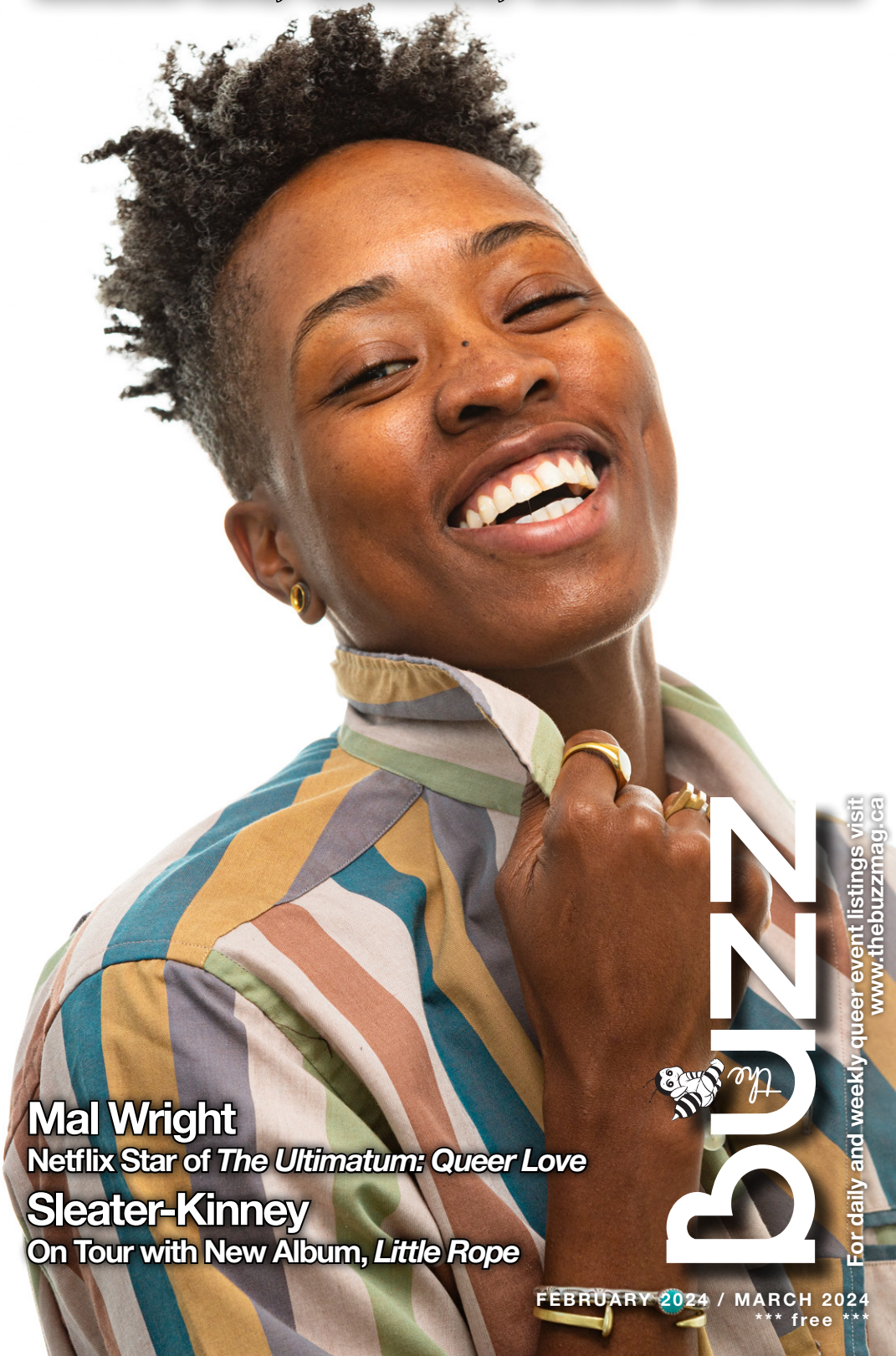


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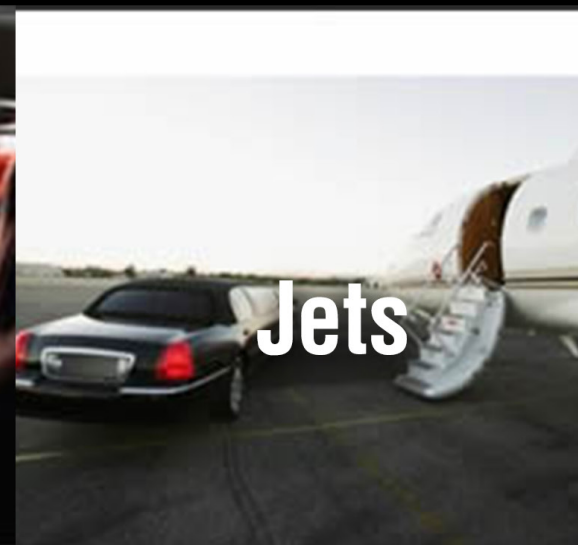
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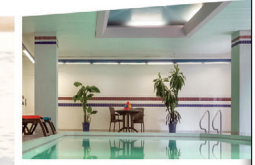
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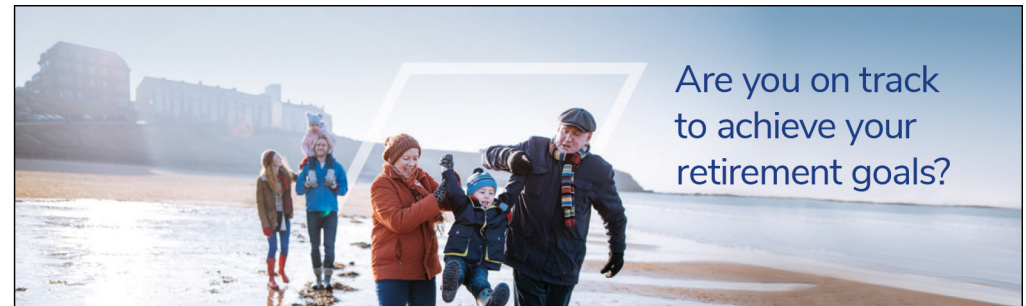


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Hello Friends!

It's 2024. Year of the Wood Dragon. Year of the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics. 25 years since the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples have rights to equal treatment. It's also the year I turn 40. Luckily, "over the hill" birthday decorations aren't as popular as they used to be. This year, I made zero New Year's resolutions. Sometimes surviving the year is enough. If you can relate, I'm proud of you – you've made another trip around the sun, on this floating ball of dirt, and that's enough. You are enough. And if you don't have a Valentine, I'll be yours – I love you.

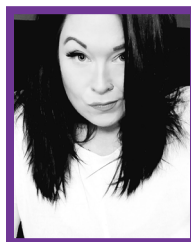
On the topic of love, if you have Netflix, you might've seen or heard of, *The Ultimatum: Queer Love* – if you haven't, go watch it! In our first feature, Menaka Swaminathan chatted up the star of this binge-worthy queer reality show, **Mal Wright**. In our second feature, Bryen Dunn gives us the scoop on what Corin and Carrie of feminist punk band, **Sleater-Kinney**, are up to; touching on what inspired their new album, *Little Rope*, and upcoming tour. Can you believe they first formed 30 years ago in 1994?!

February is Black History Month, and Rolyn Chambers dedicates this issue's *Deep Dish* to **Queer Black History**. If you've ever been curious about draglesque, **Newfound Lad** gives us the "strip down" in *Wiggged Out*. **Liz Parry** is our *She Beat* feature – she's a kick-ass martial arts champion. Boyd Kodak sat down with **DJ Trans Sister**, a long withstanding fixture in the underground goth scene in *Kodak Moment*. In *Beyond the Village*, Sherry Sylvain points our sweet tooth in the direction of freeze-dried treat haven, **Rainbow Sweets**. Don't forget to check out *BUZZpicks* for events you won't want to miss!

Someone once sang this to me while we 'kitchen danced' like goofballs, "Whenever I see your smiling face, I have to smile myself, because I love you." I hope 2024 brings you moments like these, and if there's no one to sing this to you, sing it to yourself, and dance like everyone is watching. And you're naked. And there's toilet paper stuck to your foot.

Happy New Year, even if you're the same old (or young) queer, and happy reading!

Mel MacMullin
Editor-in-Chief




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Mal Wright On Reality, Revelations, and Representation

By Menaka Swaminathan

Mal Wright was steered into the public eye after her introduction on the Netflix reality show *The Ultimatum: Queer Love*, along with eight other cast members.

Grappling with relationship uncertainties, [Mal Wright](#) and then girlfriend, Yoly Rojas, were delivered an ultimatum “to get married or move on,” on a series viewed by millions that unfolded through ten journeys of highs and lows riding on the waves of evolving emotions.

My fiancé settled in with me to watch [The Ultimatum: Queer Love](#). As a diverse couple, both racially and in sexual orientation, and not typically inclined toward reality shows, we found ourselves captivated by their stories. Extensive discussions followed each episode – dissecting the intricacies of the situations that unfolded, we empathized with some cast members while we struggled to connect with others. The unexpected bonus was the way the show became a catalyst for deeper conversations around our own relationship.

One cast member stood out with her poised and calm demeanor – Mal Wright. Having had the wonderful opportunity to speak with Wright allowed me to delve into her experiences on the show, explore her upbringing, and gain insights into her future endeavours.

Reflecting on her journey with a show that premiered on a huge conglomerate such as Netflix, Wright never anticipated even a fraction of the influence or the profound impact that her time on the show would bring. I inquired about Wright’s expectations regarding the broader impact of the show, not only on the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, but the heterosexual audience as well. Wright revealed that (surprisingly) the majority of feedback she has received are from the heterosexual community, and the responses have all been positive.

Wright’s initial uncertainty about the show’s potential stemmed from a few factors; its queer nature and the repeated delays in its premiere. Wright noted she wasn’t sure how audiences would respond to a narrative that deviated from traditional norms. Additionally, the repeated postponements of the premiere left her in the dark around reasons behind the delays.

We discussed how the premiere of *The Ultimatum: Queer Love* marked a significant breakthrough in the landscape of reality television. Showcasing queer narratives and relationships, the show not only provided some representation for an underrepresented community, but also pushed boundaries within the genre. After all, the

call for a queer bachelor or bachelorette has been echoed for some time; yet in a surprising turn of events, 2023 marked the debut of a “Golden Bachelor” breaking new ground before a queer version materialized. We agreed that perhaps a show such as *The Ultimatum: Queer Love* would be the necessary introduction to more inclusive storytelling in mainstream reality television.

Wright and Rojas came to be involved with the show through a friend of the casting team, recognizing the similarity in their situation to what the show was casting for. They were in Seattle at the time and in couples therapy, so she was apprehensive at first. It seemed a bit risky but, for the sake of Rojas, she decided to go along with the opportunity, rationalizing, “What’s the worst that could happen? We were in therapy and had the language to talk through uncomfortable things.”

Filmed in 2021, the show premiered in 2023 – the entirety of the show had been filmed two years ago. I felt interviewer’s remorse after realizing she’s been compelled to revisit and repeatedly discuss a past relationship that concluded years ago. Wright champions through it in stride, but as she expressed, “In the regular world, you break up, you’re done. Details of your relationship aren’t televised. It can be difficult to relive over and over, because when you break up with someone, you just want to put it behind you and move on.” This added a greater layer of sentimentality to our conversation, emphasizing the enduring impact of a televised narrative on personal history. Each couple share history spanning years prior to the show, which we overlook as we watch their relationships unravel on screen. What we witness is the (sometimes messy) crumbling of a connection that existed long before cameras started rolling.

Wright acknowledged the discomfort aspect of the show, adding that the lack of context to all the relationships amplifies the unease, as some stories weren’t fully developed. That lack of context left viewers with incomplete narratives and misconceptions about the dynamics at play. We discussed individual cast members, focusing on Lexi, Rae, and Vanessa primarily. Wright patiently addressed my perception of her relationship with Lexi, again explaining that there was so much in the three weeks of filming that audiences are not privy to. “It’s a very unnatural environment and situation to be in”, she explains, “the whole experience was three weeks, it was a lot to go through in a short amount of time.”

Growing up in Florida, a region she described as “backwards” in terms of societal attitudes, she grappled with the absence of openly queer individuals in her immediate environment. The lack of visibility and support made it challenging for her to explore her sexuality with ease. She described a period of experimentation coupled



with a need to hide in college, as she did not have much of a circle in the community. Wright's parents were immigrants to the States, her mom from Jamaica and her dad from Cuba. Growing up in the suburbs, they were always the only, or one of the very few, Black families in their neighbourhood, a reality that persisted into her college years. She touched upon the many misconceptions that accompanied being one of the few Black kids in school, "Every house we lived in, we had built, and people did not give my parents the appropriate credit for their hard work."

Looking forward, Wright has goals of hosting a talk show, with a focus she described as, "think if Ellen and Oprah had a baby." Despite her start in HR, she is now completely out of the corporate scene, but remains open to falling back into it in the future. She's doing casting currently, inspired by her experience on *The Ultimatum: Queer Love* where she can leverage her understanding of background to provide valuable input. Expressing a desire for variety, she also aspires to move around to different cities, past the world of *The Ultimatum: Queer Love*, which would allow her to engage in broader discussions beyond the confines of the show.

Would she willingly embark on another reality show journey? Wright, without skipping a beat, laughed, and emphatically said, "No!" While she harbours no regrets with her decision, she adamantly states she would not subject her relationship or herself to that kind of situation again. She acknowledged that her experiences on the show provided her with a sense of value, a profound understanding of sacrifice, insights into loyalty, and the wisdom to discern when enough is enough and when to walk away. Despite the challenges, she described it as a very humbling experience filled with valuable lessons that she will carry with her.

All photos courtesy of Michael Garrett.

Menaka Swaminathan is a Sri Lankan-Canadian Communications professional with an innate passion for writing and exploring the unfamiliar. During her free time, she enjoys hanging out with her family, which includes Oscar, her quirky Sheepadoodle.



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SLEATER-KINNEY

CARRIE AND CORIN'S CAMARADERIE SHINES STRONG ON THEIR NEW ALBUM, *LITTLE ROPE*

By Bryen Dunn

Carrie Brownstein and Corin Tucker have been friends and collaborators for some 30 years, with the majority of that time being focused on one of the riot grrrl scene's most notable acts.

Sleater-Kinney officially formed in Olympia, Washington in 1994, took on a strong political and feminist approach, both within their music and their personal lives.

Prior to forming Sleater-Kinney, Tucker was in a band called *Heavens to Betsy*, while Brownstein was in one called, *Excuse 17*. The pair took a trip to Australia together in 1994, and on their last day they stayed up all night recording what would become their self-titled debut album, which was released the following spring. At the time they were also romantically involved, and Tucker wrote the song *One More Hour* about the subsequent breakup.

They went on to release seven studio albums between 1994 and 2005, before going on an indefinite hiatus with no plans for future tours or recordings. They later reunited in 2014 announcing the release of a new album and several tour dates. Three decades later, they are now at the top of their game once again, with the release of their 11th studio album, *Little Rope*.

The title comes from the lyrics of the album track, *Small Finds*— “Can you gimme a little rope?” Tucker explains, “It’s meant to have a duality in it, to cut me some slack and give me some freedom, and also about someone’s darkest hour. We’re in a difficult spot in the world, a society with so many riches, promises, and technology, yet we also have intense problems and violence. It’s meant to reflect on the seriousness of decisions.”

The album was partially completed after a tragic personal incident. In the fall of 2022, Brownstein received a call from Tucker, who herself had just received a call from the American embassy in Italy, as she was still listed as Brownstein’s emergency contact on a passport form. Tragically, both Brownstein’s mother and stepfather were killed in a car accident while vacationing in Italy.

Brownstein recalls, “Playing guitar was what I needed at the time, and turning my attention to the craft of music making gave my days a shape. There’s so much uncertainty during the grieving process. The creative process I needed was essential, to continue writing songs. It was something to do with my hands and head when I felt shapeless in the aftermath of the accident. It was more primal than therapeutic, a way to get out of bed and move forward.”

Little Rope is one of the bands finest, and most delicately layered records to date. The album encompasses how we



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navigate grief, who we navigate it with, and the ways in which it transforms us. The result is a collision of certainty and uncertainty. Sometimes the process of putting the songs together involved Tucker and Brownstein alone in a room with nothing more than a couple of guitars and amplifiers — a process that began when the band first started recording.

The two lead singles, *Hell*, and *Say It Like You Mean It*, are both lyrically deep and musically strong, and the accompanying black and white videos give a feeling of nostalgia and reflection. Brownstein also directed *Say It Like You Mean It*, stating “It’s one of my favourite songs, and my way of contributing to the narrative of the song to complement Corin’s vocals visually.” Tucker added, “it’s a companion piece to *Hell* about finding protagonists in different states of longing or disillusion, desperation at different stages in life and different times of the day.”

The track, *Crusader*, touches on ideas of the queer body as one being trespassed upon. Brownstein says, “We’re supportive of trans rights, and critical of legislation in the United States that aims to discriminate and harm trans people. We’re also shocked at the way abortion rights are being taken away. We’re engaged in politics as humans with empathy and compassion about righting injustices and inequity, which means we’re going to be resisting a lot of what’s out there right now.”

Regarding the current youth movement veering away from a straightforward binary world, Brownstein explains, “Being around young people, I see less of a need to choose. There’s an openness to fluidity and a willingness to accept differences and nuances in oneself and their peers. Those in the government making decisions want to remain in a binary

world, as the in-between is frightening for those unwilling to move forward or make progress. One day those young people might be in charge.”

The current tour in support of the new album will take them across North America once again, followed by a European leg. Tucker shared, “It will be a mix of old and new material. We play long shows and have a deep catalogue, so there will be songs from each era and probably most of the new album.”

In closing, I asked for a favourite quote from each of them. Brownstein offered one from **Dorothy Parker** - “*beauty is only skin deep, but ugly goes clean to the bone*” — while Tucker went with one from her friend **Ira Kaplan** from **Yo La Tengo** - “*if the show is really bad just close your eyes as it will all be over in a minute anyway.*”

Sleater-Kinney’s 11th studio album, *Little Rope*, is available on [Loma Vista Recordings](#), produced by Grammy Award winner, John Congleton. Their 2024 North American tour begins on February 28th, with the only Canadian stop announced so far being in Vancouver on April 4th.

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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Queer Black History – Past and Present



You should know that February is Black History Month, but do you know your queer Black history?

The past is dense with stories of queer Black pioneers. Below are just three of the talented tales they have written for our history books. But history is made every day, so I have matched those of our past with our those of our Toronto present.

Past – James Baldwin

Baldwin, American novelist, essayist, playwright, poet, and social critic. Many of his works spoke to the intricacies of race, sex and classifications of a Black man living in White America. His writings not only touched on the pressures, faced by Black men, but further expounded on that also felt by queer men.

Present – Douglas Stewart

Stewart is a gay rights activist who has devoted his life with working in the Black community to advocate for gay rights and awareness. In 1984, he was a co-founder of Zami which was the first Black queer group in Toronto. Zami was formed

to combat issues arising from “queer establishments” in the 1980s. Stewart was also the founding Executive Director of the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP). In his role, he worked to create HIV/AIDS awareness among the black queer community in the 1980s.

Past – Marsha P. Johnson

Johnson was a transgender-rights activist and one of the central figures of the historic Stonewall Riots in 1969. Along with trans activist Sylvia Rivera, Johnson helped form Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries (STAR) and the STAR House to help young trans women and drag queens. Johnson is the subject of the Netflix documentary, *The Death And Life Of Marsha P. Johnson*.

Present – Biko Beuttah

Beuttah is a human rights activist who moved to Canada in 2006 to seek asylum because being LGBTQ+ is considered a crime in her home country. A champion of refugee and sexual minority rights, she has spread her message of tolerance and equality through various platforms such as the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Refugee Pride Convention, where she was a discussant on panels. She was also the first queer

person of African descent to open the Toronto Stock Exchange. Biko is currently working on Trans Workforce, the world’s first job fair geared towards people who identify as trans and gender nonconforming. An initiative she is determined to launch to get more transgender people out of underground economies like sex-work.

Past – Langston Hughes

Hughes, American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist was private about his personal life. Most academics who have studied his work have concluded he was gay, as he included gay codes and references within much of his writing. Best known for being the leader of the Harlem Renaissance, he always pushed for younger Black writers to be objective about their race, but not to scorn it or flee from it.

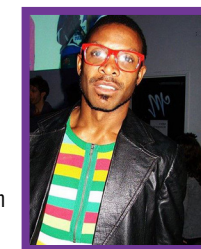
Present – Trey Anthony

Trey Anthony an out and queer Black woman raised in Canada, is of Jamaican heritage. She is a playwright, actor, and producer, best known for her award-winning play and television series *Da Kink in My Hair*. She is the first Black Canadian woman to write and produce a television show on a major prime time Canadian network.

Past or present, Black queer history is being created every day to shape the future.

(Photos L-R: James Baldwin, Douglas Stewart, Marsha P. Johnson, Biko Beuttah, Langston Hughes, Trey Anthony).

Jamaican-born Rolyn Chambers grew up in the suburbs of Mississauga, before attending *Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD University)*. 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 @rahhrolyn



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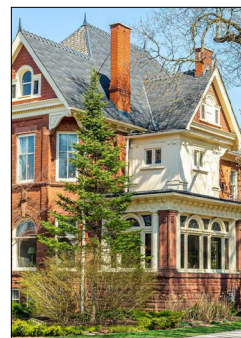
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WIGGED OUT

by Newfound Lad

FOUR STEPS TO DRAGLESQUE



Photo: Quinton Cruikshanks

steps taught to me by my burlesque daddy, James and the Giant Pasty.

STEP 1: BRING ATTENTION

To start, we bring attention to this fabulous costume hugging our body. Burlesque prioritizes the function and look of how we present ourselves on stage. The first glance, the first impression is VITAL in capturing your audience.

STEP 2: PEEL AND REVEAL

Every. Layer. Counts. As we tease off our gloves and peel down our stockings, what's below matters just as much as what's on top (if you know what I mean). How you comport yourself from start to finish, on AND off stage, all hold bearing. So, keep in mind when you're showing your ass, it better be sparkly.

STEP 3: FLOURISH

Once we remove an item of clothing, why not be suggestive with it? Dance with your corset, writhe with your boa, fellate a glove! Drag and burlesque are both filled with so many ideas. The ability to work with what's already on your body, transform it and make it new, will streamline your performance and perspective.

STEP 4: THROW IT AWAY

The final step but the least considered, throw the damn thing away. As we shake off archaic "rules" that don't serve modern drag performance, what would I throw away? Misogyny and exclusion. Burlesque is a femme built, sex-work positive, women (cis and trans alike) run art form. If you, as a drag performer, are taking inspiration from burlesque, but not elevating these femmes and attending their shows? You need to throw that attitude away.

There are draglesque artists across the country melding these art forms and bringing their best assets to the stage every time. In particular, Mx. Bukuru in Vancouver, Miami Minx in Montreal, and Kuya Atay in Toronto, to name a few. Burlesque has been, and continues to be, nightlife history. We're here to tease, we're here to please, and show you how it's done, baby.

Newfound Lad is a draglesque performer based in Toronto. They've performed at the Burlesque Hall of Fame and headlined in shows as far as Alaska. Lad competed on season 2 of "Call Me Mother" where he represented east coast drag.

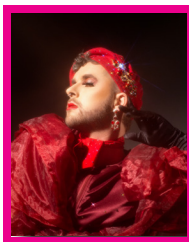


Photo: Tessia Stuckey

Burlesque, striptease, showgirls. The influence born from these sparkly goddesses of the night can be seen on drag stages across the globe. From Violet Chachki touring with Dita Von Teese to the sparkling showgirl challenge on Canada's Drag Race; the influence of burlesque is stamped onto drag. But what else can burlesque performers reveal and tease out of drag newbies and veterans alike? When I teach beginner burlesquers, I break the art of the tease down into four easy

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Liz Parry



Photo: Nikk VanRyck

woman named Yim Wing Chun. She was taught by an Abbess from the Shaolin Temple named Ng Mui who trained her so she could fend off a local warlord who wanted to marry her. Currently Wing Chun has been popularized by the Ip Man movies (on Netflix).

Liz is a disciple to the direct lineage of Grandmaster Ip Man, who was Bruce Lee's teacher. She didn't realize how talented she was until the late 1990's when she started competing. "It was satisfying to formally put the sum of all the movements into actual practice and I also never wanted to disappoint my teacher."

Her discipline has changed over the years. "It has been viewed more of a sport instead of a way of life. It is widely practiced all over the world, mostly by men whereby more physical strength is being utilized instead of harmonizing movements."

Liz has also studied Judo, Tae Kwon Do, Qinna (seizing and joint locks) and done seminars on topics of inspiration to her – Sifu and predecessors, Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming, and several additional masters.

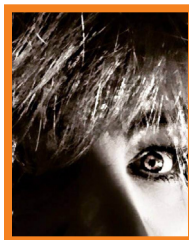
There are so many awards Liz has won, including a Canadian championship, gold and silver medals. Master Liz is also currently a judge for competitions and helping to choose members for the Canadian team.

She feels many benefits from teaching as well, "The saying is, 'When one teaches, two learn.' I am an eternal student. Each person learns differently. And the challenge of passing the knowledge of generations by means of oral, physical, and written knowledge is a great responsibility but a joy when successful."

Liz has a day job on top of her successful athletic career, as Chief Shop Steward for the South Area Letter Carriers (Canadian Union of Postal Workers). "After almost 40 years, I am actually taking a step back from martial arts but will always be available should I be needed for competitions, etc." When Liz retires and slows down a bit, she's considering writing a martial arts-related book.

Cat Grant (OCAD University) 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](#)



A martial arts champion and multi-award winner, **Master Liz Parry**, was born in Malaysia, Southeast Asia. Her father and siblings were also athletes. "My dad won many sport accolades and trophies in rugby, athletics and was a lifetime golfer."

While Liz liked geography and anthropology, sports was her jam, not academia. She excelled at sport and was the Athletic Captain of her high school, played field hockey for both her school and region, as well as javelin and shot put.

At 11 years of age, Liz saw *Big Boss*, a Bruce Lee movie, and determined right then and there she would learn martial arts. Although it was not possible until she moved to Canada at 20, Liz pursued her dream.

"The style that I practice and teach is called Ving Tsun or Wing Chun. The founder of the style was a

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A KODAK MOMENT

DJ Trans Sister

BY BOYD KODAK

Photo by DJ Trans Sister



DJ Trans Sister is a true master of darkness, a goth icon who has spent years perfecting their craft and becoming one of the most respected DJs in the underground goth scene. DJ Trans Sister has been involved in the production of many exciting and innovative goth events and programs, blending classic tracks with modern gems to create a brooding atmosphere that captivates audiences and keeps them spellbound.

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

DJ Trans Sister – I was enjoying married life but unfortunately, it did not last due to factors beyond my wife and I's control. Cross-border relationships are tough and have many moving parts. Exploring poly dynamics also was interesting. I have also been building a radio personality, DJ Trans Sister. Since March of 2023, I have been making a name for myself on Trans Radio UK. I currently host [Overnights with DJ Trans Sister](#) which talks about mental health, politics and poly dating life. That show airs at 2am GMT on Sundays, and 9pm EST on Saturdays. I have started hosting [Throwback Thursdays](#) on TRUK, this show takes you on a musical journey playing anything from 2011 and beyond. This show airs at 9am EST/2pm GMT on Thursdays. Lastly, I am part of the Community News team as well for Trans Radio UK. I also became a hospital volunteer for Niagara Health working in the

Niagara Falls Hospital ER and sitting on the Patient Experience and Mental Health Quality and Standards steering committee.

BK – That's truly heartfelt. You've really accomplished many terrific things! During that time, which was the most exciting event for you?

DJTS – That would be my wedding on March 2nd, 2023. It was my first time being married and I will never forget it. Do you ever really forget your first time for anything?

BK – True, first-time memories are special. What are you looking forward to next year?

DJTS – In 2024, I'm looking to start my school journey into becoming a Nurse Practitioner specializing in Emergency and Trauma medicine. I am also working on the website for DJ Trans Sister and launching the Best of Overnights podcast.

BK – That sounds great. Where can we see your work?

DJTS – You can check me out on Trans Radio UK, any place you get your podcasts, and on social media. TikTok is a new project in 2024 so bear with me until I get going.

BK – Future plans?

DJTS – Bring the DJ Trans Sister Overnight show to Canadian Radio. The Canadian version of the show is in development and a pilot is in the works. I am hoping to syndicate this show on community radio stations across Canada. Additionally, I'm also working on bringing the first hospital radio system to Canada.

BK – Wow, those are amazing goals, wishing you much success. Is there any message that you would like to put out there?

DJTS – Just remember every day "It is what it is" and that everything happens for a reason. Don't let people bring you down based on words alone. You are all beautiful and deserve love and joy regardless of your background.

BK – Wise words for all. Finish this sentence for us, "I lose control when..."

DJTS – I deal with people not following common sense. This seems to be ever-increasing in today's society. Also, LED lighting, it's way too bright and annoys my ASD brain.

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



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RAINBOW SWEETS



sublimates the ice into vapor, removing approximately 95% of the water. As a result, it takes on unique shapes and textures.

Some may think that once preserved, freeze-dried foods must remain frozen – this isn't true. You can keep freeze-dried foods at room temperature. Once the freeze-drying process finishes, there is no longer a need to keep them cold.

Rainbow Sweets started their sweet journey in May 2023. Balancing this venture with two full-time jobs and parenting two kids under three, their dream is to one day immerse themselves fully in the world of Rainbow Sweets. Until then, they are operating the business from their home in Innisfil. Their candy can be ordered directly through their website, or they currently have three retail locations that carry them. Maker's Market, at 3069 Dundas Street West is one location.

What distinguishes Rainbow Sweets is their commitment to exploration and innovation. They import foreign candies, infusing their creations with a burst of international flavors. Their repertoire includes limited edition Rainbow Drops (Skittles), coated marshmallows, and the intriguingly delightful salty licorice. They are always open to suggestions from clients on new products to import. To see the flavours of the limited-edition Rainbow Drops, visit [here](#).

Their commitment to the LGBTQ+ community goes beyond ownership – it's a part of their candy-making philosophy. Rainbow Sweets is your haven for a wide spectrum of flavours, just like the diverse and vibrant community to which they proudly belong.

For them it's not just about delectable treats; it's about community and giving back. As approved fundraising vendors for the Simcoe District School Board, Joanna and Mira are passionate about supporting kids and community initiatives. Whether it's contributing to a shelter for women and children, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, mental health, or cancer awareness, they try to actively participate as vendors in markets with a cause. At Rainbow Sweets, every sweet indulgence contributes to making a positive impact in the community and beyond.

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).



Based in Innisfil, Ontario, [Rainbow Sweets](#) is an LGBTQ+ family business owned by lesbian couple, Joanna and Mira. In the realm of freeze-dried candy, they bring a distinctive touch to the table with their two practices: a steadfast dedication to creating freeze-dried confections that push the boundaries of taste and experience, and a devotion to importing unique and exotic flavors from around the world. Joanna and Mira take pride in offering a diverse range of tastes that invite you to embark on a global flavor journey. They don't stop there – they also celebrate the nostalgia of North American candy, ensuring that every palate finds its perfect delight within their collection.

Freeze-dried candy has become increasingly popular due to its unique texture, intense flavour, longer shelf life (of up to 25 years), and health benefits. This fun and convenient snack is available in various options, from fruits to chocolate-covered snacks, making it an excellent option for people of all ages. Freeze-dried candy is regular candy that has been through a freeze-drying process which removes the moisture by first freezing it, then placing the candy into a strong vacuum which

OUT NOW

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I Remain is very compelling and extraordinarily well written. It's an incredible memoir that needs to be read.

(Max Wallace, *New York Times* best-selling author, including his new book, *After The Miracle*, also a journalist and filmmaker.)

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“inspiration to women”
“uplifting”
“admirable”

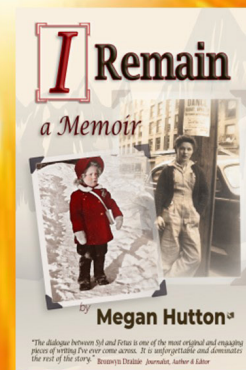
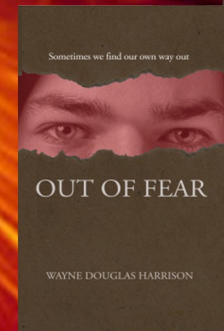
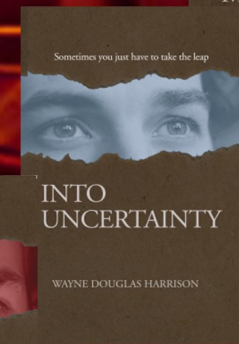
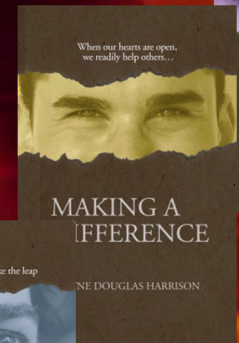
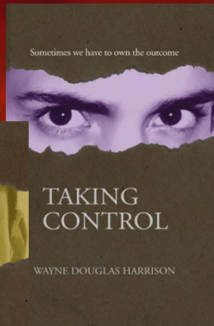
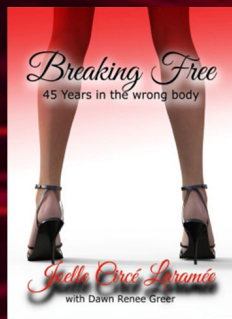
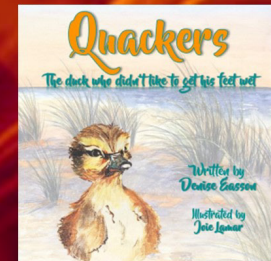
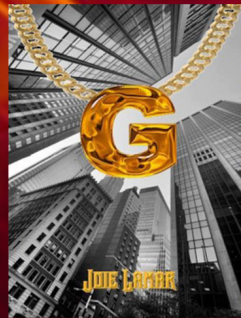
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By Sherry Sylvain

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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 & 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/

Universal Child Care

Through Feb 25

Part concert, part theatre play (and self-consciously neither of those things), the ensemble screams about the lack of affordable child care and growing inequalities while comparing different approaches to child care around the globe.

Canadian Stage, 26 Berkeley St., Toronto

www.canadianstage.com/shows-events/season/universal-child-care

WeeFestival: Quest For The Moon

February 24; 11:00 a.m.

Quest for the Moon follows a heartwarming and engaging story about the friendship between a young fox and the moon told with the magic of shadow puppetry, music, and theatre.

Ag Khan Museum, 77 Wynford Dr., Toronto

agakhanmuseum.org/programs/weefestival-2024

TICOT Charity Drag Brunch

February 25; 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Join ICP to Reign 37 Pam, Empress 27 & 32 Teran Blake and the TICOT membership for a drag brunch like no other! Help raise some money for the Reign 37 Charities of Choice! All tips are donated to the charities.

The Well, 487 Church St., Toronto

www.theimperialcourtoftoronto.com/



Opera In Concert: Ernani

February 25; 2:30 p.m.

An Italian Opera with English subtitles. Ernani sets the stage for Verdi's three decades of extraordinary achievements.

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

www.ticketmaster.ca/opera-in-concert-ernani-toronto-ontario-02-25-2024/event/10005EF50F8642B1

Symphony Of The Sea

February 25; 3:00 p.m.

This unique and enchanting afternoon of music celebrates the beauty and mystery of the ocean, taking you on a journey through the waves and tides.

Meridian Arts Centre, 5040 Yonge St., Toronto

to.live.com/Meridian-Arts-Centre

National Home Show

March 8 to 17

Meet more than 500 home vendors ready to help you make your space, your way. The National Home Show, presented by RE/MAX, is North America's largest display of innovative products, new ideas & great deals for all things home & garden.

Enercare Centre, 100 Princes' Blvd., Toronto

torontohomeshows.com/tbo/



Harlem Globetrotters World Tour

March 16; 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

See the Globetrotter stars live as they dribble, spin, slam, and dunk their way past their relentless rivals, the Washington Generals. You'll be amazed by mind-blowing trick shots, expert ball-handling skills, and big laughs.

Paramount Fine Foods Centre, 5500 Rose Cherry Place, Mississauga

www.ticketmaster.ca/harlem-globetrotters-2024-world-tour-presented-mississauga-ontario-03-16-2024/event/10005F4501FA5516

Shen Yun

March 22 to 26

Discover the deep wisdom and stunning beauty of China before communism. Come witness a magnificent culture reborn. Enjoy Shen Yun's all-new production for unforgettable dance and music, and leave feeling revitalized and filled with hope.

Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Drive, Mississauga

livingartscentre.eventue.net/

The Inheritance – Part 1

March 22 through April 13

Sweeping the 2020 Tony Awards, The Inheritance is a modern masterpiece presented in two parts which reimagines E.M. Forster's "Howard's End" as a contemporary portrait of a generation after the height of AIDS.

Bluma Appel Theatre, 27 Front St. E., Toronto

www.canadianstage.com/shows-events/season/the-inheritance-p1

The Inheritance – Part 2

March 24 through April 14

In contemporary Manhattan, Eric and Toby are 30-somethings who seem to be in love and thriving. But on the cusp of their engagement, they meet an older man haunted by the past and a younger man hungry for a future. Chance meetings lead to surprising choices as the lives of three generations collide – with explosive results.

Bluma Appel Theatre, 27 Front St. E., Toronto

www.canadianstage.com/shows-events/season/the-inheritance-p2

Planted Expo

March 23 & 24

With over 200 edible and lifestyle brands, you can look forward to trying delicious vegan products and hearing from insightful, informative, inspirational speakers from around the world.

Enercare Centre, 100 Princes' Blvd., Toronto

www.plantedlife.com/

Canada's Drag Race – Official Tour

April 1; 8:00 p.m.

O Canada! The Official Canada's Drag Race Tour returns to the Great White North in 2024 with leveled up production and for the first time in herstory, witness an all-finalist cast in their double feature show!

Meridian Hall, 1 Front St., Toronto

www.ticketmaster.ca/canadas-drag-race-official-2024-tour-toronto-ontario-04-01-2024/event/10005F69D07A2EC2



BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain



BUZZPICKS

By Sherry Sylvain

ROAD TRIPS

Drag Bingo

February 24; 7:00 p.m.

Tickets are available via e-transfer of \$20.00, and include a set of bingo cards. More cards are available at the venue for an additional \$10 while supplies last. Featuring some amazing performances from hostess and local guests.

Grillicious Restaurant and Wine Bar, 2 Marsellus Dr., Barrie
email to Jemm@Barrie.Gay

Top Tier Drag – Love Month

February 24; 8:00 p.m.

Catch some of Ontario's best drag entertainment from across the province! This new show is filled with new choreography, new looks, and all of your favourite music from different divas.

Red Papaya, 55 Wyndham St. N., Guelph
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/troybojenterainment/1110355>

Choir! Choir! Choir!

February 25; 8:00 p.m.

Sing out your musical memories with the incomparable vocal phenomenon that is Choir! Choir! Choir! Over the course of the show, the audience becomes the choir, learning a favourite song from scratch and performing it live.

Chatham Capitol Theatre, 238 King St. W., Chatham
<https://secure1.tixhub.com/chatham-kent/online/index.asp>

Choir! Choir! Choir! Epic ABBA Sing-a-long

February 29; 7:30 p.m.

This show is full of the greatest songs by the most sing-alongy group of all-time. This is a safe and inclusive space where all are welcome. Everyone will learn harmonic arrangements and within seconds everyone in the room will be laughing and singing at the tops of their lungs.

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

Drag Bingo

February 29, 8:00 p.m.

They will have 4 rounds of bingo with awesome prizes and drag performance throughout. Entry fee is \$10 which gets you into the event, plus a bingo card; additional cards can be purchased for \$5 at the event.

The Binbrook Grill, 3020 Binbrook Rd. W., Hamilton
<https://www.facebook.com/binbrookqmmunity>

Top Tier Drag – Winter Tour

March 8; 8:00 p.m.

Ontario's most successful drag stars bring to you some of Ontario's best drag entertainment from across the province! Catch this new show filled with new choreography, new looks, and all of your favourite music from different divas.

Goofie Newfie Pub and Grill, 105 Queen St. W., Centre Wellington (Fergus)
<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/troybojenterainment/1126964>

Bianca Del Rio – Dead Inside

March 9; 8:00 p.m.

She's coming out of her crypt and hitting the road again to remind everyone that she's still dead inside! If you enjoy irreverent humor, like sparkly costumes, and are not easily offended, this is the show for you.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton
<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/bianca-del-rio-dead-inside-comedy-hamilton-ontario-03-09-2024/event/10005F688A771149>



The Peking Acrobats

March 26; 7:30 p.m.

For the last 35 years, The Peking Acrobats have redefined audience perceptions of Chinese acrobatics. They perform daring maneuvers atop a precarious pagoda of chairs and display their technical prowess at such arts as trick-cycling, precision tumbling, juggling, somersaulting and gymnastics.

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

Tegan And Sara – The Not Tonight Tour

March 28; 7:00 p.m.

An intimate night of music and storytelling with the one-and-only Tegan and Sara. A portion of each ticket sold will go to the Tegan and Sara Foundation, which works tirelessly to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ women and girls.

Chatham Capitol Theatre, 238 King St. W., Chatham
<https://secure1.tixhub.com/chatham-kent/online/index.asp>



Tegan And Sara – The Not Tonight Tour

March 30; 7:30 p.m.

An intimate night of music and storytelling with the one-and-only Tegan and Sara. A portion of each ticket sold will go to the Tegan and Sara Foundation, which works tirelessly to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ women and girls.

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

Canada's Drag Race Official Tour

April 2; 8:00 p.m.

The Official Canada's Drag Race Tour returns to the Great



White North in 2024 with levelled up production and for the first time in herstory, witness an all-finalist cast in their double feature show.

FirstOntario Concert Hall, 1 Summers Lane, Hamilton
<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/canadas-drag-race-official-2024-tour-hamilton-ontario-04-02-2024/event/10005F68EF0F3B90>

Canada's Drag Race Official Tour

April 5; 8:00 p.m.

Join Jaida Essence Hall, alongside your favourite queens from seasons 3 and 4, as they hit the stage on a tour through the provinces.

Centre In The Square, 101 Queen St. N., Kitchener
<https://kwtickets.eventue.net/>

Celtic Woman 20th Anniversary Tour

April 5; 9:00 p.m.

Grammy nominated Celtic Woman, the most successful all-female Irish group in history returns on their 20th Anniversary Tour. Celtic Woman's fresh fusion of traditional Irish music and contemporary songcraft celebrates Ireland's history while reflecting the vibrant spirit of modern Ireland.

Casino Rama Resort, 5899 Rama Rd., Orillia
<https://www.ticketmaster.ca/celtic-woman-20th-anniversary-tour-rama-ontario-04-05-2024/event/1000573AFCC875AE>

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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