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weekly nightlife section in



Michael McBride.
Photo from McBride



Singer Michael McBride embraces his passions

BY C.L. FREDERICK

Singer Michael McBride understands a few things about being different and overcoming social stigmas. When he was younger, he had struggles with body image. Growing eventually to 5'6", he was smaller and shorter than most of his friends. He viewed phrases like 'good things come in small packages' as backhanded compliments aimed at making him feel better. "There were so many nights I would cry myself to sleep wishing and hoping to be taller and bigger," said McBride.

Eventually, McBride came to terms with the fact

that he had no control over his stature. He found inner strength and decided that he would place his energy on things he could control—his passion for music, fitness and education.

"I vowed that one day, I would have an impact on the world for the specific purpose of helping those who felt like outcasts know that they were valuable, competent, and loved," said McBride. As he became more confident in his height, he also began viewing his body as a gift. He decided that taking care of his body through nutrition and fitness was the only way he would start feeling comfortable in the body he was in.

He researched fitness and eating plans that he still follows today. He realized that he needed to actively be a friend to himself, speaking words of encouragement rather than the spiteful judgment that he never would have even said to another human.

"As the walls of self-hate began to crumble, I realized that I was freer to love and contribute to those around me," said McBride.

McBride was born in the Christian Protestant Evangelical church and was heavily involved in religious pursuits since childhood. "Faith was my world and primary identity," said McBride. However, that tidy bow around the predictable box began to unravel as he found himself attracted to the same sex. "Just like the movie, *But I'm a Cheerleader*, I kept saying to myself, 'but I'm a Christian.' I devoured books and blogs about changing," said McBride.

The main turning point in his life occurred one summer in Cincinnati as a student attending a music festival where he premiered an original composition. He had met another student who invited him to his first gay bar experience. "Conflicted with fear and excitement, I chose to take my chances being in another city and go. There were drag shows, strobe lights, go-go dancers and pounding music. It was all so new and overwhelming," said McBride.

Upon returning home, the guilt of his gay bar experience overwhelmed him and to relieve his conscience he confessed to church leadership. "That day was one of the worst and best days of my life. Immediately, the pastor called my parents to tell them what I had done and placed me on a three-month leave of absence, during which time I would be meeting with the elders weekly to help me make amends by becoming straight," said McBride. He felt that during the suspension he would be afforded the opportunity to soul search and receive the help he needed. "At the end of the term, I had not changed my attractions, and felt even more resolved in knowing

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February gives us a very special Black History Month edition of Black Girl Magic at Berlin, Thursday, Feb. 9, 10 p.m. Scene staples Shea Coulee, Dida Ritz, The Vixen and Lucy Stoole herald the coming of the next generation, Petty Crocker, Eva Styles, Kenzie Coulee and Mikki Miraj. Hosted by Sasha Love. DJs Gucciroxx and All the Way Kay. 932 W. Belmont Ave.



This Valentine's Eve, put on a mask and join the members of Red Tape Theatre in a night of singular strangeness and debauchery at Uptown Underground's Love Ball: A Masquerade, Mon., Feb. 13, starting at 6 p.m. 4707 N. Broadway.

Artistic Director Max Truax will be announcing exciting news about Red Tape's future, including a sneak peek into next season. The evening will contain pop-up performances, a silent auction, music, dancing, food, a cash bar with drink specials and masks to hide your identity from the crowd. It will also feature Alex Grelle as emcee and a special appearance by Sombre Reptiles.

the DISH

Weekly Dining Guide in
WINDY CITY TIMES

SAVOR River Roast jazz brunch

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Ronnie Hicks, if not considered a national treasure, should at least be seen as a local one.

Hicks is one of a rotating line-up of blues artists at the weekend brunch at **River Roast** (315 N. LaSalle St.; RiverRoastChicago.com). I'm sure the other musicians sound great, but it's hard to top the vibe Hicks put out on the day my friend and I attend—thanks to his substantial set list

of R&B classics from acts such as Sam Cooke, The Commodores and Otis Redding. (Many attendees, including myself, ended up singing along—not too loudly—or, at the least, tapping their feet.)

Of course, the music is just part of the allure: River Roast has a pretty impressive culinary menu as well. The local beets salad is a rather tasty concoction that will especially appeal to those who like those particular root vegetables. I also really liked the shrimp-and-crab toast that's topped with avocado.

The mascarpone French toast was a solid item, but wasn't revolutionary in concept or execution. But the items that give River Roast its name were spectacular, as usual. A whole chicken was brought to our table (prompting a guy at another table to say "That's so cool") and the server sliced the piping-hot bird for us—and it was just as tasty (and succulent) as advertised. (Some of the other roasts include fish, beef, pork and the "boatload of veggies.")

The only possible caveat is the price. The chicken (which serves two) is \$39 and the pork roast (also for two) is \$43; throw in a couple appetizers and a cocktail, and the bill could be more



Chicken (left) and the Ronnie Hicks Blues Band at River Roast's jazz brunch.
Photos by Andrew Davis

than you might expect.

Other places have their own musical brunches. (For example, the House of Blues has a legendary gospel event every Sunday.) However, those ven-

ues will have to work hard to top the music-and-cuisine combo at River Roast—especially during summer, when people can listen to great music and enjoy the view of the Chicago River.



"Well, I'm a power bottom."—*Boy George* on *Celebrity Apprentice* after being told his task was to promote Blake Griffin, the LA Clipper's "power forward."

In these days with so much doom and gloom, I feel it's important to seize upon positive things when we find them. One such story is about the Islamic Center in Victoria, Texas. The center had previously been broken into several times and last week was destroyed by a suspicious fire. Just when it was darkest, a group came forward to give the Muslims a place to worship. Shahid Hashmi said, "Jewish community members walked into my home and gave me a key to the synagogue." Robert Loeb, president of Temple B'nai Israel, didn't think twice about the act of kindness. "We have probably 25 to 30 Jewish people in Victoria, and they probably have 100 Muslims. We got a lot of building for a small amount of Jews." There's a lesson to be learned there.

Last week, numerous sources claimed Trump planned to sign a "religious freedom" executive order which would roll back protections to members of the LGBT community in the workplace. It's been rumored that the bill was being prepared by Pence and his followers. Allegedly, Trump didn't even know about it. A few early drafts leaked. Protests were hurriedly mounted around the country. And each day ... nothing. On Thursday night, everyone said Friday was the day. And on Friday, no bill was forthcoming.

But an explanation emerged. Support for our community came from **Ivanka Trump** and **Jared Kushner**, Ivanka's husband and Trump aide. Ivanka is a registered independent and has been described as very progressive; Kushner is a lifelong Democrat. Allegedly, the couple not only argued against the order, but felt it was important to send out a strong message denying the rumor. The White House released a statement: "President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBT community." It's said the draft was one of about 200 that was written but never even reached Trump's desk: "Some are real, some are drafts of things people like, and some are ideas people from outside have suggested." While there's still much to question and worry about, let's savor the positive when we see it.

We all know **Tom Daley** is in great shape—a lad who has been known to share glimpses of it online (as you can see on BillyMasters.com). But, please, don't compare yourself to Tom's amazing body. It's futile. He said, "I train six hours a day, six days a week. It's not as if it's something that happens just from going to the gym for 20 minutes or an hour a day." Who goes to the gym 20 minutes a day and expects to look like Tom Daley? That said, Tom wants you to have hope. He added, "I know that if anyone else trained for six hours a day six days a week, they would get the same results."

Elsewhere in Great Britain, the Policing and Crime Bill finally went into effect. Commonly



Boy George gets to the "bottom" of things.
Photo by Indira Cesarine

known as Turing's Law (after **Alan Turing**), thousands who were prosecuted for gay sex crimes will be pardoned. People already dead have been pardoned automatically. Everyone else can apply for a pardon. Once again, the dead get all the breaks.

Here in the States, the Boy Scouts made a historic ruling and decided that transgender boys can join the organization. In the past, membership was based solely on the birth certificate. A spokesperson for the group stated, "Starting today, we will accept and register youth in the Cub and Boy Scout programs based on the gender identity indicated on their application." This is more in line with the Girl Scouts membership guidelines. Although the Scouts won't admit it, this change came about because of an 8-year-old transgender boy from New Jersey named Joe Maldonado. Joe was kicked out of the Scouts a few months ago because he was born a girl. "Just knowing that he can go back to his Scouts and knowing that he's accepted, it means a lot," says his mom.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Stan in Los Angeles: "First, you had those hot Teen Wolf boys. Then, Tom Daley. Now, there's a video of **Adrian Grenier** jerking off somewhere online. But it's vanished. Can you find it?"

I wish I could disclose the machinations I went through to get this video. Let's just say it pays to travel with a pair of Ben-Wa balls. In the video, Adrian is Skyping with someone and pulls his sizable appendage through the bottom of his briefs. About two minutes later, a male voice calls out to Adrian, saying he's gonna take off. Grenier says, "I'm just gonna take a shower if you wanna wait." The guy apparently didn't wait, so Adrian continues working on what Courtney Robertson from *The Bachelor* called "the biggest penis I'd ever seen—and the biggest bush!" The video may have disappeared from most places, but you can still see every inch of Grenier on BillyMasters.com.

When Adrian's appendage is big enough to have its own entourage, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Of course, you can get all this and much more on www.BillyMasters.com—the only site where a big bush isn't a political euphemism. If you've got questions, send them along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Tom Daley releases a 20-minute workout DVD (and, perhaps, an R-rated version). Until next time, remember: One man's filth is another man's bible.

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that there was no need to change," said McBride.

Currently, McBride works as a music faculty member at Loyola University and North Park University. He is afforded the opportunity to interact with the next generation of performers and teachers; which he does not take for granted. He enjoys teaching them new ideas and inspiring them to overcome any limitations in the way of achieving their dreams.

Finding balance has become an important aspect of McBride's life. Juggling three careers, a marriage and holding down a social life has not been the easiest of tasks. His constant has been his husband of six years, Rodrigo. Admittedly, he has struggled with finding balance as a multi-passionate person, but he has discovered that by focusing on his marriage he can achieve anything. His dream is to eventually release an album that reaches the Billboard chart.

People can find McBride every Sunday morning at 11 a.m. leading worship at Achurch4me MCC and every second and fourth Tuesday hosting Killer Open Mic at @mosphere in Andersonville.

