, *Humans*, was recently released, and was conceived during an ancestral journey to her father’s homeland in 2015, which provided inspiration for Brilla to write and produce the 10 new songs on the album. The blend of Indian and East African sounds, with an eclectic musical arrangement of drums, bass, guitar, keys, sax, trumpet, congas, and djembe, provides for a truly unique sounding album.

Brilla herself plays guitar, keyboards, percussion, in addition to main vocals. CBC has been playing her tunes on regular rotation, and she’s been doing live shows across Canada, and around the world.

The first single off the album, *No More Violence*, has a catchy rhythm and poignant lyrics. “I wrote that song thinking about the over saturation and acceptance of violence in our world, specifically violence against women/femmes and the earth. I don’t see it as a coincidence that traditionally more gender-equal cultures also have more of a reverence towards the land. I also see a strong historical connection between the minimization of women’s voices to the way our planet and societies have been shaped. Violence comes in many forms, but I do believe that social and environmental balance is the solution to many of our world’s problems”, she states.

Another song from the album, *Gender Rollz*, also expresses her opinion around the differences that still openly exist between men and women, and those who identify outside that closed dual spectrum. “It’s a song about the binary and the dualistic way humans have been conditioned to view the world and its people. We know now that there is so much more that defines gender, sexuality, race, religion, etc”.

She cites Amy Winehouse and Bob Marley as her two key influences, and this is certainly apparent with her strong soulful voice mixed with reggae/dub overtones. “There has never been a conscious time in my life that I didn’t want to just play music. Music has always been magic to me, and truly the only thing that has brought me through some incredible bouts of depression in my life”.

Being one of very few female produced projects who received a Juno nomination, she strongly believes that female musicians have to work harder to get the credit they deserve. “When it comes to gender roles specifically, I am interested in the way gender has played into the music industry. My

experiences over the past 15 years in the industry, including being signed to a major label while living in Los Angeles, showed me that typically women are the pretty faces of the

operation and men are behind the scenes. I would love to see some of that dichotomy change so that folks feel free to navigate life without limitations imposed by their gender”, she explains.

Brilla also had the opportunity to put her musical skill to good use with community initiatives. “I am so lucky to live in an amazing community where I have access to work on these projects.

Indigenizing Post-Secondary Education is a short documentary I produced through Conestoga College. It looks at how Canadian schools are mandated to now

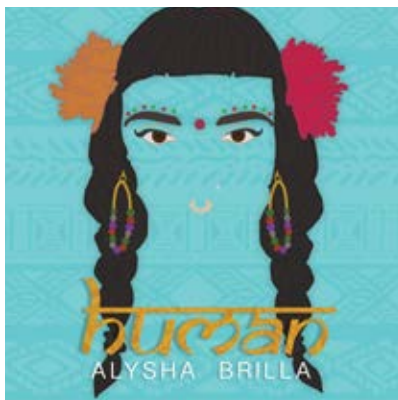
include Indigenous content and pedagogy into our otherwise Euro-centric education models. *Bridges to Belonging* is another awesome initiative that looks to include all sorts of folks across the spectrum in our community. I have played with musicians who use social services like Bridges, so it was only natural that I’d want to produce a song for their video.”

Brilla is also a certified yoga teacher, learned while in Rishikesh, India, and her philosophies of well-being can be seen in both her art and activism. She’s an arts educator, frequently conducting music and social justice workshops in elementary schools across Canada and internationally. She has also been a mentor for YWCA’s *Rock Weekend*, helping marginalized female youth develop social skills through music. Her art aims to unite people through the Canadian cultural kaleidoscope, bringing light to social inequity issues in Canada and abroad. Her music and workshops feature strong themes of cultural diversity, gender equality and inclusivity.

Visit www.alyshabrilla.com for more information, videos, and upcoming show dates. Her backing band, The Brilltones, features Alison Young (Saxophone), Marie Goudy (Trumpet), Adam Bowman (Drums), Chris Rouse (Keys) and Maxwell Roach (Bass). *Humans* is available on iTunes and select record stores across Canada. Mixing the album is Gary Noble (Amy Winehouse, The Fugees, Damian Marley), with mastering by Tom Coyne (Adele, Amy Winehouse, Maroon 5).

Featured image of Alyssa Brilla by Josh Haggarty
Co-Founder/CEO of aBabe Music.

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues.





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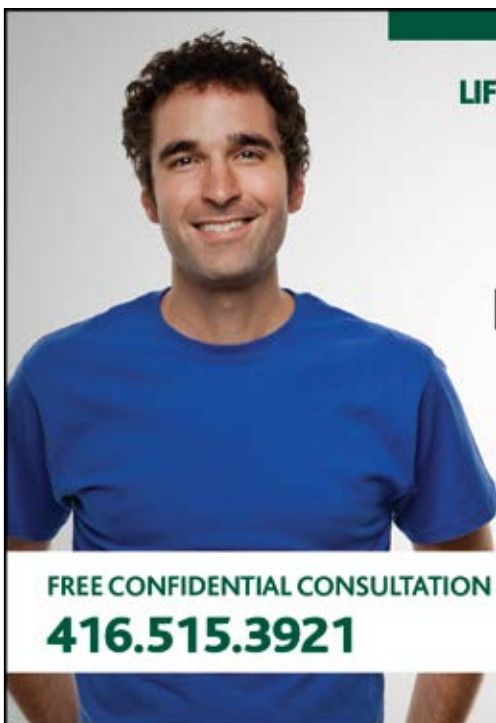
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RUPAUL'S QUEENS WERQ THE WORLD!

The queens of RuPaul's Drag Race are unleashing hilarity and hi-jinks upon the world this spring in *Queens WERQ The World*, their new world tour launching May 26 at the Danforth Music Hall (147 Danforth Ave) in Toronto.

I'm thrilled we're debuting in one of my favourite cities on earth. It will be my first time back in Toronto since performing at the city's fabulous Pride a few years back. Toronto has some sexy ass people and I hope they all come to the show.

Our show is being produced by Voss Events, OUTtv Europe, and my own production company, Say What Entertainment. It will feature some of the most unforgettable queens from RuPaul's Drag Race, including Alaska Thunderfuck, Alyssa Edwards, Detox, Latrice Royale, and Willam. Joining them will be some of the new ladies from the current season: Aja, Peppermint, Shea Coulee and Trinity Taylor.

This is by far the most outrageous and talented collection of queens that has ever been assembled on stage. We're calling the tour WERQ the World because that's exactly what these Drag Race stars will be doing for fans: WERQing like they've never WERQ'd it before!

Now that more than one hundred drag queens have appeared on RuPaul's Drag Race, competition is hot. The key to staying

relevant is by finding new ways to connect with audiences. As a queen, you gotta explore all of your talents and not be afraid to WERQ hard for the money.

These queens have some fierce new looks, never-before-seen theatrics, and over the top production numbers that will leave fans gagging. It will be especially interesting to witness how the season nine queens stack up against the veterans. Rehearsals have started and it's incredible to see this multi-talented cast of new girls and veterans coming together on some unbelievably creative numbers.

After Toronto, the tour continues to Montreal before jumping the Atlantic for fourteen shows in fabulous cities like London, Dublin, Berlin, and Vienna.

Then we return back to this side of the pond for the final show of the tour on June 23rd at New York City's Pride.

Tickets for the QUEENS WERQ THE WORLD 2017 tour are on sale now at www.werqtheworld.com

Hailing from Paris, Texas, and after only five months of performing shows in LA, Shangela

was cast on Season Two of RuPaul's Drag Race, before being sent sashaying away during the first episode. Today she continues to host, perform, and death-drop the house down as a drag entertainer across North America.

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Drag Queens Reading Out Loud



PHOTO: Nazban Tom

About a year ago I came across a news article about Drag Queens in San Francisco involved in a reading program with local libraries. I had been eager for years to bring my performance and my professional passions together. I was inspired and reached out to my dear friend Kaleb Robertson (aka Fluffy Soufflé), and to Michael Erickson, both passionately involved with Glad Day Bookshop. I simply asked, “Can we do this here?” Both were excited by the concept, and Michael began pursuing the Toronto Public Library. By June, we received confirmation that the Yorkville Branch, in conjunction with Pride Toronto, were eager to have this takeoff. I was so excited.



PHOTO: Richard Rhyme

The day of the reading was the Saturday of the final Pride weekend of 2016. I was up early and was painted and ready to go. Kaleb and I headed up to the library, and for the first time in my career I felt nervous. My mind was swirling. What if no one came? What if we were reading to an empty room. We were ushered in and began to dress in a back office. I had chosen a wonderful book by Michael Hall, “Red: A Crayon’s Story.” There were so many families, so many little ones.

We were seated behind some tall rows of shelves so as to not distract the little ones, as I wanted us to be a surprise. There were four readers altogether, myself, Fluffy and authors Catherine Hernandez and Joyce Grant.

Suddenly I heard some children excitedly say “Mr. Kane!” I turned around as three families from my school came into the library. They all had big grins on their faces, waving at me frantically. This was the first time they had seen me as Fay. They were beaming, and I was overwhelmed with emotion. I felt so supported, so empowered. My nervousness gave way to excitement and happiness. I am introduced to the audience, there’s applause and cheers. I feel my heart swelling. I make my way up to the front wearing a Cheeseburger dress, bright fluorescent yellow hair, and long emerald coloured gloves. The children are excitedly talking all at once. There is magic in the air. Smiles abound. How lucky am I? The luckiest.



PHOTO: S. Bear Bergman

Since that first reading event, I have also had the opportunity to read at the 519 Community Centre and at Glad Day Bookshop on Church Street. Fluffy and I have created a new reading series naming it Reading is FUNdamental. We are in talks to bring it to other outlets in the city so we can share our love of literacy and performance, but most importantly, our love for the little people. Just like Whitney Houston, I too “believe that children are the future, teach them well and let them lead the way”, and I’m grateful to follow.

Kindergarten teacher by day, Lady-bear-extraordinaire by night, Fay Slift has been entertaining audiences in the city since 2007.



PHOTO: S. David Hawe



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Saturday June 10th Pride in the Park Festival | Montebello Park, St. Catharines


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DISHPAN HANDS AND HEART – STEVE KEIL

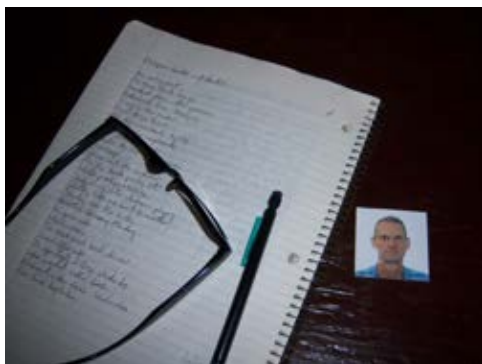
DISHPAN
HANDS AND
HEART

*My wide eyed Sunday near evenings
Were almost always spent somewhere
Lost in the bosom of bar 501
Drinking myself to excessive enjoyment
While watching the musical escapades
Of Bedeila Bidet
Or Virginia Richmond
And the crown princess of faux bettes Bunny LeBlanc
While they would run through their canon
For the window show
Named so
Because the back wall of the stage
Was the front pane of the place.*

So writes Steve Keil, reminiscing about Bar 501's legendary Window Show, in his sixth collection of free verse, titled "Dishpan Hands and Heart." Many of the poems in Keil's collections offer distant Church Street memories such as this.

"I started out being a songwriter, wrote over 200 songs, and did some recordings," he explained. "Then I realized I wasn't much of a performer. I wrote screenplays and novels, and then I did an online journal before they were called blogs. Every day I had to find something to write about, so I had to take a trip to the laundromat and make it compelling. Then I thought maybe I should do this as poetry."

One day about eight years ago he read a book about the Beat poets, and decided to try his hand. By the end of that year, he had published his first collection. "I called it "Between Keats and Kerouac", because that is where I sit, both alphabetically and stylistically", he says.



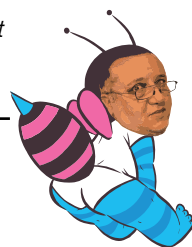
Keil grew up in Oneida, in upstate New York. He attended university in Syracuse and lived in various American cities before ending up in Toronto in the early 90s. For years he performed with rock bands that took their names from The Flintstones (The Rockenshiels, Go Freddy Go). Later, discovering the work of poets like Frank O'Hara, Billy Collins, and Allan Ginsberg, he stopped all attempts at rhyming to embrace free verse.

A lot of the poems concern the gay village, particularly the glorious period about 15 years ago when there were more performance spaces. "I miss Steve Roseland," he says of his late friend, who hosted singing shows at George's Play and Gladaman's Den, among others. "He led the live singing scene in Toronto's gay village. He was the best party host. I was living in Denver when he died. Coming back, I could really feel his absence." Keil still loves creating music, but feels the music business has changed for the worse. "I'm always listening to top 40, and in every break-up song, it's always someone else's fault. No one accepts any personal responsibility anymore. Those Taylor Swift songs? 'You did this to me.' Whereas in my writing, it's always my fault. I'm not afraid to be responsible, or embarrassed."

So can a poet ever get rich? "There is no future in poetry. There is no audience, no money, but I love the doing of it. Singing and writing poetry are the only things that keep me from losing my mind."

A book launch for Dishpan Hands and Heart takes place at Glad Day Bookshop on May 5, 2017.

Paul Bellini is an award-winning television comedy writer (*Kids in the Hall, This Hour Has 22 Minutes*). He also teaches comedy writing at George Brown College in Toronto.



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Lina Bradford



Trans DJ and talk show host Lina Bradford returns for a second season of “In The Dollhouse With Lina”, where she discusses music, fashion and pop culture with her celebrity friends. Each episode is shot in Lina Bradford’s Barbie doll room, where she has over 600 pint-sized mannequins, and a magic 8-ball. Best known for her ten-year run as a DJ on Fire Island, Lina currently still DJ’s around New York City.

Boyd Kodak - What have you been doing over the last year?

Lina Bradford - I have dedicated all of my self to “In The Dollhouse”, now in season two. Experiencing season one helped me grow and understand this part of my life, and continuing to push myself is always the most exciting thing.

BK - During that time, which was the one most exciting event for you?

LB - One particular moment that really shines very bright was last June, when I was fortunate enough to work with youth at the American Embassy in Vietnam. I feel very blessed and privileged to have been asked to take part.

BK -What are you looking forward to over the next year?

LB - I’m excited to see how my show touches and moves people. It’s exciting how organic all of the wonderful things that I do come out to play and touch people. I get very caught up in doing, and sometimes forget the magnitude of all the things that I do. I sit back, and I’m like, wow you’ve done a lot of wonderful things. As an Aries woman I always got to keep on moving, making myself and other people happy.

BK - Where can we see your work?

LB - Well aside from my speaking engagements with youth and the transgender community, being a global ambassador for Hetrick Martin Institute, a grass-roots advocacy organization that provides social support and programming for LGBTQ youth, a board member with Gay Men’s Health Crisis, and my Throwback Sundays DJ party at The Gilded Lily, you get to watch brand-new episodes of “In The Dollhouse” every Thursday.

BK- Any message you would like to put out there?

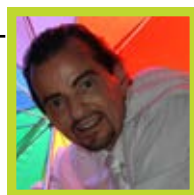
LB - Remember to connect with people. We are a physical interactive species, and more human visual contact goes a long way, as does a smile. Take some time away from these (electronic) devices, and talk to people.

BK - Finish this sentence. If I could have three wishes, they would be ____

LB - 1. To find a cure to all of the diseases. 2. Have people all over the world connecting as brothers and sisters. 3. Better health care for all.

www.djlina.com

Boyd Kodak is an award-winning trans activist, musician, writer, activist, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director.



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GET WET AT OASIS AQUALOUNGE



Oasis Aqualounge once known as the Club Baths and one of the locations busted during the 1983 bathhouse raids, is a nineteenth century mansion come adult playground. Billed as a venue for couples and women who want to explore their sexuality or enhance their relationship, the space boasts a thoughtful array of programming for women and the people who love them.

I spoke with Fatima Mechtab (aka Miss F), Marketing Director and Event Producer, to find out more about their space and special events.

What do you think is the biggest misconception that sex clubs have?

I think that people think that they have to have sex, or they put pressure/expectations on themselves to engage in play, when in reality everything is optional. You don't need to play with other partners, and you don't even have to have sex! We provide a sexually charged, clothing optional environment with liberal values, but what one does when there is completely up to them.

You could just run a sex club and make money, so why is it important to you to also be a healthy sex advocate?

Healthy sexuality (including kink and fetishes that bring pleasure), body acceptance, and/or intimacy is something that most humans want in their lives. Everyone should have access or at least information and opportunities to express that side of them, without the fear of being judged or being harmed. Oasis is a special world offering an escape from societal norms, and most of all it's a community of people who share that same common vision.

What can someone expect from your Sapphic Aquatica event?

Sapphic Aquatica is an exclusive event for women and trans folk, that also includes those who identify as non-binary. Sapphic once started as an event only for women and

woman-identified, but as I grew to understand the trans community it became more inclusive both in language and those permitted to attend. A typical event is held bi-monthly on the last Sunday, and we also hold a special Pride event every June. Each party features a DJ, some type of workshop/demonstration, and "Sybian" rides, which is operated by a trained staff member. I show queer-specific porn on the monitors, and all of the fabulous facilities are available to guests. For larger events, such as Pride and our anniversary parties, we often add a fundraising element to support important and valuable LGBTQ+ charitable organizations, like Rainbow Railroad and Trans LifeLine.

Why is there a "no cis men" policy at this particular event?

The reason that no cis men are permitted is because I feel it's important to take/give space specifically for women and all trans identities. Cis men are welcome at Oasis on any other day, so I think that for one night, those who attend Sapphic can have the entire place to themselves, to feel free, sexy and safe without having to face typical judgment or expectations that are often encountered in everyday life.

Oasis Aqualounge - 231 Mutual Street, Toronto
oasisaqualounge.com

Raymond Helkio is an author, director and filmmaker. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art & Design University and is co-founder of The Reading Salon.

www.raymondhelkio.com
www.thereadingsalon.ca





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COMMUNITY BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

What Are Your Stats?

Saturdays from 10:00 p.m. No Cover

James Quigley brings his wonderful keyboard skills and lovely voice to the piano bar at Statler's, Saturdays from 10:00 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

Statlers- 487 Church St. Toronto
www.statlers.ca

French Kiss

Sundays from 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. No Cover

Who doesn't like a little French? Kiss, that is. Jezebel Bardot and special guests bring a barrage of drag and general "folie" to your Sunday evening. Jezebel tries for at least one chanson-en-francais per show.

Blyss Nightclub, 504 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/BlyssToronto

Kraffy Queens

Sundays from 9:00 p.m. No Cover

Sofonda Cox and Donnarama, with random guests present some of the wildest drag you're likely to see. Great food and drinks, and fabulous entertainment.

Church Street Garage, 477 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/churchstgarage

Heavenly Mondays

Mondays from 10:30 p.m. No Cover

The lovely and dance-tastic Heaven Lee Hytes and her special guests burn up the stage. Day prices all evening.

Blyss Nightclub, 504 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/BlyssToronto

Werk Tuesdays

Tuesdays from 9:00 p.m. No Cover

Join a wonderful line up of Divas for a blend of comedy, live singing, and your favorite hits. 9PM — Ivory Towers & special guest. 11:30 p.m. — Vitality Black & special guest.

Crews & Tangos, 508 Church St. Toronto
www.crewsandtangos.com

The BoBo Show

Wednesdays from 11:00 p.m. No Cover

A weekly drag and variety show with hostess Scarlett BoBo and special guests. Everything from drag and burlesque through singing and dancing. Maybe a clown or musician for good measure. \$4.50 Fireball

Statlers - 487 Church St. Toronto
www.statlers.ca

Thirsty Thursdays - Smirnoff Men's Chest Contest

Thursdays from 10:00 p.m. No Cover

Sofonda Cox hosting, hot beats by DJ Mark Falco, a Special Guest (or two), \$300 cash prizes, Steamworks Toronto Giveaways, Toronto's Hottest Staff, and (male) Contestants baring their chests.

Woodys & Sailor, 467 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/WoodysSailorToronto

Roxxie's Cabaret

Fridays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. No Cover

Back by popular demand! The Live Cabaret chanteuse herself, Miss Roxxie Terrain, accompanied by the piano genius of Adam Weinmann. Mark your calendars. Not to be missed!

Blyss Nightclub, 504 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/BlyssToronto

Men's Best Ass Contest

Fridays from 10:00 p.m. No Cover

Georgie Girl hosts, also starring Devine Darlin and/or a special guest, with DJ Chris Steinbach. \$300 cash prizes, Steamworks Toronto Giveaways, Toronto's Hottest Staff and contestants.

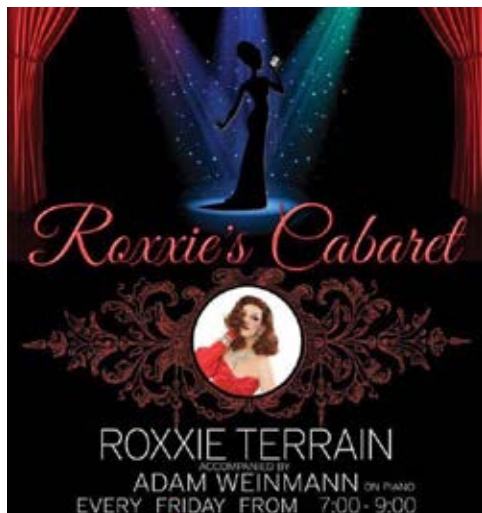
Woodys & Sailor, 467 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/WoodysSailorToronto

Drag Me To Friday

Fridays from 11:00 p.m. No Cover

Featuring Ala El Deen and a queen so hot, she douches with Bajan pepper sauce, Miss Jada Hudson!!!! Bar rail specials and a new menu to enjoy while watching a killer show!

Church Street Garage, 477 Church St., Toronto
www.facebook.com/churchstgarage





CHARITY BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

INSPIRE Awards

June 2 from 6:00 p.m.

Awards event honouring people, youth, businesses, and organizations. Enjoy a cocktail reception, awards presentation, live entertainment, DJ Dance Party in the Garden, two appetizer buffets, and a cash bar.

Hart House Theatre, 7 Hart House Circle, Toronto
www.inspireawards.ca



Wedding Crasher Queens

April 22, from 8:00 p.m. or 11:00 p.m. \$15.00

Pip and Alex are getting married, and you're invited to crash the party! Join in the celebration with over a dozen of Toronto's hottest queens. All proceeds from the bar go to support The 519.

The 519 Community Centre, 519 Church St., Toronto
www.the519.org

A Taste For Life

April 26

Participating Taste restaurants donate 25% of their evening sales to AIDS Service Organizations in their community. Support the men, women and children in YOUR community by going out to dinner.

www.atasteforlife.org

Art Gallery Of Mississauga Annual Fine Art Auction

Previews April 20 – 24. Auction April 27 from 6:30 p.m.

The live auction offers the chance to take home an original work by a roster of talented artists. All proceeds support the AGM's innovative public programming, artist projects and exhibitions.

Mississauga Civic Centre, 300 City Centre Dr., Mississauga
www.artgalleryofmississauga.com/auction14_tickets.html

LGBTQ Volunteer Fair

April 29 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

This lively and popular fair connects organizations with community members for opportunities to gain new employable skills, grow their network, and give back to the community.

The 519 Community Centre, 519 Church St., Toronto
www.the519.org



Dance Dance Tea Dance!

April 29 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Funds raised from this event will be donated to the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives in Toronto, the world's largest independent archives of its kind.

A la Carte Bistro, Gardiner Museum, 111 Queens Park, Toronto
www.dancedanceteadance.yapsody.com

East Coast Charity Ball

April 29 from 9:00 p.m.

East Coast Connected (ECC)'s flagship fundraising event in support of the IWK Foundation, a champion of excellence in women's and children's health and medicine.

Evergreen Brick Works, 550 Bayview Ave., #300, Toronto
www.eastcoastconnected.ca/events

Adoration Colour Run

May 6 from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

5 km un-timed walk/run fundraiser for Adoration Christian Centre in Haiti. During the walk/run, you pass through colour stations where you will be splashed with some beautiful colours.

Gage Park, Gage and Main Sts., Hamilton
www.adorationcolourrun.net

Annual Chas Parkway Salute to Pride

June 3 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. \$10.00 suggested at the door

Presented by The College of Monarchs of T.I.C.O.T. a drag show to salute Pride with all proceeds, including stage tips, to benefit the charities of Reign XXX.

Erotico Lounge, 461 Church St., 2nd Floor, Toronto
www.ticot.ca

Becel Heart & Stroke Ride for Heart

June 4 from 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

You and thousands of other heart-smart riders, runners and walkers in Toronto, will get to enjoy wide-open highways, and raise funds for heart disease and stroke research.

Enercare Centre, 100 Princes' Blvd., Toronto
www.rideforheart.ca

GENERAL BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

Settling In Toronto - The Quest For Freedom

Through July 25. Free admission

As Canada celebrates its 150th year, take a journey from the 1700s up to the present day as you explore how different migrants carved out their place in Toronto's history.

The Market Gallery, 95 Front St. E., Toronto
www.facebook.com/MarketGallery

Canadian Pet Expo

April 14 – 16 from 10:00 a.m. Adults \$18.00

Pets welcome. Talent Show, Service Dog Fundraiser, Groomers and Grooming Products, Cat Show, Classes and Seminars. One of the largest pet and pet accessory shows in the region.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga
www.springcpe.com

Images Festival

April 20 to 27

Established in 1987, the Images Festival is the largest festival in North America for experimental and independent moving image culture.

Various Venues throughout Toronto
www.imagesfestival.com

Backyard Living Expo

April 21 to 23

This expo showcases everything you can experience, enjoy and create in the comfort of your backyard. Suppliers, retailers, seminars, classes, workshops, and ideas galore.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga
www.thebackyardlivingexpo.com

Hot Docs Festival

April 27 to May 7

North America's largest documentary festival offers an outstanding selection of over 200 films from Canada and around the world to Toronto audiences of more than 200,000.

Ted Rogers Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W., Toronto
www.hotdocscinema.ca

Queer & Trans Family Planning Weekend

April 28 to 30

For people who identify as LGBTQIP2SAA or other, and their partners. Explore some of the practical, emotional, social and legal issues involved when thinking about becoming a parent.

Sherbourne Health Centre, 333 Sherbourne St., Toronto
www.lgbtqpn.ca

An Intimate Evening with Lea Michele

May 6. 8:00 p.m. \$49.50 to \$99.50

Singer, author, award winning actress and former Glee star Lea Michele returns with songs from her forthcoming album, 'Places', after a run of three sold out shows in January.

Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St., Toronto
www.masseyhall.com



Niagara Falls Elvis Festival

May 19 to 21

If you have a 'burning love' for Elvis Presley, then you're about to be 'all shook up'. The Greg Frewin Theatre presents the Inaugural Niagara Falls Elvis Festival.

Greg Frewin Theatre, 5781 Ellen Ave., Niagara Falls
www.niagarafallselvisfestival.com

21C Music Festival

May 24 to 28 – Tickets from \$21.00

Twenty-first Century Music Festival – Today's most innovative musicians bringing fresh new sounds and ideas. 9 concert – 5 days – 21+ premieres.

Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto
www.performance.rcmusic.ca/21c

Inside Out - Toronto LGBT Film Festival

May 25 to June 4

The largest event of its kind in Canada and one of the top five LGBT film festivals in the world. Taking place over 11 days, the Festival draws crowds of close to 35,000 with more than 200 films and videos screened.

TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St. W., Toronto
www.insideout.ca

Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to), and currently is proud to hold the title of Queen Mum to The Imperial Court of Toronto for 2015/2016.



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