

nightspots

weekly nightlife section in

WINDY CITY TIMES

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SIDETRACK

Chicago Dragons bachelor auction, Sat., April 2.
Photos by Kyle Henderson

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"As a dude, I like to hang out with a guy with a big penis—that's why I like firemen. I'm just saying, I don't need a guy with a big penis—I want a guy with a big penis."—Comedian **Christopher Titus** has strong views on penises. Although he's heterosexual (and twice-married), he's always been one of our allies. So if he wants a big penis, who am I to say no?

The German word "schadenfreude" refers to deriving pleasure at someone else's misfortune. While I can't say I'm guilty of this on a regular basis, there is one exception—when someone with an enviable physique gets fat. It's a horrible thing to admit, but it really does give me pleasure. In some ways, I like the person more because they go up and down like the rest of us—with the exception of **Carnie Wilson**, who famously said, "What does it matter if I go up and down 20 pounds?" When does "down" kick in?

Then there's **Wentworth Miller**. This week, he publicly acknowledged a meme which shows him shirtless in his *Prison Break* prime next to a photo of him a few years later, significantly heavier. Apparently this meme annoyed Went because at the time of his weight gain, he spiraled downhill mentally and was suicidal. He said, "In 2010, at the lowest point in my adult life, I was looking everywhere for relief/comfort/distraction. And I turned to food. It could have been anything. Drugs. Alcohol. Sex. But eating became the one thing I could look forward to."

Why, oh why, didn't he choose sex? If he had chosen sex and alcohol, maybe I would have had a chance. While I don't wish him pain, it is hard to have too much sympathy for someone who gained weight after a large part of his success came from showing off his once-hot body. As it turns out, this meme had two positive ramifications for Wentworth: 1) It reminded him that those tough days were behind him and b) it showed him smiling. He was happy. Well, of course he was—he had probably just eaten!

A former security guard for **Elton John** is suing the singer for sexual harassment. **Jeffrey Wenninger** says that in 2014, John repeatedly tried to touch his genitalia. Doesn't he realize that's how many of us gay men say hello? If I were sued by everyone whose penis I've "mistakenly" touched, **Dick Cavett** would be first in line! In one of the instances, Elton allegedly tweaked Wenninger's nipples and said, "You gorgeous thing, you." Another time, Elton allegedly tried to put his hands down Jeffrey's pants. And on another occasion, Elton said, "Get your todger out." I had to look that one up. Apparently, "todger" means penis. See? This is an educational column.

Last week, I spent a few blissful hours in NYC catching some marvelous shows. I'm not even sure how to describe *Something Rotten*—it's as if *Spamalot* and *Book of Mormon* had a baby, which was raised by *The Producers*. It's irreverent, it's outrageous, and it's hysterical.

The story of two brothers trying to one-up **William Shakespeare** is crazy enough. Throw in some catchy tunes and witty lyrics with triple entendres which send up virtually every show in Broadway history. Add in great direction and choreography that makes a chorus line of old women in walkers seem tame. And it all comes together in *Something Rotten*—one of the best shows I've ever seen. While **Brian d'Arcy James** and **John Cariani** are the "stars," the show is ably stolen by **Christian Borle** (as a buff rock star of a Shakespeare) and **Brad Oscar** (the lesser-known befuddled nephew of *Nostradamus*). There's not a bad performance on that stage. I was certain I knew one of the



Dancer Roberto Bolle has caused some heat, Billy says.

Instagram photo of Bolle with another dancer

sexy men skillfully playing various roles in the ensemble. Sure enough, it was **Aleks Pevec**—who I vividly remembered from the 2007 LA production of *Chess*. That's yet another reason to check out *Something Rotten*.

My next theatrical stop was **Charles Busch's** *Cleopatra*. At this point, it's almost silly to trot out superlatives about what Charles and his troupe do. I am repeatedly astonished by the skill, talent, and love that his efforts convey. As usual, the entire run sold out even before the first preview. But Busch has earned a loyal following and always delivers to us, his disciples. The production has the joy and energy of kids putting on a show in their backyard—and that joy and energy comes right back at them from the audience. Charles' Cleo is kinda like if **Susan Hayward** played the role, with more than a dash of **Mae West**. He steals snatches from **Claudette Colbert**, **Vivien Leigh**, **Elizabeth Taylor** ... and even **Barbra Streisand**. (You have to see it.) Busch is surrounded by a fabulous cast—most notably **Tony Sheldon** (from "Priscilla"), who plays Caesar, wife **Calpurnia** and one of Caesar's successors, **Marcus Lepidus**. What Tony does with his voice is mind-boggling—very reminiscent of early **Peter Sellers** from "The Goon Show." Although the run is technically sold out, there are a few tickets being released before each performance. Try to snag one at SmartTix.com—the show closes on April 17.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Patrick in Detroit: "I've heard dancer **Roberto Bolle** is gay. Is he? He's one of the hottest guys I've ever seen. And do you have any nude photos of him?"

Roberto Bolle is an Italian ballet dancer who is 42 years old—pretty old, by ballet standards. He made history in 2009 when he was named a principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre—the first time an Italian male was given that honor. The *New York Times* called him "utterly gorgeous (in both looks and dance)"—and who am I to argue with them? He's pretty cagey about his personal life, although rumors abound.

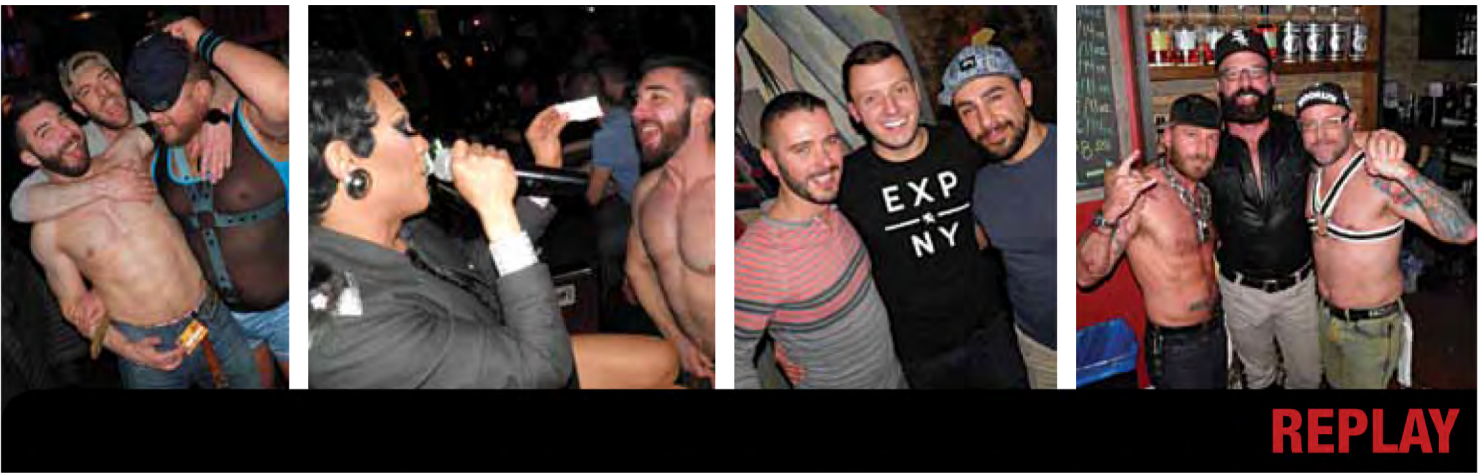
Things heated up a few years ago when a French magazine published an interview where Roberto appeared to come out. He quickly retracted that announcement: "My statement about the subject of homosexuality was taken completely out of context and misinterpreted—probably because of my imperfect command of French. I never speak about my private life and I will not start now, so the news of the alleged 'outing' is not based in truth." As to your second question, he has only appeared nude onstage once—in Naples in 2010. While the theatre confiscated all cameras, someone miraculously snuck a video. If you want to see every inch of Roberto, check out BillyMasters.com.

When Bolle's dancing as fast as he can, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Boy, this was a long one (words I suspect Roberto hears quite frequently). So I'll briefly tell you to check out www.BillyMasters.com, the site that's always en pointe. Send your questions to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before someone makes a gay porn called *The Artful Todger*! So, until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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It's the pits (and that's a good thing) at Tat Tuesday with Mr. Chicago Leather Todd Harris, Tue., March 29.
Photos by Kirk Williamson

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR Arami

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Arami (1829 W. Chicago Ave.; AramiChicago.com) is the best Japanese restaurant I've been to since ... well, its brother eatery Ani, which I visited a few weeks ago.

However, that is still very high praise, with Arami and Ani a step above most of the other Japanese places in Chicago.

Getting there is no problem—but you will have to pay attention to make sure you don't bypass the

entrance. Arami (which seats 90 people, including a private room that accommodates 20) has a nondescript exterior in a sea of nondescript exteriors along this stretch of West Town. Upon entering, you'll encounter an unpretentious atmosphere and staff—which make the quality of the cuisine even more of an unexpected delight and which can put



Photos by Andrew Davis

even the most intimidated of diners at ease. My dining companion and I started with drinks, as she had a beer and I had a Scarborough Fair cocktail, a very tasty concoction consisting of cinnamon clove syrup, lemon, thyme-infused Effen Vodka, rosemary and Asian pear. (By the way, if it's sake you're craving, Arami definitely has a wide variety of that as well.)

Cuisine-wise, things started solidly with the seared hotate—scallops with Japanese mushrooms and ponzu brown butter. However, things really took off with the dish that followed: maitake mushrooms and Berkshire pork belly cooked on a robata grill. The mushrooms were done well, but I took even more of a shine to the belly, which was especially flavorful.

The next course was a selection of sashimi involving bluefin tuna, Japanese red sea bream,

salmon and yellowtail. The selections were all wonderful (especially the salmon)—and the server enhanced the experience even more by advising which pieces should be eaten first and which should be accompanied with the soy sauce.

The maki was probably my favorite course of the evening (with dessert and the ramen vying for a



close second). We tried the ebi tempura asparagus, an intoxicating olio of flavors and textures with shrimp tempura, spicy salmon, asparagus, spicy mayo and aonori (seaweed). However, the Arami ramen was pretty impressive, too—with pork belly, soft egg, grilled enoki and house tsukemono (preserved vegetables). Even in this age of ramen-mania, this dish was better than just about all others I've tried.

Lastly, there was the combination of black-sesame ice cream and cookies with vanilla ice cream and miso caramel—a dish that was experimental and delicious. The ice cream's taste resembled coffee, and the cookies were the perfect complement.

Chefs de cuisine Ajay Popli (hot kitchen) and Nelson Vinansaca (sushi) acquitted themselves admirably, to say (or write) the least. Do not pass by Arami—it's worth the trip.

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MARY'S ATTIC

Springtime Tea in A-ville, Sun., April 3.
Photos by Jerry Nunn

nightspots

the big TO-DO

OUR WEEKLY PICKS TO PLAN YOUR NIGHTLIFE CALENDAR

Trannika's Most Wanted: Tyrannosaurus Wrecked!



Wed., April 6, 10 pm
Berlin,
954 W. Belmont Ave.
A prehistoric drag show that's sure to (bed)rock. Featuring Sara Andrews, DiDa Ritz, Nico, Alexis Bevels and Kat Sass. Hosted by Trannika Rex and guest co-host Birdy Gabkham. DJ Adam EL.

FKA presents: Tacos vs. Pizza

TEAM TACO

VS

TEAM PIZZA

Fri., April 8, 9:30 pm
Big Chicks,
5024 N. Sheridan Rd.
The showdown you've all been waiting for! Presented by Formerly Known As. DJ [X]P and guest DJ Ldy Prblms.

Sidetrack Saturday Market

Sat., April 9, 1-4 pm
Sidetrack,
3349 N. Halsted St.
Enjoy cocktails while you shop local. Vendors selling juices, pies, cheese, preserves, confections, baked goods and many more wonderful products.

Cupcake Wars 2016

Sun., April 10, 5 pm
Touche,
6412 N. Clark St.
Trident International Windy City presents this cupcake bake-off, to benefit Broadway Youth Center. Bring your sweet tooth and vote for your favorite. Photo of 2015's event by Kirk Williamson



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