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PHILADELPHIA'S LGBT LINEUP SIZZLES IN SUMMER 2018
Pride, Melissa Etheridge, A FringeArts Danceathon, Shania & An Epic Swimsuit Party

PHILADELPHIA, May 31, 2018 – LGBT culture in Philadelphia pulls no punches at summer's doorstep, launching a jam-packed season of events. First up: back-to-back **Pride** celebrations, followed by **Melissa Etheridge**, **Shania Twain** and **Kingdom Hearts Orchestra** concerts. Then, there's the always-revealing **Boys of Summer** all-night dance party, the return of the **BalletX Summer Series**, and FringeArts' delightfully queer danceathon, aptly named, **FringeA-thon**. Below is a more detailed account of Philadelphia's entertaining and enlivening LGBT lineup for the summer of 2018:

Festivals, Gatherings & Fun:

- **Philadelphia Pride Kickoff Party** – Held the Friday before Pride's daytime festivities commence, the annual block party shuts down and lifts up a portion of the Gayborhood for outdoor dance parties, mini golf, mechanical shark-riding and other outdoor activities. It's like a small-scale OutFest, only at night—and with lots more dancing. **June 8**. Between 12th & 13th Streets along Locust Street, phillygaypride.org
- **PrideDay LGBT Parade and Festival** – Philly Gay Pride Presents puts on one of the country's largest parades, starting in the heart of the Gayborhood and marching to Penn's Landing's Great Plaza, along the Delaware River. This year begins with a Pride Fun Run 5K and features Margaret Cho as festival headliner, a performance by Chris Weaver from NBC's top-rated "The Voice" and 150 food, drink and craft vendors and networking organizations. **June 10**. Parade begins at 13th & Locust Streets. phillygaypride.org
- **Big Gay Boat Independence Party** – Every summer, during just a handful of occasions, The Deck at the Moshulu is flooded with the sounds of Britney, Rihanna, Beyoncé and such for a rollicking good time. Things get especially rollicking during the Independence Day celebration party—the Big Gay Boat Party—a mainstay of LGBT culture and unique to Philadelphia. **July 3**. 401 S. Columbus Boulevard, (215) 923-2500, thedeckphilly.com
- **Boys of Summer** – The "Lifeguards"—in sum, a diverse lineup of chiseled men donning popular gay lifestyle brands like Andrew Christian—gyrate and flex their stuff for another year of all-night shenanigans. The event has expanded in recent years and now includes a weekend of events that are nearly as exciting as the main event. **July 26-28**. Location to be determined, phillygaycalendar.com/bos
- **Philadelphia Trans Wellness Conference** – Now in its 17th year, this wellness conference, previously the Philadelphia Trans Health Conference, invites more than 7,000 trans individuals, health service providers and allies to workshops and more. This year's event has promised a talk from transwoman of color Kendall Stephens and several interdisciplinary influencers in the community. **August 2-4**. Pennsylvania Convention Center, 129 N. Broad Street, (215) 563-0652, mazzonicenter.org

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- **NGLCC International Business & Leadership Conference** – With keynote speaker Martha Stewart, this annual, traveling LGBT business conference couldn't be more fabulous. The giant, sprawling event welcomes 1,300 entrepreneurs of the LGBT and allied business community to network, attend panels on growing an LGBT-owned business, participate in supplier matchmaker opportunities and, of course, mingle at drinks-clinking mixers during evening hours. Registration required. **August 14-17**. Philadelphia Marriott Downtown, 1201 Market Street, (202) 234-9181, nglcc.org

Show-stopping Performances:

- **Heather McDonald** – A special one-off event at Helium Comedy Club, McDonald is best recognized by LGBT fans as a consistent panelist on Chelsea Handler's "Chelsea Lately" on E! She also hosts the hit podcast "Juicy Scoop with Heather McDonald" and isn't shy about sharing a raunchy joke or two. **June 2-3**. 2031 Sansom Street, (215) 496-9001, philadelphia.heliumcomedy.com
- **Melissa Etheridge** – The out-and-proud singer-songwriter, best known for hits like "Come to My Window," "I'm the Only One" and "Somebody Bring Me Some Water," performs these and more favorites in her M.E. Live Summer Tour. **June 21**. Parx Casino Xcite Center, 2999 Street Road, Bensalem, (888) 588-7279, parxcasino.com/xcitecenter
- **Shania Twain** – As much a female empowerment icon as a gay one, this sassy country-pop songstress serves the hits—"Honey," "You're Still the One," "From This Moment," "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!" and more, along with tracks from her latest album, during her international Shania Now Tour—her first in years. **July 12**. Wells Fargo Center, 3601 S. Broad Street, (215) 653-8000, wellsfargocenterphilly.com
- **Kingdom Hearts Orchestra** – This Disney meets Final Fantasy mashup franchise is a staple among "gaymers." The orchestra plans to perform soundtrack singles "Simple and Clean" and "Sanctuary," from Japanese-pop diva Utada Hikaru and instrumentals composed by Yoko Shimomura. **August 2**. Mann Center for the Performing Arts, 5201 Parkside Avenue, (800) 745-3000, manncenter.org

Theater & Visual Arts:

- **Mamma Mia!** – On its own, the ABBA soundtrack of this Broadway hit makes this musical a must-add to the calendar—with "Dancing Queen" and "Waterloo" still serving as dance-floor crowd pleasers. That Walnut Street Theatre offers an affordable opportunity to experience the heartwarming mother-daughter tale, timed ahead of the sequel's cinematic release on July 19, is icing as sweet as the music. **Through July 15**. 825 Walnut Street, (215) 574-3550, walnutstreettheatre.org
- **Aladdin** – Starring every gay man's childhood crush, this Broadway Philadelphia show, inspired by the Disney movie, beautifully—and hilariously—blends comedy, spectacle and folktale, with costuming that transports audiences straight to Agrabah. Classic songs get showcased, but there's also new music by Casey Nicholaw of *Something Rotten!* and *The Book of Mormon* acclaim. **June 13-July 1**. Academy of Music, 240 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, kimmelcenter.org
- **FringeA-Thon**– This all-day FringeArts dance party, held from noon to midnight, celebrates every background under the sun, with anything-goes pop-up performances, several DJs and head-turning costuming. This year, the Bearded Ladies' John Jarboe hosts, serving the usual panache and marvelous looks of the drag cabaret troupe's monthly *Get Pegged* performance-art series. **June 16**. The Piazza at Schmidt's Common, 1001 N. 2nd Street, (215) 413-9006, fringeathon.com

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- **You Can Never Go Down the Drain** – Philadelphia’s innovative, hilarious Bearded Ladies Cabaret founder John Jarboe is the one-person star (along with a jazz trio) of a production that tests the gentle philosophies, music and simple life lessons of Fred Rogers against modern times, challenging both audience and performer to shun cynicism and embrace empathy. **June 20-July 1.** Wilma Theater, 265 S. Broad Street, (215) 546-7824, wilmatheater.org
- **42nd Street** – The historic Bucks County Playhouse, in uber-LGBT-friendly New Hope, presents this Broadway show about a tap-dancing small town (Allentown, Pennsylvania) girl dropped into the big city (New York, New York), and finally, back to Philadelphia. The show is notable for its upbeat score, with popular showtunes such as “Shuffle Off to Buffalo” and “We’re In the Money.” **June 29-August 4.** 70 S. Main Street, New Hope, (215) 862-2121, bcptheater.org
- **BalletX Summer Series** – BalletX presents a world premiere by award-winning choreographer Matthew Neenan at Summer Series 2018—one of few dance series in general in the city during the summer months, making it a reliable standout for all audiences. Still, LGBT attendees especially will want to see Neenan’s upcoming ballet set to *Mendelssohn’s Songs Without Words*, performed live by Martha Koeneman, principal pianist with Pennsylvania Ballet. The piece introduces a mysterious prop puzzle that the choreographer and dancers solve together on stage—examining perceptions of stillness and movement, object and person, conflict and resolution. **July 11-22.** The Wilma Theater, 265 S. Broad Street, (215) 546-7824, balletx.org

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