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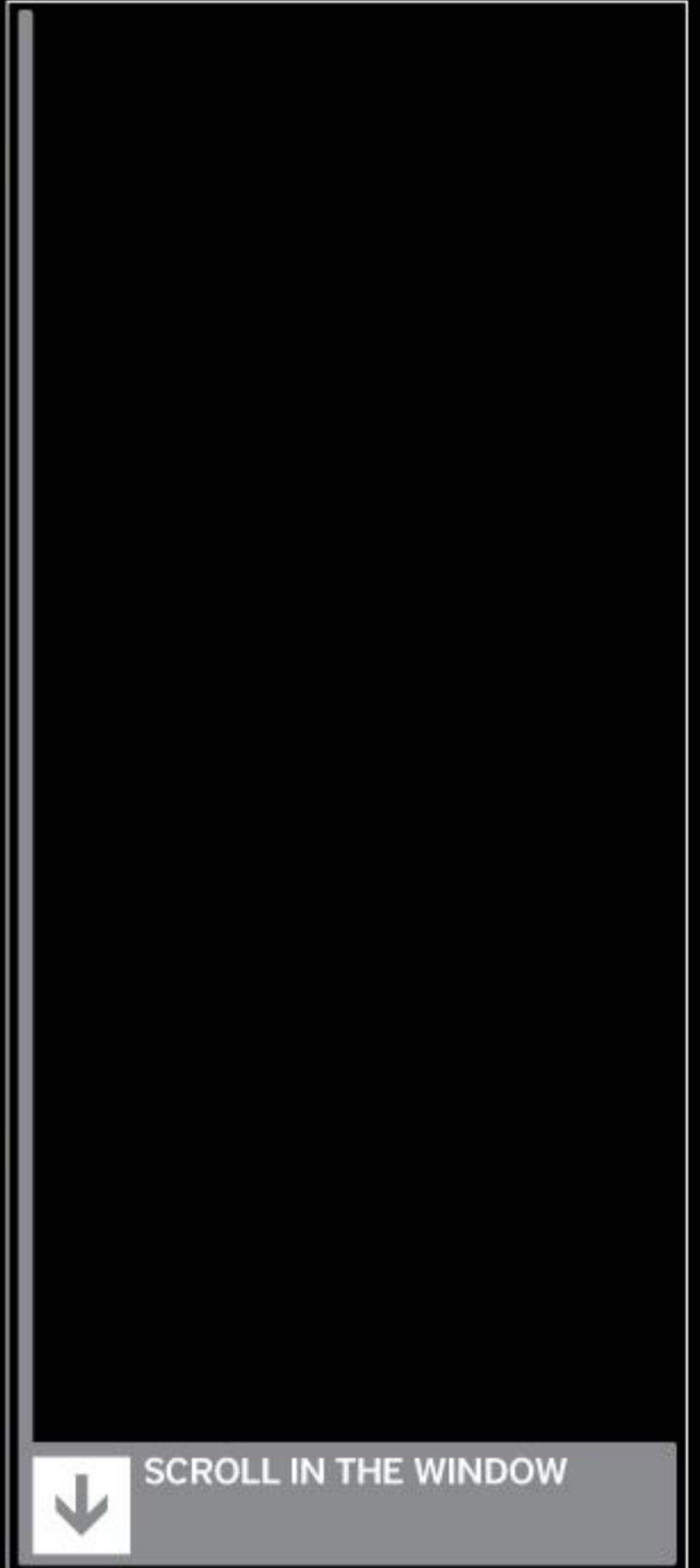
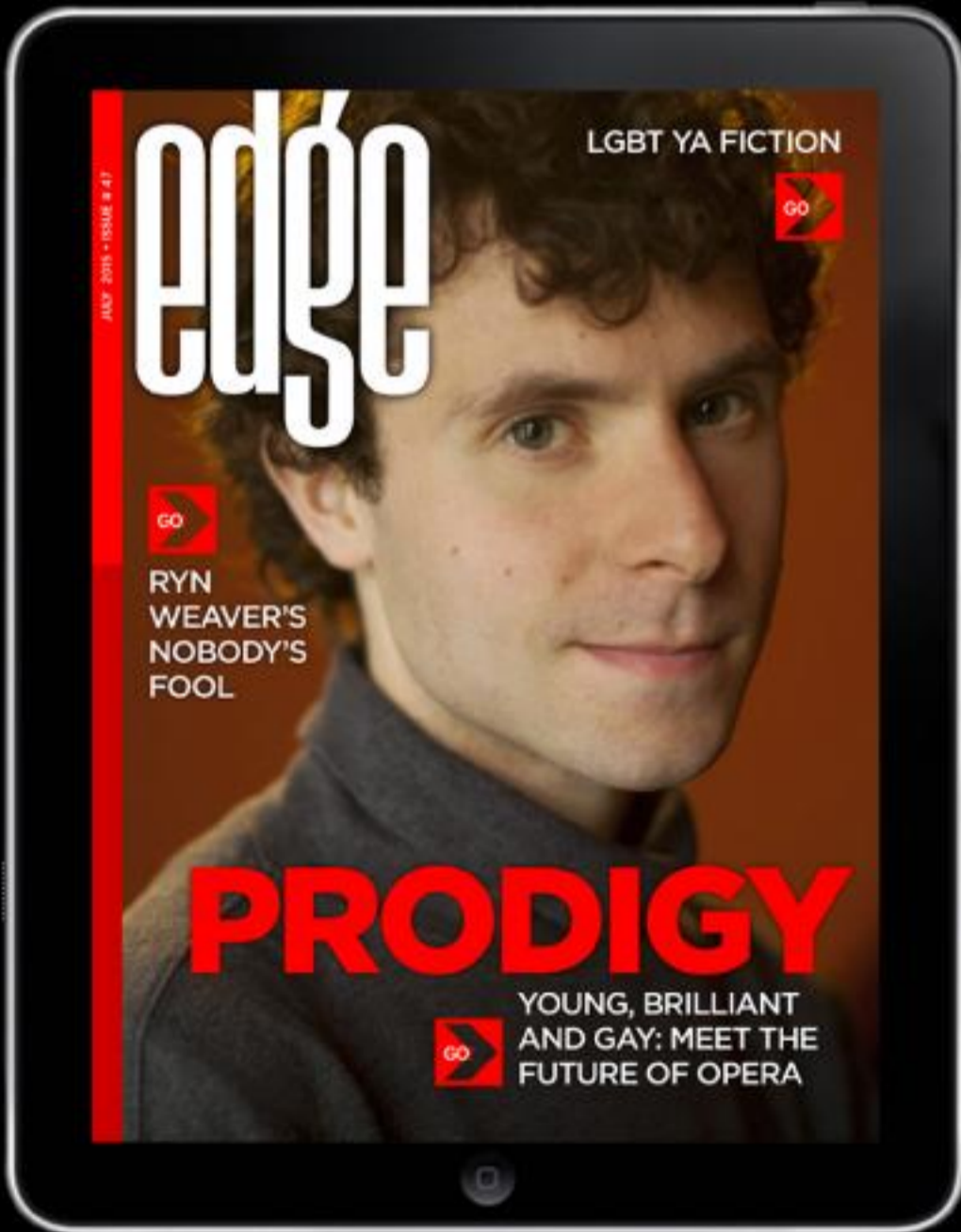
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- 25 - 8/1** 20th Annual Family Week

AUGUST

- 13 & 17** 11th Annual Provincetown Jazz Festival
- 15 - 21** Carnival Week
- 20** 37th Annual Carnival Parade

SEPTEMBER

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- 18 - 20** National Gay Pilots Association Cape Cod Classic
- 18 - 20** 10th Annual Kate Clinton Classic
- Women's Flag Football Tournament

OCTOBER

- 1 - 4** Mates Leather Weekend
- 12 - 18** 31st Annual Women's Week
- 18 - 25** Fantasia Fair
- 29 - 11/1** Halloween/Spooky Bear Weekend

NOVEMBER

- 20 - 22** Mr. New England Leather
- 25** Lighting of the Pilgrim Monument
- 26 - 30** Thanksgiving Day Weekend

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BOLGER AT A TIME



TUNAGE

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WEAVER'S DEBUT ALBUM
STACK UP?



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FROM STARTUPS TO TRIED-
AND-TRUE



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RETURN TO
THE BIG
EASY



CHATTER

COREY JOHNSON IS NEW
YORK CITY'S FASTEST RISING
STAR IN POLITICS

EVENTS



FIT

STAYING FIT
STARTS IN THE
KITCHEN



FEATURE

LOOKING FOR A YA NOVEL
ABOUT COMING OUT? NOW
YOU CAN TAKE YOUR PICK



PLUGGED-IN

CAN APPLE THRIVE IN THE
ALREADY-CROWDED STREAMING
MUSIC BUSINESS?



NATION

THE STRUGGLE AND
FUTURE OF AMERICA'S
TRANSGENDER YOUTH

edge masthead

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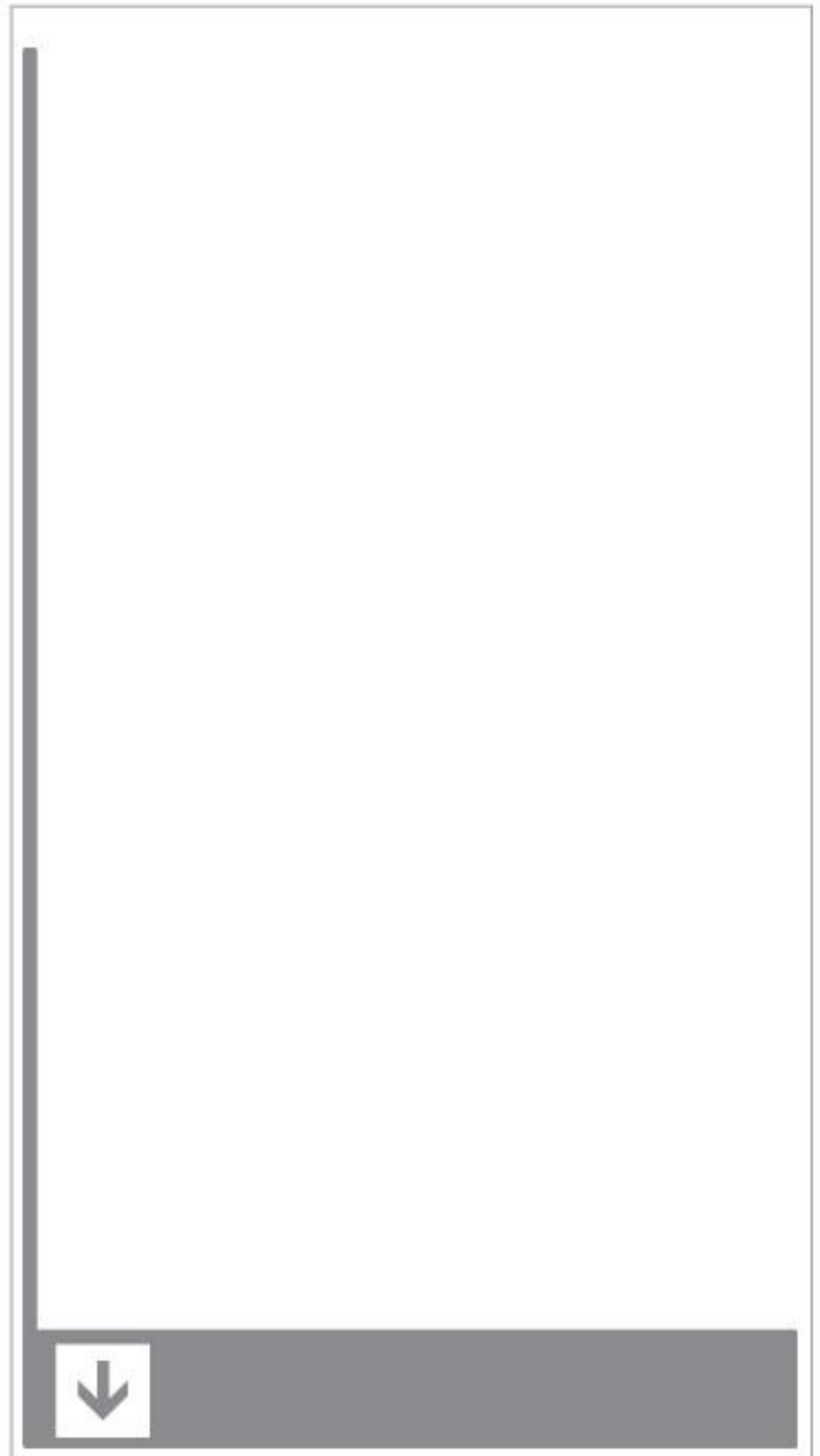
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KELSY CHAUVIN

New Orleans Journey:

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

GROWING UP IN A SMALL CAJUN TOWN

west of New Orleans made every visit special. I was lucky to have parents who loved the “big city,” so we were there all the time. We’d pile into the car practically every weekend and hit our favorite places, most of which thankfully are still around today – a testament to the staying power of joints that do it right from the get-go.

First stop, juicy burgers or giant, fluffy omelettes at the Camellia Grill, a local diner turned institution since it opened in 1946. Then we’d drop by Maple Street Book Shop to browse the titles, and sometimes hop on a streetcar to joyride under the shade of St. Charles Avenue’s massive live oaks. We’d stroll along Magazine Street or visit the Audubon Zoo to check out the white tigers and slurp sno-balls.

New York is my home today, but I still head south regularly to catch up on my favorite city. The difference between then and now is being both gay and of drinking age: two highly agreeable traits for fun in the Big Easy. And while I have my staple spots, there is a never-ending stream of new favorites to discover on every visit.





The Country Club

VISITING HOME

Finding a good place to crash is easy in a tourist-heavy city like New Orleans, where accommodations abound. A French Quarter hotel is the perfect plan for first-timers who plan to check out the legendary cocktail scene every night. A big but well-priced hotel like the Royal Sonesta is a good choice, and not just for its rooftop pool, while the more quaint Place d'Armes appeals for its shady courtyard, pool and prime location by St. Louis Cathedral. Cross Canal Street and you'll discover a whole slew of options, including the classic five-star Windsor Court Hotel and the newly rebranded, \$29 million Le Méridien.

I prefer the gay-owned Burgundy Bed and Breakfast because it's tucked among the quieter residences of the Marigny, giving me a faux home for a spell. Plus it's walking distance from the Country Club, the Bywater's long-running, flirty LGBT oasis complete with saltwater pool and hot tub, restaurant and lounge, Thursday ladies' nights, and boozy weekend brunches.

There are many places to wander around the east side of the Quarter, starting with the always lively Frenchman Street. Its restaurants and clubs seduce the senses with their freshly cooked seafood aromas and live music spilling

out, top among them the Marigny Brasserie and Spotted Cat Music Club.

CLASSIC NEW ORLEANS

There's rarely a trip home without passing through the French Market to stock up on souvenirs and Cajun curios, from carnival masks to Mardi Gras beads to alligator heads. The market shoots right onto Decatur Street, where to this day I never miss a break at Cafe du Monde for beignets and a café au lait.

The photo opps can go on all day from here, but it's the iconic image of Jackson Square from the Riverwalk that beguiles tourists, even those of us who have taken that shot a thousand times. Along with the square, I've been known to stop for a tarot card or palm reading, if not to check in with my future then to help keep the freelance fortune tellers in business. They are part of the mystique that keeps the Quarter's voodoo charm swirling.

The city's famous open-container law is a standing declaration of Big Easy priorities. If I want a true classic, Pat O'Brien's hurricane is truly like no other: sweet and swiftly intoxicating. When I need a dose of community, Good Friends, Café Lafitte in Exile and the Bourbon Pub and Parade are my staple gay bars.

Otherwise, I pull up a chair by the open doors at Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop Bar to watch the crowds from the oldest watering hole in the city, dating back to the 1730s.

All that drinking requires regular eating, and any New Orleanian can rattle off places for killer po'boys. But the best of them don't come from places with white tablecloths – they come from little delis with back counters. In the quarter, my favorite is Verti Marte on Royal Street, where fried shrimp and oyster po'boys on the softest French bread are served to go, along with daily specials and unbelievable homemade desserts. Others swear by Johnny's Po-Boys on St. Louis Street, but that's a debate nobody should take on.

A fan of quality dives, I'll also get seafood platters, fried chicken and Creole standards from the no-frills Fiorella's Café. This restaurant serves up a sense of old New Orleans, with the kind of friendly vibe that could keep you chatting at the bar all night.

GAY OLD TIMES, AND NEW ONES TOO

Southern Louisiana's wicked heat and humidity, not to mention the bureaucracy's slowly-turning wheels, means things evolve slowly here. In the 10 years since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city, rebuilding progress started off at a snail's pace before finally kicking into high gear in recent years. Some argue that the city is not the same place it was before August 29, 2005. Of course it isn't – even in an unhurried city, change is inevitable.

What's different about New Orleans a decade since Katrina is a newfound infatuation from those who survived the storm and those who were drawn there in the aftermath. If America is a melting pot, then New Orleans is a big pot of tasty gumbo, with flavor that grows richer with every new resident's love for this unique, down-home metropolis.

Post-Katrina, one of the best parts of the city's



Johnny's po'boy



Cafe Du Monde



Ryan Cochran, marketing manager of Communify



Nick Vivion and Kevin Farrell



Ursa Major

rebirth – along with improved infrastructure and economic investments that are boosting the local economy – has been renewed hometown pride. That goes for LGBT pride especially.

“Katrina didn’t discriminate,” says Ryan Cochran, marketing manager of Commu-nify, a local, gay-owned marketing firm. “The rebound for our [LGBT] community is exactly like it was for everyone else, including overall tourism. We all banded together to save and rebuild the city we love. The LGBT community is stronger for it, along with everyone still here.”

THE CRESCENT CITY’S NEXT PHASE

One need only look at the slew of new hotels and restaurants to see which way the tide is turning in New Orleans. The Bywater, Marigny and Mid-City in particular are whole new worlds since Katrina, where indie entrepreneurs are opening innovative eateries, renowned cocktail lounges, unique arts spaces, and fabulous shops rivaling any of the world capitals of cool.

Husbands Nick Vivion and Kevin Farrell

are two of those new business owners enjoying the success of their “international street food and globally inspired cocktails” at Booty’s Street Food. With most dishes less than \$10, the restaurant has quickly become a Bywater favorite since its 2012 opening, and inspired the couple to open Ursa Major this spring.

Located in the Central Business District, Ursa Major is built on an astrological theme, including a rotating cocktail menu based on the sky’s changing zodiac signs. Likewise, the food menu is “built around cultures with strong ties to the stars – think Peruvian, Chinese, Polynesian, Japanese, Greek and Egyptian,” says Farrell, adding that the “dining room sky” is made of an art installation representing 50 individual galaxies.

Naturally, there’s no shortage of nightlife either. Parties like the lesbian-centric Jem at the multifaceted, gay-tilted AllWays Lounge stay hopping thanks to the thriving queer scene. For dancing among NOLA hotties, there’s clubby Napoleon’s Itch on Bourbon Street and Oz for go-go boys. Mimi’s in the Marigny is a great neighborhood hangout that’s open late, with quintessential gay-friendly dive Big Daddy’s Bar just across the street.

For another sign that the LGBT community has undergone a significant explosion, don’t miss Southern Decadence. Every Labor Day weekend, it’s the city’s



The Sazerac: Born in New Orleans

largest gay party, heavy on scantily clad men and heavily made-up drag queens. This year, the street/circuit party descends on the Quarter September 2 to September 7.

It can be hard to keep up with all that's new in this city, and even harder to uncover some of its gay secrets. To dig a little deeper, historian Glenn DeVillier leads walking tours that cover the French Quarter's colorful gay history, as well as its literary and multicultural pasts.

The all-welcoming atmosphere of the Crescent City has long made it the stomping ground of eclectics from around the world. It's why this place became a bastion of music and arts ages ago, and why the city stays in the hearts of travelers well beyond their visits. Likewise, the LGBT community here is a vital ingredient in the New Orleans flavor, and its only getting better. Cochran even believes that New Orleans eventually will become the No. 1 U.S. travel destination for LGBT tourism.

"Today, I see the LGBT community in New Orleans becoming more connected and unified," says Cochran. "We're full of wonderful organizations that do great work, but compared with other cities, we haven't been as vocally linked with each other. That's changing – I am seeing progress in how we can all work together and create a louder, prouder voice in the South." 



SCROLL IN THE WINDOW

Drink Up



Arnaud's Restaurant

Cane and Table

Le Méridien

Commander's Palace

Resource Guide

TAP A LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION

New Orleans Official Guide

The Burgundy Bed & Breakfast

Place d'Armes Hotel

Windsor Court Hotel

The AllWays Lounge

The Country Club New Orleans

Booty's Street Food

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Maple Street Book Shop

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TRANS-GENDER YOUTH

THE MOST VULNERABLE AMONG US

FOR TRANS PEOPLE, "IT GETS BETTER" has expanded from affirming individual self-worth to a more global meaning. Bruce Jenner's transition to Caitlyn Jenner is but the latest spark to a national conversation about transgender people.

This extraordinary sea change in American society has been effected in a remarkably short time. Only a few years ago, transgender people were acknowledged as figures of pity, disgust or outrage, if at all. *Time's* cover story featuring Laverne Cox put it succinctly: "The Transgender Tipping Point."

It certainly has gotten better for celebrities like Cox and Jenner. But what about the most vulnerable: transgender youth?

"There has definitely been a huge cultural shift, but we're still getting more clients than we can handle," Heather Gay told EDGE. "People like Caitlyn Jenner are really from out people." As deputy executive director of programs at the Ali Forney Center, Gay has, as they say, boots on the ground. Ali Forney, which provides shelter and services to LGBT homeless youth ages 16 to 24 in New York City, is the largest such organization in the country.

Certainly, any regular reader of this site and other LGBT news outlets could be forgiven for despairing at the seemingly endless stream of horrific accounts about trans youth.



RELIGION

When the body of Mercedes Williamson, 17, was discovered in June behind her confessed murderer's house in Alabama, it was only the latest in such headlines. Only a few months before, a trans teen's suicide in Cincinnati sparked outrage after it came out that her parents subjected her to Christian "conversion therapy."

It is a dramatic reminder that religion remains the largest barrier to trans acceptance in this country.

"Of the late adolescents we see, a lot have religious backgrounds," Gay said. "They tell us of experiences being beaten and abused because of their identity: 'My mother said I could stay here as long as I dress like a boy.'"

Sometimes, the "therapy" takes even more extreme forms. When Gianna Love, growing up as a boy in Tampa, Fla., at 13 kissed another boy, her mother subjected her to exorcisms. The response by the Southern Baptist Convention last year is sadly typical of fundamental sects in the Abrahamic religions: It brands trans people as mentally ill, a threat to society, church outcasts.

Still, for the first time there is discussion about biblical precepts and compassion. And more

modern denominations completely accept trans people; Reform Judaism, for example, even has ordained several transgendered rabbis.

SOBERING STATISTICS

The depth of the problem for trans youth was highlighted by a detailed report from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. The findings included such alarming statistics as:

- Three-quarters of trans students, compared to only a quarter of all students, miss school because they fear for their safety.
- 90 percent of trans students are the butt of derogatory terms and negative remarks about their gender expression.
- In one school year, a third of trans students are the target of highly derogatory statements from school staff.
- Two-thirds have had property damaged at school and are the target of cyberbullying.
- Most alarming, nearly half have been assaulted *within the year of the report*.

So it's hardly a surprise that suicide is rampant relative to other youth. The suicide of Kyle Prescott, 14, in May was the third reported in San Diego within a three-month period. Fortunately, there are more and more stories like the teen couple who met while they were both transitioning – and in Oklahoma no less – or



the Utah school that elected a transgender prom queen.

In fact, Jack Dresher, a prominent gay psychiatrist who has written extensively on issues affecting trans youth, sees hateful comments elicited by ongoing controversies about everything from Jenner's transition and trans beauty pageant contestants to restrooms, pro sports and the military as a sign of progress of sorts.

When Clinton began the conversation that led to the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" compromise, he noted, the Pentagon put forward a general who mouthed the most hateful canards about LGBT military personnel. It took 20 years from DODT to serving openly.

"The beginning of a conversation is always fraught," he told EDGE. "Usually, people are either not speaking about these things or saying them in private. Conversations are necessary if you're going to create change. You're going to hear all voices. Ultimately, some are more persuasive than others."

NAVIGATING A SEA OF TROUBLES

Even so, taking the long view doesn't help those having to live in the here and now. Coming out remains an emotional roller coaster, even for those fortunate to live in the most enlightened communities. Transgender teens, Gay noted, "have the most barriers when they walk through our doors."

"Just try to be a transgender person walking down the street or taking the subway," she said. "I'm with clients every day and it's unbelievable the way they're treated. Try to get medical care, try to get a job — being rude is a best-case scenario." And this is in New York — where, it should be noted, a transwoman was pushed off a subway platform not long ago in what police described as a hate crime.

The endemic problems plaguing Gay's clients include access to basic health care, let alone the

wherewithal to fund various stages of transitioning. As for education, while well-known schools actively seek out trans students, for Gay's clients it's more important that community colleges and trade schools become supportive.

If her clients should manage to learn a trade, get a two-year associate degree or pass the GED, there's the question of who will hire them. So far, Gay said, "we haven't had companies reach out to us," although there are a few standouts, such as Starbucks, which, she said, while "pretty great, others are not."

It's certainly true that kids who come from middle- and upper-class homes benefit from better-educated parents, who have become much more educated about how to handle gender dysmorphia. Success stories abound like Jazz Jennings, 14, who made *Time's* list of 2014 most influential teens, had her own reality show on TLC, was the subject of a documentary film, co-wrote a children's book, and was even featured in a skincare company's digital marketing campaign.

None of this would have been possible without such supportive parents.

WHEN IS IT TOO EARLY?

By highlighting kids like Jazz, though, the media plays an important educative role in the fight for acceptance and understanding of what trans youth are going through. Drescher praised a June 16 front-page profile in the *New York Times* about a girl, 18, going through gender-reassignment surgery. But big-city dailies across the country are providing much-needed coverage, such as a *Tampa (Fla.) Tribune* story in April about how a local trans student, 16, and her family have been coping with her transitioning.





The entire subject of transitioning among youth remains highly controversial.

For Gay, it's entirely up to the individual – at any age: “Research tells us kids have awareness of it even before being gay, as early as age 3. We respect the gender our clients say they are. Our view is that you are the expert, so you tell us, and we will respect that.”

“We have known since at least the middle of the 20th century that it's not about changing minds,” Dresher noted. “It's about changing the condition to make people feel better about themselves. Gynecologists and other specialists are all fairly comfortable with transitioning certain patients who meet certain criteria.”


The problem, he added, is with pre-pubescent children. “Most grow up to be gay,” Dresher asserted. “No one can tell which children will grow out of it and which will not. It's hard to know the right thing to do with those children.”

This is most definitely not an opinion shared by all. Dresher, however, maintained that “there is no universal consensus.” He has been “trying to bring everyone to the same table. Right now, there no

good guidelines and people are doing what they feel like doing.”

It's not that he doesn't believe transitioning is wrong. The problem as he sees it is that the subject elicits more outrage than rational discourse. And while he acknowledged that “some activists get very mad at me because my comments might provide fuel for the other side,” he added, “I'm trying to get people to talk about how not to do harm.”

If nothing else, the very fact that transitioning at younger and younger ages has become such a hot topic is proof of how far we've come.

Recently, Gay has seen some of Ali Forney's supporting organizations taking the need to help trans people much more seriously. “Even from our own base of supporters,” she said, “a lot didn't have awareness of transgender teens and what it means. A lot of LGBT people with money have become more aware that trans persons are part of our community, too.” 

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 ROBERT NESTI

MAESTRO AUCOIN

HIS OPERA *CROSSING* IS THE MOST TALKED ABOUT WORK IN THE MEDIUM IN YEARS. AND AT 25 YEARS OLD, HE'S JUST STARTING OUT

On meeting Matthew Aucoin, you might think he's a member of an indie-rock band with a hit song on the Billboard Hot 100. Slender with a mop of curly brown hair falling over his forehead, he looks far younger than his age (25) and speaks with an open manner of a college sophomore interviewing for a job as a Starbucks barista. Who would think that this sweet young man just wrote what has turned out to be the most acclaimed new American opera of the decade?

That is *Crossing*, which premiered under the auspices of the American Repertory Theater (ART) at Boston's Shubert Theater for a week at the end of May. The intermissionless opera takes place in the grimmest of settings: a Union hospital outside of Washington, D.C., at the end of the Civil War, with Walt Whitman serving as a nurse to the wounded and maimed. The poet had come to care for his brother years earlier but stayed, offering patients not so much medical care as uplift while the interminable war wound to its end. Into the setting comes another soldier — John Wormley — who has an immediate connection with Whitman. Wormley has a secret and an agenda; he also pushes Whitman to question his altruistic motives when a physical relationship develops between them.





Crossing

That Aucoin wrote both the music and the libretto points to the diversity of his talent, which has been compared to the young Leonard Bernstein. Like Bernstein, Aucoin also conducts. (He conducted the premiere of *Crossing* with the local Boston ensemble A Far Cry.) He is currently in a two-year appointment as the Solti conducting apprentice at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, under Riccardo Muti, and an assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, which has allowed him to work with such luminaries as James Levine and British composer Thomas Adès (of whose music Aucoin is a huge fan). He has operas in the works for the Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Met, and was recently appointed to the first-ever composer-in-residence at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, where he collaborates on multimedia events with other millennial talents, known as the Encounters Ensemble.

Yet on this spring afternoon in an ART office, talk of his growing reputation in the music world felt out of place. Instead, the focus was on his craft — specifically his enthusiasm for opera's fusion of words and music. "Some of my earliest memories involve wanting to make up music,"

Aucoin said. "And then there's the fact that I have an equally intense love affair with words.

"The thing about opera is that words and the music both matter so much that you have to be intimate with both words and music if you want to write good opera ... I've tried to focus on words and music as two separate media that I want know on their own terms, so when I bring them together, I know how they behave."

It's certainly proved successful, at least with *Crossing*. The reviews are highly positive, rapturous even, which is unusual for a new work by a novice composer. "*Crossing* is a taut, teeming and inspired work," wrote Anthony Tommasini reviewing the piece in the *New York Times*. "Though certain aspects of the score suggest that Mr. Aucoin has yet to define fully his composer's voice, he clearly has prodigious gifts. The music grabbed me right through the opera's 1-hour-40-minute running time, without intermission ..." The audience response was equally strong: word-of-mouth led the weeklong engagement to sell out the 1,000-seat theater.

To say that Aucoin is a prodigy is something of an understatement. He is said to have played Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* on the piano at the age of 12 entirely from memory. *Figaro* remains a crucial work for him: it was the Countess Almaviva's second act aria — "Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro" — that first made

him aware of the medium. "I got the sense I was being exposed to feelings that I had never felt but could understand ... the music captures the psychology in such a crystallized way that it expanded my palettes of feeling. And I think that is one of the highest things that opera can do: to make us feel more sympathetic."

But having such an immediate facility for music also comes with a drawback. "I did always have the ability to play anything that I heard and remember," he continued. "The risk you have when you have that tendency is that you don't do the nitty-gritty work. I didn't always do the nuts-and-bolts – the practicing. So I had to play catch-up with learning those technical skills later. And I had to work my ass off to cover that ground, because it was important. You can't have chinks in your armor if you're going to construct full, well-constructed pieces of music. So it is both a virtue and a flaw. If it comes really naturally to you, you are not necessarily going to do the work. It's hard to write good music. It's really hard."

Aucoin grew up in a Boston suburb. His mother, Carol, is a technical writer and recreational pianist; his father, Don, is chief drama critic for the *Boston Globe*. (Because of his son's association with the ART, Don does not review plays there.) He came to the ART's attention while an undergrad at Harvard, when Diane Paulus, the Tony Award-winning artistic director of the organization, saw an opera he had composed before graduation. That summer they met in her office to brainstorm about a new piece that would be part of the theater's ongoing exploration of the Civil War. Earlier in the season, the theater produced Suzan-Lori Parks' *Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3)*.

At first, though, Aucoin was reluctant to work on a Civil War piece. "My reaction was, 'Eh, that's not me.' It didn't feel like natural subject matter. But Whitman's experience did. I reread his memoranda written during the Civil War, and what struck me was he felt the need





to maintain individual contact. His diary took the form of portraits. It is a series of miniature – it's kind of a heroic attempt to maintain a human scale in an inhuman world."

Nor did he want to write in the musical style of the time in which the opera was set. "It doesn't feel like me. I could do that if I was writing the score of a Ken Burns documentary. This is a depiction of somebody's inner life, as well as the period. And I think Whitman's inner life was a lot more turbulent and wild and complicated than what we think as Civil War music sounds like." (His score brings to mind such other composers as Benjamin Britten and John Adams.)

Crossing takes its name from one of Whitman's poems, *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*, which describes a mystical experience he has while crossing the East River. "In this moment of passage, he feels he's every person that has made this journey. And this sense of the recurring cycle makes him aware of an immortality beyond one's human life. He wants to reach

out to his fellow passengers and say we are all really having the same experience. And the act of crossing in Whitman means the act of entering a new plane of being."

In the opera, Whitman also crosses a line as he develops a physical relationship with Wormley.

"There's crossing as transgression when the relationship threatens to become sexual, when Whitman is confronted with his own desire and his motives aren't as pure as he would have liked to claim. He's confronted with that for the first time."

It was an experience that Aucoin felt in real life when, as a senior at Harvard, he felt himself falling in love with another student and was worried that love would not be returned. "Worried that my feelings would be unrequited, I came to see music as unrequitable love, and to see that it gains power by its very unrequitability," he told *Harvard Magazine*.

Being gay himself, did he feel he was conveying a political message in the opera's central relationship?

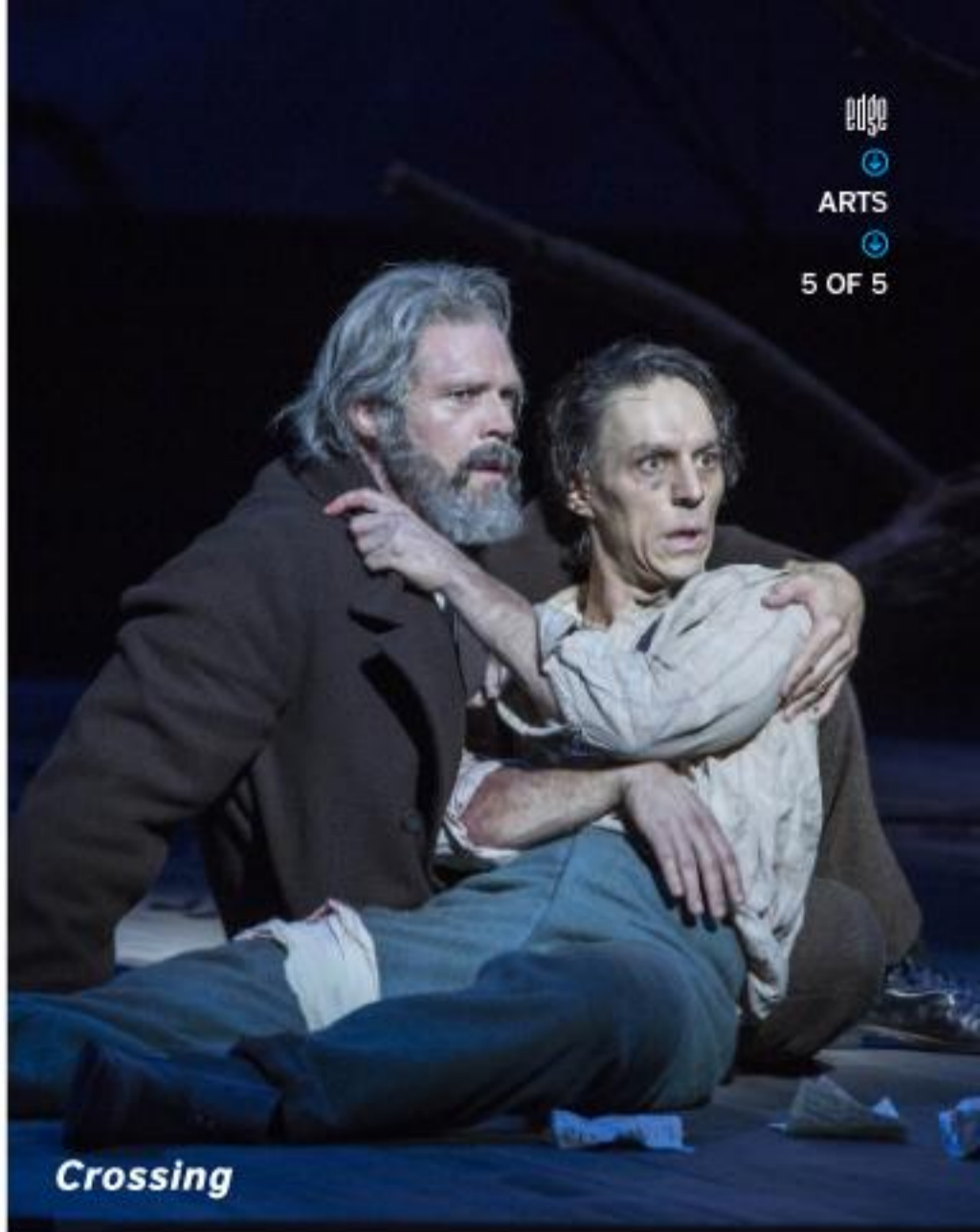
"Opera is the trickiest to get across any political message, because you run the risk of oversimplifying or preaching to the choir. Let's face it: half the audience is gay to begin with. And sometimes with

political opera, I think you would have greater effect if you wrote to your senator and wrote your opera about something else. Curiously opera has always had a large gay fan base, but it has not until very recently depicted gay relationships openly. It has always been furtive and allegories for various kinds of sexual personae. But I think it should be normalized. It is such a part of the fabric of our lives. In opera, it is strange to say, there still aren't as many gay relationships shown as there should be."

With so much going on – Aucoin also is an accomplished poet and lecturer – how does he find time for a personal life? "It's a tough balance. A very tough balance," he said with a thoughtful laugh. "But for some reason or another, most of my close friends have ended up in New York. So it is important for me to be based there because I feel my life is there. I am single at the moment."

He also doesn't feel limited to classical music. He's played with an indie-rock band as a teenager and is well versed in jazz and the Great American Songbook. When Met baritone Paulo Szot played a cabaret set at 54 Below two years ago, Aucoin was his musical director and accompanist. One world that Aucoin doesn't see himself exploring soon is the Broadway musical, despite having worked with one of the musical theater's leading directors, Diane Paulus, on *Crossing*.

"It is weird – Broadway is just not my language. It's almost like an allergy. Like I respect Sondheim, I admire the brilliance, I just can't say I love it. It would be great to do some fusion of Broadway and opera, but I don't think my music is that mold for any number of reasons. But never say never. There are modes of popular music I feel close to, but the Broadway musical



Crossing

is a foreign language to me. Everything about it. And Diane got her start in opera. Her opera roots go deep. She knows that language better than I know the Broadway language."

As for his looking like someone more likely to be seen on a VH1 video than in front of the Chicago Symphony, Aucoin only smiles. "Sure, when you first meet an orchestra, especially when I'm conducting, you do feel like everyone is saying, 'What's this kid have to say? We've played this Beethoven symphony 50 times.' But if I make it all about the music, if I focus on the matter at hand, then no one cares. The age thing stops mattering after two minutes. And with this piece, I appreciated the feedback. It has totally informed the final version of the piece."

With a *New York Times Magazine* profile, rave reviews for his opera and commissions that will take him into the next decade, how does Aucoin feel about his overnight success?

"I feel really fortunate. So I want to work with what I got and take it as far as it can possibly go." **B**



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DREAMERS

From crowd-funded start-ups to iconic brands that transcend generations, American ingenuity reigns supreme this season. EDGE takes a look at some of our favorite domestic brands – some familiar and others on the cusp – that will have you looking on trend for any occasion.



AVIATOR

Who says the adventurer can't also look stylish? Aviator's owner, founder and designer, Colby Kane, has a passion for travel, and he translates that experience into an essential collection of high-performance garments and stylish denim that's perfect for anything from a weekend getaway to a mountain trek. Kane's latest launch is a high-performance hoodie with a natural antimicrobial finish and 360-degree stretch. We also love Aviator's Fly/Jeans, featuring single-needle construction and 2 percent Spandex for just a bit of give. All products are made in Aviator's Los Angeles factory.



aviatorusa.com



ACE RIVINGTON

Who is Ace Rivington? It's the dream turned reality of Beau Lawrence, who created the character as the face of his spirited new clothing brand that launched in 2013. The iconic homespun French Terry sweatshirt is knitted and sewn in Los Angeles, while the rest of the collection includes such must-haves as a resin-coated hooded flight jacket and selvedge denim. Lawrence is also breaking ground with Ace Rivington's latest ad campaign, which features androgynous model Rain Dove and LGBT spokesperson Cory Wade, though he's quick to say he didn't pick the models but rather created a character and story that intrigues and inspires people.

"Adventure and freedom are the traits most important in the Ace Rivington brand. Rain resonated with this message and was inspired to use our product for a spontaneous photo shoot," says Lawrence. "When she showed me the images, I understood the feeling the pictures shared about adventure and freedom, and about embracing that spirit. If touching our soft fabrics, appreciating our fits or studying our branding and the stories behind the Ace Rivington character can for even a moment bring a sense of adventure and freedom into the lives of our fans and customers, then I accomplished what I set out to do. This is a campaign about people, adventure and freedom."

acerivington.com





Levi's

Who hasn't owned a pair of Levi's classic 501s? Founded in 1853 by Bavarian-born Levi Strauss, the company has grown from a dry-goods business to one of the foremost denim manufacturers in the world. But that expansion is grounded in responsible and ethical leadership. Levi's once again scored a perfect 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index, and continues to advocate for LGBT rights.

"Over the course of our history, we've stood for equality for all people in a number of ways. From being one of the first factories to desegregate in the country (before it was mandated to do so) to addressing economic equality through the Levi Strauss Foundation's involvement in the asset-building movement," says Chief Merchandising Officer Grant Barth. "And this year, during this historic time, we wanted to step up our support for LGBTQ equality in an even bigger and more visible way." Levi's 2015 Pride collection emphasizes the 1969 Stonewall Riots, with net proceeds donated to the Stonewall Community Foundation.

And back to those 501s: this summer Levi's reworked the classic silhouette to create the 501 CT, which features a slightly roomier waist and tapered leg from knee to ankle.

us.levi.com

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Gräf & Lantz

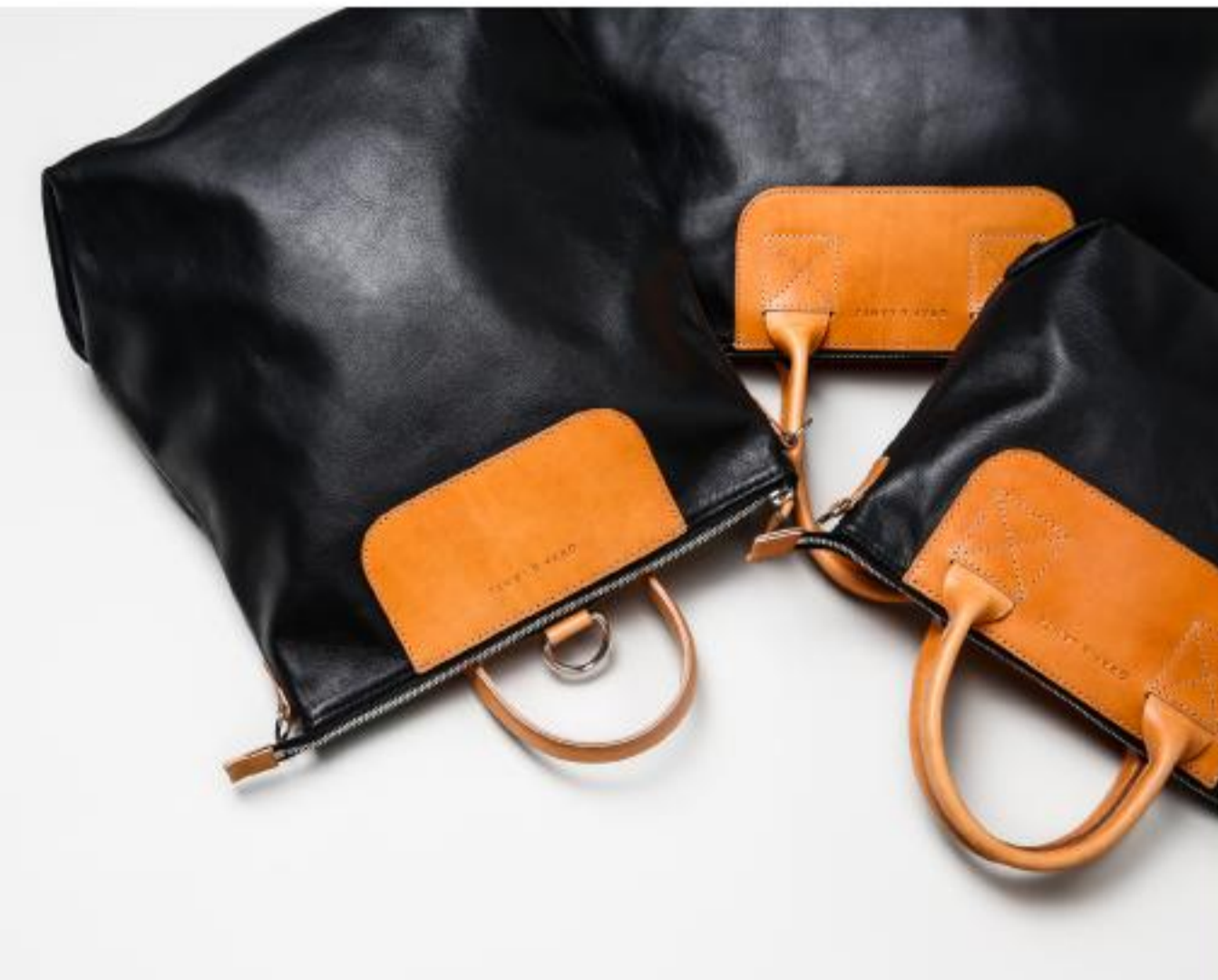
"If there's anything [we'd] like to teach the American male, it is that bags are not purses," says the design duo of Holger Gräf and Daniel Lantz, who met in Los Angeles by way of Germany and Japan, respectively. Their sophisticated and clean-lined handbag collection utilizes classic as well as unconventional materials that include Merino wool, leather, canvas and denim.



For the guys, be sure to check out the color-block waxed canvas Bedford weekender in eye-popping colors including blue, yellow and orange. And for a bag that defies "purse," consider the Jaunt tote, featuring zigzag stitching, Merino wool, genuine leather, and magnetic snap closure. Women will flip over the Andie clutch in wet-process denim and veg-tan leather.

graf-lantz.com

TAP A LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION



Hudson Made

Clean up your act with Hudson Made's skincare and shaving products, produced in the bucolic hills of upstate New York. Bill Hovard, whose background includes award-winning creative design for numerous Fortune 500 companies, is at the forefront of a movement to return to small-batch, high-quality goods for the home.

Some of Hudson Made's latest products to hit the market include a premium silvertip badger hair shave brush, along with a pre-shave and face oil with notes of agarwood, sandalwood, frankincense and pink peppercorn. These welcome additions complement Hudson Made's Beard & Shave Soap collection, available in cedar clove, citron neroli and original white. [📌](#)

hudsonmadeny.com

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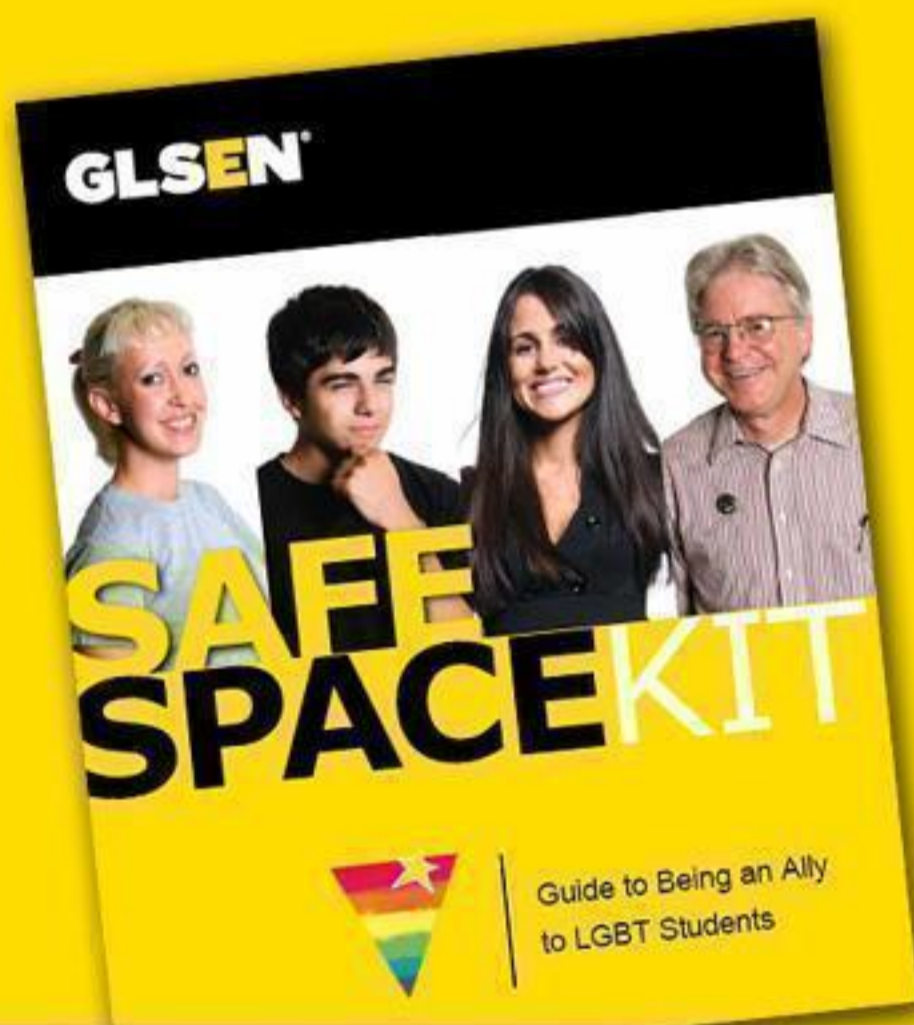


Matthew Wexler is EDGE's National Style & Travel Editor. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram at @roodeloo.

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ARE YOU THERE, GOD? IT'S ME,

Gay Margaret

WHERE WERE THESE COMING-OUT BOOKS
WHEN WE WERE GAY KIDS?

For anyone born before 1970, the concept of a young adult coming-out novel was almost nonexistent in our youth. In the 1970s and 1980s, queer/questioning preteens and teenagers had a handful of options written specifically for them. Today, new titles are published every week.

"There was a time when gay YA books numbered in the single digits, but now there seems to be 50 to 75 or more per year, which is great," says Martin Wilson, publicity manager at HarperCollins Publishers by day and author of young adult (YA) fiction by night.

"There's a definite boom, and publishers are no longer afraid to take these books on."



LEADER OF THE PACK

He wasn't the first to create YA fiction targeting and featuring LGBTQ teens, but with books like *Two Boys Kissing*, *The Realm of Possibility* and 2003's groundbreaking *Boy Meets Boy*, the prolific David Levithan has definitely pushed the boundaries in this category, both as a popular author and as a longtime literary editor at Scholastic Books. Perhaps the most groundbreaking aspect of Levithan's work is that most of his LGBTQ characters are happy and fulfilled.

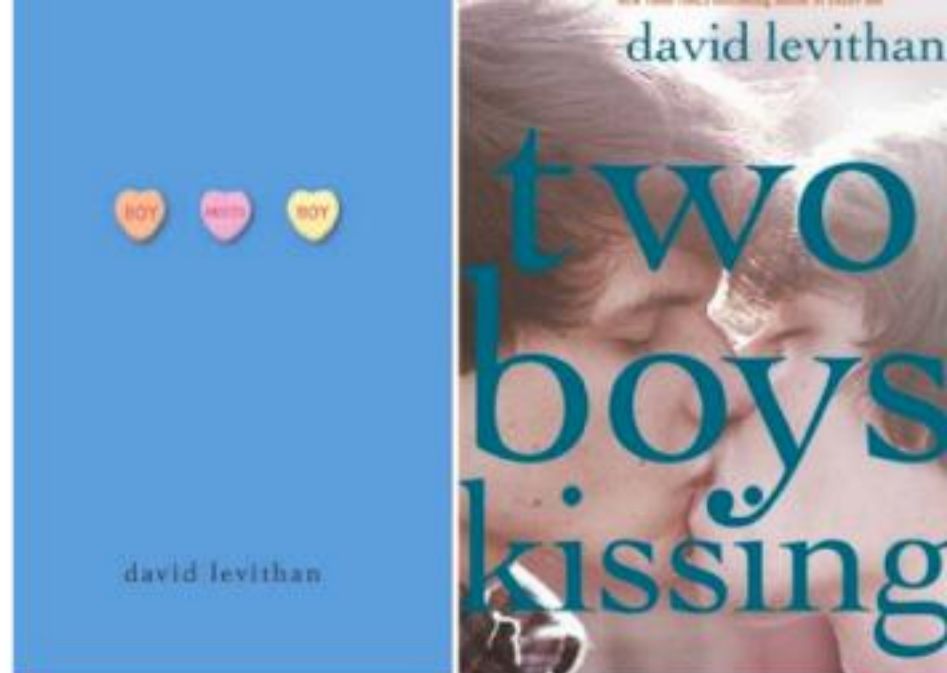
What qualifies as YA? "Often people think YA is fiction for teens, when really it's fiction that *includes* teens," says the Lambda Literary Award winner. "A majority of our readers are actually post-teenagers. The target range is 13 and up — sometimes way up."

He traces major changes in YA publishing to the late 1980s and early 1990s. "The early '90s were still the pioneer times for lesbian and gay YA," says Levithan, who joined Scholastic in the 1990s.

Before then, titles were scarce. Wilson lists a handful of pioneering books from the late 1960s through the 1980s, including the works of Nancy Garden, such as 1982's *Annie on My Mind*, which was publicly burned by a minister in Kansas City, and the recently back-in-print *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip* (1969).

John Donovan's YA novel focused on a lonely child of divorce living on the Upper East Side with his alcoholic mother, and featured a kissing scene with the hero's best friend. Donovan's 1992 *New York Times* obituary credited him with placing "the subject of homosexuality into a children's book for the first time and opened the way for authors to discuss topics previously considered taboo in children's literature."

Levithan says, "Now, 20 years later, the ground encompasses the full LGBT+ spectrum, and while



the realm of possibility

"I like bending minds. I do write surrealistic fiction. I think teenagers have more flexible minds than most adults.

—AS King, on the merits of writing for the YA market.

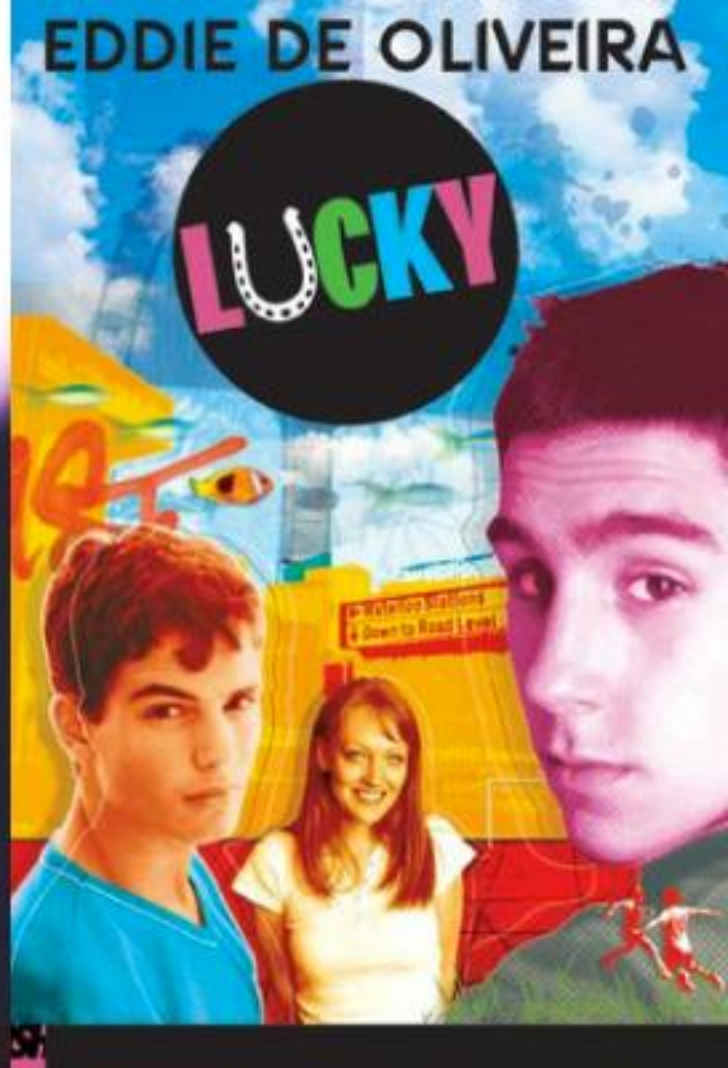
“PUSH was founded to discover new YA writers and give them a home.”

talking in the dark

a poetry memoir by Billy Merrell

EDDIE DE OLIVEIRA

LUCKY



there still may be the occasional publishing professional who says ‘gay books don’t sell,’ they are massively out of touch with the readership, and fundamentally wrong in their perception.”

Societal change has played a role, as has the Internet. The impact of e-books has been huge “with LGBT+ titles, because before there was always the hurdle of gatekeepers – in order for a kid to get a book in a library, it had to be bought by the librarian, or in order for a kid to get a book in a bookstore, it had to be brought in by the bookseller. Now readers can get any book they want with e-book access.”

Levithan has been involved with two initiatives to bring more LGBTQ YA works to the public, the largest his PUSH Imprint at Scholastic.

“PUSH was founded to discover new YA writers and give them a home. We’ve had plenty of queer books [including Eddie de Oliveira’s *Lucky*, one of the few YA novels with a bisexual male protagonist, and Billy Merrell’s poetry memoir *Talking in the Dark*] and books with strong queer characters, like Tanuja Desai Hidier’s *Born Confused*,” says Levithan.

He says that many YA and even middle-grade

novels featuring trans characters are “in the pipeline,” adding: “This fall I’m publishing Alex Gino’s *George*, an extraordinary middle-grade debut about a girl who everyone else sees as a boy – until she steals the part of Charlotte in her class’s play of *Charlotte’s Web*.”

Levithan is also branching out by organizing the “Openly YA” Tour, where he and other authors tackling LGBTQ themes tour bookstores, reading from their work, signing copies and meeting fans.

This year’s tour – which included New York’s Books of Wonder – featured Levithan, Bill Konigsberg, Aaron Hartzler, Adam Silvera, Will Walton and Robin Talley and featured stops in Philadelphia, Boston and other cities in the Northeast.

OUT DOWN SOUTH

Three of the authors interviewed for this piece grew up in small or relatively small towns and base their coming-of-age stories there – A.S. King in Eastern Pennsylvania, where she continues to live, and Wilson and Will Walton in Alabama and Georgia, respectively.

Wilson’s *What They Always Tell Us* covers a year in the life of two brothers, high school stu-

dents in suburban Tuscaloosa — the older a popular straight athlete, the younger recovering from a haphazard suicide attempt while coming to terms with his sexuality and finding happiness through a romance with his brother's friend.

"I have gotten a good number of these types of responses, both from actual teenagers, but also from older readers, who tell me they wished they'd been able to read my novel when they were younger," says Wilson.

"I've corresponded with a closeted gay teen from Arkansas to a sixty-something man who lives in Belgium, and pretty much everything in between, even young women. That's been the best part about having this book out in the world — hearing from readers and knowing it has made an impact on some people's lives. It's very cool."

SMALL-TOWN BOY

Levithan's PUSH recently published *Anything Could Happen* by first-time novelist Will Walton, a recent University of Georgia graduate. The story of a boy falling in love with his best friend is set in a small town similar to Walton's own: Perry, Georgia. It hit shelves the last week of May.

Walton has already received (mostly) positive response from readers. "I wrote *Anything Could Happen* for my 15-year-old self. I was always hoping for something that was going to say something optimistic," he says. "My experience wasn't as easy as the characters in the book."

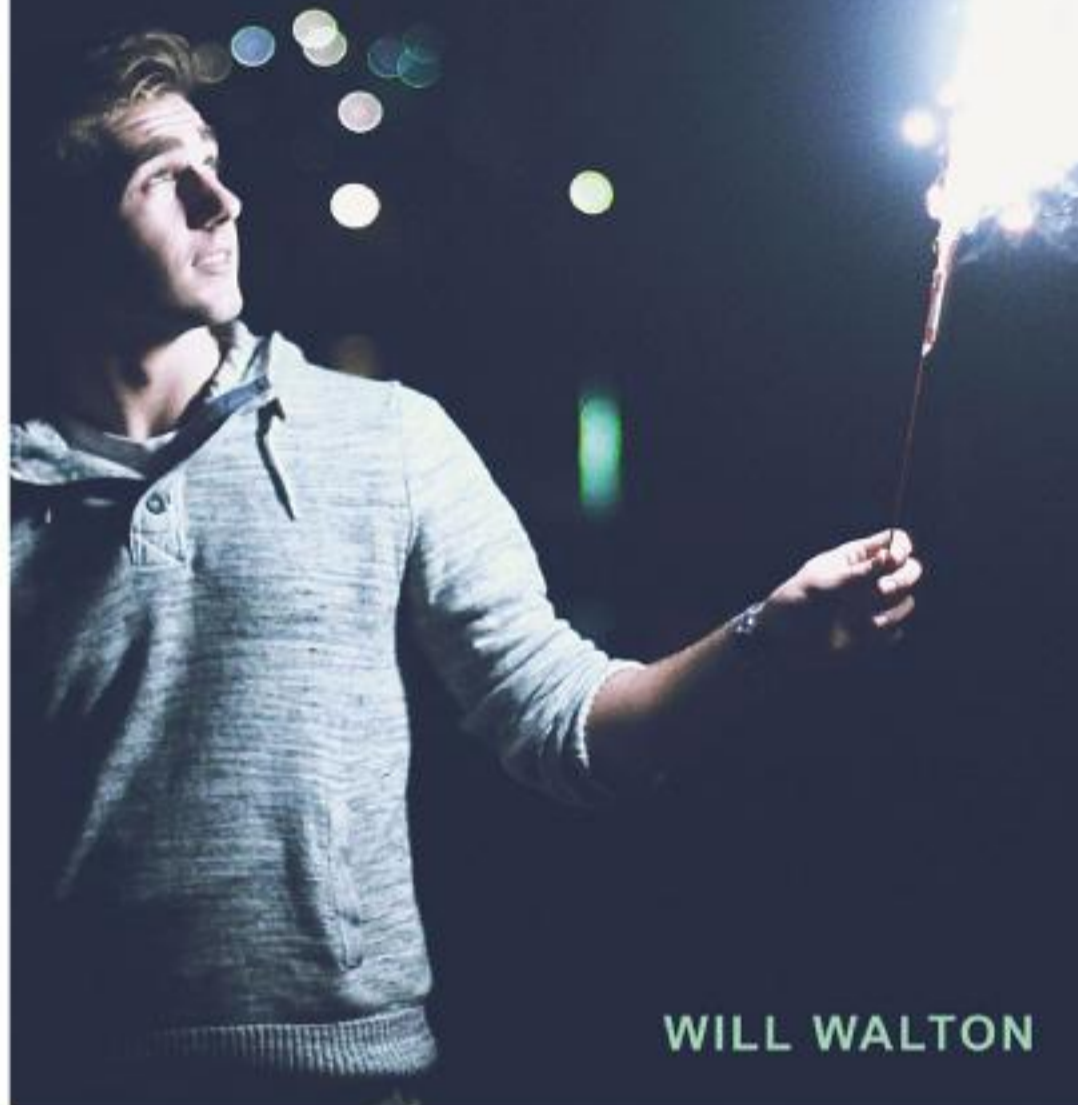
Readers searching for the tortured teen angle have been disappointed. "A few people have found the optimizing isolating," he admits. "On Goodreads, some people have said it's a little bit boring."

A bookseller at Avid Books — an indepen-

Anything Could Happen

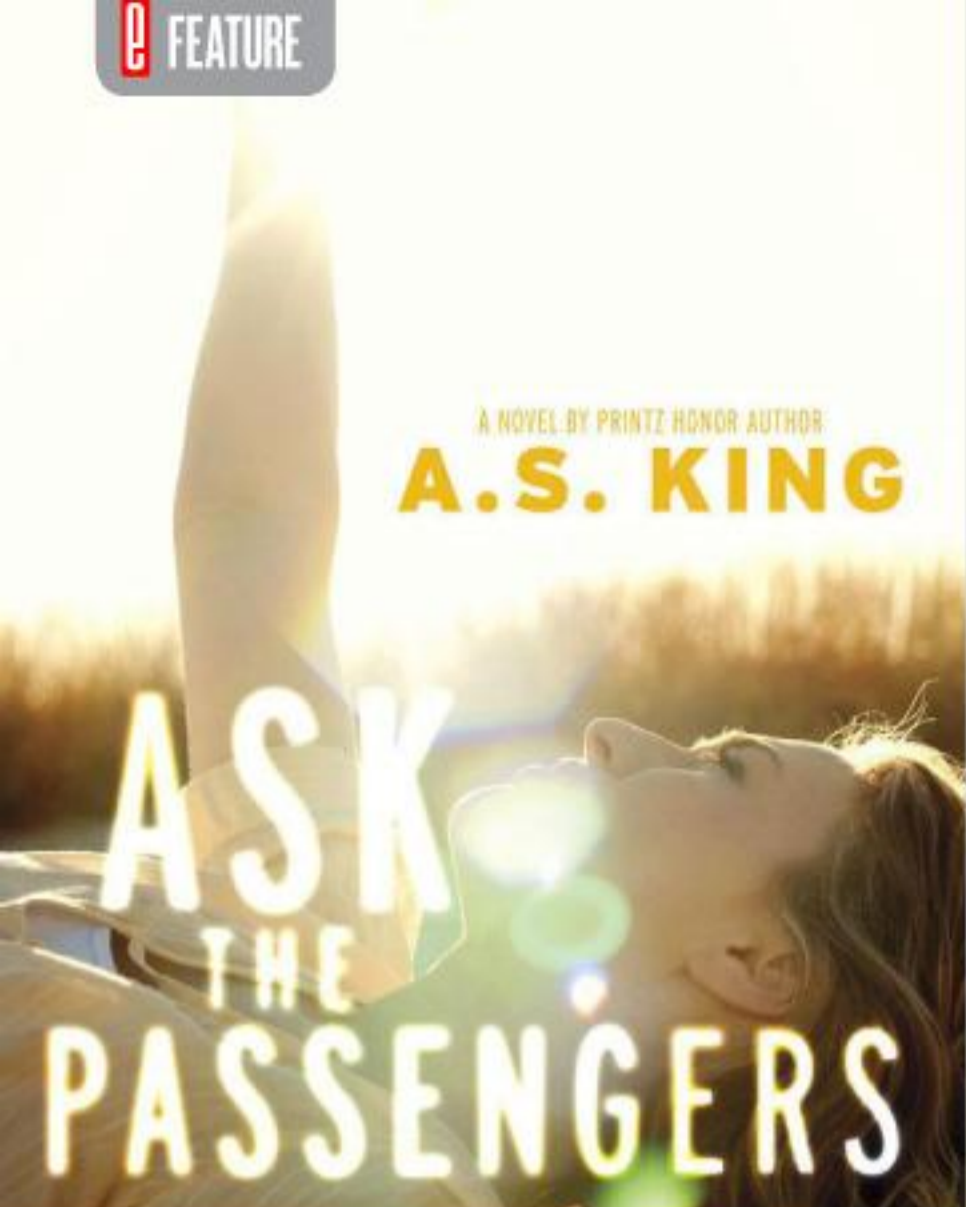
FEATURE

4 OF 5



WILL WALTON

"Now, 20 years later, the ground encompasses the full LGBT+ spectrum, and while there still may be the occasional publishing professional who says 'gay books don't sell,' they are massively out of touch with the readership, and fundamentally wrong in their perception."



“A woman in Texas wrote that she had been antigay, and this book ‘made me understand being gay. I had the wrong idea the whole time. I understand now. I can still be a Christian and love gay people.’ ”

dent bookstore in the college town of Athens, Walton – and a few coworkers have started a queer fiction book club.

He sees YA fiction moving in an empowering direction: away from stories about tortured youth and more toward “characters who are regular, functioning gay people.” And he gives Levithan the lion’s share of credit for this shift.

“Before David, the message was ‘you’re going to have a tough time.’ That’s why his books have been so incredibly progressive,” he says.

Walton believes both publishers and bookstores are working to make YA fiction more diverse. “You can almost hear the booksellers making the battle cry.”

GIRL POWER, ACCEPTANCE AND MAGICAL REALISM

Walton is a big fan of A.S. King, whose award-winning *Ask the Passengers* has meant a lot to queer and questioning readers of all ages.

“She’s trailblazing, borderline experimental, but still highly readable,” says Walton. “It’s about a girl

falling in love with a female coworker, and includes a scene where they make out in a bakery. It’s one of my favorite YA books of all time.”

Now in her 40s, married to a man and the mother of two, Amy King is pleased to see more books that reflect her experience. Growing up in a conservative Pennsylvania town, she coped with discrimination and expectations as a questioning teen with an openly gay sister.

“*Ask the Passengers* was based on my teen years, when you’re supposed to have this space to figure it [your sexuality] out,” she says.

“It was based on intense pressure on both sides [from straight and lesbian friends].

They were saying, ‘pick one,’ and that’s where I stayed for quite some time.” King says younger readers have indicated that *Ask the Passengers* helped them become more comfortable with indecision about declaring their sexuality. “They say it has

helped them come out or realize *they don't have to come out*. They realize there's no ticking clock."

King's fan letters show that powerful fiction can have an impact. "About half my readers tend to be adults, and both adults and teens have said, 'I wish this book was around when I was in high school,' " she says.

"A woman in Texas wrote that she had been antigay, and this book 'made me understand being gay. I had the wrong idea the whole time. I understand now. I can still be a Christian and love gay people.' "

King is pleased with the growing array of LGBTQ YA fiction and believes more books featuring trans, bi and questioning characters are on the way.

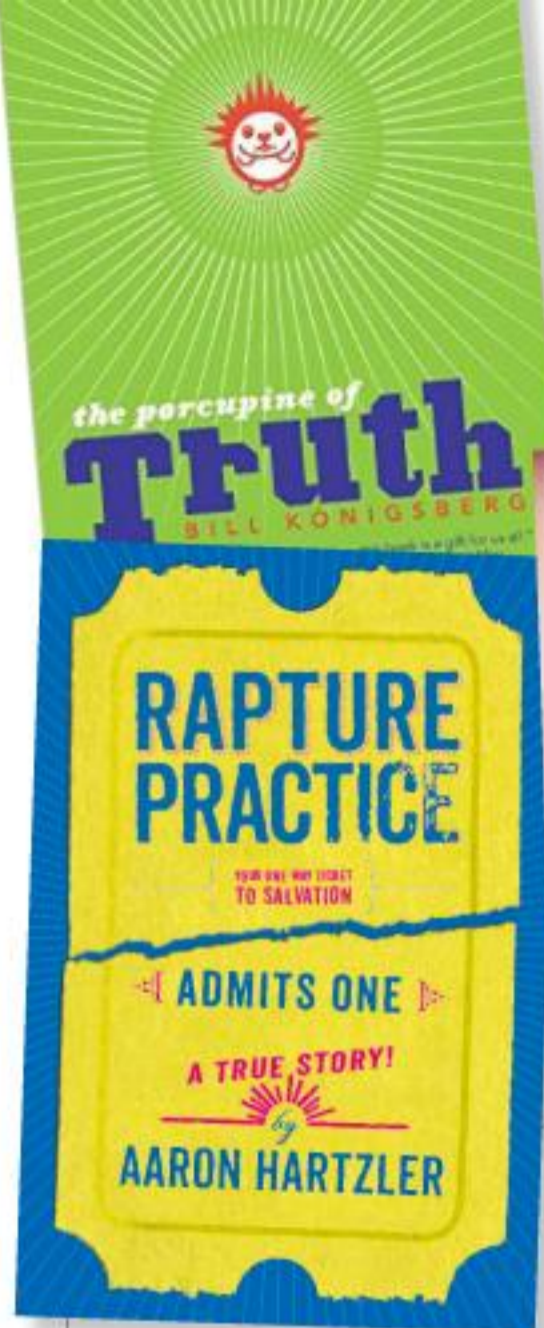
A final thought: Levithan, Wilson, Walton and King are all proud to write for the YA market, defending teen and tween readers as incredibly bright and receptive to new ideas and nonlinear forms.

In King's words: "I like bending minds. I do write surrealistic fiction. I think teenagers have more flexible minds than most adults."

A SUMMER YA READING LIST

If you're heading off to Fire Island, P-Town, Rehobeth or just a day at Coney Island, the four authors featured in this article have some suggestions for books you'll love now and wish you'd read in junior high.

Levithan recommends stuffing your public television tote bag with Bill Konigsberg's *The Porcupine of Truth*, Nina LaCour's *Everything Leads to You* and Alex Gino's



GEORGE

ALEX GINO

GRASSHOPPER JUNGLE
andrew smith

George and Walton's *Anything Could Happen*. Walton is a big fan of Nina LaCour's *Everything Leads to You*.

King recommends *Grasshopper Jungle* by Andrew Smith ("It's about the end of the world, and one of the most realistic portrayals of a boy in love with his girlfriend and his best friend at the same time"); *Rapture Practice* by Aaron Hartzler, a memoir about growing up and coming out in "a highly Christian home"; and *Honor Girl*, a graphic novel by Maggie Thrash. **1**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 4 - 5:** Stormville Airport Antique Show & Flea Market, Stormville
- July 10 - 12:** Hot Air Balloon Festival, Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce launches: 6am Sat-Sun, Dutchess County Airport; 6pm Fri-Sat, Poughkeepsie waterfront
- July 25:** Dutchess Dragon Boat Race & Festival, HRRR Boathouse, Poughkeepsie benefits Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation and Arts Mid-Hudson
- July 31 - Aug. 2:** The Wassaic Project Summer Exhibition and Festival, Wassaic
- August 9:** Beacon Sloop Club Corn Festival, Beacon Riverfront Park
- August 16:** Antique Car Show, Montgomery Place, Annandale-on-Hudson
- August 16:** Jazz in the Valley, Waryas Park, Poughkeepsie
- Aug. 25 - 30:** Dutchess County Fair, Dutchess County Fairgrounds, Rhinebeck

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GAY NEW YORK CITY
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FIGHTS FOR RIGHTS

With his baby face and love of plaid shirts, few would guess that 32-year-old Corey Johnson is on track to becoming one of the most powerful men in New York City. But this former high school football captain made waves coming out to his teammates, and then to his neighbors as chair of Community Board 4.

He parlayed his inclination for community service into a successful win as New York City council member serving the 3rd District, which encompasses several of the city's gayborhoods, including the West Village, Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen.

Now Johnson is chalking up wins left and right — from providing healthy fruits and vegetables to local families, to fighting for affordable housing for all New Yorkers, even going as far as getting arrested during a civil disobedience protest outside Governor Andrew Cuomo's office.

It's anyone's guess what Johnson will do next, but one thing is certain: this politically motivated young man has a promising future.





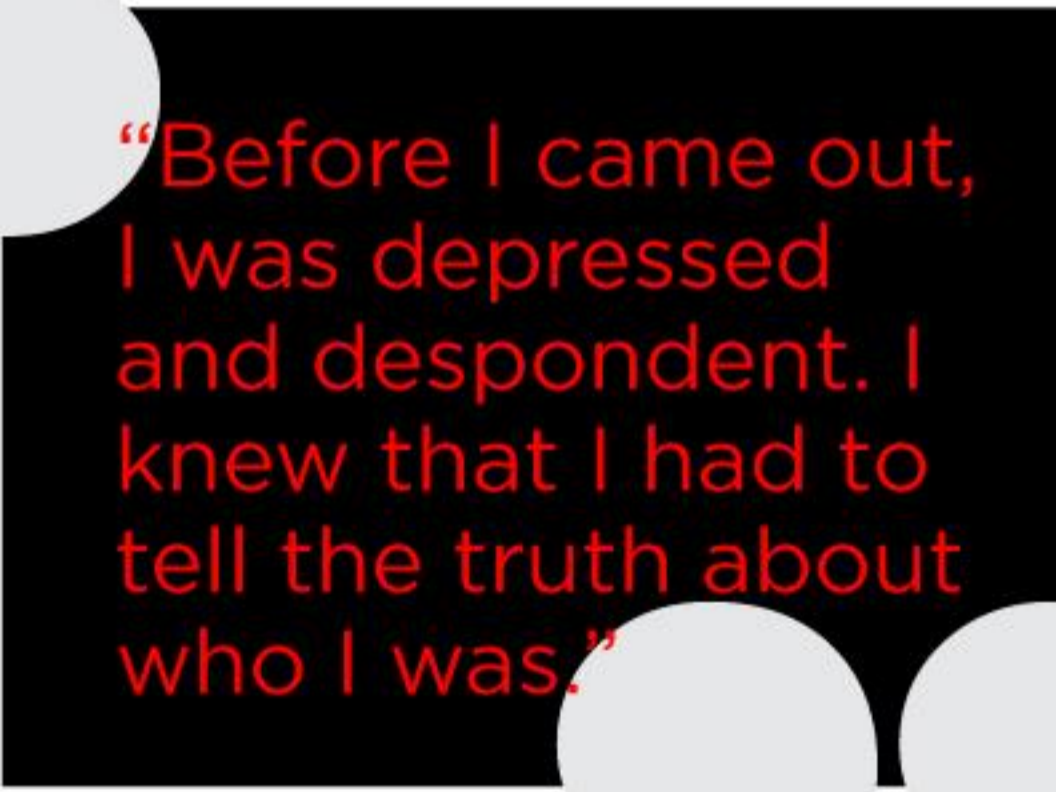
EDGE: You first garnered media attention in 2000, when you came out as gay while you were captain of your football team at Masconomet Regional High School. What prompted this revelation, and how did it change life for you?

Johnson: It changed everything. Before I came out, I was depressed and despondent. I knew that I had to tell the truth about who I was. When I came out to my team, I was afraid of how they were going to react. But you know what they said? They said all that matters to us is that you can play football. At the time, it was highly unusual for a high school football player to come out. So it made the front page of the *New York Times*. I traveled the country, sharing my story with other LGBTQ youth. From then on, I was an activist.

EDGE: You spent some time in the real estate industry, and then served as political editor for Towleroad. Did you always have an interest in politics, or did this spawn that interest?

Johnson: I first came to New York City for an event by the Hetrick-Martin Institute, an organization that provides services to LGBTQ youth. A weekend turned into a week, a week turned into two weeks – and I

never left. I immediately became involved in local progressive politics, working on the campaigns of candidates like Carl McCall and Mark Green. I moved to Chelsea and fell in love with the neighborhood.



EDGE: Following this, you served as chair of Community Board 4, leading them in issues ranging from education to affordable housing. What was your biggest accomplishment during that time?

Johnson: I was chair of CB4 during a period of profound change on the West Side. We devoted a lot of our time to ensuring that the growth

was responsible and respectful of the people, character and history of our neighborhoods. Hundreds of units of affordable housing were built, and I'm proud to have been able to play a role in that.

EDGE: You also continue to be invested in issues of affordable housing. You participated in a rally against a shady landlord on West 26th Street, and more recently was arrested for a civil disobedience charge by protesting the governor's office over this issue. Why is housing an issue for which you're willing to go to the mat?

Johnson: The rent laws are up for renewal. There are 1 million rent-stabilized apartments in New York City, housing nearly 2.5 million people. These laws are literally the only thing keeping our neighborhoods affordable to middle- and working-class people. We're losing tens of thousands of these units a year due to loopholes in the laws that allow affordable units to be removed from the program. So we demanded that the governor fight to strengthen the laws. If the laws aren't renewed and strengthened, we're not going to keep New York City affordable, and we'll lose the diversity that defines us.

EDGE: You're now council member for New York City's District 3, covering the West Village, Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen, the gayest neighborhoods in town. What's it like to work so directly for your community?

Johnson: It's an honor and a privilege to serve

my community in the City Council, particularly in a district with one of the largest and most historic LGBT communities in the world. I've been able to work actively on LGBT and HIV/AIDS issues. Working on issues that so deeply and personally impact my community is a very special opportunity.

EDGE: Unlike some elected officials, you're willing to put yourself on the line to protect New York's transgender community.

Johnson: My proudest accomplishment on behalf of the transgender community while I've been in office is the passage of birth certificate legislation, which now allows New Yorkers to correct the gender marker on their birth certificate without undergoing surgery. The previous policy was outdated and discriminatory,



involving invasive and expensive surgical requirements. A birth certificate is a key piece of identification, and not being able to correct it was really negatively impacting the lives of transgender New Yorkers. We got those bad policies off the books, and I'm extremely proud of that.

EDGE: We're also right in the middle of Pride celebrations in NYC. What does Pride mean to you, and how will you [did you] celebrate it?

Johnson: Pride is a very special time to me. It's a time for us to celebrate the tremendous progress we've made. If you look back just a few years, we've come a long way. So we take a pause and celebrate these victories. It's also a time to look forward to the progress we still have to make, and to battles ahead. We commemorate Pride at the City Council in the council chambers, and this year we were joined by George Takei. The LGBT Caucus marches in Queens Pride, Brooklyn Pride; in Staten Island, the Bronx and, of course, Manhattan. We have a great time!

EDGE: You've also worked with the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider preserving the Stonewall Inn. Why is this so important for our community?

Johnson: When I first visited New York City, the first place I wanted to go was the Stonewall Inn. I stood outside and felt a deep connection to this place that I had read and heard so much about. To now be the council member representing the West Village and to have a chance to vote on its landmark designation is incredibly meaningful and special. I really hope to see other sites of historical significance to the LGBT community landmarked so that future generations can also experience a connection to their history and heritage.



EDGE: You've also helped the LGBT community by ensuring housing for New Yorkers living with HIV, and for additional beds for homeless youth. Is the LGBT community forgetting our most vulnerable in our rush to secure marriage?

Johnson: Securing marriage equality in all 50 states is an incredibly important goal (and I hope we'll be able to celebrate that this month)! But it's important to remember that even if we're victorious on that front, there is a lot of work left to be done, and there are a lot of people being left behind. I think most people understand that. The fact that so many young people are without shelter every night is a scandal. Approximately 40 percent of them are LGBTQ.



New Yorkers with HIV are also too often left homeless, unable to take their medication on a schedule or maintain a healthy lifestyle. As a result, they become sicker and their viral loads increase. This has really stymied our efforts against HIV/AIDS, so I have put forward legislation that would allow people with HIV to access the benefits available to people with AIDS.

EDGE: You're also an outspoken advocate against animal abuses. Tell EDGE readers about your puppy love!

Johnson: I believe we have a responsibility to defend those who cannot defend themselves, and this includes animals. As chair of the council's Health Committee, I've passed laws regulating irresponsible breeders and ensuring that city pet stores do not obtain puppies from unethical "puppy mills." I've passed bills to keep animals out of the hands of abusive owners by creating

standards that potential owners must meet before obtaining a new pet, and require New York City pet shops to disclose information about the origins of the animals they sell. I've put forward legislation that would require sprinklers to be installed in pet stores. These bills will save the lives of untold numbers of cats and dogs.

EDGE: This is an awful lot to have accomplished, but you're only in your early 30s. What are your goals for the next five years?

Johnson: First and foremost, I want to be known as a great council member who went to bat for his constituents and who was able to get things done. My district has a lot of challenges, with development pressure coming from all sides and the price of real estate soaring higher than we ever thought we'd see. We need to make sure that the West Side retains the qualities that make it special, particularly its economically and culturally diverse population. Rising inequality is a very real threat to our city, and it's up to us, now, to take a stand. **i**

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DOES APPLE'S ENTRY INTO THE STREAMING MUSIC BUSINESS MEAN THAT ITUNES WILL GO THE WAY OF THE DINOSAUR?

Critics say that streaming music services are bad for music. More than 175 million consumers who stream music beg to differ. And with Apple's launch of Apple Music at the end of June, this number could double.

When Apple acquired Beats Audio last year, it was widely speculated that they would launch their own music streaming service within the year. It took more than a year for Apple to announce Apple Music, a monthly subscription service where music lovers can listen to the entire iTunes library for \$9.99 a month. (Apple currently is offering a free three-month trial at apple.com/music.)

Apple enters a busy field pretty late in the game. Pandora has more than 80 million users; Spotify, more than 20 million premium subscribers and 75 million active users; Rhapsody, 2.5 million subscribers; Jay-Z's Tidal, 777,000 subscribers; and Rdio, about 500,000 users.



“Pop superstar Taylor Swift objected to Apple’s initial refusal to pay royalties to artists and labels during the service’s 90-day introductory period.”



Spotify, Apple’s biggest competition, has grown significantly, even since the start of this year. Although the streaming service is wildly popular, the company has been accused of not fairly compensating artists and treating music like a commodity rather than art. Despite the controversy, Spotify’s numbers increase while purchases on iTunes decline. Apple is hoping they can get back on top in the music business, an industry they revolutionized and dominated for the past 14 years with iTunes.


The \$9.99 a month price tag for Apple Music is pretty standard. Although Spotify has a free service, users can listen to music, but albums are shuffled, there are a limited number of skips and it’s supported with ads. Spotify Premium is \$9.99 a month and lets users listen to any one of its 30 million songs in its catalog with unlimited skips and free of ads. Apple will not offer a free version of Apple Music, but for \$9.99 a month, listeners have access to most of its 30 million songs on iTunes with no ads and unlimited skips.

It was Apple Music’s three-month free trial that put the tech giant in the headlines in June, thanks to a very public feud with pop superstar Taylor Swift, who objected to Apple’s initial refusal to pay royalties to artists and labels during the service’s 90-day introductory period. In an open letter to Apple, Swift said that she would withhold her latest album, *1989*, from the service. Swift’s letter made headlines and

forced Apple to make an about-face on their free trial terms for artists.

“They needed to handle this perfectly,” Daniel Ives, a tech stocks analyst with FBR Capital, told the Associated Press, because Apple is facing an uphill battle against well-established services like Spotify. “There can be no snafus or speed bumps, from the artists’ perspective, or any type of consumer backlash.”

In fact, Swift and Spotify had a very public breakup last year. While talking to Yahoo News, Taylor Swift said, “I’m not willing to contribute my life’s work to an experiment that I don’t feel fairly compensates the writers, producers, artists, and creators of this music, and I just don’t agree with perpetuating the perception that music has no value and should be free.” It’s safe to say that this love



story is over, and that Spotify and Taylor Swift are probably never ever getting back together.

Swift isn't alone in her feelings. Many artists, songwriters and producers do not feel that Spotify properly compensates them on rights to their music. While many artists have complained about this for years, Swift raised public awareness by pulling her wildly popular music from the service.

But according to Spotify, they've paid more than \$2 billion in royalties and blame the record companies for keeping money from the artists. According to Daniel Ek, CEO of Spotify, Swift's label could have made more than \$6 million dollars if she had kept her music on Spotify, while Swift's management says that she received only \$500,000 for the streams on her album in 12 months. Keep in mind that Swift writes most of her songs. Streaming rights and com-

pensation really has turned into a he-said, she-said issue. Perhaps we can expect a song from Taylor Swift about it on her next album.

Do consumers care about compensation? Probably not. They just want to pay a small amount of money a month to listen to almost any song they want. Take Tidal, for example.

Tidal is the first artist-owned streaming service, with Jay-Z at the helm. During its initial press conference, Beyoncé, Rihanna, Kanye West, Nicki Minaj, Daft Punk, Jack White, Madonna, Arcade Fire, Alicia Keys, Usher, Chris Martin, Calvin Harris, deadmau5, Jason Aldean and J. Cole all signed on as co-owners.

Tidal promises to put artists first as well as pay the most in royalties. Regrettably, the concept has totally flopped. Tidal's first mistake was its initial price point: when announced, its only plan was \$19.99 a month, twice as much as Spotify. After public outrage, it announced a new plan, offering its entire content as Tidal Premium for \$9.99. There is still a \$19.99 monthly plan, called High Fidelity, Lossless Audio Version or HiFi, which streams at the highest bitrate on the market.

The HiFi streams at 1411 kbit/s. Spotify, Tidal Premium, Rdio and Rhapsody stream at 320 kbit/s. Apple Music streams

at 256 kbit/s. What do these numbers even mean? Nothing – most people can't hear the difference. Some claim that with high-end earphones, you can hear a better quality of music. If you want to drop \$200 on high-end headphones, like Beats by Dre, and pay \$19.99 a month on HiFi streaming music, Tidal HiFi is just for you. As for me, I just want to listen to the new Taylor Swift album.

Aside from the outrageous price point, Tidal suffered from a perception problem. At its press conference, already wealthy singers signed on to ownership of a streaming service because they feel like they do not make enough money. This didn't sit well with music lovers.

Where Tidal excels is having exclusive content and not just songs, but exclusive videos too. Tidal premiered Rihannas latest video for American Oxygen. Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj debuted their video for Feeling Myself on the streaming service. Madonna also shared her newest video, Bitch Im Madonna, on Tidal.

Maybe it is a good thing that Apple waited so long to announce Apple Music. Hopefully, they've learned from the success of Spotify and the failures of Tidal. Apple has taken the best parts of Spotify, mainly its price, and paired it up with exclusive content, putting the music in the hands of artists.

Much like Tidal and unlike Spotify, Apple Music promises to connect artists and fans as well as treat music as an art form.

Purchasing songs for \$1.29 (remember when songs on iTunes were \$0.99?) from iTunes has gone the way of the dodo, dinosaurs, pagers, cassette tapes and the Blackberry.



When iTunes was introduced to the world 14 years ago, it changed the music industry. iTunes gave consumers the option of purchasing individual songs rather than an entire physical album. Even though record stores closed, the industry adapted. The industry is now adapting to the streaming revolution.

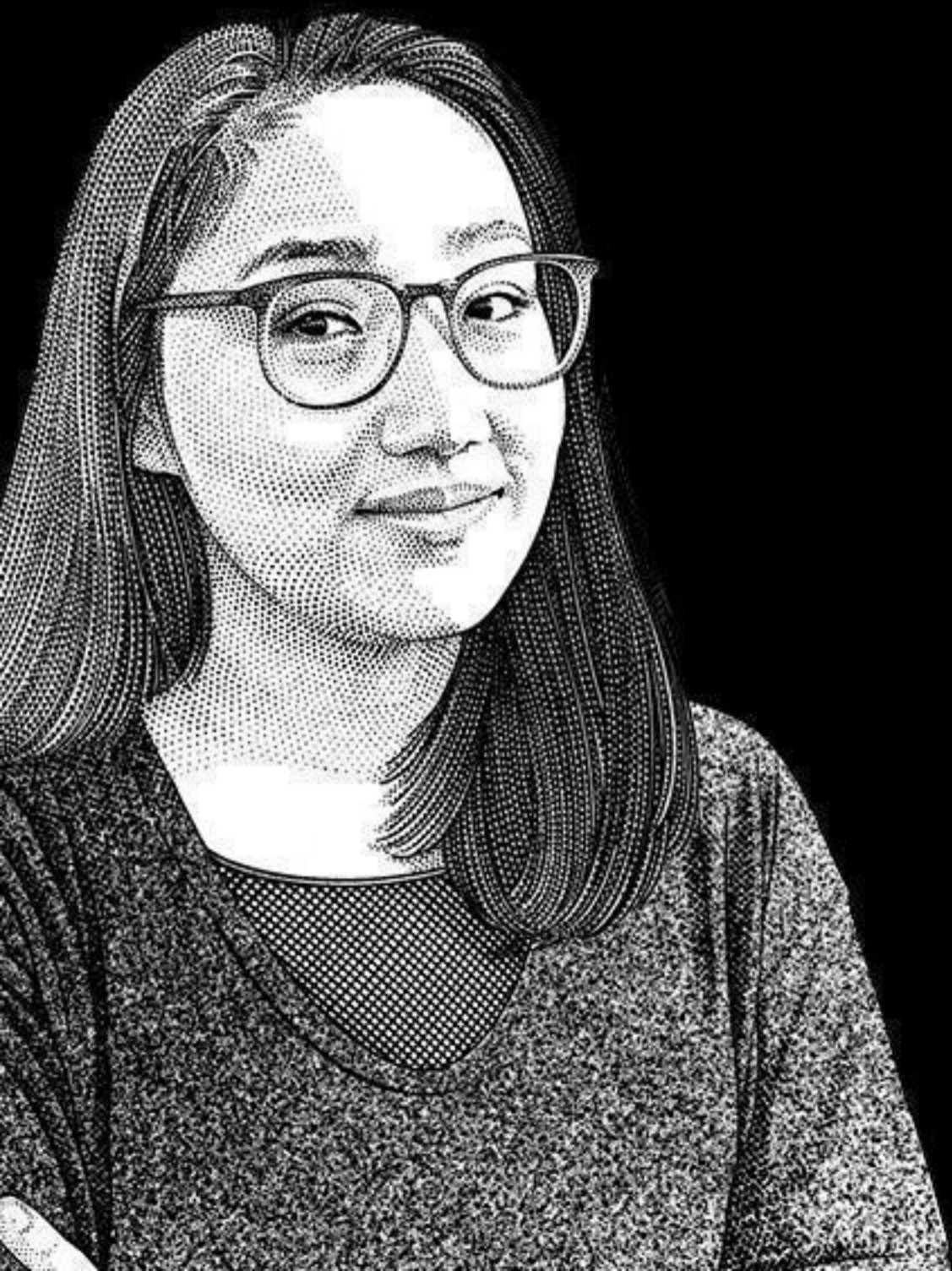
It's too early to tell if Apple's streaming service will eclipse Spotify, but one thing is certain: more competition could mean more discounts for consumers. In the lead-up to Apple's announcement, Spotify is offering three months of premium service for \$0.99, while Apple Music customers will get three months free. **i**



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BRIAN SCOTT LIPTON

MEET THE NEW YORK THEATER SCENE'S MOST INTERESTING LESBIAN, GAY, AND ALLY FAMILY

FAMOUS SIBLINGS MAY BE ALL THE RAGE at the moment (e.g., the Kardashian-Jenner clan), and talented siblings – especially in the arts – are hardly new (e.g., the Fondas, the Bridges). Yet there's something undeniably special about the Keenan-Bolgers, a talented and forthright trio of actors originally from Detroit who have overcome adversity – most notably, the death of their mother before each turned 18 – to make their mark in New York. Celia (the straight one, complete with husband and new baby) has received numerous awards and nominations for her work on Broadway in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, and *The Glass Menagerie*; adorable Andrew has made his mark on the Great White Way in *Newsies* and *Mary Poppins*, along with his many television and webisode appearances and work as an author; and Maggie is a noted queer theater artist, LGBT activist, and teacher who works with the homeless and disadvantaged.

EDGE recently asked these three extraordinary individuals to share insights into their lives and careers.



EDGE: Tell me about your individual paths to acting and how your siblings' decision to be actors influenced you?

ANDREW: As the youngest, my path to acting was absolutely influenced by my siblings. I was in such awe of my older sisters and wanted to do whatever they were doing. I have a feeling if Celia and Maggie had another childhood hobby, I might have ended up doing that professionally instead.

MAGGIE: Like Andrew, I followed in the footsteps of Celia, who saw *The Sound of Music* when she was 5 and decided she wanted to be on stage. We pretty much wanted to do anything our big sister did, so going into theater seemed to be a natural progression for us. If it wasn't for Celia, who knows, we might all be bankers today.

CELIA: I want to address my siblings' influence on me. I think both Maggie and Andrew are incredibly brave in their pursuit of making art. They've both tackled projects that they had to create completely on their own. They are constantly in pursuit of new opportunities. And they are incredible collaborators. As someone who's taken a pretty straightforward path in my career, I look to them as great examples of the kind of artist I want to be.

EDGE: Each of you tends to choose very different types of roles and projects to associate with. Can you explain how you make your career choices?

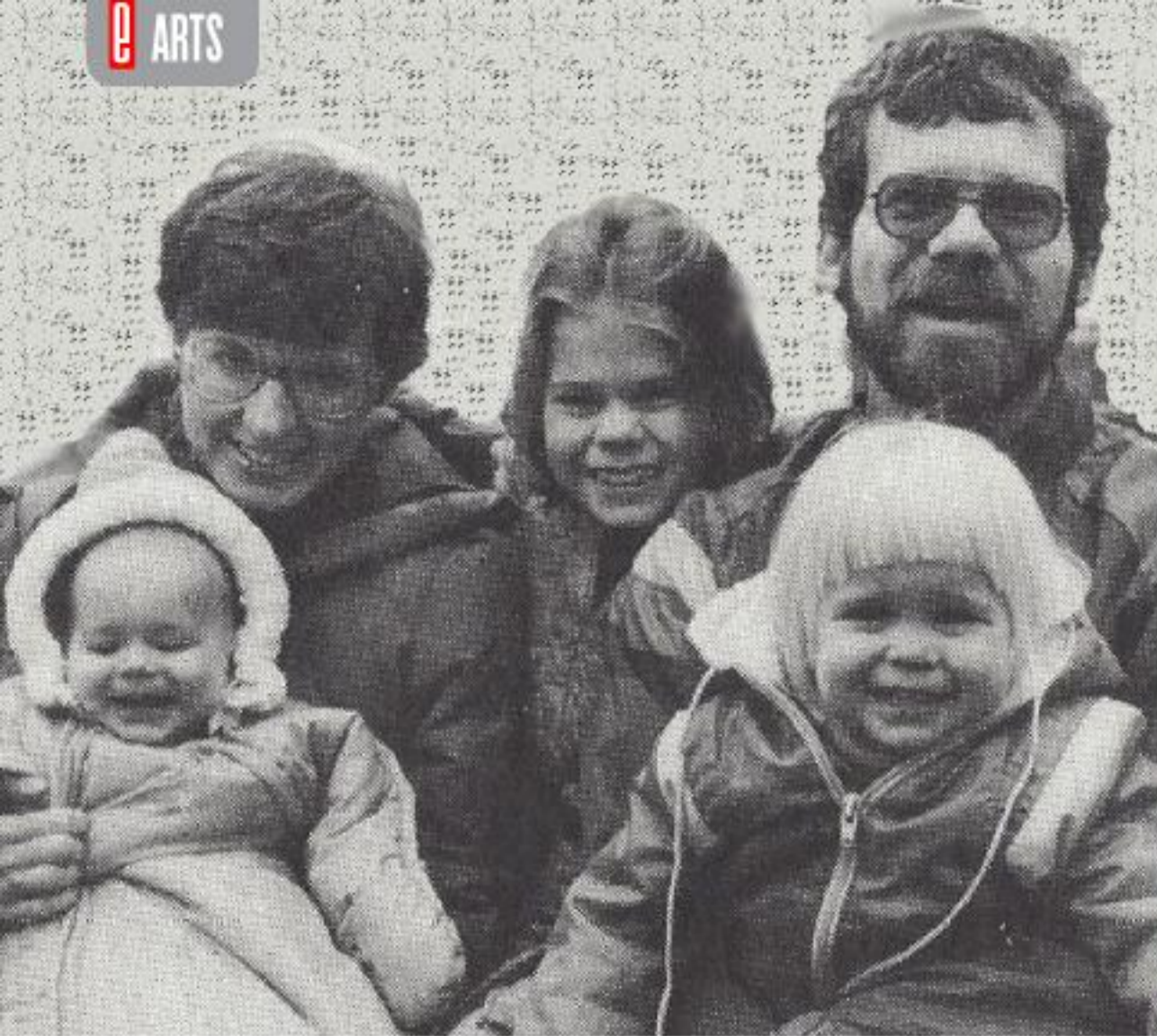
MAGGIE: I run a company called Honest Accomplice Theatre, a nonprofit with a mission to generate dialogue and stimulate change by focusing on topics that are often silenced, seen as shameful, or



portrayed as one-dimensional. We produce and direct mostly devised shows [which are created by the participants themselves] around a political or social theme. I believe theater has the power to change minds, expand horizons and generate empathy for people and situations we might otherwise feel alienated from. I also know from experience that theater is an incredible way to develop a strong community of diverse, interesting people.

CELIA: I think so much of what I choose to be a part of these days has to do with who's attached to the projects. There are a lot of writers and directors whose work I admire, so I'm always looking for opportunities to work with them.

ANDREW: I'm definitely drawn to new work, specifically in the musical theater genre. I think getting to put your stamp on a role before anyone else is the most challenging but ultimately satisfying work. I love that my sisters and I have all found different areas within the theater world to find success. Celia's gotten to do a lot of new American plays, and Maggie



has made a mark in the political/educational setting. They're the two artists I'm most inspired by, and I am so proud of the diversity of their careers.

EDGE: You all are involved with major charitable organizations, such as the Point Foundation and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU). Where did this social conscience come from?

MAGGIE: Our parents were always incredibly socially active, and it defiantly rubbed off on all three of us. We also grew up as some of the few white kids in predominately black Detroit, where we all went to public elementary, middle school and high school. I think being able to acknowledge our privilege early on and see the incredible injustices enacted upon our community, as well as the incredible resilience in response to oppression, impacted us all. We knew what it was like to feel "different" and saw firsthand the perils and joys associated with it.

CELIA: This will be my eighth year help-

ing the NYCLU put together their Broadway Stands Up for Freedom concert. The NYCLU is an organization that fights for the civil liberties and civil rights of ordinary people who have experienced injustice. Growing up, our parents and grandparents were active members of their communities fighting for social justice – so this just feels like an extension of their legacy.

ANDREW: Our parents instilled an activist mentality at a young age, and I think we all feel that pull. Being an artist can feel really self-serving at times, but it also has the potential to use your art to shed light on important issues.

EDGE: How did you all cope with your mother's death at such a young age?

CELIA: Losing our mother was sad and difficult for the three of us in different ways. I am so grateful we all had to go through it together. And even though I think we processed it in different ways, we were able to take care of each other and understand what the other two were going through.

ANDREW: Celia definitely became a mother figure in a lot of ways. Even today when I need career/relationship/life advice, I always go to Celia first. Our



mom's death was pretty awful but in a lot of ways made us dependent on each other. I don't know if we would be as close without it.

MAGGIE: It's funny, when I meet other people who are really close to their siblings, I find they often also had a parent die young or experienced some other trauma as kids that brought them together. I think Andrew and I were – and are! – incredibly lucky to have Celia, who knew exactly what we were going through and also had six more years of perspective and experience than we did. I know I relied on both her and Andrew heavily for support and understanding.

EDGE: Tell me about the straight-gay dynamic among the three of you and how it affects each relationship with one another?

CELIA: It's a nightmare. I have no idea what they're talking about most of the time. I'm kidding – but let's just say I knew about *Fun Home* way before it was a hit musical.

MAGGIE: Ha-ha. I don't think about it a whole lot, other than to be so grateful that I have siblings for whom it is, and has never been, a big deal. I know when I first came out at 14, Celia was one of the first people I told. I believe I told her by sending her what was then a newfangled invention, an email. She emailed me right back congratulating me, telling me she loved me and



welcoming me into the ranks of such awesome people as the Indigo Girls and k.d. lang. Also, I get really great fashion advice from her.


ANDREW: I never had to worry about feeling supported by my siblings when it came to sexual orientation. That being said, I do feel pretty lucky to have had Maggie bust open that closet first. I realize having a gay man, a lesbian and a straight woman as siblings is a rare thing. It's also pretty great. It's forced us to examine and try to understand types of relationships that might look different from our own.

EDGE: What can you tell me about your future projects?

CELIA: Right now, I am loving motherhood and feeling so lucky to raise our son in the same city as my siblings. They have been so helpful and supportive, and I can't quite imagine doing this without them. I have been doing little readings and workshops since William was born, and I would love to get back to work in the fall. But I do feel that whatever it is has to be pretty special. Otherwise, I worry I'll resent being away

from our new baby, and right now he feels like my main responsibility.

ANDREW: I'm currently writing *Jack & Louisa: Act 3*, which is part of a children's series about musical theater that I co-wrote with Kate Wetherhead for Penguin Random House. The first book, *Act 1*, came out earlier this year, and second one comes out in February 2016.

MAGGIE: My theater company's most recent show, *The Birds and the Bees: Unabridged*, is about female and trans sexuality – the truthful, the poignant, the humorous, the awkward. It is being presented at The Tank in July. It's a project that's been in development for over four years. We've got an incredible and diverse group of people who have created it, and we will be touring to colleges in the fall. We're still booking for the upcoming school year, so if you're a college student, professor or administrator looking for some high-quality, entertaining, nonawkward sex education, be sure to shoot us a message! 



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Fireworks Abound in Provincetown



THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, the more grateful we are that some things stay the same – especially when considering a summertime resort, where relaxation is key. In today's world of stronger, faster, harder and louder, there is still one place that hasn't succumbed to that need for speed: Provincetown.

Every summer the sleepy village of P-Town, at the tip of Cape Cod, sees its population grow to 10 times its off-season size as tourists from all corners come to enjoy its natural beauty, celebrated art scene, great dining, vibrant commercial center and legendary LGBT scene that's been evolving for nearly a century.

Yet the beauty of Provincetown is that while there's a bustling scene along Commercial Street, where trendy restaurants and shops sit next to old-school clam shacks and T-shirt shops, you can escape it in a matter of minutes by heading out to the beaches and dunes, where solitude is easily achieved. It is simply unique in offering the best of both worlds.





Crown and Anchor owner, Rick Murray

“FOR THE DANCE-FLOOR DIEHARD, THERE’S THE PARAMOUNT NIGHTCLUB DEDICATED TO ENTERTAINING EVEN THE MOST FINICKY CIRCUIT QUEEN WITH SOME OF THE BIGGEST NAMES ON THE DJ CIRCUIT.”



As the proprietor of the landmark Crown & Anchor Inn, Rick Murray has helped shape Provincetown’s resort and nightlife scene in the new millennium. Murray and his partner, William Dougal, became part of Provincetown’s landscape in the late 1980s. They have since grown multiple businesses and turned the Crown into one of the town’s most versatile entertainment complexes. “We certainly didn’t know what we were getting into – not right away,” Murray admitted about launching the Crown & Anchor.

Providing New England-style comfort to its guests, visitors to the Crown & Anchor can comfortably rent a suite with a spectacular oceanfront view or take in some rays next to the pool. The complex offers something for everyone: a dance club; a video bar and an old-school leather bar. For happy hour, you can expect the piano bar in the Cabaret to offer a relaxing and refreshing distraction.

It also offers high-end entertainment. Murray has dedicated himself to booking top-tier talents – from comedians Kate Clinton and Kathy Griffin to Broadway notables who have made their P-Town debuts on the Crown’s stage, something he sees as part of the property’s tradition. “The reputation of the Crown has preceded that of myself and Bill,” Murray insisted. “It’s been here since the 1850s and has always been iconic.”

In the past few years, Murray has brought in artists ranging from Carol Channing to Miss Coco Peru and Liza herself (booked with Alan Cumming). Unfortunately,

Ms. Minnelli hurt her back three days prior to the show, but Alan Cumming showed up and headlined a show all on his own. This summer Murray has one of the best line-ups to date, including Jennifer Holliday, Bernadette Peters, Jeremy Jordan, Linda Lavin, Billy Porter, Shirley Jones and Kathy Griffin.

For the dance-floor diehard, there’s the Paramount Nightclub dedicated to entertaining even the most finicky circuit queen with some of the biggest names on the DJ circuit. But the space isn’t just for the boys: the Crown & Anchor’s premier space has hosted special events tailored to attract a wide audience, including very special Memorial Day Weekend parties geared for the ladies. Adjacent to the Paramount is Wave Video Bar, where VJ Tom Yaz offers the most eclectic and fun-inducing programming imaginable.

The Crown & Anchor is also home to the Central House, now under the guidance of well-established “celebrity chef,” Executive Chef Michele Raggusis. “She’s been such a plus for us

to have her," said Murray. He credits Michele with revolutionizing the dining experience at the Crown.

For many LGBTs on the East Coast (especially those in Boston and New York), the big debate is the differences between Provincetown and Fire Island, specifically Fire Island's gay enclaves of Cherry Grove and the Pines. Some prefer the privacy and lack of street life that Fire Island offers, but Murray's opinion differs.

"The unique thing about Provincetown is that we have so much more to offer than Fire Island," said Murray. The entrepreneur added with scant hesitation, "Fire Island is mostly private homes and private parties, where in Provincetown you have dozens of great restaurants, art galleries and nightlife – there's just a lot more to do." The largely historical fishing and whaling community has welcomed an LGBT presence as far back as the 1930s. It served as a vastly trafficked port of call and always attracted the artistic and theatrically inclined.

"We have one of the most naturally protected harbors on the East Coast," added Murray, "so the history here goes way back." The shores of Provincetown are also visited year-round and accessed by ferry as well as its own dedicated airport, which makes it internationally appealing and a distinct American vacation attraction for Europeans. "It's also a beautiful spot to be in the wintertime, especially if you enjoy the solitude."

Come July Fourth, the Crown & Anchor presents Independence 2015, transforming P-Town into an unparalleled circuit destination. From Thursday, July 2, to Friday, July 10, the beachfront will become the Freedom Beach Party and headline one of the circuit's most sought-after headliners. DJ Roland Belmares (of White Party and Winter Party fame) returns to Provincetown (and the Crown &



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“WE DRAW SO MANY PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD — THERE REALLY IS NO PLACE LIKE PROVINCETOWN.”

Anchor) for a premier turn at the tables Wednesday, July 8.

“Last year we started the first beach party,” Murray elaborated on the genesis of what’s now become Provincetown’s big summer circuit ticket, “... and we’re doing it again this year!” Based on Miami’s widely attended Winter Party beach spectacle, Murray anticipates a great turnout for the new P-Town tradition. “We’re flying in DJs from Miami, Berlin, Brazil, New York and LA that will be coming in to play for the week.”

Murray insists that the Independence 2015 weekend was not created to compete with the barrage of circuit and music festivals that pepper the seasonal event calendar. “Our town is pretty much the opposite of all the other really big circuit events,” he says. Citing the cosmopolitan essence of South Beach, which hosts the aforementioned White Party, Murray also notes that his party takes place in the middle of summer, when there are fewer big music events.

Independence Day Weekend in Provinc-

etown will certainly find its place on the annual summer circuit calendar. We asked Murray if the decision to host such a huge dance party had any relevance in keeping pace with the broadening appeal of the music festival scene.

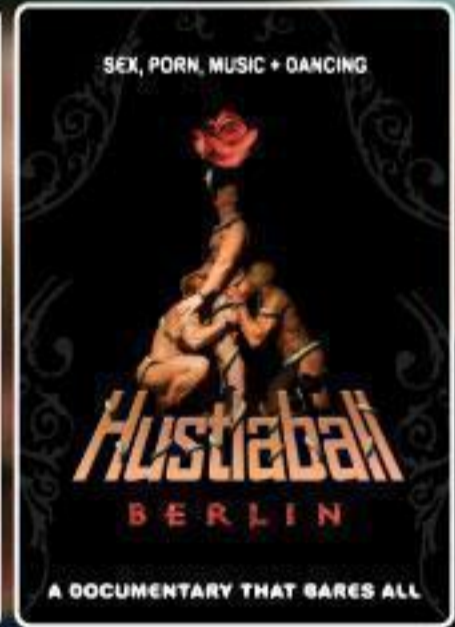
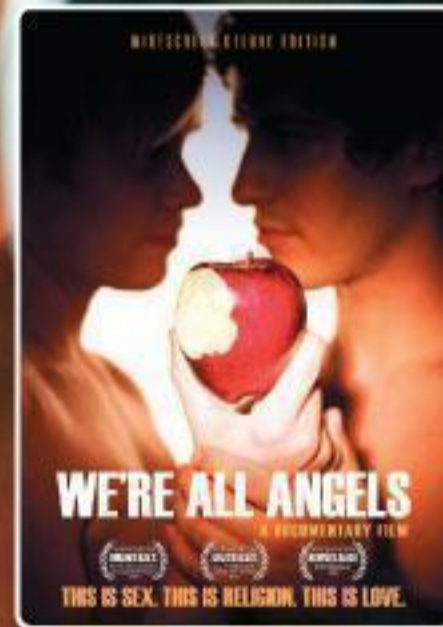
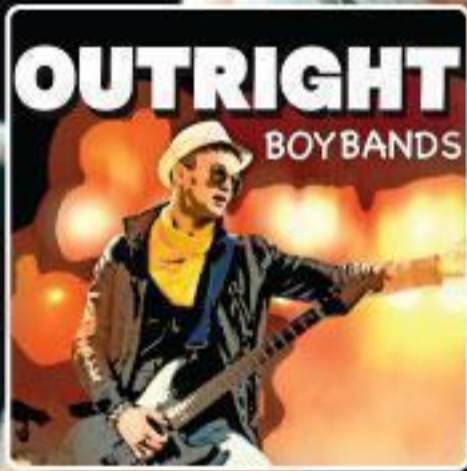
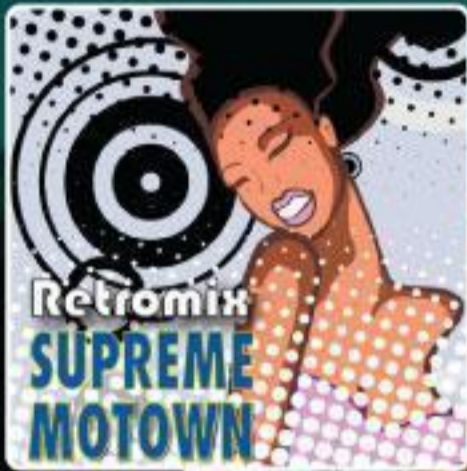
“The pace here is a little less frenetic as compared to somewhere like New York, Miami or LA,” answered Murray. (P-Town’s bars and clubs close at 1 a.m., at which time the place to hang is Spiritus Pizza on Commercial Street.)

“We draw so many people from all over the world — there really is no place like Provincetown.” It’s one of the more straight-friendly destinations on the gay getaway map that also fully embraces the changing face of our community — and that is still willing to party!

The Crown & Anchor presents “Independence 2015” from Thursday, July 2, to Friday, July 10, with internationally renowned DJ Roland Belmares taking over the sandy beaches on Wednesday, July 8. The Paramount Nightclub’s dance floor will host the premier sounds of Provincetown’s own DJ Racine, as well as DJ Phil B, New York City favorite Eddy Martinez, and more. An appearance from Tony- and Grammy-winning artist Jennifer Holliday is enough to mark this special occasion. 

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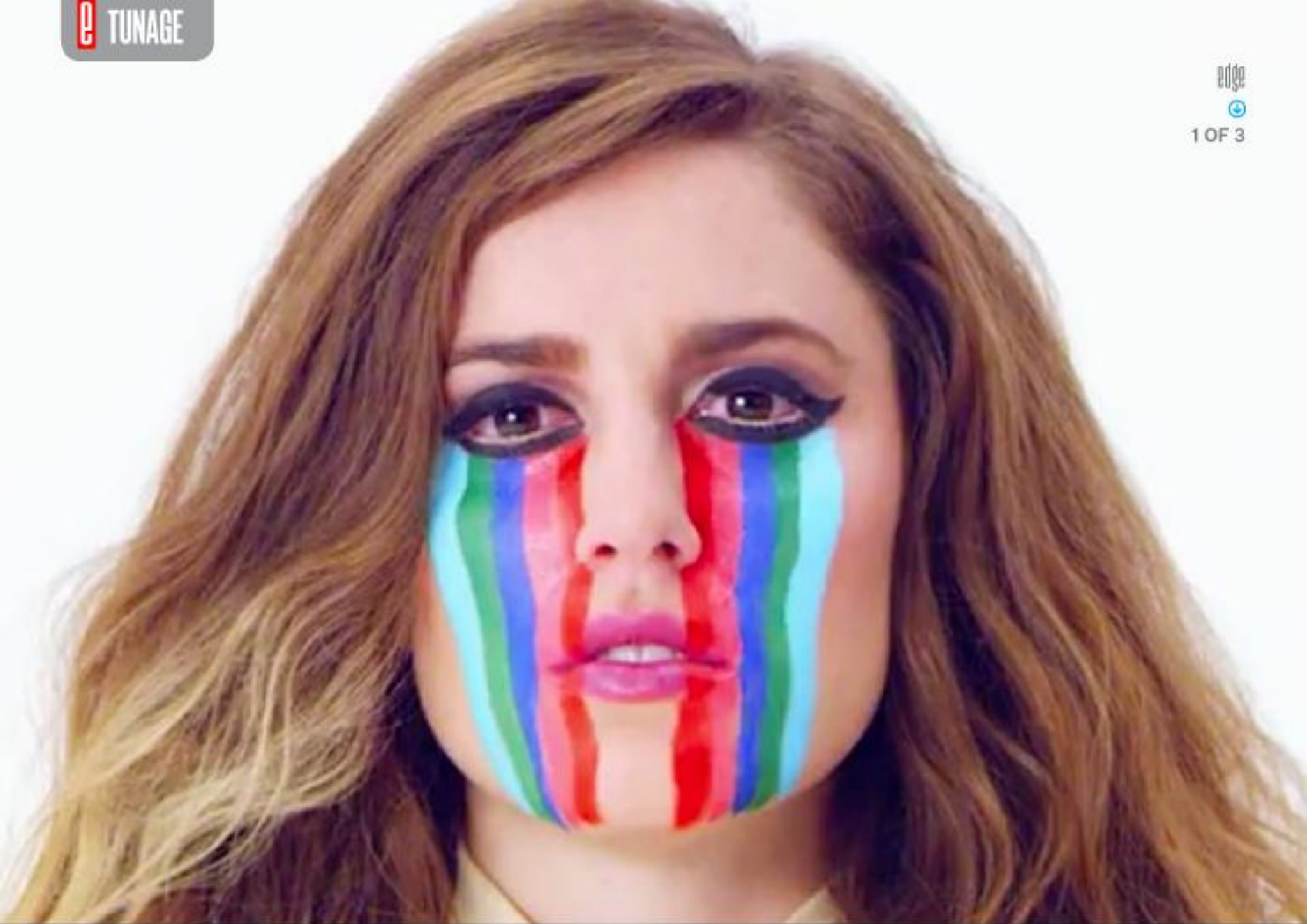
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Ryn Weaver

MUSIC'S NEW "IT" GIRL PLAYS IT SAFE ON EDGY DEBUT



JASON ST. AMAND

Singer-songwriter Ryn Weaver, 22, burst on to the music scene after debuting her single "OctaHate" on SoundCloud in August 2014. The weird little electro indie song launched her career after going viral and earning more than 3,700,000 plays on the music-streaming site. It's the type of song that's got it all: though it's rooted in upbeat and accessible pop music, it's just a little too glitchy to get radio play. But it's too damn catchy to ignore. "OctaHate" is something special – it oozes cool without trying too hard, and Weaver's large voice legitimizes the track.



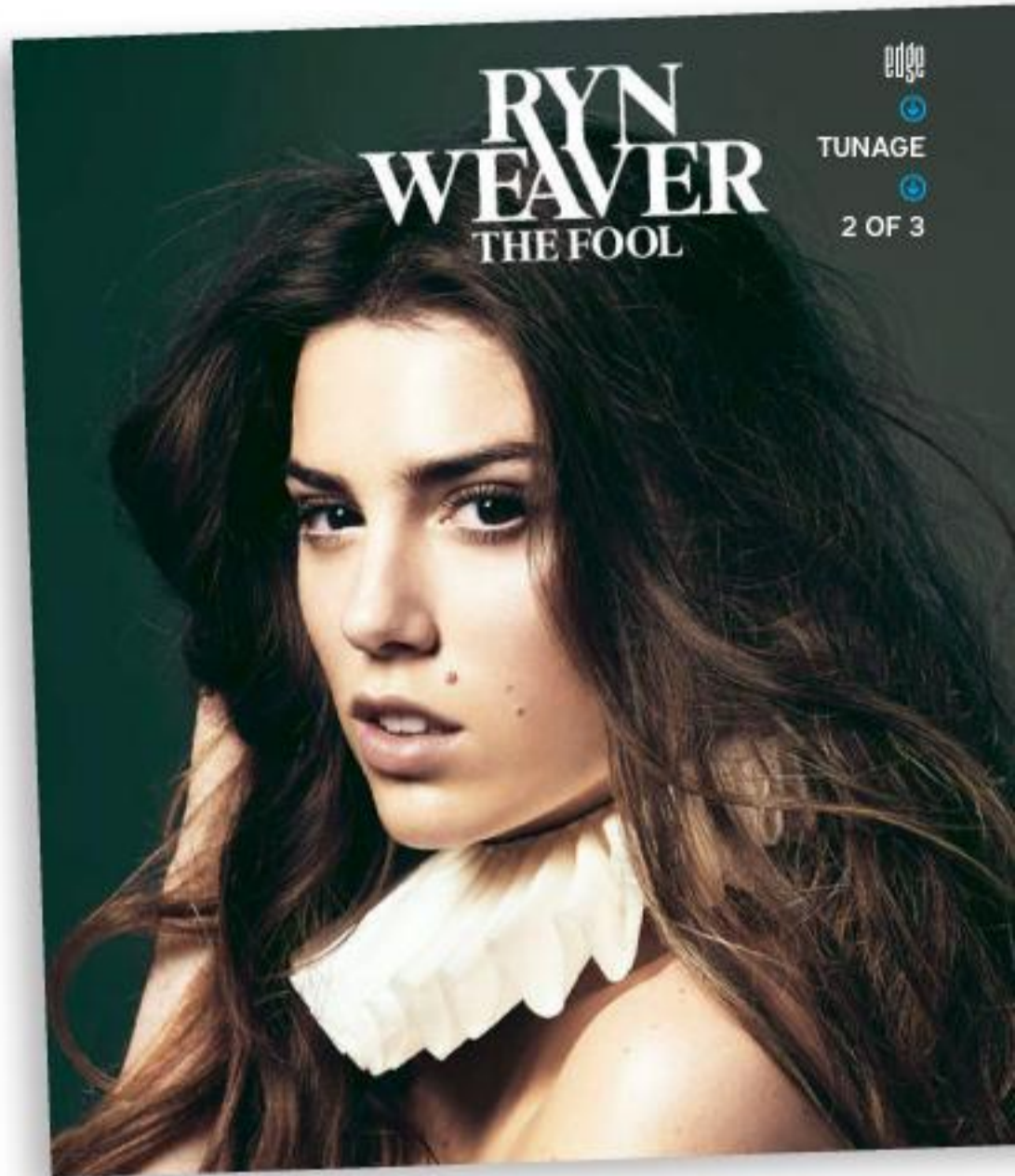
It was almost impossible for “OctaHate” to miss. At the time of its release, the pop landscape was ripe for a female artist like Weaver, born Erin Wüthrich. Lorde had already made her mark on the music industry, and the funky Haim sisters were skyrocketing to fame thanks to their Fleetwood Mac–inspired jams. The band would soon become friends with, and opening for, Taylor Swift, who also re-emerged last fall to take over the world with her pop album *1989*. Charli XCX was all over the radio thanks to her chart topper “Boom Clap” and her feature on Iggy Azalea’s song of the summer, “Fancy”; and indie songstress Sky Ferreira was captivating audiences after opening for Miley Cyrus on tour. For female artists, the lines separating indie and popular music were blending together.

Unsurprisingly, “OctaHate” blew up, seemingly overnight, peaking at No. 1 on Billboard’s Twitter Emerging Artists, No. 27 on Billboard’s Pop Songs and No. 3 on Billboard’s Bubbling Under the Hot 100.

“OctaHate” was part of a four-track EP called *Promises EP*. All of those songs found themselves on Weaver’s debut full-length, *The Fool*, which dropped in June. Indie geniuses Benny Blanco and Michael Angelakos get most of the production and writing credits, working on all 11 cuts with the San Diego-based singer.

The Fool is a sprawling effort that chooses to show a number of different sides of Weaver. It’s full of dark, honest moments and bright bursts of energy, but all songs put the spotlight on Weaver’s impressive voice. Depending on the track, her vocals change from a Stevie Nicks flow to a powerful Florence Welch bellow, but regardless of the sound, Weaver is always true to herself.

“It’s easy for me to just say exactly what I’m thinking,” she told the *New York Times* re-



cently. “And I like a bit of riddle, and some subtlety.”

In many of her songs, she’s brutally honest, like on the rumbling “Pierre,” where Weaver sings about a different lover in each verse of the song. She chants about using sex and hooking up to get over one major love, who is mentioned in the track’s chorus, “I can’t let him in / You call me up and ask me how I’ve been / I’ll call your bluff and / Keep on telling, telling, telling you lies.” On the title track, Weaver opens up again about insecurities in a relationship. This time around, she’s worried she’ll mess up and destroy the bond she has with her lover: “I tend to stack the deck with wild cards, You’re betting all you got on a broken heart.”

When speaking with *Nylon* magazine, Weaver explains that *The Fool* “covers two relationships” and that her album “poses the question: Is it foolish to settle for what you always thought you wanted as a 22-year-old woman, or is it foolish to go and leave what’s so beautiful, stable, and certain?”

“Everyone’s on the spectrum on one level or another. I’m definitely queer — I’m not a purely straight woman, and I don’t believe in limiting myself when I don’t want to.”



Though Weaver isn’t afraid of over-sharing her emotions with fans, she doesn’t get full Taylor Swift and allude to *exactly* whom she’s dating. In the same interview with *Nylon*, she comments on sexuality, saying she doesn’t “think that sexuality is set in stone for *anyone*.”

“The whole concept of categorizing what we are in order to make sense of who we are only leads to more confusion,” she continues. “Everyone’s on the spectrum on one level or another. I’m definitely queer — I’m not a purely straight woman, and I don’t believe in limiting myself when I don’t want to. It’s up to us to embrace our freedom or be stifled by constructs that were created centuries ago.”

When it comes to creating the sound of her record, which ranges from disco-anthem widescreen jams to stripped-back dirges, she told the *New York Times*, “I think the new frontier of music is taking from whatever you fancy and kind of creating this bespoke sort of genre that’s just you.”

Unfortunately, this is where *The Fool* runs into problems. Though she’s pulling from a number of influences, Weaver’s debut ultimately sounds too safe — especially for someone who’s breakthrough single is the strangely

addicting “OctaHate.” None of the songs are as sonically interesting to “OctaHate,” except for maybe “Travelling Song,” which finds Weaver romantically singing a cappella. But even that song, and a few others on the album, sounds like two or more tracks cobbled together. While they’re interesting, they don’t sound completely finished and feel rushed. Additionally, Angelakos’s thumbprint is all over *The Fool*. Fans of Passion Pit will most likely find his electro-spaz take on music works for Weaver, but Angelakos’ music can be incredibly overbearing and grinding. Even Top 40 aficionado Benny Blanco can’t rescue the spastic title track, which ends in a cacophony of synth explosions that sounds like a computer vomiting.

For all of the missteps Weaver makes on *The Fool*, she shows a lot of potential. There’s no denying she’s got a voice (though it may not be the best track, the last few moments on “Travelling Song” induce goosebumps) and she makes some gutsy choices with lyrics and the overall scope of her record, even if it scatterbrained and not entirely cohesive. If she can push the envelope a little further next time around, Weaver can make her *own* mark on the music landscape, which is craving strong and empowering artists just her. For now, she’s stuck in the crowd, standing behind the likes of Haim, Lorde, Florence, Sky Ferreira, Charli XCX, Bat for Lashes and FKA twigs, and her debut comes up short of being anything too special. **D**

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 Viva : Jun 6, NY
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 Night @ The Liberty
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