



## Matthew Harvat: Party Professional

By Jason Freeman

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National media-recognized event planner reveals his themes for Chicago-summer gaiety

In a period where the prominence of the circuit-party industry is flailing at best, [Matthew Harvat's](#) 1990's mega dance-party stemmed event design/coordination, performance management company, [Circuit MOM Productions](#), is exponentially on the rise—as this year's Shedd Aquarium gala makes evident.

"Quite the massive undertaking to cocktail, feed, dance and entertain 850 of Chicago's social leaders, including Governor Pat Quinn," Harvat says of his winning out on the bid to produce the aquarium's annual fundraiser. "But I think our vision on how to shake things up a bit and turn out a fresh take on your standard black-tie event went over very well. Custom seven-foot tall jelly costumes on the dancers that lifted off during the production number and raised up to the ceiling, a custom built LED wall as our stage backdrop, 10-foot sea dragon stilt walkers and sexy go-go boys and girls made for a wild and colorful eight-hour party."

With a client list inclusive of The Miller Brewing Company, [Sidetrack](#), Bacardi, Stoli, Live Nation, and Illinois Lottery, Harvat's Chicago-based company is known coast to coast (and in Canada too) for its grand and extravagant use of pageantry, positive energy and panache in large-scale event productions. So much so, *Out Magazine* named Harvat as Chicago's 2011 "Nighthawk"—a leading Windy City promoter and producer for which to watch out.

"*Out Magazine* has always been very kind to me over the years, but I was completely blown away and honored when they called and told me I had been chosen..." Harvat says of the title. "Chicago has been very quiet the last few years in terms of the larger gay party events, so I was a little concerned I wouldn't live up to the hype of the other city's guys, but every city has had the same downsized mentality for events—whether it's in their frequency or actual size in venues and budgets. I've been a resident DJ for *Out Magazine's* Chicago events, opening DJ for many Live Nation concert acts ... My promotions and events are far different from the other Nighthawks since I am not specifically in the clubs as much, but that is all going to change this year with pride."

In kind with Circuit MOM's industrialized dance-party roots, as well as Harvat's predilection for wild and colorful affairs, Harvat has signed on to four LGBT-targeted parties at Chicago's [House of Blues](#) this summer, donned "REVOLUTION." These events—PRIDE REVOLUTION June 24, RED COAT REVOLUTION July 23, and WILD WEST REVOLUTION for Market Days August 13—bring LGBT-community famed DJs Brett Henrichsen, Roland Belmares and Joe Gautreaux, as well as UK's Remixer/Producer Lee Dagger of BIMBO JONES [sic]. All stand to be reminiscent of the '90s circuit but seasoned with flavors apt to its preceding millennium's evolved palette.

"It's been so much fun to design new, fresh and fun visuals, amazing light shows and even dust off Circuit MOM [Harvat's stage performing alter ego for which his company was named] for a return to the Chicago stage for performances during [REVOLUTION]," Harvat says. "I love what I do ... The feedback has been great so far and traffic to my website has increased significantly, which will hopefully help get people back out and dancing."

Tickets for the REVOLUTION are on sale at the [House of Blues](#) box office (329 N. Dearborn) or at [houseofblues.com](http://houseofblues.com), as well as at CRAM Boutique (3331 N. Broadway). More information and updates regarding [Circuit MOM Productions](#) are posted to the company's website at [www.circuitmom.com](http://www.circuitmom.com)