

'KING OF DRAG' WINNER KING MOLASSES HOSTS UCONN DRAG SHOW

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In an evening celebrating queer culture with drag performances by locals, students and competition winners alike, the University of Connecticut Rainbow Center hosted its annual drag show this year titled “Court of Kings” at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Thursday, April 9.

“Court of Kings” was hosted by King Molasses, an American drag king and winner of season one of the television show “King of Drag” (2025). King Molasses opened the show with an electric set, dancing and lip-syncing to songs by pop-punk band Panic! At The Disco.

“My first drag show was at my college, and it opened me up to a world of queer possibilities,” King Molasses wrote in an email. “My hope for ‘King’s Court’ was to give every student, staff and faculty member in the audience permission to expand with each performance.”

Eight other kings and queens made their marks on the stage during the show, each evoking applause, cheers, yells and laughter from the audience. Audience members waved pride flags in the air and tipped performers with cash as King Molasses referred to the Husky crowd as “gay dogs” throughout the night.

Xiomarie LaBeija, a local Connecticut drag queen, was one of many performers who rocked the night. Her routine was set to Lizzo songs, like the popular hit “Good

as Hell.” During her set, she flipped forward off the stage and landed in a split. At the conclusion of the show, she repeated “Representation matters.”

Janelle Osei-Tutu, a sixth-semester cognitive sciences major, expressed that LaBeija was her favorite performer of the night.

“Xiomarie — absolutely beautiful,” Osei-Tutu said. “I felt so inspired. And then she hugged a little girl, and it made me cry.”

Kings of the night included local performers Frankie Cyanide, who was campy and lip-synced and danced to original covers of popular songs; Ray DeCorazón, who performed a mysterious and elusive dance number with a partner; Dom Parinyon, whose set was centered on the term “daddy,” and sang “My Heart Belongs to Daddy” by Marilyn Monroe.

Two student performers were The Traditional Man, who presented himself as a non-verbal caveman and performed a comedy skit poking fun at modern men and the patriarchy; and Gen Der Fuq as “Gandalf the Gay,” who performed a series of sensual dance and lip-sync routines.

Other queens that took the stage were the dazzlingly fierce local performer Onixx Aura and the fabulous student performer Cara Ho D’Amante, who is a graduate student at UConn.

D’Amante’s set sparked audience singing and dancing when she began “queening out” to Beyoncé’s “Diva.” D’Amante said she has performed at UConn Drag Show

for multiple years in a row, being a professional for about six years.

“This is where I got my start, actually,” D’Amante said. “My debut in drag was at the UConn Drag Show in 2019. And I’ve grown ever since, and the energy is always super great here.”

“It’s always great to be able to show off a fully realized version of myself, my art and my talent,” she said.

UConn A Capella groups A Minor, UConn’s premier gender-inclusive a capella group, and Rubyfruit, an upper-voice a capella group that promotes women empowerment, also performed at the show. Each performed an energetic and engaging set that earned cheers from the crowd.

Before closing the show, performers and Rainbow Center em-

ployees were introduced and given the chance to speak to the audience.

“I am so proud of our entire staff, especially our assistant direction and team leads,” Kelsey O’Neil, the director of the Rainbow Center, said. “We really enjoy

bringing local Connecticut performers back every year.”

King Molasses closed the show with a provocatively enticing set, dancing and removing articles of their clothing to reveal assless chaps and eventually, a leather thong. The crowd yelled and gave a standing ovation.

“Drag kings are a really important part of both just drag culture and queer culture in general, and they often don’t get the light and representation they deserve,” Ian Shick, the assistant director of the Rainbow Center said. “To be able to create a show that brings a king to host and celebrates drag kings is really important to us.”



Headliners perform at the UConn Rainbow Center Drag Show: Court of Kings at Jorgenson on April 10, 2026. The night included performances from King Molasses, Onixx Aura, Frankie Cyanide, Ray Decorazon, Dom Parinyon, Xiomarie LaBeija, Gen Der Fuq and The Traditional Man.

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