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FALL IN PHILLY BRINGS AN IMPRESSIVE CALENDAR OF LGBTQ EVENTS
On Tap: Outfest, Elton John, Martha Graham Cracker, Fringe Festival & AIDS Walk Philly

PHILADELPHIA, August 24, 2018 – In fall, Philly’s LGBTQ arts and culture scene activates in a big way. The season welcomes back Opera Philadelphia’s epic festival, **O18**, where original performances include *Queens of the Night*, starring beloved local drag queen Martha Graham Cracker, local cabaret impresario John Jarboe and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe. As always, September’s **Fringe Festival** keeps things diverse, especially in a musical number that explores cabaret history (*Do You Want a Cookie?*) and the multidisciplinary dance piece *Variations on Themes from Lost and Found*, comprised of multiple works by late choreographer John Bernd that imagine a world where AIDS never happened. Other highlights include an **Elton John** concert and an onstage sit-down with two of TV’s most prominent gay icons, *AC2: An Intimate Evening With Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen*.

Here’s a closer look at these events and others slated for Philly this fall:

Festivals, Gatherings & Fun:

- **GayBINGO! and AIDS Walk Philly** – AIDS Fund puts on the monthly can’t-miss GayBINGO!, which returns for a new season of themed shenanigans and sassy card callouts—all for a great cause. And each October, the organization welcomes thousands of early-morning participants for a charity walk that begins at the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where a portion of the national AIDS Memorial Quilt is on display. Bingo: **September 22, October 6, November 17 & December 15, 2018**, 615 N. Broad Street; Walk: **October 21, 2018**, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 731-9255, aidsfundphilly.org
- **OutFest** – Philly’s giant block party for National Coming Out Day transforms the Gayborhood into a quirky carnival of dance parties outside of bars, rotating drag performances on the main stage at 13th and Locust Streets, food vendors along sidewalks and a slew of wacky games that are kid-friendly or, in the case of a motorized bull at 12th and Locust streets, decidedly less so. **October 7, 2018**. Between 12th & 13th Streets on Locust Street, (215) 875-9288, phillygaypride.org
- **PAX Unplugged** – This offshoot of the major gaming convention Penny Arcade Expo (PAX) returns to Philly for a second year to focus on board games that venture far beyond Monopoly and Scrabble into queer territory. Some panels and performances explore diversity, and a Diversity Lounge welcomes queer-identifying groups to mix, mingle and game with other LGBTQ game enthusiasts. **November 30-December 2, 2018**. Pennsylvania Convention Center, 1101 Arch Street, unplugged.paxsite.com

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Halloween Highlights:

- **Dance Party Z** – The Gayborhood’s must-do Halloween party happens at Tabu with a series of “zombie drag” performances, music from WXPN DJ Robert Drake, a special performance from local drag legend Brittany Lynn and a curated selection of Halloween videos—a party feature made possible by the bar’s new, multilevel digs at the former site of ICandy. **October 27, 2018.** Tabu, 254 S. 12th Street, (215) 964-9675, tabuphilly.com
- **Henri David Presents: Halloween the Ball** – The year’s most colorful, most photographed party celebrates a half century of fabulousness on Halloween night at a hotel. Host and Antique Row jeweler Henri David has presided over this glorious bash since its humble start in 1968—his costume is always the evening’s big reveal—although his guests’ getups certainly offer competition. **October 31, 2018.** Philadelphia 201 Hotel, 201 N. 17th Street, (215) 732-7711
- **LGBTQ Night at Terror Behind the Walls** – LGBTQ lovers of live haunts get immersed in Eastern State Penitentiary’s prison-turned-six-attraction-strong fright factory—while feeling like they’re among friends, even as cannibals and zombies close in on all sides. Afterwards: Participants toast their bravery onsite with a cocktail in The Speakeasy at Al Capone’s Cell. **October 10, 2018.** Eastern State Penitentiary, 2027 Fairmount Avenue, (215) 236-3300, easternstate.org

Concerts & Conversations:

- **Elton John** – The knight who needs no introduction caps off an incredible career with the *Farewell Yellow Brick Road* tour. The show—more like a spectacular—features dazzling costumes, heart-wrenching piano ballads and energizing rock tunes, including “Can You Feel the Love Tonight?,” “Rocket Man” and “Tiny Dancer.” **September 11-12, 2018.** Wells Fargo Center, 3601 S. Broad Street, (215) 336-3600, wellsfargocenterphilly.com
- **AC2: An Intimate Evening with Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen** – Two of cable television’s most prominent gay faces open their minds and mouths in this Q&A tour, during which the two share gossip before taking questions from the audience. That audience can expect plenty of cheerful—and sometimes salacious—banter initiated by Bravo personality Cohen and some blushing from CNN’s famously private Cooper. **November 3, 2018.** Academy of Music, 240 S. Broad Street, (215) 893-1999, kimmelcenter.org
- **Billie Eilish** – With silver hair and an ethereal, synth-y “gloom pop” sound, 16-year-old Eilish has made a surprising impact at a young age, accruing millions of YouTube and Instagram views and nabbing big-ticket appearances on late-night television. Her Philadelphia appearance will include a performance of her first hit single “Ocean Eyes,” along with brand new tracks like “You Should See Me in a Crown.” **November 4, 2018.** Union Transfer, 1026 Spring Garden Street, (215) 232-2100, utphilly.com

Art & Performing Arts:

- **Fringe Festival** – Philly’s 22-year-old, 18-day citywide arts festival comprises more than 1,000 performances by local and international artists, with a focus on accessibility, affordability and moving the needle. **September 6-23, 2018.** Various locations, (215) 413-1318, fringearts.com
 - **Do You Want a Cookie?** – This world premiere from The Bearded Ladies Cabaret (which debuts two day before the festival begins) promises a radical bake-off that whips up a heaping helping of cabaret history—all within an old, unnamed Callowhill factory transformed into a two-level nightclub. **September 4-16, 2018.** 448 N. 10th Street, (215) 413-1318, fringearts.com

- **Variations on Themes from Lost and Found: Scenes from a Life and Other Works by John Bernd** – What would contemporary dance be like if the AIDS epidemic hadn't robbed arts communities of an entire generation of LGBTQ talent? This ambitious dance, music and visual art production by Ishmael Houston-Jones and Miguel Gutierrez revisits and reimagines standout works by experimental choreographer John Bernd, who died in 1988 at age 35. **September 14-16, 2018.** Christ Church Neighborhood House, 20 N. American Street, (215) 413-9006, fringearts.com
- **Dining with the Divas** – A gaggle of queens serve up food, drink and comedy at the evening spinoff of Punch Line Philly's popular Drag Diva Brunch series. Mimi Imfurst, Morgan Morgan Morgan, Anita Manhattan, Sutton Fearce and pals perform during cocktails and dinner, in an event that benefits The Attic Youth Center. **September 16, 2018.** Punch Line Philly, 33 E. Laurel Street, (215) 606-6555, punchlinephilly.com
- **O18** – Hot off a successful first year, Opera Philadelphia's O festival feeds the momentum with 11 days of productions that highlight human connection, including two standout LGBTQ-centric works. **September 20-30, 2018.** Various locations, (215) 732-8400, operaphila.org
 - **Glass Handel** – Rising star countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo created and stars in an interdisciplinary world premiere concert and immersive art installation. Costanzo envisioned the environment with multimedia fashion and art company Visionaire, planned music by Philip Glass and George Frideric Handel and incorporated visual arts, ballet and song to explore themes of fashion, art, dance and filmmaking—all amid one of the world's most esteemed art collections. **September 22-23 & 30, 2018.** Barnes Foundation, 2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 732-8400, operaphila.org
 - **Queens of the Night** – This marquee South Street performance bands together two Philadelphia gay icons with a Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano. Philly's John Jarboe of The Bearded Ladies Cabaret joins inexhaustible drag-queen king Martha Graham Cracker for the three-part performance with songstress Stephanie Blythe. **September 24-25 & 28, 2018.** TLA, 334 South Street, (215) 732-8400, operaphila.org
- **Artist Bash: Fierce Women** – Ahead of the opening of *Berthe Morisot: Woman Impressionist*, the Barnes hosts women-only showcase that looks at how to nurture community. Performances by bold female artists include choreographer Annielille Gavino-Kollman, singer Vessna Scheff, clothing designer Nicole Haddad, drummer LaTreice Branson and queer storyteller Nikki Powerhouse, who will debut new performance art. **September 21, 2018.** Barnes Foundation, 2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 278-7000, barnesfoundation.org
- **The Laramie Project** – This poignant, popular production tells the story of Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old gay college student who died in October 1998 after being severely beaten in rural Wyoming. At the time of its release in 2000, the play was a monumental production in the theater community. This revival marks the 20th anniversary of Shepard's death. **September 28-30, 2018.** Theatre Horizon, 401 DeKalb Street, Norristown, (610) 283-2230, theatrehorizon.org
- **Fabulous Fashion: From Dior's New Look to Now** – Haute couture, ready-to-wear attire and accessories by some of the world's top designers make up this fashionable new exhibit. It begins with Christian Dior's 1947 game-changing "New Look" and includes pieces from Balenciaga, Comme des Garçons and others—all part of the museum's renowned collection. Fall visitors may also dine at Stir, the museum's new, 76-seat restaurant with design by architect Frank Gehry and seasonal menu by the Starr Catering Group. **October 16, 2018-March 3, 2019.** Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2600 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, (215) 763-8100, philamuseum.org

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