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## The Editor

Dear theBUZZ readers,

This is a special issue and a special time for LGBTQ communities far and wide. Our city hosts one of the greatest and most enduring Pride festivals, drawing every walk of life. A conglomeration of arts, culture, politics, festivals and activities, Pride is as multifaceted and multidimensional as the folks who attend, participate and appreciate. Its appeal still lies in the fact that there is something still worth fighting for and celebrating. To assemble, celebrate, debate, and create a forward looking, forward thinking future for all. One of the features in this issue examines Pride overseas. It's quite something to look back into the past and also observe the present and marvel at the similarities between struggle, endurance, and victory that still happen today. You gotta fight for your right to party. You gotta fight for your right to live and be yourself. As well, columnists Cat Grant and Boyd Kodak bring us their take on what significance Pride has for them.



Happy Pride! Much love, Donnarama

As the lovely Donnarama alluded to, we are lucky to live in Toronto where diversity of cultures and sexualities is welcomed by most. In this issue our columnist Lexi Sanfino chats with local MPP Cheri DiNovo about the extraordinary political work she has done for the LGBT community at all levels of government. Of course politics are important, and it's how the community has achieved much success in recent years toward equal rights. However, the other side to politics is parties, and that's what Pride Toronto brings the city each year with a stellar line up of entertainment. Columnist Paul Bellini spoke with members of "My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult" on their upcoming performance, while our Events Editor, Sherry Sylvain got the scoop on "Divinesque", who is not only an amazing drag performer but also a jewellery designer. Finally, Judy Virago had the opportunity to speak with RuPaul's Drag Race Season 6 winner, "Bianca Del Rio", who graces our cover this issue and is performing at Yonge-Dundas Square as part of Drag On!

Also, check out our event listings for the latest BUZZ happenings, both in Toronto and beyond.

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I had the opportunity to chat with Bianca Del Rio, and began by asking her how life has changed since winning season six of *Rupaul's Drag Race*. "It's quite obvious really. I have daily conversations with people like you that would have never happened before. It's intense, it's insane, and I'm grateful it happened to me later in life because I think I probably would have lost my mind if I were younger".

by Judy Virago

# BIANCA DEL RIO

## - LASHES AND SASHES -

America's Drag Superstar is not an occupation for lazy queens and Bianca is always on the move. Being on such a whirlwind tour I wonder how she finds a moment of "Roy time". Bittersweet laughter rings down the line from her current stop in Cleveland, Ohio. "Not a chance, it hasn't happened in a long time. It's an intense schedule but I like it, I like to work. There are little pockets of time here and there, but it's an amazing journey, a golden ticket, and to complain about it would make me sound like an asshole".

For a star whose comedy is insult-based, I wondered why she'd have a problem with sounding like an asshole. It's the difference between stage and self and I get the feeling that it's important to Bianca to let people hear her heart as much as her humour. I ask if there's anywhere in the world that just didn't appreciate the acid tongue realness she serves. "Usually after three drinks, three for me and three for the audience, everyone's kind of the same. It's been rare to have a situation that didn't work out well. Of course there are shows that I say I wish I would have done better, but I usually blame myself. The cities have been really fun, and even on a night when I think it's not my best work, they've always been very complimentary. So far I've been pretty fortunate, and the power of television is an amazing thing".

Even when she's unsure of what to expect, she can appreciate her job around the world. "I really did love Sydney, Paris and Amsterdam. They're cities that I didn't even assume or think would get my sense of humour or



understand anything, culturally. I didn't know what to expect and they were beyond lovely, not to mention just beautiful places to visit"

I asked if anyone in particular had stood out for her. "Well, no", she laughs. "It was a cluster fuck, it was different than our season because there were 14 people, and our season was essentially two groups of seven contestants, so it was easier for me to get to know people's personalities. With 14 people in the room I couldn't tell who was who and a lot of them look similar this season, which I thought was kind of interesting. It's a lot of people and information to get in one episode"

Bianca has an incredible integrity to her work ethic, and her admiration of that quality in others shows. "Jackie Beat and Lady Bunny have been a big part of my career, and recently I've gotten to work with them. I've known Bunny for many years. The great thing about it is that they're still working. They're brilliantly talented people that have been working for many years and didn't have the aid of Drag Race, so kudos to them. Those old whores are still trucking."

Her career itself is the milestone of her life. "The biggest thing is being able to work all these years. It's been a lovely thing to make a living and travel, and Drag Race obviously has helped with that immensely. It gives you the opportunity to do things you couldn't have done because no one gave a shit. Just being able to work, having an audience. Some nights it's ten people, some nights over a hundred."

While her instantly recognizable look of a print of make-up on a t-shirt is unmistakably the face of Ms Del Rio, developing her iconic visage has been a journey of "trial and error". "Of course I've always liked an eyelash, they've just gotten bigger. I don't know if it was an intentional thing, but I've always liked a clown approach to it. I'm not a natural beauty and I'm not trying to be a girl by any means. It just kind of evolved as the white eyeliner has always been there, and I've added more lately, but it goes back and forth. It's interesting because recently I've been travelling with Battle of the Seasons with 6 or 7 other queens, and it's amazing how when you sit next to someone else, you're influenced by either their technique or something else they do. So it was kind of funny that by the end of the tour we all started to look the same. You do pick up tricks from other people. For me the main thing has always been eyelash. If I don't have an eyelash I look odd."

It's that lifetime of sharpened technique from a career spanning twenty years that helps her throw a face together. There's no pre-show ritual for this dame. "I recently was in Texas and my flight was beyond delayed and I had to get ready within twenty minutes, but shockingly I looked exactly the same as I look when I spend an hour. It's not the ideal thing as I like a little time with at least an hour to chill, but there really is no real formula. Time can pass by quickly, and sometimes you just have to get in that monkey suit and get on stage".

For this seasoned queen, there is a lesson in everything she does. Winning Drag Race has changed her life, but it doesn't seem like it's changed her as a person. "It's a learning experience, both during the show itself and the experience after. There's so much you can do with it if you're willing to put yourself out there. I think a lot of the queens who have been on the show think that they're already set once they're on it, because they're fierce and they're fabulous, but the work is just the beginning."

I thank her for taking the time to call me, and she asks if she'll see me when she's here for Pride Toronto. I tell her yes she will, as I'm also performing on the same stage as she is. "Well say hi, and we'll have a cocktail", she says. Make sure you're there to join us in what will be one fantastic evening of entertainment.

Bianca Del Rio hosts Pride Toronto's "Drag ON" event at Yonge-Dundas Square starting at 7pm on June 27, with a line-up of over 35 drag queens and DJs performing as part of the 35th anniversary celebrations.

[www.facebook.com/events/1632896756940792](http://www.facebook.com/events/1632896756940792)

Stay in the know with all things Bianca  
**[www.thebiancadelrio.com](http://www.thebiancadelrio.com)**

Judy Virago is a transgender writer and performer living in Toronto. A background in theatre, activism, and government social policy has informed her interest in transgender rights and visibility.

She is the co-founder of the queer art collective The House of Filth, and was voted "Runner Up" for NOW Magazine's Best Toronto Drag Queen 2015. She takes her inspiration from fierce, fabulous creatures who have soared to stardom, fallen from grace, and clawed their way back to the top.





# ON UPON A DRAG

By SHERRY SYLVAIN

Back in the 1980's there was a pretty little drag queen named Dana Gallagher, a trained dancer who was pure and innocent, so much so that she used to impersonate Anne Murray with La Cage in Toronto. One day, Dana got tired of doing drag and changed back into a slender little fag named Bryan Greenwood, who went to York University and earned a degree in music.

Bryan worked for several years on commissioned recordings and a collection of traditional and modernized highland dance music. It was during this time as a music producer that Bryan's husband James felt that Dana Gallagher needed to return. However, Dana didn't feel or look the same as she had several years ago, when she was packed away in a box.

Bryan had always been a big fan of the drag goddess Divine, so he decided to craft a tribute to this legendary artist, and Divinesque was born. From the early part of 2007, Divinesque had slowly developed her unique style and character, gradually transforming with more extreme and exaggerated make-up, massive wild white hair, and loud garish costumes with increasingly excruciating platform heels. The Divinesque persona matured to something which Bryan describes as "terrorist drag".

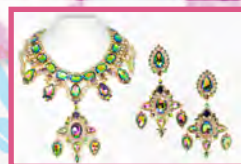
Divinesque then began to sing live to tracks, which Bryan arranged, orchestrated, played and recorded from his skills learned at university. In addition to producing tributes to Divine, Divinesque strayed into heavy metal, stadium, and hard rock. "It's music that I've appropriated from a stereotypical macho-male homophobic culture, and spit it back out in their faces as a middle-aged, overweight, over-painted big ass queer in a dress and heels", she harkens.

About three years ago, Bryan (a Gemini) again became somewhat bored with the status quo which he had created for himself. His creative personality needed more, so he decided to learn how to make jewellery, and thus became the Crystal Countess. Each piece is hand-crafted, offering a wide selection for both men and women, and he's also a licensed Swarovski Branding Partner.

So what does the well-dressed drag queen, and other bejewelled individual's need to be sartorial and stylish for Toronto Pride 2015? Bryan has provided the following style suggestions from his Crystal Countess collection:



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There's also a whole line of rainbow jewels for Pride celebrations, including cuffs, bracelets, pins, and so much more.

Divinesque is performing during Pride Toronto, Saturday June 27th as part of Drag ON at Yonge-Dundas Square, and Sunday June 28th at the Alterna-Queer stage. Her CD "Thunder Throat" is available on iTunes and includes tribute mixes of Divine's biggest hits, along with some great alternative and rock tracks. [www.facebook.com/QueenDivinesque](http://www.facebook.com/QueenDivinesque)

Crystal Countess Jewellery is available direct from the designer, who prefers to work one-to-one on commissioned pieces. [www.crystalcountess.com](http://www.crystalcountess.com)

Selected works are also available at the following retail representatives.

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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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# PRIDE IN EASTERN EUROPE

BY SHEILA KOENIG

Every year Toronto's Pride festivities bring upwards of a million people together to celebrate LGBTQ diversity. World Pride Toronto 2014 drew an estimated two million people to Toronto and contributed \$719 million to the city's economy, so it is easy to forget the roots from which Pride has grown. From the intimate Gay Day Picnics at Hanlan's Point in the 1970s to the demonstrations on Church Street following the 1981 Bathhouse Raids to the present day celebrations drawing hundreds of thousands of revelers, Toronto Pride has grown into a major tourist event and one of the largest festivals in North America. We had to fight for our right to party.

But in many countries in Eastern Europe, the fight for LGBTQ rights remains very much a struggle. Since 2006, Russian LGBTQ activists have been campaigning to hold a Gay Pride parade, but most requests have been rejected. Undeterred activists have marched anyway in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and have been met with violence from nationalists and religious conservatives. In 2012, Moscow city council enforced a ban on Pride parades in the city for 100 years, a ban which was upheld by the Moscow City Court. Luckily, Madonna and Cher will still be around then when it's appealed. Russia's 2013 ban on "homosexual propaganda" targeting minors gave Russian police the legal sanction to use force to shut down such events, and to turn a blind eye toward extreme right groups using violence to disrupt the gatherings. However, in 2014,

for the first time in Russia, an LGBTQ rally was sanctioned in the free-speech zone at the Field of Mars in St. Petersburg, drawing about two dozen people. Unlike earlier demonstrations, this was the first LGBTQ rally to be held peacefully in Russia.

Similar bans on Pride rallies and parades have existed in several European capitals, including Warsaw, Kiev, Riga and Belgrade, but, like their Russian counterparts, the LGBTQ communities in these cities have not been easy to suppress. Serbia's first attempt at a Pride march took place in Belgrade in 2001, but was met with such extreme violence from anti-gay protesters that the police were not equipped to control it and organizers fled to a student cultural centre. Although several assailants were arrested in the riots, none faced any legal consequences.

Belgrade LGBTQ activists made a second attempt at organizing a Pride event in 2009. However, deterred by extreme right wing groups making public threats of violence, authorities banned the event. In 2010 the Belgrade Pride parade went ahead with about 1,000 participants. Once again the parade drew opposition, with close to 6,000 anti-gay protesters shouting homophobic slogans and hurling rocks at parade participants and police officers. Around 140 people were injured in the clash. Although Serbian President Boris Tadic spoke out against the violence, Belgrade Pride parades would be banned again every year



until 2014, when the parade was held once again, with less violence than previous years.

In Kiev, LGBTQ organizers planned the first Pride parade in 2012, but had to abandon their efforts just a half an hour before the event would take place, when upwards of 500 ultranationalist protesters mobilized to disrupt the event. Moments after cancelling the event, organizer Svyatoslav Sheremet was attacked and tear gassed by several masked protesters.

Undeterred by the previous year's violence, and despite a district administrative court approving a city ban on the parade, Sheremet and fellow organizers rallied together again in 2013, drawing together between 50 and 75 activists. The location of the parade was not disclosed until moments before, and participants were bussed in and out under police escort. According to reports, about 1500 police were deployed to provide security at the event, and anti-gay protesters were unable to infiltrate the escort. In 2014 the Pride events were once again cancelled when police would not guarantee protection.

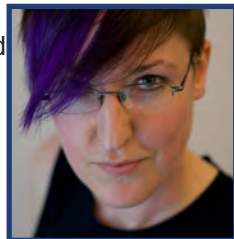
Although Riga city officials tried to ban the first Pride parade in 2005, and even Latvian president Aigars Kalvitis spoke out against the event, an administrative court found the council's decision unjustified, and the parade went ahead. In 2006 a second parade faced similar debate and was thwarted by anti-gay protesters. But despite ongoing struggles with city officials and public opposition, Riga's Pride and Friendship Days have grown to attract hundreds of participants. In 2009 Riga hosted the first Baltic Pride, which is held alternately among the three Baltic capitals, Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius. The event went ahead without violent incident. This year, Riga will play host to its largest Pride celebration yet—EuroPride 2015, a pan-European LGBTQ celebration. Organizers hope that holding EuroPride in Riga will help to draw international attention to the fight against LGBTQ oppression in post-Soviet states.



What is clear across all of these struggles—and where they link to our own here in Toronto—is the indefatigable spirit of LGBTQ communities. We are connected in our resistance. Last year Svyatoslav Sheremet was among several LGBTQ delegates representing Ukraine at World Pride. He brought to an international stage a glimpse into his own community's current effort, and saw here one possibility for the future. In Toronto, for the most part, we have the luxury of forgetting something that is still very much apparent in many LGBTQ communities across the world: that Pride is born in struggle. And that is why we celebrate.



Sheila Koenig is a writer and radio announcer based in Toronto. Throughout the years, she has carved out a living for herself using numerous dubious talents, including populating dance floors for lesser-known DJs, writing travel guides and articles for TripAdvisor.com and Private Islands Magazine, slinging hash at dive bars, handling top-secret government documents, dancing around in men's clothing, and crafting award-winning creative. You can catch her on air Saturday and Sunday nights on 103.9 PROUD FM.



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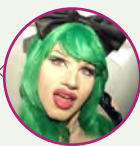
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# WIGGED OUT

BY DONNARAMA

The beautiful and legendary Donnarama has graced the stages of T.O with outrageous costumes and comedy skits, and there is never a dull moment! A scene queen and Canadian drag staple, her dedication, pioneering originality and uniqueness have scored her numerous awards, bar titles and visits to therapy. Check out Donnarama's blog, Wiggged Out, at theBUZZmag.ca

Here comes the glorious rainbow of every color and every creed. It's a special rainbow and it happens whether or not there is a storm. Whether people are soaking wet or feverishly hot, nothing stops the people from coming out to be with it. Like that long orange flacid parachute Rihanna wore to the MET Gala, it's long and ridiculous. Err, I mean, it sweeps in and gloriously strikes a pose! It's hot, it's happening. It's Pride!

Time to ride! Ride it like a bull at the biggest fetish party at Toronto Pride with Pitbull's '#LeatherLove' Friday June 26 at The Opera House (735 Queen St. East). Bad boy's, leatherettes, athletic gear, kinky boots, cross dress, bare chest...all are welcome with their fetish and eccentrics. There's no dress code as you get your freak on the dance floor with Gordon John's (UK) opening set and the amazing Brian Maier (SF) headlining and dominating the dance floor.

If you like your beads around your neck instead of other places, try Pitbull's 'Mardi Gras Pride' party the following Saturday June 27th at The Phoenix (410 Sherbourne St) where New Orleans superstar DJ Joe Gauthreaux headlines with Toronto legend Mark Falco opening the set. Hot go go boys and porn stars are masked and up to the task of getting the crowd jamming southern style. Tickets for both Pitbull events available at The Men's Room Shop (465 Church Street) and online at [www.pitbullevents.com](http://www.pitbullevents.com).



SSplash splash I'll be batting a lash as Prism in association with PUMP present 'The Aqua Pool Party' Saturday June 27th at The Muzik Pool Bar (15 Saskatchewan Road). The daytime event features Sofonda's 'Pool Boys' who give good slippery banana as DJ Mickey Friedmann (GER) and Eddie Martinez (USA) flood the sound waves and get the boys surf boarding. Aqua is finally a pool party with three large swimming pools and fabulous decor to boot.

Tickets available also at The Men's Room Shop (465 Church Street) and online at [WWW.TICKETWEB.CA/](http://WWW.TICKETWEB.CA/) PRISM. 19+ valid ID required.

From beach balls to drag balls, Kaleidoscopic Production's serves up

'REALNESS: The Drag Ball', a glittering star studded event Thursday June 25th at The Opera House (735 Queen St. East). The girls down their wigs for one of Pride's most exciting gigs, featuring 10 of Toronto's top talents including stunning stage shows featuring Brooke Lynn Hytes, Miss Conception, Scarlett Bobo, Alisha Van Horne and more. RuPaul's DRag Race star DJ Mimi Imfurst spins the night just right with dance floor classics and crowd favorites. Doors 10PM, admission \$30, Tickets available at [TICKETFLY.COM](http://TICKETFLY.COM) and The Men's Room Shop.



These boots were made for walking! Alan Mingo Jr and a virtually all Canadian cast star in the Broadway acclaimed production of 'Kinky Boots' strutting it's way into The Royal Alexandra Theatre (260 King Street) beginning June 16th. Music by Grammy Award winning icon Cyndi Lauper takes the show to campy heights in high heels with this Tony Award winning production that will give you the feels. Star Alan Mingo Jr is all the rage onstage and has starred in the Broadway production of 'The Little Mermaid' and the Broadway revival of 'RENT'. Tickets available through [www.mirvish.com](http://www.mirvish.com).

Sequins, check. Waterguns, check. Dancing shoes and kinky boots, check. We're ready for these good reasons this season to dance and prance. A joyous celebration throughout the nation for all, as we welcome Pride once again to light up the night...Let the games begin! Be proud! Happy Pride Buzzsters!







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# SHE BEAT

BY CAT GRANT

Cat Grant OCAD is a multimedia artist. A published poet currently writing a book. She contributes to Hone Life, Jingobox and her blog for theBUZZ. Painting, sculpture, photography/video, choreography/dance & costume design also make her days. Check out Cat's blog, Kitty Indacity, on our website: [www.theBUZZmag.ca](http://www.theBUZZmag.ca)



It is almost upon us, what many of us refer to as “Gay Christmas”, it’s Pride 2015, the wonderful fete shared with those far, near and dear, allies and queer. There are plenty of fab things to do, such as the Dyke March, the main parade, the street fair, the shows, spectacles, and of course my fave part, girl watching!

I am often asked, “Where can I go to dance and meet women?” It’s true that in the T.Dot we have do not have a great variety of lesbian clubs to hang and cruise, at least not for quite sometime now.

The days of “The Rose”, “Pope Joan” and “Slacks” are now her-story. This does not mean that there is no place to go however. Trending in the past few years are lesbian based and themed club nights dedicated to us. More and more appear and are popping up.

During Pride they flourish, making way for “The Palais Royale”, “DJ Dallas”, “Cherry Bomb” and one of the most fun and trendy, “Girllplay”. Anna-Maria Bura started a party called “SNATCH” and teamed up with high school pal Tania Morano who bartends. Tania shared with me that she thinks “SNATCH” was the start of the “new lesbian party revolution”. “SNATCH” eventually ran it’s course.

Anna had a successful “LICK IT” Friday Pride Party while Tania Morano scored with a popular Sunday T-dance, Justine Keyserlingk alongside Rachelle Allen started “TOASTR” which continues to this day.

Anna and Tania had an epiphany about starting an edition to the Pride festival, bringing them all together under one umbrella as a way of offering and enabling a place for women to have variety and enjoy the best of all the parties as a conglomerate.

The girl’s goal was to make it so that people didn’t have to think too much about what they want to do or where to go, and exclaiming humorously, “Picking parties is surprisingly stressful for people!”

They wanted to create something amazing that the community would be excited to get behind. Last year they had an attendance of over 2000 women. With amazing venues and a new partnership with another big party “CREAM” featuring the huge headliner DJ Lisa Pittman from Vegas, Pride 2015 looks to be even better than last year.

“I feel a sense of great gratitude for our ability to celebrate and be free”, says Tania, “No one should ever forget how blessed we are to be gay in a time like now and in a country like Canada. All of this is due to the blood, sweat and tears of those who have come before us.”

Tania and Anna sum up their love for Pride as an infectious and exhilarating vibe. “To be a small part of adding to the whole big picture is a pretty amazing feeling.”





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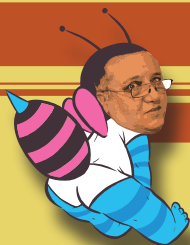
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<b>S28</b> 3 PM - 9 PM  9 PM - 2 AM	<b>7TH ANNUAL T-DANCE</b> <b>STICKY CUTS (TOASTR) KLR (CREAM) &amp; DELICIOUS (BTC)</b> <b>WRAP PARTY</b> <b>DJ LISA PITTMAN</b> (VEGAS) \$20 AT THE DOOR FOR BOTH PARTIES! @ MASON - 582 CHURCH STREET



BY PAUL BELLINI

Paul Bellini is a comedy writer who has worked on such TV shows as *The Kids in the Hall* (where he played *The Towel Guy*), *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Locker Room*. He was also a *FAB* magazine columnist for 11 years. He currently teaches comedy writing at George Brown College and the Second City Training Center in Toronto.



**When** I want to have fun on Pride Day, there are two places I can go – the baths, or the Alterna-Queer stage in the Alexander Parkette next to Buddies. Last year they had Lydia Lunch and Pansy Division! And this year, we can anticipate a visit from *My Life With the Thrill Kill Kult*!

TKK emerged from the grimy 80s, a decade in which musicians discovered both industrial noise and digital sampling. They met while touring with Ministry, and originally set out to record the soundtrack to an exploitation film, but when the film never got made, they released the soundtrack and it was a hit.

Though they've played Toronto many times over the last 25 years, the band has never actually played a Pride event. "We have played both the Folsom Street Fair in San Francisco and the Silver Lake Leather Festival in Los Angeles twice," explained the band. "They're similar celebrations of pride, though maybe a bit more on the naughty side of the spectrum."

Over the years, TKK have put out lots of music, so I had to wonder if they had a favorite song. "Jeez, there are way too many to choose just one. We have so many different styles it really depends upon our mood for any particular day. *Sex On Wheelz* had always been a fan favorite, and in retrospect is a well-crafted ditty, but we don't consider it our best. It was actually written to mock the pop-rock genre, and yet it turned out to be one of our most notable songs."

Typically of a band that revels in dope, gore, sex and Satan, there's bound to be a lot of controversy, no? "Surprisingly, there never really was a lot controversy surrounding TKK, except for the PMRC [Tipper Gore's The Parents Music Resource Center] boycotting us in the beginning, and that was laughable. We never made it our goal to repeatedly 'push buttons' so to speak, in the way artists like Madonna or Marilyn Manson have attempted. We take the more subtle, back-door approach, and the world has changed a lot in 30 years. Actually, we think we're quite tame compared to what's on the airwaves and video screens nowadays."

**So why would gay** audiences – or at very least the Alterna-Queer crowd – like the band? "The simple answer would be to say because our imagery and songs are penned by one of their own, though we've never made our sexual orientation a focal point of the band. We try to speak to all people through our music, regardless of sexual identity. We're also quite tongue and cheek with our subject matter, which the gay community seems to connect with right away. They 'get it'. The set will be an eclectic concoction of both, mixed with a good dose of revved up disco to keep everyone up and dancing from the first song to the last. It's a celebration... so let's party!" And get naked.

Okay, that last part was just my little suggestion.



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# A KODAK MOMENT

## BY BOYD KODAK

Boyd Kodak is an award winning trans activist, musician, writer, activist, filmmaker, curator, and festival/entertainment director. Boyd put together both educational and artistic programs for festivals worldwide. In 2012 he was inducted into the International LGBT Hall of Fame.



It's that time of year when our thoughts turn to Pride. As we know, the original pride started out as a riot that was led by trans people. Pride was a political event and for some it still is. Though the struggle for rights and recognition continue, the trans community has sure made a lot of strides since.

The 10x10 Photography Project is an annual exhibition and book launch, that celebrates LGBTQ people that have contributed to the arts in Canada. The 2015 show includes, for the first time, the work of a trans woman behind the camera.

I recently spoke with Sophia Banks, a Toronto based trans advocate and artist who's photography is internationally recognized and published. Her current photography work is focusing on empowering portraits of queer and trans people with a visual narrative.

Boyd - Tell us what have you been doing over the last year?

Sophia - The past year I have been focusing on finding my creative voice as a trans woman.

When I came out as trans and started transition, it took up a lot of my creative energy.

I have also been doing a lot of trans advocacy but feeling these days that I want to focus on my career and art again.

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

Sophia - The most exciting thing in the last year was getting involved in 10x10. A Canadian photography project that takes 10 LGBTQ photographers to do 10 portraits. I am very excited about the group show and book coming out in June.

Boyd - Congratulations, that is a great accomplishment. Tell us what are you looking forward to over the next year?

Sophia - Getting back into my creative photography. I absolutely love portrait photography.

Years doing wedding photography and going through my gender transition left me questioning if I wanted to stick with photography and art in general. I took a few years to re-evaluate my life and figure out who I was.

Boyd - Plans for the future?

Sophia - I am not sure. I sort of want to start dabbling in film work. I love the idea of working with moving images and expanding my visual storytelling tools.

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

Sophia - Where to begin?

Boyd - The last thing I do before I go to sleep is...

Sophia - I can never sleep in silence. I usually fall asleep to Star Trek on Netflix

The 10x10 exhibit runs from June 5-August 10, 2015 at the Gladstone Hotel -1214 Queen St. W.

The reception is Thursday June 25, 2015 at 7pm.

Check out <http://sophiaphotos.com/>



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# BEYOND THE VILLAGE

BY LEXI SANFINO

Toronto based transgendered artist, writer, performer, and activist.

Cheri DiNovo, MPP for Parkdale-High Park, did not intentionally choose politics. "Politics was not even on my radar. It was unusual", she states. At the time she first entered politics she was a United Church minister and happy to be so. DiNovo was always a social activist. In 1971 she was the only woman to sign on to the "We Demand" paper and subsequent demonstration on Parliament Hill, which was the first gay rights demonstration recorded in Canadian history.

She later performed her first legalized gay marriage in 2001, and subsequently wrote *Queering Evangelism: Growing a Community from the Outside In*, for which she was presented with a Lambda Literary Award in Washington DC in 2006. In 2012 she introduced Toby's Law for gender expression and identity. Looking back, it seems the trajectory to political office was clear.

LGBTQ issues have always been a passion of hers. Growing up as a queer kid with queer friends in a queer world, it was "impossible" for her not to be involved. However, it was issues of poverty and marginalization that were nearest and dearest to her when she first entered politics. "There is no more marginalized group I would wager right now, than those who are in the trans community. It's the trans community that needs the loudest voice at Queens Park, and there didn't seem to be another voice willing to speak for that community, so I de facto became that voice".

DiNovo has passed more private members bills as an opposition MPP than anyone in Ontario's history. She believes there is a very simple explanation for that. Self-proclaimed queen of the tri-party bill, she tries to get all parties together around issues of importance. By being supported by members of all parties, the bills have a much better chance of passing. The work lies in getting the support of those other parties, and the Premier. "It's still a struggle, but it's less of a struggle than if it was just me alone behind the bill. It's about working well with others", she claims.



Regarding those in society who oppose her political stance, DiNovo believes that the majority of her opposition comes from the religious right. As a church minister by trade, she recognizes that there is a small group of people in every faith who have hijacked their own

faiths for a right wing agenda, and who are not representative of the entirety of their faith. "The religious right has nothing to do with faith and everything to do with vested state interest. For example, Jesus said nothing, not one word about homosexuality, so why is homosexuality such a huge issue?"

The LGBTQ community in Toronto has benefited greatly from the relentless work of DiNovo, and it doesn't look like she's ready to stop anytime soon. She is dedicated to mobilizing support for Bill 77 that is currently before the house, and would effectively ban the practice of conversion therapy for LGBT individuals. She's also prioritized support for the trans rights Bill C279, and opposes the recently passed federal Bill C36, which effectively criminalizes sex work

"I encourage the community to contact their elected officials to show their support or express their concerns on any of these issues, as our collective voices are important", she concludes. It is MPP's like DiNovo that continue to make politics exciting and meaningful.

Meet Cheri ([www.cheridinovo.ca](http://www.cheridinovo.ca)) at her 6th Annual Community Appreciation Gala on June 10th from 6:30PM to 9:00PM at 2849 Dundas Street West

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## JUNE 18 BRANTFORD PRIDE BOAT CRUISE

This is a wonderful sunset cruise down the Grand River departing at 7:30 PM. Light snacks and beverages are available on board. Grab your tickets fast so you don't miss out. Tickets are only \$15.00. Hosted by Brantford Pride.

Grand River Dinner Cruises, 36 Brant County Road 22, Caledonia, ON

## JUNE 21 SWEETNESS PRIDE BEACH

On Sunday June 21, join Pride Toronto and Sweetness Pride Beach Party as they co-host WE PLAY at Sugar Beach. This event takes advantage of the beautiful urban beach located in the heart of Toronto's waterfront. WE PLAY will deliver the sweet, the spice, and all of the heat that comes with this larger than life production. Sugar Beach, Toronto  
Noon to 7:00 p.m.

## JUNE 21 HAMILTON PRIDE @ THE PIER

This will be an afternoon full of family fun and fabulous entertainment. Let's give Hamilton back it's Pride. It all happens at Pier 4 Park, beginning right after the rally at City Hall.

Pier 4 Park, 64 Leander Drive, Hamilton  
1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

## JUNE 26 PRIDE AND BASS

Sail into the night across Lake Ontario and dance to drum'n'bass, break beats and 80/90s hip hop. Don't miss this year's epic adventure where bass meets Pride!

River Gambler, 333 Lakeshore Blvd. E.  
6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.  
[www.pridenbass.ca](http://www.pridenbass.ca)

## JUNE 26 PRIDE TORONTO: BEND IT LIKE BOMBAY

Immerse yourself in a world of colour, vibrance and culture so riveting and magical as Pride partners with Besharam to show you just how fun this multicultural city can be!

TD Wellesley Stage, 15 Wellesley St.  
from 7:00 p.m.

## JUNE 27 PRIDE TORONTO: BEAR GARDEN

Pride Toronto asks you to take the following precautions if a bear is sighted at this year's Bear Garden. Prepare: For hugs, dancing, drinks and of course, fur! Presented in partnership with Pitbull.

OLG Central Stage,  
512-516 Church St., Toronto from 2:00 p.m.

## JUNE 27 PRIDE TORONTO: DRAG ON

Thirty-five Queens and Kings will take centre stage at Yonge - Dundas Square in the heart of the city to perform a non-stop, all-day epic drag event in celebration of 35 years of Pride Toronto. The evening portion is hosted by Bianca Del Rio, of Rupaul's Drag Race fame. Yonge-Dundas Square,  
1 Dundas St. E. 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

## JUNE 27TH NORTHBOUND LEATHER'S KINKY CRUISE

Toronto's only floating dungeon. Strict Fetish Dress Code: Swim wear, Leather, PVC, Fetish Sex Wear, Drag, Uniforms, Gothic, Rubber. DJ's Jimi LaMort and Millhouse Brown. Boarding begins at 6:30pm. Obsession III, West Pier, Queens Quay West  
[www.northbound.com](http://www.northbound.com)

## JUNE 28 PRIDE TORONTO: LAST DANCE

Rhythms and lights from the hottest DJs will have you sending off Pride 2015's final night in style, as New York native DJ Tom Stephan headlines, along with Canadian talents SoundSystem, John Caffery and Josh Karmin. OLG Central Stage, 508 Church St.  
2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

## JUNE 28 PRIDE TORONTO: DIRTY DISCO

The best electronic dance party at Pride is hosted by Miss Raquel and MC Flipside. This year pays special tribute to the late Dr. Trance, aka Don Berns, who originally created and curated this event  
Bud Light South Stage, 423 - 425 Church Street 2:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.



**JUNE 16, JULY 21, AUGUST 18**

## **SAFE: SOCIAL ACTION FOR EQUALITY**

SAFE provides an inclusive, welcoming, and positive space for all LGBTQ2SA friends in South Etobicoke and beyond. Monthly meetings are open for all to gather and share stories.

LAMP CHC, 185 5th St., Etobicoke, 6 P.M. to 9 P.M.  
416-252-6471 [www.equalitytoday.ca](http://www.equalitytoday.ca)

**JUNE 20, 21**

## **PWA FUNDRAISER**

Join The Imperial Court of Toronto and others for a Barn Show and weekend of camping, both on stage and in tents. Use caution in heels.  
Cedar's Campground,  
1039 Concession 5 West, Millgrove,  
ON Reservations: 905-659-3655  
[www.cedarscampground.com](http://www.cedarscampground.com)

**JUNE 19 - 20 PRIDE BUILD 2015**

Pride Build is Habitat GTA's newest signature event and the only event of its kind in Canada. In celebration of the Pride Week, Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area invites supporters of the LGBTQ2SA communities to come out and swing a hammer in support of a vision of a world where everyone has a safe and decent place to live.  
Sign up - [www.habitatgta.ca/pridebuild](http://www.habitatgta.ca/pridebuild)

**JUNE 19, JULY 3/17, AUGUST 7/21**

## **FTM DROP-IN**

FTM support group at the 519 church community first and third Friday of every month  
The 519 Community Centre,  
519 Church St. 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.  
[www.the519.org](http://www.the519.org)

**JUNE 28, 29**

## **TICOT PRIDE BOOTH**

The Imperial Court of Toronto invites you to get your Pride Toronto pictures taken with the Regent, the Royal Family, or just you and your Pride Family. Photo booth located in the Venders Section of Pride Toronto

[www.ticot.org](http://www.ticot.org)

**JULY 5, AUGUST 2**

## **POZ-TO**

Monthly video dance party in The Zone at Crews and Tangos on the first Sunday of each month. Presented by DJ Relentless with Hostess Barbie Jo Bontemps. \$2.00 raffle tickets for great prizes!  
Crews & Tangos, 508 Church St. 9:00 p.m.  
[www.crewsandtangos.com](http://www.crewsandtangos.com)

**JULY 26**

## **BINGO WITH THE REGENT**

A fundraiser for the charities of The Imperial Court of Toronto (TICOT) with Regent Empress Lauren Michaels.  
Lots of fun and prizes!

Flash on Church, 463 Church St  
2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
[www.ticot.org](http://www.ticot.org)

## 1 JUNE 17 AND 19 RUSH: R40 LIVE

After 40 years together and 20 gold and platinum studio albums, Rush is ready to celebrate with the most loyal fans in the world by embarking on their 21st tour, one which will most likely be their last major tour of this magnitude. Celebrate four decades of music with three incredible musicians - all in one night.

Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay St., Toronto 7:00 p.m.  
[www.rush.com/tour/rush40-tour](http://www.rush.com/tour/rush40-tour)

## 2 JUNE 18-29 29TH TD TORONTO JAZZ FESTIVAL

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

## 3 JUNE 19 TO 28 LUMINATO

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Various venues across Toronto  
[www.luminatofestival.com](http://www.luminatofestival.com)

## 4 JUNE 20 BETTE MIDLER

"It's The Girls!" reunites Bette Midler with long-time collaborator and award-winning composer and producer Marc Shaiman, along with Scott M. Riesett. See The Divine Miss M live in all her glory.

River Gambler, 333 Lakeshore Blvd. E.  
 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.  
[www.pridenbass.ca](http://www.pridenbass.ca)

## 5 JUNE 25 - OCT 11 LIGHT UP THE SKY

This play within a play is a comic love letter to the theatre world. Written by Moss Hart and directed by Blair Williams, with original music and sound by Marek Norman.

Shaw Festival, Festival Theatre,  
 Niagara-on-the-Lake  
[www.shawfest.com/playbill/light-up-the-sky/story/](http://www.shawfest.com/playbill/light-up-the-sky/story/)

## 6 JUNE 28 AND 29 NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

They're back, no longer kids, and are coming to Toronto as part of their Main Event tour with a 360-degree stage offering optimal viewing from all angles. If that isn't enough, TLC & Nelly are the openers. Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay St., Toronto 7:00 p.m.  
[www.nkotb.com/events](http://www.nkotb.com/events)

## 7 JULY 4 IMAGINE DRAGONS

Imagine Dragons use the frenetic energy of life on the road to infuse their music with both raw tension and intense vulnerability. As on their double-platinum full-length debut Night Visions, the band works with sharply crafted beats and grooves to dream up rhythm-driven rock music.

Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay St., Toronto 7:30 p.m.  
[www.imagedragonsmusic.com](http://www.imagedragonsmusic.com)

## 8 JULY 5 - OCT 11 THE DEVINE: A PLAY FOR SARAH BERNHARDT

A new play about the legendary actress Sarah Bernhardt and her controversial performances in Quebec City at the turn of the 20th century. Shaw Festival, Royal George Theatre, Niagara-on-the-Lake

[www.shawfest.com/playbill/the-devine/story/](http://www.shawfest.com/playbill/the-devine/story/)

## 9 JULY 6 & 7 U2 INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE TOUR

The tour follows the recent release of U2's thirteenth studio album "Songs Of Innocence". Bono and the boys are bound to present an extraordinary show that will go on With or Without You, so grab your tickets soon.

Air Canada Centre, 40 Bay St., Toronto 7:30 p.m. [www.u2.com/tour](http://www.u2.com/tour)

## 10 JULY 11 - OCT 10 - THE INTELLIGENT HOMOSEXUAL'S GUIDE TO CAPITALISM & SOCIALISM WITH A GUIDE TO THE SCRIPTURES

The latest production by Tony Kushner follows Gus, a powerful 20th century thinker on the verge of defeat, as he struggles to understand the 21st century.

[www.shawfest.com/playbill/the-intelligent-homosexual/story/](http://www.shawfest.com/playbill/the-intelligent-homosexual/story/)



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