

**B**BCM, short for Bad Boy Club of Montreal, produces events that are big, beautiful and transcendent. They are also painfully difficult to describe accurately. You have to see it to know it. And you have to know it to decide how it does or does not fit in your life.

Here's your chance. On May 19-23, BBCM is presenting Hot & Dry, five days of parties that climax at Club Métropolis on May 21 and 22. The event combines world class DJs with high-energy visuals to create a spectacle unlike any other on the planet. The theme of this year's event is Egyptian – but not the Egypt of gay arrests and imprisonment, no, this Egypt is the desert land of fantasy and excess: think Cleopatra.

#### From Friends to Foundation

BBCM started in 1991 when a group of friends decided to throw a big party.

"In the beginning, we started off with just one party, which was the Black and Blue," recalls BBCM Director of External Affairs Caroline Rousse. "Originally, the cofounders wanted to recreate what was going on in the States and be part of the Circuit. They wanted their friends to come to Montreal because they really liked their city. They started by inviting their friends for the first Black and Blue. It was a by-invitation-only party, but 800 people showed up."

The Circuit is a series of annual events that take place around North America. The events are one part marathon, one part disco, one part family reunion with drugs, sex, music, and lights thrown in to boot. What lures someone to a Circuit party can be anything from curiosity to spirituality, a deep love of club music, or a desire to be part of something much, much bigger than themselves.

Over the years, Black & Blue became a fixture of the Circuit and grew to a seven-day, multi-faceted social, cultural, sport, and party extravaganza that brings more than 80,000 participants from North America and beyond. BBCM began producing other events throughout the year: Bal des Boys on New Year's Eve; Red Party for Valentine's Day; Twist during Montreal gay pride in August; and Hot & Dry Weekend in May.

"Hot and Dry is our second-biggest event," said Rousse. "It is the end of the winter here and people go wild."

Rousse added, "For this party,



## Montreal's Spring Weather Forecast: Hot & Dry, Lots of Dancing

by Ric Kasini Kadour

we've been booking more progressive DJs. For other events, we have a more typical 'gay' sound." This year, DJs include DJ Vibe from Lisbon, DJ Desyn Masiello from London, Robert de la

the twelve-hour party. The provocative Radical 5 and the BBCM dancers will present "Queen of the Nile." Singing diva Stephane Moraille will perform live.

Proceeds from these events sup-

**The BBCM Foundation has granted over \$1.1 million to gay and AIDS-service organizations. Its events have generated over \$500 million in economic and tourism spin-offs.**

Gauthier, and local-boy DJs Patrick Guay and Gilles Jr.

#### Walk Like an Egyptian

"We also have a theme that we work around every year. This year is Egyptian-themed. We have a dancers show. We are talking about Cleopatra," said Rousse. BBCM works with several artists and a team of dancers to weave various shows, imaginative décor, and special effects into

port the foundation's charitable work.

The BBCM Foundation has granted over CAN\$1.1 million to gay and AIDS-service organizations. Its events have generated over CAN\$500 million in economic and tourism spin-offs. Their success is the result of a few unique factors, not the least of which is the broader social and cultural conditions of Montreal and Quebec, including tourism promotion support from the city and the province.

#### World-Class Acceptance

While the core audience of BBCM events is gay men, a greater diversity of participants makes them more welcoming than other circuit parties.

"For some reason, in Montreal, people really like to mingle together," said Rousse. "They go out just have fun, so what you look like really doesn't matter so much." Men and women, gay and straight, old and young; when BBCM throws a party, a wide cross-section of Montrealers get involved.

BBCM also has developed a reputation for being fiercely progressive and forward-thinking when it comes to producing a party. They look globally for talented musicians, rely on highly skilled professionals for lights and décor, and stay mindful of the health and well being of their audience.

"We know that people do take drugs and there is no way for us to stop them. We realize that it is a problem," said Rousse. "We do the best we can. We give them information. We do lots of research about the effects of drugs. And tell people to be careful." BBCM's website offers clear, succinct information about how ecstasy, GHB, crystal meth, and other club drugs work in the body. The site includes information on benefits and potential risks. The site also offers tips for safe and fun partying.

For those who have never been to a BBCM event, or any circuit party, for that matter, Rousse has some advice: "Dance a lot, make lots of new friends, and relax."

Hyperbole is easy when talking about BBCM events. One could say it's a few thousand mostly gay men dancing shirtless for twelve hours, taking a nap, and doing it again. You could say, it's a bunch of cranked-up, bitchy muscle queens spending 72 hours getting wasted and screwed to monotonous, repetitive music. Or, you could say, it's a deeply spiritual convergence where music and lights are the vehicle participants use to enter sacred space, to transcend the mundane and elevate their lives and the lives of those around them.

Rousse's best advice is also the best description of the event: "It is a state of mind." ▼

*Ric Kasini Kadour is a writer, a men's health advocate, and a Bear who lives in Montreal and Vermont.*