

# OUTCLIQUE.ORG

Volume 2, Issue 7  
June 2018



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# OUT CLIQUE .ORG

WHAT TO DO. WHERE TO GO. WHO TO MEET

**Steven O. Evans, PhD**  
Publisher and Editor in Chief  
Steven.Evans@OutClique.org

**Darren Loli**  
CEO & Digital Director  
Darren.Loli@OutClique.org

**Alan Beck**  
Vice President for Sales & Marketing  
Alan.Beck@OutClique.org

**Dylan Denmark**  
Brand Ambassador  
Dylan.Denmark@OutClique.org

**Sach AD Group**  
Director of Graphic Design  
Sach.Elore@OutClique.org

**Cindy Curtis**  
Sales Manager  
Cynthia.Curtis@OutClique.org

**Jared Curry**  
Video & Still Photography

**Connie Evans**  
Chief Copyeditor

**Tom Pence**  
Distribution Manager

**Chris Brown**  
Director of Orlando Outreach

**Photography**  
Connor Wilkinson

**National Advertising**  
Rivendell Media

**Contributing Writers**  
Tony Adams, Joey Amato, Chris Brown,  
Rod Davis, Marty Kiar, Dr. Beau Nelson,  
Denny Patterson, Steve Pike,  
Patrick Rogers, Gregg Shapiro

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(954) 998-6429 | OutClique@gmail.com  
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**Steve Margolis**

Realtor  
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# THE NEW INTERIM MEMORIAL AND PARK AT PULSE

By Chris Brown



June 16, 2018 marks two years since the night of the Pulse shooting. Forty-nine members of the Orlando community were killed and dozens more were injured. Although the Florida LGBTQ community has made strides to heal and protect its members, no site is more sacred to those affected than the building of the Pulse nightclub. For over a year, Pulse became a site for travelers to stop and pay their respects at a makeshift memorial, a fence lined with handmade posters, tributes, and prayers. Since February 2018, that area around Pulse was closed for the construction of a semi-permanent memorial for visitors to grieve, mourn, and celebrate the lives of those lost that night. As of May, the Interim Memorial and Park at Pulse, built by the onePULSE Foundation ([www.OnePulseFoundation.org](http://www.OnePulseFoundation.org)) is open to the public.

This new memorial is a space that truly brings people together. During the day, visitors may view a finely crafted wall of photos and writings that wrap around the site, as the building itself is nearly obscured by the outpouring of love. At night, visitors have a distinct experience. While the iconic Pulse sign, the sacred list of names underneath, and the rest of the site are lit vibrantly, around the side of the building visitors may stop to see a black light shining through panels laid over the walls that were demolished during the event. It is somber to see the shape of the holes left by people and bullets, but the reality of the place and its past are not meant to be lost in the memorial. There is beauty in spending time with the details of Pulse and those lost there. That's the way we must move forward into the future, with a compassionate and focused eye on the reality of what we have lost.



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Photo by Jovanni Jimenez-Pedraza

## PUTTING THE SPICE IN ADVICE: AN INTERVIEW WITH BIANCA DEL RIO

By Gregg Shapiro

**W**hen I first heard that Bianca Del Rio had written a book, in true Bianca Del Rio fashion I thought, “Wrote a book? I didn’t even know she could read a book!” Cue the laughs. Undoubtedly the greatest success story that RuPaul’s Drag Race ever launched out of the starting gate, Del Rio consistently sells out concert venues

for her live shows, has graced the silver screen in Hurricane Bianca and its new sequel Hurricane Bianca: From Russia With Hate ([www.HurricaneBianca.com](http://www.HurricaneBianca.com)) and now has a new book of advice, Blame It on Bianca Del Rio (Dey Street, 2018) to her name. I spoke with Bianca about the book, Drag Race, and “insightful prying.”



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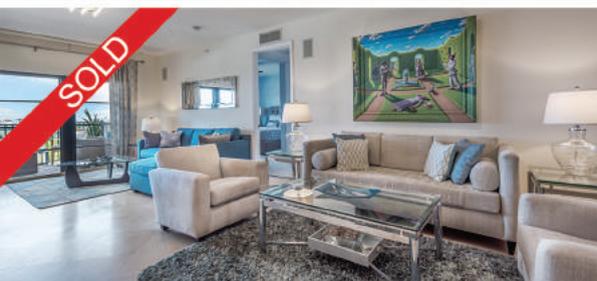
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**Gregg Shapiro:** As someone who just published an advice book, what's the best advice you ever received?

**Bianca Del Rio:** It was really good advice, but I didn't take it. Which was "Don't do drag. It's a trap" [laughs]. I found out later, they were right [laughs].

**GS** What's the worst advice you ever received?

**BDR** "Do drag [laughs]!" No. Advice is an odd thing, because you always think you know better yourself. In fairness, I think the best advice I truly did get was, "Always laugh. Laugh at yourself. Don't take yourself too seriously and keep moving." I think for me, in particular, when I was much younger I would get hung up on things for a long period of time. Now, it's like, "You'll live. Get over it! Have a drink. Life's too short!" In the end, it's that it's not that serious. Or it shouldn't be that serious.

**GS** What percentage of advice column questions do you think are legit versus made up by writers?

**BDR** I grew up without having social media. I'm old enough to remember that world. It's quite fascinating to me how much of their business people put out in the real world. Whether it's Facebook or Instagram. When I was doing this book – obviously I'm doing it as a joke to give the worst advice possible, because if you're seeking advice from a 42-year-old drag queen, something's wrong with you. But I'm fascinated by the stuff people would share. I don't know if they're doing it for attention purposes or if it was actually real. It was fascinating to see how people's minds work. People have no shame at all, none, I must say.

**GS** Can you please say something about the transition of your humor from the stage, where most people know you, to the page?

**BDR** I think it's a lot harder, as I realized when I was doing the book. There's also an audio version. When I started to read it aloud [for the recording] [laughs], I started to

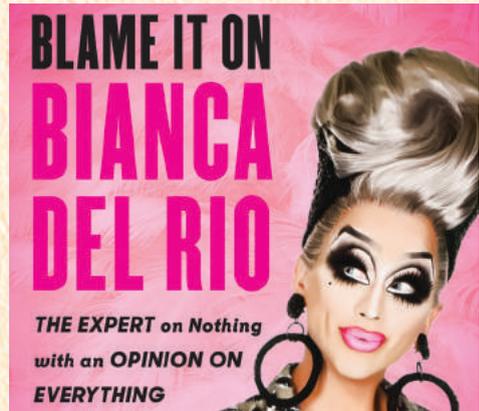


Photo courtesy of Dey Street Books

get nervous about a couple of things. I thought, "This in print comes across differently than my stage show." I think you can get away with murder on stage, in a moment, by delivery. Whereas when you have something in print and someone is reading it for the first time, it may come across a little differently. There are some things I fixed in the end where I thought, "Maybe this won't translate," unless you got the audiobook. My first reaction was, "Whoa, this seems too far or a bit much." Usually, for me, it's no holds barred. Everything is funny. But I thought, "In print, it's a little serious." Some things I was like, "Go with it! You asked a ridiculous question, you deserve a ridiculous answer [laughs]!"

**GS** You mention "insightful prying" in the author's note. In what ways can that be a useful tool?

**BDR** I think sometimes the answer is usually there and people know in their hearts what the truth is. Of course, what I'm doing here is comedy. In fairness, there is a lot of truth in comedy. Usually the funniest stuff is what you can really relate to. A lot of people are attention whores at this point in the world, and they put things out there that they know are wrong. Or they have an idea of what the truth is, but they fail to recognize it. I thought that if I could give it to them in some inspirational way [laughs], it might actually help them. If it's a real question. You never really know. When I posted stuff saying that I was interested in doing a book of this nature and, "Send me your questions," we had several duplicates. Usually drag-related. Everything from "What is RuPaul like?" to "What color is your eye makeup?" Some of them, I was like, "This is insane! The





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## **Brief Summary of Patient Information about BIKTARVY®**

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### **What is the most important information I should know about BIKTARVY?**

**BIKTARVY can cause serious side effects, including:**

- ▶ **Worsening of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. If you have an HBV infection and take BIKTARVY, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking BIKTARVY. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.**
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**For more information about side effects, see “What are the possible side effects of BIKTARVY?”**

### **What is BIKTARVY?**

BIKTARVY is a prescription medicine that is used without other anti-HIV-1 medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) in adults:

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### **What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking BIKTARVY?**

**Before taking BIKTARVY, tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including if you:**

- ▶ have liver problems, including hepatitis B virus infection
- ▶ have kidney problems
- ▶ are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if BIKTARVY can harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant during treatment with BIKTARVY.

*Continued on next page.*

## What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking BIKTARVY? (continued)

**Pregnancy Registry:** There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of this registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.

- ▶ are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take BIKTARVY.
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
  - At least one of the medicines in BIKTARVY can pass to your baby in your breast milk. It is not known if the other medicines in BIKTARVY can pass into your breast milk.

Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, antacids, laxatives, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines may interact with BIKTARVY. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

- ▶ You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with BIKTARVY.
- ▶ **Do not start a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.** Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take BIKTARVY with other medicines.

## How should I take BIKTARVY?

- ▶ Take BIKTARVY exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to take it. BIKTARVY is taken by itself (not with other HIV-1 medicines) to treat HIV-1 infection.
- ▶ Take BIKTARVY 1 time each day with or without food.
- ▶ Do not change your dose or stop taking BIKTARVY without first talking with your healthcare provider. Stay under a healthcare provider's care during treatment with BIKTARVY.
- ▶ If you take antacids that contain aluminum, magnesium, or calcium, take BIKTARVY on an empty stomach 2 hours before you take these antacids.
- ▶ If you take supplements that contain iron or calcium, take these supplements with food at the same time that you take BIKTARVY.
- ▶ Do not miss a dose of BIKTARVY.
- ▶ If you take too much BIKTARVY, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- ▶ When your BIKTARVY supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to BIKTARVY and become harder to treat.

## What are the possible side effects of BIKTARVY?

BIKTARVY may cause serious side effects, including:

- ▶ **See “What is the most important information I should know about BIKTARVY?”**
- ▶ **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having any new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.
- ▶ **New or worse kidney problems, including kidney failure.** Your healthcare provider should do blood and urine tests to check your kidneys when starting and during treatment with BIKTARVY. Your healthcare provider may tell you to stop taking BIKTARVY if you develop new or worse kidney problems.
- ▶ **Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis).** Too much lactic acid is a serious but rare medical emergency that can lead to death. **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms:** weakness or being more tired than usual, unusual muscle pain, being short of breath or fast breathing, stomach pain with nausea and vomiting, cold or blue hands and feet, feel dizzy or lightheaded, or a fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ **Severe liver problems.** In rare cases, severe liver problems can happen that can lead to death. **Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get these symptoms:** skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow, dark “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools, loss of appetite for several days or longer, nausea, or stomach-area pain.

## What are the possible side effects of BIKTARVY? (continued)

The most common side effects of BIKTARVY are diarrhea (6%), nausea (5%), and headache (5%).

These are not all the possible side effects of BIKTARVY.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

## General information about the safe and effective use of BIKTARVY.

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use BIKTARVY for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give BIKTARVY to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This Brief Summary summarizes the most important information about BIKTARVY. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about BIKTARVY that is written for health professionals. For more information, call **1-800-445-3235** or go to **www.BIKTARVY.com**.

**Keep BIKTARVY and all medicines out of reach of children.**

Issued: February 2018



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# BEING A BETTER CONSUMER IN 5 STEPS



**W**hat does it mean to be a good consumer and why is it important? Every day consumers make decisions about who to hire and where to purchase goods. If consumers hire or make purchases from businesses who cut corners, use bait and switch techniques, or do not commit to good customer service, the result is encouraging those types of business practices. Consumers have access to more information than at any time in history, but the sheer volume can be overwhelming, so let's see if we can simplify the process.

## It Starts with Research

We don't know what we don't know. If you are about to make a purchasing decision and you are not familiar with the process, before you begin researching businesses, you should first gain an understanding of the process and potential pitfalls. As an example, most consumers engage a mover only occasionally over their lives. Many consumers fail to obtain full valuation coverage for a move and if your

property is damaged the moving company is only required to reimburse consumers at 60 cents per pound. Not a good risk to take. Obtain guidance or information from a trusted source. For example, if you are considering a move BBB provides tips ([www.bbb.org/en/us/article/tips/13306-bbb-tip-hiring-a-mover](http://www.bbb.org/en/us/article/tips/13306-bbb-tip-hiring-a-mover)) and government agencies overseeing industries (e.g. the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and moving businesses) are another good source ([www.fmcsa.dot.gov/protect-your-move](http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/protect-your-move)).

## Supporting Good Businesses

Businesses build a reputation based on how they work with consumers. Depending on the type of business you are checking out, there are different sources you should consult. BBB is a good starting point since we have data on most industries, but if you are exploring hotels or lawyers you may want to visit Trip Advisor or AVVO, respectively. The more you plan to spend the more important it is to consult multiple sources. Use the information gained from your

process evaluation as a lens to review complaints and consumer reviews. Almost every business will have a negative review, but is the overall record positive, does the track record demonstrate good business practices, and when a problem does arise, does the business work with the customer to resolve the complaint in a positive and professional manner? In some cases, the customer may be the unreasonable party. Supporting businesses with a proven track record rewards businesses for doing the right thing.

### **Create Clear Agreement**

If you are buying a shirt from a retailer, you will want to know the return policy, but if you are moving, installing new windows or putting in a pool, it is important to have a detailed agreement that clearly outlines the duties and responsibilities of each party (i.e., the business and the customer). Take the time to create a guide to a successful partnership with the business. Develop a detailed agreement that includes dates for completion, specifies what is included and what is not included, identifies who purchases materials, how the selection of products is done, sets milestones and payments tied to completion of milestones, and if the business employs subcontractors, include a provision that requires a lien waiver at the close of a project. While it may cost a little extra, having a contract reviewed by an attorney or industry expert may be a wise step in the long run.

### **Document**

Keep careful records and document all communication. Visual records (i.e., photos or video) can also be a useful tool if there are questions about the quality of work. If you have a question, speak up. Don't wait until the end of a project if you have a concern or issue. Working closely with the business throughout the progress of any project in a collaborative manner will help you both keep on track and avoid misunderstandings. Good businesses want happy customers. Customers want good work at a good value. Objective documentation will help keep you and your project on track.

### **Be Fair and Professional**

Consumers rely on consumer reviews and online content to help them make decisions. Be fair and professional with your feedback. BBB urges businesses to be responsive, professional and to explore solutions to fairly settle disputes. Consumers should not threaten or embellish information so it is no longer accurate or fair. If consumers and businesses feel more empowered and less threatened, they will work better together, which benefits everyone. So remember to share positive feedback and constructive feedback. When you do share negative feedback, be objective and provide documentation to support your position. Constructive criticism helps the business learn and improve and informs other consumers about the problem with a business.

If each of us becomes more informed, organized and active, we will be more effective in promoting better business practices.



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answer is right there in your question!" But I had to point it out for them because they're probably not smart enough to figure it out themselves.

**GS** Some of the more colorful and amusing parts of the book are the wonderful photos. How did you come up with some of the concepts?

**BDR** Basically, the publisher said they would also like to include photos. But we live in a social media world and I post a lot of photos. Back in my day, you had to have a photo and you had to have it printed and you had to wait a week! This was a different process. I had to create new content for the book. I had to make myself appear a lot more established than I am. And also push the joke home, make it fun. Over four days, we did a photo shoot here in Los Angeles with a friend of mine who is a New York photographer and we hit the road. We thought, "What are the most ridiculous things we could do?" From that is where we came up with the captions and dialogue. I truly didn't want to do a vanity project and write a book about myself. I thought this would be a good way to slide in my sense of humor, that I'm also making jokes of myself as well.

**GS** Do you think you might have another book in you, perhaps a novel?

**BDR** I am not opposed to it. Friends of mine who have read the book have looked at me and said, "What is wrong with you? You are absolutely insane!" Which I think is great. I guess that works for books. No one has ever said, "Stephen King's a normal person." [Publisher] Harper Collins has been extremely supportive, even discussing things in the future. I'm like, "Sure, sure, sure! But let me get through this week first [laughs]." When I have a minute to collect my thoughts, I would totally do it. Why not?

**GS** On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the experience of your recent return as a guest on RuPaul's Drag Race?

**BDR** I would say it was a 10 for me. I filmed the show originally in competition almost five years ago. It was

like going back to high school. All the feels and smells were the same. When you film on the soundstage, there's one side where the contestants are during filming. The other side is where the staff and Ru and guest judges stay. It was interesting to be on the other side of the wall. I didn't realize how fabulous it was until Audra McDonald was in the dressing room next door. That made up for it. My little gay heart got excited and I realized that this is legitimate!

**GS** What's the single best piece of advice you would offer this season's queens?

**BDR** Oh! In seriousness, the best advice would be to be as honest and as real as you are. Even though we're wearing wigs. Just be yourself. I think the audience, especially with a reality show, gravitate to people that are real. Knowing the pattern of Drag Race in particular, now that they're in their 10th season, some of the most notable characters were people that were true to themselves. It's very easy to get lost in the madness. It's easy to get lost with cameras around you. To think, "I need to be this. I need to be that." Shockingly, the audience can usually see through it.

**GS** In addition to your first book hitting bookstore shelves, your new movie Hurricane Bianca: From Russia With Hate is opening in theaters. What can you tell the readers about it?

**BDR** It's our second feature, which I'm excited about. The first film actually dealt with gay rights and a schoolteacher who was fired for being gay, which is completely insane in 29 states, which is insane! He loses his job and then gets it back. My nemesis in the film is the brilliant Rachel Dratch. In the second film, we pick up where we left off. I ruined her life and now she's determined to ruin mine. And I end up in Russia! So, it's topical and fun. We have some great cameos and supporting players. The fabulous Janeane Garofalo, Cheyenne Jackson, and Wanda Sykes. We were lucky to gather a bevy of talented people. I'm really looking forward to it!

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We hope you will consider attending this very exciting event. For more information or to register, please visit our event page: [www.MenHavingBabies.org/Florida](http://www.MenHavingBabies.org/Florida).

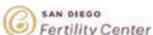
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# SOUTH FLORIDA PRIDE WIND ENSEMBLE PRESENTS CARTOON CLASSICS

Photo by Brett Hufziger



**O**n Saturday, June 9 at 7:00PM, the South Florida Pride Wind Ensemble will once again take the stage in the Amatur Theatre at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. This time they will be performing "Cartoon Classics." As Dan Bassett, Artistic Director of the ensemble explains, "The concert will include music from all animated genres, including classic Saturday morning cartoons such as 'The Road Runner,' 'Bugs Bunny,' 'Donald Duck,' and 'The Jetsons.' The show will also include animated

feature films such as Fantasia, The Incredibles, The Little Mermaid, Prince of Egypt, The Lion King and Frozen."

Carla Bordonada, from the popular piano/vocal duo Rick and Carla, will be featured along with cirque performers, the Pride Jazz Ensemble, and Pride Steel Drum Band. Be prepared to be brought back to your childhood as classic animated videos will accompany many of the musical selections.



Tickets are available through the Broward Center Box Office or the Pride Wind Ensemble's website,

[www.PrideWindEnsemble.org](http://www.PrideWindEnsemble.org)

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Funding for this organization is provided in part by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners as recommended by the Broward Cultural Council. This organization is also sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.



# THE QUEEN OF UNCONVENTIONAL HAPPY ENDINGS: HANS HIRSCHI

By Denny Patterson

**H**ans Hirschi, the Swedish author behind popular LGBTQ novels like *Willem of the Tafel*, *Spanish Bay*, and *The Fallen Angels of Karnataka* released his latest work, *Returning to the Land of the Morning Calm*, late last month. It is available digitally and in paperback on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and selected local bookstores.



Photo by Thomas Johansson

*Returning to the Land of the Morning Calm* centers around 84-year-old Korean War veteran Martin, who lives quietly in an upstate New York retirement home. Although his days are ruled by the routine of staff, he often thinks of his youth, his time in Korea, and the lost true love of his life. Two close friends encourage him to travel back to Korea and search for that love, but with six decades passed, how much has changed?

*Without giving too much away, give us a little more as to what *Returning to the Land of the Morning Calm* is about.*

It's the story of how one man remembers the love of his life and becomes obsessed with the idea of seeing him again, if still alive. Martin makes new friends at his retirement home, a nurse and the brother of a resident and they are the catalysts, both to his memories and his eventual visit in Korea, where Martin had met Ji-Hoon when he had been stationed there during the war.

*Tell me more about Martin. Is his character based on someone you know personally?*

No, and yes. All my characters are, to a degree,

amalgamations of traits in real-life people, but I can't say who or what aspect of their personality. My characters usually take on a life of themselves fairly early on in the stories and I just tell what they let me know. Often times, I don't know more than what is written on the pages. Martin is an 84-year-old Korean War veteran living his life quietly in an upstate New York retirement home. His life is very much, "same old, same old." Day after day. Nothing big happening, except maybe someone cheating at a card game in the commons room. Or, at least until a new nurse starts to work there, a Goth kid named Kevin, and one of the residents dies, and her brother comes by, that's when things start to get exciting for Martin.

*Can readers expect an unconventional happy ending? I mean, you are known as the queen of them. What do you hope readers will be feeling once they reach the end?*

Hope, and the urge to buy more Kleenex. There's absolutely an ending that has the stamp of approval of Her Majesty. She's quite pleased with it. It's also the only realistic way to end the book. Readers will understand when they get there. It has to do with Korea and how that society works.





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What made you want to write a book on war and Korea? Is it because they have been hot button topics in the news and politics?

The story originally started out as a short story about a very old man in a retirement home. Not quite old enough to be a WWII veteran, but yeah, just right for Korea. So, it was more an age thing than a political thing. When I ended up going to Korea for my fourth time to do additional research, the story began to expand around the Korean character Ji-Hoon, and Seoul as a city, both in war time and today. It just made sense. But it's interesting to once again have written a book so timely with societal discourse. My novel last spring about a Sami character coincided with a huge debate on Sami rights here in Sweden. Seems like I've done it again. Who knows, maybe somewhere in my subconscious the shouting last spring at the United Nations pushed a button or two. It was not a conscious decision.

What other main social issues does the book tackle?

Given that Martin is African-American, racism, and the continued struggle of the black community is obviously a topic I had to address, with the changes from the fifties to today. Then there's the character of Eugene, and he was perfect as a #MeToo victim as well as being able to address the HIV crisis of the eighties and then some. He's quite the trooper! Then there's the never-ending debate about coming out, and how it affects different generations in unique ways, and how some things never really change, including religious persecution. So, there's a bit of everything. Then again, it's a book that spans over seven decades. Lots has happened in that time.

What is the overall message you are trying to convey?

The book begins with a message from, rather than a dedication: "Hold on to love. You may never find it again." I'm not trying to discourage people, rather show them that we need to fight

for love, not give up so easily.

What would you say was the most challenging part?

To do justice to Korea, the people, and the culture. While I've been in the country four times, I can't claim to be an expert on Korea, far from it. But when you write a book with a Korean character, a story that at least to a third plays out in that country, you need to get it right. I wanted to make sure that it is an honest depiction. Not seen through rosy glasses and not white-washed. Korea has an amazing culture. That along with finding the answers to some of my war-time inquiries was the most challenging aspect. Luckily, I had great help on the ground from very helpful friends, guides, and museums.

What have you personally learned the most?

Life goes on, even in the most atrocious of times. There are people getting up in the morning and getting to work. I've always had this impression growing up that ordinary life ceases during a war, but that's not really what happens. Which, when you think about it, makes total sense. That revelation came to me when I saw a picture of people sitting by the Han river sunbathing. The picture was from that era. While probably taken after the ceasefire, it still affected me deeply, particularly in contrast to all the death and destruction I'd seen on other photos. It inspired me to write a scene in the book, one of my favorite ones.

What can we expect from you next?

I am currently working on a children's book, which is, given what I just said, very much important to me. Something completely different. It's also the most difficult thing I have ever done. Almost no text, but every word counts. I am trying to make it appealing to both children and the parents who will read it to them. I am in awe of authors of children's books. I am also working on short stories for a new collection, but I can't say when that will be done.

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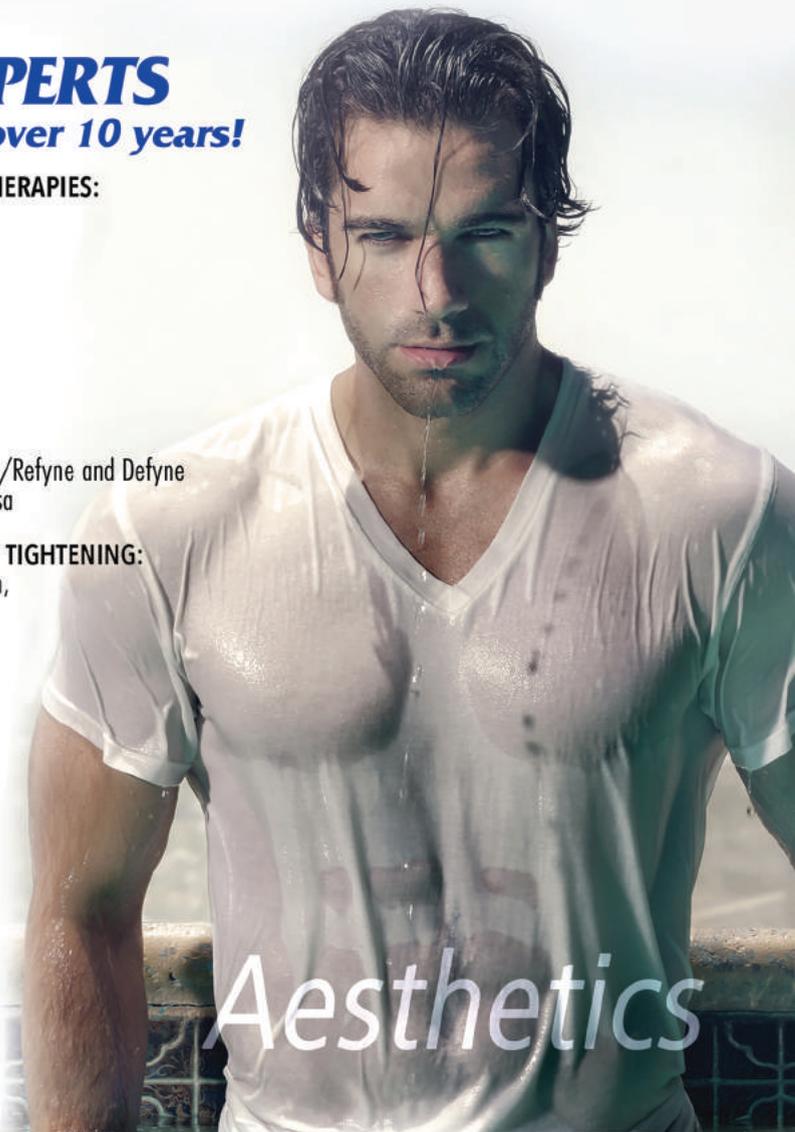
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# DIVERSISAFE GALA ENTERTAINS AND EDUCATES

Photos Courtesy of Latinos Salud



**W**here do you find celebrity drag queen Tatianna from RuPaul's Drag races, dancers from the Miami City Ballet, popular local DJ AJ Reddy, and Mardi Gras bedazzled circus performers ... oh, and a town hall presenting strategies to combat HIV? All of this and more filled the Gallery of Amazing Things at "DiversiSAFE Fort Lauderdale" in May 2018.

Latinos Salud, the non-profit in Broward and Miami-Dade that serves gay Latinos, all persons living with HIV, and anyone who identifies as transgender, staged the May 12th event. Guests raved that this fourth DiversiSAFE event was the best one yet, with the most fun and the most memorable tips about how to stay safe from, or live healthier with HIV.

According to Latinos Salud co-founder, Rafaelé Narváez, "The DiversiSAFE event is one of a kind: part networking hour, part spectacle, and part educational forum, all closing with a high energy nightclub vibe."

Three years ago, Latinos Salud conducted a

survey of several hundred locals that found low awareness of new HIV prevention strategies. Many who had heard of the new strategies still had inaccurate information. The agency created the DiversiSAFE approach to close the gap by giving everyone the facts.

Since similar town halls have been staged around the nation had limited success reaching the community, Latinos Salud decided to take a creative approach, merging a gala event, a party, and a sort of "Ted Talk" on HIV. The result? With hundreds in attendance at each DiversiSAFE event, the small non-profit has produced the nation's largest community town halls covering the topics of HIV, PrEP, and Treatment as Prevention.

Behind the fun of the event, DiversiSAFE has a serious mission. Miami Dade ranks #1 and neighboring Broward #2 in new HIV infections out of over 3,000 counties nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control reported last year that new HIV rates are declining in all populations, except for two groups: Latinos, and gay/bisexual men. The majority of both new infections and AIDS related deaths in South Florida impact gay, bisexual, and transgender communities of color.

“We’re losing a battle when we finally have the weapons to win,” says Stephen Fallon, PhD, Executive Director of Latinos Salud. “With so many people here in South Florida at risk of HIV, and others faring poorly living with HIV, we needed to arm the whole community with life-saving information. DiversiSAFE is our community response.”

The word is a mash up, embracing “Diversity” for a “Safer” community. It refers not only to the diverse populations that can benefit from the intervention, but also to the principle

that people can now choose from an array of diverse risk reduction strategies, to protect themselves from HIV. “It’s not just about condoms anymore,” says Yamil Cruz, Latinos Salud’s Program and Operations Coordinator. “DiversiSAFE empowers community members to enact whichever risk reduction approach is most suited to their own goals and lifestyle.”

DiversiSAFE documents in plain language the potential effectiveness of

- Condoms
- PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis)
- Undetectable (treatment as prevention)
- Test Twice, Talk, Trust (negotiated safety)
- Emergency PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis)

and also teaches the life-saving potential of current HIV treatments, when taken properly.



While the DiversiSAFE intervention is typically delivered as a one-on-one discussion in Latinos Salud's offices, the DiversiSAFE event gives a snapshot of the messaging in the midst of an event that in all other ways feels like a gala.

"DiversiSAFE is about community, hope, and most of all, celebration," says Narváez. "If everyone picked one of the DiversiSAFE approaches and used it, new HIV infection rates would drop so low that the epidemic would sputter out. We'd soon be talking about HIV the way we talk about smallpox now."

New to this year's event, the "DiversiSAFE dancers" gave an interpretive dance to electronic music, while word art on screens summarized exactly how each DiversiSAFE option protects. Tatianna praised the agency from the stage for its pioneering efforts to curb the epidemic.

But no one wants to hear about data and science, right? "People were actually taking photos of the slides on the video screens," says Broward HIV/STD outreach worker, Noe Inestroza. And when Fallon tackled community HIV stigma head on, the audience exploded in cheers. "People who control their HIV, and get it down to a sustained undetectable level, do not transmit the virus to partners," Fallon said. "It's time for us to stop stigmatizing people living with HIV, time to stop shaming people who take PrEP. DiversiSAFE is about coming together as a community and supporting one another's individual choices," Fallon said.



# LATINOS SALUD DIVERSISAFE



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## CHANGE OF HEART: AN INTERVIEW WITH CINDY WILSON

By Gregg Shapiro

**W**ith the release of her debut solo disc *Change* (Kill Rock Stars), Cindy Wilson is now the third member of the legendary B-52s to record a solo album. Be forewarned, you shouldn't expect to hear the Cindy Wilson you remember from B-52s' songs such as "Give Me Back My Man," "Girl From Ipanema Goes to Greenland," "Legal Tender" or "Love Shack," on *Change*. Closer in mood to the subtle soul drama of "Ain't It a Shame" (from 1986's underrated B-52s platter *Bouncing Off the Satellites*), the songs on *Change* introduce us to a more soft-spoken Wilson who sings these 10 songs (two of which are covers) in a breathy belt. The disc opens with "People Are Asking," a potential activist anthem if there ever was one. Wilson, who has an appreciation for a good beat, invites us to "dance this mess around" again on "No One Can Tell You," "Stand Back Time," "Mystic," "Memory" and the title track. Wilson takes an unexpected experimental rock turn on "Brother," her interpretation of a song by Athens, Georgia band Oh-OK.

Just back from her first solo concert tour, Wilson took a few minutes to answer some questions in a phone interview.

**Gregg Shapiro:** Your full-length solo debut album *Change* was released in late 2017. Why was this the right time for you to put out a solo record?

**Cindy Wilson:** I had the time to do it. The B-52s were laying off for a while. It was a stressful time and I started to get together with a friend of mine to do some music. We went into Suny Lyon's studio to kick it around and experiment and see what kind of direction we want to go in. It took about three and a half years, off and on, recording and everything. Then we put the songs together with a band and went down to Austin, Texas. We met Portia (Sabin) from (record label) Kill Rock Stars and she helped us get on the right path. It's been amazing, really.

**GS** *Change* is an accurate name for the album, because it doesn't sound like the Cindy Wilson people are familiar with from your years in the B-52s. Was that a deliberate decision?

**CW** Of course. I've been doing the B-52-thing for 40 years. It was really fun to be experimental. I had a different set of

musicians. It was a real learning experience for me. The music scene is a whole new thing now. With the business end and creatively. I had a blast experimenting with that.

**GS** There are a couple of cover tunes on *Change*, including “Brother” which was originally performed by Athens GA band Oh-OK. Was this meant to be a nod to your roots in that music scene?

**CW** We started in the late `70s and they came just a tad later. What happened was we had done Oh-OK songs in Athens with Ryan (Monahan) and Lemuel (Hayes) and some other musicians. We had done a tribute to Vanessa (Briscoe) from (the band) Pylon and different musicians who were in Athens at the time. It was so much fun. The Oh-OK song “Brother” turned out so well that we decided to record it. Everybody loves that song!

**GS** With the exception of the cover songs, you co-wrote the remaining tracks with Suny and Ryan. In what ways would you say that your writing experience differed from when you co-wrote songs for the B-52s?

**CW** Luckily, I thrive in a situation where people are being super creative. You let down your guard. That’s when a lot of good ideas can come through. You bounce off each other and you create things together. You tap into this stream of consciousness. It’s really magical. It was different from the B-52s, but it was definitely being able to feel the vibe. Like I said, for the Cindy Wilson thing, I let down my defenses and explored. This was great. I did a lot of listening to Suny and Ryan and I got to throw in some things of my own. It was really fun.

**GS** You mentioned how this has been a stressful time and I was thinking about how “People Are Asking,” the first song on the album sounds like one of your most political songs, which feels new for you. Am I on the right track?

**CW** Yes! It’s one of the elements, definitely. I hate to tell people what

a song is about, because it does feel better for it to be a personal thing. But it definitely had those (political) elements in it.

**GS** Kate Pierson’s solo debut was released in 2015 and Fred Schneider put out one in 1984 and another in 1996. Did they have any words of advice for you on the subject of going solo?

**CW** Yes [laughs], yes! They did it their way. Everybody does it a different way. When we signed with Kill Rock Stars Records, they had a lot of ideas, too. It was definitely a joint thing.

**GS** On June 10, the B-52s are headlining Milwaukee Pridefest. As the B-52s’ sole straight ally member, can you please say a few words about what the LGBTQ community and LGBTQ fans mean to you personally?

**CW** [Laughs] I’ve got so many friends and family members and loved ones that are in the gay community in all different forms. I take my hat off and say thank you!

**GS** One of the tour dates brings the B-52’s to Atlanta in July. What does it mean to you to play to your hometown audience?

**CW** It’s very special. Everybody says it’s the hardest when you come and play to your hometown. There are so many fans there and everything. It’s going to be fun. It’s going to be a hoot!



Photo by Keith Trigaci



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By Steve Pike



In the 15 months it has been open at the Diplomat Beach Resort in Hollywood, Michael Schulson's Monkital restaurant has emerged as not only one of the top eateries in South Florida, but also in the country. For example, Monkital won two USA Today Readers' Choice Awards within one year, "Best Hotel Restaurant" of 2017 and "Best New Restaurant" of 2017.





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One visit to Monkital and you'll know why. Dressed in dark woods and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, Monkital is an homage of sorts to Schulson's time living in Japan and learning the arts of Japanese and Asian cooking. Monkital's deep menu reflects each item in small plate and large plate offerings, from rolls and specialty sashimi, to Japanese Fried Chicken and Duck Scrapple Bao Bun.

Monkital also offers a "robatayaki" menu. "Robatayaki" is a method of slow-cooking food on skewers over an open charcoal flame. "I'm all about the clean flavors of the sushi and simplicity of the robatayaki," Schulson said. "The hardest things to do well are the simplest." The 10-item Chef's Tasting menu for \$65 per person is a great way to become familiar with what Monkital is all about.

"You always hope people understand and appreciate your vision when opening a restaurant," said Schulson. "I am very fortunate to have a great team at Monkital with Chef Sung helming the kitchen and Elliot Dines our GM overseeing all front of house operations," Schulson said. "As a result of everyone's hard work, we have been blessed with great reviews, honors and accolades."

Schulson, a celebrity chef and restaurateur, is best known for his restaurants in Philadelphia, including Double Knot and Harp & Crown, and Izakaya in Atlantic City.

Monkital is his first foray into South Florida and is part of the Diplomat's trio of signature restaurants, the others being Diplomat Prime and Chef Geoffrey Zakarian's Point Royal.



"First and foremost, I am chef by training as I graduated from the CIA (Culinary Institute of America)," Schulson said. "However, now that we have 11 restaurants within the Schulson Collective, I would consider myself a restaurateur. Each restaurant has an executive chef overseeing the culinary side of things, yet my background allows me to jump in the kitchen from time to time to work with each chef during menu development and execution of dishes." Dining at Monkital is an experience you will not want to miss.

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Photo by Mike Ruiz

# PUTTING THE W IN WONDERFUL: AN INTERVIEW WITH KRISTINE W

By Gregg Shapiro

It's been a little over 20 years since Kristine W first made contact with our ears and our bodies with her perfect 1996 debut album *Land of the Living*, featuring the timeless classics "One More Try", "Feel What You Want" and the titular tune. Since then the belting diva has had 17 (!) number one Billboard hits and has been crowned the eighth greatest dance artist of all time. In addition to returning to the club spotlight with her recent dance music hit

"Stars", Kristine W has teamed up with none other than Carson Kressley for a cross-country tour of their musical comedy stage show *Stand Up With a Twist*. On June 10, 2018, at 8:00PM, she headlines the second annual Communi-Tea Dance at the Adrienne Arsht Center's Thomson Plaza for the Arts, 1300 Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. Kristine was generous enough to spare a few minutes to answer a few questions.





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**Gregg Shapiro:** Last night, I saw the incredible documentary *Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami*. Have you ever been approached about making your fascinating life story a documentary?

**Kristine W:** That's definitely something I need to do. It's so crazy, I was just with Grace in New York at (hairstylist) Roberto Novo's apartment. We spent the whole night together running around New York, drinking some champagne and talking. She told me about the documentary and that it took a really long time. She said she didn't want it to be rushed because she wanted it to be real. She said, "You can't capture your life in a few weeks or a few months. It's going to have to be a commitment that you make of some years." I told her she was right. It's almost like making an album. Some of these albums I've spent four years on. People look at me like I'm crazy. (But) the songs evolve. You write them and then you're like, "If I rewrite it this way, it's going to speak volumes. It will speak to people more. Or if I change this it's going to make more sense. The message is going to be stronger." As musical artists we think about film like an album. We're used to doing albums. Most people now just do one off. They put out a single, because it's easy. If you make an album, you're putting out a book. That's so funny, I had this conversation with Grace [laughs].

**GS** So, who's taller, you or Grace?

**KW** I had my combat boots on that night, but I think I'm taller than Grace. We had so much fun! We have so much in common. We talked about doing a song that I wrote with Billie Ray Martin. We really hit it off.

**GS** When I previously interviewed you, I lived in Chicago, the home of house music. Now, I live in South Florida the birthplace of the TK Records sound (KC & The Sunshine Band and others) and Miami bass. As a dance music legend, how do you feel about those distinctive regional musical styles?



Photo by Karl Giant

**KW** I have listened to so much dance music over the years. House music, dance music, European, Dutch. Chicago house music, obviously, yeah! I grew up at the Palladium and the Sound Factory. I went straight from college into that world. I was raised in the northern United States and we would go to Canada and listen to all the great European house music that wasn't being played in my little farm town. We would go to Victoria and Toronto. We heard music that wasn't being played on the radio in Pasco, Washington. The first time I heard Donna Summer, her voice, I was like, "I want to do that. I want to make people dance, make them happy." When I saw her in concert, people would be singing and dancing. My grandmother was a Mel Torme freak, which led me to Al Jarreau. I was literally obsessed with him. The loss of Donna Summer and Al Jarreau really hit me like a landslide. They were so pivotal in the development of my craft.





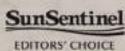
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**GS** According to your website, your most recent single, is the dance sensation "Stars."

**KW** Yes, that song went to number one about 10 weeks ago.

**GS** It's the second single from your forthcoming full-length album. When do you think the new album will be released?

**KW** Probably in July or August. I'm waiting on a couple of people that I wrote with and a producer I worked with in the UK. I'm also waiting on a couple of fellows I wrote a song with here to see if we can get those lyrics produced. We're in the home stretch.

**GS** On June 10, 2018, you are scheduled to headline the 2nd annual Communi-Tea Dance tribute for the Orlando Pulse nightclub victims in Miami. What does it mean to you to take part in such an event?

**KW** It's really powerful for me. I've played Pulse. I've performed at the club. I'm very familiar with that club. It was a place where we all hung out. When that happened, it was really crazy. I remember my mom calling me because she knows I play Florida a lot. I love Florida. She called me in a panic, "I hope you're not in Florida! Have you heard what happened?" I saved that message. It's still on my phone. The emotions were crazy. I could have been there. No matter what event I was at in the Miami area, after it was over, I would always go by Pulse. I'd give the DJ some of my music, see my friends there. It was such a popular place with such a strong community of people. It means a lot to me to be involved.

**GS** While we're on the subject of senseless violence, as a longtime Las Vegas resident, would you mind sharing your

thoughts about the tragedy that occurred in October 2017 at the Mandalay Bay Hotel?

**KW** I think it was so much harder because this is the happy place, where everybody comes to get happy. Get their happy on, forget about the worries of the world. Being someone who's been on these stages for a couple of decades – I came here at 17 years old – it's my home! It really affected everyone. The servers, the people who live here. It was so quiet here for a couple of months. Going to a grocery store or a Starbucks or a Home Depot that is generally buzzing – and it was like crickets. The casinos were dead. The attendance was down. People weren't coming here for the first two or three months. On the whole, the shooter definitely killed the spirit of Vegas for a while. I'm not a hockey fan, but the (Las Vegas Golden) Knights gave us something for us to root for, including rooting for the city and ourselves.

**GS** It's almost like New York after 9/11.

**KW** Exactly! That was on such a bigger scale, but for us, we're a smaller, tight-knit community, it felt like that.

**GS** From one Gemini to another, what do you think is the best part of being born under that zodiacal sign?

**KW** I think we're super-creative and we think out of the box. But that can get you into trouble a lot. We tend to obsess over things. I notice that some of my comrades and different artists will just throw the music out there. "Okay, I made this" and boom! We're kind of perfectionists to the point where it can be detrimental [laughs]. You don't want to overthink it or spend too much time obsessing over something. You need to let it get out there so people can enjoy it. We're hypercritical of ourselves.

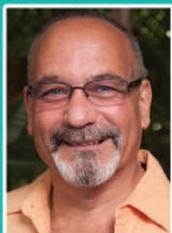
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**THE CROWDED HONEYMOON OF NEW MAYOR  
DEAN TRANTALIS**

By Tony Adams

Photos By

Connor Wilkinson (@HonorConnor) | Mayor's office

When Fort Lauderdale's newly elected and first openly gay mayor, Dean Trantalis, welcomed OutClique into his office less than three weeks into his new job, his familiar smile and warm embrace were in full force. Despite the whirlwind of his successful campaign, Trantalis is invigorated rather than exhausted.

Although he won the office by a healthy margin, he is still amazed at the cordial reception he gets in parts of the city traditionally assumed to vote otherwise. He says, "I am currently deep into the aftermath of the election and the honeymoon period that comes with it. People I didn't think would support me did support me. I represent something to them that goes far beyond being gay, but I never thought we'd have an openly gay mayor so soon. Voters looked past that. I visited the Coral Ridge Country Club yesterday and everyone came up to tell me that they had voted for me. I won that district which was not expected. This is

change for the good. They didn't vote for me to create change. They voted for me because change has already happened and I am just a reflection of that. I am not what Fort Lauderdale used to be. I am what it is today."

Fort Lauderdale is not so distant from its memory of antigay Mayor Naugle and his infamous "bathroom bill" targeting gay men supposedly having sex on the beach. His attack on the gay community gave birth to LGBT activism in Fort Lauderdale. Trantalis sees a progression, saying, "I'm just one generation from Naugle. Mayor Seiler could be considered, from a social justice perspective, as a transitional mayor. He wanted to appeal to gay constituents, but sometimes showed other spots."

Florida Atlantic University Professor Fred Fejes, PhD, confirms Trantalis' view of history, telling OutClique, "You can measure the progress of social justice in Florida by who



Photo courtesy of Mayor's office

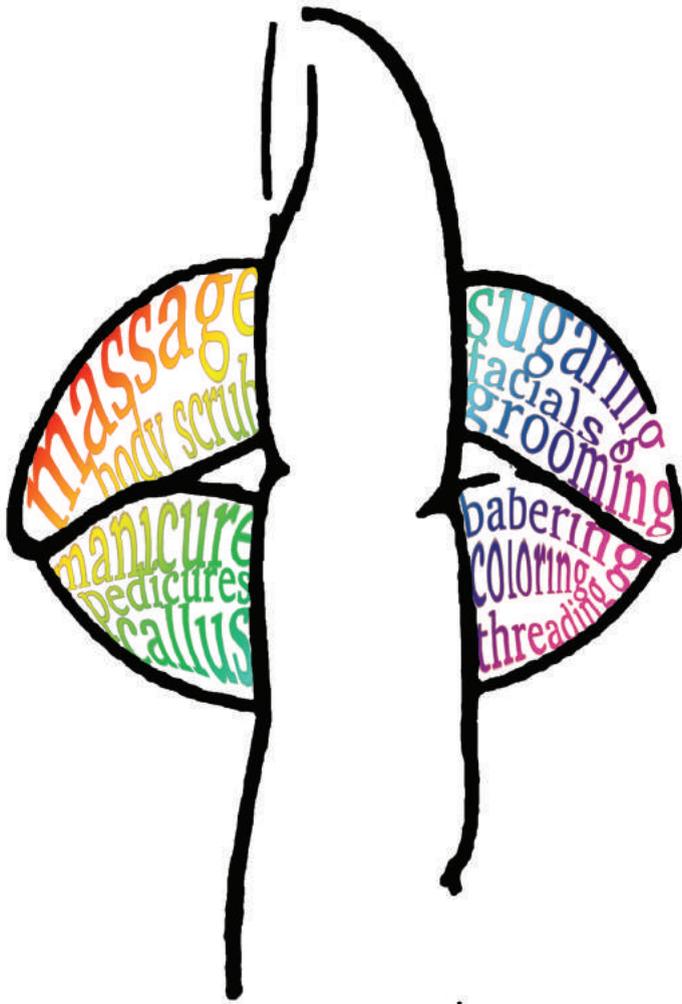
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gets elected into a public position. First it was elected Jewish officials, then Catholic, then African-American, then Latino, then women. The election of a gay mayor of a major Florida city shows that this progressive trend continues."

What does Trantalis expect to accomplish as mayor? When OutClique mentioned the existing plans for downtown development and beach development, he said, "There are different plans for different sections of the city. They involve technicalities like density, or building height, or traffic regulation. That said, there are also plans created by neighborhood groups that have been completely ignored by the district commissioners. For example, the 'North Federal Highway Gateway Master Plan.' It's beautiful, thick, and colorful. The new 'Riva' condo complex ignored that plan, with the commissioners voting in favor of the project. I am not surprised that the project has run into trouble. Yes, the plan had never been formally adopted, but hundreds of people took part in meetings to build that plan. Their voices should have been taken seriously."

Focusing on downtown, Trantalis said, "Downtown is still in transition. There aren't enough amenities to make it a walkable district. You still have to get into your car to get to a grocery store. I know what is on the drawing board for downtown, but it's basically like building a city from scratch. There are certain pockets that are walkable but we aren't there yet. There are sections that have to be filled in."

Is Trantalis afraid of being the guy who delivers the bad news to Fort Lauderdale about what it will cost taxpayers to improve its aged water and sewage system? He said, "I'm not afraid to be that guy. I've been talking about this for a couple of years. I'm ready. The problem is that the city is not ready. The city has not priced out this project and it has no plan for it. The

manager is sitting on his hands; talking a lot, but not doing anything."

Trantalis has devised a set of five priorities for his time in office. He laughs as he begins to run through them, invoking the name of a presidential candidate who gained ridicule when he drew a blank on items in his own list. Trantalis did not have that problem. He said, "First, we have to halt the WAVE [a streetcar project that has secured funding but is widely considered alarmingly inappropriate for Fort Lauderdale] and repurpose the huge amount of Federal funds tied to it. We need to replace streetcars with 21st century technology. Second, we need to seriously and humanely address head-on the problem of homelessness. We are forming a coalition of groups to accomplish this. Third, we need to stop ignoring the critical needs of our infrastructure. Fourth, we must devise a realistic traffic strategy that will alleviate a bad situation that is frustrating for residents and visitors alike. Part of that strategy involves restraining development that would worsen the traffic problems we are already living with. Also, if we can achieve infill [the process of developing vacant or under-used parcels] people will be less reliant on their cars to get places. Fifth, the Bahia Mar project needs to be restructured and scaled back. The plan of development for the beach has never been voted on and has never been completed. I have urged the city manager to get going on this."

On the subject of cycling in Fort Lauderdale, Trantalis said that he is committed to the building of a seven-mile greenway bicycle path and to the finding of alternative thoroughfares for cyclists that would alleviate the friction between bicycles and cars. Painting bike lanes green was his idea, and he is pleased with the way those lanes remind both cyclists and cars to share the road carefully. Trantalis would like to see green paint on the bike lanes along the beach. ➤



Photo by Connor Wilkinson



Photo courtesy of Mayor's office

On the subject of tourism in Fort Lauderdale, Trantalis said, "Tourism in our city is unique. We are blessed with sunny weather, a beautiful clean beach and wonderful hotels. We are not Miami Beach, and that fact is appealing to some people. We have a very vibrant boating industry. We will add more dock space to help it grow. We are even returning to being a Spring Break destination with an important difference. These Spring Breakers are now paying three times as much for a hotel. We have a calendar full of signature beach events. They are great events. We know who we are and what kind of crowds we want our events to attract."

Trantalis came to Fort Lauderdale from Connecticut at the age of 29. He had passed the bar in Florida and also in Connecticut where he had begun to practice law. He recalls,

"My college roommate – straight - told me that Fort Lauderdale was the place to be. In those days, I was just coming out and it was heaven. I think I went out every single night. The gay community has continued to evolve beyond Wilton Manors. Statistically, Fort Lauderdale has a higher LGBT density than Wilton Manors. If a young LGBT person wants to build a career here, there are ample opportunities. There is a growing art scene and culturally this is an exciting time for younger gay people to relocate here."

We have vibrant real estate, boating and tourism industries, but if we are going to grow successfully, we have to attract new types of business. Fort Lauderdale has to hear the clarion call of the businesses of the future and listen to what they need that will make them take root here."



Photo courtesy of Mayor's office

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## THE VILLA CASA CASUARINA AT THE VERSACE MANSION

By Steve Pike



Miami Beach and South Beach each has their own share of infamous hotels. The most is undoubtedly The Villa Casa Casuarina, best known as the Versace Mansion. Located on Ocean Drive and in the heart of South Beach, The Villa Casa Casuarina is the third-most photographed “private” home in the U.S., behind only The White House and Elvis Presley’s Graceland in Memphis, TN.

The main difference, of course, is that the public can only tour The White House and Graceland. The Villa Casa Casuarina, former

residence of legendary fashion designer Gianni Versace, is a 10-suite hotel that showcases the lifestyle of the late fashion icon, who was murdered outside the Villa’s front gate in 1997.

“People know about [The Villa] but think it’s a museum or something that they can’t visit, so we have been really getting the message out the past few years that it’s a boutique hotel with a gourmet restaurant,” said Chauncey Copeland, general manager of Victor Hotels, which is owned by the Nakash family of Jordache Jeans fame. “You can sleep in the





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same room as Gianni Versace did and next to the pool he designed.”

The Nakash family acquired the mansion in 2013 for \$41.5 million. Operating as The Villa Casa Casuarina, the property's suites include Gianni Versace's lavish suite, and Gianni's at The Villa restaurant where guests eat beside the Versace-designed swimming pool.

Gianni's at The Villa, which features the Mediterranean cuisine favored by Versace, and the Onyx Bar, just to the left, both are open to the public. They are basically the only way the public can get inside the historic property, originally built in 1930, without staying in one of the suites. Although if visitors are nice, staff near the front door generally allows people in to take a few pictures as long as they don't stay long.

The Villa Casa Casuarina is actually the

reworking of two properties. In 1992, Versace bought a run-down hotel and neighboring apartment building and re-designed and re-built each into his 19,000 square-foot South Beach dream home – complete with two kitchens, eight bedrooms, ten bathrooms and four living rooms.

The best opportunity to experience Versace's South Beach world, short of staying in one of The Villa Casa Casuarina's suites, is having dinner at Gianni's at The Villa. Guests can sit poolside or have the option of dining at one of the balcony tables. Both offer great views of the pool. The balcony tables, located near the Onyx Bar, also are great locations for watching the diners at pool level.

Either way, dinner at Gianni's at The Villa is a “must experience” in South Beach dining. It is also a glimpse into a world unimaginable to most people.



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# AUDRA MCDONALD SINGS HAPPY

By Gregg Shapiro

**W**ith a powerful and impressive vocal range that encompasses opera, musical theater and Billie Holiday, Audra McDonald is the diva's diva. A certified star of stage (a recipient of multiple awards, including six Tonys), screen (she won an Emmy Award in 2015) and recorded music (Ms. McDonald also has a Grammy), there doesn't appear to be anything she can't do. As she has demonstrated time and again, she is as comfortable in a comedic setting as she is in a dramatic one. In May 2018, McDonald released her first concert recording *Sing Happy* (Decca Gold). She was kind enough to take time out of her busy schedule to answer a few questions.

**Gregg Shapiro:** You were recently a guest judge on RuPaul's Drag Race. What was that experience like for you?

**Audra McDonald:** It was so much fun! I've known Ru for a long time. I've obviously been a fan of the show. Ever since I've been in New York, when I was in college, a couple of my friends were doing drag and performing in clubs when we were in school to make a little extra cash. I grew to have not only an appreciation but also a love of the art form very early on. I consider it to be an incredible art form! For me, it was a joy to be a part of it.

**GS** Have you ever seen a drag queen doing you in their act?

**AM** Have I seen one? No. But there is a very talented actor in New York who sounds like me, so he'll sing like me from time to time. He'll do Audra McDonald imitations. He's amazing! I've never seen one do me in their act.



Allison Michael Orenstein

**GS** The “Snatch Game” Drag Race episode you were on featured Alex Trebek. Have you ever been an answer on Jeopardy?

**AM** I was! I was a whole category once [laughs]. It was a huge honor.



Allison Michael Orenstein

**GS** Sing Happy, your first live album with a full orchestra, is being released this month (May). What are you most looking forward to about the release of this recording?

**AM** Just the fact that I got the opportunity to sing with the New York Philharmonic and that it's been recorded for posterity – that for me is a dream come true. These are a lot of classic Broadway tunes that I'm doing. A lot of times they were orchestrated for larger orchestras than what we have on Broadway now. But I don't think they were ever orchestrated for as huge an orchestra as we had with the New York Phil. It was a dream come true to do an album with the incredible institution that is the New York Philharmonic.

**GS** When you perform a concert, as you are doing at the Broward Center in Fort Lauderdale on June 11, what percentage of the material is drawn from your stage work and your recordings?

**AM** Really a small percentage of the roles that I've actually played. Maybe one or two songs from the roles that I played. For the rest, I try to let myself have a wide berth in terms of singing songs of the roles that I might not get the chance to play or roles that I've always wanted to play. More of it is just from the incredible songbook of the Great American Musical Theater. But mainly it's as if I could play any role that I wanted. Even with the live recording. A lot of the songs were songs that were written for men and male characters.

**GS** You were in two very different movie musicals in 2017, Beauty and the Beast and Hello Again. In Hello Again you played Sally, a character who got to have love scenes with Cheyenne Jackson and Martha Plimpton. What was it about Sally that made you want to play her?

**AM** I auditioned for Hello Again when it was first done off-Broadway a million years ago. That's where I first met (gay playwright) Michael John LaChiusa and (director) Graciela Daniele. They said, “You're not quite right, not quite old enough for the role.” I've had my eye on Sally since then [laughs]. When I was contacted about them making it into a film and Michael John asked me if I wanted to do it, I said, “Heck, yeah!” I didn't have to think about it for a millisecond. Once they told me I was working with Cheyenne Jackson and Martha Plimpton, I was over the moon! I've known them both and loved them for years. To get the opportunity to finally work with both of them was great and a ball. We had a blast!

**GS** Finally, speaking of movies, you have an Emmy, a Grammy and a Tony. What would it mean to you win an Oscar and complete the EGOT package?

**AM** Oh, my goodness! I don't know that that's something that will ever happen, but I'd be blown away if that were to happen. I don't think I could come up with that in my wildest dreams. If that were to happen I'd probably lie down and float right up to heaven. I don't know what else would be left to do [laughs].

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The preliminary 2018 property values will be posted on our website at [www.bcpa.net](http://www.bcpa.net) on June 1. This will be your first opportunity to review your 2018 property value and contact our office if you believe the just value to be inaccurate. Florida law requires our market values be a year in arrears meaning we use the qualified sales of comparable properties from January 1, 2018 back through January 2, 2017 for the 2018 property values. If you purchased your property in 2018, your 2018 purchase price will be used in setting your property's 2019 market value.



For questions regarding your residential property, please call 954.357.6831. Our office will be mailing the 2018 TRIM (proposed tax) Notices to all Broward property owners in mid-August. This notice will show your property's 2018 market value, assessed value, exemptions and proposed tax rates as set by the various taxing authorities.

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The absolute last deadline to file for all 2018 exemptions is September 18, 2018.

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If my office can ever be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 954.357.6904 or by email at [MartyKiar@bcpa.net](mailto:MartyKiar@bcpa.net).

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Kiar".

Marty Kiar

Marty Kiar is the Broward County Property Appraiser and longtime advocate for LGBTQ equality.

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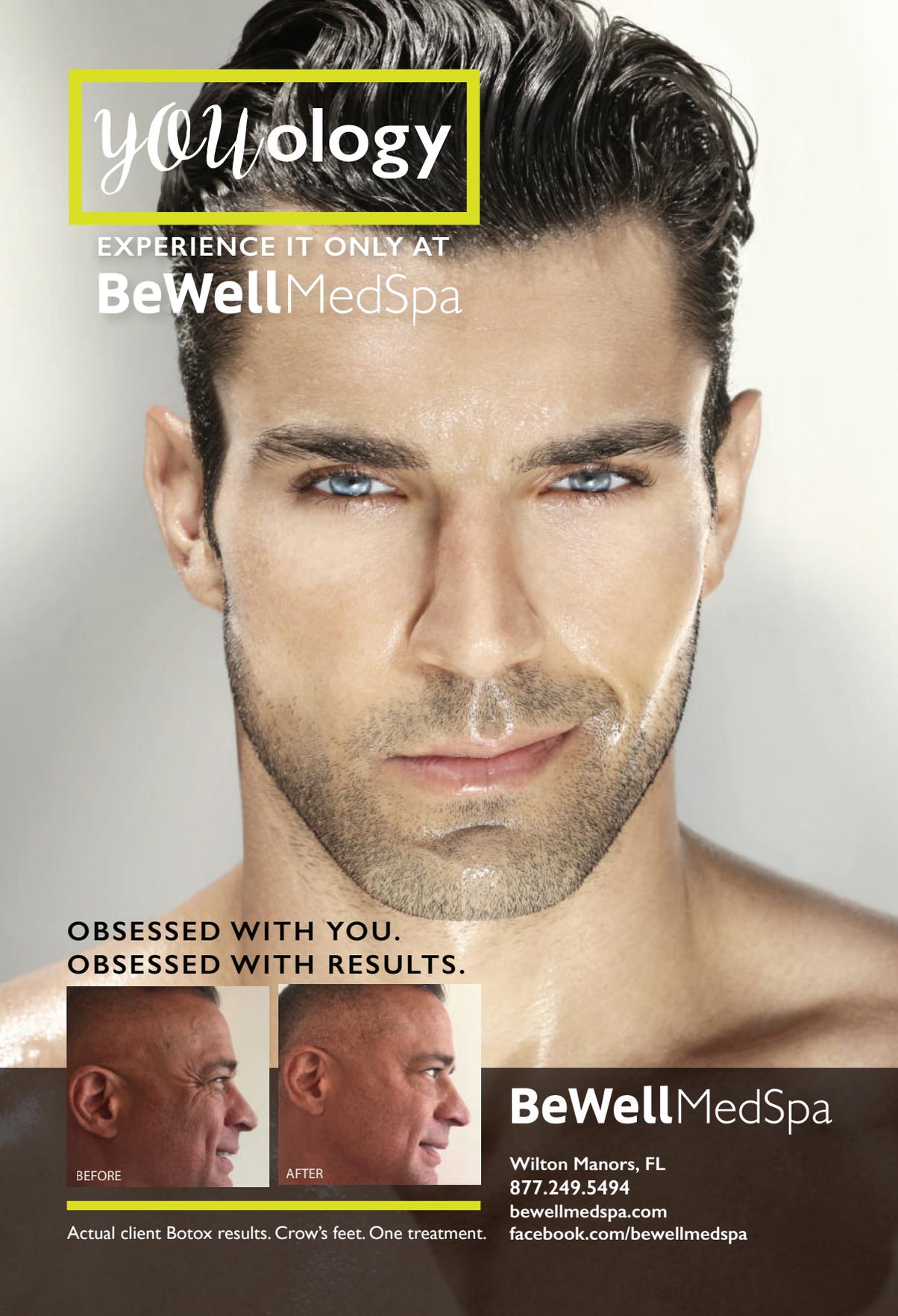


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Photos by Mike Jeknavorian



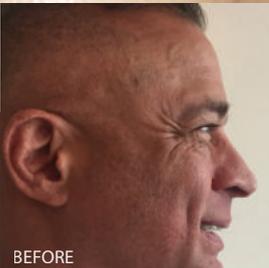
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# CLAIMING YOUR PLACE AT THE TABLE

By Rev. Patrick Rogers, MDiv.



In the Christian New Testament, Mark 7:24-30, we learn the meaning of and need for pride. What better bible story to reflect upon during June which is traditionally considered pride month in the United States.

In this story from the gospel of Mark, due to political pressure from the Jewish authorities, Jesus needed a reprieve for a reason we do not know. He traveled to the region of Tyre which was predominantly Gentile. A woman whose daughter was sick approached Jesus as he was eating and showed him reverence by bowing down and asked him to heal her daughter. She crossed all kinds of political, social, and cultural norms by even approaching a male whom she did not know much less a Jewish person. Jesus' response was not what we know as his "typical" message of hospitality. Jesus' reply was, "Let the children be fed first for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs!" In this comment Jesus sternly reminds her that he was sent only for the "lost sheep of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Jesus referred to her as a "dog" which was a slang word the Jewish people used for Gentiles. In other words, it appears that Jesus insulted her and attempted to send her away from the "table" thus refusing to heal her sick daughter. Did Jesus discriminate?

The Syrophenician woman's response changed the world forever! It's also the response the world received from Rosa Parks, Norma Rae, and the Drag Queen who refused to leave "her" table, and thus igniting the Stonewall Riots which began the LGBTQ movement for equality. The Gentile woman said, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." The woman claimed her self-worth and place at the table, any table, and especially Jesus' table. Jesus agreed and healed her daughter. In other words, Jesus' message to her was "pull up a chair and join me."

Ironic today that women in many churches are still treated as second class citizens when it comes to service, leadership, and positions of authority. What part of the story don't they understand? My favorite statement from Jesus is when he tells the woman, "For saying that, you may go - your daughter is healed." Jesus rewarded her for standing up for her rights and her place in the kingdom of God!

It was the early morning hours of June 28,



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1969, and the New York City police again raided The Stonewall Inn. But, it was to be different this time. There are varying accounts regarding what sparked the LGBTQ patrons to finally fight back that night, but some attribute the first person to say “no more” was lesbian or a drag queen. The result of her taking a stand for her rights (or a seat at her table) sparked the beginning of the modern-day LGBTQ equality movement.

Who says that one person can't make a difference? I am glad that no one told that to Rosa, Norma, the Syrophoenician Woman or Sister Syro Felicia! This month and every month, celebrate who the Divine has created you to be! Be proud to be an LGBTQ individual! And kudos for all allies who also take a stand for equality and justice! Be bold like these four women and be proud! From the gospel of Diana Ross, “Make this world a better place!”

Rev. Patrick Rogers, MDiv. – Community Activist and Senior Pastor  
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# MUSIC, THEATER, (AND LOVE) COLLIDE IN WILTON MANORS FOR CREATIVE COUPLE

By Damon Scott

Worlds collide from unlikely places in South Florida. Seemingly so. Such is the case with two overachievers who fit in some of those unlikely categories — Harold Dioquino and Martin Childers. Although much of how Harold and Marty (as friends call them) met makes a lot of sense.

Dioquino landed in South Florida (now residing in Wilton Manors) via Davao City, Philippines, about 18 years ago. The unassuming 45-year-old Filipino is a musical powerhouse. But unassuming or not, he is now the artistic director and conductor of the Gay Men's Chorus of South Florida, leading 125 men in a variety of vocal productions.



Dioquino toured the world singing in choruses, from the Philippines to Canada to California. "I've been in chorus for so long. I grew up in a Baptist church since I was a child and it provided a lot of opportunity to sing," Dioquino said.

He admits he had a natural musical ability, but said the music education where he grew up was not as elaborate as in big-city Manila or as involved as he wanted it to be. Dioquino would specialize in vocals and piano, earning a degree in piano in the Philippines. He toured with the HiMig Singers of Davao City, and that's the experience that landed him in Los Angeles for eight months while his paperwork was completed to stay in the U.S.

He'd eventually be offered a job at the Church by the Sea, a diverse and inclusive congregation located in Bal Harbour, FL. "A lot of the job offers [in music] are from churches, where it's usually a very traditional kind of conservatism. Being gay is not always seen as a good thing."

## FROM BLUEGRASS TO BLUE SEA

Childers moved to South Florida on New Year's weekend 2016. He didn't have much time to acclimate, as he started working Monday, January 2. Childers was hired at Island City Stage in Wilton Manors as its managing director.

"I left a job that I'd had for 14 years at the Jenny Wiley Theater. I just told myself that if I was ever going to leave Eastern Kentucky, it was the time to do it." Childers discovered the job in an online posting. His experience in professional theater management impressed the Island City Stage board enough to make the hire. He began meeting a few people and always had a desire to be in a chorus.

"You don't have these opportunities in Eastern Kentucky," Childers said. Naturally, he then auditioned for the Gay Men's Chorus of South Florida. "I started singing, but I was going to quit after a Saturday rehearsal. I don't like to



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rehearse on Saturday," Childers said.

Walking out, Dioquino stopped Childers and asked him to hang on for one more week. "I had always noticed him during breaks," Dioquino said. "He was very quiet. And very handsome." Childers sent Dioquino a message on Facebook the following week. "I said I have to quit. I have too much going on with my new job," said Childers.

Fast-forward through a series of messages and chats. Harold and Marty ended up at a Chinese New Year's party at a friend's house. "I didn't quit that cycle and stayed in and had a good time and met a lot of people," Childers said. "It was a great experience, but eventually I did quit," he said with a chuckle.

#### ISLAND CITY STAGE

Childers, 55, had the nonprofit theater in Kentucky running like a well-oiled machine as Island City Stage was just starting to grow. His experience in fundraising and management was key for the board, which was starting to become overwhelmed with all the moving

parts of running a successful theater.

"We were the theater organization in Eastern Kentucky, and the product we were putting out there rivaled theatres in much larger cities," he said. Childers admits the move to South Florida was intense because he'd always known Kentucky as his home. "That particular community was wonderful to me. I still consider it home and I pay attention to what's happening there," he said. "Before I came here, they had just produced one production at the new space on Dixie Highway. We have now taken the space beside it for office space, a scene shop, and storage," Childers said.

Childers set up donor management, fundraising strategies and increased grant funding. "We've really worked on marketing to see how we promote ourselves and present ourselves," he said.

Island City's subscriber's base is the largest it has ever been at 427 patrons. "However, if we relied just on ticket sales we'd do half of what we do," Childers said, adding that corporate and individual support is a big focus. ➤



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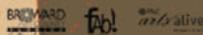
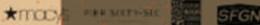
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## DIDN'T WANT TO BE TYPICAL

Dioquino had a host family when he moved to Florida in his late 20s and said it made the transition less scary than Childers'. Dioquino is now in his second year as the artistic director of the chorus. He said his goal has been to change the programming to be more relevant and innovative.

"I didn't want us to be the typical choir: stand there and sing with books in hand," he said. "It's more like production shows now, with a team that handles the lighting, etc., things like a Broadway show." The chorus produces shows that touch on several themes now, from the new experiences of young people, human rights, gay rights, women's rights, and black rights.

"We do it in a subtle way," Dioquino said. "The audiences have responded. Very much so." One of the biggest concerts of the year is at the Hard Rock during the holiday season. A celebrity artist is brought on — Alan Cumming was featured last year.

## LGBTQ CONNECTION

Childers and Dioquino's organizations cater to the LGBTQ demographic. "We have our niche and we live in the perfect area to have that niche," said Childers. "But of course it's not just for gay people. If you like theater, we want you to come," he said.

Dioquino said the audiences at his concerts are made up of mostly gay people, but he thinks about 20 to 25 percent are straight. He said it's due to the quality of music the group is producing.

"There are a lot of LGBTQ programs and organizations [in the Wilton Manors area]," said Childers. "One challenge is we're all raising funds, that is a difficulty — there are only so many dollars to go around. But if not

us, support someone," he said.

The duo is working to capture a younger audience in their respective venues. "We want to say there's more than just going to the bars," Dioquino said. "There's a world of arts and music that you're missing. There's a life of such great stuff out there."

The two admit they know many young people come to Florida as visitors who want to party. "But the audiences are changing, it's evolving," said Dioquino. "A lot of the young people are coming to our concerts now." Added Childers: "We don't want to go backwards. [Our previous production] Zanna, Don't! was one of the first times young people came to the show."

## BET ON THE LAUGHS

Harold and Marty celebrated their two-year anniversary in February. Dioquino's longest previous relationship was 14 years; Childers' was five years.

"We kept seeing each other," said Dioquino. "And finally it was Super Bowl Sunday and we went to eat. There was no one at the restaurant and we talked for three hours. We're probably the two most boring people. We don't drink, we're not trying to hook up and we actually go to the bars to eat," he said.

The two say the decision to enter a committed relationship happened pretty quickly. "Personality-wise I liked him immediately," said Childers. "He's a very warm person. When I first met him, he was up there doing his thing. This little guy up there directing all these people. We would have been friends regardless."

"He's very sweet and charming," said Dioquino. "On a day-to-day basis it's so much fun to live with Marty. The thing that keeps us together is there's not a time of day when we don't laugh."

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# THE SOFTER SIDE OF AJA

By Denny Patterson

**B**rooklyn based drag queen and entertainer Aja may have gained notoriety by competing in RuPaul's Drag Race season 9 and All Stars 3, but she is on the path to accomplishing much more. Last month, she released her debut EP, "In My Feelings," which is available on SoundCloud and iTunes. The six-track album focuses on the daily life and everyday experiences of the drag superstar, but also allows listeners to see and hear a glimpse of Aja's softer and vulnerable side. She says creating the album was a labor of love. I received the pleasure of chatting more with Aja about "In My Feelings," in addition to her musical style and aspirations.



**Congrats on releasing your debut EP! That must be quite an accomplishment for you.**

Thank you! Yes, it's definitely something I have never done before, so it's exciting. It's different. I didn't really know what to expect from it, so I'm happy it's finally out.

**Tell me a little bit more about your EP, "In My Feelings."**

"In My Feelings" was really just an idea that I had. I always wanted to work on music and it just came to life. I didn't know what to expect from it myself, but the finishing product is better than what I thought it would be and I am really grateful for that. It also challenges me and makes me think that anything is possible. If I can do this, then I can do anything I put myself towards. I worked on "In My Feelings" for only two months.

**Have you always had a passion for music and performing?**

Yes. Before I ever did drag, I was always writing raps, but you know, everyone thought they were silly and were telling me that I can't be a rapper. I'm like, well, why not? It's a great way to tell my stories, and now that I have this platform and have people watching me, why not let me do something I really want to do. So, yea, I did it.

**And when did the drag aspect come into play?**

Well, like the thing is, I never thought about doing music and drag together. It just came out of nowhere. It was one of those things where I was 16-years-old, you know, I'm going to do drag, and everybody thought I was crazy, of course. It just somehow took off and I still don't understand or know how. It just happened. Drag became a thing, but I never really expected it to take off.

**Is there an overall message you are trying to convey?**

Yes. The real message I am trying to convey with the EP is that, you know, life isn't all about happiness. Life can be about enjoying the emotional roller coaster. The big dichotomy that goes into it and the album cover is really half and half. Happy and sad. Light and dark. It's very polarizing and I think life is the most beautiful when you have a little bit of everything. I think people who are happy 24/7 honestly have boring lives. Having different emotions is the real beauty of life.

**Who are some of your musical inspirations?**

Some of my musical inspirations, my preferences are all over the place. Definitely in terms of music, I look up to people like Nicki Minaj. People who just rap and collaborate



with good club or house beats. Turning house beats into a rap track is kind of difficult, but yea, I'm really inspired by that type of style.

**I'm sure this is going to be a difficult question, but which song from the album do you hold closest to your heart?**

I feel like the one on the album that I hold closest to my heart is "Art God," and that one was really difficult for me to write too because I felt like I had to really dig deep. Most of the tracks, I wrote literally overnight, or it just came to me. I'm like, I got it, but "Art God" took me a few days because I didn't know what to write about and I felt I had to dig deep into my own emotions to come up with something. I really put a lot of my own personal emotions into the song. Comparing my life experiences to works of artists, painters, musicians, and overcoming sorrow. "Art God" would be the one.

**Where do you hope your music will take you?**

I hope that I can take my music on tour. I really want to do something that nobody in queer music has done before. A lot of people dream about getting their music out there, and I want to be one of those people who make it. I want to get to the point where I'm not just getting covered by Billboard Pride, I want to get to the point where Billboard is covering my story. I want people to start looking at my music as just music and not queer music. Embrace my talent for what it is and not feel the need to label it as something else.

**How would you describe your style of music?**

I feel like my style of music is, I really think it's just intelligent rap. It's fun. You listen to it and it might take you a few times before you realize the meaning of what I said. I want my music to be like a puzzle that someone can put together. There's a story within the pieces. You just have to unwrap it.

**Do you think you would be where you are at today if it were not for the success of Drag Race?**

I feel like Drag Race put me on a higher platform of visibility. I don't feel like anything's impossible, but I definitely think I would not

be in the same exact place I'm at right now if I didn't have that extra boost. So yes, I think Drag Race contributed a lot to my success as both an entertainer and musician. Without the help of Drag Race, I feel like it would have taken me a lot longer to get where I'm at today.

**Throughout both of your times on Drag Race, your season and on All Stars, what is the most important lesson you have learned?**

During both seasons of Drag Race, I learned, well honestly, here's the thing, the fan bases on Drag Race are just so crazy, and one I learned from the show and the fan bases is that I have to live my true self and not care about what anybody thinks about me. Nobody can dictate my truth, and I really just stopped caring what anybody thought about me. Both online and in my real life. If you don't like what I'm doing, that sounds like a personal issue for you.

**What are your thoughts on the current season?**

I think the current season is really intense. They are bringing up a lot of issues that have to do with our political climate, and that's something I wasn't really expecting. I think it's been very entertaining.

**Will you be involved with any Pride events across the country this month?**

I have always been super involved with pride celebrations, and my manager always books me in a few each year. So, you can expect me celebrating Pride in your city soon.

**What would you like to say to your South Florida fans? Will you be visiting anytime soon?**

I love South Florida! I can't wait to see you soon, and as soon as I finalize some touring plans, you'll know!



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# CELEBRATING BROADWAY'S BIGGEST NIGHT:

## Once on This Island's Michael Arden

By Denny Patterson



The 72nd Annual Tony Awards will be broadcasted live on Sunday, June 10. Per usual, individuals who were nominated and theatre lovers across the country will be clutching their drinks and pearls in anticipation throughout the entire evening. This prestigious event honors excellence in the theatre and celebrates plays, musicals, performers, scores, costumes, choreography, and so forth.

Some of you may remember Michael Arden from 2016 when he was nominated for Best Direction of a Musical for the Deaf West Theatre revival of *Spring Awakening*. However, the odds were stacked against him since he and every other show that year were up against the blockbuster sensation, *Hamilton*. He has now received a second chance for the gold with his direction of *Once on This Island*. In total, the production has received eight Tony nominations, including Best Orchestration, Best Leading Actress, Best Costume Design, and Best Revival of a Musical.

I had the pleasure of chatting more with Arden about *Once on This Island*, his artistic choices, and upcoming projects.

First off, congratulations on your Tony nomination for Best Direction of a Musical!

Thank you! It's really exciting.

And *Once on This Island* has eight nominations in all. That must be quite surreal for you.

Yes, it's incredible. I mean, to go from this idea, I brainstormed about doing this piece in a parking lot somewhere, to getting eight Tony nominations. It's astounding and such an honor.

For those of us who are not familiar with the show, can you give me a little synopsis of it?

*Once on This Island* is a story, it's sort of a play within a play that tells the story of a young girl named Ti Moune who is born on an island like Haiti and there's a great economic and social divide that has to do with colorism. So, there's one side of the island who are landowners and they are a mix of black and French and then there's the peasants who live on the other



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side of the island. For many reasons, there is an enormous divide between the two, and Ti Moune is a young peasant girl who falls in love with a boy from the other side of the island and the Gods of the island have set her fate in motion to settle a bet where her love can conquer death. I hope that sounds okay. You can probably find something better on Wikipedia [laughs].

**No, that's perfect! I want to hear your own words! Now, I have been told and read some articles that this production is essentially a retelling of Romeo and Juliet. Would you say that is true?**

In a way. It's a book by Rosa Guy, an amazing writer who is no longer with us. It's kind of like a Haitian retelling of the Little Mermaid fable, but dealing much more with social and class divide and prejudices.

**Gotcha. And do you think that's how the production is relevant to today's society?**

Yes, definitely. When I was doing research for the piece, I traveled to Haiti with my designer and the same issues and justices that the characters are struggling with are incredibly present in the world today. I think in quiet ways and sometimes not so quiet ways. So, I think it's an incredibly relevant piece. It also looks at how our own perceptions of class and race sort of reverberate through time. So, I think it's an incredible piece that peels back layers of how people separate themselves from other people, sometimes out of fear. Usually out of fear.

**Is that also the overall message you wanted to convey to audiences?**

I think the message I want to convey is that Ti Moune is a character who ultimately chooses to love someone and not take revenge when she has been incredibly wronged by this man and by society. She has been failed by society, but in the end, she chooses love and forgiveness over retribution and I think that's an incredibly strong message. At a certain point, you must stop and learn to forgive as humans, otherwise, it's a never-ending cycle of blood. I also want audiences to see that the good we do in our lives, we may not

see a return of that good in our lifetime. Those actions and the love we give and the injustices we try to correct and stand up for. Those are incredibly valid actions and they can reverberate through time and who knows what future generations might react to that. Those times we step in front of a bully, those are the times we choose to forgive. We're living in a world where you want immediate ratification. An immediate response to your Instagram post, you want people to like it. We may not see immediate change, but it's still important that we do it.

**What made you want to jump in and direct this revival?**

Well, I love the score, it's like one of the best scores ever written for the stage. It's perfect. The characters and the overall story is beautiful and life affirming. I am attracted to stories that inspire faith, and this show inspires faith and humanity. It's just an important piece. I have always loved it and I thought, there must be a way to tell this incredibly relevant story. Not only by looking at the world around us and looking at what people are dealing with and the devastation people live with, in places like Haiti and Puerto Rico, but also looking at our own quiet prejudices and trying to highlight that too.

**Throughout the entire process, what would you say you have learned the most?**

I think I have learned that when an obstacle is presented in a situation, it's an opportunity. When an obstacle presents itself in front of you, it usually means to open your mind to collaboration in bigger ways than what it was before and to listen more carefully. There are more clever ways around it and it will always lead you to something better. I make you think about what you want a little bit harder.

**In addition to directing, you have also acted in several productions, TV shows and movies. Do you prefer one over the other?**

That's hard to say. I love directing, not because it's what I'm doing now, but because it's sort of a culmination of all my skills as an actor, as well as additional ones. I feel like I am acting,



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but I'm acting as every character in a way, quietly. I just love being able to bring artists together to create an environment where they can just work. I think that's incredibly fulfilling, and I get much more of a thrill out of seeing a group of people I can help guide. That sparkles more than taking a bow myself.

**Right now, you are also working on the production of Annie for the Los Angeles Philharmonic?**

Yes! Every summer, the Hollywood Bowl does a musical. It's sort of like an enormous Summer Stock production. So, we put it together in two weeks and we have an incredible cast. We rehearse for about a week and a half then do it for three nights and drink a lot of rosé and all go home and sleep for a week [laughs]. But I'm excited and it's certainly a challenge with all the kids and dogs. I may have bitten off more than I can chew, but I'm surrounded by great people and a great team. The cast is shaping up nicely.

**What are some other upcoming projects we should be on the lookout for?**

I am creating a one-man version of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol with an incredible actor named Jefferson Mays. You may know his work, he was nominated for A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder and he was the star in I Am My Own Wife which won Best Play a few years back. He's an incredible actor and performer and we're creating a version of A Christmas Carol I would say will be the spookiest and scariest version of A Christmas Carol, hopefully, you've ever seen. We're focusing on what a ghost story is. It opens at the Geffen this fall in Los Angeles in time for Christmas.

**After the success of the Deaf West Theatre revival of Spring Awakening, do you plan to direct any more Deaf West productions?**

I really hope to. I am currently working on one, but you know, with anything, it takes a really long time, definitely with a deaf musical. We must put everything in piece by piece quite methodically for it to work. Hopefully in the next few years, if all goes well, the world can

see what we have been dreaming up. It just may take a while.

**Your husband, Andy Mientus, played a leading role in Spring Awakening. How fun is it for you two to collaborate on projects together?**

It is so much fun. I feel like we are always quietly working together on projects. I come home and tell him everything and he gives me ideas and inspires me. Spring Awakening was actually his idea and to be able to actually go to work together and do something we love is great. Hopefully we will be doing that for a long time. He is the smartest person I know, and we complement each other well within a room. He's sort of the brains and I'm the brawn. All the good ideas come from him and I can manage a room and make it happen and put it into action. We have an amazing partnership both artistically and otherwise [laughs]. It's nice when we work together because there are long extended periods of time where we are in separate cities.

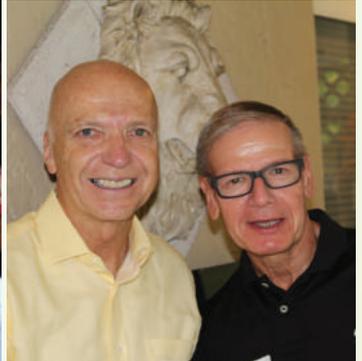
**You two planned to propose on the same day, didn't you?**

Yes, and he beat me to it. Let's just say I was planning this great scavenger hunt in Bath, England, where we ended up getting married, and I had this whole thing planned. I was putting the last pieces into play when he came back to the room and he surprised me. So, it was a bit like a farce, and it was amazing. It felt like the universe was smiling down on us saying yes, today's the day.

**That is so sweet! Lastly, I must ask, do you have any Tony predictions?**

I have no idea. I think the minute you try to predict, you set yourself up which will result in disappointment. A part of me is still the kid who would watch the Tony's on the floor in my grandparents' living room back in Texas. I just can't wait to see what happens. Who knows, and it's just such a celebration and what chance to show the world what we do in New York and how we press the boundaries and ask questions. We are at the forefront of the arts. No predictions expect that I think it will last about three hours long.

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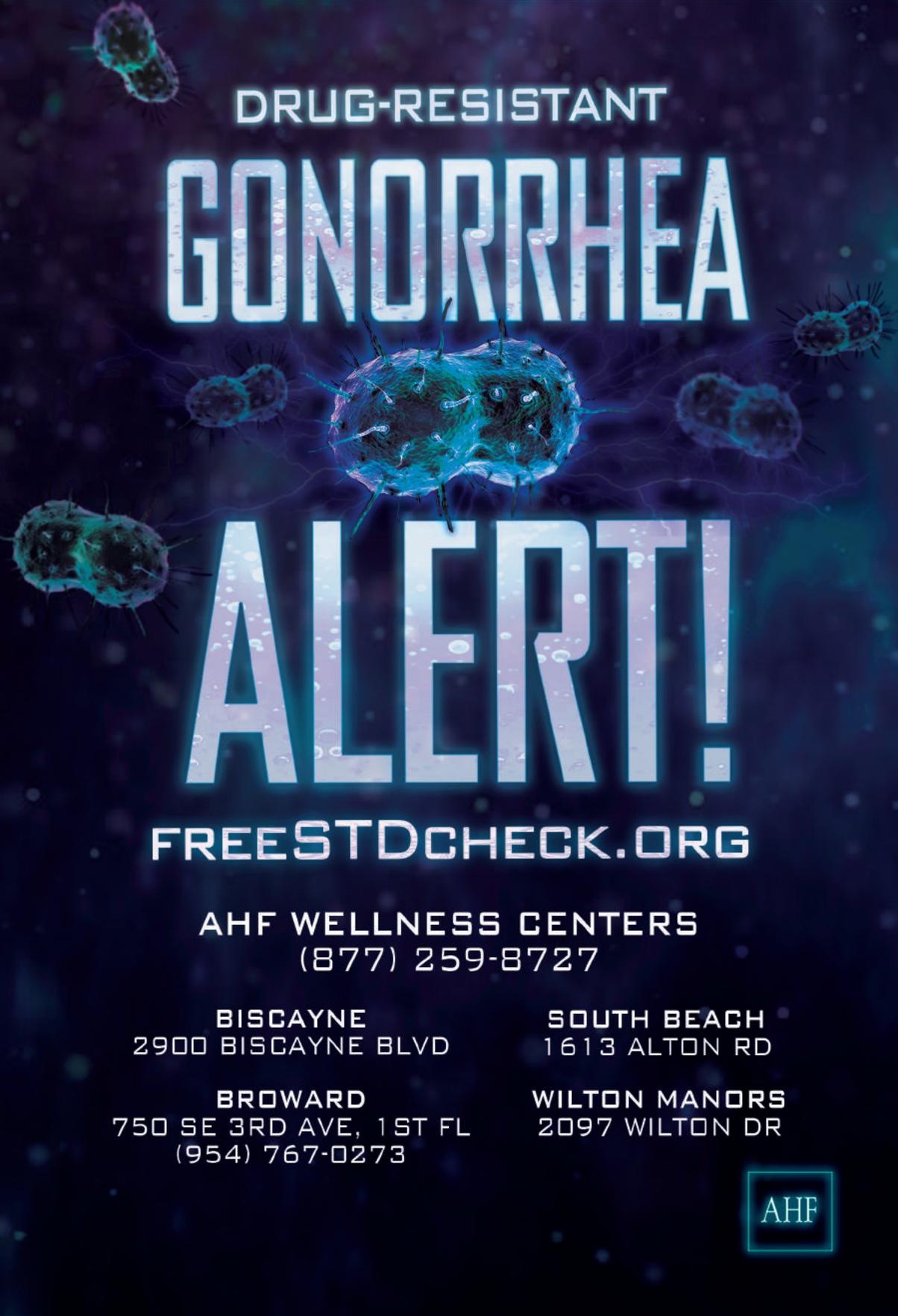
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