

Makayla Couture • Chrysanthi • Canne • The Well Queen St. W

LP

*Multi-Platinum Singer-Songwriter Releases
7th Album, Love Lines*

Stephen Murphy

Writer & Director Unstoppable in the Face of ALS



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Hello Friends!

HO-HO-hold on a second . . . now, before the festivities of the holi-gay season begins, you must take this moment to open up a gift for yourself. No, you can't wear it. You can't eat it either. Will it make you smile? Mistletoe-tally. Look, it's the perfect time of year to egg (or oat) nog your way through claymation Rudolph or Elf for the 9647th time, but it's also when we feel the warmed cockles of our heart yearn to let people know how much they mean to us. Well, my cockles are extra warm (borderline spicy), and I want you to know, this December issue of theBUZZ is our gift to you!

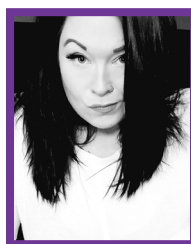
As you start to unwrap this gift (flip the pages) you'll see we have American multi-platinum singer-songwriter, LP (Laura Pergolizzi), as our first feature. Bryen Dunn gets the rundown on their new 12-track album, *Love Lines*, which was released on September 29th. It's their 7th full-length studio album; dubbed their "most luminous and heart-expanding work yet." Aaron Rothermund had an in-depth conversation with the unstoppable Stephen Murphy, Toronto-based writer and director, who continues to overcome personal obstacles, his recent diagnosis of ALS, for his love of film and television. Murphy is currently working on a feature film he wrote, *Strangers After Fall*.

Rolyn Chambers gives his two cents on a few recent bar additions in *Deep Dish* – no, not in The Village, but in the city's east and west ends. Our *Wiggged Out* feature, Makayla Couture, is full of love and pride in who she is, and she has every right to be! For *She Beat*, Cat Grant sat down with multidisciplinary artist and creative ball of fire, Chrysanthi Zora Michaelides. Boyd Kodak takes a *Kodak Moment* with Indigenous two-spirited visual artist, Canne, who's currently promoting their new series, *The Faces of Femme*. In *Beyond the Village*, Sherry Sylvain tells us what we need to know about the opening of a new Well location, *The Well Queen St. W*. Soon there will be more Wells than Tim Hortons. And don't forget to check out our *BUZZpicks* for events you won't want to miss!

Whether you're celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, something else, or none of the above, may this December and upcoming new year bring you all the magic and wonder your queer little (spicy-cockled) heart desires.

Happy Holi-gays to you, yours, and theirs!

Mel MacMullin
Editor-in-Chief



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LP's New Album *Love Lines* is All About Love, Freedom, and Respect

By Bryen Dunn

With powerhouse vocals, a genre-bucking attitude, and a sharp pen that distills potent feelings into soaring pop hooks, Long Island born singer/songwriter [LP](#) (Laura Pergolizzi) has become one of the most underrated and beloved musicians of their generation.

LP's start in music began as a songwriter, penning Rihanna's 2011 mega-hit [Cheers \(Drink to That\)](#), followed by writing further hits for [Cher](#), [Céline Dion](#), [Christina Aguilera](#), and the [Backstreet Boys](#). They eventually honed in on their own style by studying greats like [Freddie Mercury](#), [Jeff Buckley](#), [Aretha Franklin](#), [Joni Mitchell](#), and [Roy Orbison](#).

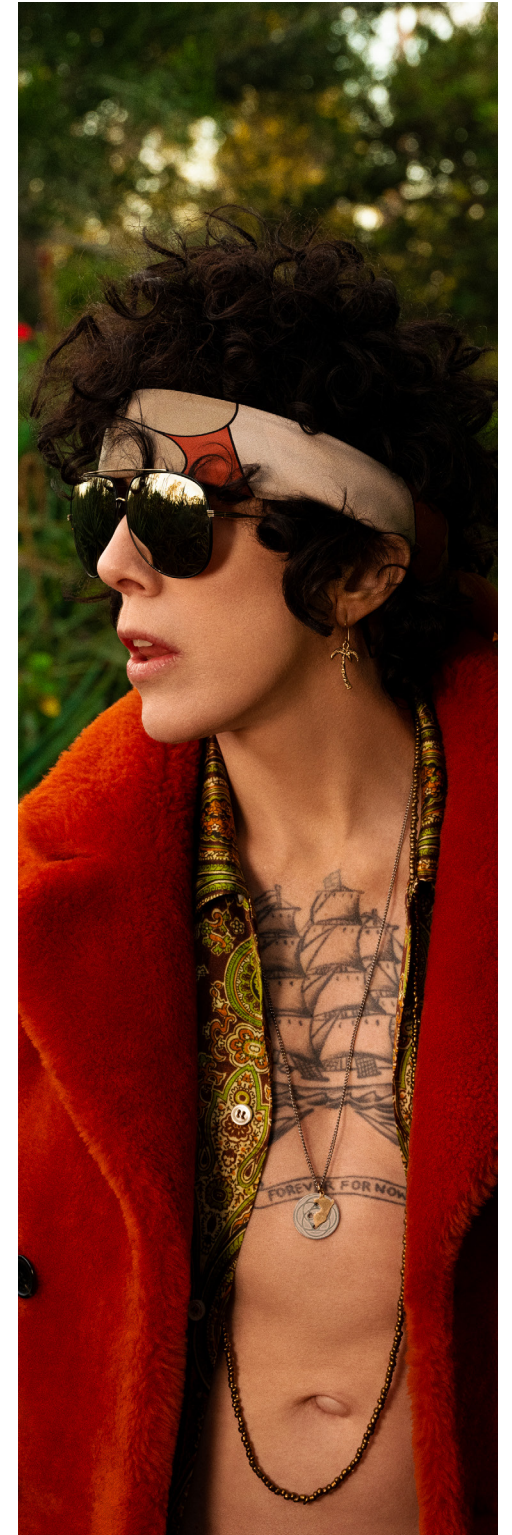
The recently released 7th album, *Love Lines*, is their most luminous and heart-expanding work yet. After spending a year and a half just "living and collecting experiences," LP says, "songs began pouring out with ease during sessions held between the island of Grand Cayman and Palm Springs."

There's a sense of quiet confidence and gratitude that permeates *Love Lines*, which was influenced by the sun-drenched expanse of California, and sweeps through a spectrum of Western-inspired sounds that's filled with the blow-out choruses that they are best known for.

On the album, LP reflects on the wide tapestry of relationships they've had in their life, from romantic partners and family to their own self, and how all these kaleidoscopic experiences have helped them get to the core of who they truly are. It's an album about breaking up, getting into someone else, and the struggle of going back to someone. "All tracks came from an easy kind of place with a bunch of different themes," they explain. "Songwriting is a way for me to go to the centre of my own world and find the originality I need to get for myself," LP adds.

The project also reveals LP's most masterful songwriting yet, each line a vivid gem of chest-pulling imagery. "I feel like I'm always getting more succinct and tighter in my writing, having every word and sentence turning in on itself or expressing a duality, or even several feelings at once," they say. This can be found on acoustic ballads like the sentimental, [One Like You](#), or the new wave-inspired rock on, [Love Song](#).

On the single, [Golden](#), LP sings of learning to appreciate the lessons that come from lost love. "We are golden/We're not broken," they sing with their expressive belt, equal parts captivating and tender. *Golden* can be filed under "hangin' in there" which was written after "coming out of a couple relationships that made me feel less, but it always takes two," they reveal.



Explaining the meaning behind, [Long Goodbye](#), LP explains, “I need someone, and I don’t need someone. I wanna get to know myself a little bit better and how I react in the face of love. Find out what I wanna do for my own personal growth. It’s sort of a figment of my imagination that I kind of need someone, but I don’t have to stay with someone just because I have a good time for little bit.”

The video for [Dayglow](#) was shot on location in Prague at the city’s annual Pride Festival, capturing unforgettable, candid moments that encapsulates the essence of Pride: love, acceptance, and celebration of one’s true identity. LP is also leveraging the video to raise awareness of marriage equality within Czechia.

With all the wisdom LP has shared in their music and lyrics over the years, what word of advice would they offer on love? “To not have your love be conditional. Be kind and empathetic and lead with love, as you can’t lose with kindness. Smile at someone and they’ll smile back,” they believe.

They cite their most challenging project to date as, “my whole fucking career.”

“Music was a real challenge. I had to start from scratch, not knowing anyone. I didn’t write poetry as a kid, as I was more into sports. I liked to write but didn’t know how to write a song. Then, it just sort of grabbed me.”

“I’m not complaining as I’m so lucky. It’s not your typical career, and it doesn’t come for free, but I love it. I’m still finding my path, and just keep creating and putting shit out, continuing to cultivate what’s inside,” they divulge.

LP identifies as a gender-neutral lesbian, and states, “It’s not important to prove myself as a lesbian, but nevertheless visibility is important.” As of May 2023, LP’s official bio uses the singular they. LP also stated they are “equally comfortable being considered a garden variety lesbian woman, and honorary gynecologist.”

“Even as a human, I feel like I just keep getting more and more dense, concentrated. I’m more me every fucking year. I’m trying to reach out to more people all the time,” they add. “To make people feel good for even three minutes of a song,” LP explains.

Asked what are their three highest values in which they live their life by, they quickly replied, “love, freedom, and respect.”

Finally, when asked for one question they’ve never been asked in an interview, but wish they were, they replied, “Would you like a drink?” – and their answer would be, “Yes, I would like a Mezcal Margarita.”

Cheers to that, and cheers to LP’s universal message of love.

LP just completed a fall North American tour which included a stop here in Toronto, with a European jaunt scheduled for the first part of 2024. [Love Lines](#) collaborators include Ashton Irwin (5 Seconds of Summer), Andrew Berkeley Martin (Palaye



Royale), and GRAMMY-nominated producer-songwriter Matthew Pauling. Stream [Love Lines](#) [here](#).

All photos by Ryan Jay.

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



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FILMMAKING ON HIS OWN TERMS: THE UNSTOPPABLE STEPHEN MURPHY

By Aaron Rothermund

Stephen Murphy is a writer and director from Toronto, where he works in the film and television industry. His short films have screened at prestigious international film festivals and his screenplays have received awards at the Austin Film Festival and the Final Draft Big Break screenwriting competition.

In his childhood, Stephen learned that he could make comedic commentary during movies, and snarky wisecracks during class. In fact, Stephen created his first short film in high school while on assignment by his communications class teacher. The film, *Soylent Gravy*, was set in-the-near-future, where school administrators were turning students into gravy to save valuable resources.

“I gave the teacher a small role and some lines and we got an A+,” Stephen writes to me over email. “Even back then I was already thinking in terms of commercial value and marketability!”

Although born in Thornhill, Stephen felt the sweet siren song of the downtown Toronto comedy scene. So, armed with sarcasm, wit, and two TTC tokens Stephen would travel forty-five minutes from the rolling strip malls to the epicenter of comedic extravagance. In the Queen Street West area, Stephen honed his skills at open mic nights at **Yuk Yuks**, the **Second City Training Center**, and amateur comedy nights at pubs and bars.

Stephen’s passion for comedic storytelling soon led him to the director’s chair for his award-winning short film, *Dennis in the Bathtub* (2016). Interestingly, the entire film took place in a basement bathroom, and it featured an emasculated merman, his fishy wife and captor. “The genesis of that film was a comedy sketch I wrote in a class with Paul Bellini who wrote for Kids in the Hall,” Stephen tells me. “My sole aim was to create a sense of claustrophobia for the character while still maintaining an absurd tone, which the actor who performed in it was able to deliver.”

Although the film only ran three minutes in length it premiered at the **Toronto Independent Film Festival**, **Little Terrors Short Film Event**, and was presented at the **Toronto After Dark Film Festival** to approximately six hundred people with rave reviews. “The After Dark was the biggest and most widely publicized screening,” Stephen remarks. “It felt very satisfying to have a big crowd of people that didn’t know me laughing at all the right spots and really enjoying the film.”

As cinematographer, Murphy worked on the YouTube series, *Friendly Fires* (2017-2019), which was based on non-union actors trying to break into the entertainment business. The series eventually got funding and continued as a short film titled, *Respect* (2020). After this success, Murphy was cinematographer on the comedic web-series, *Business Inc.* (2021), which featured the hottest local comedians in Toronto thrown into outlandish comedic scenarios.

“Friendly Fire was a good experience to work on something episodic for the first time and to learn how to shoot over multiple episodes and maintain the right consistencies,” Stephen remembers. “Same with Business Inc. That one was done during COVID, and it was a long shoot, 16-hour days, and it was challenging work. I didn’t get a lot of sleep, but I didn’t notice because I was really eager to shoot the next day and collaborate with people.”

Following this career momentum, Murphy completed two feature film screenplays. First, he lengthened the short script and developed the story for *Dennis in the Bathtub* to create his hilarious yet unproduced screenplay, *Freshwater*. This quirky script highlights his vision as a writer, his imagination as a filmmaker, and lends itself to stylistic cinematography.

“I used the character of Dennis as the foundation to explain a longer and bigger story which gradually took on a life of its own. It’s about someone who wants to reconcile with his brother, who he thought was dead, and coming to terms with the fact that it might not be possible, but framed in an absurd reality, where people can merge with fish.”

Murphy, most recently wrote the feature film, **Strangers After Fall**, and was starting pre-production on the film when he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. ALS is often called Lou Gehrig’s disease after the baseball player who was diagnosed with it. ALS often begins with muscle twitching, numbness and/or weakness in an arm or leg, trouble swallowing or slurred speech. Eventually, ALS affects control of the muscles needed to move, speak, and breathe.

“ALS is a tricky diagnosis,” Stephen explains. “I don’t want to be defined by a diagnosis, certainly not one that is so misunderstood and vague. I prefer to take it day by day, honouring what is happening with my body and what I need on a given day to have the best quality of life. And I’m still working it all out.”

ALS has affected Murphy’s ability to stand for extended periods of time and now he utilizes an electronic chair. Murphy can no longer lift his arms above shoulder height, so holding a camera is going to be impossible for him on these projects. Murphy will use his filmmaking peers to be his legs, arms, and occasionally eyes and voice.

Strangers After Fall centers on an average man whose identity switches with a doppelganger, an exact double that only he can see. After processing the situation, the protagonist must



confront the possibility that his doppelganger may be a better version of himself.

"I wanted to make a film in Niagara Falls where I have a lot of memories as a kid," Stephen says. "It always seemed to me like the busiest place in the world. I wanted to capture all those elements and write a story where strange things can happen in a mystical place like Niagara Falls. It ultimately became a doppelganger story, about losing your identity and trying to reclaim."

Murphy's personal life unknowingly mirrors the plot of *Strangers After Fall* as he is faced with a new version of himself. "The pre-production and prep haven't really changed so it's really on set that would have some difficulties and need some rethinking. I have been considering technologies to use and trying to direct from a distance, if possible, though I wouldn't really feel as engaged but it might look like being on set with a personal support worker and having extra assistance and more preparation than would normally be needed would have to be expected. The cast and crew would have to be prepped on the possibilities of things taking longer and what mobility issues are and determining whether locations will be accessible. Given all those factors

I would be on set as much as I am able to be and use virtual communication of surrogate direction when I'm not able to be on set. Thankfully there are technologies that allow for this."

Murphy's patience, resilience, and unwavering commitment to the world of television and film is an inspiration, and a percentage of the proceeds from this film will be donated to the research and prevention of ALS. Another of Murphy's dreams is to move the community members to building more accessible and safe places for people with ALS to live with dignity on their own terms.

Check out the *Strangers After Fall* fundraising page [here](#) to donate or get involved as an investor.

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



East End, West End – One Bar, Six Bars



Toronto is now home to two new queer venues outside of the Queer Village, and they couldn't be any different.

The first, [Impact Lounge](#) at the corner of Parliament and Dundas, opened just over a year ago. It is the passion project of **Jason Voneuw**, who was last involved in Mandy Goodhandy and Todd Klink's short-lived Mandy's Bistro on the Danforth after their hugely successful venue, Club 120 (formerly Goodhandy's), was forced to close.

Impact's bread and butter seems to be its wild, anything goes, male-dominated parties put on by Freakin' Awesome Gay Stuff (FAGS) (IG: @freakinawesomestaystuff). But its stage is also graced with live singers, comedians, book readings, burlesque

and of course drag. FAGS originated at the very short-lived club, Boom Box, which popped up along College Street just before the pandemic, and sadly died out shortly after. For Impact, this was a good thing since they were struggling to bring in the coins with their lineup of smaller name drag artists and comedy acts.

The energy on the Impact's dance floor (especially during their recent foam party) is electric, the bar staff are genuine, and the dark room is sexually charged. Their bathroom situation (there are only three located on an unfinished upper floor) is a travesty of urinal proportions. But with an influx of events courtesy of FAGS, plus DJ Black Cat moving his series of hugely successful parties to the venue, Voneuw now finally has the cash to invest in this area.

On the other side of the village and on the complete opposite end of the queer nightlife spectrum is [The Well](#). No, not the



Well on Church Street, the new one, the fifth one in Ontario, at Queen and Spadina. Owner **John Ribson** (who owns more than two dozen Wendy's franchises) seems intent on streamlining cruising like he has for grilling meat.

The first location in Toronto's Queer Village was originally a partnership with Steve Palmer (who owns Men's Room and The Pitbull parties with Francis Gaureault) and Jimmy George (who owns O'Grady's on Church). Together they also owned The Drink. Creative differences, however, saw him split with the other two, keeping The Well and severing ties with The Drink. Over the course of four years, he has opened five new locations, two in Toronto as well as London, Hamilton, Waterloo, and Windsor.

From its Burger King-like corporate signage outside beckoning pseudo-Queen Westers inside, its floors are polished and gleaming, its walls white and screaming. We went to the Queen Street location's soft opening only to discover we had missed the drag show at midnight, the drag queens and everyone who might have come to see them had all left. The place was barren and looked more like an upscale fast-food joint. For Queen Street, it was characterless and reminded

me of when The Gap intruded on this once fashionable area of the city.

While these two venues are vastly different, what they have in common is their potential to draw people away from the Queer Village – however, this is nothing new as the Queen West and East bars that host queer nights have operated for well over a decade now.

We are here, we are queer, we are indeed everywhere.

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 YumEe! Communications. IG @rahrhrolyn



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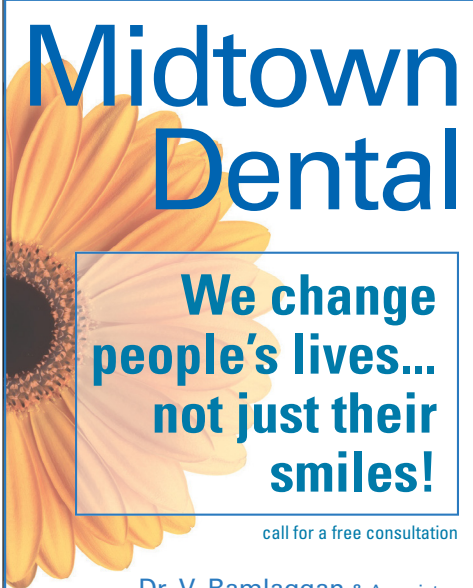
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WIGGED OUT

by Makayla Couture

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

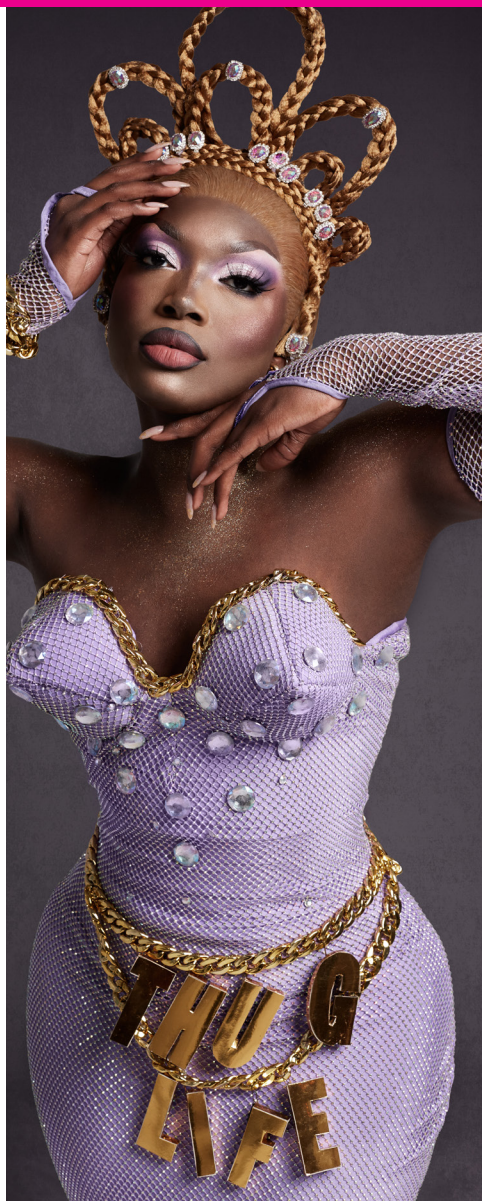


Photo: Fabian Di Corcia

When I first started drag it was a way for me to express all the different aspects about myself that I didn't always love. While I have been received by many in such a loving and positive light, I realized over time that not everyone receives my black trans joy the same. Sometimes it's out of ignorance and other times it's from a place of not understanding.

I believe all queer spaces should be a safe space for all types of queer people. Whether you're black, white, asian, disabled, or able-bodied, you deserve to feel welcomed. I have felt out of place in many spaces, but entering queer spaces was the one place I knew I should be able to be the authentic trans woman I have always dreamt of being.

You see, many queer spaces cater predominantly to cisgender gay white men, despite the diverse group of people who enter the spaces daily. From the music that plays to the performers a producer chooses, this will affect how an audience can potentially feel welcomed.

My very existence is a constant radicalization and protest against the norm.

I stick out like a golden ray of light however, never a sore thumb because I bring every square inch and aspect of me to my shows. I represent everything not seen, but should be seen, in the queer community and that allowed me to realize how important my very being is.

To be able to see a black trans woman performing your favourite black artist and on top of that, bravely talking about mental health both on and off stage is so important. Especially for a queer person of colour entering a queer space for the first time. That's me. That's what I do.

In 2024, I plan to begin my first all-black queer cabaret show that will showcase various black queer artists across the city of Toronto called, **THIQUE** – named after one of Beyonce's songs on her *Renaissance* album.

My hope is that I can continue to encourage more performers of colour to bring their culture to drag so together, we can work to create a more diverse queer Toronto.

Photo: FNess Devos

[Makayla Couture](#) is a star. You may know her from her iconic appearance on Canada's Drag Race season 2, episode 8 where she became the third member of the House of Couture, or you might remember her rise to top 4 on OutTV's *Call Me Mother*.



There are three things I choose to celebrate every day – I am TRANS, BLACK, and PROUD!

I love myself. It's taken me way too long to say it, but I love my dark skin, my trans identity, and my black culture that influences my very being.

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Chrysanthi

Photo: Chrysanthi



salsa, ballroom, modern, contact, and more. “I taught art, theatre, movement and percussion workshops to kids, teens, and women who had been through the penal system, as part of a life skills program I was co-directing/producing.”

Chrysanthi has danced on the playing field at the Skydome for the Argos and the Blue Jays, as well as danced (and acted) on stages across Canada and in NYC. “I danced the foxtrot, circling Helen Mirren in the movie, Red. It’s never too late to dance.”

Singing is a passion of hers, too. “My first professional singing job was being part of a new wave punk band when I lived in London, England in the 1980’s. And while holding my infant daughter in my arms, I sang with Liza Minnelli on her AIDS music video.”

At 19, Chrysanthi worked with a youth theatre troupe (KYTES) and co-wrote and performed in a play that toured across Canada. At 25, she moved to NYC to study at The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. She fell deeply in love with teaching and New York, where she partied with Whitney Houston, Mike Tyson, and Eddie Murphy. “I was also scouted by a modelling agency who wanted to cast me for a Lady Godiva-esque commercial.”

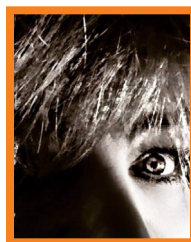
“I have worked as writer, director, producer, costume designer, production designer, mask and giant puppet maker, muralist, and installation artist.” Chrysanthi’s latest projects include tv commercials, an art installation for the premiere of *Wonka*, and the 30th anniversary of the Riverdale Share Concert at the Danforth Music Hall.

“I have narrative films and documentaries in the works, art shows to build, and books which my soul needs to write. That’s where I’d like to pour my energy and passions in the upcoming years. And travel. Lots of travel, which fills my heart and renews my creative spirit.”

Her advice to young creatives is, “Say yes, and say it more often. Reinvent yourself as many times as you desire. The sky’s the limit.”

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 in Cyprus to an artistic household, multidisciplinary creative **Chrysanthi Zora Michaelides** and her family escaped to Canada just before Turkey annexed their island. “My kids, sisters, and cousins are also diversely creative, although we each and express our own creativity differently.”

Her parents built an art studio above the house. “It had an array of fascinating tools, antique baubles, and old stamps depicting scenes and landscapes from countries I began to dream of one day visiting.” Chrysanthi’s parents taught her to sculpt, and the family drove their Morris Minor to travel in the summer to the mountains where retailers awaited her parents’ work to sell in their shops – these trips gave Chrysanthi her ongoing love of travel and cool cars.

Chrysanthi would later study all forms of dance from arabesque belly dance, Indian kathak, Afro-Cuban,

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A KODAK MOMENT

Canne

BY BOYD KODAK

Photo by Haylen Rose



BK – It’s an excellent series. During that time, which was the most exciting event for you?

C – I think my most exciting event was my very first showing in some years. It was a small intimate event at Pegasus Bar on Church Street earlier this year. Haylen and I did a lot of work together to make it happen. The preparation was filled with so many precious moments with her. I’ll take those with me for all the years to come.

BK – That’s so lovely. What are you looking forward to next year?

C – Next year we are definitely making a big push for my new work, on a couple series I’ve been ideating over, to galleries and showings in Toronto. We’re also looking into creating services that marry art and technology to help local art find its way to galleries, and other art consumers with less effort and cost to the artist. We’re hoping to launch some of those next year as well!

BK – Wow, that’s such an interesting idea, and much needed service. Where can we see your work?

C – We’re currently taking a bit of a break until next year, so in the meanwhile some of my work can be seen on my site, eyeofcanne.art. Orders for prints on select pieces can be done there as well.

BK – Tell us about your future plans?

C – I like to take it as it comes. I do plan to continue enjoying life through love though!

BK – That sounds like a great plan. Any message you would like to put out there?

C – If more of us can make a conscious effort to allow love for each other to guide our decisions, we’d create a beautiful world for the coming generations, something we can be truly proud of!

BK – So very true, I hope many heed that advice. Lastly, please this sentence for us, “The last thing I do before I go to sleep is...”

C – Think about the things that I am most thankful for!

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



An OCAD graduate of Indigenous heritage and identifying as two-spirited, [Canne's](#) work has been showcased in varied locations across Canada including major venues such as Toronto City Hall and The Rogers Centre. Canne’s work has also been featured in major publications like *Stolen Generations* and *Fireweed* – her life, art, and journey has been the subject of multiple documentaries and articles including the *Toronto Post*. Canne is now rejoining the Toronto art community promoting their new series highlighting Femme PWR – *The Faces of Femme*.

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

Canne – I’ve been reconnecting with my art through the work I’ve been doing for the Faces of Femme series in partnership with my girlfriend, Haylen. It’s been an inspiring journey of love, art, and beauty working with her and we’re excited to have more of my work out there. I’ve also been spending a chunk of my time experimenting with new ideas and mediums to work with.

Faces of Femme is a Femme PWR Series capturing varied sides of the Femme experience, highlighting the unique power of each, in my own artistic brand of vibrant color and intensity.

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PRESENTING SPONSOR *Accenture* PLATINUM SPONSOR *Telus* PLATINUM SPONSOR *Sleep Country Canada*

THE WELL QUEEN ST. WEST

Cabaret Drag Brunch with local favourites – Saturdays, noon to 4:00 p.m.

Karaoke – Saturdays, 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

Drag Bingo Brunch hosted by Messy Margaret – Sundays, noon to 4:00 p.m.

The kitchen will be open essentially the same hours as the venue, with an interesting, appealing, and affordable menu similar to that of The Well Church St. (Toronto). Featuring daily specials, as follows: Mondays – Well Clubhouse, Tuesdays – BBQ Chicken Pizza, Wednesdays – Penne Primavera, Thursdays – Spaghetti Bolognese, Fridays – Fish and Chips, Saturdays – Bruschetta Chicken Burger, Sundays – Well Burger Trio. The kitchen is willing and prepared to make every effort to deal with food allergies, sensitivities, and dietary restrictions, to ensure a pleasant and problem-free experience.

It is also worth noting that, much like The Well Church St. (Toronto), The Well Queen St. W. is predominantly handicap accessible – the entirety of the main level is barrier free, and staff are happy to assist with any special requirements which are within their capacity. Understandably, The Well Underground will be, by its nature, substantially less so.

So, if you are a member of the Queen W. community, looking for somewhere different to spend an evening, or scoping out the prospect of a new set of social connections, check out The Well Queen St. W., 482 Queen St. W., on the north side of Queen, a few steps east of Denison, next to the Wendy's.

The Well Queen St. West

Sunday to Thursday, noon to 10:00 p.m.

Friday and Saturday, noon to 2:00 a.m.

482 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario

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).



Back in mid-October of 2023, a new bar opened at 482 Queen St. West, right beside the Wendy's, The [Well Queen St. West](#), joining its sibling bars, The Well Church St. (Toronto), The Well Hamilton, and The Well London.

The Queen St. West community has been waiting for something to open in the area for some time, having lost so many 2SLGBTQ+ spaces over the course of the recent pandemic. Much in the way that The Well London was created in response to community need, John Ribson, a prominent businessperson, activist, and fundraiser for the 2SLGBTQ+ community in southern Ontario and beyond, the owner of multiple Wendy's franchises, in addition to The Well Church St. (Toronto), The Well Hamilton, and The Well London has responded to that need. Further, the basement of The Well Queen St. West., will soon open as The Well Underground, and plans are in the works for The Well Windsor, and The Well Waterloo.

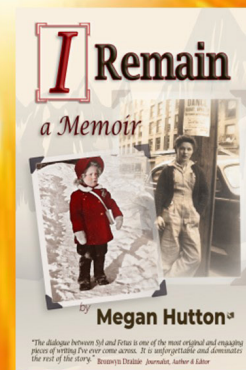
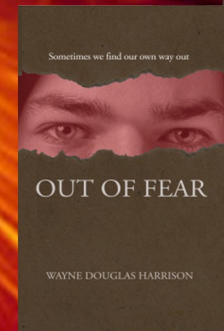
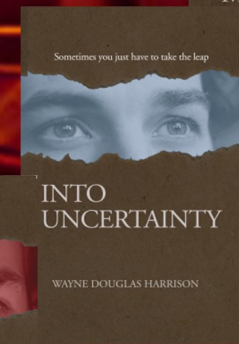
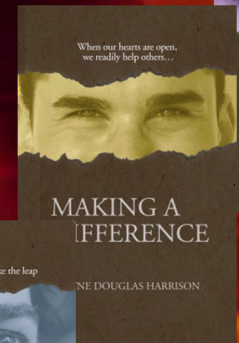
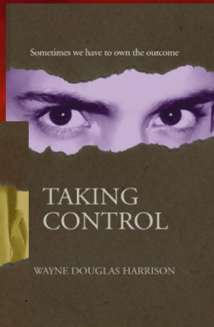
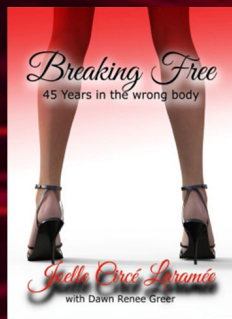
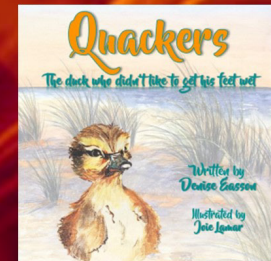
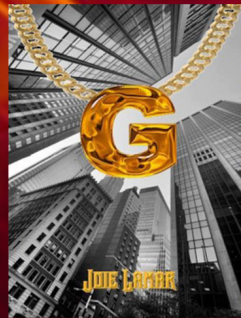
The Well Queen St. West is more of a restaurant-lounge than simply a bar; plus, they will have entertainment, hosting many events on a weekly basis, including:

Canada's Drag Race Viewing Party Season 4 – Thursdays, 8:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Drag Show featuring Jessyca Prosecco with special guest – Fridays, 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

www.BrainspiredPublishing.com

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By Sherry Sylvain



By Sherry Sylvain

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

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 and big fun! Arrive early to sign up as a performer.

Woody's, 467 Church St., Toronto

woodystoronto.com

Hump Night Honeys

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

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

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

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

woodystoronto.com

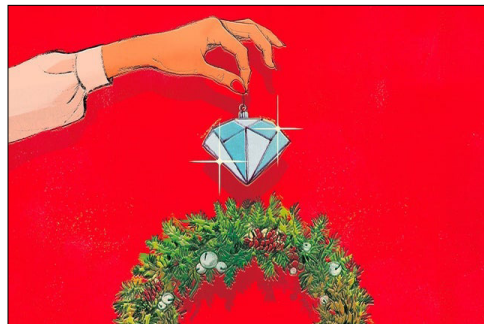
Chris, Mrs. – A New Holiday Musical

Through to December 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

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



Barra MacNeils: An East Coast Christmas

December 22; 8:00 p.m.

A musical potpourri of traditional MacNeil family favourites gleaned from Christmas ceillidhs, midnight masses and the general festive frolic that accompanies each holiday season.

Massey Hall, 15 Shuter St., Toronto

masseyhall.mhrth.com/tickets/barra-macneils

Gay AF Comedy New Queers Eve

December 29; 11:00 p.m.

Gay AF is saying goodbye to 2023 with a lineup full of stellar comedians – all past Gay AF headliners and audience favourites together for a fabulous night of comedy. Hosted by Robert Watson.

Comedy Bar, 945 Bloor St. W., Toronto

comedybar.ca/shows/gay-af-comedy-new-queers-eve

New Year's Eve Comedy Extravaganza

December 31; 7:30 p.m.

Get ready to ring in the New Year with uproarious laughter at the most hilarious comedy night of the year! Hosted by John Dore.

Massey Hall, 15 Shuter St., Toronto

tickets.mhrth.com/5618/5619

Naked-ish New Year's Underwear or Less Party

December 31; 10:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m.

Toronto's only underwear or less NYE party – grab your tickets now for this stellar open bar event! Tiered ticket pricing.

Impact Lounge, 238 Parliament St., Toronto

www.universe.com/events/naked-ish-new-years-for-gay-bi-guys-tickets-W54RPT



Bugs Bunny at The Symphony

January 11 & 12, 2024

What's Opera, Doc? The Rabbit of Seville, Corny Concerto, Baton Bunny, Long-Haired Hare, and many others – plus five brand new animated shorts will be projected on the big screen, while their exhilarating original scores are played live.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

www.tolive.com/Event-Details-Page/reference/Bugs-Bunny-2024

Eldritch Horrors - Plays from the Tomb

January 14, 2024; from 3:30 p.m.

Special staged reading series of Eldritch works unearthed from the grave – a special preview of their newest play in development: Zombocalypse! With special guest readers to be announced.

Red Sandcastle Theatre, 922 Queen St. E., Toronto

www.ticketscene.ca/series/1114

Thirst Trap Dance and Play Party

January 19, 2024; from 10:00 p.m.

Thirst Trap is the "anything goes" dance & play party for gay & bi guys. Come explore your desires. The details of this party are too sexy to write on here – see the website link.

Impact Lounge, 238 Parliament St., Toronto

gaystufftoronto.com/thirsttrap



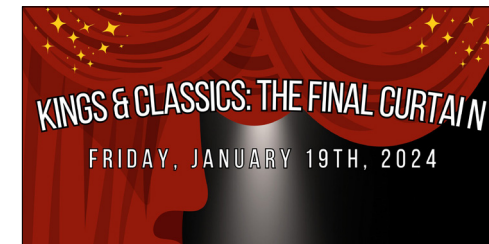
Kings and Classics: The Final Curtain

January 19, 2024; 10:30 p.m.

East King Productions has been creating and providing safer inclusive spaces for 7 years and now it's time to move over and let the newer generations create their own magic. Featuring 18 performers with an after-show dance party. Tickets at the door only.

Buddies In Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St., Toronto

buddiesinbadtimes.com



The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers – In Concert

January 26 to 28, 2024

Join the FILMharmonic Orchestra and Choir for a thrilling journey back to Middle-earth and experience Academy Award-winning Composer Howard Shore's epic score performed live to the motion picture in HD.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

www.ticketmaster.ca/

Macbeth: A Tale Told By An Idiot

February 8 to 18, 2024

Shakespeare's blood-soaked king, weird witches, viscera-sopped murders, nightmares of madness, and terrifying occult prophecies crash head on with a ghoulishly giddy bag of timorous trickery.

Red Sandcastle Theatre, 922 Queen St. E., Toronto

www.ticketscene.ca/series/1113

The Hot Sardines – Valentine's Day

February 14, 2024; 8:00 p.m.

Celebrate Valentine's Day with some foot-stomping hot jazz and salty stride piano from the era of Louis Armstrong, Django Reinhardt, and Fats Waller. After the concert, enjoy a beverage and stay late to dance to a swing band at the Postlude Performance.

Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W., Toronto

www.rcmusic.com/tickets/seats/298001



BUZZ PICKS

By Sherry Sylvaín



BUZZ PICKS



ROAD TRIPS

Fur XXXmas Party

December 22; from 10:00 p.m.

Are you a sexy elf or a naughty reindeer? Come get your XXXmas on or off. See you at the North Pole! The dance floor is going to be busting with the amazing DJ Rose spinning for you.

The Casbah, 306 King St. W., Hamilton
casbahlounge.ca



Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer

December 29 & 30

Because of his shiny nose, Rudolph doesn't feel like he belongs in Christmastown and sets off to find a place that accepts him. Along his journey, he encounters fellow misfits, only to realize that home is where he has belonged the whole time.

FirstOntario Arts Centre, 1010 Main St. E., Milton
secure1.tixhub.com/milton/online/index.asp



Sing-A-Long Sound of Music

December 29; 2:00 p.m.

Sing-a-long to the most successful movie musical of all time! This memorable event includes an unforgettable costume parade and major amounts of audience participation.

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 242 St. Paul St. E., St. Catharines
firstontariopac.ca/Online/default.asp



Final Draganza of 2023

December 31; 8:00 p.m.

Ontario's most successful drag stars return for their last Draganza in 2023, New Year's Eve. For one night only, they bring you some of Ontario's best drag entertainment.

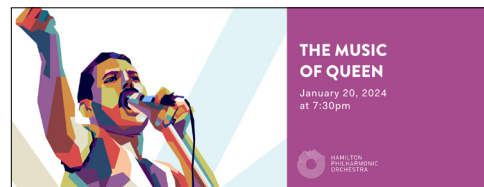
Red Papaya, 55 Wyndham St. N., Guelph
www.tickettailor.com/events/troyboyentertainment/1076794

The Music of Queen

January 20, 2024; 7:30 p.m.

We will rock you! Experience the legendary music of Queen performed by the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. Featuring classic hits like Bohemian Rhapsody, Somebody to Love, and Under Pressure.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton
www.coreentertainment.ca



Trooper and Streeheart

January 20, 2024; 8:00 p.m.

Two Canadian bands in one night of classic rock hits from the 70s and 80s. Trooper – Raise a Little Hell, We're Here for a Good Time (Not a Long Time), The Boys in the Bright White Sports car; Streeheart – Under My Thumb, Look In Your Eyes & Here Comes The Night.

Casino Rama Resort, 5899 Rama Rd., Orillia
www.casinorama.com



2024 Milton Film Festival

January 26 to 28, 2024

The 11th annual Milton Film Festival – January 26th through the 28th. Local, Canadian, and International features, documentaries, short films, special guests Q&A and more.

FirstOntario Arts Centre, 1010 Main St. E., Milton
secure1.tixhub.com/milton/online/index.asp

Top Tier Drag Winter Tour – Owen Sound

January 26, 2024; 8:00 p.m.

Ontario's most successful drag stars return! For one night only, they bring you some of Ontario's best drag entertainment.

The Harb, 332 8th St., Owen Sound
www.tickettailor.com/events/troyboyentertainment/1052093

Jann Arden

February 9, 2024; 9:00 p.m.

The multi-talented Jann Arden is a Canadian singer-songwriter, author, and actress. The Juno award winner is best known for her signature ballads InSensitive, Could I Be Your Girl & Good Mother.

Casino Rama Resort, 5899 Rama Rd., Orillia
www.casinorama.com



Canada's Drag Race Official Tour

February 11, 2024; 8:00 p.m.

The Official Canada's Drag Race Tour returns to the Great White North. Join The Queen of the North, Brooke Lynn Hytes, alongside your favourite season 3 and 4 queens, as they hit the stage on a tour through the provinces.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton
www.coreentertainment.ca



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