

# Arts & Culture

## ArtBeat



By Michael Gurney

### Amid the Dozen Days of Christmas

Following the Coast's profuse choral and instrumental offerings of early December, the MOTET chamber choir plans two concerts at the midpoint of the traditional Christmas festival.

Its Twelve Days of Christmas concerts explore the depths of the Christmas season, beginning with an introit for midnight mass, celebrating the multitude of saints and reflecting on the gifts of the Epiphany.

Works by Byrd and Weelkes will be featured to mark the 400th anniversary of their deaths, as well as newer arrangements by Pierre Pincemaille, Philip Stopford, and Janet Wheeler.

MOTET performs in Sechelt on Saturday, Dec. 30 at 3 p.m. at St Hilda's Anglican Church, and in Vancouver on Tuesday, Jan. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church. Admission is by donation (\$15 to 25 suggested) at the door; all ages will be warmly welcomed. More info is online at [www.motet.ca](http://www.motet.ca).

### Bright lights on the beach

The Sunshine Coast Hospice Society invites the public to its Lighting of the Memories ceremony on Jan. 1 at 1 p.m. at Mission Point Park.

The gathering is a follow-up to the Society's Lights of Life event in December, where hundreds of ornaments were collected with handwritten tributes or the names of friends and family who have passed away.

Those ornaments with messages are collected and brought to Davis Bay to be lit in the ceremonial bonfire as a symbolic release of the sentiments expressed.

### The apocalypse will be dramatized

The Off the Page play-reading series is gearing up to present *How to Survive an Apocalypse* by Vancouver playwright Jordan Hall.

The dramatized reading will feature actors Sophia Ballantyne, Lisa Furfaro, Justin Huston and Steve Schwabl. It takes place at the Heritage Playhouse on Jan. 14 at 1 p.m.

The script is a funny and frank exploration of a young couple who become end-of-the-world "preppers" when faced with financial hardship. Desperately unprepared for any actual wilderness living, they join another couple in the woods to boost their survival skills.

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### PINE 'N' SANDY

## Drag doyens raise roof for affordable housing

MICHAEL GURNEY

Arts & Culture Writer

Performers from the Pine 'N' Sandy drag troupe cemented their reputation as standard-bearers for glamour and goodwill during the group's two-act holiday revue on Dec. 16.

The Fab-Yule-Us show at the Raven's Cry Theatre rounded out the group's second year of existence while raising \$16,500 for the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society.

"Our organization doesn't get any ongoing funding," explained Kim Darwin, president of the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society. "So these types of things are what keep us operational — the Pine 'N' Sandy troupe partnered with us again, and we couldn't do this without them."

Darwin highlighted Gibsons-based housing projects funded by the Affordable Housing Society, including long-term rental units on Franklin Road (now fully occupied), and 40 housing units on Shaw Road due to open in 2024.

The live show, paired with a silent auction fundraiser, featured 11 characters whose personas are pillars of periodic Pine 'N' Sandy lounge acts at the Gibsons Legion. As protagonists, Poysin Mercury and Randy Darlin' assumed familiar seasonal archetypes: a bah-humbug Christmas skeptic and an overworked holiday devotee. Darlin's performance embodied wide-eyed wonder and sunny affection for his mercurial employer.

Musical numbers advanced the plot as it careened toward Mercury's inevitable redemption. Manly Nipkiss, who lip-synced while wearing shimmering cowboy garb, performed a reverse strip tease to become a svelte, silver-haired Santa Claus. Hot Carl and Bindiya House, in complementary fur stoles, danced to an irony-drenched version of *Baby, It's Cold Outside*.

Divas Candi Strutts and Shaylo, in iridescent gowns and capes, belted a duet reflecting the affection and support, which group members say have become hallmarks of the Pine 'N'



MICHAEL GURNEY PHOTO

Candi Strutts and Shaylo deliver a duet number during the holiday performance by Pine 'N' Sandy.

Sandy community since its establishment last year.

"Sometimes you get the odd person [from the public] mumbling their own homophobic stuff under their breath," observed Shayne Forster, the group's coordinator — and portrayer of Shaylo. "But that's a rarity. We've never had any formal negative feedback. Our fan base has grown and we do a lot of volunteering as well."

Earlier this fall, Pine 'N' Sandy participated in a Gibsons event called Drawn to Drag. Performers modelled for artists in a variety of outfits and poses, with proceeds dedicated to the queer youth drop-in and gender diversity network programs of Sunshine Coast Community Services. Members have led drag storytime at local libraries. Candi Strutts offers lash tutorials at London Drugs.

The group's fans have also chosen a collective name: the Pine Cones. The sobriquet was officially endorsed by the Pine 'N' Sandy artists at its October

show. "Now we have supporters of us — the Pine Cones — who are always asking if they can help," added Forster.

Each routine in Saturday's spectacular reached new heights, sometimes literally. Davis Gay danced to *It's a Marshmallow World* adorned in a rhinestone-studded suit, teal cape and a towering topper apparently fashioned from sugar candy. Van De Weller, sporting a crinoline, waistcoat and a prodigious beard, crooned to mammoth snowballs. During intermission, children ran to the performers, flushed at their brush with celebrity.

The artists triumphed over minor snafus. When a St. Lucia crown worn by Davis Gay tumbled to the stage, scattering greenery and candles, Gay shrugged, leaned in, and brought the routine to a scintillating climax.

Details of Affordable Housing Society projects are online at [affordablesc.org](http://affordablesc.org); aspiring Pine Cones can follow Pine 'N' Sandy via Instagram: @pineandsandydrag.com.

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