

“THE BLACK COMMUNITY IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LINE WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING INFORMATION, EVEN WHEN WE’VE BEEN SO HARD HIT BY THE DISEASE. I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT BY GOING PUBLIC WITH THIS [BEING HIV +], I CAN GIVE OTHER PEOPLE THE COURAGE TO FACE IT.”

SYLVESTER (1948-1988) was an African-American musician, performer and AIDS activist. After moving to San Francisco in the 70’s, Sylvester joined the legendary pan-sexual performance troupe The Cockettes, performing songs from Bessie Smith’s catalogue. Later, Sylvester made two rock albums in the early seventies before crafting his proto-House disco sound in the late 70’s. Often singing in falsetto and dressing in flamboyantly beautiful outfits, the disco star was unapologetically queer and Black. He performed his brand of high energy dance music in androgynous costumes, often based on Egyptian or African historical figures. Sylvester refused to conform his public persona, even in the face of pressure from his manager and his record label. After being diagnosed with HIV in the 80’s, Sylvester used his celebrity to raise awareness about the spread of HIV within the Black community.

CHANCES DANCES invites you to celebrate the magic of Sylvester and all queer revolutionaries, deviants, and witches! These masks portray a selection of radical queers and allies, some from the past and some from the present, some recognized and others hidden. We hope their lives and work will inspire current and future generations to

SUMMON A NEW QUEER REALITY!

We offer this mask as a symbol of power through knowledge and community through history! Please pass it on!

to see the other 26 masks and other info on
Chances events, go to

CHANCESDANCES.ORG

Chances Dances is a LEZ BI GAY TRANS INTERSEX HETERO DANCE PARTY that functions to bring together the varied queer communities of Chicago.

It happens on the third Monday of every month,
at Subterranean, 2011 North Avenue