# Undress for Success

For 16 years, Broadway's hottest stars have dropped trou for HIV/AIDS, in the spectacularly fleshy revue Broadway Bares. A production of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, it has raised $5.6 million—and priceless awareness—for the cause. Here, POZ slaps it some skin.

September 1, 2008 By Michael Musto

---

Naked, writhing bodies can actually help the fight against AIDS. In fact, for 16 years, *Broadway Bares*—a lavish revue of legit dancers shticking and disrobing for one night only—has raised more than $5.6 million for the New York City–based Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, which works with the Actors Fund to help anyone in the entertainment industry living with HIV. The sellout crowd at Roseland Ballroom—where the event has played to enormous, sweaty success since '99—will tell you that they're there to fight the epidemic, especially given its effect on the Broadway community. But press a little harder, and they'll add, with eyes popping and tongues dropping, that they also wouldn't mind gaping at some lovely Broadway flesh, hubba hubba.

And they get to see miles of it, honey. In the show, steaming-hot chorus boys and girls strut their chests and butts so aggressively that last year, guest star Leslie Kritzer looked around and cracked, "I didn't know that Equity's health insurance pays for these!"

This year's *Broadway Bares 18: Wonderland*, which unfurled June 22, was a saucy Denis Jones–directed romp mixing Lewis Carroll, *Spring Awakening* and a vaguely Michael Lucasy aesthetic. The looser–than–Lindsay Lohan plot had repressed schoolgirl Alice being led to sexual liberation by a barely dressed rabbit. Along her journey, she found a stripping, rapping Humpty Dumpty, the queen's lovely tarts (one black and one white) and—after the show—creator/producer Jerry Mitchell asking the crowd, "Have you ever seen so much beautiful ass in your life?"

Then came the best part of the night—"Rotation," when the dancers slither out into the audience and solicit bucks to be ceremoniously placed in their gyrating crotches. And no, Jerry, you've never seen so many high-toned theater people rush to donate just so they can plunge the crisp bills into a hot guy's thong.

"Dancers are born to strip…it's a natural state for us," writes Mitchell in his foreword for the new book *Broadway Bares: Backstage Pass*, a photographic chronicle, which has about as much text as the show does costumes (buy it at rizzoliusa.com, where all of the book's sales go directly to Broadway Cares). Mitchell—the *Hairspray* and *Legally Blonde* choreographer who hosts Bravo's *Step It Up and Dance*—spent the early '90s as a loinclothed Indian in *The Will Rogers Follies*,

making the ladies and gay boys scream over his lithe body of work.

A friend urged him to dance in that outfit on the bar at New York gay joint Splash and make some money for AIDS, and that led to the first *Broadway Bares*, which was held there on April 8, 1992, and made $8,000. Like all of us, *Bares* had been born naked, bright-eyed and ready to serve.

Over the years, the cast has grown from six to 235, and that doesn't count all the volunteers who seem so anxious to get close to the performers to help! The star drop-ins have ranged from Broadway bear Harvey Fierstein—who claims, "When I hit the catwalk, I was savagely pulled down onto the ground and gang-donated"—to Tom Wopat, who obligingly shed his T-shirt when an audience member yelled, "Take it off," prompting the actor to reflect, "One day this will be known as a low point in my career."

But the real stars are the Broadway gypsies who put out so provocatively year after year. One of them, Michael Curry, has done three *Broadway Bares* and says he's never felt self-conscious about it, especially since he'd already been shirtless in Cabaret. "I've always said that *Broadway Bares* is the most fun you can have with your clothes off," he told *POZ*. "The energy at Roseland is electric. You basically feel like a rock star!"

And since the show—which I affectionately call *Buttocks Over Broadway*—is about making like Gypsy Rose Lee, even wardrobe malfunctions can turn into triumphs. "In 2001's show, *Space Oddity*, my pasty fell off," remembers dancer Rachelle Rak, laughing. "So I threw the other one at the audience!" Rak had a whole other pair of provocative playthings on her this year in *Wonderland*—a few days before the event, she told me, "Come say 'hello.' I'll be the one with two midgets under my dress!"

Meanwhile, *Wonderland*'s rabbit hole also unearthed Nick Adams, the *Chorus Line* performer and 2(x)ist model who's a natural for this pecsy extravaganza. Adams told me that he didn't need to alter his diet and workout for months in advance, like a lot of the dancers do. He's already a slave to perfection! And it's specimens like him that have helped *Broadway Bares* funders attract such a mix of good Samaritans and shady sex addicts. I'm currently writing a check with one hand…

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/broadway-bares-hiv-15118-1165