

From: Meghan Paul <mepaul1210@gmail.com>

To: pdfconvert@pdfconvert.me

Subject: Fwd: MAX Weekly Newsletter Update – Hamilton, SFGMC, and More Part 1/2

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Weekly Newsletter Part 1/2 - March 19, 2019

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EVENTS THIS WEEK

March Third Thursday Thursday, March 21st at 5:30 p.m.



This Thursday join MAX SF at Beaux Bar from 5:30 pm to 8 pm for MAX's "Third Thursday". Join a superb crowd of gay men and their friends for food, conversation, and spectacular performances at the nearby piano. Tasty cocktails at happy hour prices! Appetizers provided!

Admission is \$5; complimentary for dues-paying members.

RSVP on Meetup [here](#) for a fun time! Or if you prefer, click [here](#) to RSVP on the website.

MAX Goes to *Hamilton*! Thursday, March 21st at 6:15 p.m.



This Thursday join MAX for the musical and cultural phenomenon that is *Hamilton*!

Hamilton tells the story of America's Founding Father Alexander Hamilton. Featuring a score that blends hip-hop, jazz, blues, rap, R&B, and Broadway, *Hamilton* is the story of American then, as told by America now. In 2016 *Hamilton* received a record-setting 16 Tony nominations, winning 11, as well as receiving a 2016 Grammy Award and the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. For more information about the SHN production of *Hamilton*, please click [here](#).

The show starts at 7:00 pm. **For attendees from MAX, a VIP reception will be held in the Orpheum Theater Blue Room starting at 6:15 pm.**

Buy your tickets for the 7:00 pm March 21st performance [here](#). Orchestra tickets start at \$246 and mezzanine tickets start at \$214 (no discounts are available for *Hamilton*).

Then register on our website [here](#) to **RSVP for the MAX pre-show VIP reception in the Orpheum Theater Blue Room.**

For any questions or for help with ticket availability, please contact the event champion and MAX SF liaison to SHN, MAX SF Board Member Nick Wade at wade.nicky@yahoo.com.

SHN Orpheum Theatre
1192 Market St., San Francisco

SFGMC: The Brits Are Coming Friday, March 22nd at 8:00 p.m.



On Friday join MAX SF Community Partner, the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus (SFGMC) for a salute to our British friends and the extraordinary music and artists they have shared with us.

Accompanied by a five-piece band, SFGMC will take audiences on a vibrant and varied journey into British music legacies from **Handel** and Sir William Walton to **The Beatles** and **Adele** to **Sir Elton John** and, of course, **Queen!**

Grab your mates for a smashing evening of memorable music, cheeky humor, and the posh stylings of 300 queens (minus Elizabeth).

Special guests from the African-American Shakespeare Company join in the fun with their twist on a rousing scene from the classic comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

To purchase tickets, please click [here](#).

Davies Music Hall
201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

March Fourth at Finn Sunday, March 24th at 3:00 p.m.



This Sunday join us at [Finn Town](#) for our March **Fourth at Finn!** Enjoy a fun afternoon of conversation, cocktails and delicious appetizers thanks to the wonderful team at one of our favorite Castro hotspots.

MAX Board member Nick Wade will be hosting the event, and we'll have our own private space at the back of the restaurant. Held on the fourth Sunday of each month, MAX SF's Fourth at Finn events provide an opportunity to get to know other men in the MAX community in a friendly space.

RSVP on Meetup [here](#) for a fun Sunday afternoon! Or if you prefer, RSVP on the website [here](#). There is no cover charge.

MAX STORIES

In case you missed this story last week, we are recapping the fourth and final of a series of articles on the MAX trip to India in October of 2018.

MAX India Part IV: THE PEARLS IN INDIA'S NECKLACE

by Phil Walker



After visiting Delhi and the Taj Mahal in Agra, we were off to visit the 2 most beautiful cities in northern India-- Jaipur and Udaipur.

Jaipur is called "The Pink City." It got that title because all of the buildings and walls are painted a shade of pink. (Actually, I thought it was more Santa Fe Sienna, but who am I to say?) Jaipur is centered on an outdoor astrological observatory; palaces with carved windows so the female inhabitants could look out but not be seen inside; a hunting lodge palace, which appears to float in the middle of a lake; and elephants.



One of the greatest highlights of our trip was spending an afternoon with elephants. We painted, fed, bathed, and then rode them. If you have never been near these remarkable, gentle creatures, this was a powerful and moving experience. Humans are naturally drawn to them.

Gary Thackeray was king of the Mahoots (elephant trainers). James Claffey demonstrated his style while riding a female, and Brian Richards showed his artistic flair while painting a forehead. Refat looked like the "Jungle Boy" atop his elephant.

For photos of Jaipur:

[Jaipur Video 1](#)

[Jaipur Video 2](#)

[Jaipur Video 3](#)



After Jaipur, several of us traveled to the peak of our trip: Udaipur and the Taj Lake Palace Hotel. Udaipur is known as the City of Lakes. An Indian prince owned the area. The area was dry. He wanted to own a palace which floated in the middle of a lake. So, he had his summer palace built on a hilltop and flooded the valleys around. As a result, the area is now home to a major lake with a palace floating in the middle--the Taj Lake Palace Hotel.

Udaipur is magnificent! Once the prince built his palace, other royals came and built their own palaces surrounding the lake. As a result, at night, the illuminated palaces form a necklace around the lake. You spend your time there taking boat tours of the lake, dining at magnificent outdoor restaurants, and touring the City Palace (where Octopussy was filmed).

Photos of Udaipur:

[Udaipur Video](#)



The Taj Lake Palace Hotel is the number 1 hotel in the world. This hotel was the Raja's summer palace, created to look like it floated in the middle of the lake. The Raja invited Jackie Kennedy Onassis to visit the palace. She loved it and told him: "You should turn this into a hotel." He did.

The week before our arrival, the King of Saudi Arabia had held the wedding for one of his sons at the Taj Lake Palace Hotel. (I must have been traveling when my invitation was sent...)

We found ourselves at the Taj Lake Palace through sheer luck. The normal price of the hotel is \$1,100 per night. Too much, so we decided to have dinner there. When we called to make a reservation, we were told that only hotel guests could dine there. Luckily, it was a Sunday, and the hotel was not too busy. James and Phil looked at each other and said, "What do you think?" They went onto [hotels.com](#) and were able to get a room for \$430.00. Then, when they applied their [hotels.com](#) credits, the cost came down to \$260.00. Done!



That night turned out to be the absolute high point of the India trip. You take a boat to get to the hotel. When you arrive, a turbaned doorman escorts you, holding a large Indian ceremonial umbrella over you. The rooms were heavenly. Celebrities lounged by the pool. (This is the hotel where Anderson Cooper and his partner, Ben Masani, stayed when they were mending their relationship after the paparazzi took pictures of Ben Masani canoodling with his former boyfriend in Central Park while Anderson was in Yugoslavia with Kelly Ripa...)



Phil had his astrology done by an Indian astrologer in his 70's who was a former Chemical Engineer (very good reading). Gin and tonics were drunk while Rajahastani singers and dancers performed folk dances on the terrace and sunset fell.



That evening, Phil, James, and Refat dined on the roof of the hotel. With sitar music playing in the background, they sat having cocktails looking out across the lake at the illuminated palaces where Octopussy had been filmed. While they grew hungry smelling lamb being roasted outdoors, they could hear the sounds of the Hindu Durga Puja Celebration going on in the streets of the City. The streets were filled with people banging drums, chanting, and dancing amid flashing lights behind the statue of a Hindu goddess.



Finally, at exactly 11 p.m., all of the lights on the illuminated palaces went out. The night was plunged into darkness. Only candles flickered on each table atop the roof of the Taj Lake Palace. James called for a nightcap and savored sitting in the number 1 hotel in the world.

The next afternoon we departed. To say that James, Phil, and Refat practically had to be dragged out of the Taj Lake Palace would be an understatement. You have never seen 3 sadder faces than when they boarded the boat to be taken to land and driven to the airport.

Photos of Taj Lake Palace Hotel:

[Taj Lake Palace Hotel Video 1](#)

[Taj Lake Palace Hotel Video 2](#)

That afternoon, they flew from Udaipur to Delhi where they rested several hours. And then, at 2 a.m., their flights departed for the US.

MAX is hosting two trips to India in 2019. The first runs from March 28 through April 13, 2019. Ten people are currently signed up for that trip. It will retrace most of the steps of the first MAX India trip and add in a new destination--Neemrana Fort Palace--a fort from the 1400s which has been renovated into a luxury hotel by a gay couple from Delhi.

MAX will host a second trip to India in the first two weeks of November 2019. That trip will head to the Pushkar Camel Fair--a gathering of thousands of nomads and camel traders/herders in Northern India. The festival is filled with magicians, snake charmers, astrologers, hypnotists, musicians, camel races, camel decorating, and religious ceremonies. Some have called it "Burning Man on Acid!" That trip will also feature Delhi, the Taj Mahal, and the Taj Lake Palace Hotel. For information, email Phil Walker at phil@askphilwalker.com.

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-- Paul Munro, Programs and Events Chair, MAX SF

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