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# Rick Mercer

*Hitting The Road Again...Just For Laughs*

**Bif Naked**

*Surviving Cancer Through Words, Music, and Laughter*



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# The Editor

## Greetings and Salutations!

It's finally fall, my favourite time of the year. Gone are the summer days of sweat and smog, as we welcome the cooler, colourful days of autumn. Which also means Halloween is on the horizon!

As you likely have noticed, that's **Rick Mercer's** mugshot on our cover. The beloved former host of *Rick Mercer Report*, and *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, is embarking on a cross Canada stand-up comedy tour. He'll be hosting *Just For Laughs Comedy Night in Canada*, along with three equally as talented fellow Canadians - **Ivan Decker**, **Debra DiGiovanni**, and **Ali Hassan**. Rick tells us what to expect on this family-friendly event, as he makes his way across the country. He also discusses some of the weird and wacky antics he's accomplished during this decades long tenure on television, and what plans he has for the future. Which, by the way, do not include retirement!

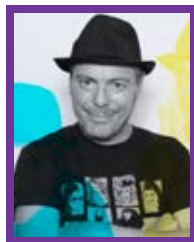
Our second feature is also on a well-known Canadian, musician and author, **Bif Naked**. Cat Grant caught up with her to chat about her music career that began in the 1990s, and continues today as she works on her latest album release. She has had some personal obstacles along the way, including her battle with cancer, which she is detailing in a new book she's currently writing. She's also putting together a work of poetry that's soon to be published, and enjoying life here in Toronto after her recent move to the city.

Our guest Wiggled Out columnist is Toronto's own, **Eva Lasting**, who discusses how drag can be complemented with politics, which she does perfectly with her YouTube show, *Fake Tits, Real News*. Cat is back, speaking with artist **Constance Rennet**, who sculpts works of the human form, while Boyd Kodak caught up with local musician, **T. Thomason**, who is steadily gaining popularity after his performance on CTV's, *The Launch*. Paul Bellini gets ready for fall, by preparing his fantasy feast for his honoured guests, and Raymond Helkio ventured out to the west end to discover **Unlovable**, one of the best dive bars in town, and we mean that in a good way!

Don't forget to flip to the back pages for our popular BUZZpicks events listings, where you'll find an eclectic mix of Toronto events and Road Trip suggestions, all compiled by our Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain. As always, thanks to our designer, Mychol Scully, for making us all look so beautiful!

Thanks for picking us up. Enjoy the read!

**Bryen Dunn**  
Editor-in-Chief





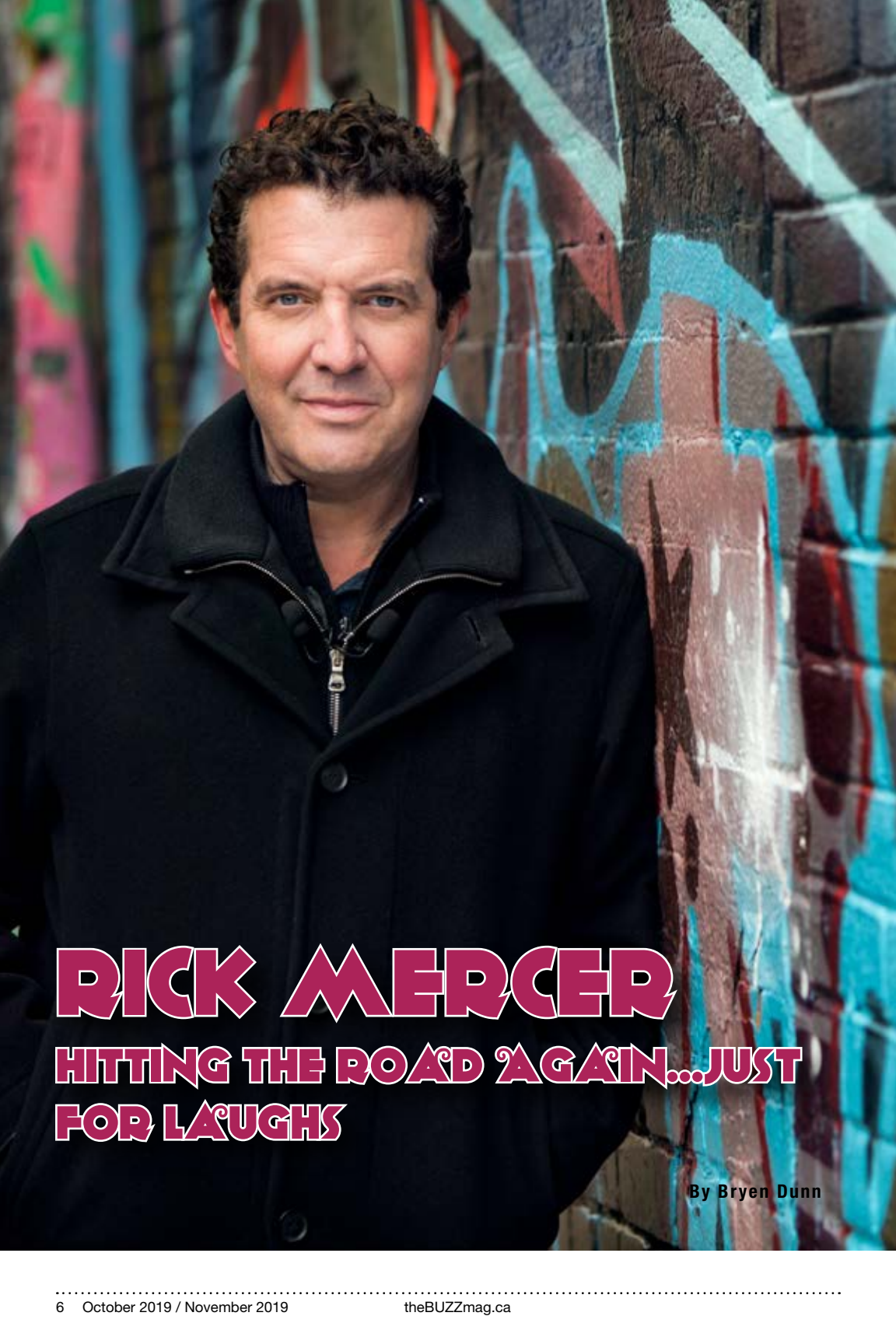
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# RICK MERCER

HITTING THE ROAD AGAIN...JUST  
FOR LAUGHS

By Bryen Dunn

## Rick Mercer loves Canada. So much so, that he's heading out on another cross-country comedy tour, something he accomplished more than 15 years ago, and referred to as, "the highlight of my career."

No stranger to being on the road discovering everything wild and weird about the country on his acclaimed CBC television series, *Rick Mercer Report*, he's now returning live to the stage to perform stand-up, something he truly loves doing.

"This is going to be a true cross Canada tour," he says. "We're going from coast-to-coast, from St. John's, Newfoundland to Surrey, British Columbia, with an all Canadian line up." Mercer grew up in middle section of the amalgamated town of, Logy Bay-Middle Cove-Outer Cove, Newfoundland, about 10 minutes outside of the capital of St. John's. He often returns home and says, "anyone who is doing a quick tour of St. John's will likely visit the beautiful beaches."

He'll be hosting the tour, as part of the *Just for Laughs Comedy Night in Canada* tour, along with an all-Canadian trio of extremely talented and diverse comedians. He'll be joined onstage by **Ivan Decker, Debra DiGiovanni, and Ali Hassan**. "This was important to me, having an all-Canadian line up," he states. Although he does admit, "I don't know them that well, but it's a small community. We often pass each other and say hello. I'm really looking forward to getting to know them, and by the end of the tour I'm sure I will, as this is the classic road tour of planes, trains, and buses."

As to what fans can expect on stage, Mercer says, "This is a classic stand-up show for everyone. I remember falling in love with comedy as a kid, and it's sometimes tricky for families to find comedy for all. All these comedians are top notch, each different in their own unique way, yet all complement each other as well."

As someone who has been on the road travelling as part of his job for a good part of his life, he stated that the show will have slight variations as it makes its trek across the country. "It's almost impossible to be in a part of the country and not talk about the region. I have stories that involve almost every town in Canada, and it just comes natural to talk about the place that I'm at. We also tend to talk about what's currently going on in the country, as well as local current topics."

The tour is also raising money for, *Movember*, a *Just For Laughs* initiative whereby a dollar from each ticket sold will go to this charity organization that raises awareness

for men's health issues. Mercer has always been supportive of charitable causes, having raised millions via his work through the *Rick Mercer Report* for *Spread The Net*, an organization he co-founded that aims to reduce malaria in African nations. He acknowledges, "The students were the ones who raised millions of dollars over the years. They did all the heavy lifting."

When asked to recall most memorable moments from his RMR days, he said he could go on for days, but then just randomly chose a few experiences from his times in British Columbia. "Bungee jumping with Rick Hansen, whitewater rafting in Tofino, ziplining with the Mayor of Vancouver, and countless others," he rhymes off. "There were a lot. That was my job to find memorable moments."

As for the most terrifying, he cites the "train of death" episode which took place in Varney, Ontario back in October 2009. "I actually thought I was going to die. I was so afraid that I was not only going to die, but I was going to be a punch line, as I died doing the train of death," he laughs. "There was a moment where I was legitimately terrified, and the funny thing is, I'm not an adrenaline junkie. I wouldn't sign up for any of these things if left to my own devices." There's a clip of it on YouTube.

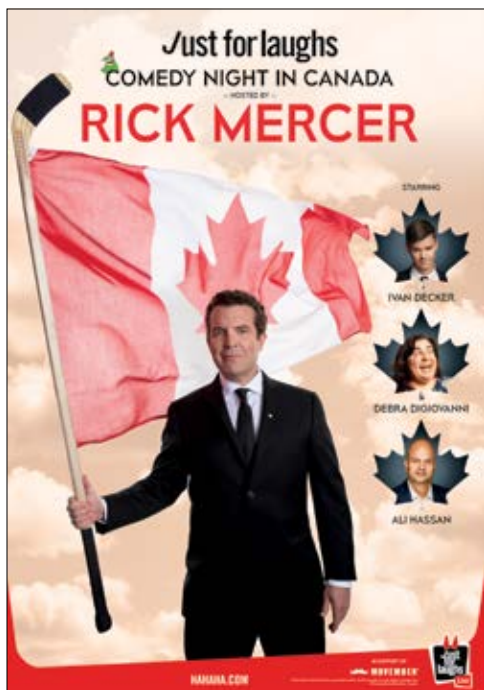
Mercer became well known for a variety of skits, on both *Rick Mercer Report*, and his previous satire television series, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. Two in particular always come to mind, Jean Poutine, where he had then presidential candidate, George W. Bush, chat about fictional Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Poutine, and his *Talking to Americans* stunts, where he would question everyday Americans on Canada, and receive the most outrageous answers. When questioned whether he might consider reviving either one, he remarks, "I stopped doing them for lots of different reasons, and I don't envision going back there, but also I've also learned to never say never as well."

With regard to his former role on the satire series, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, which he co-founded with fellow Newfoundlanders, Mary Walsh, Cathy Jones, and Greg Thomey, he states that the cast have kept in touch. "It was a big part of my life." When asked about a possible reboot/reunion, he quickly replies, "Well there's an idea! It's certainly something worth thinking about. I love performing with all of them."

**"This is more about doing what I want to do right now. I'm not retiring. This is as far from retired as one can possibly get. It's just different that's all."**

When asked what's next for Rick, he quips, "This tour is what's next." In terms of a possible return to television, he mentions, I'd most like to do the Rick Mercer Report.





I didn't stop doing the show because I didn't like it, I stopped because I felt the time had come. I never stopped loving doing the show. The tricky part is coming up with a new show that I like better than the one I've been doing."

He continues, "I never complained about having a television show, but the only difficult thing for me is that it meant I couldn't take on any other opportunities that

came along" One such opportunity he did have was to host and moderate, "An Evening With Steve Martin" live on stage here in Toronto. Given the opportunity to interview other such celebrities, he says, "That would be great. It's not something I ever really considered doing before."

So with this return to being live on stage, as opposed to a weekly scripted television show that he's done for the past couple of decades, will there be any challenges? "It's completely different. Being on stage is something I love, and being alone onstage is something I've done a lot of. Even with the television show, I loved having the live studio audience, and being able to meet them personally off camera. It's something I looked forward to every week. It's very exciting and there's no feeling quite like it," he proclaims.

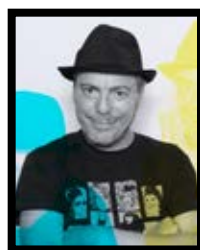
In closing, one can't speak to Mr. Mercer without asking him for his latest rant, and he was more than happy to offer up his opinion on the latest Provincial government carbon tax sticker fiasco that Doug Ford has imposed on independent gas retailers. "I can't believe Ford has the audacity to force private gas stations to put stickers on their gas pumps, and those who are critical of the carbon tax and refuse to do so, are being threatened with a fine of up to \$10,000 a day if they don't comply. It's completely outrageous. Doug is in the sticker business, so anytime he sees a problem, the solution is to slap a sticker on it. It's the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my life!"

To catch Mercer live on stage, grab your tickets for *Just For Laughs Comedy Night in Canada*, which begins October 23, 2019 in St. John's, Newfoundland, and ends November 17, 2019 in Surrey, British Columbia. The tour stops in Toronto on November 3, 2019 at Roy Thomson Hall. [www.hahaha.com/comedytour](http://www.hahaha.com/comedytour)

He's also released a soft cover version of his latest book in his collection of essayed rants, titled, *The Final Report*. Additional material has been added, and he'll be doing a couple bookstore signings along with the comedy tour, so check his website for a place near you. [www.rickmercer.com](http://www.rickmercer.com)

All photos courtesy of Jon Sturge.

Bryen Dunn is a freelance journalist based in Toronto with a focus on tourism, lifestyle, entertainment and community issues. He has written several travel articles and has an extensive portfolio of celebrity interviews with musicians, actors and other public personalities.





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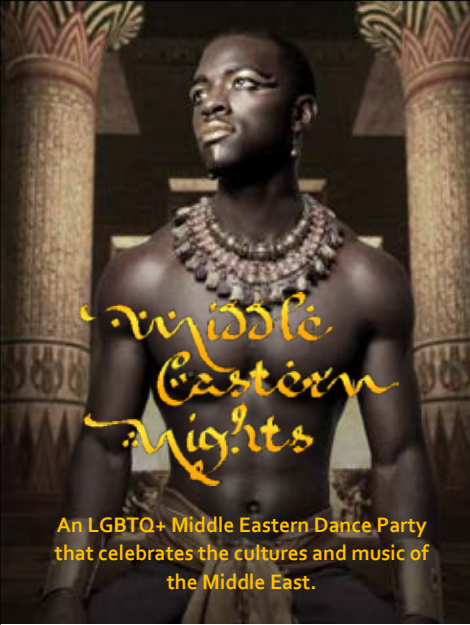
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# Bif Naked

## Surviving Cancer Through Words, Music, and Laughter

By Cat Grant

In person, the iconic singer-songwriter Bif Naked's positive energy is palpable, a superpower of sorts.

This Indian-born Canadian has conquered the music charts, acting, writing, and cancer!

Her mother is her primary role model. "Although I was an incorrigible teenager, my mother still informs just about everything I do. When I'm mad I do the dishes. My mother internalized, I realize. Throughout life, no matter what was going on she always was philanthropic, understated, and a genius, and at 81, she still is."

Bif's first professional inspiration was found in the lead singer, Chi Pig, from Vancouver seminal punk band, *SNFU*. "Even though he was notoriously impolite, I really latched onto everything he knew. Whatever he said, I took it to heart, and I still do a lot of the same moves."

Later Bif met Gail Greenwood, bass guitarist with the band *Belly*, who later went on to join the other riot-girls in the band, *L7*. The two ladies just clicked, and because it was the 90's, for a long time they were pen pals. "We would send each other funny letters, cartoons, and stickers from our respective town before email came into our lives."

In 1996, Bif released her self titled debut album, and followed that up with 1998's, *I Bificus*. Soon she was gigging with famous musicians, and playing the festival circuit. Her pal Gail joined the band on tour as bassist in 2001. "I use to play about 250 shows a year for about 10 years, until I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007."

Life suddenly changed for this soft spoken and articulate artist, when Beth Talbot, (her given name) got that diagnosis. It took away how hard it was to speak of the minutia and side effects of cancer, and how isolating that can feel.

"Even if someone has a big beautiful supportive family, it's really difficult to explain to your twelve year-old daughter, or well meaning spouse, that you actually can't pinpoint why you have another headache. It's because of residual chemotherapy, or that you have no nose hair and have a nose bleed everyday, or that you live in fear that it's going to kill you"

"There's so many intimate things that we don't want to burden other people with... those truths. Also, there are things that are funny that other people are not going to find funny. It's funny to talk about things like, not having to wax, or how my baseball hat wouldn't stay on my head. It keeps us going and laughing."



Photo Credit: Cat Grant



Photo Credit: Coco and Kensington Photography

She didn't set out to be a volunteer, but Bif just kept getting asked by patient's families. In the beginning it was almost always palliative care. "I couldn't say no even if I was afraid, or felt badly. I realized sometimes it's really necessary to have a class clown in the room, to just break up the monotony and the dark cloud."

Bif enjoys the speaking engagements as well. October is a busy month for her. She calls it *Titmonth*, in reference to *Breast Cancer Awareness Month*. "I was stuck at home for a year (although I did tour a bit anyway), but I found that I was more comfortable doing acoustic shows. I had to go through that phase before I could come full circle."

Much of her life story has been detailed in a 2016 memoir she penned. She was very overwhelmed by the idea of writing, "I Bificus", as she didn't even have a computer until 2006. "I hand-wrote everything, until Harper Collins assigned an adult to me, and then I had to learn."

Currently, she's been writing non-stop with two projects on the way. First a comprehensive book on cancer, that she says is, "Specifically about volunteering and some of the funny solutions we find to deal with it. You know, like a surgical port. What are you gonna do when they give you a spinal tap?... fart! Tickle the nurse, you know, funny stuff."

Second, is a volume of poetry. "I had to keep my brain working, and I wanted it to be a fall for all the lovey-dovey gushy ragey response feelings. I never really had a place to put them before. I need to be fearless, it doesn't matter if other people take it seriously. Poetry is abstract, yes it's art, you either like it or you don't."

Today, she's quite enjoying her recent move to Toronto from Vancouver. "I have hockey skates and a bike. Its been so much fun. It's very hot here in the summer, and I love that!"

Something else that fans are sure to like, is her new album. It's been in the works for a couple of years. "The last eight months we stumbled upon a bit of a mood that creates a thread between the songs. I'm really proud of these songs, but then again, you always have really high hopes as an artist!"

[www.bifnaked.com](http://www.bifnaked.com)

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Cat Grant (OCAD) is a multidisciplinary fine artist, with a focus on photography, multimedia portraiture, and illustrating children's books. She's also a published poet, and senior reporter for *On the Couch* LGBTQ TV show.  
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# WIGGED OUT

BY EVA LASTING

## KEEPING DRAG FUN, CLASSY, and POLITICAL

**It's almost Halloween, or as many of us know it: Gay Christmas! Yay! It's a time where Church Street closes and hoards of people get dressed up and ready to party. Similar to Pride, it's also one of the best times for fledgeling drag nuggets to make their debuts.**

If you're looking to try out your sashay, let Eva help get your @ss in gear! In order to ease whatever nerves having a few drinks won't calm, I recommend you prepare as many aspects of your drag ahead of time. In the era of *Youtube*, *Instagram* and *RuPaul's Drag Race*, judges and audience members know what elements they are looking for, and expect you do as well. If you want to make a splash, pay attention to details like hip pads, a stylized wig, big lashes, and making sure your outfit and heels fit properly - especially when you move around!

Thinking about your aesthetic and persona ahead of time can give you a full heel-step over the other nuggets, but in my humble opinion, a fully realized drag persona requires more layers, more truth! That means understanding and connecting to how drag always has, and always will be political.

Considering the early days of protests like the Stonewall Riots to modern day Pride Parades, there are many examples of how drag has been, and continues to be tied in to the social issues in our community. Whether they are issues happening within the community or ones that impact us less directly, it is not so much about which side you identify with, but whether you take the time to find out what is really happening. Listening to opinions other than the ones you already hold is a great way to connect with the whole community, not just parts of it.

I'm not saying we should all constantly fixate on the news or make everything political. And I'm not saying we always need to talk about serious issues, when we just want a fun night out. But the LGBTQ+ community has come through some trying and traumatic times, and there are still ways in which the community faces serious issues.

Whether you decide to create a *YouTube* channel highlighting social and political issues like I did, or you simply take a few minutes to learn about an issue; giving a damn is sexy! I know reading news articles isn't everyone's vibe, and finding online sources these days that are actually REAL NEWS is hard work!



But don't fear, darlings, if regular news isn't your thing, check out my show on *Youtube*: *Fake Tits Real News*. Knowing who you are and what your community is going through can add a much deeper layer to your drag, and can help you grow connections in surprising ways...and who doesn't like a little surprise every now and then.

And remember: my tits may be fake, but our news is not!

Eva is a community queen who prides herself on being Toronto's Green Fairy. Fond of jungle looks and floral prints (whether it's spring or not), she loves to integrate repurposed and ethically sourced materials into her style. Eva's looks are "green" and her politics are loud! Follow her on Instagram @miss.eva.lasting, and never miss a look or a performance. [FakeTitsRealNews.com](http://FakeTitsRealNews.com)



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# Constance Rennet

## Sculpting The Human Form Through Emotion



**For the past three years, retired masseuse Constance Rennet has been honing her craft of sculpting into a new surreal figurative stage.**

She told me her hands had memorized the anatomy of human form, and this has transferred seamlessly into sculpting. "Observing the human condition, increases my ability to render these emotions into a physical form" she explains.

A catalyst for this newest stage of life that Constance found herself in, was the diagnosis of her best friend with cancer. "Watching the body go through many changes, struggles, resurrections, etc. Talk about emotion in the physical form. I could sculpt every emotion of this, and the experience would still not be expressed," she divulges.

Her process is varied. At times she will sketch, at other times she will simply observe. "The portraits I sculpt are of no one in particular. These portraits are a little bit of everyone, with every gender combined as well. So one could say these portraits are imaginary, but the feelings within them are real," she confesses.

Constance casts any one sculpture up to seven times, creating a limited edition of one particular piece. "I also continue to fire sculptures in the kiln. These fired pieces are not reproduced and are the only one of its kind," she says.

Starting each piece with an armature and some wet clay, Constance builds up the image/sculpture bit by bit, assessing

and reassessing as she goes. "If I am going to fire the piece, I will hollow it and send it to the kiln. If I am going to make a silicone mold, I do that. Once the silicone mold is made, I will cast it in a material called Winterstone. The best way to describe Winterstone is like a refined cement. Very durable, and very strong." She continues, "Then I patina the rendered piece, with acid wash and shoe polish. At times I will also cast the sculpture in hydrocal. That is like a very stable plaster."

A dream Constance has is to have an interactive show. "I'd create a walk through of all my sculptures and work. Music, lighting, and story telling. Have the viewer experience this world. Like walking through a theme park. Engaging all the senses!"

In the meantime, Constance is currently preparing her work to be placed in a gallery in Toronto. She adds, "I'm also working on my sculptures going into a pop up show. I'm very excited, and am just weeks away from all of this happening."

You can also view Constance's beautiful pieces at her home gallery by appointment only.

Facebook: Constance Rennet

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Cat Grant (OCAD) is a multidisciplinary fine artist, with a focus on photography, multimedia portraiture, and illustrating children's books. She's also a published poet, and senior reporter for On the Couch LGBTQ TV show.  
Facebook @grantedarts







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THES19 - 519 Church Street, Toronto  
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General Reception @ 6 pm

**Categories:**  
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& Question & Answer

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**Advance \$35**  
**Advance + \$40** Include afterparty entry

**Preferred \$50 Advance ONLY** Include welcome cocktail & assigned seating

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## FALL FEAST

**I adore the harvest. Pumpkins, gourds, and turkeys abound, as do fall colours. What a lovely time of year to be alive.**

Because I'm too lazy to actually do anything, I often fantasize about creating the ultimate Harvest Dinner, and because I can't decide on what fowl to consume, I'd make a turducken. It takes over 13 hours, but the idea of a boneless turkey stuffed with a boneless duck in a boneless chicken gives me a boner. I'd also do a pumpkin ravioli with a brown butter sauce; a tureen of baked beans with applewood smoked bacon, pinto beans, kidney beans, brown sugar and molasses; and of course, roasted root vegetables. Are you drooling yet? If so, you can mop it up with my pumpkin bread, still warm and redolent with cinnamon and nutmeg.

So who would I invite? This being a fantasy, I would love to entertain my favourite homosexuals throughout history. The guest list would have to include, Andy Warhol and Paul Lynde, because they were the two I grew up imitating. Andy would be running around taking Polaroids, while Paul would be recounting a long story about Zsa Zsa's pussy.

Sitting next to them would be Cole Porter, whose classic tunes like, *Love for Sale*, or *You're the Top*, reveal a wealth of gay innuendo. I'd also want a gay porn star present, a vintage one. It would be nice to have Jack Wrangler show up in that unbuttoned denim shirt to say Grace, for when he was a child, his father created the saying, "The family that prays together stays together."

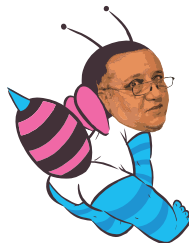
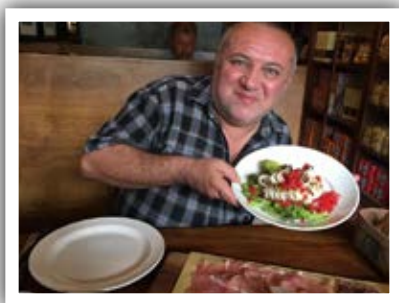
It might be nice to have Charles Laughton, so he could recite some Shaw or Shakespeare while we sip port in the study, but I really wouldn't appreciate him mocking my Martha Stewart touches. Like he's never seen pressed maple leaves, spray-painted acorns, or a cedar bough artfully draped across a linen tablecloth before. It would be nice to invite Alan Turing. Poor guy never gets invited anywhere.

I'd also extend an invitation to Count Luchino Visconti, the genius film director of *Senso*, and *Death In Venice*, but that means I'll have to use the good china. You can't cut corners with royalty. And because I love gossip, I'd ask celebrity biographer, Darwin Porter, to take a seat at the table. (Darwin once told me that they caught Fred Astaire with an underage boy. There goes *Top Hat*.)

Finally, at the head of the table, seated right next to me, is Kevin Spacey. A lot of people would think he'd be persona non grata, but I'm not like other people. I'm a writer. I have a million questions, and I'm not above plying him with drinks and letting him fondle whatever, just to get him talking.

Then when it's all over, I would give the whole gang the bum's rush. Except for Jack Wrangler. He can stay and rush my bum. Also, I need someone to do all those dishes.

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.





**SLAY TEES**

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# A KODAK MOMENT

## T. Tomason

BY BOYD KODAK



Photo: MeghanTanseyWhitton

**After releasing three albums between the ages of 14 and 19, T. Thomason took a year away from music to begin testosterone hormone therapy and relearn his singing voice, changing his name and pronouns along the way.**

In 2019, T. appeared as one of five artists on a Season 2 episode of CTV's hit music-reality show, *The Launch*, from which the song, *Hope*, was debuted.

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

**T. Thomason** - It has been a really exciting one! I've released four singles, been playing as many shows as possible, and had the amazing experience of being on CTV's *The Launch*, and releasing my song *Hope* as a result of that. It's been a whirlwind, and it isn't stopping any time soon!

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

**TT** - I was invited by Marie-Mai, a mentor from *The Launch*, to come and sing with her at the Bell Centre in Montreal. She is huge in Quebec and did three nights in a row there. I went and watched the first two nights, did the red carpet party for opening night, and then got to get up and sing my song *Hope* with her on the third night. That was absolutely incredible. There were 20,000 people singing along with us, and the whole thing was the best high of my life.

**BK** - Wow, sounds great. What are you looking forward to over the next year?

**TT** - I am really excited to be heading overseas to Germany, France, and England this fall. I'll be playing the *Reeperbahn Festival* in September, and doing a residency writing a musical in France with Rhiannon Collett in October. Then I'll be heading to U.K. in November to do some gigging, writing, and taking in the local music scene, after being there last May and making some exciting connections.

**BK** - Nice. Where can we find your work?

**TT** - You can find me on social media @swtbbt across all platforms, or head to [www.t-thomason.com](http://www.t-thomason.com)

**BK** - Future plans?

**TT** - I just turned 25 in September and kind of figured it might be a nice birthday treat to myself to put out the album I've been working on for four years. So, keep your eyes and ears open for that!

**BK** - Will do. Any message you would like to put out there?

**TT** - I just want to say thanks so much for sharing the word about my music! It is lovely to be included in an LGBTQ2S+ publication. There's nothing more important than community supporting community.

**BK** - Finish this sentence for us - My favorite TV show of all time is...

**TT** - *Riverdale*, buuuut it is slowly being replaced by *Schitt's Creek*.

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







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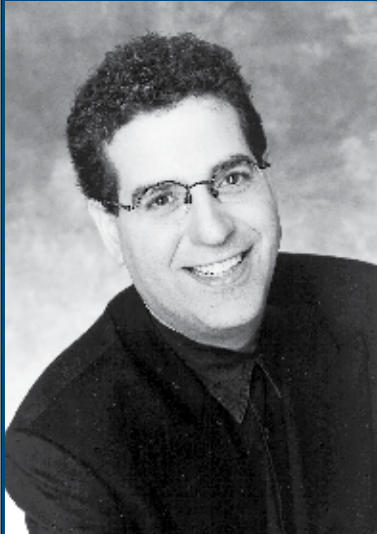
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# LOVING THE *UNLOVABLE*



## Over a decade in business, *Unlovable* is proof that you can never judge a book by its cover.

What appears to be an abandoned space sandwiched under a building complex, is actually a slick, albeit intentionally understated, gem of space. More than a bar, *Unlovable* continues to host parties for luminaries like Bruce LaBruce, who hosted his TIFF after-party there for his film, *The Misandrists*.

*Unlovable* is the brainchild of Jamal Watson and Pol Williams of *Sweaty Betty's*, *Loveless*, and *Unlovable General and Gallery*. This exciting collection of businesses is one of the reasons that Ossington and Dundas West has become a destination for downtowners. The area is so rich with things to do, and perhaps one of the most populated strips in the west end that lends itself perfectly to those still practicing the lost art of bar hopping. One of the attractions to *Unlovable* is that it's a dimly lit cozy space that boasts some of the most interesting pieces of art and nostalgia. Add in beer prices starting at \$8 for a tall can of local hops, and it's no wonder people tend to stick around longer than the average pub.

It's not just the name that's ironically lovable, the entire space has been under-groomed on purpose, catering to a mix of Trinity Bellwood locals and Queen Street hipsters. Just ask our Editor Bryen Dunn who frequents *Unlovable* and includes it among his favourite neighbourhood watering holes, which is easy to understand why. Part of *Unlovable's* charm is in the

effort they have put into not looking like they've made any effort at all.

More impressive than the types of parties *Unlovable* hosts, is their attitude towards remaining inclusive, which sometimes means taking a hard line against racism, homophobia and misogynistic behaviours. Like the time bar manager Goldie Saljoughi kicked a customer out for wearing a "Proud Boy" t-shirt, which is a controversial far-right, pro-Trump men's rights group. At first the incident caused a viral backlash against the business, but soon became a badge of honour garnering them a swell of community support. They soon received many five star recommendations on Facebook from people who have never been there, but fully supported the bars intentions. *Unlovable* does not have a website so check out their Facebook event page for all the crazy parties happening, or just pop in for a friendly greeting by Goldie and her patrons. Cheers Queers!

**Unlovable - 1415 B Dundas St West, Toronto**

**Facebook @UnlovableBar**

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](http://www.raymondhelkio.com)  
[www.thereadingsalon.ca](http://www.thereadingsalon.ca)



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By Sherry Sylvain

## BUZZ Local Picks

### The Rocky Horror Show (Live)

**October 17 to November 16; evening and matinee shows.**

This comedy horror and cult classic tells the story of newly engaged couple Brad Majors and Janet Weiss ("SLUT!"), who meet a group of strange individuals.

Lower Ossington Theatre, 100 Ossington Ave., Toronto  
[www.lowerossingtontheatre.com](http://www.lowerossingtontheatre.com)



### RuPaul's Drag Race: Werq The World

**October 17 and 28; 8:00 p.m.**

Hosted by Michelle Visage with alumni queens, including Aquaria, Kameron Michaels, Asia O'Hara, Kim Chi, Naomi Smalls, Violet Chachki and other queens from Season 11. Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto  
[www.sonycentre.ca](http://www.sonycentre.ca)

### Light The Night Toronto

**October 17; 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's walk is an evening of inspiration and hope. Individuals and teams walk at twilight, holding illuminated lanterns showing their connection to the cause.

Nathan Phillips Square, 100 Queen St. W., Toronto  
[www.llscanada.org](http://www.llscanada.org)



### Priscilla Queen of the Desert

**October 4 to November 3; matinee and evening shows.**

Based on the Oscar-winning movie, this stage production is about the hilarious adventures of three friends who hop aboard a battered old bus bound for the Australian Outback to put on the show of a lifetime.

Randolph Theatre, 736 Bathurst St., Toronto  
[www.lowerossingtontheatre.com](http://www.lowerossingtontheatre.com)

### Canada's Baking and Sweets Show

**October 19, 20; from 10:00 a.m.**

The Baking Show is everything a passionate or beginner baker could ask for, including professionally decorated cakes; competitions; and experts in the field.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga  
[www.canadasbakingandsweetsshow.com](http://www.canadasbakingandsweetsshow.com)

### Empty Bowls

**October 24; 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; \$55.00**

Fundraiser in support of Anishnawbe Health Toronto.

Delicious soup served up by some of the city's eminent chefs, in your choice of one of over 400 hand-crafted, one-of-a-kind donated bowls.

Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen's Park, Toronto  
[www.gardinermuseum.on.ca](http://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca)

### 32nd Annual Toronto International Snowmobile, ATV, & Powersports Show

**October 25 to 27; hours vary**

If you're into snowmobiles, ATVs and Powersports, this is the show for you. As soon as you step foot on the show floor, you'll be blown away with the incredible roster of exhibitors and exciting events.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga  
[www.torontosnowmobileatvshow.com](http://www.torontosnowmobileatvshow.com)

### Motown Halloween Party

**October 25; 9:00 p.m.**

The best damn soul party going, featuring top hits from the famed Motown Records roster, Northern Soul, and Stax Records labels.

Revival Bar, 783 College St., Toronto  
[www.revivalbar.com](http://www.revivalbar.com)

### Preservation Hall Jazz Band

**October 29; 8:00 p.m.**

For nearly fifty years, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band has been travelling the globe, bringing the joy of traditional New Orleans Jazz to music fans around the world. Now's your chance to catch them live.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto  
[www.roythomsonhall.com](http://www.roythomsonhall.com)





# BUZZPICKS

## Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince in Concert

October 31 to November 2; times vary

Fans of all ages can experience the thrilling tale of Harry's obsession with a mysterious potions book, accompanied by the music of a live symphony orchestra, as Harry soars across the big screen in HD.

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto  
[www.sonycentre.ca](http://www.sonycentre.ca)

## Toronto Sings the Breithaupt Brothers' Songbook

November 2; 8:00 p.m.

Canadian vocal jazz icons, Jackie Richardson, Denzal Sinclair, Heather Bambrick, and more, are joined by an all-star band to bring the Breithaupt Brothers songs to life.

Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto  
[www.rcmusic.com](http://www.rcmusic.com)

## Just For Laughs Comedy Night In Canada, hosted By Rick Mercer

November 3; 8:00 p.m.

Following the 15th and final season of the incredibly popular Rick Mercer Report, Rick is hitting the road with some of the best comedians Canada has to offer.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto  
[www.roythomsonhall.com](http://www.roythomsonhall.com)

## ProArteDanza – The 9th!

November 6 to 9

ProArteDanza celebrates its 15th anniversary season with the Toronto premiere of The 9th!, the full-length choreographed imagining of Ludwig van Beethoven's epic 9th Symphony.

Fleck Dance Theatre, Harbourfront Centre, 207 Queens Quay W., Toronto  
[www.harbourfrontcentre.com](http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com)



## The Eco Lifestyle Market - Holiday Market

November 10; 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A collection of 60 of Toronto's finest local, handcrafted, sustainable, eco-friendly, and wellness goods vendors. A day of delicious local eats, local vendors, and cheer. Free Admission.

[www.theecolifestylemarket.com](http://www.theecolifestylemarket.com)

## Another Brick in the Wall - The Opera

November 13 to 23, times vary

Based on the lyrics and music of Roger Waters' The Wall, that represents the difficulties of a whole generation confronted with the destruction of its dreams and the world.

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto  
[www.sonycentre.ca](http://www.sonycentre.ca)

## A Christmas Story

November 8 to December 29; matinee and evening shows

Based on the perennial holiday movie favourite, the story chronicles the young and bespectacled Ralphie Parker as he schemes his way toward the holiday gift of his dreams.

Lower Ossington Theatre, 100 Ossington Ave., Toronto  
[www.lowerossingtontheatre.com](http://www.lowerossingtontheatre.com)

## Toronto Christmas Market

November 14 to December 22 – every day except Monday

Find that perfect holiday gift from a collection of locally handcrafted products. There will also be entertainment, light bites, warm mulled wine, and of course, Santa and his elves.

Distillery District, 55 Mill St., Toronto  
[www.tochristmasmarket.com](http://www.tochristmasmarket.com)

## The Everything To Do With Sex Show

November 29 to December 1; times vary

An upscale adult show dedicated to enhancing lifestyles, encouraging romance, personal betterment, and all things taboo. Includes seminars, shopping, fashion shows, and live demonstrations.

The International Centre, 6900 Airport Rd., Mississauga  
[www.tabooshow.com/toronto](http://www.tabooshow.com/toronto)

## The 33rd Annual Women's Blues Revue

November 29; 8:00 p.m.

The Women's Blues Revue returns for its 33rd year, bringing blues lovers together for an evening honouring the contributions to the genre with some of Canada's finest musicians.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto  
[www.roythomsonhall.com](http://www.roythomsonhall.com)

## Holiday Fair in the Square

December 7 to 23; check the website for times

Combining the charm and elegance of a Christmas market with the excitement and allure of a thriving winter carnival, this is a new favourite Toronto holiday tradition. Supporting Epilepsy Toronto.

Nathan Phillips Square, 100 Queen St. W., Toronto  
[www.fairinthesquare.ca](http://www.fairinthesquare.ca)

# BUZZPICKS

## BUZZ Road Trips

### Pumpkins After Dark

**September 26 to November 3; times vary**

This Halloween season, witness magnificent works of pumpkin artistry, as 5,000 hand-carved pumpkins illuminate the skies. It's an unforgettable night of fun and enchantment for the whole family.

Country Heritage Park, 8560 Tremaine Rd., Milton  
www.pumpkinsafterdark.com

### Line Dancing

**Every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month; 8:00 p.m.; \$5.00**

Join DJ Wayne and one of many instructors to learn a few new dances and then dance the night away with old favourites. Country and pop music all night.

The Bell Tower, 575 Central Ave., Fort Erie  
www.thebelltowercommunity.com

### Bravo Niagara! Presents Measha Brueggergosman

**October 19; 7:30 p.m.**

This Canadian soprano has emerged as one of the most magnificent performers and vibrant personalities of the day, having performed sold-out solo recitals around the world.

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines  
www.bravoniagara.org

### KWHydro Classic Albums Live: Breakfast In America

**October 23; 8:00 p.m.**

Released in 1979, this is arguably the most successful Supertramp album, winner of two Grammy Awards and the band's best selling album.

Centre In The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener  
www.centreinthesquare.com

### Wizards Festival & Hallows Express Train Ride

**October 26 & 27; 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

This weekend festival brings to life the Wizarding World filled with interactive shows, potions classes, maze, magic shows, and workshops on how to defend yourself against the Dark Enemy.

York-Durham Heritage Railway, 19 Railway St., Uxbridge  
www.ydhr.ca/reservations

### Rock the Rink

**November 2; 7:00 p.m.**

Staring Canadian greats: Tessa Virtue & Scott Moir, Patrick Chan, Kaetlyn Osmond, and Elvis Stojko.

This show will also showcase world-renowned skating talent from Europe and the United States.

The Aud, 400 East Ave., Kitchener  
www.theaud.ca

## Monty Alexander at the 2019 Voices of Freedom Festival

**November 8; 8:00 p.m.**

This Grammy nominated pianist is an American classic, touring the world relentlessly with various projects, delighting a global audience drawn to his vibrant personality and soulful message.

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines  
www.bravoniagara.org

## An Interactive Evening with Dr. Phil

**November 14; 8:00 p.m.**

An interactive evening of humour, straight talk, and insight. You've seen his no nonsense approach to helping people cut through the clutter, find inspiration, and set direction.

Budweiser Gardens, 99 Dundas St., London  
www.budweisergardens.com

## Santa Train

**November 23 to December 22; from 10:00 a.m.**

On-board entertainment keeps everyone occupied while waiting for Santa's arrival on the decorated and heated heritage train. Have your wish list ready to share with him when he visits kids big and small.

York-Durham Heritage Railway, 19 Railway St., Uxbridge  
www.ydhr.ca



## Country Christmas

**December 1 to 22; see website for schedules**

Stroll through the Village, visit the historic homes for unique holiday traditions, enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride, let little ones meet Father Christmas, and sing-along to your favourite Christmas carols.

Waterloo Region Museum & Doon Heritage Village,  
10 Huron Rd., Kitchener  
www.waterlooregionmuseum.com

Sherry Sylvain is a transgender woman who has been working in the LGBTQ community for too many years to count (or admit to).



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