



The Last Session in 1997 in New York City... and in Denver This Week!

Steve Schalchlin discusses his musical, *The Last Session*; inspired by his mid-90s survival thanks to the advances in HIV treatment.

October 30, 2023 By [Shawn Decker](#)

If you're in or around Denver, you should know [The Last Session is in town](#) for a limited run. Don't know about The Last Session? Then you probably don't know much about one of the guys responsible for it, musician and all-around wonderful human being, Steve Schalchlin.

The Last Session is a brilliant time capsule for what many went through in the mid-90s. Those who

were fortunate to be in the right place at the right time during the worst health of their lives. On October 17, I saw Steve post that it was the 26-year anniversary of The Last Session's off-Broadway opening night.

I was there and it was one of those epic-wins-for-the-good-guys kind of nights that are unforgettable.

I'm overjoyed that audiences will once again have the opportunity to experience The Last Session. Since Steve's a natural at promo and is also one of my Godparents, he was forced to say yes when I asked him if I could interview him about The Last Session's history as well as it's upcoming run in Denver. Enjoy!

Shawn: Steve! You just turned 70 so this isn't a fair question. But... do you remember where you were on this date in 1997?

Steve: I was standing in front of an Off-Broadway theater at the opening of my hilarious AIDS musical!

The Last Session- my favorite musical of all-time! Tell the folks a little bit about TLS.

It's based on the songs I wrote while dying of AIDS. Writing and singing them kept me alive for a year until the new drugs were released. Music power, baby!

I am so thankful you have had way more sessions since. Do you have any particularly vivid memories from that opening night?

I remember a young woman approaching me and saying how she was using songs from the show as musical therapy for young children with severe autism - and how the song "Going It Alone" stopped the entire chaotic room in its tracks.

Music power, indeed. It's such an emotional outlet, as performer and listener. Before I opened up about HIV I really leaned into my favorite artists when it weighed on me. I think our ears- our hearts- are drawn to what we need.

Is there any musician or band that has helped you out in particularly difficult times?

When I got good and frustrated at that time, I'd get in my car and turn Creedence Clearwater up to full volume and drive around LA.

As a fellow longterm survivor, what's living with HIV been like over the last decade or so?

Living with it means accepting it and handling it as part of my daily routine. What, from the

outside looks horrific — pill schedules giving myself shots, doctor visits, “bad days,” the exhaustion of simply having to always keep track and stay aware of your limitations — it becomes routine.

As the Stoics say, “The obstacle is the Path.” I have AIDS, so my attention to it becomes my path through it.

Yeah, if it wasn't HIV/AIDS it'd have been some other obstacle, right? Thanks for sharing your experiences through your art. And with so much heart. Circling back to The Last Session. Tell the wonderful people of Denver and beyond why they should [go see The Last Session in Denver](#) this week.

They should go because this cast is amazing. It's rarely produced. It's safe for your parents and it's hilarious.

Sold!

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