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weekly nightlife section in 

Dixie Lynn Cartwright.
Photo by Jacob Bjorge



NUNN ON ONE: THEATER

Dixie Lynn Cartwright comes out of the closet

BY JERRY NUNN

Drag personality Dixie Lynn Cartwright stars in *Barney the Elf* this holiday season. The story follows Santa Claus passing away and his wicked son taking up the historic job. Barney the Elf flees his northern home afterwards and winds up in a drag bar. The jokes begin as Bar-

ney tries to save the day while learning about love and makeup.

Cartwright's credits include *Snow White* and the *Seven Drag Queens*, *The Bitchfest Club* and *Scream Girls*. She currently hosts shows at the bars *Sidetrack* and *Berlin*.

Windy City caught up with Cartwright's alter ego, Drew H. Nixon, at a coffee shop recently.

Windy City Times: So I read that we went to the same college: Western Kentucky University.

Dixie Lynn Cartwright: Did you? Were you a Hilltopper for Christ?

WCT: I climbed that hill! What did you study in school?

DLC: I started at a Southern Baptist college in Mississippi—you know, with self-hatred and all that stuff. I have a twin brother who is a pastor. I was studying vocal performance there. Needless to say it did not go well. When I slept with all the closeted boys it was time to leave, so then I studied special education at Western. I taught for eight years after that.

Dixie took off and, with the late nights and early mornings, I couldn't teach anymore.

WCT: So you only do Dixie now?

DLC: No. I tried for six months, then needed health insurance. I work for a STD call center now. I get benefits there working 30 hours a week. I also get benefits from my partner.

WCT: You perform regularly at Sidetrack, right?

DLC: I am their go-to. I feel bad for the people that don't enjoy me because any big event at Sidetrack I will be there!

WCT: You are really quick. I was impressed with your hosting the other night.

DLC: Thank you. You are so correct! I really turn it on. In every day conversation I am kind of a dud. It is a tears-of-a-clown kind of thing.

WCT: Where did the name "Dixie Lynn Cartwright" originate?

DLC: I started doing drag with the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus when I first moved here. It was a way to meet people. When I would speak I would get nervous and my Southern accent would explode all over the place. I figured I had to be a Southern character and Dixie is the most southern name in the world.

My mother's middle name is Lynn, like every Southern woman. They all have three names.

I tacked Cartwright on at the end because I am always right!

WCT: How long have you done drag?

DLC: Just a few years. I would do it once a year for the chorus. Regularly I started two years ago.

WCT: You have come a long way.

DLC: Thanks to the Chicago drag community. They are so supportive of one another. I owe big props to Trannika Rex. She runs this town, let's be honest.

Since RuPaul's *Drag Race* many queens burn out and are a dime a dozen. I feel like *Sidetrack* has kept me afloat.

WCT: Would you want to perform on Logo's Drag Race?

DLC: Yes. That is an instant career. I'm bidding my time. I don't want to be the first to go home, so I want to be really good.

WCT: Talk about Barney the Elf.

DLC: I did the show last year. It was a sold-out run. They extended it for even more performances. It is based on the Will Ferrell movie *Elf* but our elf is gay. Santa dies and Santa Junior is a huge homophobe. Barney is kicked out for being gay. He comes to Chicago and works at a gay bar, where he meets me. My name is Zooney and I play a drag queen. We have a little romance.

It goes back and forth from Chicago where Barney finds out who he is, to the north pole where Santa Junior is a slave driver. The stories then collide.

It is a musical parody so all of the songs are from past musicals like *Wicked*. We just change the words.

WCT: What is the difference from last year's production?

DLC: Last year, we had a drag queen chorus but this year they have been removed and Mrs. Claus is telling the story. Maggie Cain plays her and has been in everything. A lot of character comes out of her and she is wonderful.

Barney is played by Bryan Renaud. I wasn't sure what it would be like with the writer being in the show. He is totally down to play with the part. He didn't have a lot of experience as a drag queen so he let me shape her. What Dixie does at the gay bar in the show is what I do at Sidetrack. They really let me play with the audience. Bryan's voice is butter.

WCT: Do you sing a solo?

DLC: I do. I have a big giant ballad in the middle when I upset Barney. It is from *The Wedding Singer* musical called "Come Out of the Dumpster" but my version is "Come Out of the Closet." It is so sweet.

I sing "Last Christmas" but with different words like "I saw daddy f--king Santa Claus."

WCT: Oh, my: fun for the whole family...

DLC: Last year we did have a woman bring her two kids but they stopped her at the box office to tell her it is an adult-themed show. She got her money back but wrote a negative review online: "I brought my kids, they said it wasn't for kids. I got money back, not happy."

WCT: She should have done her research.

DLC: And sentence structure escaped her!

WCT: I just saw Rudolph at the Chicago Theatre, and it was so gay.

DLC: I feel like all Christmas shows are gay. Ours is just way more open about it and has songs about boners.

Can queer holiday cheer save Christmas? Find out as Barney the Elf plays now through Sunday, Jan. 1, at the Greenhouse Theater, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave, upstairs studio, at 8 p.m. Thurs. through Sat. and Sun. at 3 p.m. Visit GreenhouseTheater.org or call 773-404-7336 for ticket information.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR
Acadia

BY ANDREW DAVIS

With most of the profiles in this column, I'm fortunate enough to go to restaurants through arranged visits. This allows me to sometimes interview chefs and related staff, but also puts the onus on restaurants to really bring their A-games to warrant positive outcomes (although they should do that for everyone, anyway).

I wrote the preceding bit because one gets the impression that Acadia (1639 S. Wabash Ave; AcadiaChicago.com) brings its A-game with every patron.

Acadia was one of the few restaurants in Chicago to garner two Michelin stars when the latest ratings were released (with only two spots,



Pre-dessert of pear (left) and mini-macarons at Acadia.

Photos by Andrew Davis

Alinea and Grace, getting three stars)—and it's easy to see why.

The restaurant has two options if you're in the dining room: five- and 10-course options. (The front bar has a separate menu, including the acclaimed burger.) Drinks started well, with me getting a refreshing Bosc Pear mocktail and my friend getting a kicky, truffle-garnished cocktail called *Death by Astonishment*.

Calling our dinner five courses is a bit deceptive. There were canapes, and even a pre-dessert palate cleanser of pear. Some of the many highlights included mini-sandwiches (lobster roll, ra-



zor clam, etc.), Thai peanut soup with a mirepoix delicately set in a spoon, Deer Island lobster surrounded by onion petals, chestnut puree with black truffle (probably my favorite), Berkshire pork belly with saffras and butternut squash, and elegantly presented macarons.

The only drawback is that the stereotype of small dishes at upscale spots rings true here—although I understand the point is to savor each bite. One dish consisted of a single small rabbit-pheasant ravioli (and the server poured chicken consomme over it).

However, there's no mistaking that the experi-

ence at Acadia was very elegant, and highlighted by impeccable service (with servers bringing a brand-new napkin each time someone leaves the table, and with them even asking if they should call taxi service). Go if you have a big celebration—you'll be impressed.

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"It takes me a long time to get mad, but when I get mad, I'm an Italian. I was just in Italy. I'm no different from anyone else over there, you know what I mean? And they're just talking normally. They're not having a fight—they're just paying for bread!"—**Patti LuPone** attributes her fiery temperament to her ethnicity.

A few months ago, **Zsa Zsa Gabor** allegedly told husband **Prince Frederic von Anhalt** that, for her 100th birthday, she'd like to move back to Budapest. Alas, she was at her Bel Air home when she died at 99. I met Zsa Zsa many times, and she was everything you'd want her to be—grand, gorgeous and ridiculously over-the-top. Although she lived in the United States for more than 70 years, she was known for her thick Hungarian accent and calling everyone "Dahlink." Although she had numerous film credits, I'll be curious to see if she makes the Oscars' "In Memoriam" segment.

Donald Trump is having a heck of a time booking talent for his upcoming coronation ... er, inauguration. So far, the biggest name he's got is **Jackie Evancho**, often touted as an opera singer, but to the best of my knowledge someone who has never sung an operatic aria in her life. But didya know that she has a trans sister? And Jackie is her strongest supporter. "She told me she was transgender, and I was actually very happy for her because she finally found herself and can be who she wants to be." In addition to singing the national anthem at the inauguration, Evancho will also sing a duet with **Andrea Bocelli**. But, shhh, nobody tell him—he thinks he's singing for Hillary!

As the studios are trotting out their best and brightest for Oscar consideration, the Academy has made an unprecedented ruling. Former RuPaul's Drag Race contestant **Kelly Mantle** is the first person ever to be eligible to be nominated in both the Best Supporting Actor and Best Supporting Actress category. Huh? Mantle appears in *Confessions of a Womanizer*—a film I've never heard of, but it just had Oscar-qualifying screenings in LA. In the movie, Kelly plays a transgender prostitute named Ginger—sidebar, why do these hookers always have a name like Ginger or Cinnamon? You'll never see a transgender prostitute named Susan or Claire! Anyhoo, director and writer Miguel Ali lobbied the Academy on Mantle's behalf. He felt that because Mantle is "gender-fluid," s/he should be submitted in the supporting acting categories for both genders. The Academy agreed. Ali says, "To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time in Oscar history that a person will be considered for an acting Oscar in both gender categories. I firmly believe that our androgynous/transgendered acting community is the most untapped resource in Hollywood. We need to bring them more attention, and by doing so, we will create more empathy for our androgynous/transgendered brothers and sisters."

Perennial Oscar nominee **Eddie Redmayne** recently made a startling revelation—he's seen **Prince William's** willy. Let that sink in—he's seen the penis of a future King of England. Apparently, Eddie and Willie were classmates at Eton College. While he doesn't go into details regarding how he glimpsed the crown jewels, the two played rugby together and, presumably, showered together—as boys in British boarding schools oft do. Since we don't want you to feel left out, you can check out William's willy on BillyMasters.com—the site fit for a king or a queen.



Eddie Redmayne (above) has gotten up close and personal with the future king of England.

Photo of Redmayne in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* by Jaap Buitendijk

This is it: the final installment of **Billy's Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions**. Our first gift is not only fashionable but practical. Say you work with a particularly sexy colleague. In most offices, it's frowned upon to touch yourself (or others) inappropriately. But that won't be an issue if you are wearing **The Jerk Shirt**. Yes, it's exactly what you think it is. This shirt has a built-in arm, so you can pleasure yourself without anyone being the wiser—although perhaps the 2.0 model should come equipped with a specimen bottle and a squeegee! Proving the manufacturers are thinking of everyone, the hand comes in a variety of skin tones—light, beige, tan, and dark. Grab one (so to speak) at TheJerkShirt.com. And you can see a video of it in action on BillyMasters.com.

Tippi Hedren was one of the first legendary ladies of the silver screen that I met in Hollywood. And she's also been the most consistently charming. She lights up a room and has a never-ending supply of scintillating stories that involve people from Hollywood's golden age. Even closer to her heart is the Shambala Preserve, which she founded to protect wild animals. She's brought her two passions together. Tippi: A Memoir was just released, and it is a page-turner. And a portion of the proceeds will help continue to fund Shambala for years to come.

One of my favorite people in the world is **Charles Busch**. The legendary trailblazer has been touring the country with former porn god **Tom Judson** entertaining the masses with their cabaret act. So it was only logical that their collaboration was immortalized for all posterity. *Charles Busch Live at Feinstein's/54 Below* just dropped (as the kids say), and it's a captivating collection of songs and stories. Would that it were a DVD. But, well, a CD is better than nothing. What you really ought to do is see the duo live—perhaps at 54 Below on New Year's Eve. But the next best thing is buying this CD at BroadwayRecords.com.

In a very brief "Ask Billy" question, Gary from Chicago writes, "When I saw *Hamilton*, there was a guy in it who looks exactly like **Brent Corrigan**. Is it him?"

You are quite right—the resemblance is remarkable. Alas, it's not Brent Corrigan. The guy in question is **Thayne Jasperson**, who you may remember from his time on *So You Think You Can Dance*. I don't know much about Thayne except he is extraordinarily talented. When he got the chance to play King George II, **Lin-Manuel Miranda tweeted**, "The craziest person in *Hamilton* got to play the craziest part (I love you 4ever @thaynejasperson)." And, yes, Thayne is gay and he's hot, as you will see on BillyMasters.com.

When I'm bringing you the Brent Corrigan of Broadway, it's time to end another column. If you need a last-minute gift that works well with *The Jerk Shirt*, consider giving someone a membership to www.BillyMasters.com, the site that always delivers. Whether you're a member or not, feel free to send your questions to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Trump tries to grab Evancho's sister's pussy! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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