

“Broadway Bares: License to Strip” Raises Record \$2.5M to Fight HIV [VIDEOS]

Watch highlights from the 2026 spy-tastic, high-stakes seduction benefitting Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

June 25, 2026 By Broadway Cares/Equity Fight AIDS

More than 200 of New York City’s fiercest dancers accomplished their mission of infiltrating Hammerstein Ballroom for Broadway Bares: License to Strip on Sunday, June 21, 2026, delivering an evening of high-stakes seduction and larger-than-life spectacle.

The espionage-inspired production immersed two sold-out audiences in a world of covert operations, barely classified secrets, liberation and love, raising a record-breaking \$2,534,428 for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, which produces the evening. Included in that total was a record \$1,251,972 raised through Stripathon, the online fundraiser led by the show’s cast and crew.



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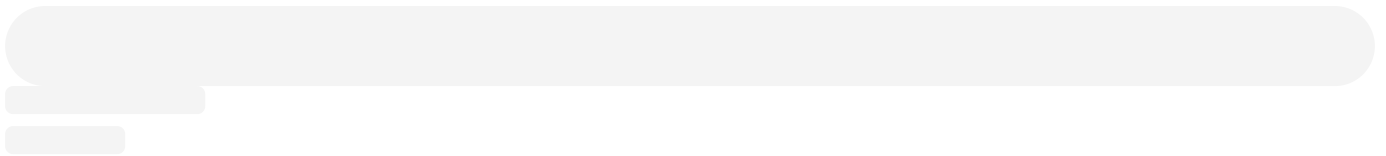
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The evening's success will help hundreds of thousands of people in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., including members of the theater and entertainment community, access meals and medication, healthcare, housing assistance, counseling and other essential services. At a time when many communities face growing economic uncertainty and devastating funding cuts, this support makes a lifesaving impact at a critical moment.

The evening began at Mission MI69, where master provocateur J. Harrison Ghee challenged DeMarius Copes, Jimin Moon and Joey Taranto to put the "ass" in assassin and compete for the coveted title of Top Provocateur. Their mission: to stop a rogue artificial intelligence agent from destroying Broadway. The challenge exploded into a pulse-pounding opening number filled with espionage, seduction and high-stakes showmanship, choreographed by Broadway Bares: License to Strip Director Kellen Stancil.

As the evening unfolded, the agents encountered a star-studded team at Mission MI69 headquarters, including 2026 Tony Award winner Shoshana Bean, Taurean Everett, Frankie Grande, Sydney James Harcourt, 2026 Tony winner Qween Jean and 2026 Tony nominee Layton Williams. Together, they guided, distracted and occasionally derailed the competing agents as the race to save Broadway intensified.

From a sizzling Sherlock Holmes to a purring Pink Panther, and from coquettish Carmen Sandiego to a buff and bare James Bond, the trio of spies-in-training met a bevy of bodacious characters on their quest.





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Michael Graceffa cracked the case in “Sher-Locked,” a steamy Sherlock Holmes-inspired mystery choreographed by Miles Keeney. Surrounded by a sharply-dressed brigade of detectives, Graceffa followed the clues through a pulse-pounding number that proved there was nothing elementary about Broadway Bares.

Keely Beirne prowled onto the scene as the elusive Pink Panther in “The Pink Diamond.” At an elegant cocktail party with a hunky security detail guarding an oversized jewel, Beirne orchestrated a feather-filled heist choreographed by Broadway Bares Executive Producer Nick Kenkel. As flashlights swept the room and tensions rose, the sly feline thief ultimately claimed the prize for herself.

Jessica White bent reality as Trinity in the futuristic “Dom-in-the-Matrix.” Choreographed by Reed Luplau, the high-tech spectacle featured gravity-defying flips, daring lifts and enough cyber-inspired seduction to leave audiences questioning what was real.

Alice Reis slipped past every investigation imaginable as globe-trotting thief Carmen Sandiego in “Lady in Red.” Choreographed by John Alix, the number unleashed a parade of decoy Carmens who confused a captivated ensemble while Reis stylishly evaded capture at every turn.

Nika Lindsay and Ricardo A. Zayas channeled the seductive intrigue of legendary spy Mata Hari in “Mata Hari’s Palace.” Amid flowing red silks and a troupe of whirling aerialists overhead, the duo commanded a world of danger, desire and deception in a number choreographed by Mike Baerga with aerial choreography by Alyssa Gray.

Inspector John Juan Mercado found himself delightfully distracted while pursuing a pair of mischievous bandits played by Tony d’Alelio and Mitchell Tobin in “Go-Go Gadget.” Choreographed by Sarah Meahl, the playful caper transformed a bustling meat market into a scene of comic chaos, culminating in a hilariously unexpected showdown.

Cajai Kennedy embodied legendary entertainer and French Resistance operative Josephine Baker in “Invisible Ink.” Wearing Baker’s iconic banana skirt, Kennedy captivated an ensemble of soldiers with dazzling charisma and undeniable charm in a mesmerizing number choreographed by Ilia Jessica Castro.

Dancer and choreographer Khasan Brailsford brought comic book detective Dick Tracy to life in “The Dick Tracy Show.” Choreographed by Julius Anthony Rubio, the playful romp paired Brailsford with Chance Hoover’s glittering, gender-bending Breathless Mahoney, whose flips, splits and

scene-stealing antics threatened to derail the investigation at every turn.

Matt Wiercinski had the audience saying “yeah baby, yeah!” as Austin Powers in “Oh, Behave!” Led by choreographer Billy Griffin, a glamorous battalion of fembots helmed by MiMi Scardulla marched onto the runway with weapons drawn and confidence blazing, only to discover they were no match for Powers’ animal magnetism and shagadelic appeal.

Milena J. Comeau, Jenny Mollet and Emma Sofia took flight as Charlie’s Angels in “Ángeles de Plata.” Choreographed by Jenny Oehlwein and Shani Talmor, the trio dazzled with salsa-inspired flair, trading sultry solos and synchronized swagger as they danced circles around the criminals in their path.



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Preston Taylor stirred audiences as a martini-sipping James Bond in “License to Restrain.” Choreographed by Kellen Stancil, the number took a turn toward “James Bondage” when Aydin Eyikan’s nearly naked Goldfinger arrived to tie up the superspy. Beneath a suspended cage with soaring aerialists choreographed by David Isaac Gray, Eyikan delivered spellbinding contemporary movement.

The mission concluded with a joyous finale choreographed by Tanner Lane. After Ghee revealed that Copes, Moon and Taranto had stopped the Broadway-ending plot and all earned the title of Top Provocateur by working together, the cast celebrated with a spirited musical sendoff. Two hundred thirty-five dancers filled the stage in a triumphant display of community, unity and

unapologetic joy, bringing the mission to a thrilling close.

The show's famous "Rotation" was ushered in by Frankie Grande, who sailed in from the Ship of Dreams at Titanique. During Rotation, the entire cast filled the stage to receive tips from the audience after each show.

Broadway Bares' Tony-winning creator and executive producer Jerry Mitchell accepted presenting sponsor M A C Viva Glam's check of \$200,000 from Kyle Anderson, senior national artist for North America at M A C Cosmetics. Anderson was accompanied by Sandy Joseph and César Silva, who represented the production's 85 brilliant makeup artists. Over the years, as presenting sponsor of Broadway Bares, M A C has donated \$5.4 million to Broadway Cares.

In Stripathon, the online fundraising competition led by the cast, crew and supporters of Broadway Bares, dancer Mark MacKillop once again topped the leaderboard with an extraordinary \$227,371 raised. First runner-up Ricky Schroeder (BOOP! The Musical) followed with \$29,517, while Steve Bratton (\$28,767), Jason Viarengo (\$27,557) and Katie Thrasher (\$24,343) rounded out the top five. An inspiring 443 participants joined this year's fundraising effort, helping drive Stripathon to its record success.

The License to Strip cast of 230 dancers represented 18 Broadway and Off-Broadway shows from this season including 11 to Midnight, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, Aladdin, The Book of Mormon, Buena Vista Social Club, CATS: The Jellicle Ball, Death Becomes Her, The Great Gatsby, Hadestown, Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Just in Time, The Lion King, Masquerade, MJ, Moulin Rouge! The Musical, The Outsiders, Ragtime and Wicked.

The book for this year's show was written by Hunter Bell, Steven Cutts and Troy Britton Johnson. "Top Secret," the opening number, was written by Amanda Green and Lynne Shankel.

Production Stage Manager Johnny Milani with Sarah Helgesen, Sammy Landau and Kassi Wilson led a team of 65 stage managers with more than 600 volunteers behind the scenes to create the show.

Craig Stelzenmuller was the production's lighting designer, with sound design by Nick Borisjuk and Daniel Lundberg and scenic design by David Arsenault. Jeffrey Wallach was costume coordinator; Kenneth Griffin and Taylor Marrs coordinated hair and wig design; Cesar Silva oversaw makeup design; and Caite Hevner was video content producer.

Stancil, a Broadway Bares veteran, served as director. He was joined by associate director Paula DeLuise.

The rich history of Broadway Bares began when Mitchell, then a Broadway dancer, gathered seven of his friends to raise awareness and stem the stigma of HIV by stripping and strutting on the bar at New York City's Splash. They raised \$8,000 that first night to help those living with HIV/AIDS. Since then, BroadwayBares has raised \$33.6 million for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.

Photos by Curtis Brown, Michael Hull, Katie Mollison, Thomas Mundell and Jonathan Tichler

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