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The skin game: show and sell

Male celebs dare to bare for success

by Howie Sandoval

Skin has always been in, but now it's more out than ever before. Today, many artists and public personalities are revealing themselves to sell albums and tickets. But does it work?

"Showing skin has definitely increased my tour's visibility," says DJ Scotty Thomson, currently spinning big room clubs across the nation on the Show It! Tour, sponsored by sportswear designer Andrew Christian. Thomson is scheduled to bring his buffed body and driving beats to Ibiza Nightclub in Wilmington on July 28.

"I'm in the business of creating fun nights and it is fun to let it all hang out," he says.

Billy Prescott, a TV news anchor on Canada's "Naked News Daily Male," agrees. "In today's overcrowded media climate, it's important to find something that will make you stand out from the rest. If you got it, flaunt it," he says with a laugh.

It's not only gay celebs daring to bare it all. Seventeen-year-old actor Daniel Radcliffe's ("Harry Potter") full monty in the London

stage production of "Equus" sparked an international media frenzy. He's nearing the end of his run with the show and blogs are reporting that "Billy Elliot" star Jamie Bell will be taking his place.

Blogs are also abuzz that "Beverly Hills, 90210" alum Ian Ziering, who is a contestant on the current season of "Dancing With The Stars," will soon be appearing in *Playgirl* magazine.

"It would be the best decision for his career," says Thomson. "Ziering needs to shake it up a little. Appearing in *Playgirl* would get people talking about him again."

But not everyone takes the issue as lighthearted. Seth Gold, an attractive young DJ currently headlining *Playgirl* magazine's Black Out club tour, has declined requests to take his clothes off. "I know sex sells but I don't want to be objectified. I prefer to gain attention with my music," he says.

Gold's position is the prevailing sentiment for many artists. But the problem, others say, is that talent alone isn't enough anymore. Today, image is an undeniable building block for constructing a successful career.

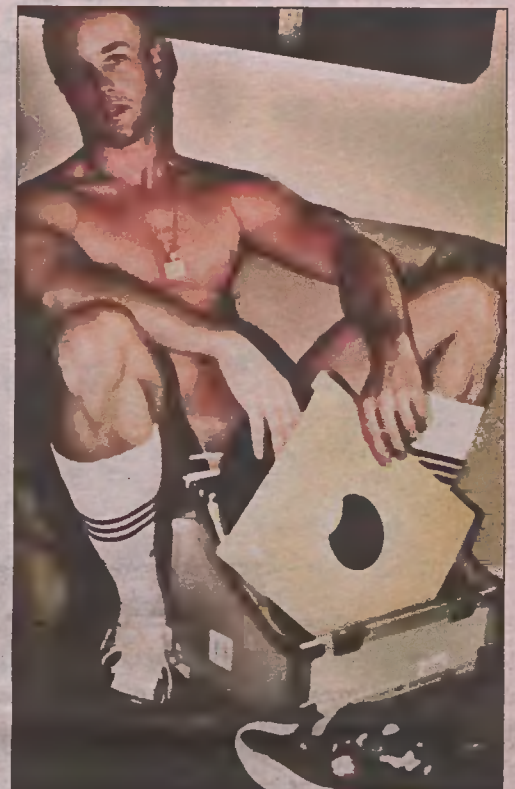
Perhaps no gay performer understands

this better than singer-songwriter Noa Tylo. He has promoted the release of his new album, "Let's Do It!," by appearing on several LGBT magazine covers this year in various states of undress.

"I express myself through image and music," he explains. "My new album is about freedom — not being constrained by old ideas and expectations. It's about being yourself and not what others tell you to be. Therefore, I think any nudity I do with the release of the album is relevant. It's part of my message."

On the other hand, Tylo says, "I don't believe the media is only interested in me for my body, however flattering that may be. I think they write about me because I have something to say. My ideas are as provocative as my photos."

A quick scan of the music aisle reveals that the skin trend isn't limited to artists willing to reveal their own bodies. Sexy album covers are ubiquitous on music marketed to gay men. But does the image really equal sales? "It does," says Ricardo Torres Ortiz, a gay man and director of A&R at Ultra Records, one of America's top dance music labels.



DJ Scotty Thomson says his career has profited from his propensity for showing skin.

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Faith in America takes on the right

'Call to Courage' campaign will come to Greenville, S.C.

by Jim Baxter . Contributing Writer

When David took on Goliath, he wasn't quite so organized. Mitchell Gold's slingshot, however, is a full-scale media campaign. His target is anti-gay bigotry couched in Bible verse.

Gold is CEO of "Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams," a successful furniture manufacturer located in North Carolina. The company has annual sales of more than \$70 million and employs over 700 people.

"Last year Jimmy Creech and I realized that an organization just didn't exist that was focused on educating people about religion-based bigotry," Gold said at a May 3 press conference.

Creech, a former minister, is now executive director of Faith in America — the organization started and funded by Gold. Gold is 56, gay and Jewish. Creech is not gay, 62, and Christian.

Together, they've planned an advertising



Mitchell Gold and Jimmy Creech with Soulforce in Colorado Springs last year.

campaign to educate Americans about the historical misuse of religious teachings.

"During my 29 years of ministry, it became clear to me that the fundamental reason for the discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people is religion," Creech said. "As someone committed to the Christian church and the ministry, I felt it was incumbent upon me to begin to challenge the misuse of religion."

Challenge he did, and it cost him dearly. Creech lost his minister's credentials with the United Methodist Church after he performed a

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Soulforce Equality Riders head for home

Nationwide effort affects change across country

by Page Schilt

On April 26, 52 Soulforce Equality Riders bid farewell to the massive buses that served as their surrogate home for eight weeks on the road. Emblazoned with the slogan "Faith Forward Social Justice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People," the two buses carried these remarkable young adults to 32 Christian colleges on two separate routes.

They began and ended in Minneapolis, but traveled as far as the Pacific Northwest and the Atlantic Southeast on their mission to start conversations about faith, sexuality, and inclusion.

Now the buses have stopped rolling, but the impact of the 2007 Equality Ride is still unfolding across the nation.

All of the colleges on the 2007 Equality



Equality Riders onboard the eastern route make a stop at Gordon College in Wenham, Mass. Photo: Adam Britt

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