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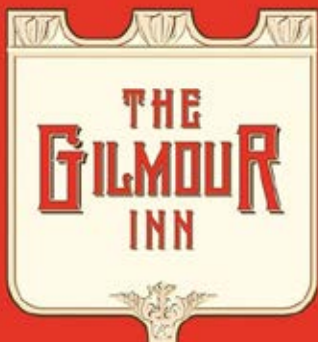
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Best Day Ever

From the **Publisher**



I am extremely glad that our Editor-in-Chief agreed that a film theme for this year is a good idea. Film and the film industry are such a huge part of our pop culture, and enjoying a good movie connects us together in many ways around the world.

I love the movies. A guest I had on our talk show, *On the Couch*, had seen my social media posts and commented, “you do watch a lot of movies”, and they were right. When I sit down to relax at the end of my busy days, I pop a movie into the player, and escape for a couple of hours. So that’s an average of 365 movies a year. My taste spans the gamut, from rom-coms, to horror, from sci-fi to foreign, from oldies and classics, to the odd and the eccentric.

So yes, I am a true movie buff, and I assume many of you readers are as well. But, even if you just appreciate the occasional movie, I know you’ll enjoy our 2019 look at “*The Year of the Cinema*.” So here we are, the beginning of an entire year of looking at mainstream cinema, queer cinema, queer influence in mainstream cinema, and those involved in creating the magic of film.

So how did my love of movies start you may be wondering? (and if you’re not, I’m still going to tell you, LOL.)

I look at my love of movies, and by now, my vast knowledge of movie trivia, in four stages of my life. My early years, the years I hung out with my younger brother watching a bunch of movies, the years coming out into the community and watching movies with my friends, and now.

My younger years started with a love for TV and the golden age of TV. My mom’s way of keeping me quiet while she did house work (before my siblings were born) was to pop me down in front of the TV.

I loved that moving talking picture. So, you can go ahead and blame TV for being the gateway drug to my addiction to film.

Then my uncle took me with my cousins to see my first movie at a movie theatre back in Kuwait (where I was born), and the rest is history. The movie was *Star Wars*. I was in awe, I was transfixed, I was forever addicted, and *SW* and all its sequels became an iconic thing for me because of this. I loved the whole experience, the crowd, the big screen, the refreshments. I wanted more.

My uncle then snuck me in with my two older cousins to see *Jaws* (great film). *Superman -The Movie* was my next theatrical experience and talk about what an experience that was. It is widely accepted that Superman is an iconic accomplishment in film making. Because of *Superman* I spent four weeks crying until dad caved in and bought us our first VHS player, just so I could watch it again and again, and again.

That period was dominated by George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. So, at the top of my favourite films of that time are things like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *Indiana Jones, E.T.*, and of course the *Star Wars* sequels.

In the next issue I will go over the next stage of my movie fandom.

Now, go make some popcorn, grab a cold drink, dim the lights (not too much, you still need to see the pages), and enjoy Part One of “The Year of the Cinema.”

Antoine Elhashem
Publisher

publisher@pinkplaymags.com

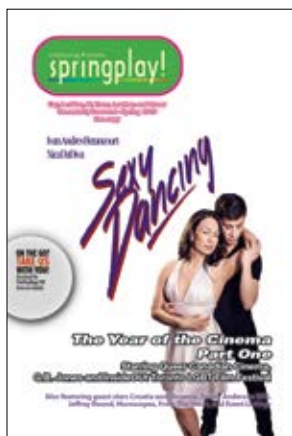
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Community Seasonal from PinkPlayMags
Free • Spring 2019**

Publisher/Creative Director: Antoine Elhashem
Editor-in-Chief: Bryen Dunn
Art Direction and Production: Mychol Scully

Contributors

Writers: Jerry Schaefer, Cat Grant, Michael McNeely,
Bryen Dunn, Kelly Wilk, Raymond Helkio, Jeffrey
Round, Mychol Scully, Julie Antoinette, Joey Viola,
Sherry Sylvain

Cover Photography: Angel Torres Photography



Cover *Sexy Dancing*

In the summer of 1963, innocent trans 17-year-old Xica vacations with her family at a high-end resort. One evening, catchy music draws her to the staff quarters, where she meets dance instructor Ivan. Over the vacation, Ivan teaches Xica the art of dancing and loving.

Written & Directed Antoine Elhashem

Cinematography Angel Torres

Starring Xica DaDiva & Ivan Andres Betancourt

In this issue

- 11 **Queer Canadian Cinema**
– Jerry Schaefer
- 16 **G.B. Jones** – Cat Grant
- 20 **InsideOut LGBT Film Festival**
– Michael McNeely
- 23 **Travel: Croatia and Slovenia**
– Bryen Dunn
- 31 **Fiction: Shadow Puppet**
– Jeffrey Round

Regular features

- 29 **Hot Artist: Trevor Anderson**
– Raymond Helkio
- 37 **Community Cornerstone:**
NFB – Kelly Wilk
- 39 **In the City** – Sherry Sylvain
- 44 **From the Heart**
– Mychol Scully
- 48 **Winter Horoscopes**
– Julie Antoinette
- 50 **Looking Back: Queer Cinema 2018**
– Joey Viola

Published by

INspired Media Inc.

Operating INspiredcreative (www.inspiredcreative.ca), and
publishers of The Pink Pages Directory, PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, and
The Local Biz Magazine.

President. Antoine Elhashem
General Manager Kim Dobie
Advertising Consultants. . . Carolyn Burtch, Michael Wile, Tina Perrea
Counsel. Jerry Herszkopf Law

Mailing address

205-1691 Pickering Parkway, Pickering, ON L1V 5L9

To contact us

416.926.9588 Toronto 905.231.9722 GTA

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From the **Editor**



As a new year begins, so does a new theme for our four seasonal issues of PinkPlayMags. We will be taking a look at the various aspects surrounding **Cinema**, chatting with filmmakers, discussing milestone movies, and so much more. We have several talented writers who will be contributing pieces throughout the year, so make sure not to miss any of our four issues this year.

For our cover feature, writer Jerry Schaefer has written a piece looking back at 50 years of Canadian Queer Cinema, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality here in Canada. He had an opportunity to chat with two very prominent individuals involved within the queer film circuit. Educator **Matthew Hays** reflects back on some of the earliest films that had specific gay content, while **Andria Wilson**, Executive Director of *Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival*, takes a look at where we are today, and what the future looks like. Our two other features include an exclusive interview that Cat Grant did with queercore filmmaker, artist, and musician, **G.B. Jones**, while Michael McNeeley provides some insight into the history, community outreach programs, and mentorship opportunities with the **Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival**.

Also in this issue, our **Travel** feature is on two tiny European countries that are currently on the bucket list of many travellers, and we'll tell

you why both **Croatia** and **Slovenia** should be on your travel list as well. Our **Fiction** excerpt is from "Shadow Puppet," the latest novel in the Dan Sharp Mystery Series by Toronto author **Jeffrey Round**. Our **Hot Artist** feature is written by Raymond Helkio, and spotlights **Trevor Anderson**, an up and coming filmmaker from Toronto who recently returned from the Sundance Film Festival where his latest film, *Docking*, was screened alongside many of the latest and greatest. Kelly Wilk wrote this issue's **Community Cornerstone** piece on the **National Film Board of Canada**, and got the inside scoop on all the latest news on their great queer programming. The organization celebrates both their 80th anniversary and the relocation of their headquarters to Montreal this year.

As always, we have **Horoscopes** by Julie Antoinette, **From The Heart** by Mychol Scully, and **Event Listings** by Sherry Sylvain. We close with our **Looking Back** column, written by our sister publication's (theBUZZ) film blogger, **Joey Viola**, who reflects back on some of the queer individuals who have made names for themselves last year on the silver screen.

Enjoy the read!

Bryen Dunn
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QUEER CANADIAN CINEMA

The First 50 Years

By Jerry Schaefer

Back in 1967, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau said, “There is no place for the state in the bedrooms of the nation,” as he introduced an omnibus bill, C-150. After parliamentary delays, fierce debate, and a filibuster, C-150 became law in 1969, decriminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults. Many say the Stonewall riots in New York City marked the beginning of gay rights, but six weeks earlier Canada had legalized homosexuality.

Springplay celebrates 50 years of sexual freedom by also celebrating 50 years of queer Canadian cinema.

“It is difficult enough to be queer, but to be queer in the cinema is almost impossible. Heterosexuals have fucked up the screen so completely that there’s hardly room for us to kiss there.”

The above quote is from English director Derek Jarman, and prefaces the book, *The View from Here: Conversations with Gay and Lesbian*

Filmmakers, by Canadian author **Matthew Hays**. Hays is also the film instructor at Marianopolis College, and teaches courses in film studies, journalism and communication studies at Concordia. He has previously served as a programmer for the *Toronto International Film Festival*, and on juries at several other festivals as well.

Trivia time! Name the first queer movie made in Canada. Answer: *Winter Kept Us Warm*, directed by David Secter in 1965, four years before homosexuality was legal. It was only a student film, but it was also the first English-language, Canadian film ever screened at Cannes. While it lacks artistry and has a low-budget sound, the dialogue and direction are good, the leads are believable, and their acting sincere. Although mores of the times frustrate their relationship, neither is crippled by anxiety, sexual angst, or suicidal thoughts. This alone sets it above many gay movies that followed. With the exception of the shower scene, there’s nothing overly

explicit in *Winter*. The sexuality is low key, but so was gay life at that time.

PinkPlayMags asked Hays about his thoughts on this film, and he replied, “I think it has been really, really important. Funnily enough, the actors were straight and claimed they had no idea it was about homosexuality, which was pretty funny!”

Another earlier queer-themed film was *Fortune and Men's Eyes* (1971, Harvey Hart). In a way, it was also pre-legalization, as it's based on events in the 1950s involving queer writer John Herbert, who originally wrote the script for a play based on his time in prison. In spite of workshopping it at Stratford, he was unable to obtain funding, so it premiered in Los Angeles, where Sal Mineo directed and starred opposite a 19-year-old Don Johnson. The play also had a successful New York run. The movie version is uneven, and odd music choices hurt, but some of the action is still shocking to see.

“*Outrageous* (1977, Richard Benner),” says Hays, “was really important in terms of its representation, both of a gay man, and also a drag character, played by Craig Russell, who himself was gay. It was a kind of an autobiographical film in a way, as he was basically playing himself.” *Outrageous* is still funny! And the camera work puts you right there, onstage and backstage.

Are movies like these from so long ago still relevant today? Hays thinks so. “I’m actually showing *Hookers on Davie* (1984, Janis Cole & Holly Dale) to a class I teach, right now. That’s a really remarkable film and it was so ahead of its time, in terms of trans representation. It’s so rich and so full of fascinating images. I love that film.”

Quick fact!. Both *Hookers on Davie* and *Fortune and Men's Eyes* led to improvements in Canada’s penal system. “The[se] representations actually were the shock troops; they helped to make people much more accepting of the LGBTQ community, and to push our rights forward,” Hays says. “What’s interesting is how representations of LGBTQ people has changed

over time, and how the acceptance of LGBTQ people has changed as well, which you can’t really separate. This is really fascinating to me.”



Winter Kept Us Warm, 1965

According to Hays, queer characters were once burdened with what he calls, “the weight of limited representation,” or the expectation that a queer character be positive and perfect, which ruled out gay villains and jerks. “And now what I find is people can write LGBTQ characters as they would like to, and it’s all okay.”




Narcissus, 1983



When Night Is Falling, 1996

For reasons like this, television today has never been better. Cable channels, unencumbered by censorship, used that freedom to explore queer content. As Hays puts it, “It’s so not unusual, if I can put it that way, to see



an LGBTQ character on a show. Now, it's really sort of obligatory that if you have a show, you've (almost) got to have a gay storyline somewhere."

When asked how Trudeau's omnibus bill affected queer films, Hays is reluctant to point at any one body of work, but he thinks the effect was positive. "I would say that there had to be some kind of psychological reverberation, an impact on individuals, which would be felt among artists as well, because

that was a really huge shift. I'm sure it did have a big impact on a lot of queer people living in Canada. To say, 'Well, the government's done this now, so I can be freer to write about it without

fear of people saying, you're writing about a criminal activity', because it's no longer criminal!"

Is there anything Hays is eager to see more of? Yes — transgender stories!

"Because lesbian and gay people have

become far more accepted, the religious right needs a new boogie man and they found one in trans people. So we really need to support trans people right now and I want to see more. I think that's really the next frontier and they're too vulnerable right now. I feel very strongly that those stories need to be told and those lives need to be protected," he states.

Springplay also spoke with **Andria Wilson**, Executive Director of *Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival*. In a way, Wilson and her team are shaping the queer Canadian cinema of the future. *Inside Out* employs dozens of programmers who evaluate over a thousand submissions to select its movies. Do they have a working definition of "queer cinema"?

"I think that conversation is definitely evolving," she says, "as within our community we see identities and understanding of gender expression and sexual orientation to be more expansive than maybe it used to be viewed. Something that is really important for us at *Inside Out* is supporting LGBTQ creators, filmmakers, writers, directors, and really giving them a platform."

There is room for improvement, however. Wilson believes that when it comes to intersectional representation in LGBTQ stories, they are behind the curve. How does the festival hope to rectify this? "We're used to seeing folks from a lot of different backgrounds, more black and people of colour representation, and more indigenous and Two-Spirit stories," Wilson explains. "As we see some of [our] funding models shift their focus, and more funds become available with dedicated support for underrepresented groups, I think that's an incredibly important piece, but there's still a lot of work to be done there."

Queer films are reaching even wider audiences, thanks to television. Wilson notes that services like Netflix will stream their content into categories — action-adventure, romantic comedy, horror, and LGBT, but she isn't worried about queer programming being pigeonholed.



Vic and Flo Saw a Bear, 2013



Photo: Mo Skin Off My Ass, 1991

“What’s really interesting,” she says, “is that we’re starting to see LGBT films be more represented across all genres, where a film might be classified as LGBT based on the characters, or the creator, or prominent representation of LGBT [actors] in the film, and it can also be classified within those other genres as well.”

Canada certainly serves a wide variety of genres, from the graceful and poetic films of Norman McLaren (*Narcissus*, 1983), through the underground punk, queercore work of Bruce LaBruce (*No Skin Off My Ass*, 1991), and on to the fine films we see from Quebec, like *C.R.A.Z.Y.* (2005, Jean-Marc Vallée), *I Killed My Mother* (2009, Xavier Dolan), and *Vic + Flo Saw a Bear* (2013, Denis Côté). We asked Wilson to name a few of her personal favourites from the past 50 years.

“For recent contemporary, I’m a huge fan of *Closet Monster* (2015), Stephen Dunn’s film. I’m from Nova Scotia and he’s from Newfoundland and I think he’s such a talented visionary and it was truly a special film. I would definitely add Thom Fitzgerald as well, again being from the East Coast, his work was so influential in my life. I think [his film] *Hanging Garden* (1997) is a must-watch, absolutely. And then, I would have to say definitely Patricia Rozema. *When Night Is Falling* (1996), for me personally, is one of the first lesbian films that I saw. It was really, truly a lesbian narrative and it wasn’t in the shadow of another story. Again, just really amazing performances that she got out of her actors, and it was so exciting at the time, and I think it still really resonates.”

Of course, seeing so many films must give Wilson some idea of what it is that makes our Canadian movies stand out.

“I think our LGBTQ Canadian directors really know how to direct actors,” she says. “That’s something that I think is a great strength. Even look at the career trajectories of some of [our] directors, like Jeremy Podeswa, who was one of the founders of *Inside Out*, and is now directing *Game of Thrones* and *The Handmaid’s Tale*. He is this incredibly prolific television director for

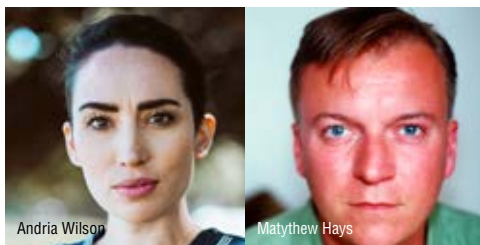
shows that have amazing queer content, and are also respected as some of the most well-acted shows. When I talk to individuals who have worked with Patricia Rozema, she has such a wonderful reputation, and she gets such nuanced performances out of young actors, new actors, and also very seasoned pros.”

Recent films screened at *Inside Out* include *The Fruit Machine* (2018, Sarah Fodey), *What Keeps You Alive* (2018, Colin Minihan), and *Love, Scott* (2018, Laura Marie Wayne). As for this year’s festival, Wilson and crew are still assembling the program with its offering of features, shorts, and documentaries by queer artists from May 23 – June 2, 2019.

“At the core of it,” she says, “we’re looking to showcase films that highlight under-represented voices in film. And to really give people in our community here in Toronto, and in our LGBTQ community, an opportunity to see themselves represented.”

Hear, hear, to another 50 years of queer Canadian cinema!

Photo: Samson Learn



Thank you to Matthew Hays and Andria Wilson for their valuable insight during the preparation of this feature article.

Jerry Schaefer is a Toronto actor and writer whose work has appeared on CBC radio and television.



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by Cat Grant



G.B. JONES

Filmmaker, artist, and musician, G.B. Jones is a multi-talented creator. Born in Bowmanville, Ontario she sang in a church choir every Sunday until the age of 12, which is when she confesses, she became a “juvenile delinquent.”

“I was lucky, I went to school in a time when they still had arts and music programs, before all the Conservative governments began chipping away at them, denying funding, and cutting them,” she says. Her artwork has been in galleries around the world and G.B. has also enjoyed all her musician gigs with her different bands so much that she can’t pick a favourite. She also likes all genres of film, but her interest was peaked further when she discovered an American magazine called *Film Culture*, in her local library.

“I read all the back issues they had on hand and it opened up a whole new world for me. Here were all different kinds of people making movies,” she recalls. In the mainstream film and art worlds there were very few women directors and artists during the 1970s, so G.B. found reading about all of them to be really exciting. “It just seemed like the experimental film and video world was where everything interesting was happening, and I wanted to find it.”

After a few years of reading magazines, going to art galleries, hanging around the infamous Roxy Theatre, and seeing every weird cult film that was shown, G.B. eventually went on to college and took a class with filmmaker Ross McClaren.

G. B. has since directed and appeared in a number of underground films. In 1990, she and **Bruce LaBruce** held J.D.s movie nights in London, Toronto, Montreal, Buffalo, New York, and San Francisco, showing their no budget films made on Super 8mm film. *The Troublemakers* premiered at this time and proved influential, although rarely screened afterwards until the mid 2000s. In 1991, she starred in the feature film, *No Skin Off My Ass*, by Bruce LaBruce, which has been noted by Gus Van Sant to have been Kurt Cobain’s favourite movie. To date, her own films have been made using a variety of mediums, including Super 8 mm and analog video.

Her best known work from the 1990s is perhaps *The Yo Yo Gang*, released in 1992, a 30-minute exploitation movie about girl gangs. The film stars a number of well-known musicians, including Fifth Column members Caroline Azar and Beverly Breckenridge. During the 1990s, Jones was also a contributor to the film zine created by Miranda July, called *Joanie4Jackie*. Jones’ film *The Lollipop Generation*, which had been a work-in-progress for 13 years, had its premiere on 3 April 2008 at the



Images Festival in Toronto. The film stars Jena von Brucker, Mark Ewert, Calvin Johnson, Joel Gibb, Jen Smith, and many other musicians, performers, and artists.

As a musician, when her band *Bunny and the Lakers* dissolved, G.B. found herself missing it. Painter John Brown listened to G.B. complain about it, and he suggested she meet two women, Janet Martin and Kathleen Robertson, who were in the process of starting a new band.

"I went over to meet them and found we had some similar interests and aesthetics, so I decided I needed to join the band. After a couple of months we met Caroline Azar and asked her to join, and that's when *Fifth Column* officially began." As a post-punk all-female group, *Fifth Column's* live shows included films projected behind the band, along with male go-go dancers on stage. The band name is derived from a military phrase describing a group of people who undermine larger group from within.

G.B. has also worked on three zines: the first was one that Caroline Azar and Candy Pauker were creating, called "*Hide*." "I'd helped a little bit on the first issue and then they asked me to join them. Caroline then thought of turning it into a tape cassette zine, and so we covered the underground music scenes in Toronto, around Ontario, and the United States. We had articles on underground filmmakers of course, and queer culture was steadily creeping onto the pages as well."

Next she started "*J.D.s*" with Bruce LaBruce, which was the world's first Queercore zine that kick-started the movement. After "*J.D.s*" G.B. worked on "*Double Bill*" with Caroline Azar, Jena von Brucker, Johnny Noxzema, and Rex. "In that zine we championed bountiful Bill Conrad in opposition to bad Bill Burroughs as a means to talk about media, men, and misogyny."

G.B. doesn't really think of herself as an activist, although others do. "You know, in the early 1980's Caroline Azar decided to write "*The Fairview Mall*

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Inside Out

LGBT Film Festival

Film Screenings, Community Outreach, and Mentorship Opportunities

by Michael McNeely

Cinema has the ability to spark conversation and to bring people together: especially cinema that is not easily accessible.

In the 90s, LGBTQ films were not as “mainstream” as they are now, and there were those in positions of authority in the City of Toronto that did all they could to censor what they thought was immoral and obscene propaganda.

Queer Film History

Back in 1991, the Inside/OUT Collective, comprised entirely of volunteers, organized and ran Toronto’s first queer film festival, which was named The Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival. Approximately 3,000 people attended this four-day event, and witnessed the beginning of some prominent Canadian artists’ careers, including John Greyson, Colin Campbell, Lynne Fennie, Kathleen Pirrie Adams, and Jeremy Podeswa.

According to Steen Starr, who has been an employee since 2009, the fact that 3,000 people attended the first incarnation of Toronto’s annual queer film festival was remarkable, as it showed first-hand the hunger of a queer community needing to see themselves represented on the silver screen.

Energized by the success of the first couple of years, in 1993 the group was recommended for a small operating grant by the city’s Arts

Council, however, a group of vocal citizens decrying charges of obscenity and threats to public decency, had successfully pressured Metro Council to invoke a little-used veto against the recommendation. Despite the setback, The Collective has continued to host a film festival every year since, and eventually became the Inside Out Toronto LGBT Film Festival (Inside Out) as we know it today, comprised of a mix of employees and loyal volunteers.

Today, funding is more reliable, with sponsors like RBC and Delta Airlines, who have flown in celebrities for premieres, such as Olympia Dukakis, Matt Bomer, Buck Angel and drag queen Bianca Del Rio. Starbucks is also interested, which seems appropriate since they took over the former Euclid Theatre, one of the original venues of the 1991 festival.

Community Initiatives and Outreach

The first Friday of the festival is Youth Day, where high school students are invited to attend and watch a film for free, and also engage in conversations and panels with prominent LGBTQ personalities, who provide insights into the challenges of growing up queer and making art. Youth are welcome to attend youth and family screenings throughout the festival as well.

The New Visions Program provides mentorship opportunities to youth and seniors who have never made a film before. Over the course of a few months, participants get together with mentors who guide them through the various stages of making a short film. Equipment is provided by Charles Street Video, and completed

works are then screened one evening during the festival, providing audiences an opportunity to see a glimpse into the future. The mentored artists are also provided the opportunity to enjoy the rest of the festival with VIP passes.

Reel Access is a new initiative that the organization is launching this year by hosting a conference on film festival accessibility, that helps to ensure patrons in all film festivals in Toronto have ready access to what they need to enjoy screenings – whether it be subtitles, audio devices, low sensory screenings, and much more.

RE:Focus Fund is a new resource dedicated to providing direct financial support to LGBTQ women and non-binary filmmakers. The fund was made possible by a generous \$25,000 lead gift from Martha McCain, and the first phase supported filmmakers in the form of travel bursaries that allowed them to attend the 2018 festival. This program will expand to include funding for professional development programs, as well as grants to start, finish, or close the gap on their film projects.

Kelsey Butt, who is Inside Out's Events and Engagement Coordinator, is busy reaching out and collaborating with Toronto community groups, such as The 519 Community Centre and the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. Partnerships can be formed when an organization sponsors and/or co-presents a particular film in a festival or at a community screening. Inside Out also donates tickets and passes to other organizations, such as People With AIDS Toronto.

Ottawa and Beyond

Prior to 2007, Ottawa was also home to a queer collective who were passionate about film. Its members were struggling to find funding, and they eventually folded and weren't going to be able to host any more film events in that city, until members of Inside Out Toronto decided to bring the Ottawa group under their growing umbrella. Inside Out Ottawa happens



over a span of four days in November, and also has annually presented a youth screening and/or workshop at the Ottawa Carleton District School Board's Rainbow Youth Forum for the past four years.

Jenna Dufton, Inside Out Programming Manager, is well aware of the role she plays in finding films to move and broaden the imaginations of Toronto audiences. "There are many films that I have felt honoured to showcase and to have a small part in their festival journey. A recent favourite would have to be

the 2018 selection of *Skate Kitchen*, the story of a group of young women skateboarders in New York. Although not explicitly a queer film I absolutely fell in love with the story and the women involved, and I hoped there would be an audience for it at Inside Out. Turns out there was and it was one of the most impactful screenings of the festival for me. A large group of young women skateboarders from Toronto came to the screening and were so excited to be able to interact with the Skate Kitchen crew."

It is not just through the curated films that allow Inside Out to have an impact. The above mentioned partnerships, as well as the mentorship opportunities that Inside Out is involved with, encourage LGBTQ individuals to know that their stories are worth telling, which after all, is the most important obstacle to overcome.

Inside Out 2019 takes place May 23 to June 2, 2019 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto.

Check the website for updates www.insideout.ca.

Michael McNeely is a 2nd year law student, critic, filmmaker, and actor.

He enjoys meaningful presentation of LGBT folks and those with disabilities in popular media. Michael is deaf-blind; he enjoys the presence of subtitles and other accessibility features.



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THE
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by Bryen Dunn

CROATIA AND SLOVENIA

THE NEW GAY-WAY TO EUROPE

These days, people are always on the look out for the next big thing, and travel is no exception.

As the more adventurous explorers seek out new experiential travel opportunities, as opposed to the typical sun and sand vacations, changing destinations become the “it” spot for the selfie social set. Right now it appears that the former eastern identified, now referred to as Central European countries are poised for their time in the spotlight.

Croatia has been garnering new found attention for about a decade now, and more recently the Dalmatian coast has caught the eye of many *Game of Thrones* fans. Visitors are continuing to flock to the capital of Zagreb, and exploring more of the Adriatic Sea coastline and the numerous National Parks. Neighbouring **Slovenia** is an even newer emerging market for travellers, and although small in size, the country is big on a welcoming hospitality, an abundance of culture, and unlimited outdoor adventures.

Croatia

Zagreb, Croatia's capital, has a rich history that dates back to Roman times. The last 100 years have been quite turbulent with World War 2 and the Croatian War of Independence bringing conflict to the area. However, the city has overcome these setbacks, and today is a bustling metropolis and cultural hub with a vibrant cafe culture, interesting museums, great shopping

opportunities, and architecture reflective of its medieval and communist past.

Be sure to check out the bustling Dolac open-air market, the towering St. Mark's Church, and the Lotrščak Tower for the canon shoot at noon. Also, jump aboard the shortest funicular ride in the world, and be sure not to miss a visit to the **Museum of Broken Relationships**, a unique emotional journey around the world told through the tales of hundreds of break-ups. Its exhibits include personal objects donated from former lovers, accompanied by brief descriptions. A short bus ride outside of the city leads to the **Mirogoj Cemetery**, which dates back to 1876 and inters members of all religious groups, including many famous Croatians as well as memorials, monuments, and markers commemorating all the fallen soldiers from the many past wars.

Same-sex relationships have been legal in Croatia since 1977, and discrimination is banned on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, however same-sex marriage has still not been legalized within this still rather conservative country. Despite the slower progress toward full equality for all, **Zagreb Pride** is held annually in June, and attendance numbers have been increasing steadily over the past several years since the first tiny march was held back in 2002. Zagreb also has a modest gay scene that is a lot more subtle than other large urban centres, however there are a few gay-owned and gay-friendly establishments where locals like to hang out.



St. Mark's Church, Zagreb

National Parks, Adriatic Sea, and Dalmatia

Driving the coast from Zagreb to Split in the Dalmatia region is a spectacularly scenic experience. Definitely not to be missed is **Plitvice Lakes National Park**, one of the most beautiful treasures in the country that's world-famous for its lakes arranged in cascades, the result of the confluence of several small rivers and subterranean *karst* rivers. **Paklenica National Park** is both a hiker's and rock climber's paradise just a short drive outside of town, that encompasses the largest mountain range in the country. There are several caves and a variety of wildlife on site, as well as a primitive mountain hut for those wishing to overnight.

There are numerous small towns and villages to explore along the coastal route, and one must stop is the historic city of **Zadar**. Here visitors can discover human history dating back to Romans and even the Stone Age. For this reason, the architecture is a mix from various time periods and styles, reflective of the many wartime occupations. Two of the more popular

visitor attractions are the *Sea Organ* and *Sun Salutation*, artistic creations that respectively each utilize nature to resonate beautiful sounds and sights that attract crowds every night around sunset. The Sea Organ creates music generated by the motion of sea waves through a series of organ pipes built beneath a small set of steps. Then, as the sun fades away the nearby Sun Salutation begins to magically illuminate generated by the sun's energy absorbed via solar panels during the day.

The UB40 Effect

The *Garden Lounge* in Zadar was opened by two members of Brit reggae outfit UB40. This spectacular garden atop the city walls has been one of the coolest hangouts for the past 15 years. During the daytime it's a calm haven from the busy narrow streets of old town. Sit inside for a cool beverage, or grab one of the outdoor daybeds to recline on. After dark things pick up with a rotating roster of guest DJs playing every evening, while bartenders serve up a great selection of local wines, creative cocktails, and their namesake craft brew that's produced in Zagreb.

The franchise has since expanded throughout Croatia, with their coastal *Garden Resort* offering a vacation getaway that's also home to their Summer music festivals and the all-night outdoor *Barbarella's Disco*. Definitely a hot spot for those looking to party, with restaurants and bars onsite, and a variety of accommodation options from camping and glamping, to unique offerings such as hostels, apartments, mobile homes, and even retro Airstream trailers.

The Garden Brewery taproom in Zagreb is where the Weekend Block Party happens, which is back for its second edition taking place March 28th to 31st, 2019 in the front yard. The entertainment includes an eclectic line-up of both international and local artists, combined with awesome food and plenty of amazing craft beer. This location includes a record and merchandise store on site. There's also *The Garden Bar & Kitchen* in both Zagreb, and in Cakovec, which is located in a historic Castle.

The two most visited cities in Dalmatia are **Dubrovnik**, made even more famous by being featured in *Game of Thrones*, and **Split**, the port city that's the second largest in the country. Split has a UNESCO-declared historic centre that



Artist Alleyway, Trojir



Pink Week Dragon's Ball, Ljubljana Castle

dates back to the Roman Empire, and its location makes it the perfect gateway to the islands of the Adriatic Sea and Eastern Europe. It also has a small LGBT community, hosting their own Pride festivities, and having several gay-friendly bars and clubs like *Ghetto*, *Sanctuary*, and *Kocka*. The UNESCO World Heritage City **Trojir** is another wonderful city to visit if time permits. The surrounding islands located just off the mainland, include **Solta**, with its numerous olive groves, **Brac** for outdoor adventures, such as hiking, biking, and rafting, and the largest of the islands is **Hvar**, which lately has become somewhat of a destination hot spot for jet-setting millennial Europeans. An ode to its openness.

Slovenia

With a population of less than 300,000, the capital of **Ljubljana** has a relatively young demographic, which makes it an overall vibrant and openly welcoming city. The centrepiece of the city is the Ljubljanica River, with its beautiful pedestrian bridges decorated with the city's symbolic dragons, and its picturesque embankments that are lined with outdoor cafes and restaurants. The city's beautiful architecture, cultural festivals, music, and museums offer visitors plenty of opportunity to explore. The city itself is a former *European Green Capital*, and UNESCO *City of Literature*, which is celebrated through the various outdoor lending "libraries" located within city parks.

Ljubljana's position at the forefront of the gay and lesbian movement in Eastern Europe

stretches back to the Yugoslav days, with homosexual acts being decriminalized in 1976. The establishment of the *Ljubljana Gay & Lesbian Film Festival* in 1984 by the city's Student Cultural Centre, is the oldest gay and lesbian film festival on the continent. In 2015 Slovenia became the first Slavic country to allow same-sex marriage, and promotes itself as being the only country with 'love' in its name.

Two local gentlemen, partners in business and life, are known locally as Matej and Matej. The pair launched their annual **Pink Week** celebrations in 2014, with events taking place this year from May 22 to 26, 2019. Their dedication and hard work has played a vital role in helping to put Slovenia on LGBT travellers radar, and is a unique opportunity to discover hidden gems, make new friends, and be yourself. Various packages include attractions, accommodations, transportation, and access to exclusive events, all locally guided. The week ends with the extravagant *Dragon's Ball*, a magical VIP party held high atop the city inside the historic Ljubljana Castle, where guests dance the night away with Slovenia's A-listers and socialites. It's fast becoming the party of the year to be seen at.

Ljubljana Pride's inaugural parade was first organized in 2001 and has ran annually in June ever since. **Klub Tiffany** offers a weekly gay party night in the bohemian alternative enclave known as **Metelkova**. Formerly the site of past military headquarters, the area consists of seven barracks which have been squatted and re-purposed since 1993. There are numerous galleries, outreach organizations, music venues, bars, and DIY spaces that have taken up space here for daytime drop-ins and nighttime denizens. This is where the *Red Dawn* arts festival is held in March, and visitors can even stay overnight at the **Celica Art Hostel**, a former prison that has been transformed by artists, complete with barred cell rooms. There are also regular queer parties happening **Klub K4**, and



Lake Bled and Church, Ljubljana

other notable events include **Ljubljana Fashion Week** in the spring, **City of Women** arts festival in September, and the **Ljubljana LGBT Film Festival** in November.

Ljubljana Day Trips

Lake Bled and its centrepiece island is one of the highlights to see when in Slovenia, mostly for the outstanding views of the statuesque church back-dropped by the surrounding mountains of trees. Be sure to make a wish and ring the church bell while there. Nearby is the *Goriška Brda* wine growing region, that has the highest per-hectare yield of medals and recognition, with *Movia Wines* being one of the top producers of quality wines in the country.

Another highlight of any visit to Slovenia are the literally thousands of underground caves, of which 22 are open to the public. Each of the caves reveals beautiful and unique *karst* formations that have been growing for millions of years. The world-renowned **Postojna Cave** is the largest, that's entered via a special train taking visitors deep into this magnificent underground world to view unusual sculptural rock formations, including magical stalactites and stalagmites. Also on site is *Predjama Castle*, the



Postojna Cave, Slovenia

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Zagreb Pride - www.zagreb-pride.net

Zadar - www.zadar.travel and

www.arthotel-kalelarga.com/en

The Garden - www.thegarden.hr

Discover Slovenia

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Tourism - www.slovenia.info

Pink Week – www.pinkweek.eu

Ljubljana Pride - www.ljubljanapride.org

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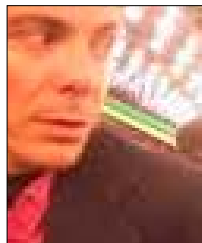
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largest cave castle in the world. Other outdoor adventures include **Planica**, home to the zipline with the steepest descent in the world, and **Mount Peca** in **Mežica**, where visitors can ride a bike through the tunnels of the disused mine, or even row through them in a kayak. Slovenia is small, but mighty!

These two beautiful countries can easily be combined into one amazing adventure. People are overly welcoming, and the crowds are way less than in the more touristy destinations of their western counterparts. This is definitely the new gay-way to Europe!

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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Hot Artist



Trevor Anderson is a queer filmmaker with an extraordinary sense of purpose. His latest film, *Docking*, had its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival and it's as provocative and epic as they come. It took Trevor four years to complete what he describes as, "the most special effects-heavy film I've ever made," which should have no trouble dominating the festival circuit this year. I caught up with Trevor to ask about the creation of the film and his plans to turn it into a feature film.

Are there any queer filmmakers that have been an influence on you, and why?

When I was first coming out I went to the queer film festival in Vancouver and saw two short films that, taken together, blew my mind. One was a Canadian short film called *The Making of Monsters*, by John Greyson, and the other was an Australian short-film called, *Poetry for an Englishman*, by Martin Daley. The first was very intellectual, Brechtian, and formally clever, and the second was very sentimental, emo, and full of feeling. The combination of these two films made me feel like this was something I wanted to do, and also something I could do. I feel like all my work since then has been bouncing between those two poles, the brainy alienation of the Greyson film, and the longing heart of the Daley film.

In a recent CBC interview, you talked about how you involved Todd Cherniawsky in realizing your vision for *Docking*. If you were to make a sequel to this film, what might you do differently?

I actually plan to make a full-length feature film version of *Docking*. The four-minute short-film doubles as the opening sequence to the feature... from there we descend to earth and see a whole fictional story play out in Edmonton in winter. It's a sexy-scary-thriller-horror-comedy.

As a filmmaker what do you know now that you wish someone had told you when you started out?

I actually got an amazing piece of advice when I met the great filmmaker Jane Campion. She said to me, "Look after your health. Do yoga, even if it's only fifteen minutes a day, or swim. A relaxed mind can make good decisions."

Of all of the films, you've made which is your favourite and why?

My personal favourite will always be, *Rock Pockets* (2007). That's the one where I really found my own artistic voice. People still talk about it and program it on the festival circuit. I feel like I'll always identify most with that one, and I hope I carry its lessons with me through everything I go on to make.

Super-gay-bonus-question: If you had the power to change one thing about the gay community, what would that be?

Decriminalize sex work.

*Toronto film buffs may have an opportunity to see a future screening of *Docking*, as Anderson has submitted the film to both the Hot Docs (www.hotdocs.ca) and Inside Out (www.insideout.ca) film festivals. Check each website, or www.trevorandersonfilms.com for updates.*

Raymond Helkio is an author, director and filmmaker. He graduated from the Ontario College of Art & Design University and is co-founder of The Reading Salon.
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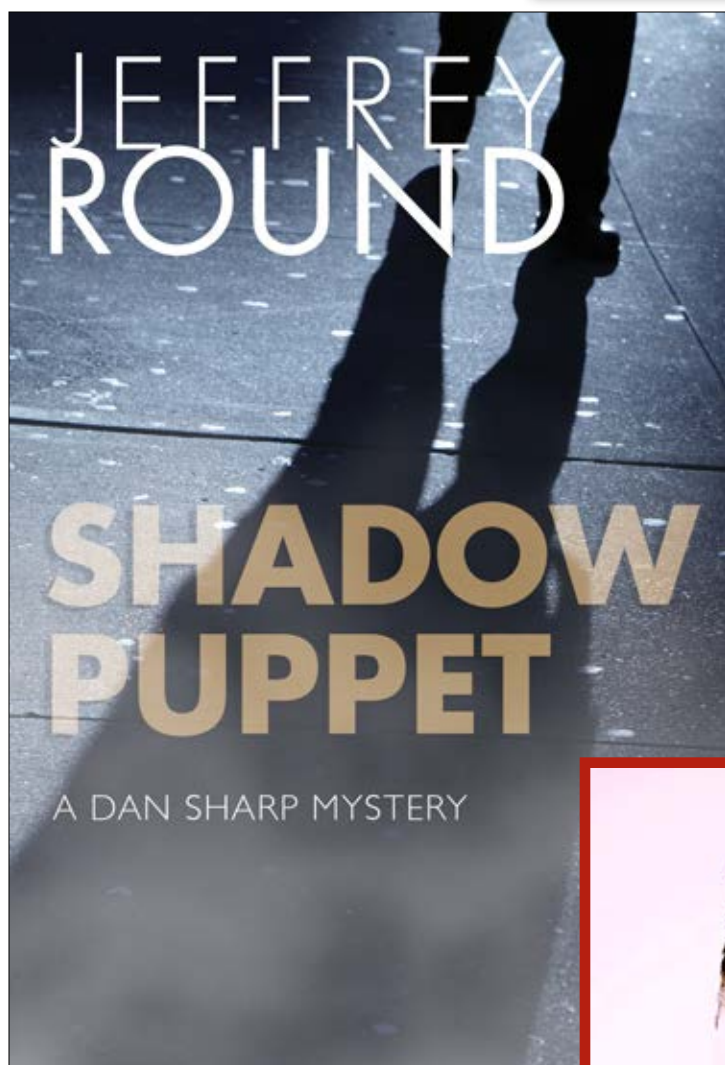
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Private investigator Dan Sharp investigates the disappearance of three closeted gay men.

When a serial killer stalks downtown Toronto, private investigator Dan Sharp finds an unexpected link between the missing men that even the police are reluctant to investigate. A meeting with the chief of police confirms his suspicions, but does nothing to resolve the problem. Obsessed with uncovering the truth, Dan enlists a small group of friends to delve into illicit goings-on in the local sex industry. It's only when the next man disappears, however, that Dan finds himself in a race against time to track down an elusive, manipulative killer who is a master of disguise.

Excerpt

He felt like the world's greatest puppet master. No matter who they were or where they came from, he could make them sing and dance. All it took was a little reassurance. With a gentle smile, he let them know he understood their suffering. The shame and fear, the condemnation and humiliation. Oh yes, all of that and more.

Best of all, he could make them weep.

That was when he felt most powerful, an avenging angel, as though he could scoop up their tears and wash away their sorrow. It was also when he felt closest to the lost lambs who followed him home and undressed for him, shedding their innocence along with their clothes. Giving up the purity that would take them to paradise. He stripped them of all of that.

The man over in the corner had been eyeing him across the bar for the past ten minutes. Light-skinned, a hint of facial hair. Muscular, but not too big. Just the right hesitation in his glance: Are you interested in me, brother?

Music pounded as video screens threw shadows across the room. He glanced back, gave a gentle nod: Yes, I am interested.

Then he turned away, not to let the other get too cocky. The time would come to spark his confidence, to let him think he was in control. But not yet. Not right from the beginning, when his hands had deftly begun to pull the strings, bringing the puppet to life with each twitch and flutter.

The song ended and a new beat edged in. The two headed for the bar at the same moment, random atoms propelled by chance. The bartender, in black leather, looked up at the shaved-headed man.

"Dude?"

"A Molson Dry, please."

He turned to the other. "For you?"

"Same, please."

"Two Molson Dry coming up."

As the bartender moved off, the larger man let his arm brush against the young man's arm. The crowd was packed in so close there was no room to step aside, just the subtle warmth of skin touching skin.

"Habibi."

They were facing each other now.

"You like this place?"

The younger man nodded shyly. The bartender returned, deftly clipped the caps off the bottles and pushed them forward where they gleamed under the lights.

"I've got it." The larger man passed a bill across the counter and waved away the change.

The new acquaintances picked up their beers and made their way through the crowd to a pair of stools against the far wall.

"Chokron." The younger man lifted his glass and swallowed long and hard.

"You like beer?"

"Yes. I like it."

"That's good. It relaxes you." The shaved-headed man laughed and clasped him around the back of his neck, feeling the smooth skin and warm flesh.

"Tell me, where are you from?"

"I am from Iran," he said. His eyes skittered nervously, knowing what it meant to discuss such things openly.

"A great country."

Talk ensued. The older man had lived in Toronto for almost a decade; the younger had been there less than a year, he said. Do you get lonely? Yes, I miss my family all the time.

All good men missed their families. They agreed and clinked bottles. Of course, the families did not know they frequented bars and drank alcohol and invited the devil into their beds.

"I am Joe. What's your name?"

"Sam."

"Good to meet you, Sam."

"And you."

"Back home I was a dentist," the shaved-headed man said. But his certificate was useless in Canada. In a year or two, he said, he would go back to school and upgrade his papers. But everyone said that, the dream easier spoken of than accomplished.

They talked of being immigrants, of the ridiculousness of all things Western and the treacherous stranglehold the West had on world affairs. Their bottles were empty now.

The younger man bought another round. He was already on his third, stumbling when he stood to use the bathroom.

"Let me help you."

The older man took him by the arm and led him to the urinals. They stood side by side looking down, the older man's hands lingering, stretching and letting go with a snap before the stream of piss came with an impressive splash.

He looked over. "We are friends, yes? Same-same? You and I?" He rubbed two fingers together in case the other hadn't already got the message.

The younger man nodded, a lamb drawn to the slaughter.

"Yes, brother. I like you."

"Come, habibi. We've had enough drink. It is time for us to go and make ourselves better friends together, away from this place."

Excerpted from Shadow Puppet by Jeffrey Round ©2019. All rights reserved.

Published by Dundurn Press (dundurn.com)

Shadow Puppet is available February 2019, from Dundurn www.dundurn.com

Other novels in the Dan Sharp Mystery series include, Lake on The Mountain, Pumpkin Eater, The God Game, After The Horses, The Jade Butterfly

Jeffrey Round is the Lambda Award-winning author of the Dan Sharp mystery series and Endgame, dubbed a "punk rock reboot" of an Agatha Christie classic. His first two books were listed on AfterElton.com's 50 Best Gay Books. He lives in Toronto. www.jeffreyround.com



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Community Cornerstone

by Kelly Wilk

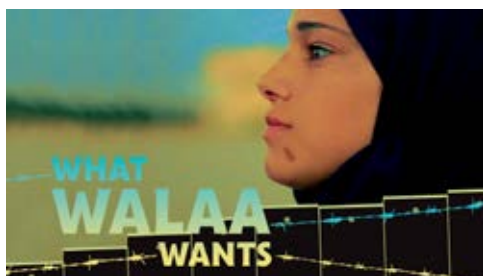
Sitting down with publicist **Jennifer Mair** of the **National Film Board of Canada (NFB)**, I was excited to explore the topic of representation in film. “We’re about allowing people to tell their own stories, rather than outsiders coming in. Documentary filmmaking is about the authenticity of the voice, and real communities being depicted on film,” she explains.

The NFB produces on average of a hundred English and French projects a year, ranging from documentary, and animation, to fiction-based films. Mair has her plate full doing publicity for work that casts an eye on national and international issues. In the documentary, *What Walaa Wants*, director **Christy Garland** discovered a young Palestinian girl while shooting in the West Bank with a Danish artist who was doing digital storytelling workshops in conflict zones. Over a period of five or six years Garland worked with the aide of translators to capture this young woman’s rebellious journey becoming a policewoman in the Palestinian Security Forces (PSF).

Closer to home is a film I am intrigued to see, *1999*, by **Samara Chadwick**, that was inspired by her experience returning to her high school in New Brunswick to speak with students about the suicides that occurred in that year. On the NFB website the synopsis reads that it is a project exploring the “lyrical study of memory and trauma, and the elusiveness of language that you face when comforting grief.” This film approaches the horrible topic of people having to grieve en masse, but in creating a film like this I believe that it not only creates a vehicle for communication, but also an opportunity to collectively heal.

Queer producer **Justine Pimlott** is in the early production stage of five short films tentatively titled ‘Five at 50’, that chronicle LGBTQ2S identity 50 years after the decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada. “The NFB has a long history of telling queer stories and working with queer filmmakers. There are just so many stories and angles, and very different issues that can be explored under the LGBTQ umbrella,” says Mair.

It’s clear that the organization doesn’t shy away from politics or controversial subjects, however another area they explore is technology. “We want to push



the boundaries of storytelling, to create new forms and language, and provide the space to do that experimentation,” remarks Mair.

In *Draw Me Close*, former technology skeptic and multi-disciplinary queer artist **Jordan Tannahill** has created this super intimate and very moving project that blurs the worlds of live performance, virtual reality and animation to create a vivid memoir about the relationship between a mother and her son, in the wake of her terminal cancer diagnosis. Weaving theatrical storytelling with cutting-edge technology, the performance allows the audience member to take the part of protagonist and experience life as Jordan inside a live, animated world.

With a panache for telling stories and such a dedicated team, the NFB is gearing up for a new phase in the life of their organization. They will continue to make older projects available online, while blasting towards new territory and maintaining their position in the collective minds of Canadians, that brings the world to us, and us to the world!

Visit the National Film Board website for more information on all the great films and events they present. www.nfb.ca. Also, mark your calendar for the 80th anniversary of the NFB on May 2nd, and the Grand Opening of their new headquarter in Montreal on November 7th.


Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to a six-year-old, red-headed, Irish, Aries boy who is growing up way too fast. Follow “The Ginger Gent” on PinkPlayMags blog page, and Brave. Creative. Me at www.kellywilk.ca.



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by Sherry Sylvain

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Glad Day Bookshop, 499 Church St., Toronto

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www.gladdaybookshop.com

Tip: If you can read half of the above description easily, and the other half is somewhat challenging, maybe this is an event you should consider.

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back—In Concert

March 20 – 23

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

The battle for the galaxy intensifies in this thrilling fifth episode of the unfolding saga. As Imperial Forces launch an all-out attack on the Rebel Alliance, Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) flee to Cloud City where they are captured by Darth Vader. Screened with a live orchestra playing the score.

www.tso.ca

Tip: Know the difference between, “May the force be with you” and, “Live long and prosper” or you may find yourself less than popular.

Toronto Pflag Film Screening: Gender Revolution

March 26; 5:30 p.m.

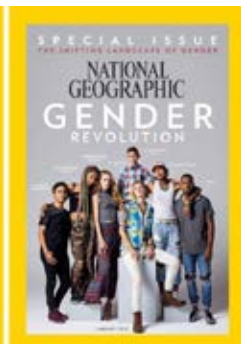
Runnymede United Church, 432 Runnymede Rd., Toronto

A screening of National Geographic’s “Gender Revolution”, hosted by Katie Couric. This FREE screening and Q&A is presented by Toronto Pflag volunteers. “Gender Revolution” is an engaging film that delves into beginner’s understanding of Gender 101 and touches on advanced conversations relating to gender.

www.torontopflag.org

Tip: Go with one of your best trans or non-binary friends.

Go if you have no trans or non-binary friends, and learn the basics of gender identity.



Toronto Yoga Show

March 29 to 31; from 10:00 a.m. daily

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front St. W., Toronto

Enjoy three FREE days of Yoga in the Yoga Garden. Connect with 300 like minded exhibitors, enjoy a glass of wine in the new Wine Garden. There are also classes available under separate cover, priced per class, booked and paid in advance. www.theyogaconference.com/toronto/

Tip: *Comfy clothes, and bring your own yoga mat, blanket, belt, blocks and whatever other yoga prop you might normally use for your practice.*

Mingle

March 29; 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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

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(Toronto's only social event for the HIV+ Community and their allies). For the first event of the season they are partnering with Ontario Positive Asians - OPA+ as a fundraiser. There is NO COVER; but, donations will be accepted at the door, and there is a raffle with prizes. Support this important HIV/AIDS organization while networking and socializing. They welcome everyone and encourage you to bring your friends. www.buddiesinbadtimes.com

Tip: *Take a nice chunk of change for donations and raffle tickets, as well as for the bar.*

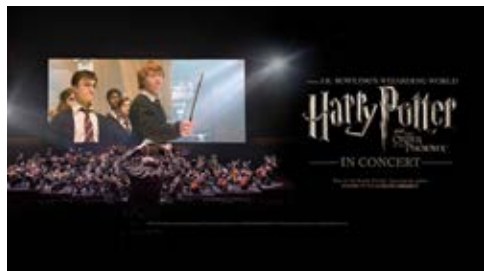
Classic Albums Live: The Band "The Last Waltz"

March 29; 8:00 p.m.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

Classic Albums Live and its roster of A-list musicians from across the country perform rock favourites exactly as you remember hearing them, note for note, cut for cut. The Last Waltz was advertised as the Band's farewell concert appearance, held on Nov 25, 1976. The concert hosted many special guests including Eric Clapton, Ringo Starr, Bob Dylan, Ronnie Wood, Muddy Waters, Neil Young, Neil Diamond, Van Morrison, Bobby Charles, Dr. John, Paul Butterfield, Emmylou Harris, Ronnie Hawkins, Joni Mitchell, and The Staple Singers. www.roythomsonhall.com

Tip: *I'd hit the local thrift shop and try to attend this event in my best mid-70's attire.*



The Oresteia by Aeschylus / Translation by Ted Hughes

April 2 to 6

Annex Theatre, 730 Bathurst St., Toronto

Faced with the choice of killing his daughter, Iphigenia, or losing a war, Agamemnon brutally murders his child and unleashes a chain of vengeance that rips through his family. When he returns home victorious, he is murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra. Their son, Orestes, returns from exile to avenge the crime by killing his mother, incurring the wrath of the Furies and the judgment of the court of Athens. www.randolphcollege.ca

Tip: *Since this is actually a trilogy of Greek tragedies, written in the 5th century B.C., plan on a longer than average theatre experience, and take a brainy friend you've been dying to impress.*

Torque: Animal Triste

April 11 to 13

Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W., Toronto

A study of the nature and posture of humanity – poor and perishable one day, free and triumphant the next. Though human beings know that life is finite, they deny their mortality. They conquer, dominate, oppress. And procreate. Visceral and highly charged, "Animal Triste" will ask you to investigate how our instincts actually drive our relationships, despite our blinding delusions. www.harbourfrontcentre.com

Tip: *Take transit, or something that doesn't require you to drive; parking and traffic are quite difficult in the area.*

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix In Concert

May 2 to 4

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto

Featuring the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. For the first time ever, audiences can rediscover the magic of Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix while a live symphony orchestra performs Nicholas Hooper's unforgettable score, and Harry Potter soars across the big screen in high-definition. www.sonycentre.ca

Tip: *Don't be a muggle.*

Canadian Music Week

May 6 to 12

Various venues throughout Toronto

A celebration of Canadian music at various venues throughout the city, featuring performance, workshops, discussion groups, and more. www.cmw.net

Tip: *Check the website to choose from a vast array of performers, locations, days and times.*



Classic Albums Live: Led Zeppelin Houses of the Holy

May 10; 8:00 p.m.

Roy Thomson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., Toronto

Classic Albums Live and its roster of A-list musicians from across the country perform rock favourites exactly as you remember hearing them, note for note, cut for cut. Houses of the Holy is the fifth studio recorded album from Led Zeppelin and their first containing entirely original material, with some of their most well-known songs - No Quarter, The Song Remains the Same, Over the Hills and Far Away. The album is certified 11-times platinum.

www.roythomsonhall.com

Tip: Do NOT take acid before or during this concert. After is up to you.

Toronto Poutine Fest

May 24 to 26; from 11:00 a.m.

Yonge-Dundas Square, 1 Dundas St. E., Toronto

That wondrous, distinctly Canadian creation of french fries, cheese curds and gravy – and various incarnations. Featuring live music, over 50 varieties of poutine from the best food trucks across Ontario and Quebec and lots more. This is the second annual edition of this event.

www.poutinefestontour.com

Tip: Go hungry. Wear loose pants, or something with an elastic waistband.

Torque: LOT X

May 29 to June 2

Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W., Toronto

This site-specific piece holds a magnifying glass to the very land we are standing on and the people we stand with.

Explore and challenge questions of ownership, intimacy and sharing, while the performers move with you through physical and virtual spaces. Your perspective will shift as you choose where you want to be. Move beyond the confines of the theatre to experience an amplified awareness of our urban space.

www.harbourfrontcentre.com

Tip: Bad traffic and parking may be more than the reason you choose not to drive; these may be areas worthy of reflection after seeing this show.

Jane Siberry

May 31 to June 2; 8:30 p.m.

Hugh's Room, 2261 Dundas St. W., Toronto

Iconic and enigmatic; Jane Siberry is one of the world's most unique and gifted singer/songwriters. Blessed with a sincere integrity and emotional depth, her work has spanned three decades, with the release of 14 studio albums, and performances on concert stages around the world.

www.hughsroomlive.com

Tip: Check the web site; the shows are a little different each night.

Ghostbusters in Concert

June 8; 7:30 p.m.

Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, 1 Front St. E., Toronto
Experience Ivan Reitman's two-time Oscar and two-time Golden Globe-nominated film, screened live as an orchestra performs Elmer Bernstein's Grammy-nominated score and Ray Parker Jr.'s Billboard Hot 100 chart-topping theme song, "Ghostbusters."

www.sonycentre.ca

Tip: Do NOT take slime with you. Do take someone who has never experienced the fabulosity of this classic.



Toronto True Crime Film Festival

June 14 and 15

Revue Cinema, 400 Roncesvalles Ave., Toronto

A two-day film festival dedicated to true crime on the big screen and beyond. This is the second annual festival.

15% of all ticket sales will be donated to charity.

www.torontotruecrimefilmfestival.com

Tip: Wear your trench coat and deerstalker; carry a pipe and magnifying glass.

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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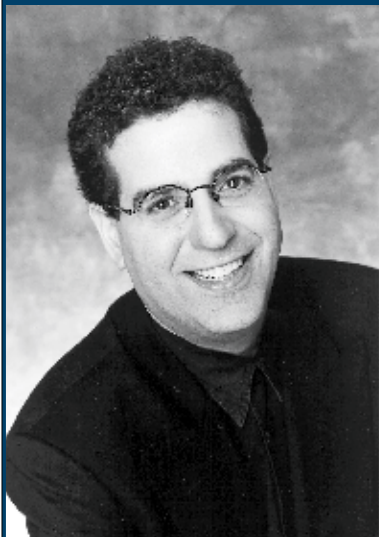
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From The Heart

By Mychol Scully

I was an avid science fiction reader at an early age. As a socially awkward 10-year-old, I didn't hang out with a lot of friends; preferring to spend time alone immersed in alternate universes and sci-fi adventures.

So when *Barbarella* hit the theatres back in 1968, I absolutely HAD to see it! Based on a comic book from France, it starred a 19-year-old Jane Fonda in the title role. It was a campy romp through a comic book universe, with a million crazy costumes, surreal sets and cheesy special effects. It was also rated PG, which meant I had to convince my mother to escort me! How I convinced her that we had to go see this movie, I have no idea. The opening scene of Ms. Fonda performing a weightless space suit striptease must have totally freaked my mom out.

Spoiler alert: I was fascinated by the weightless special effects and more or less unmoved by the nubile young Ms. Fonda's presence on the screen.

AND THEN...

There appeared on the screen a character named Pygar (played by a young John Phillip Law). He was a blind angel, dressed in a white feather loincloth with enormous white feather wings, a chest to die for and the most mesmerizing eyes. At age ten, I had the sudden realization that I might not be "like the other boys." Pygar took my breath away and gave me butterflies in my stomach. I could not look away. He was the most breathtakingly beautiful man I'd ever seen.

My visceral reaction to seeing Pygar on the screen awakened something in me that had been lying dormant. All of a sudden I was noticing men everywhere. There was the window cleaner at my elementary school, washing my second-floor classroom windows on a ladder, shirtless under his coveralls open to THERE. My home room teacher, with her

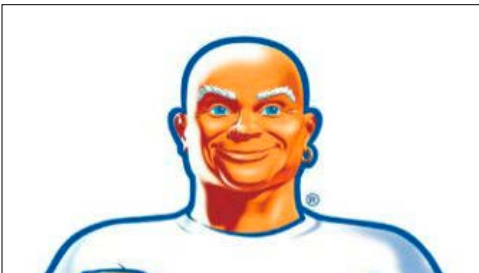


beehive hairdo, left me cold, but my gym teacher with his skin tight T-shirts and loose track pants fascinated me.

I'd always been a fan of movies set in ancient times. I had an abiding scholastic interest in ancient Egypt, so Ben Hur was a staple every Easter. Only now... Charlton Heston was MUCH more interesting! His scenes as a slave, bound and glistening with sweat, were absolutely hypnotic to this randy kid.

Later, when the original Planet of the Apes was released, Mr. Heston reprised his scanty Ben Hur slave costume as the rebellious human who challenged the apes' status quo. The casual way he moved from scene to scene while practically naked, his thighs exposed all the way to his buttocks, represented to me at the time some masculine ideal to which I could only hope to aspire.

Even the Mr. Clean animated ads of my youth held sway. That impossibly tight white T-shirt



was like a flame to the moth. Whenever I heard that TV commercial jingle, I'd come running. Given that my parents were (and are) committed TV addicts, I never missed a chance to catch a glimpse of the Mr. Clean character.

Five decades later, these iconic images of masculinity still thrill me. While my taste in men is much more diverse now, these manly men still hold a special place in my heart (and loins).

I don't believe these formative and influential experiences were unique to me. It's a fact that media shapes our expectations and our perceptions of the world around us. Whether straight, gay or otherwise, the media we're exposed to in our early years does shape, at least in part, what we think of as "the way things are." Thank you to Pygar, Charlton Heston and Mr. Clean for showing me to me and unlocking my abiding appreciation for the male form in all its variations.

Mychol Scully is Senior Art Director for INspired Media Inc. publications PinkPlayMags, theBUZZ, The Local Biz Magazine, and The Pink Pages Directory. Mychol is available for thoughtful conversation or lascivious teasing anytime at mychol@mychol.com.



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Spring Horoscopes

by Julie Antoinette

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

A painful event has caused you to be decisive about the end of a pattern in your life that has outgrown its place. This decision point marks a new trajectory for you, which will be incredibly fruitful. However painful this event was, immense gratitude is in order. Also, congrats on your courage.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

Ever the pleasure-seeker, you're searching for new ways to have fun. What you don't realize is that hidden negative beliefs have formed a blockage within you that is preventing the fullness of the pleasure you seek. Rumi said, "Seek not for love, but seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it." Tweak and apply this wisdom in your case as needed.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

It's been an excruciatingly long winter for you, Gemini. Something about the warm weather and long sunny days make you feel in your element. If you didn't get away to a sunny destination this past winter, you deeply regret it. Springtime holds the promise of the return of your better moods. Load up on vitamin D in the meantime.

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

You have been bitten by the declutter bug as spring cleaning activities take over your abode full force. With every toss of trash or donation to your local thrift store, you are incrementally enjoying the sweet liberation of freed up energy. You survey your cleared surroundings and rejoice in the reclamation of each cubic meter of space restored. Enjoy the sense of lightness and flow.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

Your attention, care and focus is greatly required by your family at this time. There is an issue, or need that must be addressed in a way that only you are able. Others are relying on you to demonstrate a sense of leadership and responsibility so that safety and security are unquestioned. A Leo must look after his pride.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

You find yourself in the midst of a conflict between two opposing personalities. The problem is that you have love and devotion for both of them. Be careful not to allow yourself to think you have to choose one side over the other. Your role is to love and support each person based on your relationship with them respectively. The conflict is not your conflict.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

Lately, you've grown tired of the state of your living space. You want to change it up, liven it up, do something — anything — to avoid looking at the same old décor day after day. You've been doing some research into interior design to get some ideas. The trouble is, there are so many ideas to choose from! Simplicity is key. Choose a theme and go with it.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

You've had a tough few months Scorpio, but the change in season also represents the turning of a metaphorical page for you. No need to have your guard up or wonder when the other shoe is going to drop. The universe knows you need a break and is delivering a nice one right to your door. Just answer already!

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

Uh oh... that feeling hasn't left for weeks now... The constant nudge of dissatisfaction with your career has got you worried that if you don't take action soon, a festering of dissatisfaction may erupt. It's not the money, it's the lack of personal fulfillment. If you can find a hobby that will give you that sense of fulfillment you seek, this may ease the tension.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

Is there trouble in paradise? Lately, the friction between you and your significant other has reached uncomfortable levels. Under the surface, there are truths that remain unexpressed because of fear of upsetting or losing the other. If you could both somehow master the art of gentle expression, and non-judgmental listening, you could turn this friction into sparks! (The good sparks).

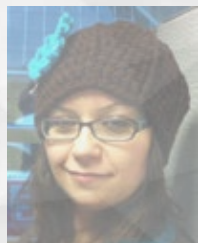
Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

Someone who loves you has really hurt you. What you must understand is that this person is afraid to love you even though they unquestionably do. They are afraid of love in general because someone who didn't know how to love, hurt them, and they don't know anything different about love. This is an opportunity for both of you to heal old wounds and new ones together.

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Recently, something about listening to music really grips and stirs you deeply. Sometimes it's the lyrics and sometimes it's the musical arrangements or sounds. You feel it. It's alive and is conjuring emotions in the depths of you that want to surface. What will result, if you let it, will be equivalent to 10 years of therapy.

Julie is a Sociology and Psychology graduate, a Psychotherapy Intern and a lifelong student of the psyche. She seeks to relay intuitive messages of guidance from the collective astrological archetypes. As above, so below.



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Looking Back

by Joey Viola

2018 was a huge year for queer visibility, and it's amazing to see so many LGBTQ+ stories being told in Hollywood. However, while tinsel town boasts inclusivity and diversity in cinema, the majority of queer characters are still portrayed by straight, cisgender actors. Despite this fact there were some stand-out performances by several immensely talented LGBTQ+ actors in 2018 as well. Here's my list of some of the most proud, dynamic and accomplished queer film actors from the past year:

Tessa Thompson in "Annihilation"

The bisexual star of *Thor: Ragnarok*, and the upcoming *MIB: International*, stars in this sci-fi adaptation alongside Gina Rodriguez, and although Rodriguez portrays a gay character in the film, it's Tessa Thompson's visibility as a queer woman of colour that makes *Herstory*.

Ezra Miller in "Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald"

The androgynous Ezra Miller has had roles as The Flash in *Justice League*, and Credence Dumbledore in the *Fantastic Beasts* series, including most recently, *The Crimes of Grindelwald*.

Lena Waithe in "Ready Player One"

This screenwriter, producer and actress has a role in *Ready Player One* that is short but sweet, yet it lands her some major queer visibility in one of the biggest sci-fi/fantasy blockbusters of 2018.

Keiynan Lonsdale in "Love, Simon"

While Nick Robinson plays the title character of *Simon*, it's Lonsdale who steals everyone's heart.



Hari Neff in "Assassination Nation" and "Mapplethorpe"

Trans actress, model, and writer Hari Neff made her big screen debut in 2018 kicking ass as an openly trans teen in *Assassination Nation*, and also as a wild Andy Warhol associate in *Mapplethorpe*.

Troye Sivan in "Boy Erased"

The South African-born Australian singer, songwriter, and actor makes his way onto the big screen, and although Lucas Hedges plays the main character in the true story adaptation of *Boy Erased*, it's Sivan who leaves an equally lasting impression.

Briana Hildebrand in "Deadpool 2"

Hildebrand impressed audiences as a lesbian superhero named Negasonic Teenage Warhead in both *Deadpool* and *Deadpool 2*. This marked her visibility as a huge LGBTQ+ milestone in queer cinema, and a first for any Marvel superhero movie, ever.

Shangela and Willam in "A Star Is Born"

When two of *RuPaul's Drag Race* alumni graced the big screen in *A Star Is Born*, the popular *Drag Queens* marked the first appearance for any *Drag Queen* in an Oscar-nominated film.

Joey Viola is the Co-Founder of MoJo Toronto and an LGBTQ community leader who utilizes his passion and flair for the art of writing by bringing a fresh perspective in reviewing entertainment and advocating for equality, tolerance, and social/political justice.





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