

THICKS THEVES PRODUCTIONS

FOREVER WITH PRIDE QUEERS

curated by mark gatiss



Phil Nair-Brown



Lee Payne



Samantha Nixon



Colin Rogers-March



Jake Marchant



Jimmy Schofield

6 - 8 Aug 2026

The Lantern Theatre Brighton

8pm (2:30pm matinee on the 8th)



Tickets:

1st August 2026

Issue 57

<https://www.ticketsource.com/act/e-grlado>
or call 0333 666 4466





Hello!

I'm Levi, the owner of Bitchin' Boutique, an independent online clothing boutique with one simple mission: helping plus size people wear the clothes they actually want to wear, rather than settling for what they're told they should.

Fashion has always been a huge part of who I am. I love bold prints, alternative styles, tattoos, vintage influences and clothes that make a statement.

But like so many plus size people, I spent years discovering that the fashion industry didn't always feel like it had room for me.

Shopping was often frustrating, with limited options, uninspiring designs and the constant feeling that style stopped at a certain dress size.

Bitchin' Boutique was born from the belief that everybody deserves to feel confident in clothing that reflects their personality.

Whether someone loves gothic fashion, rockabilly, retro dresses, quirky prints or simply wants something a little different from the high street, I wanted to create a place where they could find pieces that genuinely excited them.

As a small independent business based on the Isle of Wight, I hugely appreciate every order.

I personally select the collections I stock, focusing on brands that celebrate individuality while offering inclusive sizing and flattering fits.

My aim has never been to chase fast fashion trends, but to offer clothing that people will genuinely love wearing for years to come.

Running a small business is rarely glamorous.

Behind every parcel is someone answering emails late into the evening, packing orders in a 30°C stock room, updating the website and juggling family life around it all.



Like many independent business owners, I wear every hat imaginable.

It can be challenging, but it's also incredibly rewarding knowing that something I've built has helped so many people feel more comfortable and confident in themselves.

Outside of work I'm mum to two wonderful boys who constantly remind me to see the world differently.



Family life is busy, unpredictable and sometimes chaotic, but it's also shaped who I am.

Living with chronic illness has also taught me resilience and the importance of finding confidence in yourself even on the difficult days.

Those experiences have given me a real appreciation for kindness, patience and creating a welcoming community, values that naturally flow into the way I run my business.

One of my favourite parts of Bitchin' Boutique isn't actually selling clothes, it's getting to know the amazing customers behind each order.

Whether someone messages asking for sizing advice, styling ideas or simply wants reassurance before buying, I genuinely enjoy those conversations.

I know how intimidating shopping can feel when you've spent years believing that fashion wasn't made for you.

If there's one thing I'd love readers to take away, it's that style has absolutely nothing to do with your size.

Fashion should be fun. It should help you express yourself, boost your confidence and make you smile when you look in the mirror.

There are no rules saying plus size people have to wear black, hide away or choose clothes simply because they're "flattering."

Wear the bold print. Wear the bright colour. Wear the dress you've always wanted to wear.

If you'd like to see what Bitchin' Boutique is all about, you can browse the latest collections at www.bitchinboutique.co.uk.

I'm also active on social media, where I regularly share new arrivals, styling inspiration and a behind-the-scenes look at life as a small business owner.

Whether you're looking for your next favourite outfit or simply want to support an independent business that believes fashion should be for everyone, I'd love to welcome you to the Bitchin' Boutique community.

Levi xx



Bitchin Boutique



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How To Become A Social Media Influencer

Expanded Edition

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By Oliver Finnly

SCOTTISH FILMMAKER CALLS FOR SOLIDARITY BETWEEN LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

- Celebrating Cuba's historical referendum on new Family Code with march and film
- Call for LGBTQ groups nationwide to demonstrate support throughout Pride season and beyond



picture credit: Andrew Johnstone

At this year's Edinburgh Pride on 20th June, filmmaker Angus Reid and activist Andrew Johnstone marched through the streets with a banner saying "Lesbians and Gays Support Cuba" in the spirit of Mark Ashton and the historic Lesbians & Gays Support The Miners (LGSM) alliance.

They hope to encourage similar groups to march in solidarity with Cuba in many of the UK pride events throughout the summer and autumn, with London, Leeds, Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Brighton, Manchester coming up in the next few weeks.

Angus Reid directed *A Week In The Sun* which he made with the Cuban film-maker Hugo Rivalta at the time of the referendum on 2022.

It passed with 67% of the population voting for the right of all adults, whatever their sexuality or gender identity, to marry, to inherit and to adopt.

This is the most progressive LGBTQ legislation in the world. The film, described by documentary filmmaker and writer Mark Cousins as "passionate, playful and beautifully made" is currently available to watch and screen for free on YouTube.

The banner was home-made, like the many cardboard signs, and unlike the corporate branding and commercial flags elsewhere.

It was "definitely one of the biggest and most commanding in the parade" said Pride attendee, Holly Welsh, co-founder of Dunfermline Creative Network put it, adding that the LGSM activists were "passionate and knowledgeable which made it easy to learn about the beauty of Cuban LGBTQ culture and the threats their communities are currently facing."

Observing those on the Edinburgh Pride march, Angus says "the astonishing thing was to discover how politically minded, how angry, and how eager to learn and stand in solidarity that vast, 40,000 strong crowd was".

Andrew adds: "Pride, it seems, is dominated by a party spirit, by corporate branding (Lidl in Edinburgh's case) and deafening music, and that is certainly how the mainstream media want you to see it.

But it remains a political action. Everyone, from newbies to seasoned regulars are all marching with a shared cause: equality.

These are the very rights that are now part of the Cuban constitution, but still piecemeal and contested everywhere else".

"Speaking to fellow marchers" Angus continues, "you could see how LGSM's slogan and class politics resonated with the crowd.

And when you get a crowd like that, it's willingness to learn, and ability to act, cannot be underestimated.



picture credit: Andrew Johnstone

"We explained that Cuba has the best LGBTQ rights in the world because they held a referendum and proved that the majority of Cuban people are tolerant, you could see the astonishment.

And then, we explained that such a result demonstrated that in Cuba, if you hold homophobic, transphobic or misogynist views, you are the minority.

"Imagine that. We are not the minority. They are the minority. Imagine the pleasure of explaining to a Pride parade that what the Cubans are doing is to erase discrimination".

Despite the banner being "definitely one of the biggest and most commanding in the parade", no news outlets printed an image of it, demonstrating no desire in the media to recognise Cuba solidarity as a majority movement requiring government action.

But the take up in the crowd was extraordinary, with 100 marchers volunteering to sign the banner in solidarity.

A post-march screening of A Week In The Sun was arranged at The Outhouse, a

friendly central bar, and afterwards, Josephine, a trans activist, said, "To present this message in this public arena is really important.

It's community arts. To see the film is a reminder that we share ambitions, dreams, and a common humanity with the Cubans. It's a wake-up call!".

She added, "I don't have a problem with LGSC as a slogan," she said. "Anything so strongly political stands there in its own right. I took it as inclusive!"

Despite the World Cup, Nicky, the manager of the Outhouse, was prepared to switch channels to YouTube to show A Week In The Sun.

He has been so taken by the banner that he is keeping it on permanent display in the bar.

"I do like the signatures," he says with a smile.



Angus Reid's film, A Week In The Sun can be viewed here:





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What a fantastic show!

The Lady Boys of Bangkok is everything you want and more in a show! It's got fabulous costumes, fantastic and beautiful performers, catchy pop songs, and all in a unique venue - a tent in Shepherd's Green in London!

Performing for the very first time in London, the world famous Lady Boys of Bangkok present their new show "Full Moon" and it's a vibrant and immersive theatrical / cabaret production that will have you toe tapping and standing on your feet clapping along!

It's a vibrant theatrical cabaret production that blends music, comedy, choreography and visual storytelling into an immersive stage experience.

Over the top production numbers (as expected) help to tell the story of a beach party set against the backdrop of Thailand's legendary Full Moon celebrations. And the cast of world-class performers delivers - and they all are glamorous and gorgeous!

This show is perfect for date night, group outings, friends night out, celebrations and birthdays, and also for no specific reason! But you have only until July 12th to catch it! You'll be sorry if you miss it as it's good fun in a venue with a full bar and a kiosk with Thai food!

Forever with Pride Official Playlist



Click or Tap To Play



New Tracks Add All The Time!

Tales of the Second City

Misadventures on Birmingham's Gay Scene

Tales of the Second City – Misadventures on Birmingham's Gay Scene Gay Seen

My first tantalizing glimpse of the world of gay men happened at The Victoria.

Not inside this beautiful 19th century Birmingham pub, but on the street outside. I was too young to drink... and wearing school uniform.

The Victoria stands proud on the corner of Station and John Bright Street, beneath the mezzanine bridge that connects the two halves of the Alexandra Theatre.

There are so many reasons to love this funky pub, from the elegant curve of its exterior to the original bar fittings within.

A bust of Queen Victoria sits on the internal canopy above the redundant central door, keeping an imperious eye on events.

The place had a far shabbier atmosphere back in the day, with an eclectic mix of clientele.

. It was a pub where residents of local tower blocks, postal workers from the Royal Mail building, and Birmingham's gay community all muddled along together.

I happened to walk by The Vic for the first time on one very sunny day.

To expand our understanding of modern art, my A-level art class had been

instructed to buddy up with a partner and visit the Ikon Gallery, which at the time was located just up the road from the pub.

We made our way to the gallery, under our own steam, where we made notes on any work that caught our attention.

I vaguely remember large structures created from car tyres, and square canvases splashed with streaks of paint, which put me in mind of dog piss on a paving slab.

As we headed back toward New Street Station, we passed The Victoria.

On this summer afternoon, a group of lads were on the steps, enjoying a drink and a fag in the sun.

Several of the group had removed their shirts to take full advantage of the weather.

I furtively checked them out. They looked like a band on the cover of an 80's album.

At the sight of two fresh-faced chickens, these boys who watch boys began to wolf whistle and catcall in our direction.

Filled with fear and excitement, a blush rose to my cheeks.

This was my first encounter with anyone who was gay.

I couldn't let the moment pass without somehow letting them know I was one of the family.

I used to wear my keys on a long chain attached to one of the beltloops on my trousers.

I had been warned by my sister to always keep the keys in my front pocket, as having the chain lead to your rear pocket was a secret signal you were queer.

Following her unintentional advice, I discreetly took my keys from the front pocket, without my school mate seeing, and slipped them pointedly into the back.

The catcalling stopped.

I glanced back over my shoulder.

One guy nudged his mates and gave me a subtle nod of understanding.

There were smiles of solidarity.

Finally seen.

I was not alone.

Hear it first hand from the secondcity @

www.talesofthesecondcity.com



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My name is Rachel Sewell and I'm a New Vision Therapy (NVT) Practitioner based in Runcorn, Cheshire

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The "Isle of Wight Pride" is not just an event; it's a cherished celebration that captures the very essence of island life, and each year, you can feel the electricity in the air as islanders come together in Ryde, filling Union Street with vibrant love and unwavering spirit

The LGBTQ+ community on this beautiful island, with its rich and colourful history, has long awaited a platform to shine, finally stepping into the limelight with their first official Pride Parade in 2017.

This beloved annual event has blossomed into a mesmerizing kaleidoscope of joy, acceptance, and a bold celebration of diversity, drawing in visitors from all corners who come to join in the revelry.

Just look at the fabulous individuals who graced Isle of Wight Pride this year, each radiating their unique charm and enthusiasm, creating a sense of unity that is palpable.





As Union Street bustled with people revelling in the warm sunshine and infectious energy of the Pride Parade, they flowed toward the Ryde seafront, where the festivities truly ignited into a spectacular celebration.

The stalls here showcased local talents and entrepreneurial spirit, from a mystical card reader eager to unveil your future to the stylish allure of Bitchin Boutique, one of our remarkable sponsors.

Isle of Wight Pride will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year, and whispers of breathtaking surprises and unforgettable experiences fill the air, so be sure to stay tuned for exhilarating updates in Forever with Pride e-magazine!

Don't forget to immerse yourself in the community by joining their Facebook group and bookmarking their website, ensuring you won't miss a beat as they unveil the enchanting lineup of events, extraordinary special guests, and countless opportunities to become part of this magnificent celebration of love and inclusivity that unites us all.



Isle of Wight Pride



SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY 17TH JULY 2027



10 YEARS OF PRIDE!



SAVE THE DATE!

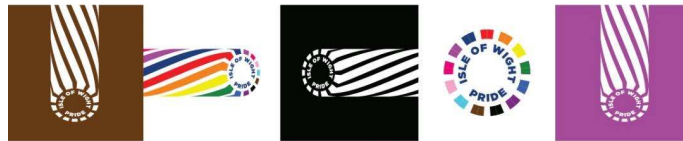
SATURDAY 17TH JULY 2027

Join us to celebrate 10 years of Isle of Wight Pride



SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY 17TH JULY 2027



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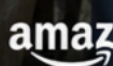
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DEEZER

QUEERS

curated by mark gatiss



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or call 0333 666 4466





Queers – Curated by Mark Gatiss

6th, 7th, 8th August 2026- 8pm + Saturday Matinee 2.30pm

Nettie Sheridan, founder of Thick As Thieves Productions, and local award-winning Theatre Director is excited to be producing 'Queers', curated by Mark Gatiss for Brighton Pride 2026 at The Lantern Theatre, Brighton.



Nettie Sheridan

Nettie says; 'As Brighton celebrates Pride, a moment of visibility, joy and protest 'Queers' offers audiences something equally vital: the opportunity to reflect on the lived experiences behind the rainbow flags.

Theatre has the unique power to bring us face-to-face with stories that challenge, comfort and connect us'.

'Queers' explores the complexities of queer identity, love, belonging and resilience with honesty and humanity, reminding us that behind every headline, political debate or historic milestone are real people navigating extraordinary and ordinary lives.

The history of LGBTQ+ equality in the UK has been hard fought. From the publication of the Wolfenden Report in 1957, which recommended the decriminalisation of homosexuality, to the partial decriminalisation of sex between men in England and Wales in 1967, where the age of consent remained higher than for heterosexual couples until finally being equalised at 16 in 2001 and the introduction of same-sex marriage in England and Wales in 2014, progress has never been inevitable.

Every step forward has been achieved through courage, activism and the determination of those who refused to be silenced.

While these milestones transformed countless lives, Pride remains as much about advocacy as it is celebration.

At a time when LGBTQ+ rights continue to be challenged around the world and many queer people still face discrimination, isolation and prejudice, telling queer stories on stage has never been more important.

Representation is not simply about visibility, it is about creating understanding, fostering empathy and ensuring that diverse voices are heard.

Presenting 'Queers' during Brighton Pride is an opportunity to celebrate queer creativity while encouraging meaningful conversation.

It is a reminder that theatre can be both entertaining and transformative: a space where audiences laugh, reflect, recognise themselves, and perhaps see the world through someone else's eyes.

There are eight beautifully drawn character stories in the 'Queers' collection, and Thick As Thieves is so grateful to have six hugely talented local actors to tell them.

This is truly unforgettable, theatre, and the Thick As Thieves team look forward to welcoming you at The Lantern Theatre, 77 St James's Street, Kemptown, Brighton BN2 1PA. Scan the QR code for tickets or contact the venue direct at:

www.lanterntheatrebrighton.co.uk

Phone: 01273 818266



In one of the world's most celebrated LGBTQ+ cities, 'Queers' stands as both a celebration of how far we've come and a powerful reminder that history is not something confined to the past.

The freedoms many enjoy today were won within living memory, and the stories of those who fought for them deserve not only to be remembered, but to continue inspiring future generations.

QUEERS





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FOREVER WITH PRIDE E-MAGAZINE!

Berlin - We stand with you

Berlin: It's a City like no Other!

In light of recent events in Berlin, we would like to highlight how much of a great city Berlin is, anytime of the year.



Photo provided by visitBerlin

Berlin is a relatively inexpensive city compared to other European cities, and only under a two hour plane ride away from London.

There is so much to do - daytime and nighttime - museums, walking around, remnants of the wall, lovely cafés and restaurants, all the Platz's (including Alexander and Potsdamer), and just soaking it all up.

Including many unique and diverse neighbourhoods where two are not the same.

Good transportation links, easy access to the airport, nightlife that is off the charts and the best in the world! And it's a city that never sleeps!

Get yourself a three day Museums pass that's gets you into 30 top museums (www.visitberlin.de/en/museums-museum-pass):

Also there is a three/five day metro pass which allows you to hop on and hop off buses, the U-Bahn and S-Bahn networks that take you all over the city.

Must see places of Berlin include: The LGBTQ + Schwules Museum is a fantastic place to discover our community and currently there is a look at the life of celebrated Lesbian author and critic Susan Sontag: Seeing and Being Seen (on until Nov. 2, 2026), alongside Cruising the Countryside - a look at queer life in the countryside. Excellent.



Marc Brandenburg, Untitled, 1994, © Marc Brandenburg, Photo: Marc Brandenburg

Pop over to the Berlinische Galerie for the shocking and erotic work of gay artist Marc Brandenburg in "20th Century Debris."

Brandenburg ranks internationally among the leading graphic artists of our day.

On display - until September 19th. The Berlinische Galerie is near the Jewish Museum.

berlinischegalerie.de/en/exhibition/current/marc-brandenburg-20th-century-debris/

The Anne Frank Center (Zentrum) is a must visit - in Hackescher Markt (next to Alexanderplatz) - and is dedicated to the life of the young woman who, with her family and other people, were in hiding from the Nazis during WWII, and eventually murdered.

www.annefrank.de/en/exhibition-berlin

Head to Deutsche Kinemathek for its exhibition titled 'Inventing Queer Cinema' presenting key LGBTQ+ films and paying tribute to the pioneers of this genre, focusing on Berlin as a hub of queer film culture - on display until September 13th.

<https://www.deutsche-kinemathek.de/de>

Gropius Bau has the Marina Abramovic Balkan Erotic Epic exhibition.

It's in your face and brings together historical and new works by the performance artist, with ritual, eroticism, death and the body as key themes of her work. Including scenes of nudity and mutilation, and not for the squeamish. On until August 30th.

www.berlinerfestspiele.de/en/gropius-bau

Helmut Newton

At the Museum for Photography is a two floor tribute to famed photographer Helmut Newton.

It's a fascinating look at the work and life of Newton who changed fashion photography by his unique eye and style. Until Nov 30, 2026.

www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/museum-fuer-fotografie/collection-research/collections/helmut-newton-foundation/

Time Machine at the Humboldt Forum takes us on a journey through time, exploring queer migrant Berlin.

www.humboldtforum.org/en/programm/laufzeitangebot/exhibition/time-machine-infinitum-163252/

Also worth a mention is galerie-newman.de which displays, and sells, queer contemporary art.

For more information on upcoming events in Berlin, the best resource is this:

www.visitberlin.de/en/top-events-berlin

If fashion is your thing, then take a fashion tour (link below). Highlights include Melinda Stokes Stokx Shop for her very well fitting designs and who shares a shop with Remesalt, an eclectic brand born in Berlin with fashion for everyone; genderless pieces that break the mold and celebrate individuality. I have to say his pieces were fantastic!

www.thefashiontours.com/berlin/Stokx.de

A definite must is Raw Gelände. Right next to Warschauer Strasse station, Raw is an expansive, 19th-century former railway repair yard in Friedrichshain.

Today, it operates as a vibrant, gritty cultural hub.

It has alternative nightlife, street art, vendors selling offbeat goods, and it's just an eclectic place to hang out.

And if you are lucky enough and the weather is good get a ticket to whatever party is happening at Maaya, an outdoor pool/club inside Raw that hosts all sorts of dance events (from naughty to, well, naughty!).

Also recommended is a food tour given by forkandwalktoursberlin.com.

My guide - Sören - introduced me to many lovely cafes and bars (some off the beaten track) and also included a huge rainbow cake that was just extremely delicious (at gay cafe Romeo und Romeo in the Nollendorfkiez section of Berlin).

Berlin is one of the very few European cities where there is an abundance of hotels. From pricey ones in nice neighbourhoods to edgy hotels for travelers on a budget.

Hotels are in every neighbourhood, but of course if you're a tourist you want to be close to most of the tourist sites - there are two that we can recommend that are very LGBT+ friendly.



Hotel Palace Berlin

Located steps from Zoologischer Garten train station and one of the main shopping districts, and right across the street from Zoo Berlin is Hotel Palace Berlin.

It is one of the original hotels from a bygone era of Berlin (opening in 1968) and it still looks as beautiful today as it did back then.

With rooms at every price level, and sizes (239 rooms and 39 suites) you can't go wrong with this place due to its very central location and close to many transportation links.

The hotel has a sumptuous spa with a lovely pool which is great to use in the warmer summer months.

And the breakfast buffet is one of the best I have ever seen: from eggs cooked your way to pancakes, loads of fruit choices, cheeses, meats and excellent coffee and juices, and all served by an extremely warm and friendly staff.

Hotel Palace Berlin belongs to the Pink Pillow Berlin Collection which is a network of LGBTQ+ friendly hotels in Berlin. The Hotel Palace Berlin is a place where I plan to stay again on one of my next visits to Berlin.

www.palace.de/



beef 45

And don't forget the restaurant downstairs, beef 45 (Meat Culture reimagined!!), where I had the honour of enjoying a fantastic and delicious meal.

The Black Angus Beef Fillet was one of these best I have ever had.

Kudos to chef Herr Hendrich for an excellent meal (beef 45 ranks among Germany's top 50 steakhouses).

The night doesn't have to end there. Next door is House of Gin and where I would recommend the porn star martini and the negroni.

www.palace.de/



The Westin Grand Berlin

Another hotel that we recommend is The Westin Grand Berlin. Located a few blocks away from Brandenburg Gate and The Reichstag building (Germany's Houses of Parliament) and Friedrichstraße train station,

The Westin is a glamorous hotel with a sweeping staircase in the lobby where rooms are set within an atrium and is absolutely stunning.

With a ground floor restaurant and bar (and even an outdoor terrace in warm weather) - the hotel ticks every box.

Over 400 newly designed rooms and suites (designed with relaxation in mind), and their Heavenly Beds are so so comfortable.

Rooms in August are a snip at only 154 EUR per night! And the rooms are super modern looking.

There is a good breakfast buffet, and a stunning outdoor garden, a spa with a swimming pool, and staff that are very nice and attentive.

Located at the Boulevard Unter den Linden, this Berlin luxury hotel offers space for both business and leisure.

A place where we had the pleasure to dine was the Kink Bar & Restaurant.

There's nothing kinky about Kink Bar & Restaurant, but if you're looking for somewhere to eat that is a bit different, very trendy and hot, off the beaten tourist path, then this is the place! Located in Prenzlauer Berg, Kink is urban dining at its most modern and dynamic, offering up a unique smattering of dishes, with a fantastic outdoor garden, while the indoors is welcoming and warm.

Their motto - come as strangers, leave as friends - is so true as the staff are all very nice and at your beck and call.

As for the food - I would highly recommend the Hokkaido Pumpkin Tempura with sweet and sour plum dressing - absolutely delicious.

Also unique were the Corn Flautas - filled with grilled spinach and potatoes, served with salsa tatemada, achiote oil, and sour cream, and covered in greens.

Order two of these. White Asparagus with sake-hollandaise was another standout, but it was the Wood-Grilled, Bone-In Steak that was eindrucksvoll (impressive)!!!

It's 30 days dry-aged, quite large, tender, and a snip at only 29EUR! Their decadent and sexy desserts (it's Berlin after all) include Chocolate Fondant and Bergamot Sorbet on Early Grey jelly topped with meringue. A superb selection of drinks are on offer including frozen margaritas.

Other eye-catching drinks include the Coco Diablo (sugarcane with coconut water, melon, lime and habanero) and the Zest & Spice (mezcal), plus loads of others.

Kink Bar & Restaurant also does brunch and includes my all time favourite French Toast, among lots of other dishes, along with loads of coffee to help out with the previous nights festivities (what happens in Berlin stays in Berlin).

Anything goes at Kink Bar & Restaurant (well almost anything) - except boredom!

After this most recent visit, I love Berlin even more, and I want to go back as often as I can - I can't get enough!

Written by Tim B for Forever with Pride



Berlin - We stand with you

THE TREMAINE TRILOGY

by

Robin .S. Goodfellow



A trilogy spanning three generations all
with one thing in common

The Dead Won't Leave Them Alone!

robingoodfellow.uk

Deptford Sound Collective

The Queer Activist Band Turning Pop Music into Protest

“Protest with a wink and banging tunes you want to add to your playlists.”

Plasticmagazine



In an era marked by growing political division, rising intolerance, and increasing pressure on minority communities, a new voice has emerged from South East London determined to challenge injustice through the universal language of music.

The **Deptford Sound Collective**, a diverse queer activist band formed in January 2026, is proving that pop music can still be a powerful force for social change.

The project was founded by filmmaker, activist and writer **Ray Barron Woolford FRSA**, whose work has long explored LGBTQ+ history, equality and human rights.

Alarmed by the rise of violence and fear being whipped up by far-right movements, and concerned by the increasing

marginalisation of vulnerable communities, Woolford felt compelled to act.

The inspiration for the band came during a meeting in a Deptford coffee shop, where a group of friends from different backgrounds – straight and queer, black and white – gathered to discuss the challenges facing society.

They spoke about the rise in homelessness, mental health crises, discrimination and the continued persecution of LGBTQ+ people around the world. In some countries, simply existing as an LGBTQ+ person can lead to imprisonment and even a death sentence.

Rather than simply talking about these issues, they decided to create something

that could reach people emotionally and politically.

“Let’s form a band,” Woolford suggested.



Drawing on his experience writing songs for the LGBTQ+ civil rights play *LIBERTY* and the acclaimed documentary *Liberty: Kath Duncan – The Untold Story of the Struggle for Civil Rights*, Woolford and his collaborators set out to create pop music with a purpose.

The result was **The Deptford Sound Collective** – a band committed to highlighting stories that are often ignored.

Their songs explore the realities of LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees, disability, mental health, economic hardship, heartbreak and loss.

Their first release, a version of “**America’s Most Wanted**”, inspired by the case of Assata Shakur, aimed to draw attention to what the band viewed as a significant miscarriage of justice.

However, the track quickly found itself at the centre of controversy after being

removed from streaming platforms and Meta services for being considered too political.

Undeterred, Woolford created a short film to accompany the song and released it through the Deptford Sound Collective’s YouTube channel, ensuring the message could still reach audiences.

The controversy only strengthened the group’s determination. With Donald Trump in the White House and public debate around LGBTQ+ rights intensifying, the band responded with humour and satire.

Their infectious 1980s-inspired pop track “**Give Me Give Me Give Me (You Know I Want It All)**” poked fun at both Trump and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric.

Complete with catchy hooks, sharp lyrics and memorable visuals, the song quickly gained attention, although supporters claim it was also shadow banned on several platforms.

Since then, the collective has continued to release music that reflects everyday struggles and acts of resistance.

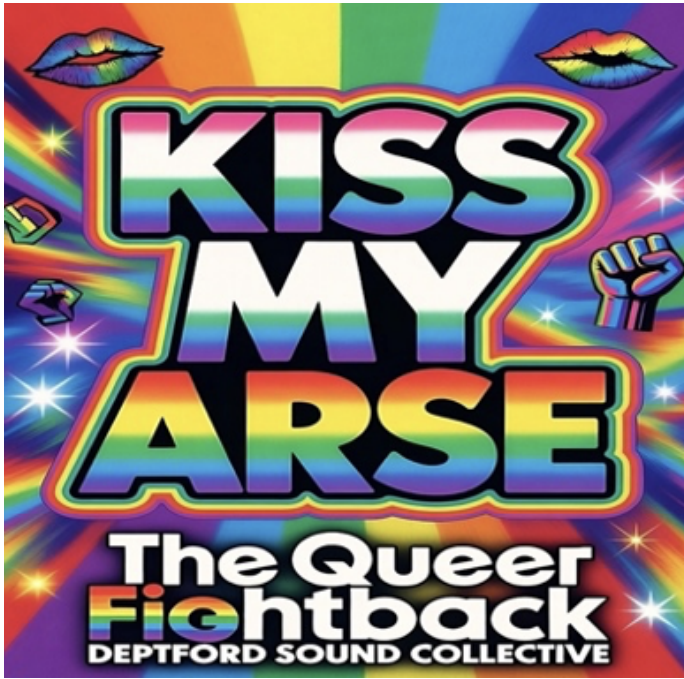
#Broke highlights the reality of people working multiple jobs while still struggling to make ends meet; **#StopRunning** is a call to action, urging listeners to stop looking away from injustice and recognise that now is the time to take a stand.

But not every song is overtly political.

We All Need to Get a Cat explores the heartbreak of losing a beloved pet and the healing joy that can come from rescuing an animal in need.

It reflects the band's wider belief that compassion, community and care are also forms of activism.

Their latest release, **Kiss My Arse (The Queer Fightback)**, continues the group's unapologetic approach, combining satire, protest and pop culture commentary.



Like much of their work, it challenges audiences to think, laugh and question the status quo.

At a time when many artists avoid controversy, **The Deptford Sound Collective** is embracing it.

Whether tackling politics, poverty, mental health or love, they are creating music that encourages people not just to listen, but to act.

In doing so, they are reviving a tradition of protest music for a new generation – one dance track at a time.

The **Deptford Sound Collective** is planning to take these powerful vibes to the stage with live shows in London this coming November and is looking for new members and session musicians.

If you are interested, send us some samples, video or audio, via our social media (Deptford Sound Collective on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Facebook).

“This is real music and the one that actually deserves the top spots on your playlists; it’s real, blends genres beautifully and actually ignites something deeper than some trends.

”SW11SPA (Music Blog)



Playlist



YouTube



Facebook



Tik Tok





PersianLGBT



سازمان حمایت از همجنسگرایان ایرانی مقیم بریتانیا

The organisation aims to bring the Newly arrived, Asylum Seekers and Refugees LGBT members of community together to develop welcoming safe place environment for its members here in the UK.



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August 2026

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**Gay Gardeners UK, Plants, Seeds and
surplus Exchange Group**

Here we are in the middle of one of the hottest summers ever and prolonged temperatures that has wilted and roasted many plants.

The scientists tell us this isn't a one off and to get used to this more often.

So, we have no choice but to change the way some of our gardens are planted and maintained.

My front garden faces south and is at the mercy of the sun so I can tell you what happens even if you're allowed to use the hosepipe.

The change needs to come from the type of plants we have in south facing gardens.

My Wisteria hasn't got a single scorched

leaf it has soaked up all that intense sun and loved it and I haven't watered it at all.

Needless to say, it has grown constantly and need a lot of trimming and training.

My Stargazer Lillies have also loved the sun and produced huge flowers. Dahlias are also soaking up the sun but they need a lot of water too.

One thing that hasn't done well is my lawn and it is one of the things we may need to get used to being oat colour in high summer or replacing it with something else.

An established strong lawn will come back when the rain returns but you might want to try something like a camomile lawn which has a beautiful scent when you walk on it.

Lavender also in my front garden has thrived and been covered in bumble bees.

The plants run into each other as they grow and produce lots of tiny nectar filled flowers that gives the bees just what they need.

I tested Sedum spectabile thinking it wouldn't survive but it thrived and will have pink flowers from late August through to

October and the butterflies love it.



Left - Lavendar showing thousands of tiny purple flowers. They will flower for many weeks and ideal for garden pollinators.

Right a visitor at this time of year you might see warming up in the early day sun to get enough energy to take off. You will certainly see different colours of Dragonfly if you have a pond.

August is a good month for collecting seeds or seed pods from various plants.

Fuchsias will have dark almost black seed pods on by now and they are what you want to take if you want to try and grow some new ones from seed.

They should be fairly soft and you have the option of planting straight away onto seed compost and place in a propagator.

Alternatively store on kitchen paper after splitting open the seed pod and sowing at Christmas.

Others you can collect are sweet peas and runner beans if you have some large ones that got forgotten.

Dead heading is important to keep your plants producing flowers. Roses and Dahlias in particular respond well to this.

Pond plants can be divided this month to create new plants if you want to increase the number or reduce the size of your clump that has got too big.

An entire group of plants that has done well this year, if you can keep the watering up, are the fruit bushes and trees.

Plums, apples, pears, figs all love plenty of sun.

I bought a small fig plant in a pot in the Spring and it has grown really well in a large pot in a south facing garden.

The nice thing about fruit trees, you get lots of flowers in the spring and then benefit from the fruit in late summer – two for the price of one.

In the greenhouse you will be harvesting tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers and chillies.

If you have an abundance you can always pickle or dry and use later.

Planning for later in the greenhouse you can order your indoor bulbs for placing in pots and bringing inside for Christmas flowering.

This gives additional use once you clear out your tomatoes etc.



Left – A nice harvest of mixed sized tomatoes. Take some of the stems with them to help green ones ripen and they will also taste better.

Right – Fuchsia seed pods – the dark one at the back is ripe and ready to harvest. Leave the others a bit longer until they change from green to that really dark colour. Be quick because birds like them.

Keep feeding your flowering and fruiting plants to keep them in good condition and maintaining the flowers well into autumn.

- Plant of the Month Grass -

Depending on the weather late August is the time to apply lawn dressing to your lawn and maybe adding some seed this year if it is somewhat burnt.

The top-dressing evens out the lumps and bumps in the lawn as well as giving it a feed for the autumn.

This year it may well be an essential thing to do to restore a nice green look. Be warned, it will look bad for a few days but once, hopefully, the rain has worked it into the surface it will look much improved.

There are some autumn flowering bulbs that can be planted in August like Nerines which will add a boost of colour to your borders late on.

Pinch out the tops of tomato plants as any flowers won't have time to produce ripe

fruit and the plant will instead put the effort into existing fruits that will be fine until late September.

Transfer to the garage or shed any green fruit late on and they will eventually ripen or you can cook them as, "Fried Green Tomatoes!"

Onions and shallots will probably be an early harvest this year. Hang them on a string inside to help them dry off and stop them rotting from mould.

Plan for what will likely be another dry summer next year.

Either change some plantings or provide some shade to keep the most severe sun away from them.

Not much chance right now of frozen assets but you certainly have to make sure you're wearing plenty of suntan cream to make sure they don't get burnt!

Stay safe in this summer heat



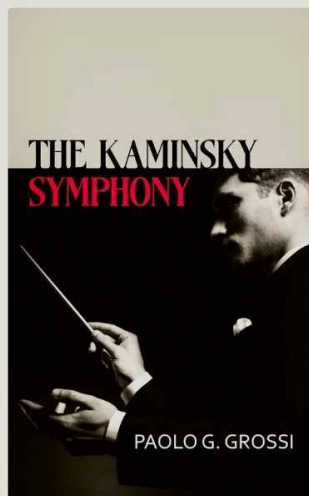
Spectrum Books

Pride in books



The Kaminsky Symphony

By Paolo G. Grossi



Milan, 1913. Maestro Mandelli di Castagnino is resident conductor at La Scala, having taken over from the legendary Toscanini.

Barely in his mid-thirties, he is revered by the Milanese public and fêted by the city's high society. But once the baton is down, and after another soirée in his honour organised by his sycophantic agent, he returns to an empty home, surrounded only by his servants.

Disenchanted and longing to leave his secret life behind, he accepts a post as resident chief conductor at the Odessa Opera House, causing consternation among his family and admirers.

After an eventful journey by land and sea, he settles in the elegant coastal city, improving the performance of the orchestra and winning the approval and friendship of the locals.

He also finds love, but the continent is about to sleepwalk into the carnage of a futile war and Imperial Russia is on the cusp of being rocked by the October Revolution.

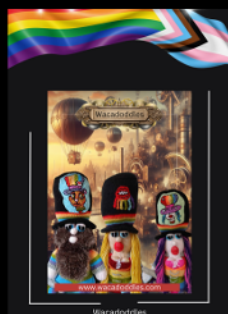
Undeterred by the unfolding catastrophe and wanting to protect his beloved from the savagery of the civil war, he is confronted with a desperate choice.

Out 6th December 2025

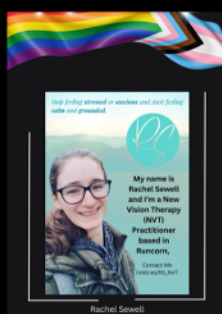
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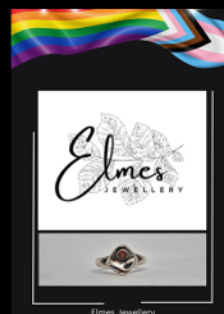
Adam Swain Ferguson



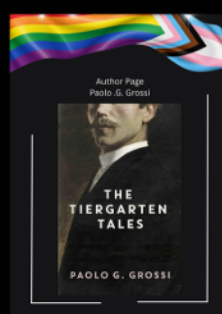
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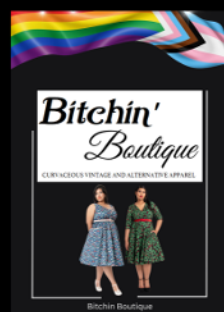
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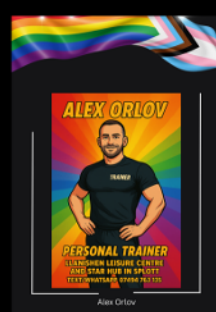
Paradox Ravens



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The organisation aims to bring the Newly arrived, Asylum Seekers and Refugees LGBT members of community together to develop welcoming safe place environment for its members here in the UK.

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2026



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