

Grapefruit • Kingchella • Robyn McDonald • Al Val • Creamery X

**Founder of Trans Studies,
Sandy Stone**
Girl Island: The Sandy Stone Story
**In Conversation with
Cliff Cardinal**
Indigenous Playwright and Actor



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IN THIS ISSUE

- 08 **Sandy Stone – Mel MacMullin**
- 12 **Cliff Cardinal – Aaron Rothermund**
- 16 **Deep Dish: The Regrowth of Grapefruit – Rolyn Chambers**
- 20 **Wigged Out: Love Thyself – Kingchella**
- 22 **She Beat: Robyn McDonald – Cat Grant**
- 24 **A Kodak Moment: Al Val – Boyd Kodak**
- 26 **Beyond the Village: Creamery X – Sherry Sylvain**
- 30 **BUZZPicks – Sherry Sylvain**

The Editor

Hello Friends!

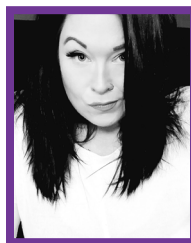
Aside from having to switch to boots (made for walkin', wheelin', scootin', or sittin' pretty), the changing leaves and crisp air not only encourage us to bid adieu to the warm weather, but to perhaps also revisit what we, as queer folk, have accomplished thus far in 2023 as we continue to navigate the world around us. What I like to reflect on and weave into this magazine are the inspiring, uplifting diverse perspectives and experiences of our community members – from Canada, and around the globe.

To highlight a notable community elder, living legend, and humble American pioneer and visionary, I jumped at the opportunity to speak with the founder of the academic discipline of transgender studies, the 87-year-old **Sandy Stone** for our first feature. Both her and former student **Marjorie Vecchio**, are currently working on producing a documentary film on Stone's life: titled, *Girl Island: The Sandy Stone Story*. In our second feature, Aaron Rothermund caught up with Canadian Indigenous actor and playwright, **Cliff Cardinal**, to discuss his previous award-winning works, his current play: *(Everyone I Love Has) A Terrible Fate (Befall Them)*, and to give us a “behind-the-curtain” look at his creative process.

Rolyn Chambers gives us his take aka the *Deep Dish* on the re-growth of legendary queer dance party, **Grapefruit** – first established over 2 decades ago back in 2002! If you've seen *Call Me Mother* or *1 Queer 5 Queens*, you'll recognize our *Wigged Out* feature, **Kingchella**, who shares with us their life's journey to date as a plus-sized person of colour. Cat Grant has got the *She Beat*, and this time around she's showcasing the uber-talented drummer, **Robyn McDonald**. For *Kodak Moment*, Boyd Kodak talks with Transgender Comedian, **Al Val**, who is “weird, wonderful and clumsy.” The wind might be blowing a bit colder these days, but it's never too cold to treat yourself to some ice cream, or how about frozen custard? Sherry Sylvain gives us a double scoop of deliciousness on **Creamery X**, owned by Toronto-based lesbian couple, Bonnie and Melissa, in *Beyond the Village*.

Curl up in a warm fuzzy blanket by yourself, with a significant other (or others), a pet (or pets) with a hot chocolate or a bowl of frozen custard because we're about to BUZZ you with premium LGBTQ+ content – plus, check out our BUZZpicks for events you won't want to miss!

Mel MacMullin
Editor-in-Chief



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Now Boarding for Destination, Girl Island The Life, Times, and Turning Tides of Sandy Stone

By Mel MacMullin

You've heard of Fantasy Island, Gilligan's Island, Treasure Island, the Island of Misfit Toys, and even Islands in the Stream, but what about Girl Island?

"Girl Island has been a part of my life since I was four or five years old. It was a mythical land, in which all the occupants were girls – and that included me. Before young kids even had a clear idea of what gender was, I had a clear vision of Girl Island."

– **Allucquère Rosanne (Sandy) Stone**, *Founder of Trans Studies, pioneer of Digital Art & Theory, audio/music engineer, professor, author, activist, performance artist, mother, wife, and the list goes on.*

Girl Island was an imaginary world, now 87-year-old visionary **Sandy Stone**, would dream of and drift away to in the 1940s. As a child assigned male at birth, she instinctively knew early on, and all along, that she was a woman. "I didn't have a vocabulary for it back then – and the idea of vocabulary or having an image or a symbol or a glyph, to describe some inner state of yours or of anyone's has been an issue that has consumed me, in many ways. It wasn't until I was in my teens that Christine Jorgensen showed up and people began to use the word transsexual, which didn't fit but was close, it was at least a starting place for dialogue. In the late 60s and 70s, we got gender dysphoria. Years later, we got transgender, but that's going to keep evolving."

Girl Island was, and is, as very much nonfictional as fictional, as it still, and will always exist within Stone, continuing to fill her with a sense of wonder and adventure in living, even 9 decades later. Taking it a step further on the scale of reality, a former student of Stone's, **Marjorie Vecchio**, is currently working on directing a film titled, *Girl Island: The Sandy Stone Story*. It'll be a documentary with weaved in aspects of animation, archival content, original music, and 18+ interviews with individuals from Stone's life to colour the storytelling portion of "America's most modest rebel" and the "Goddess of Cyberspace."

"So here I am [on Girl Island] with these little girls, but they're not doing things little girls did at that time. Instead, they were swimming swift rivers, climbing mountains and trees, learning to talk with animals, and building little huts in the woods to live in. Little girls absolutely did not do that — this was a space that had no corresponding existence in the real world. But to me, when we start talking about how do you define what is a girl? How do you define what is a boy, or a man or a woman? I can't talk about that on those terms. Because here were these people on Girl Island, not doing the things that girls were supposed to do yet having all the fun in the world – and that's what I wanted to do ... that has stuck with me, that was the vein," Stone reminisced.



Photo: Sandy Stone Archive/MV Productions

"We want to make the kind of adventures that I was having and that other people were having on Girl Island, but known to a wider audience – to try to convey a sense of that adventure, and have that kind of crossing back and forth, porousness between the mundane of the real world and this world of high adventure, which, as you find out later in my life turns out to be in the real world," Stone expressed in regards to what she hopes to accomplish and see in the making and release of Vecchio's film, *Girl Island*.

"I want to make great art, and I think Sandy does, too. I don't want to just make a documentary about a person — I want it to transcend that. Sandy being like 80-something and me being 50-something — we're looking at history and past generations. I want this to be a film younger people could and want to watch, especially since they're so bracingly like way ahead of all of us right now in terms of anything related to gender," shared Vecchio, Director of *Girl Island*.

Stone, born 1936 in New Jersey, presently a resident of Santa Cruz, is undeniably an abstract living legend who has led quite the interesting life – at age 5, doctors dubbed Stone a genius. Teaching herself how to read as a toddler, she would also take apart and rebuild radios, followed by computers years later. "I started to read very early; my parents claim it was long before I could walk. My father had a fairly large library, so I would drag his books down and start to read them at random. I went from reading to building stuff or picking apart



Photo: MOV Productions

Sandy Stone with Florence Martin recording the new intro to the manifesto.

my parents' radios and then sometimes putting them back together. Eventually, they bought me a tape recorder for my birthday. I immediately took that apart and built a much bigger and better one out of the pieces. I was in those wonderful spaces between art and technology where there's an aesthetic dimension, or a practical dimension, and how it changes an emotion or the way that you look at the world."

She later became a music engineer for **Jimi Hendrix, Grateful Dead, Van Morrison, and Crosby, Stills & Nash**, to name a few. From 1974 to 1978, she worked with the infamous **Olivia Records** collective, an L.A. lesbian-feminist music company that had taken her in without a second thought and would later support and defend her against trans-exclusive radical feminists (TERFs). It was when radical feminist, Janice Raymond sent Olivia Records a chapter of her dissertation where things started to get heated and controversial. "It had a vague cover letter signed by her [Janice Raymond]. It said something like, I would appreciate your comments on this. It didn't mention me by name yet, but it was clearly intended to out me. It was hard to figure out what the ultimate purpose of the whole thing. They [Olivia Records] drafted a letter of support, that said two things that stuck out in my mind; one of them was Sandy Stone is a person, not an issue. The second thing was, we know and love Sandy, as Sandy knows and loves us, and we intend to spend our lives working and making music together."

"When the book [The Transexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male] came out [post-dissertation], that chapter was expanded, even uglier, nastier and attacked me personally by name. This was not academic work. This was someone trying to destroy another person in a very hateful way. What shocked the collective was that the person who was leading the attack against Olivia Records happened to be the head of our competition company, Lady Slipper Records. It was as if they had found this convenient excuse to trash Olivia records, and it happened to be me — I was in the way and I was going to get ground up for it."

Perhaps you've heard of Stone's *The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto*, from 1987. This influential essay which dives into and critiques the historical viewing, study, and treatment of Transgender women, is considered as the founding text in academic discipline of Transgender studies. "Striking back" against transmisogyny, Stone's essay was born as a response to Janice Raymond's 1979 book, *The Transexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* which came in the form of a personal and targeted attack. Stone would fight against harassment, never positioning herself as the victim, she instead went on to create a new and remarkable conception of Transgender identity.

Stone's thoughts on recent transphobic backlash Transgender persons are facing describe how history may repeat itself, but not to lose sight because we're still making progress. "There are some areas where we're going backwards. We took 10 steps forward in the last generation, we made big progress. Now the Conservatives have a new target for their fear and anger — and it's going to be us. We've taken 10 steps forward, but we're about to experience being pushed back five steps, the net gain is still five steps, right? We're still ahead."

Girl Island: The Sandy Stone Story, is partway through production, but keep a close eye and make sure you see it upon its release — sponsored by [Women Make Movies](#). Vecchio and team received a majority of the funding required via [Kickstarter](#).

Melissa MacMullin is a freelance content writer and journalist for leading publications. A strong distinct queer Canadian voice with pride and purpose. Author. Screenwriter. Performer. Part-time adventurer.





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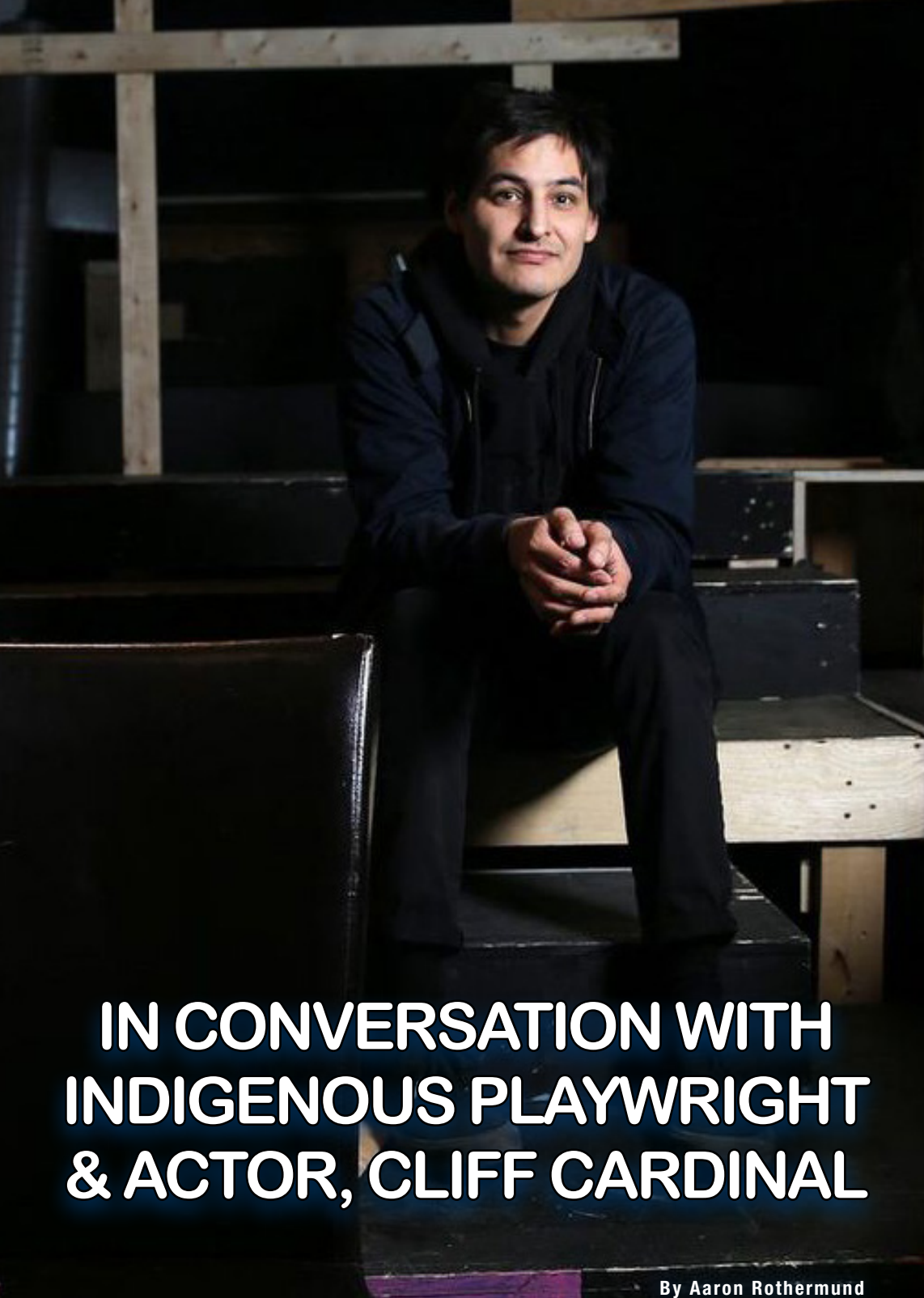


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IN CONVERSATION WITH INDIGENOUS PLAYWRIGHT & ACTOR, CLIFF CARDINAL

By Aaron Rothermund

“Cliff is sly, funny, charming, and he says some things that might be construed as outlandish by others, and then he stops and says, ‘That’s right, isn’t it?’ and you wonder if he’s joking or trying to catch me in something.”

Mirvish, Director of Communications and Programming,
John Karastamatis

Cliff Cardinal distinctly remembers watching Billy Merasty rehearse *New France*, the first part of Michael Hollingsworth’s epic play cycle, *The History of the Village of the Small Huts*, in the back room of the iconic Cameron House. Being crammed into the small office/rehearsal space on the second floor with the creative geniuses of [Video Cabaret](#), sent Cardinal on an unavoidable path toward his true calling as a subversive theatrical force of nature.

Cardinal first appeared on stage in three pivotal theatrical works (*Savage*, *Freeman’s Wake*, and *Transcanada*) directed by Yvette Nolan for [Native Earth Performing Arts](#). He’d later appear as *Russell Yellowlees* in *Schoolhouse* written by Leanna Brodie and directed by Leah Cherniak for the Blyth Theatre Festival in 2006. In a full circle moment, he was asked to play *Wandering Spirit* for *The Saskatchewan Rebellion* written/directed by Michael Hollingsworth for Video Cabaret in 2007.

Soon afterward, Cardinal became an associate artist at Video Cabaret, and they activated such early writings as *Stitch*, *Maria Gets a New Life*, and *Romanceship*. Native Earth Performing Arts workshoped Cardinal’s first play, *Stitch*, directed by Giovanni Sy at the Rubaboo Performance Gala in Edmonton in 2009, and Cardinal won the Emerging Artist Award presented by Theatre Passe Muraille for the revamped production at SummerWorks in Toronto in 2011.

While in association with Video Cabaret and [Canada’s National Arts Centre](#), Cardinal wrote, *Huff*. The full production was co-created by Director and Dramaturge, Karin Randoja and Native Earth premiered the show at Aki Studio in 2015 and later remounted at SoulPepper in 2017.

The Guardian Observer called *Huff*, “a hard-hitting tour de force,” and Cardinal won two Dora Mavor Moore Awards, the Quebec Critics’ Award, the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre Vanguard Award for Risk and Innovation, the RBC Tarragon Emerging Playwright Prize, the Lustrum Award, and was shortlisted for the Amnesty International: Freedom of Expression Award.

Following a worldwide tour of *Huff*, Deanne Taylor and Michael Hollingsworth mentored Cardinal in Video Cabaret’s signature style of Black Box theatrical performance and staging. During this time Cardinal wrote his semi-autobiographical play *Too Good to Be True*, which opened the newly minted, Busy Street Theatre. This multi-character story of a mother-on-the-run kicked off Video Cabaret’s 2019-2020 season, and marked one of the first times in many years that the company would stage a play not penned by Hollingsworth and/or Taylor.

By the end of 2019, Cardinal developed an edgy variety show, *Cliff Cardinal’s CBC Special*, and he began touring the show across Canada and Mexico. By 2020, Cardinal began writing (*Everyone I Love Has*) *A Terrible Fate (Befall Them)*, which has since been quietly workshoped at *The Basement Review*, *The Writer’s Room*, and the *Thin Air Writer’s Festival*. By 2021, Cardinal in association with Chris Abraham began gestating on a new idea for a tired classic. *As You Like It: A Radical Retelling* was born and has since been produced by Crow’s Theatre and presented by Mirvish Productions as *The Land Acknowledgement*, or *As You Like It* at the CAA Theatre in 2023.

You wrote and directed, Too Good to Be True, which was infused with Video Cabaret’s signature style of precision lighting, atmospheric sound design, and exaggerated make-up, costumes, and wigs. What was your experience like fitting your story into the Black Box style of performance?

One of the coolest parts is the ability to have many characters in many locations. *Too Good to Be True* is a three-hander that takes place in one location. In that respect there was kind of no point in staging my play in that style except that it was inexpensive and a way to stretch out the season, proliferate the form and foster little old me as a playwright/director. The best part was working with Cheri Maracle, Patti Shaughnessy, and Ryan Cunningham. Black Box is amazing in the way that the audience can get lost in the spell of an actor telling the truth.

You’re mostly known for writing and performing your own scripts, what brought you to writing and directing (not performing) in a multi-character comedy?

I studied playwriting at the National Theatre School of Canada. I have a passion for theatrical writing. There are things best said on stage. Most of my solos are multi-character dramas too, for better or for worse. I’ve still got a couple ideas for plays hanging around. Eventually they’ll start feeling like psychological hangnails and I’ll need to tear them from my body.

How do you balance being called a Canadian Cultural Icon by The Globe and Mail and being a bit of a rebel? Do you feel the responsibility or are you good at categorizing the accolades?

This is my favorite question ever. I read a review one time where someone complained about my incredulous writing and



phony acting, but they compared me to Kanye West. The point was lost after that.

You work closely with director and dramaturge Karin Randoja. Can you discuss your collaboration with the esteemed director and dramaturge or other team members? How do you navigate differing opinions and ensure a cohesive vision for production?

Karin and I have a deep collaboration based on ten years of experience but also what we call a similar "brain energy." She knows as much about my story as I do but deep down there's a theatre actor who loves to surprise people. And our stage manager, Jen Stobart is utterly fearless.

The play can be dark and raw, but it also has a brilliant sparkle. How do you think patrons will feel walking out of the show? What do you hope they talk about as they wander home?

Remember in Ghostbusters II when they get goo'd with psychomagnotheric slime and they're like "I love you. I love you. I love you." That's what we're hoping to achieve with this show. If they walk out like they just saw the first scene in Jaws that would be a victory too.

You're touring As You Like It to Quebec at the end of September, and Huff to Crowsnest in the spring of 2024. Do you have plans to tour ATF – any cool stops/shows to plug?

There's a bunch of touring. ATF is going to Ottawa in November. Then I've got dates for my theatre and music coming up in Toronto, Ottawa, France, NYC, Oklahoma City, London (ON), Peterborough, Burlington, and a few other places might drop still. Not going to plug a show but if you see my name it's going to be dark, catchy and over-priced.

What's the next milestone for you?

Dinner at Milestones.

(Everyone I Love Has) A Terrible Fate (Befall Them) written/ performed by Cliff Cardinal and co-created by Director and Dramaturge; Karin Randoja will open Video Cabaret's 2023-2024 season. This brilliant production is produced by Video Cabaret in association with Crow's Theatre and looks to solidify a relationship between these two powerhouse theatrical companies and celebrate the opening of the re-branded Deanne Taylor Theatre at 10 Busy Street. *A Terrible Fate* previews October 10th and runs until October 29th, 2023.

Aaron Rothermund is a freelance writer, theatre creator, and filmmaker. Aaron has worked on articles for The Courier, Culture Days, theBUZZ, and PinkPlayMags.



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The Regrowth of Grapefruit



Photo: Grapefruit at Fly

More than twenty years ago, November 2002, in a second-floor club called Tequila Lounge on the corner of Bloor and Bathurst, a juicy new party called **Grapefruit** was born.

It was just around the time that I began this column, Deep Dish, in the iconic Fab Magazine, and this party was one of the first that I covered. As the saying goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Tequila Lounge is long since gone, but the space has morphed into a few venues over the years and is currently Coda nightclub. Grapefruit, however, which was the first of many queer parties that would later glitter up this west end corner, is back.

“I was sick of hearing tribal dance music everywhere,” says promoter and **DJ Shane Percy** explaining his reason for creating this party. “Deep down I knew the gays craved lyrics.” Joined at the (once) vinyl hip with his musical partner in crime, DJ Aural (AKA Brad Latendresse), the two set off to bring Toronto just that; music people could dance and sing along to.

The party grew in popularity and in 2005 it moved to the legendary Fly Nightclub. In 2013 when Fly changed its Friday night format, and after eleven years of crafting their kiki, the duo felt they were done. But, now after a

ten-year break, it has made an unexpected return (with huge lineups) at The Black Eagle.

Over its first run, the party has seen every queen in the city and beyond grace its stage including The B-Girlz, Tynomi Banks, Sofonda, Miss Conception, Daytonna Bitch, Mahogany Brown, Jackie Beat, Shery Vine and Donnarama (the queen of Grapefruit) who once ate and threw KFC chicken at an unsuspecting audience.

But it was sexy singer Cazwell, who perks Percy’s memory most. I was there that night in 2010 and this is part of what I wrote:

Grapefruit recently celebrated its eight-year anniversary at Fly nightclub. Spitting cute and dirty rhymes from the stage, special guest Cazwell thoroughly puts this party in a juicy category. Shane Percy is all smiles as he and Aural play for a packed house and dancers Scott Fordham and Sheldon MacIntosh take to the speakers for their refreshing hip-hop fusion moves. “The most successful parties are the ones that focus on fashion and glamour,” Cazwell says. “It’s all about pulling looks.”

Why is it back? “It feels like we never left,” Percy says. “I had so much pent-up creative energy and I was also re-inspired by a lot of great new music coming out.”



Some of that is the new Kylie Minogue album *Tension*, and Grapefruit hosted a huge album release party. They’ve had few for Kylie over the years.

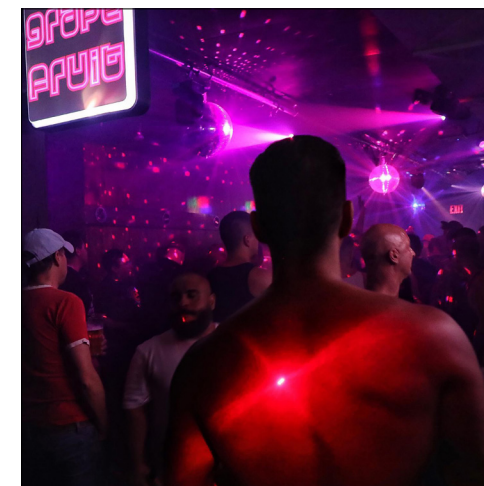
It was also in 2010 that I wrote:

Kylie is back and Grapefruit holds her official Toronto album release party. And highly gay Kylie totes and CDs are given away to the rabid audience. Not sure if MuchMusic’s Trevor Boris got one. He’s too busy dancing with a sweet young thing that may or may not have been born when Kylie began her career.

That was then, this is now, and according to Percy, “the scene is of course very different, but the spirit is the same. People just want to dance and sing to really fun songs with their friends.” Raise a glass of sparkling grapefruit juice to another ten more years.



Photo: Grapefruit at Fly



All photos by Mitchell Raphael unless otherwise noted.

Jamaican-born Rolyn Chambers grew up in the suburbs of Mississauga, before attending *Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD)*. In 2001, he began his *Deep Dish* column with *fab Magazine*, which ran for a full decade, allowing him to interview everyone from clubbers and promoters, to celebrities and politicians. Deep Dish has now been resurrected once again here in theBUZZ. Chambers is also the author of, *The Boy Who Brought Down A Bathhouse*, self-published by himself via YumEee! Communications. IG @rahrahrolyn



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LOVE THYSELF: SURVIVAL OF THE THICKEST

by Kingchella



Photo: Max Kopanygin

has been reaping the benefits of “the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.”

I want to state that I am not here to complain about the world we live in, I am here to explain what it is like living as a person of colour in this world. I must work 10x harder to be noticed or to even attain the success I want – and I most definitely have.

I started my drag career in 2021, mid-pandemic. After my first open stage at Woody’s and Sailors in August, my life changed forever. Within a few months, I curated and hosted my own monthly show downtown, followed by monthly shows in my hometown of Ajax, as well as various other performances across Ontario. After only 9 months of doing drag, I was cast in two hit TV shows, *Call Me Mother* and *1 Queen 5 Queers*. I felt on top of the world, but TV life and bar life are two different ballparks and I lost myself for a bit.

Losing myself was devastating because I had worked hard making a name in the industry. After filming, I would find myself questioning if drag was for me. But then I discovered Ballroom, a space for Black and Brown; gay, trans, queer individuals to display art, community, identity, creativity and love. I attended a few balls as a spectator then walked my first in the category of body – that experience was like no other: the love, the celebration, the GAG-ory!

I love being a successful plus-sized person and embodying what it is like to live this life. I struggled with my body and weight for the longest time, but when I realized this body is beautiful, it is sexy, it can be loved, show love, and be romanticized – that is when I knew I was meant for great things.

What’s next for this icon? Bigger and better lights, cameras, and stages! I’m a big gworl so I only deserve the biggest things that life has to offer. I’ve been through and conquered a lot in this life – I’m ready to do it over and over again. I will never take myself for granted or let anyone come between me and my power ever again. I’m ready to show the world my authentic self and make the world fall in love with me.

Kingchella your favourite person, place or thing is a drag performer located in Ajax, Ontario. Representing Indo-Caribbean, non-binary, plus-size, queer people of colour with a grungy sense of style. You can catch Kingchella on Season 2 of *Call Me Mother* and Season 2 of *1 Queen 5 Queers*!



Being a plus-size, person of colour, still trying to understand my gender identity, there has been a lot of trials and tribulations within myself. Not feeling desired or desirable, not feeling “attractive” enough, having intercourse with random strangers. Just because. It was a lot, but that did not stop me from being who I am, and who I was meant to be. [Kingchella](#).

The world we live in is run by cis, white, masculine, heterosexual men – not that this is a bad thing – but these systems that have been in place for generations, and have caused people within the margins to live a life of being alert. The capitalistic world we live in perpetuates this as well because the hierarchy that has been established for decades,

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Robyn McDonald

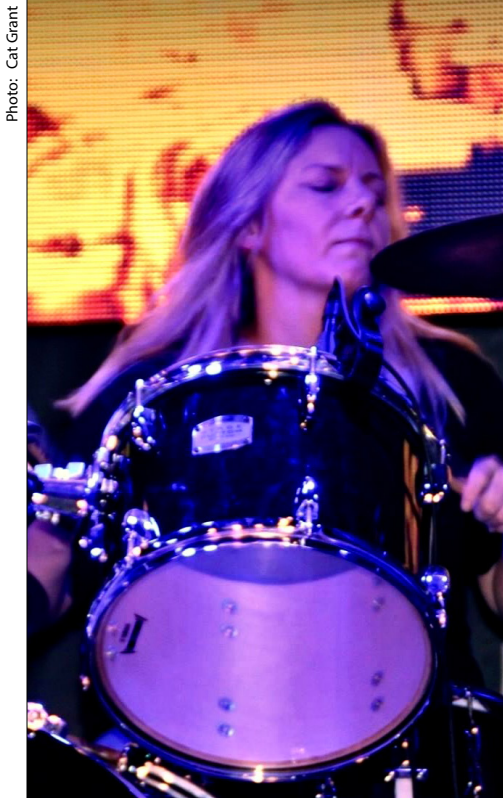


Photo: Cat Grant

Robyn desired to be a skilled musician and she played around town often before she was even old enough to be in bars. "Being in a small town didn't really make it easy to be a professional musician." Robyn's first band was **Striptstone**, and that's with whom she played her first live performance. "We were an alternative rock band similar to say Nirvana or Pearl Jam. We played a battle of the bands in our hometown, and it went pretty well actually. I think we won 1st or 2nd place."

"Off the top of my head, I can count 11 bands that I've been in." Her favourites are the long-term and current bands she plays with: **Sarah Smith, Stiletto Flats, Fat Head Hazel, and I Will Be King**. "The others are from back home, my first band Striptstone, and another band called Good 2 Go," shared Robyn. "I met Sarah Smith in 2008, playing with Shawnee and we were billed with Sarah and Elana Harte at Slacks." Robyn began working with Sarah fairly regularly. "In 2010 she asked me to do a weekly duo gig with her in Brantford which led to more gigs." They toured across Canada and currently, they're on tour in Europe.

Robyn still gets stage fright but says besides the drums being so physically demanding the hauling and setting up can be the hardest parts of being a drummer. "The best part of playing live for me is the energy from my band as well as the audience. It's a high that is unlike anything else." A dream gig for Robyn would be playing for Evanescence. "I love rocker chicks!"

Robyn's advice to any girl wanting to play drums is to just do it. "Be confident and don't take shit!" Robyn would love to see more of the world and play music while doing it. What's next after Europe? "I've got a gig with Sarah at the Aeolian Hall in London on November 19. November 25 my David Bowie Tribute, I Will Be King, takes place at [The Linsmore Tavern](#) in Toronto."

Cat Grant (OCAD) is a multidisciplinary artist. Starting her career in dance and music, painting and photography are her main focus now. As a published poet, Cat is also the Executive Director for *The Toronto Women's Arts Festival*.

[Facebook @grantedarts](#)



Born and raised in Kenora, Ontario, drummer **Robyn McDonald** did not grow up in an artsy household. "My Dad worked construction and built houses. That's about as creative as it gets!" While not a great student, Robyn was well-liked by her teachers. She loved music, "I think the first album I bought myself may have been Appetite for Destruction by Guns N' Roses."

She started with the clarinet in her school's music class. "I knew it just wasn't for me and quite honestly, I hated it." Starting grade 8 the following year, Robyn had a new music teacher who was a drummer. "Willie Mathis, he was badass! He's kind of the reason why I wanted to play drums. He showed me a few basic skills and off I went to buy some drums!" Her favourite class was woodshop but even there Robyn's musical influence prevailed. "In grade 9 I made a guitar. My teacher had it hanging up still years later when I went back to visit."

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Al Val

Photo by Jo Koy Gala



AV – My trip to Europe was eye-opening! I made some good connections and loved performing for the crowds in Oslo. I do look forward to going back, but personally it was just so riveting seeing Europe for the first time. I fell in love with Stockholm!

BK – That sounds amazing. What are you looking forward to next year?

AV – I cannot wait for the release of my special, *So Brave*, in 2024 and am excited to see what sort of doors it will open for me. I so strongly believe in the material that, as my debut album/special, is literally the culmination of my 17 years in comedy.

BK – We will look forward to seeing it. Where else can we see your work?

AV – Full episodes of my weekly podcast, *PodGis* are available on my YouTube channel and anywhere you can get podcasts; follow me on Instagram, TikTok, and basically every social media app there is, all with the username *@alvalcomedy*. Also, if you want to support me, please grab an Al Val shirt from merchmonkey.ca!

BK – Will do. Future plans?

AV – Another European tour, potentially set up a channel and monetize exclusive comedy content on OnlyFans or Patreon, performing in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and if all the above fails then maybe seduce a millionaire with my trademark guacamole recipe.

BK – Super goals, we hope they all come true for you. Any message you would like to put out there?

AV – Choose kindness, always. When you're on social media it's easier to scroll away from the things you don't like than to type out and post something cruel. Y'know what? Do one better. Just limit your social media time altogether. It's all bad for you. Except *my* content. It's great.

BK – Haha, and ours, of course. Finish this sentence for us, "The last thing I do before I go to sleep is..."

AV – Practice a little gratitude for the gifts I have in my life, then cuddle my Yoshi plush.

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



Al Val is a comedian/musician and actress from Toronto. Her honest and insightful, yet silly and spontaneous account of her transgender journey has turned heads and earned her appearances at many renowned festivals. She was a writer on the 30th season of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, a lead on OutTV's season 3 of *Drag Heals*, and has performances on CBC Gem, Crave, and CTV.

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

Al Val –The third season of *Drag Heals*, an inspirational documentary, came out on Apple TV, Out TV, and Vimeo; I toured in Europe for the first time; I performed at the Just For Laughs Festival for the third year in a row; played guitar on the track titled, *Malta PSA*, on Dan Galea's *Inter-Dan-Mensional* comedy-music album... all while somehow staying a single bachelorette.

BK – Wow, you have been busy, those are all great achievements. During that time, which was the most exciting event for you?

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CREAMERY X



On the corner of Jarvis St. and Queen St. is a vibrant pink storefront, with a bright, colourful interior, and a rainbow-shaped door mat. [Creamery X](#) is the home of coffee, drinks, floats, baked goods, and ice cream — and not just any ice cream! We're talking handmade decadent, weird and wonderful selection of rich creamy custard ice cream flavours, vegan and gluten-free options, and custom ice cream cakes. Imagine gluten-free toffee crunch, strawberry balsamic cheesecake, spiced apple cheddar, hot honey toast, vegan and gluten-free mango Tajin sherbet, and so much more. They keep a few mainstays around, but their seasonal flavours change monthly.

Creamery X also has a “charity flavour program,” where 25% of the sales from the selected flavour are donated to a local charity. Some of the past beneficiaries of this program have included: HIV Legal Network; Sistering; The 519 Community Centre; Rainbow Railroad; and Sheena's Place.

Creamery X is the love child of Bonnie and Melissa, a couple who met in their earlier corporate jobs. Melissa's love for baking and Bonnie's passion for ice cream, inspired this special destination for those who love rich, yummy, gooey, tasty and sweet treats. Creamery X's ice cream is not “too sweet”; Bonnie noted that it was a conscious decision to reduce the amount of sugar in the ice cream by using a blend of dextrose and skimmed milk powder. Melissa advised that it took 6 weeks to perfect the dairy recipe and almost 2 years for the ideal vegan recipe. The vegan recipe began with a coconut milk base; however, it soon became clear that an oat milk base worked better for most flavours; whereas custard ice creams are made using a base created with egg yolks for a richer, creamier flavour. Many say they can't tell the

difference between the vegan and dairy products; Melissa and Bonnie put extensive effort and time into researching and experimenting to achieve a richness and texture in the vegan products that would rival the dairy line; ingredients for all flavours are listed in their product descriptions.

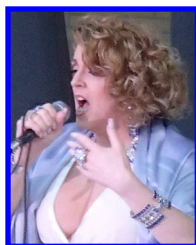
Creamery X does its best to accommodate food allergies and sensitivities, and to avoid cross-contamination they sanitize surfaces and tools however, they're not a nut or gluten-free facility.

Although the premises is not handicap accessible (they made a great but fruitless effort in getting a door ramp) they are happy to serve you outside with their portable menu; give them a call when you arrive (their number is on the glass). If you can't get to their store, their products are available for delivery by the pint, and sold on Uber Eats, SkipTheDishes, the Flamingo Market, and select retailers: Fiesta Farms, Fresh & Wild, McEwan's, and Don Mills.

Creamery X

Open daily, 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
114 Queen St. E., Toronto, Ontario
(416) 364-4889
creameryx@gmail.com

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).



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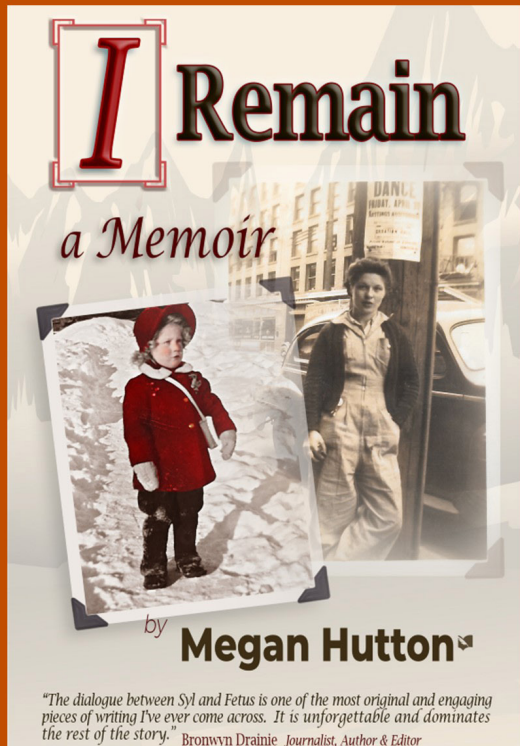
Music Chart

Artist Database

Playlists

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LOCAL PICKS

C.U. Next Tuesday - Open Stage

Tuesdays from 9:00 p.m. to midnight

Bring your sheet music or pick a song from their song books. Musical theatre & jazz standards encouraged but you may sing what you like.

O'Grady's On Church, 518 Church St., Toronto

<http://www.ogradyschurch.com/>

Open Stage Cabaret

Tuesdays from 10:00 p.m.

An open stage event hosted by a stunning array of leading queens, with special guests. DJ Cory Activate. Glorious star-making machinery & big fun. Arrive early to sign up as a performer.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

<http://woodystoronto.com>

Hump Night Honeyes

Wednesdays from 10:00 p.m.

Hosts Carlotta Carlisle and Katinka Kature welcome an array of special guest stars with DJ Chris Steinbach, and Toronto's Sweetest Staff.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

<http://woodystoronto.com/>

Jock Night Thursdays

Thursdays from 8:00 p.m.

Hosted by Morgan James and sponsored by JockstrapCentral.com. Meet the newest entertainers and existing favourites in the field of male striptease. A male-only venue. Located above Flash.

Cock Bar, 461 Church St., Second Floor, Toronto

<https://www.flashonchurch.com/>

James Quigley – Piano Bar

Saturdays from 7:00 p.m.

Crazy, interactive, fun, live piano bar show! Bring your charts, lead sheets, or choose from the on-site list of options, and sing your heart out. No cover.

Flash On Church, 463 Church St., Toronto

<http://jamesthemusician.com/>

Hollywoody to Broadway Show

Sundays from 6:00 p.m.

Hilarious host Georgie Girl welcomes a selection of guest performers every Sunday evening serving up your favourite hits of stage and screen, and more.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

<http://woodystoronto.com/>

The Wild Rovers

To November 15

Inspired by the music and magic of the beloved Irish Rovers, The Wild Rovers is a mad-cap adventure that sees the famed band whisked away to a fantastical land of Athunia, not to be confused with their sworn enemy, Ethunia, (and yes, they are pronounced exactly the same).

Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/the-wild-rovers-preview-performance-toronto-ontario-10-14-2023/event/10005EF0CCE93616>

Bob Dylan – Rough and Rowdy Ways

October 26 and 27

This event will be a phone-free experience. Use of phones, smart watches, and accessories will not be permitted.

Upon arrival at the venue, all phones, smart watches, and accessories will be secured in individual Yondr pouches.

Anyone seen using a device will be escorted out by security.

Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/bob-dylan-tickets/artist/734972>

Opera Atelier presents Orpheus and Eurydice

October 26 to November 1

The subject is among the most frequently retold of all Greek myths, being featured in numerous works of literature, operas, ballets, paintings, plays, and more recently, films and video games.

Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/opera-atelier-presents-orpheus-and-eurydice-toronto-ontario-10-26-2023/event/10005EFEBFE933C5>

Mavis Staples

October 28; 8:00 p.m.

The once-in-a-generation artist whose impact on music and culture would be difficult to overstate. She is a civil rights icon, a multiple Grammy Award winner, a chart-topping soul/gospel/R&B pioneer with her family group The Staple Singers, a member of both the Blues Hall of Fame and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a National Arts Awards Lifetime Achievement recipient, and a Kennedy Center honoree.

Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto

<https://www.rcmusic.com/>

Beethoven's Seventh

October 29; 3:00 p.m.

Conductor: Gustavo Gimeno Violin: Jonathan Crow Program: Tansy Davies: Plumes (North American Première) Ligeti: Violin Concerto Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/beethovens-seventh-toronto-ontario-10-29-2023/event/10005EF29CFA13A4>



Randy Rainbow for President

November 3; 8:00 p.m.

American comedian and singer, best known for spoof interviews that blend political satire and musical parodies from a liberal perspective. Rainbow will take on current topics and politicians while bringing fan favorite videos and parody songs to live on stage.

Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/randy-rainbow-for-president-toronto-ontario-11-03-2023/event/10005ED3A4FE13E1>

Pink Martini

November 10; 8:00 p.m.

Drawing inspiration from music from all over the world – crossing genres of classical, jazz and old-fashioned pop – Thomas Lauderdale founded Pink Martini in 1994 to provide more beautiful and inclusive musical soundtracks for political fundraisers for causes such as civil rights, affordable housing, the environment, libraries, public broadcasting, education and parks.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

<https://roythomsonhall.mhrth.com/tickets/pink-martini>

Alan Carr: Regional Trinket

November 15; 7:00 p.m.

English comedian, broadcaster and writer best known as the star of the comedy chat show, Alan Carr: Chatty Man (2009–2016) which aired on Channel 4.

Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/alan-carr-regional-trinket-toronto-ontario-11-15-2023/event/10005EBAC0951EAG>



Patti LuPone: Don't Monkey With Broadway

November 17; 8:00 p.m.

Best known for her work in musical theater, she went on to receive three Tony Awards; two for Best Actress in a Musical for her roles as Eva Perón in Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's Evita in 1980, and Rose in Gypsy in 2008, plus one for Best Featured Actress in a Musical.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/patti-lupone-dont-monkey-with-broadway-toronto-ontario-11-17-2023/event/10005D6DCA1B2B44>



Chris, Mrs. – A New Holiday Musical

December 5 to 31

The story begins in the city, where festiveless father Ben Chris leverages his late parents' lodge in exchange for a promotion. The only problem is, his brother Charlie still runs it. Ben reluctantly decides to head there to convince him to sell, packing up his socialite girlfriend Vicki, and his teen children. After discovering a ring in their father's suitcase, the teens write to Santa for assistance, which seems to appear in the form of Holly, a seasonal employee at the lodge.

Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St., Toronto

<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/elgin-and-winter-garden-theatre-centre-tickets-toronto/venue/131082>





Festival of Carols

December 5 and 6

Ring in the holiday season with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and its beloved annual celebration of music. This dazzling performance is bound to fill your heart, and make your spirits soar as you sing along to classics like Silent Night, Angels We Have Heard on High, and O Come, All Ye Faithful.

Yorkminster Park Baptist Church, 1585 Yonge St., Toronto
<https://www.tmchoir.org/event/festival-of-carols-2023>

Adi Braun Quartet Noir

December 14; 8:00 p.m.

As Fay Helm said in "Phantom Lady," there are "no names, no addresses – just companions for the evening." Slide into the delicious and dangerous music of the Film Noir era with Adi Braun lighting the way through songs and repartee from this truly unique period in filmmaking.

Lester B. Pearson Theatre, 150 Central Park Dr., Brampton
<https://tickets.brampton.ca/online/>

Scott Bradlee's Postmodern Jukebox

December 16; 8:00 p.m.

There is nothing in the world that compares with the thrill of hearing classic genres of music, performed live by a group of exceptional singers and musicians that have truly mastered the ability to move an audience.

Massey Hall, 178 Victoria St., Toronto
<https://masseyhall.mhrth.com/tickets/pmj>



ROAD TRIPS

Comic Strippers

October 19 to 29

A fictitious male stripper troupe, played by a cast of some of Canada's best improvisational comedians. These guys try to be sexy – it just comes out funny. Constantly grooving and gyrating, in-between scenes they banter with the crowd and perform their sexy-larious twist on improv sketches.



Various venues throughout Ontario – see the link below
<https://www.shantero.com/Comicspage.html>

Boos and Ghouls Brunch

October 22; noon to 2:00 p.m.

A spooktacular drag brunch featuring Kasha Czech, Robert Tucky, Qlorox, and Manny Manila showing you some Halloween Realness. Tickets will be \$12.00 at the door, or \$10.00 if purchased online in advance. They have some amazing performers for you.

Southbrook Golf and Country Club, 4349 Hwy 56 S., Hamilton

<https://www.facebook.com/events/268098109423201/>

The Vagina Monologues

October 26 through 28

An Obie Award-winning whirlwind tour of a forbidden zone, The Vagina Monologues wowed the world with its wildly divergent gathering of female voices exploring many topics including sex, relationships, sexual violence, menstruation, and more.

Cyril Clark Library Lecture Hall, 20 Loafers Lake Ln., Brampton
<https://tickets.brampton.ca/online/default.asp>



The Family Crow: A Murder of Mystery

October 26; 7:30 p.m.

Puppets! Puns! Murder! A mysterious murder has occurred amidst the Family Crow and now Horatio P. Corvus is on the scene to crack the case. Eat your heart out, Agatha Crowstie.

The Orillia Opera House, 20 Mississauga St. W., Orillia
<https://secure1.tixhub.com/orillia-oh/online/index.asp>

The Vampire Circus

October 29; 8:00 p.m.

90 minutes of innovative and surreal performances by vampires, including acrobatic feats, comical interactions with the audience, tantalizing music and mesmerizing illusions. Gather your garlic for a wicked and witty Halloween circus experience unlike any other.

Algonquin Commons Theatre, 1385 Woodroffe Ave., Ottawa
<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/event/31005EBDDDFED27BC>



Paul Anka: Seven Decades Tour

November 3; 7:00 p.m.

He is best known for his signature hit songs including Diana, Lonely Boy, and Put Your Head on My Shoulder. Anka also wrote the theme for The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson; one of Tom Jones' biggest hits, She's a Lady; and the English lyrics to Frank Sinatra's signature song My Way.

Fallsview Casino, 6380 Fallsview Blvd., Niagara Falls
<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/paul-anka-seven-decades-tour-niagara-falls-ontario-11-03-2023/event/10005EAC4553905>



By Sherry Sylvain

The Vampire Ball

November 4; 8:00 p.m.

LGBTQ2S+ Halloween ball for all you vivacious and vicious vixens and vampires. \$15.00 in advance, \$20.00 at the door. Special Rate at The Hilton Garden Inn via amanda.axt@hilton.com

Cambridge Newfoundland Club, 1500 Dunbar St., Cambridge

Tickets via e-transfer to musicandfriendsdanceparties@hotmail.com (add \$1.50 per transaction)

Decades of Bond - The Music of James Bond

November 17; 7:30 p.m.

The ultimate tribute to the incredible music of the James Bond film empire. This 13-piece show band is stacked with some of the finest musicians in North America. \$57.00 per person.

The Orillia Opera House, 20 Mississauga St. W., Orillia
<https://secure1.tixhub.com/orillia-oh/online/index.asp>



Our Past Gave Us A Future: Transgender Day Of Remembrance

November 20; 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Free event, with Coffee/Tea/Water and Snacks; the bar will be open for both non-alcoholic/alcoholic drinks. Please mingle and enjoy the Transgender speakers, artists, and performers. At the end of the evening, attendees will be invited to take part in a candle-lighting.

Southbrook Golf and Country Club, 4349 Hwy 56 S., Hamilton

<https://www.facebook.com/binbrookqcommunity>



The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Show Starring BenDeLaCreme & Jinkx Monsoon

November 25; 8:00 p.m.

You better watch out, you better not cry, because "The Queens of Christmas" are coming back to your town with a brand-new edition of the internationally acclaimed The Jinkx & DeLa Holiday Show.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton
<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/the-jinkx-de-la-holiday-show-starring-hamilton-ontario-11-25-2023/event/10005EE7A7561818>



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