New Year’s Revelations

Party with seven HIVer artists who’ll rock your 2005

January 1, 2005 By Stephanie Fairyington

Who: Brian Grillo

Then: Howled lead vocals in his LA punk band, *Extra Fancy*.
Now: Touring for his September 2004 solo album, *Stomping Back on Fire*. Go to www.spitshinerecords.com for a listen.
Quote: “‘Sustiva’ is my favorite song on the new album. I wrote it after the first night I had to take it. I felt like I was coming off a bad acid trip.”

Who: Alexandra Billings
Then: Won rave reviews opposite Greg Louganis in a 1999 production of Larry Kramer’s anti-Reagan farce *Just Say No*.
Now: Starring in *Diva Diaries*, a musical about drag queens, and will appear on *ER* and the made-for-TV version of *Romy and Michele*.
Quote: “On *ER*, everyone was so nice and down-to-earth, I almost forgot I was on an Emmy Award–winning TV show.”

Who: Shawn Decker
Then: Started a witty Web diary (www.mypetvirus.com), a *POZ* column and a synth-pop band, Synthetic Division.
Now: Plans to publish his HIV and hemophilia memoir, tentatively titled *My Pet Virus*, crammed with raucous anecdotes and tips on how to live positively.
Quote: “Writing my memoirs was about discovering how I went from someone who wouldn’t speak about being HIV positive to someone who won’t shut up.”

Who: Sharon Sopher
Then: Wrote, produced and directed the Emmy Award–winning and Oscar-nominated PBS film *Witness to Apartheid*.
Now: A cross-country road trip in her HIV-info-packed bus, the Goddessmobile, to show her documentary *HIV Goddesses: Stories of Courage—Diary of a Filmmaker.*

Quote: “Going cross-country with my film, my message is going to be: Do you know where his wiener has been? If not, then you better be damn careful.”

Who: Bill T. Jones

Then: Choreographed the controversial 1994 death-defying dance classic *Still/Here*.
Now: A June solo show at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and a new work titled *Blind Date*, also in June, at New York's Aaron Davis Hall.
Quote: "My [dance] influences come from varied places—HIV is just one more. It also casts a particular light on any success I have."

Who: Mark Weigle
Then: Queerifed '80s classics on his album *Different and the Same*, like morphing "867-5309"'s Jenny into Jimmy.
Now: The February release of his double CD, *Soulsex*. One disc focuses on being gay; the other is all about s-e-x. Find out more at www.markweigle.com.
Quote: "The LA Gay Men's Chorus plans to perform my songs, and LOGO, the new gay channel, may feature my music in a film. It's going to be a banner year."

Who: Barton Benes
Then: Shredded money, splattered blood and sculpted cremains in earlier artworks, which appeared in his 2002 book, *Curiosa*.
Now: Upcoming gallery shows of multicolor found goodies, meticulously classified and encased, at the Lennon Weinberg Gallery in New York City and Europe.
Quote: "I think the reason I am using colors now is because I am happy. I have a boyfriend."

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/New-Year-s-Revelations-165-7532