

MIDSUMMER 2013

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Q MAGAZINE

featuring
ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE
the famous spiegel tent



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q comment: FORGOTTEN VICTIMS

Victoria's peak wildlife organisation Wildlife Victoria needs your help.

"With the current spate of bushfires across the State we desperately need the public's help to spot and then report to us any wildlife that may have been injured in the fires." Karen Masson CEO has said.

So the message is if you see a nocturnal animal out during the day or near a fire ground to call them on the emergency phone line 13 000 94535 and they will have an experienced volunteer go out and assess the animal. Something may be wrong and they would like to err on the side of caution and have the animal evaluated. They have hundreds of amazing experienced volunteers across the State they rely on every day to respond to calls regarding sick, injured and orphaned wildlife.

Some animals may have lost their habitat through the fires and could be on the move looking for a new home, water and food so they too will be susceptible to possible new predators such as domestic animals, cars and trucks and other wildlife. So please take care on the roads especially around the fire areas and call them if you suspect an animal may need assessing.

Behaviours to look out for:

- Have the wildlife been easier to approach than normal?
- Do animals look sad or tired?
- Do kangaroos avoid hopping off when approached?
- Do animals move too slowly or look in pain?
- Have you seen koalas on the ground?



-Have you seen possums or wombats out in daylight?

If so, please call them on 13 000 94535 so that they can assess the animal and organise medical attention if necessary.



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Brett Hayhoe t/a Q Magazine
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q feature: ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE

The Famous Spiegeltent will once again adorn the Arts Centre Melbourne Forecourt from Wednesday 5 February to 21 April 2013, with its signature mix of circus, cabaret, theatre and live music, with additional programs for children, and food and wine events.

"The Famous Spiegeltent – widely regarded as the most beautiful of the Spiegeltents – has a long history with Melbourne, which was the first city in Australia to host it," said Tim Brinkman, Executive Performing Arts, Arts Centre Melbourne. "The Famous Spiegeltent season has since become a much anticipated annual event in Melbourne's performing arts calendar, and its mirrored interiors a mecca for quirky and idiosyncratic local and international artists. It's a joy to program this historic tent and we are pleased to be able to welcome it back to our city and offer up a fresh and unique program in 2013, including acrobatics, burlesque, jazz concerts and 1930s glamour."

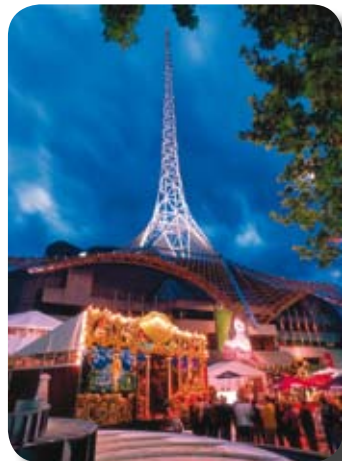
New in 2013:

- Renowned French American acoustic group Moriarty, whose unique sound has been described as 'Depression era American folk/cabaret' meets early Neil Young.
- The Dark Party, three-man show of extreme visceral, punk-inspired 'sideshow noir' fusing sideshow stunts and contemporary comedic theatre, where staple guns, singing saws, power tools and car batteries all make a cameo appearance.
- Two Spiegel favourites returning with exciting new collaborations: Lior, performing with Melbourne vocalist/composer Gian Slater and her group breaking choral ensemble 'Invenio' for three magical evenings in March; and Katie Noonan in Love Song Circus, a remarkable piece of physical theatre created around a beautiful song cycle inspired by the letters and stories of Australia's early convict women.
- Once Upon a Time, a new series of classical daytime shows on Wednesday mornings. Highlights include ARIA Award winning Sally Witwell and her toy piano; Egyptian-born oud virtuoso Joseph Tawadros and a rare performance from acclaimed Australia composer Brett Dean.
- Big Band Burlesque – 'adults-only' variety show with a stellar lineup of the Melbourne's hottest burlesque and funniest comedians sharing the stage
- A great lineup of shows for kids and families including the Super Speedy Sound Shed (April school holidays) a 'live radio play adventure' where the audience and performers create and explore the crazy world of sound effects.
- The Famous Supper Club, a inimitable supper-and-show experience with highlight shows including Imogen Kelly, reigning Queen of Burlesque as crowned in Las Vegas at Miss World Exotica, performing Herstory, a time travelling romp through the hilarious escapades of history's most notorious women.

Returning in 2013:

- The sell-out hit of 2012, the hugely popular Jazz High Tea, a gourmet afternoon of cakes, tea and Melbourne's most-loved jazz musicians, returning Sundays during the season.
- Club Spiegel – late night risqué revelry on Friday and Saturday nights, featuring a headline band plus guests from circus, cabaret, theatre, burlesque and more.
- Especially for Melbourne's littlest music lovers, a Sunday morning program offering a mix of local and international acts including Holly Throsby, London Klezmer Quartet, The Mighty Buzzniks, Boon Wurrung Ngargee, MSO Jam for Juniors and MASSIVE Choir.

Tickets for the above programs in The Famous Spiegel Season 2013 are available now.



The Trip Headlines The Famous Spiegeltent from February 12

Direct from Berlin and the headline act of The Famous Spiegeltent from Tuesday 12 February – Sunday 3 March 2013, The Trip is a daring, tongue-in-cheek circus show featuring seductive circus performances, including a contortion act inside a disco ball and a slippery acrobatics routine in a fish bowl filled with water.

The Trip boasts an international cast of stars including boylesque artist and contortionist David Pereira, acrobats and La Clique stars The Caesar Twins, New York drag sensation Baby Jane and Ethiopian juggler Girma Tsehai.

The all-star extravaganza The Trip has been lavishly assembled by David Pereira, the latest star to emerge from Base Berlin, a hub for creative artists established by The Caesar Twins. With his breathtaking disco ball contortion act, Spaniard David Pereira will amaze Melbourne audiences his unfathomable flexibility, strength and skill.

Trained in ballet, David Pereira turned his hand acrobatics and won junior championships for the sport in Spain for five consecutive years. By the age of 18, David Pereira had found his calling on the stage for Cirque du Soleil and now regularly performs in self-produced work around the globe.

Internationally-acclaimed Polish stars of Royal Variety and La Clique, The Caesar Twins star alongside Pereira in this mélange of contemporary vaudeville, new burlesque and circus with their world-famous underwater routine. The identical Aryan twins Pablo and Pierre Caesar, described in The Observer as having sprung “fully formed from the fantasies of Jean-Paul Gaultier”, will perform their half-nude circus and gymnastics routine inside a fishbowl filled with water.

The Caesar Twins have been performing together since their childhood, gaining notoriety for their act called “Wheel of Death”. However, in 2002, while performing this act, brother Pablo Caesar reportedly fell 16 metres and severely injured himself. Nevertheless, after extensive surgery and months of rehabilitation, the brothers persevered and continue to train and perform together almost a decade on.



Arts Centre Melbourne and Base Berlin presents
The Trip
With David Pereira and The Caesar Twins
Arts Centre Melbourne, The Famous Spiegeltent
Tuesday 12 February – Sunday 3 March 2013
Tickets from \$60

For further details on what's on in The Famous Spiegeltent visit artscentremelbourne.com.au or pick up an On Guide from the venues.

For more information about Arts Centre Melbourne and our events pick up a copy of the 2013 Program Highlights brochure from our venues, read it online at artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183. Become a fan of Arts Centre Melbourne on Facebook or follow @artscentremelb on Twitter.

q leisure & lifestyle: with PETE DILLON

Visiting Melbourne or firmly ensconced in the lifestyle? Midsumma is a perfect time to get together with friends before a show or after, or just to get your gay and lesbian on.

There are literally hundreds of venues that are GLBT owned in Melbourne where you can enjoy great food, excellent wine and terrific service. Apart from the usual GLBT venues that are often lauded as drinking spots, food should always be on the menu as well.

Oscars Table at Docklands is a gay owned business and their food is terrific. I have detailed them here before but a great place to visit in Docklands for excellent tucker.

Jason McLaren Jones and his partner Brahman Perera are the people behind four Melbourne venues — Porgie and Mr Jones in Hawthorn, Friends of Mine in Richmond, Snow Pony in Balwyn and Mazzitelli in Richmond. All are terrific venues and cover breakfast, lunch and dinner so check them out.

On the south side and much closer to some of the Midsumma action is Fitzrovia on Fitzroy Street in St Kilda. Owned by chef Paul Jewson and front of house Manager Marco, these partners in life have lived and worked together for 20 years or more. Their food is impressive and the service is impeccable, so it is well worth a visit for some seasonal fare. It's the perfect spot to start or finish Pride March as well.

While in this area, also check out Illona Staller in Balaclava and Ciciolina in Acland Street, St Kilda. Owned by some lovely ladies, these venues have cemented their place on the Melbourne culinary landscape and are highly respected in the industry. Great spots to eat for sure.

Longrain, with venues in Melbourne and Sydney, are regarded very highly for their impressive Thai food. Chef and partner in the business is the very lovely Martin Boetz, a proud member of our community and a terrific chef with an extraordinary understanding of the nuances of Thai food. You can find Longrain in Little Bourke Street, at the Paris end of Chinatown. It should be on everyone's list of dining options at least once.

Then there is the amazing empire of the indefatigable Vernon Chalker. His venues include Madam Brussels in Bourke Street, Collins Quarter and Ra in Collins Street, Bar Ampere and The Gin Palace in Russell Place in Melbourne. Each of them with their own wonderful history and personalities, they are all excellent venues in which to eat and drink in Melbourne town. Some of the best spots for a cocktail once your done with everything else.

If you are on Commercial Road, the Hotel Prince Max is a great place to stop for a beverage or a meal. Owned by the effervescent Michael Broderick, it's been a stalwart on Commercial Road for decades and has been restored somewhat to its former glory. A great operator and a terrific venue for a pre show or event dinner.

On Cato Street in Prahran you will find Ice Café. Open for breakfast and lunch every day, and dinner on some days, this is another community hangout. Owned by everyone's favourite lad, Liam Quinn, the venue is well worth a stop in if you need to cure yourself from the night before, or if you need to recover from the gym across the other side of the street. Either way, it's a great place to see and be seen.

Aptly named The Bottom End at the Spencer Street end of Little Collins. The love child of an honest pub and a down home party girl, the venue is the brain child of Michael Delany Korabelnikova. It's the home of Poof Doof so a great place to get your boogie on, as well as a US style diner to make sure the stomach is lined.

I can attest to the mac cheese balls and warn they are addictive. Delaney Korabelnikova has been behind some other terrific Melbourne venues and is quite smooth operator.

There are many more venues that have a strong GLBT flavor and I suggest you ask your friends for recommendations of any they know — these are but a few that are worth looking at and celebrating in for Midsumma 2013.

Enjoy Midsumma and enjoy our proudly GLBT owned venues.

For more from Pete, tune in to *Cravings* every Saturday at 1PM on JOY 94.9



q money: with EVAN DAVIS

A New Year and what better times to focus on extracting a higher return from your favourite asset class? The smuttier among my readership are no doubt waiting for me to slip in a blue joke at this point concerning arses, chests, legs or packages. But I'm not going to. I'll save that for the conclusion!

Kidding, an asset class is typically a group of investments that have similar characteristics. Typically they'll perform in a similar manner, be subject to similar laws and regulations and more often than not have similar returns and importantly risks.

Before selecting any investment regardless of class, you need to know what you need to achieve from the investment in the first place. Speak to a professional and get good qualified advice. Your needs and decisions may also change over time.

It is important to note that any investment regardless of the asset class will have a level of risk associated with that class. Investment risk is used to measure the volatility of the investment when compared with the rate of return.

Though simplistic it is still fair to say that investors typically expect to receive a higher return on a riskier investment, such as growth assets rather than on defensive assets which provide lower though more predictable, safer returns.

Many different factors can create risk in an investment, so it is prudent to consider this when looking at investment options. A qualified Financial Advisor will help you to understand your own risk profile and will help you identify potential investments that are in line with your risk appetite and financial goals.

On the lower end of the risk spectrum are defensive assets. Cash and fixed interest investments. These investments naturally included cash at bank, fixed rate bonds and mortgages. They tend to suit clients who are risk adverse or who no longer need the returns associated with more volatile higher paying investments.

There are many reasons an investor might have a low risk appetite and would benefit from more stayed investments. They might be approaching or transitioning to retirement and perhaps drawing a pension from their investments or super. Or an individual may simply not have the stomach for a financial roller coaster ride and simply want to sleep easily at night. It will all come down to the individuals risk profile and their individual needs at that time of their investing life.

Growth assets however tend to have the objective of achieving an investment return (including capital growth and income) that outperforms inflation. Growth assets include: Australian shares, international shares, property and alternative assets. Growth with any investment occurs over time and the shorter the time required to achieve the desired growth is usually reflective of the risk associated with the investment.

A diversified investment will typically invest within and across a number of the different asset classes to reduce the overall risk. Diversification generally reduces the likelihood of any single investment or asset adversely affecting the value of your investment portfolio. However, you should realise that the value of your investment, including a diversified investment, can fall or may not perform in line with your expectations.



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q sydney: DANCE COMPANY SEASON

THREE GROUNDBREAKING WORKS IN ONE UNMISSABLE SEASON

Sydney Dance Company presents *De Novo*, a trio of unmissable dance works from three exceptional choreographers, brought to life by Australia's premier contemporary dance ensemble. March 1 to 23 at Sydney Theatre.

In what promises to be one of the most exciting dance offerings of the year, Sydney Dance Company brings together three ground-breaking new works in one peerless season: a suite of playfully provocative and subversive productions which brazenly hurl themselves at the cornerstones of contemporary culture.

Rafael Bonachela's *Emergence* acknowledges his enduring fascination with popular culture and his belief in the potential for 'pop' to meaningfully inform and influence the artistic process. For this show he has commissioned composer Nick Wales and internationally acclaimed singer-songwriter Sarah Blasko - in her first foray into the contemporary dance world, to create an original music score for his upcoming world-premiere production.

The result, a stunning raw and instinctual soundscape featuring vocals by Blasko, has fuelled the development of a hothouse production which showcases the power and diversity of the full Sydney Dance Company ensemble, with established team members at their electric and sensual best, and introducing new dancer Cass Mortimer-Eipper and the 2013 Sydney Dance Company Foxtel Scholarship recipient Holly Doyle.

Emergence also celebrates a much-anticipated collaboration between Bonachela and acclaimed Australian fashion designer Dion Lee, who has taken time out from the world's catwalks to develop an exclusive collection of costumes for the production.

Joyful, intelligent and irreverent, *Cacti* is the critically acclaimed work of one of Europe's most highly sought-after artists, award-winning Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman. Featuring 16 dancers, a string quartet and a dynamic set - complete with potted cacti, this brilliantly conceived, fresh and engaging theatrical performance celebrates the simple pleasure of dance whilst simultaneously commenting on the audiences' obsessive desire to define and interpret art and performance.

Sydney Dance Company's production of *Cacti* is an Australian first, and will introduce Australian audiences to the work of one of Europe's most exciting young multi-talented artists, currently working with internationally acclaimed Netherlands Dance Theatre. At just 28 years of age Ekman has already created 35 dance works, often composes music, creates video and designs sets for his productions, and in 2009 devised and directed the dance film, *40m Under*. Media Release

From up and coming Australian choreographer Larissa McGowan comes *Fanatic*, a hilarious high-energy performance set in the lounge room of a disillusioned movie fan who is using YouTube to vent his feelings on the advent of the *Alien* vs. *Predator* franchise. The hit of the Spring Dance 2012 Contemporary Women program, this tongue-in-cheek exploration of sci-fi fan culture is back for more pulse-pounding, chest-busting dance action, featuring a trio of Sydney Dance Company dancers at their dramatic best and a soundscape of movie-bytes from two titanic sci-fi blockbusters.

Comprising three ground-breaking works from three exceptional contemporary choreographers from around the globe, *De Novo* is set to take Sydney by storm when it premieres in March 2013.



**De Novo opens at Sydney Theatre on March 1 2013, for a three-week season until March 23.
Book at www.sydneytheatre.org.au, 02 9250 1999.**

q youth: with TASMAN ANDERSON

After four years of Q magazine, I can say for the first time ever that I'm going to discuss the huge elephant in the room and before you joke, no I'm not talking about my sexuality. I'm of course, talking about religion.

Okay, I swear I felt all of you gasp right then! so before my editor has a heart attack, let me explain. As many of you know, I'm not religious. In fact, I'm so far from religious that I'm sure I'd accidentally start an apocalypse if I were ever to set foot in a church. However, I'm a strong supporter of the freedom to believe in whatever and whomever you want as long as it does not endanger another's life. With that said, I've never been turned off from people who just so happen to be religious. However, after a series of events played out earlier this month, I was left questioning everything I ever knew about God and religion.

It's no secret that religion has a strained relationship with homosexuality. We constantly hear about religious fanatics condemning the GBLT community to hell or the internal struggle that religious youth endure when they start experiencing an attraction to the same sex. However, I didn't understand the influence of religion until recently when my best friend, Dominique met her first girlfriend. Everything seemed to be going well until her girlfriend's extremely fundamental catholic mum found out about them. Her girlfriend ended up facing an ultimatum – either break up or move out. Obviously with no where to go and the possibility of losing her family, she chose to end the relationship. Domi was left devastated and confused. She kept thinking *'what was so wrong with two people loving each other? Wasn't that what God was all about?'* I started asking myself the exact same thing and after spending a week trying to work it out and being unable to let it go, I approached one of my Christian friends.

Once I told Nick, who became a Christian a few years ago, about what had happened to her, he was quick to assure me that both himself and his church had no issues with homosexuality. He explained that Christianity has its extremists similar to how the racial equality issue had the Klu Klux Klan. He said that it would be unfair to judge an entire religion based on the opinion of a select few. When I asked him about the bible's view on homosexuality, he simply said that the bible was not supposed to be a set of rules that you abide by but a way of life one can either choose to commit too or learn from.

I have always been curious about religion. To me, the idea of having someone watch over you and lend you a 'hand' when you truly feel lost was extremely comforting. God suddenly felt like a parental figure that continued to love and support you even when your own parents couldn't anymore. However, I never could follow a religion that was so hell bent on condemning people for listening to their hearts and choosing to love and not hate, regardless of gender.

After talking with Nick, my opinion on religion did change. I was able to better understand why people were so drawn to God and the Bible. It gave purpose to life and guidance for when things became too confusing or messy. However, I still think I'm torn. I've always believed that when I died and finally found out what the afterlife was, that if God were to be there then he would be able to see whether I was a good or bad person based on my soul rather than on whether I believed in him or not. Unfortunately, Nick explained to me that God didn't do things that way and regardless of whether you were good or bad, if you were a non believer then you'd go to hell.

I didn't know what to think then and I still don't know now. How can I believe in a God that would condemn a goodhearted person to suffer just because they didn't believe in them? How can I believe in a religion that could be warm and caring one moment and so harsh the next? I suppose that is where faith comes in.

In the end we do all need something to believe in and I think I would much prefer to believe in life. We've got one shot to experience our hearts desire, why waste it?



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Offer Ends 31/03/13

q cuisine: with NATHAN MILLER

Over the years I have collected some wonderful, unique things and a large portion of my collectables is taken up with Marilyn Monroe prints and ornaments. There is something about Marilyn that gives me a feeling of belonging, a belief in her and her grace.

We were on the search for a big breakfast whilst cruising around the Yarra Valley recently when we stumbled across Monroe's Place Café in Healesville.

When I say stumbled, what I mean to say is I saw this establishment from across the road full of Marilyn Monroe prints and collectables and proceeded very quickly across the busy street. It wasn't until I got close that I realised it was a café. So with my own unique charm, I coerced my friends in hoping for a great value and overly large breakfast.

When entering this truly American styled café, I was just in awe of the sizeable prints and paintings of the lady herself. Some are quite unique whilst others are fairly common prints. Either way, having this one space dedicated to Marilyn is uniquely cool.

So enough about my passion, lets get into some food. The menu was very 1960's, which suited our needs that very morning, so it was the 'Big Aussie Breakfast' all round. I know it doesn't sound very American, but believe me I needed bacon and eggs stat!

The service was very efficient, and the owner seems to enjoy every minute he is there, as you can often hear him singing from behind the coffee machine.

Whilst we enjoyed the music, the atmosphere and our own discussion, my coffee arrived and to my surprise was a very good standard - it must have been the singing.

Just inside the door were a small stack of books containing portraits of Marilyn, so without trying to be rude, I engaged myself into some light perusing whilst we waited for our food.

When someone says 'Big Breakfast' it does not always reach my expectations, but on this occasion the big breakfast was massive. It was fresh, hot, cooked amazingly well and with our little side orders of black pudding and lambs fry, again not very traditional but amazing either way.

We sat and gorged our way through the massive plate of bacon, eggs, tomato, sausages, beans and toast as the world passed by the lace curtain-clad window. I swear we could have been in a café 30 years ago and been none the wiser.

There is nothing I would change about this distinctive and vibrant little café.

**Open 7 days for breakfast, lunch and dinner you will find them at
228 Maroondah Highway, Healesville VIC 3777
(03) 5962 2033**

For more reviews, suggestions and comments visit www.ramblingrelish.com



q festival: 23rd MQFF



Every year queer film lovers come together for the largest film festival of its kind in Australia. For 10 days in March the Melbourne Queer Film Festival (MQFF) will delight audiences with the best of international GLBTIQ cinema and home-grown talent, screening over 150 films.

Serious issues are tackled in a selection of films from the international film festival circuit, including award winning Facing Mirrors (Aynehaye Rooberoo) directed by Negar Azarbayjani – set in Iran, the story follows married Rana and what happens when she becomes friends with the rebellious transgendered Edi. French film Beyond the Walls (Hors Les Murs) looks at two men, whose relationship veers into co-dependence and addiction; and years of unrequited love are encountered in North Sea Texas (Nordzee, Texas) from Belgium filmmaker Bavo Defurne.

North American indie films are well represented with: Keep the Lights On, a gritty chronicle which follows the emotionally and sexually charged journey through the love, addiction and friendship of two men who meet through a casual encounter; Fourplay – a feature anthology of short tales which depicts varieties of sexual intimacy set in four American cities; Struck by Lightning, which is Glee star Christopher Colfer's first foray into screen writing; and Route of Acceptance which plays with the idea of destiny, while exploring three possible realities for young lesbian writer, Ryan Stark.

Comedies are aplenty this year too. Hilarity ensues in Gayby when straight single Jenn and gay comic book illustrator Matt decide to conceive a baby the 'old fashioned' way; Mrs. Doubtfire meets Tootsie in Swedish film Cockpit, an over-the-top comedy of mistaken identities; and comedy of errors A Perfect Ending.

Get into the Festival mood with Queens! Destiny of Dance – a fever pitched Bollywood melodrama which follows a group of hijra (male to female transsexuals) living a glamorous life in their insular community in Rajasthan; and

Bye Bye Blondie starring French film favourites Béatrice Dalle and Emmanuelle Béart which gets into 1980s lesbian punk rock glory days and then revisits 25 years later when their lives have changed enormously.

Swing back to the 1970's with Funkytown, a brilliant ensemble piece set in Montreal, by Canadian Daniel Roby. The disco era is in full swing, and 8 men and women who want to see and be seen at the trendiest disco juggle fame and anonymity until they're forced to make sober choices in an era when excess was the norm, disco was king, homophobia rife and HIV approaching on the horizon.

Tickets are on sale now - don't miss out.

Become a MQFF Member and save. Receive 20% off all tickets and enjoy a priority booking service.

For more information visit mqff.com.au

Stay in touch with Facebook, twitter or subscribe to our e-news and be first in the know.

WHAT: 23rd Melbourne Queer Film Festival

WHEN: Thursday 14 – Sunday 24 March 2013

WHERE: ACMI, Federation Sq, Hoyts Melbourne Central and Loop Bar and cinema.

MORE INFO: www.mqff.com.au



q dance: BANGARRA

Internationally acclaimed Bangarra Dance Theatre heads boldly into 2013 with an inspiring and poignant new dance theatre production, *Blak*. Tickets for the world premiere season at Arts Centre Melbourne, 3 to 11 May and the Sydney Opera House, 7 to 22 June are now on sale. Tickets are also on sale for limited seasons of the *Blak* national tour at Illawarra Performing Arts Centre, Wollongong; Canberra Theatre Centre and Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane.

Choreographed by Bangarra's Artistic Director Stephen Page and emerging choreographer and dancer Daniel Riley McKinley, *Blak* places culture at the heart of our existence. It reaffirms the powerful experiences of rites of passage for young people as they transition to adulthood. By embracing their responsibilities, these young people become a critical link in the songlines that connect our future with our ancient past. Based on the myriad of stories told by Bangarra's young artists, their personal appreciation for traditional customs and practices drives the central themes of *Blak*.

Culture, language and survival are intrinsically linked in the urban world of changing social behaviours. 2012 was an extremely successful and busy year for Bangarra with 123 performances in 19 cities across Australia and around the world. The company also received numerous awards including Helpmann, Arts Hub and Australian Dance Awards.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Stephen Page, Bangarra Dance Theatre has built a strong global reputation, touring throughout Australia and performing in New York, Washington, Paris, London, China, Mongolia, Switzerland and Germany. Named NSW Australian of the Year in 2008 and NAIDOC Artist of the Year in 2012, Stephen Page has long been recognised for his efforts to bring cultures together through the performing arts and also for his commitment to developing the next generation of Indigenous storytellers by mentoring emerging artists. Continuing this commitment, Page has commissioned emerging choreographer and dancer Daniel Riley McKinley to work alongside him in creating Bangarra's 2013 production *Blak*.

Joining Bangarra in 2007, Daniel Riley McKinley has toured and performed nationally and internationally in *Clan*, *True Stories*, *Mathinna*, *Fire - A Retrospective*, of earth & sky and *Spirit*. Daniel has been nominated for numerous awards including Dancer of the Year at the Deadly Awards in 2012. In 2010, Daniel made his choreographic debut for Bangarra with the acclaimed work *Riley*, from the production of earth & sky which was revered for its exceptional technique, strong ensemble work and powerful portrayal of character, story and emotion.

Bangarra Dance Theatre is Australia's premier national Indigenous performing arts company. Under the brilliant and inspirational artistic direction of Stephen Page, Bangarra has strived to maintain the cultural integrity and spirit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition, combining it with contemporary expressions of stories, dance and music. Bangarra creates dynamic, moving theatrical experiences and delivers these experiences to audiences across Australia and around the world.



For further information go to www.bangarra.com.au

Melbourne Arts Centre Melbourne, 3 to 11 May

Bookings: <http://www.artscentremelbourne.com.au/whats-on/event.aspx?id=3444>
p 1300 182 183

Ticket prices : \$29-\$89 plus transaction fees

Sydney Sydney Opera House, 7 to 22 June

Bookings: <http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/whatson/blak.aspx>
p 02 9250 7777

Ticket prices : \$29-\$89 plus transaction fees

Canberra Canberra Theatre Centre, Canberra 11 to 13 July

Bookings: canberratheatrecentre.com.au
p 02 6275 2700

Ticket prices : \$40 - \$63 plus transaction fees

Brisbane Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), Brisbane 18 to 27 July

Bookings: qpac.com.au
p 136 246

Ticket prices : \$34.50 to \$65 plus transaction fees

q assistance: **FLIP IT**

Living Positive Victoria has launched a new program, the Finance, Learning Independence Program (FLIP) which will provide financial assistance to any member of Living Positive Victoria who is seeking assistance with returning to work or study in order to attain financial independence. This program has replaced the Emergency and Distress Fund.

People living with HIV are living longer and increasingly healthier lives. This trend is being shown in social research across Australia and we believe that it is important to support people living with HIV to attain the best health, social and economic status as possible. FLIP is about getting to the root of independence and building up, instead of band-aid solutions.



living positive victoria
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS VICTORIA

In recognising that some people living with HIV may not have the option to fully realise financial independence the program also offers limited financial assistance to any member of Living Positive Victoria who finds themselves faced with situations of extreme financial duress, such as an eviction notice for rental arrears. In these instances an application for assistance can be made on an emergency granting basis after ensuring all other avenues have been explored.

The FLIP fund will be taking applications for financial assistance twice a year in January and June. The applications will be judged on merit and within the budget allocations by a panel of peers which will include Board Directors, staff and community members.

For further information about criteria of eligibility to access FLIP please go to www.livingpositivevictoria.org.au or by contacting Guy Hussey on (03) 9863 8733.

q cabaret news: **SHE RETURNS**

Melbourne Cabaret Festival hit show "Candice McQueen: Nasty!" starring London's Spanky is returning to tour Australia in February and March. Spanky held a seven-year residency at London's infamous Bistrottheque, has performed for three British Prime Ministers and had private bookings at the request of Sir Elton John and Alexander McQueen.

Spanky's alter-ego, the immortal demi-goddess Candice McQueen, is a Mr Sister who has partied her way around the world for thousands of years. She has a heart of ice. It's her weak spot. So she's like Samson with a superior weave. The show is a comedy-cabaret about Candice falling in love with a fallen 90s screen idol and the journey to save both their lives weaving 90s pop culture and fashion.

Melbourne

The (new) Butterfly Club, Saturday 16 February
<http://thebutterflyclub.com>

Perth

The Spiegeltent, Monday 18 to Sunday 24 February
<http://www.fringeworld.com.au>

Sydney

Slide Lounge, Thursday 28 February
<http://slide.com.au/shows/spanky>

Adelaide

Holden Street Theatres, Friday 1 to Monday 4 March
The Spiegeltent, Garden of Unearthly Delights, Wednesday 6 March
<http://www.adelaidefringe.com.au>

www.rushpoppershop.com.au

q perth: 2013 ARTS FESTIVAL

Joyous and celebratory, thought provoking and poignant, cutting-edge and contemporary – the 2013 Perth International Arts Festival program offers a feast of culture for arts lovers of all ages and persuasions, spilling across the unique venues and spaces of one of the most beautiful cities in Australia.

Perth International Arts Festival is Australia's original arts festival, with a worldwide reputation for excellence. In 2013, the Festival delivers a superb program celebrating works of imagination and integrity, created by artists who are daring, thoughtful, and original. Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway said: "In the 2013 Festival we have invited some of the world's most exciting artists to descend on Perth, to be inspired by and respond to the beauty of our city and to perform and collaborate with the vibrant artistic community of Western Australia."

After the dusk welcome Beginnings on the banks of the Swan River, with performances by Archie Roach and a glorious Noongar choir, the 2013 Festival explodes out of the blocks, literally, with the Lotterywest Festival Spectacular B.P.M. Bombs Per Minute from Les Commandos Percu (France). From the darkness, a clock ticks, bells toll and fireworks hypnotically dance across the night sky. Fresh from opening the 2012 London Olympic Games, these masters of the high octane arts of explosives, percussion and drumming are ready to get the Perth Festival going with a bang in 2013.



The Festival's free program takes art to the people and turns people into art: the streets of Perth become a theatre, an art gallery, and a peep-show for the Lotterywest Festival Celebration La Marea, an Australian exclusive that sees ten scenes play out in the illuminated windows, balconies and cafes of Rokeby Road. Of all the People in all the World by theatre collective Stan's Cafe (UK) imagines the 1.54 billion people in Perth's time zone (GMT+8) as grains of rice, creating a hauntingly beautiful, constantly shifting sculptural landscape that brings statistics to life in eloquent visual form.

The 2013 theatre program traverses the spectrum from the sublime to the surreal. One of the world's great companies, Bertolt Brecht's Berliner Ensemble (Germany) comes to Australia for the very first time with their masterwork The Threepenny Opera, with visionary director Robert Wilson creating an unforgettable production of an extraordinary work. Epic in scale and ambition, three of Australia's most revered artists, director Neil Armfield, writer Andrew Bovell, and artistic associate Stephen Page come together for the first time to adapt Kate Grenville's acclaimed novel The Secret River for the stage. The most entertaining musical about economics ever, Mission Drift by New York darlings The TEAM (USA) takes audiences on a pioneering journey across the USA in search of capitalism, with a score that fuses Vegas glitz, Western ballads and Southern blues. Lose yourself in the nostalgic romance of the spectacular vintage big-top tent with the Australian exclusive La Cucina dell'Arte from sixth-generation circus performers Circus Ronaldo (Belgium). The National Theatre of Scotland return to Perth with their pub-crawling, manically funny theatrical hit The Strange Undoing of Prudentia Hart, an evening of anarchic theatre, supernatural storytelling, live music and strange goings-on. The Holy Trinity of Irish Theatre: Gate Theatre Company (Ireland), Samuel Beckett and Barry McGovern come together for the Australian exclusive performance of Watt, Beckett's extraordinary and hilarious story of the bizarre adventures of an itinerant character and his struggle to make sense of the world around him.

Rediscover a sense of magic and wonder with the Perth Festival programming for the young and young at heart. Vibrant, playful and fantastical, Clouds by Aracaladanza (Spain) is a mesmerising journey into the surreal world of Rene Magritte: clouds transform into sheep, dancers perform captivating routines and giant green apples fall from magical trees. Arena Theatre Company (Aus) presents The House of Dreaming, an incredible interactive labyrinth brought to life by an innovative combination of robotics, performers and projections, a three-dimensional storybook of wonder and dreams. Barking Gecko Theatre Company (Aus) presents the world premiere of Duck, Death and the Tulip, a thoughtful, tender and intriguing tale about a duck who strikes up an unlikely friendship with death.

The dance program presents an Australian exclusive, the visionary and internationally acclaimed Shiva Shakti from Daksha Sheth Dance Company (India), a stunning blend of Indian classical dance, aerial performance, martial arts and yoga performed by Isha Sharvani, Bollywood actress and one of India's finest dancers. The Ballet National de Marseille presents The Truth 25 Times a Second, an extraordinary collaboration between Belgian choreographer Frederic Flamand and acclaimed Chinese visual artist Ai Weiwei that pushes the limits of human movement.

In a feast for music lovers, three towering figures of contemporary music make their way to Perth. One of the most influential composers of our time, Philip Glass brings his deeply personal piano etudes to Australia, presenting the world premiere performance of all 20, including three commissioned specially by the Festival. The etudes are performed by Glass with long time collaborator Maki Namekawa, and Australian pianist Sally Whitwell. Two legendary forces in new music: Laurie Anderson and Kronos Quartet, come together for the first time for a phenomenal evening of electrifying sound. Music and art come together in an extraordinary Perth Festival commission; visual artist Benjamin Bergery and St George's Cathedral Consort present *Tenebrae et Lux* (Darkness and Light), combining glorious a Capella singing with a new light-based installation.



Perth will rock throughout the Festival to an eclectic selection of sounds from some of the most idiosyncratic performers from around the globe. Cat Power channels her humour, anger and spiritual inquiry into songs that are deeply optimistic, expansive and wonderfully woozy; funk titan Maceo Parker navigates between 60's soul and 70's freaky funk, all while taking in the grooves of mellow jazz and hip hop; lyrical femme fatale Chrysta Bell smoulders in her collaboration with iconic film director David Lynch; seminal post-rock cult collective Godspeed You! Black Emperor make their Australian debut; while Melbourne duo Dead Can Dance make a long awaited homecoming kicking off their first Australian tour in 20 years, bringing their signature ambient, ethereal and neoclassical sounds to the Perth Concert Hall.

The 2013 Visual Arts program highlights two artists using technology to create deeply engaging work. Jim Campbell's *Scattered Light*, is a remarkable canopy of suspended light bulbs that morphs into a 3D screen as the sun goes down, projecting the bustling energy of city life. Trained in electrical engineering and mathematics, Campbell has achieved worldwide acclaim for his poetic and groundbreaking use of light and electronics. Srinivas Krishna's *My Name is Raj* is a participatory installation that honours the work of Bollywood pioneer Raj Kapoor. The audience becomes the art, as their own images are superimposed into Kapoor's cinematic world in the guise of starring characters.

The Perth Writers Festival is the hub of Festival discussion and discourse. Save the fourth weekend in February (21-24 Feb) to join readers and writers in this much loved celebration of the written word. An opening address by novelist, journalist and political commentator Ahdaf Soueif reflecting on her experience in Cairo's Tahrir Square during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, and a closing address from 2012 Miles Franklin winner Anna Funder will bookend an incredible weekend of literary events, with writers attending including literary giant and Man Booker Prize winner Margaret Atwood, sci-fi genre bender China Mieville; and American crime writer Dennis Lehane. And in a first for the Perth Writers Festival, *Out of the Box* explores the thriving artform of television drama with a stellar lineup of TV writers, directors and producers including the President of HBO Home Entertainment Henry McGee. The full program will be announced in January.

Keep an eye on the website for the announced films – perthfestival.com.au.



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Artist's Impression



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q drag: CONNIE LINGUS

Connie Lingus is one of the unsung heroes of the Melbourne drag scene, coming into her own at the 1999 Victorian Diva Awards. Alan Mayberry says 'Connie Lingus This Is Your Life!'

Born in Devonport Tassie, my family moved about a bit and I finished up at Sunbury High School — sadly not at the boys' school next door! I was an early bloomer, hating boys' toys. Also I was not very sporty to boot like my cousins and uncles, and that was a stigma that hung over my head with dad's family. Sadly in their eyes this meant I was a pansy! Believe me it is quite a thing to hear your grandfather call you that and not know what it meant. I was me, pure and simple, and I didn't know that I was the cause of a lot of turmoil for my father's family until later, which put a heavy strain on my relationship with my dad. Only recently have I looked at it from his point of view and realised he was a young adult and having a child cramped his style. We have a better relationship now that I'm older. Even though it's come too late, it's better to have it than not. My relationship with my mum has never changed — a quiet woman but with the ferociousness of a mother bear if her cub's in danger. She stood up for me all my young life and that means an awful bunch to me.

I built up a great relationship with my mum and her family, who were the most influential people in my life. I got the best of everything, which I cherish to this day. It wasn't until later that I finally accepted I was gay and instead of telling my parents, I confided in my oldest friends who supported me. I feel no need to air what I do in my bedroom to my parents — they accept me for me and that's all I care for.

I got my taste for men at high school when I started to have crushes on boys. At 15 I discovered a passion for swimming with one all-time crush (we will call him Steve). He was the first man that brought out the sexual urges I was having and not knowing at the time that he was also gay. I got my flirt on with him. We did not have sex but he helped me an awful lot in my later teen years.

As for the drag side of it I was always a performer, in a myriad of school musicals. I always wanted to be a showgirl as they had all the best songs and I guess it grew from there. The first drag show I remember was *The Lipstix* at 3 Faces. I was awestruck. Then I progressed to *New Wigs on the Block*, *Infidelity*, *The Saturday Show* — I could not get enough of the shows and thought this will be the closest thing I will get to being a showgirl. But then came my first performance at the Xchange on *Hey Hey It's Dulcie* in 1993 as a back-up girl for Wendy Sunday and later on *Anything Goes* with Lucy Loosebox. The rest is history. Right now I'm hosting *Bingo Au Go Go* at The GH every Wednesday from 8pm sharp!!!



I remember reading Carlotta's book and saw a lady called Conchita. She was stunning, and since I also love the play on words I Anglicised the name to Connie and the Lingus flowed after. For a brief period (damn pipe dreams) I went by Connie Cheewa I know, I know shocking but true.

Bingo started for me in 2012 when The GH opened 6 nights a week. Now nearly a year later I am still fondling balls. My original cohost was Madge but she was sent on an extended holiday to Thailand to invest in a designer vagina and we haven't heard from her since. She left me floundering, so I called in some favours and have had the crème fraîche of Melbourne drag come to my aid every week from Millie Minogue to Candee and Paris. I really have run the gamut of sidekicks. Throw in some living legends like Cherry Ripe and Dianna Lee and we have had a very historically camp year of ball dropping. So look out for some amazing things coming Bingo wise in 2013.

Right now I am based back in Melbourne after my 2012 sojourn to Queensland which was enjoyable to the extent of me losing 20kgs through this evil thing called walking along the beach - he he. Prior to that sabbatical I worked 20 years in the legal industry. I didn't love all of it but took away so much knowledge and true friends that it was worth it. Currently I am looking for work. I'm a pencil pusher so that's what I am conditioned for. But throw something challenging to me and I'll do it to the best of my ability — maybe there is something out there for me just hiding around the corner.

How do I fill my spare time? I'm an avid reader of all genres, am a closet geek as I have been collecting comics for 30 years. I worship at the altar of *Glee*, and love curling up and downloading shows. I also enjoy genealogy which I have been doing for the last 20 years - all in all way too many things to pass my time away.



Yes I'm proud to be a dresser to the stars. I've been moonlighting as a dresser of drag shows since the mid 90s working at The Xchange, 3 Faces and the Market, with every known drag combination known to man. One of the main shows I dressed was *PZR Sugar* (Zowie Knox, Rita Le Coeater and Paris), hosted by Kerrie Le Gore with Doreen Manganinni, Millie Minogue and Jennifer Anne Wells as special guests. Dressing these girls was amazing and I formed a special bond with all of them which has lasted to this day.

Fast forward to the early 2000s, The GH was coming into its own with huge weekly shows and the then dresser was going walkabout throughout the night and the girls were at their wits end. I got a call from Rita to ask if I would like to dress the show. Since Paris had worked with me previously I was a shoe in, and suffice to say nearly 7 years later I'm still there. The cast has changed a lot from then when we had 4 drags and 2 male dancers to what it is today. But even though the cast has changed, the integrity of the show still remains. I always smile when I think back to dressing the gorgeous Vivien St James. The zipper kept sliding down and she turned to me and yelled 'It's only a Fucking Zip', I didn't have the heart to say maybe you have put on a little weight!

Talking of weight, don't get me started on donuts – twice I've nearly choked to death on stage because of these delicious cinnamon treats. Once in the middle of a duet with Linda Lamont who came up and stuffed donuts in my mouth while I was singing. I started turning blue and clutching at my neck so she could try and dislodge it, which happened and I felt for the front row as they were covered with donut residue. The second time was in my heat of *Jumbo Queen* and yet again the donut went down the wrong hole and if it was not for the quick thinking of Shireen Sequin I'd have succumbed again to a dreaded donut death.

I could go on forever... there are many stories that happen while on the road – but like they say what happens on tour stays on tour.



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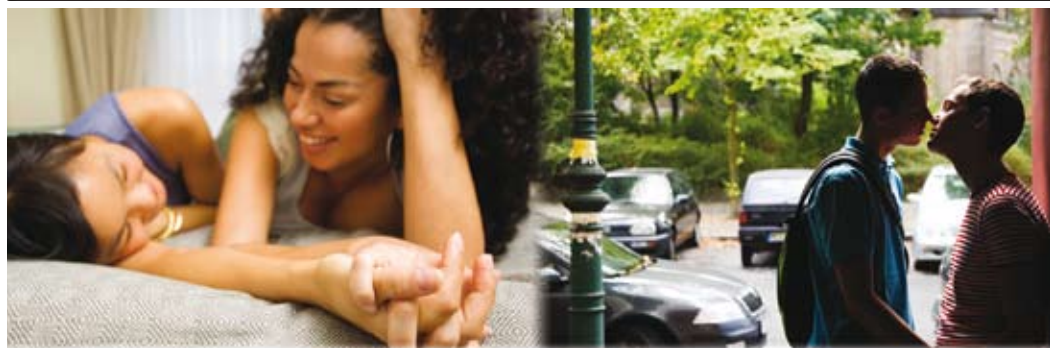


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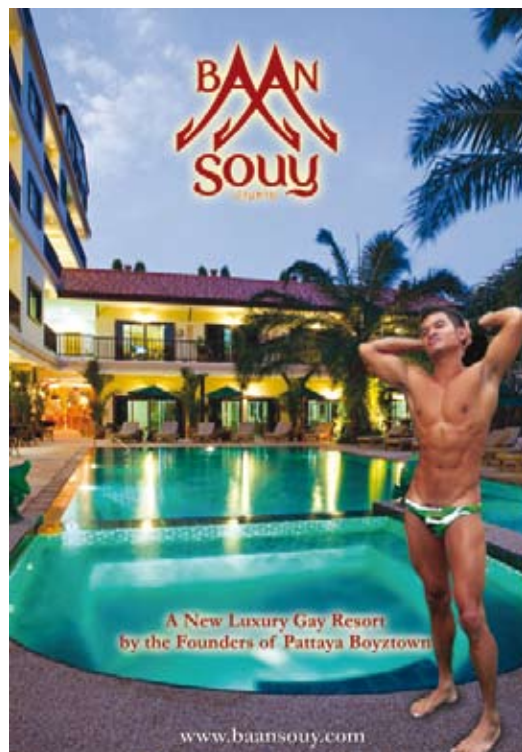
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q theatre: NEW FOR MELBOURNE

The Butterfly Club has announced it had achieved its \$130,000 target to relocate from South Melbourne to the city centre. The bulk of the money raised has come from two arts foundations as well as a critical \$23,700 raised from hundreds of fans following a six week crowd-funding campaign.



The Butterfly Club's (Mr) Simone Pulga said *"The success of this campaign means Melbourne will now get a brand-spanking new 80-seat theatre in the heart of the city, plus 'activate' another little known laneway (Carson Place), adding to Melbourne's vibrant laneway culture".*

The Ron and Margaret Dobell Foundation said *"We established our foundation primarily to support emerging artists through education and training and the development of performance opportunities. The Butterfly Club has a reputation for being the career starting point for so many of our top performers and is a practical example of putting these aims into practice through its generous support of young and emerging artists."*

"We are delighted to put the name of the Ron and Margaret Dobell Foundation to supporting the club in order to preserve this iconic venue which is such an important part of the Melbourne and Australian cabaret scene."

Representing The Campbell Foundation, Trustee Gavin Wright said *"The cabaret scene is significantly under-represented in arts funding programs so we're proud to help fill this critical gap by supporting an arts institution that has for so long nurtured and encouraged the cabaret art form."*

The crowd-funding campaign saw thousands of fans spread the word and hundreds more buying a diverse range of exclusive experiences and kitsch items donated by the cabaret community. The campaign was designed by Crowded, a new boutique agency specialising in crowd-funding and aligned campaigns. <http://crowded.net.au/>

The Butterfly Club remains operating until the shift from 5pm nightly (except Mondays) at 204 Bank Street, South Melbourne. The Butterfly Club will present a series of events to highlight its relocation:

1. A Final Countdown Gala on Friday 8 February
2. A series of invited guests at the current venue; check <http://thebutterflyclub.com> for full line-up. The final show is Sammy J & Randy's Eviction Party on Sunday 10 February
3. The Cocoon Cabaret season, featuring international acts, in the new venue opening Saturday 16 February

Final Countdown Gala

Join Melbourne's cabaret glitterati as they celebrate the biggest metamorphosis of The Butterfly Club in its 13-year history. The line-up includes Yon (from Tripod), Fiona Scott Norman, Anne Edmonds, Amelia Ryan, Geraldine Quinn, Gillian Cosgriff, Karin Muiznieks, Sarah Gaul and Trevor Jones.

Location: Melbourne Town Hall

Friday 8 Feb at 8pm Tickets: \$45 Bookings: <http://thebutterflyclub.com>

Cocoon Cabaret

It hosts Australia's largest collection of kitsch, is celebrated for its cocktails and quirkiness, launches more new shows than any other venue in Australia, and is renowned as a Melbourne icon around the world. So you'd expect it would take The Butterfly Club a few weeks to get everything juuuust right before its metamorphosis is complete.

The Cocoon Cabaret season will mark the metamorphosis as the new home of The Butterfly Club. Cocoon Cabaret features international guests from Saturday 16 February through to the start of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival on Wednesday 27 March. Guest acts include:

Spanky (UK) who will launch both the venue and a national tour on Sat 16 Feb
Joanna Weinberg (South Africa), 16 & 17 Feb
Trixie Little and the Evil Hate Monkey (New York), 25 Feb to 3 March
David Raleigh (New York), 25 Feb to 3 March
Mindy Button (UK), 18 to 24 March

Location: 256 Collins Street, enter Carson Place (rear laneway off Little Collins St)
Saturday 16 February through to Wednesday 27 March, various times – check website for full details
Bookings: <http://thebutterflyclub.com>

q launch: 2NARAMA

Alan Mayberry always finds a highlight of Midsumma is the launch of the latest Toonerama exhibition by Brett Willis at the ArtBoy Gallery at 99 Greville Street.

We are now reaping the benefit of Brett's love of cartoons that started in the 80s on his diet of trashy US sitcoms and buffed super heroes. Brett's first toons were published when he was 12.

He came to Melbourne from NSW and studied at RMIT in the late 80s. And what a collection he has now of sexy sports stars, drag divas, and community hot shots !

This year's Toonerama exhibition has tributes to Pussy Willow and Renee Scott. And a naked Prince Harry gets quite a few sideways glances too. Even Dame Edna is threatening legal action! When you go make sure you read the Fun Facts about each celebrity.



q cinema: IN THE BACKYARD



Gasworks Backyard Cinema returns for 2013 with a fabulous line up of outstanding recent releases, award winning animation and family classics. Running for the next seven weeks, spend balmy Friday nights on the grass under the stars with family and friends. Ride your bike for discounted tickets and bring your dog too!

Gasworks' resident café Priscilla Jones will be firing up the Priscilla Jones BBQ at each screening, so be sure to head to the park early to grab a prime location and a snag.

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q grooming: with MICHAEL KLIM



Australian swimming legend Michael Klim is not only known for his record-breaking contribution to sport, but he also knows good skincare.

Having experienced his fair share of dry skin due to all the time spent in the water, Michael certainly knows what works and what doesn't when it comes to men's skin:

"While I was swimming, I found that chlorine gave me really dry skin and I consistently struggled to find a quality product that would help. After I retired from professional sport, I noticed a gap in the market for men's skincare."

Klim shares his shaving tips for the everyday man, and offers this advice on how to best look after your skin:

1. Let your skin heal - It's important to give your skin time to heal in between shaves. Shaving a few times a week, rather than every day can help to relieve irritation. To avoid dryness, make sure you use a protective moisturiser on your skin at the end of each shave.
2. Choose the right product - Using the right products on your face is essential! Make sure you find a shaving cream that has a high concentration of lubricants and moisturisers. Keeping in mind that every man's skin is different, know your skin type and choose your products accordingly.
3. Select a good razor - Use a good quality razor blade. A dull blade can be traumatic to the skin, so ensure the blade is sharp and changed regularly. As a rule of thumb, you should aim to discard blades after four or five uses.

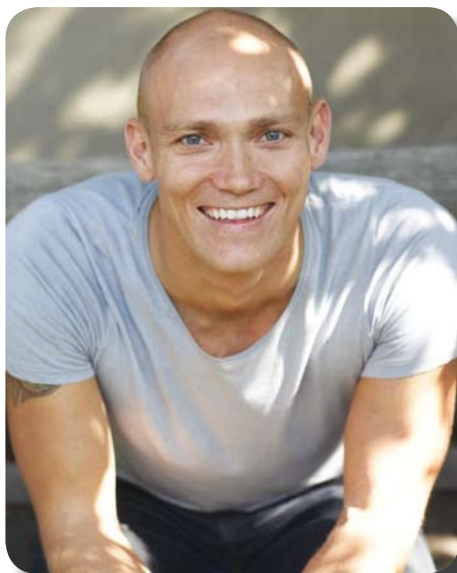
When shaving, use gentle strokes; don't put too much pressure on the blade.

4. Wet shave - There are always mixed opinions on whether shaving wet or dry is better for your skin. Michael Klim says he prefers to wet shave for its luxurious feel and skincare benefits:

"I only wet shave these days. I went through a phase a while back where I only used an electric shaver, but more recently I like the freshness a wet shave gives you. I always apply Milk's Shave Moisturiser afterwards; it soothes my skin and keeps it looking revitalised."

5. Cleanse after shaving - Always make sure you cleanse and soothe your skin after your shave, as your skin can be quite vulnerable. Ensure you rinse your face with warm water and use a facial wash that contains Vitamin E to help protect the skin. Finish off by applying a face moisturiser. Klim recommends the Milk Face Moisturiser + Sunscreen SPF 15, which contains vitamins A, B and E and is perfect for keeping your skin fresh and hydrated.

These skincare tips come courtesy of Michael Klim at Milk Skincare. Visit www.milkskincare.com for more information.



q win: **HAPPY NEW YEAR**

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q scene: OUT & ABOUT



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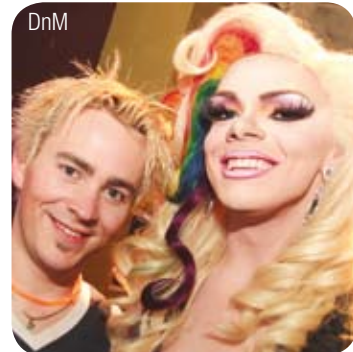
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q travel: with BARRIE MAHONEY

'Tweeters from the Atlantic'

Barrie Mahoney was a teacher, head teacher and school inspector in the UK, as well as a reporter in Spain, before moving to the Canary Islands as a newspaper editor. He is still enjoying life in the sun as a writer and author.



Always look on the bright side
It was time to meet up again with George for dinner. I like George, in small doses, but I do find some of his views extreme and depressing. Anyway, I am a firm believer in 'it takes all sorts to make a world' and so, after a stiff drink, I headed to the restaurant. I tend to be an optimist by nature, much preferring the view that my glass is half full, but George is the exact opposite, which does not always lead to a happy evening.

"Isn't it cold today?" grumbled George, beckoning me to sit down in front of him.

"Is it? I hadn't really noticed," I replied. "It is cooler than the 40 odd degrees we had a few weeks ago. I really don't mind it being a bit fresher."

George grunted and peered at the menu.

I sighed, and sat down. I could already sense that this was going to be a very long evening. During the next hour or so George grumbled about the state of the economy in Spain and the UK, the corruption of politicians, young people, dental implants, the European Union and the benefits that he receives in Spain.

I was tempted to point out that as he has received discretionary unemployment benefit for the over 55s from the Spanish government for the last two years, as well as free medical treatment, he didn't really have too much to complain about, but I thought better of it and bit my tongue. Suddenly, I realised that I was not going to put up with this verbal abuse of Spain any longer. I love Spain, it has been good to me and it is my home. I launched a counter attack.

Did he realise that Spain is second only to the US in terms of tourists visiting the country? Actually, the tourism sector is currently at an all time high, with 57 million visitors in a country of only 46 million people. Exports of goods and services have grown by 18 per cent in the last three years, significantly reducing the balance of trade deficit. "By the way, George, guess who is leading the Panama Canal expansion and building the first high speed train service in the Middle East between Mecca and Medina? Yes, George, you've got it, it is Spanish companies!"

George ignored my triumphant outburst and then went on to give me a tirade of distorted and inaccurate statistics about high unemployment, debt and, of course, the crisis. Didn't he know that politicians could make statistics say anything?

I countered with my own attack. "Who manages major airports around the world, and constructs off-shore wind farms in Scotland? Yes, two highly successful Spanish companies, namely Iberdrola and Repsol. Talking of

off-shore wind farms, George, guess who supplies wind turbines to the world's leading economies? Who is building desalination plants in New Zealand, as well as some in desert areas? Who built the weather station for the Mars Rover? Another glass of wine, George?"

Did George realise that two Spanish banks have recently been described as two of the best banks in the world.

"Did I mention Telefonica, George? Yes, I know how much you hate them after they cut you off for not paying that bill a few years ago, but they provide telecommunications services to over 300 million customers across the world and in 25 countries, including the UK and Ireland. What do you think about that?"

"Electricity bills? Yes, I know that they are high, but do you really need an electric fire on all the time in your small flat? Anyway, energy costs are still much lower than in the UK. Did you realise that 13% of our energy comes from renewable sources, such as solar where Spain is the world leader, as well as 4th in the world for wind energy? Yes, I know you hate wind turbines, George, but just think about global warming. You don't believe in it? No, I thought not. Spain is a world leader in fashion and footwear. Yes, George, I know that you only buy clothes from your local Chinese shop but..."

"Another glass of wine, George? You've had enough? Then we have the quality of our climate, food and the health care system, which, believe it or not, George, is one of the best in Europe. Yes, I know that they made a mess of your in-growing toenail, but you will live to fight another day, I am sure."

I was enjoying this, and I poured myself another glass of wine and continued my flow.

"George, did you know that Spain has the third highest life expectancy level in the world, according to the OECD? Yes, I know women live longer George, and that your wife ran off with a chiropodist from Rhyll, but that makes Spain the second highest life expectancy in the world, if we are talking about women. By the way, did you know that Spain has the highest number of organ donors in the world, with a twelve per cent increase in transplants just last year? Maybe you should think about signing up for that one day, George? More coffee, George?"

"You've had enough, and have to leave now? Oh dear. By the way, did you know that Spain is pretty good at football too? I gather it did rather well this year? OK George, good to see you too. Maybe I'll see you again one day."

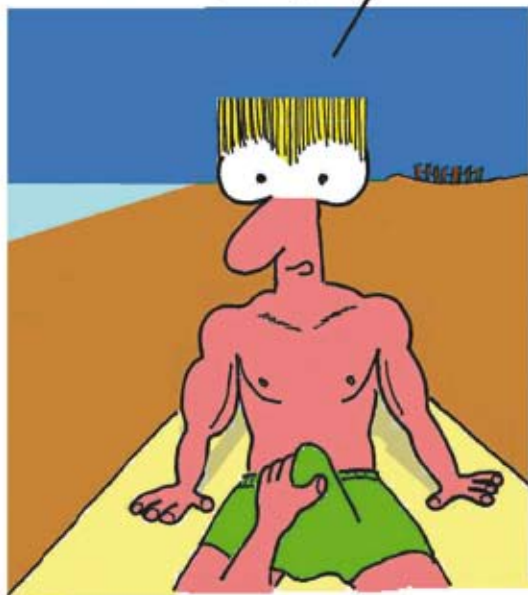
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Gaylord Blade

Young, Gay & Hot-to-trot

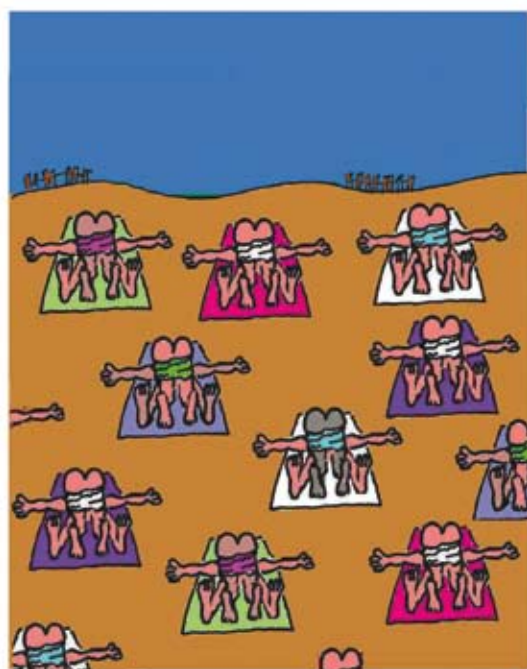
WHAT are ya doing Jack?



You're getting me hot in a public place!



Give me a break, Gaylord! We're at the Gay beach. I suddenly got INSPIRED!





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