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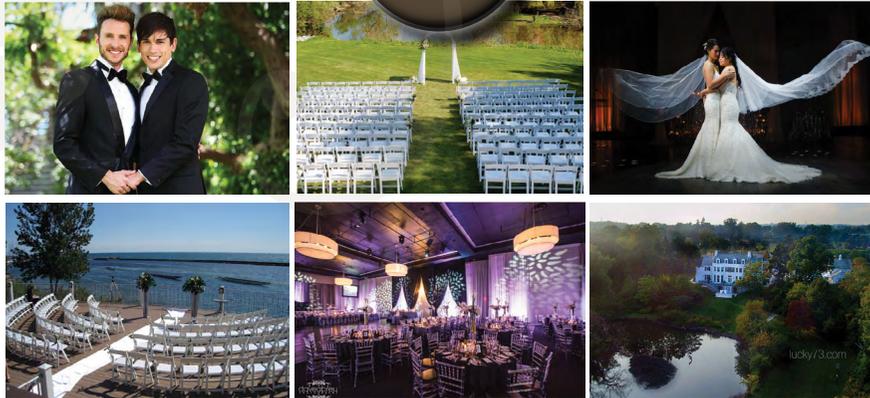
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Our "From the Publisher" feature will be back next edition...

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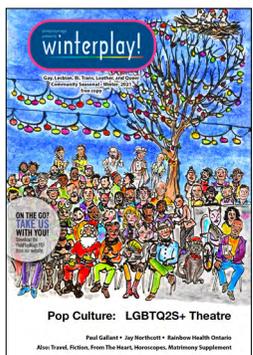
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Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, Queer, and Two-Spirit
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Free • Winter 2021

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Cover Pop Culture: LGBTQ2S+ THEATRE
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From the Editor

Greetings and salutations!

Our four-part *Pop Culture* editorial concludes with a look at how *Theatre* has been influenced by LGBTQ+ individuals throughout the years. Aaron Rothermund provides a detailed look back to the early work of pioneers from **Shakespeare's** “drag” ensembles and the campness of **Mae West**, to the provocative works of **Brad Fraser** and **Alec Butler**, and up to today's trailblazers, **Monyan King**, **Trey Anthony**, **d'bi young**, and **Bilal Baig**.

In our second feature, writer Mandy Goodhandy spoke with three queer theatre personalities who continue to push boundaries by providing proper representation within the LGBTQ+ community and beyond. **Fay Nass** is the Artistic Director for both *The Frank Theatre Company* and *Aphotic Theatre*, based out of Vancouver, and discusses working in today's changing environment. **Nick May** is the Artistic Director of *Theatre Topikós*, and also producer of the *Toronto Queer Theatre Festival*, and explains how today is all about finding the right balance. **Sky Gilbert** is the co-founder of *Buddies in Bad Times Theatre*, and discusses how to play the game within the industry.

We have a wonderful *Travel* article on how to make the most of our winter in Ontario. Our *Fiction* piece is *Still More Stubborn Stars*, by **Paul Gallant**, a comic,



moving and sometimes thrilling drama across four decades of Prince Edward Island life, and our *Hot Artist* feature is with **Jay Northcott**, a multi-disciplinary artist, theatre-maker and mentor. The *Community Cornerstone* column spotlights **Rainbow Health Ontario**, a Toronto based organization that aims to educate health care workers around best practices to address specific LGBTQ+ needs.

Be sure to check our quarterly horoscopes, and our event listings which remain mostly [virtual](#), compiled by our Events Editor, **Sherry Sylvain**. The always inspiring *From The Heart* column is written by **Mychol Scully**, our very creative Art Director, who also designs this publication for us. As well, we have our annual **Matrimony Supplement** providing tips for those who are planning a future wedding ceremony. A special thank you goes to our cover illustrator, [SK Dymont](#), who once again has created a colourful depiction of our community.

Enjoy the read!

Bryen Dunn
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Ceremonial Traditions

By Bryen Dunn

So, you've found the love of your life, and have decided to make it official. Congratulations!

One of the most significant aspects of getting married are the ceremonial aspects. We've highlighted a few suggestions around the more traditional aspects, that of course can be adjusted to your own individual liking. We take a look at the inclusion of wine, roses, and candles, and the significant role each adds to your ceremonial event. As well, we offer advice on how best to involve children, should either, or both, partners already be parents.

Rose Ceremony

Roses symbolize love, and there are a number of creative ways to incorporate a rose ceremony into your big day. A single red rose always means "I love you". Your gift to each other for your wedding are your wedding rings, which symbolize an outward demonstration of your vows of love and respect, and a public showing of your commitment to each other. Marriage is a coming together of two lives, and a celebration of the love of two people. As you embrace one another in your love, so too do you embrace the families which have been brought together on this happy occasion. Often, the couple will give

each of their mothers a rose as a token of their love for family. This can be extended to include other members of the family or even to mark the absence of a loved one (by placing the rose in a vase). Roses can also be exchanged as the couple's first gift to one another as a married couple. This is often regarded as the start of a tradition in which the couple gift each other a rose every year on their anniversary. This is seen both as a re-commitment to your marriage, and a re commitment that this is a marriage based upon love.

Candle Ceremony

Just before the wedding vows, the parents of the couple come forward (or other family members, children etc.) and light one candle for each. Then the couple light the centre candle together from these two outside candles. This Unity candle symbolizes the joining of their families, the merging of two individuals, and the creation of a blended family. The two outside candles have been lit to symbolize the union of two individuals, and their two families. The three candles will remain lit throughout the ceremony, as symbols of the commitment to each other, and to a lasting and loving marriage.



Wine Ceremony

The rose is the symbol of love, and the blending of the red and white wine creates a light pink rose wine, celebrating the love of the new couple. Before the wedding begins, red wine and white wine, each in a small carafe, are placed next to a larger empty carafe with one or two wineglasses on a small table near the couple. The centre carafe, called the "Marriage Carafe" is usually a bit larger than the two outside individual carafes. A single glass of rose wine is placed on a table, from which both partners will each drink after the reading and ring exchange. The couple proceeds to the table and each takes an individual carafe and pours some wine into the larger carafe. One then takes the larger filled carafe with the combined wine and pours some in a glass for the other, which is then repeated in reverse order. Each would then offers a toast, such as, "Now our lives are one" or "To our lives together", and drinks

Involvement of Children

If either partner has children, it's especially important to involve them in the ceremony to make them feel welcome into their new family unit. It is generally best to give a younger child only one active role, while with teenagers it may be something more significant. For younger children, usually the simple



task of holding the rings or bouquet is enough to accomplish a sense of participation. For teenagers, the role may be playing the wedding music, or taking pictures of the ceremony. Mentioning a child's name during the wedding assures that they are an important part of the occasion. Typically, couples may give children a gift right after they exchange their own rings and vows, usually a necklace, medallion, rose, or ring. It's also advisable to allow your children to come up and sign part of the official documents at the signing of the register. When children are coming into the marriage, it is appropriate to mention in the ceremony that not only is a marriage being formed, but also a new family.

Be sure to visit [Gay Weddings Ontario](#) for all the professional assistance you require on your big day.

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.





Queer Representation in Theatre

By Aaron Rothermund

For the LGBTQ2S+ community, participating in theatre has always been a way to explore ourselves in relationship to society.

It allows us a safe place for self-realization, and to connect with other like-minded individuals. Being positively represented on the stage means public acknowledgment and personal empowerment in the medium in which all social life bloomed.

Ancient Greece gave us a glimpse of an alternative lifestyle in the stories of same-sex relationships and gender transformation. They were one of the first civilizations to use male actors in drag (fake stomachs, breasts, and hips) to look more feminine, and pale stockings to appear lighter skinned.

As women were legally restricted from acting on stage, “dressing in drag” also became a popular technique in classic British theatre. Some researchers believe that the word “drag” comes from an acronym,

and others believe the term referred to an actor’s dragging costume. Later **Shakespeare** would famously scribble the term “drag” in his plays, and young males would adorn a wig to play the ingénue.

Most plays followed the heteronormative formula completely erasing any deviation from the norm. When the queer lifestyle was presented, it was loudly pronounced in sensational drag characters, or referenced as criminals (thieves, murderers, addicts, and prostitutes). Healthy same-sex partnerships were hidden, coded, or downgraded as “sisters,” “roommates,” or “close friends.”

By the late 1920s, **Mae West** famously wrote, “*The Drag: A Homosexual Comedy in Three Acts*” in favorable treatment of gay people. The show was ill received by the public and West was arrested for general indecency. Then in 1927, New York City quickly passed the “padlock bill,” prohibiting queer stories on the Broadway stage.

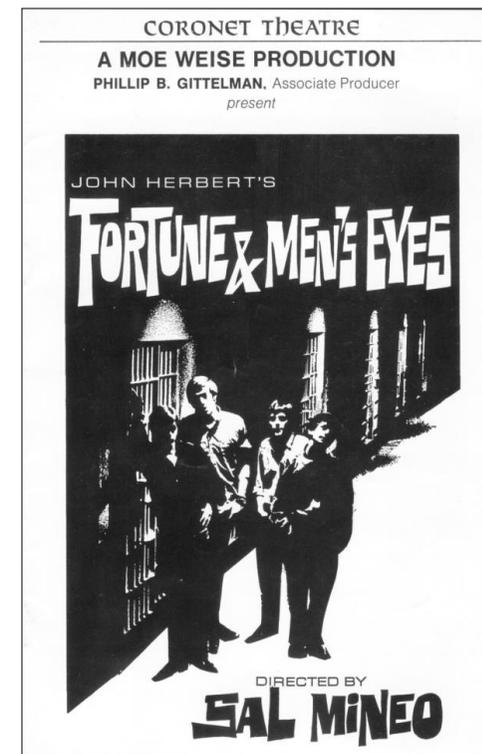
Although many LGBTQ+ individuals were working behind the scenes in skilled trades or creative

positions, the political climate made it difficult for the queer community to live openly. Sometime around 1957, **Tennessee Williams** secretly wrote, “*And Tell Sad Stories of the Deaths of Queens*” featuring Candy, a lead character born into a male body but living her life presenting as a female. This one-act play introduced us to a fully nuanced queer character in a position of power that also happened to be involved in a tragic love affair with a brutish sailor. Williams kept this theatrical treasure hidden from the public, but it was published and produced after the playwright’s death.

In 1964, two publicly presented one-act plays detailed how gay characters could be considerably modernized. “*The Madness of Lady Bright*” by **Lanford Wilson** centered on a drag queen recounting her bittersweet memories of love and loss, and for the first time in modern history a drag character publicly appeared as a human and not a deviant. The second play, “*The Haunted Host*” by **Robert Patrick** presented Jack, an out and proud non-sensational main character finding fulfillment through sovereign artistic practices. These plays marked a major cultural turning point, considering the outright censorship that gay playwrights faced in the preceding decades.

In 1967, **John Herbert** meditated on how the prison system is corrupt, and leads to sexual slavery in “*Fortune and Men’s Eyes*” which was based on Herbert’s own experience of being attacked, while in drag, outside a gay bar. When the police arrived, Herbert was then convicted of indecency by the testimony of the attackers. He was incarcerated in the Ontario Reformatory in Guelph, and witnessed unrelenting sexual assault, rape, and violence. “*Fortune and Men’s Eyes*” has been translated in over 40 languages, produced in over 100 countries, and has won numerous awards for its stark portrayal of the innocence lost.

By 1968, **Mart Crowley** opened his play, “*Boys in the Band*,” which featured a large cast of distinct gay characters, which opened the door for more playwrights to contemplate multiple gay story arcs. Then in 1969, homosexuality was decriminalized in Canada, the same year that the Stonewall Rights protests happened in New York City, decrying police brutality and marching for the right to gather.



In 1973, French-Canadian writer, **Michel Tremblay** premiered his remarkable play, “*Hosanna*” in Montreal. After the play was translated into English by **John Van Burek** and **Bill Glassco**, it was presented in Toronto the following year. This marked the first time in Canadian theatrical history that a play was centered around and starring a drag queen. “*Hosanna*” referenced social expressions of identity, sexuality, and dressing in clothing opposite to one’s assigned gender. The play also acted as a vehicle in which to discuss the assimilation of the French culture through the lens of an aging queer Québécois.

By 1978, **Matt Walsh**, **Jerry Ciccoritti**, and **Sky Gilbert** founded *Buddies in Bad Times Theatre* to produce “theatrical poetry.” One year later, Buddies was incorporated with Gilbert acting as the Artistic Director. First appearing as a nomadic theatre company popping up at various locations, Buddies has been thriving in its’ permanent space, fostering early works by **Diane Flacks**, **Daniel MacIvor**,

Daniel Brooks, Sonja Mills, and Ann-Marie MacDonald.

Governor General's Award winning, **Brad Fraser** tested the edges of animalistic homosexuality in his short play, *Wolf Boy*. Originally produced in Alberta in 1981, the play travelled to Saskatoon in 1982, before making its way to Toronto in 1984, starring a sexually charged **Keanu Reeves**. Fraser also found critical success with his racy play, *Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love*. The play was first produced in Calgary by the *playRites Festival* in 1989, and it quickly sparked controversy for its brazen dialogue, violence, and nudity. The production follows sexually questioning individuals, and a serial killer terrorizing them in the cold Edmonton city streets.

In 1990, **Alec Butler** was nominated for a Governor General's Award for the play *Black Friday?* that was produced in Nova Scotia, and directed by **Bryden MacDonald**. Butler's work is devoted to provocative and entertaining theatre in the spirit of social change, seen through the lens of a two-spirited, non-binary, intersex, and trans person that was born on Cape Breton Island, of Mi'kmaq and French/Irish descent.

The early 2000's saw a rise in the quality of queer theatre with independent theatre festivals giving the power of curation to the artist. Rising star, **Moynan King** began developing the *Hysteria Festival* for women by women, co-directed the *Rhubarb Festival*, and also curated *Cheep Queers*, *Explain Yourself*, *Strange Sisters* and *City of Freaks*. Recently, King published an anthology of plays, interviews, and performances by emerging and established radical queer voices in Canada.

Trey Anthony produced her one-woman show *Da' Kink in my Hair* at the *Toronto French Festival* in 2001. Since then, the play has expanded to a multiple character story set in a Caribbean-style Jamaican hair salon, and has been produced in California, New York City, and London. It was also the first Canadian play to be produced at the *Princess of Wales Theatre*. The production was named one of the top ten plays in Canadian theatrical history, and won four *NAACP Theatre Awards*, several *Dora Mavor Moore Awards*, a *Gemini Award*, the *Eve Ensler Award of the Arts*, and the prestigious *Harry Jerome Award for the Arts*.

Between 2001-2016, **d'bi.young** performed her plays *Blood.Claat*, *Benu*, and *Word! Sound! Powah!* as part of *The Sankofa Trilogy* for various main stages and theatre festivals. She then quickly moved onto her next triptych, *The Orisha Trilogy* featuring *Esu Crossing the Middle Passage*, *Mami Wata & the PussyWitch Hunt*, and *Lukumi: A Dub Opera*. The third in the series, *The Ibeji Trilogy* features three biomyth plays: *Androgynne*, *Once Upon a Black Boy*, and *Concrete Jungle*. Her work contains music, poetry, dance, and drama that chronicles the quest for multi-dimensional Black womxn and genderqueer self-actualization.

By 2018, **Bilal Baig** premiered the play *Acha Bacha*, which was produced jointly by *Theatre Passe Muraille* and *Buddies in Bad Times Theatre*. The play featured a gay Pakistani/Canadian man struggling to reconcile his sexuality with his strict Muslim upbringing. The following year, Baig premiered an excerpt of the play, *Kitne Laloo Yahan Pey Hain*, at *Soulpepper Theatre* as part of *RARE Theatre's Welcome to my Underworld* project. In 2021, Baig co-created the celebrated CBC show, *Sort Of* with **Fab Filippo**. The show marked the first time a queer South Asian Muslim actor played a lead character on primetime television, and the first time a non-binary lead character was portrayed on Canadian television.

The new generation of artists are building upon the foundation set by the many queer trailblazers before them. They're constantly challenging theatrical techniques, developing new stories, and workshoping ideas publicly. This allows artists and audiences to sit in contemplation, process their emotions, and place emphasis on process and development.

Although mainstream theatre is becoming more inclusive in form and content, queer theatre will always show us that we can still have differences, while living together peacefully.

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



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OUT Onstage

By Mandy Goodhandy

plunged into music theatre back in the 70's, and had a fairly difficult time, first identifying as hetero, then bisexual, and then homosexual.

I can't even imagine what would have happened if I had completed my human experience as transgender. So, have things progressed over the years? I spoke with three individuals who were either founders, co-founders, or artistic directors of their own *Queer* and multi-race theatre companies.

Fay Nass is a community-engaged director, writer, dramaturg, innovator, producer and educator. They are the Artistic Director of *The Frank Theatre Company* and the founder/Artistic Director of *Aphotic Theatre* in Vancouver.

"I was interested in the notion of devised theatre, and wanted to investigate that practice more, along with how to incorporate more intersectional queer and BIPOC stories on pages and on stages," Fay begins. With the Aphotic Theatre, they wanted it to

be a company that works with non-theatre trained individuals. They are now moving in different directions as well, but that was the original intent. They still offered the same level of production values, aesthetic, and innovation, and stated, "I could see that the system was constantly providing obstacles."

I asked if they thought the theatre had moved forward regarding putting people into the typical two binary boxes regarding casting. Fay replied, "As a gender-queer masculine presenting person, that was why I moved from acting to directing. I was being told that I had to wear dresses, and I could never make it if I didn't. On the other hand, I wasn't masculine enough to be Stanley."

Fay feels that we are in this kind of era where the pendulum has to go to the next extreme in order for it to find equilibrium. Fay's opinion is, "I don't think we have necessarily moved forward. I think we have moved in a different direction". Fay states that the younger generation coming from marginalized communities want to write their own piece, and they want to act in it.

Fay also feels we are losing the other side. This younger generation just want to tell their own story, and only their story. Looking ahead, Fay thinks we have to go through this for another decade or so, until everyone feels, "Okay, I did occupy the space. I did play my part, my story, Now I can go and audition for other parts and other stories."

Nick May is an actor, and Artistic Director of *Theatre Topikós* in Toronto. He believes, "Things may have changed slightly, but I think there is a lot of room for it to get better. That's a role we want to play with the *Toronto Queer Theatre Festival*." He makes it clear that as a theatre collective they want to be representative of the entire spectrum of the LGBTQ+ community. "We were really proud of the Festival that we put together for 2020 before COVID disrupted things. We had non-binary, trans and people of colour, and that is something we look forward to having again in 2022."

So how does one balance between being diverse in their selections, yet still presenting quality work? He said, "I don't think one necessarily negates the other. For us it's about making sure that we are aware of how the story is being told and who is telling it, which means being really open-minded in the casting process. I don't think it should be looked at as filling your quota, but making sure that the process itself is inclusive."

Sky Gilbert is a writer, actor, academic, and drag performer. He was co-founder and past artistic director of *Buddies in Bad Times Theatre*. With some of the same background and longevity in the theatre world as myself, I wanted to see if Sky's thoughts were similar in thinking things haven't changed all that much over the past several decades. He shared, "I was in acting at York University at first, before switching over to drama studios. When I was acting, it was all about trying to get rid of what they called my 'mannerisms'. It wasn't that I couldn't do the other stuff, it was when I did the feminine stuff I would be much better."

As a result of this, he has continually mentored younger actors. He once worked with two young actors, one naturally effeminate, and one who could probably play 'straight' roles. Although both were very talented, he felt that one would probably leave the theatre, and the other could probably get an agent. He explained, "If you are an out gay actor



Fay Nass



Nick May

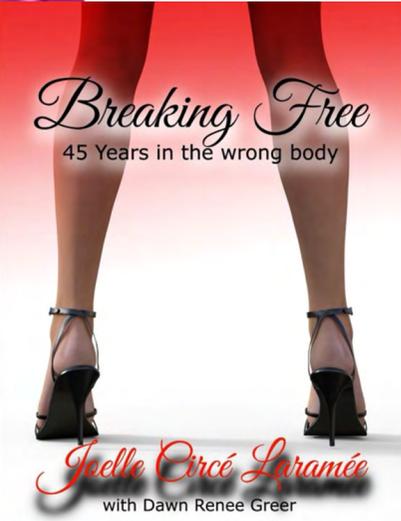
and you have an effeminate thing going on, that is probably problematic. Of course those doing the casting are not going to be openly against you, but they won't find a part for you because you are not part of the game." Despite these hurdles, he also has hope that in time this will improve and change.

In conclusion, it's not just casting directors, agents, and producers who must move ahead with the times, we have to rely on the storytellers to also be aware that things are not always cut and dry regarding their characterizations of binary male and female characters. This all could lead to a fabulous rainbow characterization within theatre, a rainbow that perhaps has always existed, but was too afraid to show its full true colours for fear of judgment of the times.

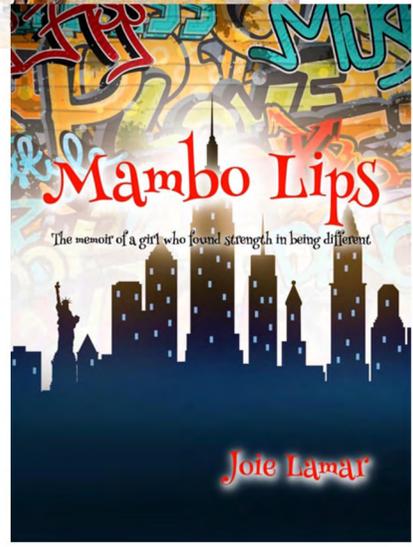
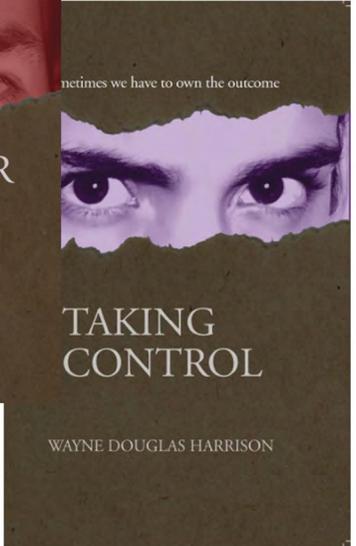
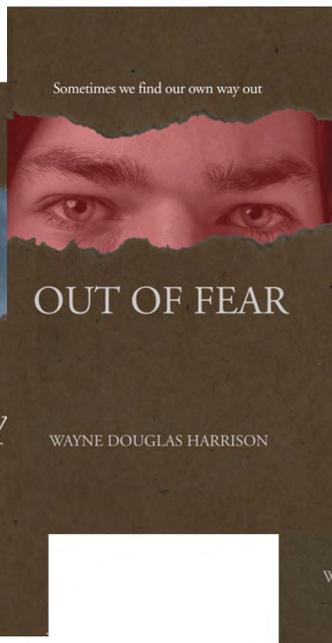
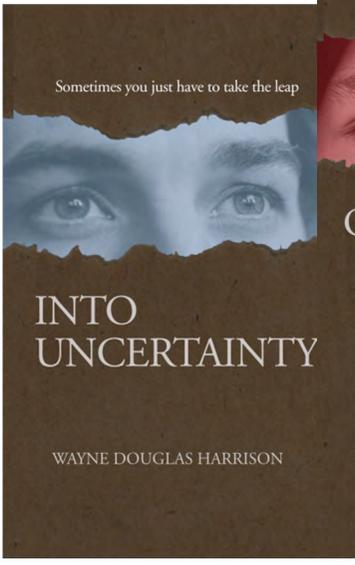
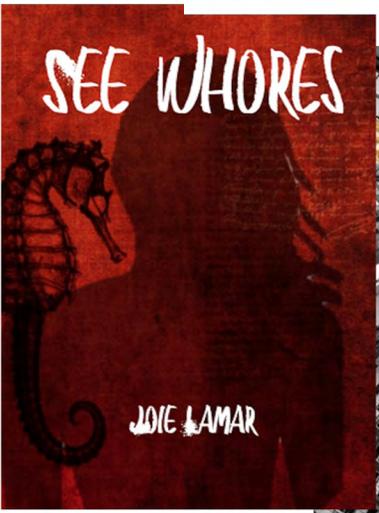
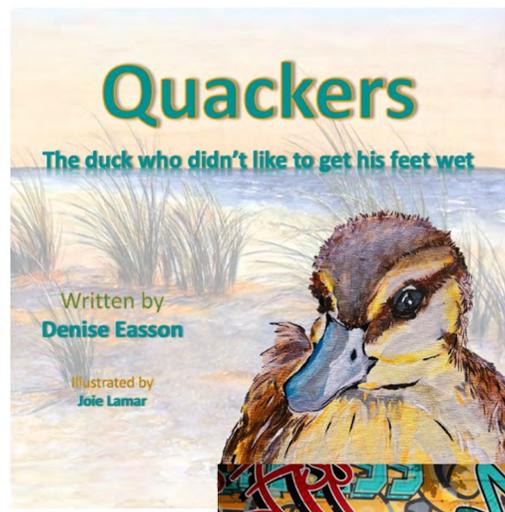
Mandy Goodhandy is a transgender woman; author, singer, comedian, and recording artist.

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Winter! There's no escaping it, so why not embrace it?

With over half a million freshwater lakes and rivers, and thousands of kilometres of coastline, from the Niagara Escarpment to the expansive Canadian Shield and northern boreal forests, Ontario is an outdoors natural playground. Whether you want to lace up a pair of skates and hit one of the many city rinks, or venture further north to try your hand at skiing, snowboarding, and snowmobiling. For something different, why not try ice climbing or snowkiting?

Over a dozen [Ontario provincial parks](#) remain open during the winter, offering groomed or tack-set cross-country ski trails, and even more offer designated snowshoe trails. [Conservation areas](#) and nature reserves are also great destinations for cross-country or snowshoeing adventure. Find an [Ontario ski hill, resort or club](#) near you. Prior to departure, be sure to check out the daily snow and ski conditions. The Canadian Adaptive Snowsports Program ([CADS Ontario](#)) is a ski program designed to enable people with special needs to enjoy the thrill of skiing and snowboarding.

With over 30,000 kilometres of marked and maintained trails, Ontario is the snowmobile capital of the world. Discover tour loops, find new trail systems, plan an epic ride, or find a great club event to join. The [Ontario Federation of Snowmobile](#)

[Club's \(OFSC\)](#) district members establish and maintain the best quality trails, loops and passages. Check out their [Interactive Trail Guide](#) and [snowmobile guide](#) to find out what you need to know before you head out on a snowmobile ride, and consider starting out on a [fully guided snowmobile tour](#) for your first few rides.

Just outside Thunder Bay is [Kakabeka Falls](#), a natural wonder that throws more water over its crest per minute than Niagara Falls. Now picture yourself riding less than 130 meters from the crest. There is no feeling more powerful than the thundering of these massive falls as you head out on a snowmobile adventure. The [North Western Ontario Trails Association](#) has three major loops that take riders through the entire region.

Not many people know this, but you can actually snowmobile directly between the US and Canada at two places in the northern region: Atikokan and Fort Frances. Going into the US, riders check in with a border agent via videophone, because of the remoteness of the location. Before you venture out, make sure you have both a [Minnesota](#) and [Ontario snowmobile permit](#). This is definitely one of those bragging right experiences that not many can claim.

The [Round Algonquin Park \(RAP\)](#) tour is an easy 3-day route that allows you to jump on at any point and go in either direction. The [Seguin Trail](#) cuts from [Parry Sound](#) on the shores of Georgian Bay all the way over to [Algonquin Provincial Park](#). [Highland](#)

[Wilderness Tours](#), near Maynooth, offers various guided tours that cater to everyone, from beginners to die hards, and there are family-friendly [Guided Tours at Deerhurst Resort](#) in Huntsville, or more advanced three-day adventures are offered from [Call Of The Wild](#), that begin in Haliburton. [Haliburton Forest](#) is one of the few private snowmobile trails found in the province, with over 300 km of trails, on-site snowmobile rentals, and dogsled tours if you want to add some variety to your adventure..

Ice climbing in Ontario is most definitely a bucket list item, as you haven't really hit your peak until you've scaled a frozen waterfall. Join [Outdoor Skills and Thrills](#) for fully outfitted and guided ice climbing excursions just outside Thunder Bay. Sault Ste. Marie's [Superior Exploration](#) can guide you to the best spots to climb in the Algoma region. Closer to Toronto, [One Axe Pursuits](#) offers great guided ice climbing adventures at Elora Gorge. Climb the best vertical ice challenges up granite cliffs in the hardwood forests of Muskoka with [Liv Outside](#), then opt for a full day climb with [Yours Outdoors](#) in Haliburton. For something fun, meet like minded adventurers at the [Southern Ontario Ice Festival](#) in Maynooth.

Snow kiting lets you experience the euphoria of surfing while soaring across a frozen lake or a snowy field. Clutch the controls of a kite, while combining the skills of waterskiing and snowboarding, then harness the power of Ontario's winter wind to give

you lift and speed. This adrenaline sport can be found not far from Toronto, in Collingwood, Wasaga, Georgina, Beaverton, and other heavy snowfall areas with good winds. [Kite Canada](#) offers customized fully equipped snowkiting lessons for any skill level on Lake Simcoe near Keswick, and they can also arrange skis or snowboard rentals too.

Okay, this all sounds exhausting, right! For something more relaxing, there are several skating trails throughout the province, with one of the more popular ones at [Arrowhead Park](#). If you're looking for something a bit closer to home, there are many Toronto area [skating rinks](#), along with two [ski and snowboard hills](#) to conquer your restlessness.

Visit [Destination Ontario](#) and [Resorts of Ontario](#) for all the information you need to organize your winter adventure.

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.

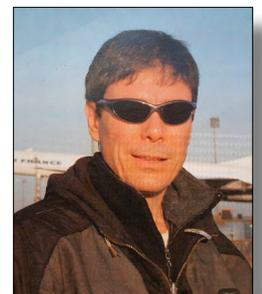




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"I really like to see the development of Generation Z. They are strong-minded and have emotional capacity," shares multi-disciplinary artist, theatre-maker, and mentor [Jay Northcott](#). "In my role as mentor, I help to hold that space and give them room to explore being trans, being queer, discovering their identity. Their pace of change is amazing."

Jay's schedule is significant. They work with Sheridan College directing new drafts in a program developing 30-minute radio plays. They are the Indigenous arts producer with [Paprika Festival](#). They are workshopping an independent production called *Parasite*. They co-facilitate the [ENBY Ensemble](#) with [Cahoots Theatre](#), and they are developing an exciting new program with [Obsidian Theatre](#).

Jay wears many hats and they all look fabulous. From their roots in Spruce Grove, Alberta to gracing, directing, and influencing stages across the country, Jay has a tremendous ability to connect with the folks they're around. At the same time, Jay also feels, absorbs and learns from all of the people they connect with. Like a double helix, Jay does a tremendous amount of work in both producing theatre and offering mentorship. These two parallels revolve around the common axis of visibility.

Being Black, Indigenous and Trans, Jay has not always been seen and felt represented—in theatre, on screen, in classrooms, and more. This has been part of the pull toward mentorship and teaching. "Teaching can create safer spaces to treat people like people, not like products," they state.

by Jon Pressick

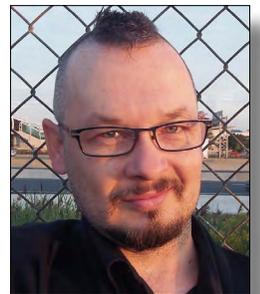
Hot Artist



But, let's not just paint Jay with their work brush. Jay is a self-described "bad-ass bitch who has a strong opinion and doesn't take shit." Their own credo is to be on time and work hard, but getting out to party and have fun are also critical. Jay looks at issues of professionalism in the Toronto theatre community and yearns for more expressive, spontaneous times, like the 1990s. They see a shift in purporting a clean-cut, upper class, gentrified demeanour in the scene that is artificial. "Theatre people will never be rich. Artists will only ever be middle class and there's no point in being snooty. I say 'fuck' a lot. I love to say 'fuck' and I'm not going to change myself."

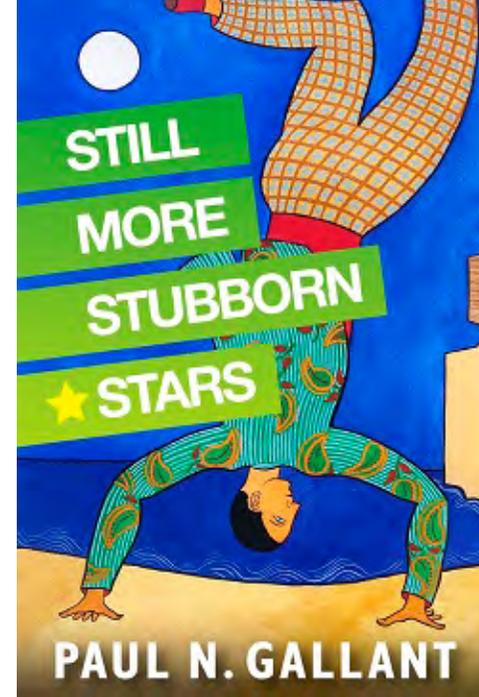
Want to catch Jay at the top of their bad-ass bitch game? Check out their drag performances as [Rosé Parks](#). "I created Rosé out of a love of making fun of white people. She's a venture capitalist who is after Daddy's money. She's out there to Nickelback." Jay is happy to be back out performing Rosé again—not only because it's fun, but these events are where social commentary happens. "As Rosé, in drag, I can say things I want to say, but I can't always say in person. But when I'm Rosé, I can say it and people laugh," Jay concludes.

Jon Pressick is a writer who focuses on sex and sexuality. View his work at sexinwords.ca



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Roger Niese has agreed to let his flighty younger brother Allan use the Acadian Cultural Centre for Allan's "Surf and Sand" event, an underground drag party the likes of which 1990s Prince Edward Island has never seen. Excerpt below.

On the night of Surf and Sand, the auditorium hall filled up, as did the parking lot, with many cars from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. There were escorts, too, in tuxedos, military uniforms, firefighters' coats. Beatrice found the uniforms especially thrilling. Tracey, though, put a "Retour en 15 minutes" sign on her counter and went to find Roger. He had been demoted to Allan's errand boy for the night, carrying chairs, popcorn, and cases of beer. Tracey found Roger in the little office off the auditorium stage which he liked to use when he wanted to hide from people.

"Roger, what kind of party is this?"

"One we absolutely must host every month if they keep buying booze at this rate."

"Have you seen these folks?"

"Beatrice says you've been on a bit of a tear all night. Is it because Allan doesn't get your jokes or because you don't get his?"

"Allan has jokes?" snapped Tracey. "I'm fine with it myself. I love the film Paris Is Burning. I'm just worried about what local people will think."

"They'll think their Centre is very well supported across the Maritimes by people of various interests." This wasn't necessarily true, Roger thought to himself, but it should be.

Stomping back to her post, Tracey found a twenty-dollar bill stapled to the note, "Admission for two. Keep the change." She laughed aloud. She had a price. She bought some Glosette raisins and pocketed the rest of her tip.

There wasn't a single fight the entire Surf and Sand Night. After the guests had drunk all the beer the Centre had on hand, they cleared out the vodka and the rum. Panicking, Allan called Lester Shaw, whom he had befriended one day in a video gaming parlour in Tyne Valley. The businessman showed up at 1:10am, carrying several cases of distilled liquor in Mason jars.

"Rodney made this shit," said Lester, who had started to accept that his son was, for the most part, an outlaw. Lester was wearing a pajama top tucked into jeans, no socks with his sneakers. "Needed to get it out of the house before the cops showed up. Two birds with one stone. Three birds, maybe. Once this shit eats up everybody's insides, you might never have to host a party like this again. You don't want some pot and coke, do you? Not that it's me asking, I'd fucking deny it in court."

"I don't think so," said Roger, smiling like a eunuch who had been offered a happy ending to his massage. "How much do I owe you?"

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Rainbow Health Ontario

It is a vulnerable time in a queer person's life when they are deciding to come out or otherwise transition. It's easy to feel alone, or be overwhelmed by the decisions ahead of you, and some of those decisions can involve seeking the help of healthcare workers that are hopefully LGBTQ2S+ friendly.

Filling that need is **Rainbow Health Ontario**, who provide extensive online resources, but even more fundamentally, they are working to train members of the health community to better serve these clients.

I had the pleasure of speaking with **Carolina Berinstein**, Master of Social Work (MSW) about the various ways they are meeting the challenges to maintain their ever growing body of resources, while creating effective content for courses to help health care workers understand how to be allies to the queer community. "There are documents and educational tools on a wide variety of topics, which creates a space where people can find information on things like name changes, smoking cessation, transitioning, and trans health knowledge," states Berinstein.

As part of **Sherbourne Health**, the online site is a repository of information that provides, "a plain language resource that is relevant to people's experiences, and services that are aligned

with mandates and values supporting the queer community," she adds. Before the time of COVID they used to travel around the province to different hospitals, community centres, and labs, facilitating open workshops for healthcare workers and anyone in the social service sectors. Berinstein stated that there is very little training in the way of adapting with how to deal with queer clients. The organization aims to, "create the opportunity for the health care community to improve, create more inclusive care, and remove the barriers to health care for members of the queer community."

Currently doctors and nurses advance their training in four core areas - transitioning, pre-and post-op surgery, youth care, and mental health. Berinstein revealed that, "a course for caring and supporting LGBTQ2S+ seniors is also in the works."

The **LGBT2SQ Health in Focus symposium** takes place on February 25th, 2022, and is billed as the largest LGBTQ2S+ health conference in Canada. Healthcare workers across the country are able to attend the panel discussions via the new online platform. The three major areas of focus will be, queer seniors, post-surgical care, and health care in relation to food. Other topics covered include, body image, gender identity, migration, long-term care, family, housing, and other social detriments of health.

Facing the future of health care for the queer community, I think organizations like Rainbow Health Ontario are already leading the way to better support for the LGBTQ2S+ population.

Kelly Wilk is a freelance writer and single mom to red-headed, Irish, Aries boy who is growing up way too fast. Follow their adventures on PinkPlayMags' parenting blog "The Ginger Gent", and also on Kelly's own website and blog, Brave. Creative. Me at www.kellywilk.ca





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As businesses, venues, and organizations continue to reopen, we are slowly starting to see live events return as well. We have started to once again include more live event listing as part of our Events directory in theBUZZ, and are hoping to start listing some here in PinkPlayMags again in the very new future.

Please continue to monitor government updates for the most current advice, and visit venue and business websites for the most current entertainment listings.



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by Mychol Scully

From The Heart

It's almost a cliché that gay kids spend some part of their school years in Drama Club.

Whether drawn to performance or engaged in the more technical aspects of sound, lighting, set design and construction, or wardrobe, many questioning queer kids found a supportive home in Drama Club.

I entered high school in 1969 as an isolated boy with no real social connections. I had a close relationship with one of my English teachers, who was also responsible for handling Drama Club productions. Although I did occasionally perform in comedy sketches (most stolen from Monty Python at the time), my passion was more technical and I quickly took responsibility for managing the lighting of our productions.

What was it about Drama Club that created a safer haven for kids who were different?

In part, I believe, it was the celebratory nature of dramatic expression. Theatre offered an opportunity to step out of the shadows and for brief moments, one could express one's inner fabulousness with

impunity. Moreover, that exuberance was lauded and encouraged within the specific context of theatre endeavours. For many, the opportunity to throw off the oppressive behavioural status quo that was often cruelly enforced in high school peer interactions was a life-saving breath of fresh air. For some, it offered an optimistic vision of what the world *could* be when we finally made it out of the social pressure-cooker that was high school for so many.

The high school Drama Club in the 1970s was probably the first "safe space" for many queer and questioning kids, at a time when "safe space" wasn't even really a concept. How the world has changed!

Let Your Freak Flag Fly!

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



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Winter Horoscopes

DECEMBER 2021 to MARCH 2022

by Julie Antoinette

Aries (March 21 – April 20)

All kinds of old friends are coming out of the woodwork. For quite a while it seemed as though life had led you all in disparate directions. Now it seems that a homecoming movement has inspired many reunions. Take note of those that have returned, they are the keepers.

Taurus (April 21 – May 21)

In your nightly dreams, you find yourself relocated to new places where you encounter new people as well as people from your past with whom you have unfinished business. Despite your awkward history, you feel oddly comfortable and at peace. Your subconscious is trying to show you what awaits on the other side of forgiveness.

Gemini (May 22 – June 21)

You are in serious purge mode. You are re-evaluating each of your items and how long they have been with you on your journey. You've grown tired of seeing them daily for so many years. Perhaps even they are begging for new vistas? You must send them on their way. Think of all the square footage you will reclaim!

Cancer (June 22 – July 22)

The Universe has gifted you with your own private champion and cheerleader. This person is always present to cheer you on, point out your talents and gifts and encourages you to take the next step. The Universe must feel you have work to accomplish. You too know what it is you were meant to do. Never doubt that you are fully supported.

Leo (July 23 – August 22)

At the oddest and most mundane of moments, and completely unprompted, long-forgotten and emotionally-charged memories are surfacing. Rather than question the seemingly randomness of their appearance, consider these little opportunities to make peace with yourself. Feel the emotions as if they were fresh and let them move through and out of you. One memory at a time, you'll feel oceans lighter.

Virgo (August 23 – September 23)

Someone in your life is displaying a great need and has found its fulfillment in you. You are a very compassionate person and sometimes overextend yourself. Unfortunately, there are those who feel entitled to have others rescue and carry them indefinitely rather than constructively embrace assistance to better themselves. Be very careful of becoming a target and long-term host to someone's parasitical tendencies.

Libra (September 24 – October 23)

As the holiday season approaches, it seems you've come down with a case of the Crafter's Bug. It's crafter's time in the city! A creative burst of energy inspires ideas that shoot out as energetic firecrackers from your head as you walk down your favorite local crafter's aisle. This Christmas, handmade gifts will be under the tree for all your near and dear ones. Gather your supplies and hop to! Moments of inspiration like these are meant to be milked "udderly" and entirely.

Scorpio (October 24 – November 22)

An uncomfortable feeling of guilt surfaces in your life as you go about your interactions. It may be helpful to stop and explore the origins of this feeling. As you process this emotion, consider this: It is said that guilt always seeks punishment. It is also said that guilt is a useless and crippling emotion, when re-lived over and over. Guilt's only function is to indicate an action that you do not wish to repeat. Let this set you straight and set you free.

Sagittarius (November 23 - December 21)

There is something that only you are exceptionally good at. There is no one that you've encountered or heard of that has this same talent you have. When people find out about your talent, they are always fascinated, impressed and interested. You've always been modest, but now it's time to share yourself with the world. Once word gets out, you'll be set for life and your gift will gift you back. Your niche awaits you.

Capricorn (December 22 – January 19)

You've become involved in a particular charity that touches your heart. Surprisingly, you find that the more you give the more you receive. It seems paradoxical but there it is. There are other forces at play. It is cosmic law that the universe abhors a vacuum. Any thing given from the heart will be given back wholeheartedly. It is truly more blessed to give than to receive.

Aquarius (January 20 – February 19)

You're feeling the call to adventure and a need to break out in your life somehow, yet simultaneously you feel the daunting taunting of risk-aversion. Some feeling holds you back. Whether it is financial, career, home, family or any other perceived safety net. Remember: "A ship is safest in the harbor, but that is not what a ship is for."

Pisces (February 20 – March 20)

Every time you look in the mirror you catch yourself cringing or scoffing. Perhaps you could use a little lift to your aura? How about a new wardrobe or pair of shoes? Maybe even a root touch-up? Whatever the detail, do it. Your mirror will thank you.

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.



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