

Prince Poppycock



Poppy at Paramount Studios. Photo: www.ShawnSmithPhoto.com

About the Prince:

Described by pop culture and style journalist Rose Apodaca as a “rock star in Rococo France,” roguish operatic dandy Prince Poppycock’s glittering reign commenced in 2006 when singer-songwriter John Quale was invited to perform the Figaro aria, ‘Largo al Factotum,’ at a friend’s club. There was one stipulation: he must wear a wig. John appeared in a towering powdered confection to highlight how the song is about being a fabulous hairdresser, and Poppycock’s royal presence was instantly in demand. Witty and glamorous, with a powerful trained voice, Prince Poppycock has opened for bands like the Dresden Dolls and The Sounds; performed at extravagant events like NYC’s Dances of Vice; and opened for performance art legend Ann Magnuson at LA’s prestigious Redcat Theater. He is currently a contestant on NBC’s [“America’s Got Talent.”](#)

Please inquire at press@princepoppycock.com for more information or visit the following links to see and hear more of Prince Poppycock:



www.PrincePoppycock.com

Prince Poppycock Biography

John Quale has been singing since he could speak. At 11, he had his first professional gig at the **Kennedy Center**, with the **Washington Opera children's choir**. He continued his studies at competitive **Interlochen Arts Camp**, performing and touring with musicals and choirs through his high school and college years.

Inspired by his love for a wide range of musical styles and artists like David Bowie, Depeche Mode, opera, madrigals, Gregorian chant, The Smiths, and Gilbert and Sullivan, John began to write and record his own music while still a teen. In college, he was lead singer and songwriter for Chicago synth pop band **Endora**; later, after moving to Los Angeles, he wrote, produced, and released his solo debut album, **Worldview**, which is now available on [iTunes](#).

While in LA, John won critical acclaim for his role in smash musical "**The Beastly Bombing**," a winner of the **LA Weekly Theater Award for Best Musical** that enjoyed two short off-Broadway runs in NYC. He also wrote a civil rights anthem called "[Rise Up and Shout](#)" for a documentary of the same name about emerging gay Los Angeles artists which recently premiered on the **Sundance Channel**.

In 2006 John created the character of **Prince Poppycock**: a roguish operatic dandy with a persona and repertoire that drew on all John's varied influences as a performer and a musician. Described by style maven and pop culture journalist **Rose Apodaca** as "a rock star in Rococo France," Poppycock's look and sound combined elements of glam rock, light opera, synth pop, and Western art music in a way that was fresh; sometimes startling; and always entertaining, doing each of those traditions justice yet transcending the past – rather than simply updating it – to become something truly original.

The glittering reign of Prince Poppycock commenced when John was invited to perform the **Figaro** aria, '**Largo al Factotum**,' at a friend's club. There was one stipulation: he must wear a wig. John appeared in a towering powdered confection to highlight how the song is about being a fabulous hairdresser, and Poppycock's royal presence was instantly in demand. Witty and glamorous, with a powerful trained voice, Prince Poppycock has opened for bands like the **Dresden Dolls** and **The Sounds**; sung at extravagant special events like New York's **Dances of Vice**; and opened for performance art legend Ann Magnuson at downtown LA's prestigious Redcat Theater. He is currently a contestant on NBC's "[America's Got Talent](#)," where judge **Sharon Osbourne** dubbed him "the male Lady Gaga."

John continues to work actively on both Prince Poppycock as well as his solo projects as a singer and songwriter. He is presently partnering with songwriter and keyboardist **Kristian Hoffman** (of **The Mumps** and **Klaus Nomi** note) on the Poppycock debut album.

www.PrincePoppycock.com

Prince Poppycock

Fact Sheet

- Singer and songwriter **John Quale** was raised in Virginia but is now based in Los Angeles. John is best known for his role as **Prince Poppycock** – a Baroque operatic dandy with a powerful voice; rapier wit; and dazzling period costumes who is currently among the **Final Four contestants** on #1 NBC show “**America’s Got Talent.**”
- A classically trained singer, John created the Poppycock character in 2006 when he was asked to perform the **Figaro** aria, ‘**Largo al Factotum,**’ at a friend’s nightclub – with the stipulation that he wear a wig of some kind. In honor of the fact that the aria is about being a fabulously in-demand hairdresser, John first wore the towering white Rococo wig that became core to Poppycock’s signature look.
- Prince Poppycock **debuted** on “America’s Got Talent” on June 8, 2010, performing the **Figaro** aria from **Rossini’s Barber of Seville** in an emerald satin frock coat by LA Opera head tailor **Sharon McGunigle**. He received a standing ovation; judge **Sharon Osbourne** threw her papers in the air and pronounced him “magnificent.”
- **YouTube** clips of Poppycock on AGT alone have together garnered well over **3 million views**.
- Poppycock was in the **top 5 most popular Google searches** the night he debuted on AGT – beating out **Meg Whitman**, who had won the Republican nomination for governor in the California primaries earlier that same day.
- **ABC News** coverage of the June 8, 2010 episode of “America’s Got Talent” focused on Poppycock exclusively in a piece titled “**Is This Guy the Next Susan Boyle?**”, which showed footage of his audition for the TV show in NYC: <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/video/prince-poppycock-americas-got-talent-10868746>
- Poppycock’s Vegas appearance on “America’s Got Talent” aired on July 6, 2010. He sang ‘**La donna e mobile**’ from **Verdi’s Rigoletto**, in a lacy red rhinestone suit by LA artist **Steve LaNasa** (<http://stevelanasa.com/>). His choreography included a magician’s confetti trick, the “**Ultimate Snowstorm.**”
- The Prince’s performed ‘**Vesti la giubba**’ from **Pagliacci** on the August 3rd episode of AGT. His costume – a combination of **Harlequin** and **Pierrot** – was designed by **Steve LaNasa**, and featured a neck ruff with chasing LED lights and a cape of 350 yards of tulle with a plaque mounted inside commemorating supportive fans.
- Poppycock smashed fine china in a Delft-inspired production number to **Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody”** on AGT’s August 24th episode. The massive blue-and-white setpiece, which the Prince designed alongside **Steve LaNasa**, featured LaNasa’s hand-painted props as well as a video backdrop by creative designer **Kevin Santos**. Poppycock wore a 17th Century uniform by **Sharon McGunigle**; a bicorn by **Topsy Turvy Design**; and “crown jewels” from **Savannah Parker Studios**. He was backed by **Kristian Hoffman** on a white baby grand piano.
- Poppycock descended on a platform backed with whirling sparklers to perform a medley of “**Star Spangled Banner,**” “**Yankee Doodle Dandy,**” and “**Stars and Stripes Forever**” on AGT on September 7, 2010. The Busby Berkeley-style showpiece, which Poppycock collaborated on with **Steve LaNasa**, featured a kicking pinwheel of shapely showgirls, pitched against a backdrop by **Kevin Santos** of portraits of civil rights leaders like **Susan B. Anthony** and **Harvey Milk** interspersed with images of the Prince as Lady Liberty; on a three-dollar bill; and crossing the Delaware. Poppycock called the act his “love letter to America,” a celebration of the inclusiveness of the country that embraced his unique theatrics.
- Prince Poppycock competes for the crown on the final episode of “America’s Got Talent” on Tuesday, September 14th on NBC (9/8c).

Prince Poppycock

Accolades & Press

“The male Lady Gaga.”

--judge Sharon Osbourne, after Poppycock's August 24, 2010 performance on “America's Got Talent”

“Does ‘America's Got Talent’ have a Susan Boyle on its hands?”

--[ABC News](#)

“Hilarious, yet soaring.”

--[CBSNews.com: “Celebrity Circuit”](#)

“Last night's ‘America's Got Talent’ featured 12 of the semifinal acts. Well, technically it did. But what really happened was Prince Poppycock stole the show completely, with his biggest, best performance yet.”

--[Entertainment Weekly, EW.com: “Popwatch”](#)

“The electrifying moment of the night.”

--[People Magazine, People.com: “TV Watch”](#)

“Poppycock! Prince Poppycock that is! We are loving Prince Poppycock on *America's Got Talent*! He's fabulous!”

--Perez Hilton, [PerezHilton.com](#)

“Freddie Mercury has returned.”

--[Christwire.org](#)

“Prince Poppycock Best In Show...Many of us would have paid double to hear more of Prince Poppycock. The powdered wigged crooner would've been a rock star in rococo France.”

--Rose Apodaca, “La Vie En Rose” ([www.roseapodaca.com](#))

[www.PrincePoppycock.com](#)

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Prince Poppycock as Pagliacci on “America’s Got Talent,”
August 3, 2010.

Photo: www.ShawnSmithPhoto.com

Poppycock performing “Bohemian
Rhapsody” on “America’s Got Talent,”
August 24, 2010.

Photo: www.SteveLaNasa.com





Prince Poppycock reclining on a blossom-strewn chaise at Paramount Studios.

Photo: www.ShawnSmithPhoto.com

www.PrincePoppycock.com

PRINCE POPPYCOCK'S PAGLIACCI PERFORMANCE IMPRESSES ON "AMERICA'S GOT TALENT"

(Los Angeles, August 4, 2010) – Glam Baroque dandy **Prince Poppycock** dazzled audiences with an aural and visual spectacle during last night's live broadcast of hit NBC show "[America's Got Talent](#)." The classically trained theatrical singer's emotional rendition of the famed '**Vesti la giubba**' aria from **Ruggero Leoncavallo's Pagliacci** earned him thunderous applause from the studio audience. Written in 1892, 'Vesti la giubba' has long been a favorite tenor aria in the operatic cannon, and the popular song became the first million-selling record when recorded by **Enrico Caruso** in 1904.

Powder-wigged Prince Poppycock – the alter ego of Los Angeles musician **John Quale** – is among the top 48 contestants on the show, who have competed over the past month in groups of 12 for a live studio audience in Hollywood. "America's Got Talent" judges praised Poppycock's performance, where he emerged from a striped circus tent and discarded a multi-hued pastel confection of a tulle cape to reveal a sleek fitted suit of sparkling Harlequin diamonds with lacy ruffs at the wrist, ankle, and neck swirling with hundreds of moving LED lights. Judge **Piers Morgan** said, "Could I see this guy in a Broadway show? Absolutely yes!" and **Sharon Osbourne** added, "I just hope that you come back, because if you don't – I don't know what I'll do!"

Poppycock's spectacular costume for the number was designed by Los Angeles artist **Steve LaNasa**. Trained at the prestigious Art Institute of Chicago, LaNasa's props and costumes have been described as "breaking the boundaries of the rational, and quite often, the possible." The extravagant costume he created for Poppycock was an inspired mashup between the traditional Commedia dell'arte Harlequin and Pierrot, which developed in Italy and France in the Seventeenth Century. The characters are an appropriate choice for the *Pagliacci* aria, as the opera presents the traditional love triangle between Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine as a play within itself. A crystal pom-pomed Pierrot hat by **Kim Brown Dye** of [Topsy Turvy Designs](#) and makeup by celebrity makeup artist **Mathu Andersen** finished the look.

The *Pagliacci* costume included an almost inconceivable amount of fabric, with over 350 yards of multi-colored tulle in the cape alone. LaNasa – who spent several weeks constructing the elaborate creation, which filled most of his large workroom – joked about the sheer size of the project, saying, "It's hard not to create comfortable, functional businesswear – which is what this really is, for Poppycock – when you have hundreds



Prince Poppycock on "America's Got Talent",
August 3, 2010. Costume and photo:
www.SteveLaNasa.com

of yards of tulle; some sequined spandex; a square mile of chantilly lace; and a couple of hundred color-changing LEDs lying around.”

Poppycock commemorated the supportive friends and fans who contributed to the cost of the elaborate production with an engraved plaque mounted inside the tulle cape. Another Poppycock fan, **HOJO** – an anime artist in Bangkok who first saw the Prince on “America’s Got Talent” – created the art for the act’s backdrop, which featured Poppycock’s signature makeup as the classic comedy and tragedy theatrical masks.

Though Poppycock’s elaborate whiteface stage makeup may have a great deal in common with the classic clown face of Pagliacci, Quale says that he was actually drawn to portraying the operatic clown because of the kinship he felt between Pagliacci and John Quale himself. “‘Vesti la giubba’ – literally, ‘Put on the costume’ – is about the struggle to put on the costume and makeup when your heart is breaking on the inside,” John said. The aria, he explains, is sung when Pagliacci has learned his wife is unfaithful and yet has to prepare to go onstage to make people laugh when all he wants to do is cry. “When my father passed away, it became increasingly difficult to perform as Poppycock because my heart had become so heavy,” he said. “So I sympathize with the character’s struggle to go on with the show.”

Quale lost his father two years ago, and was getting continual offers to perform as Poppycock as the character was already a success in LA theaters and nightclubs at that time, but he felt a gulf between himself, the grieving son, and the witty, glamorous Prince. Though the opera ends in tragedy, Pagliacci shows both real courage, in going onstage when he is at his lowest, and true devotion to his audience, whom he doesn’t let down even though he’s feeling his worst. Because of this, Quale felt the opera clown was a character he could learn from, and took on the role in hopes that it would not just be a showstopper for the audience, but a healing – and growing – experience for himself. As he told “America’s Got Talent” in his pre-show interview last night, “This performance is the reconciliation between myself and Poppycock.”

“America’s Got Talent” airs Tuesday and Wednesday nights on NBC at 9/8c. At this stage in the show, live performances are on Tuesdays; voting results and show recaps are on Wednesdays.

About Prince Poppycock:

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A PRINCE TAKES ON QUEEN AND IS CROWNED “THE MALE LADY GAGA:” PRINCE POPPYCOCK PASSES INTO “AMERICA’S GOT TALENT” TOP 10 WITH HIS ROYAL TREATMENT OF “BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY”

(Los Angeles – August 30, 2010) Baroque dandy **Prince Poppycock** closed the August 24th episode of NBC’s “**America’s Got Talent**” with a rousing performance of Queen’s “**Bohemian Rhapsody**” that literally shattered all expectations. In a Delft porcelain-inspired blue-and-white number, the Prince – who has only performed popular opera arias since first appearing on “America’s Got Talent” – cavalierly toppled enormous fine china vases set on pedestals so that they crashed to the floor, meanwhile staying just out of the reach of scolding Dutch girl maids in a massive production that lived up to the epic sound of the classic rock song.

Los Angeles singer and songwriter **John Quale**, who portrays Poppycock, says he chose the Queen song partly to “open the act to an even wider audience that is not interested in listening to classical music,” and it seems his bid for a broader reach was successful: his powerful performance won a standing ovation from the studio audience, and also won over the American public, who voted him into the show’s top 10 finalists that evening. Judge **Howie Mandell** declared, “This is your night. This is all about Poppycock!” and fellow judge **Sharon Osbourne**, dubbing Prince Poppycock “the male **Lady Gaga**,” pronounced him a “superstar” several times over, saying, “I bow down to you.”

Though “Bohemian Rhapsody” has seen considerable popular interpretations over the years ranging from The Muppets to the infamous scene in *Wayne’s World*, Prince Poppycock’s stage-spanning production, which he designed and executed along with Los Angeles visual artist **Steve LaNasa**, “made the operatic pop song his own,” as **TV Guide** remarked – so much so that one reviewer was prompted to say that “**Freddie Mercury** is on the prowl once more.”

The song’s unique dramatics, says Quale, gave him the perfect opportunity to address the central challenge of “America’s Got Talent,” which continually asks contestants to up the ante by revealing new facets of their abilities. It also highlighted his skills as an entertainer and producer, making it difficult to continue to easily compare him to other vocalists on the show simply because they have also chosen to perform selections from the classical canon.

“The combination of the operatic styling with rock and roll,” he says, “was a great segue to allow me to display my ability to front a rock band – something that I believe only I have the ability to do in this competition.” But performing “Bohemian Rhapsody” is also Poppycock’s tribute to one of his personal heroes. “Freddie Mercury is a definite idol to me,” he explains. “His combination of talent, musicality, and



Prince Poppycock backstage on “America’s Got Talent.” Photo: Steve La Nasa
www.stevelanasa.com.

showmanship has been something of a touchstone to me for most of my life.” And this song in particular, Quale felt, was a good fit for Poppycock because it was central to what his stage persona was all about. “The statement in the song that ‘nothing really matters’ is one of the tenets that Poppycock was built upon,” he says. “Of course, Poppycock turns it on its head and makes it something to celebrate, not mourn.”

The joy of letting go was a driving force behind Prince Poppycock’s untamed staging of “Bohemian Rhapsody,” in which he runs wild like a bull in a china shop, smashing fine plates and vases “in order to illustrate,” he says, “the inherent meaninglessness of physical objects in a fun and frivolous manner.” The Prince looked like a Dresden figurine come to life as he made his entrance lounging against a 10-foot blue-and-white porcelain plate that LaNasa built and painted for the number. His curled white King Charles wig and Wedgewood blue silk ensemble remained true to the fashions of the 17th century, when the Dutch Delft porcelain that inspired the look of the number was at the height of its popularity.

Based on the concept “Cinderella Goes to War,” the petticoated military dress uniform with custom-made gold fringed epaulets and embroidered royal monograms was designed by Ovation-award winning costumer **Sharon McGunigle**, who also made the emerald satin frock coat and breeches that Poppycock wore for his “America’s Got Talent” debut.

As McGunigle – who is head tailor at the Los Angeles Opera – quipped, “It takes a kingdom to dress a Prince,” and Poppycock’s intricate and polished production – which came together in only two weeks – was the result of a collaboration with a talented army of artists who contributed their professional skills. Bay Area milliner **Kim Brown Dye** of **[Topsy Turvy Design](#)** created Poppycock’s blue and gold ostrich-plumed bicorn hat, while his “crown jewels” – which included several massive gold filigree rings and medals set with sapphire blue and opalescent stones – were made by **[Savannah Parker Studios](#)**.

Besides creating the giant pastoral-themed china plate framing Poppycock’s entrance, production designer Steve LaNasa also hand-stenciled a blue Oriental carpet that blanketed the stage, and painted dozens of monogrammed dinner plates ranged along steps at the back of the stage set. Creative designer **[Kevin Santos](#)** was responsible for the video backdrop that began with a kaleidoscopic series of swirling blue Delft floral psychedelic patterns and ended in a rain of shattering porcelain plates that fell thick and fast at the close of the number.

Poppycock was backed by four singers in blue choir robes and accompanied on a white baby grand piano by his longtime musical collaborator, **[Kristian Hoffman](#)**, songwriter and keyboardist for punk band **The Mumps** and seminal New Wave singer **Klaus Nomi**. The two are currently working on songs for Prince Poppycock’s debut album.

Prince Poppycock next performs live on “America’s Got Talent” on Tuesday, September 7th at 9/8c on NBC.

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“LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF POPPYCOCK:” PRINCE POPPYCOCK’S PATRIOTIC PAGEANT ON “AMERICA’S GOT TALENT” IS A GLAM CELEBRATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS

(Los Angeles – September 10, 2010) – “Life – liberty – and the pursuit of Poppycock!” is how operatic dandy **Prince Poppycock** described the patriotic pageant he presented on the September 7th semifinals of NBC’s “America’s Got Talent.” Swathed in a red, white and blue cape and top hat decked with silver stars, the Prince descended from the rafters on a platform backed by whirling sparklers, singing the final verse of “**The Star Spangled Banner**” before moving into “**Yankee Doodle Dandy**” and “**Stars and Stripes Forever.**”

With its kicklines, baton-twirling majorettes, and considerable pyrotechnics, the routine was a first-rate piece of entertainment – one that got Prince Poppycock voted into the Final Four contestants on the #1 show of the season. But underneath the glamorous façade, the number made poignant references to the American civil rights struggle, while still remaining, ultimately, a celebration of American openness and individualism.

“As a nation, our strength lies in diversity,” Poppycock says. “We are a nation of individualists, and as Americans, we seek to develop what makes us unique to its fullest potential. The more fully realized we are, the more different we are, so it’s really our differences that make us strong. And I believe that this country as a whole, which has opened its heart to my theatrics, feels the same way.”

That belief was the basis of the concept that John Quale, who portrays the Prince, dreamed up for the extravagant production, which was realized in collaboration with LA production designer **Steve LaNasa**, who also created many of the props, including an 8-foot Thirteen Colonies flag that he made in just under two hours. Though they only had two weeks to turn out the elaborate show, LaNasa – who also built (and portrayed) the saucy dancing Capitol Building – refused to skimp on the lavish details. “Well after the live taping was under way,” he reports, “I was picking through a multicolored bag of sequins to find the silver ones for the stars on the Capitol flags.”

Besides LaNasa, it took an army of Poppycock patriots to bring the massive project – which drew inspirations from the **Ziegfeld Follies** and **Liberace’s** 4th of July spectacular at Caesar’s Palace – to fruition in so short a time. The Prince’s blue sequin top hat was created by **Kim Brown Dye** of **Topsy Turvy Designs**, and he wore massive red, white, and blue rhinestone rings by **Savannah Parker Studios** on every finger. New



Yankee Doodle Dandy Prince Poppycock. Photo: www.ShawnSmithPhoto.com

York graphic artist **Kevin Santos** created gorgeously rendered background stills that combined Poppycock's image with iconic Americana in amusing ways, including one of the Prince crossing the Delaware à la George Washington, with a boatload of soldiers and a perfectly poised French poodle by his side, and another of a three-dollar bill – a reference to the old saying – that featured Poppycock's top-hatted image brandishing a lit firecracker like Uncle Sam wielding his cigar.

With a video backdrop that included images of **Abraham Lincoln**; civil rights leader **Rosa Parks**, women's rights leader **Susan B. Anthony**; and gay rights martyr and politician **Harvey Milk**, Poppycock's act acknowledged the inequalities of America – and the struggles of those who tried to address them – in the past and present. Standing in front of the images of Milk and Parks, the openly gay singer solemnly recited, “We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal.” Whipping open his cape to reveal a sequined shorts suit and striking a pose, he added, with a wink: “Of course, *some* men are more equal than others!” and broke into a Busby Berkeley-style production number that included a pinwheel of showgirls dressed as sailors; majorettes; Statues of Liberty; and American flags.

But though Poppycock's vision of America isn't blind to its injustices, he's still an old-fashioned patriot with an optimistic view of America's potential. “I love my country,” he emphasizes. “This act is not ironic.” Instead, he says, it commemorates America's ability to be inclusive, and it is this open-armed image of his country that inspired the spectacular stagemusical, which he told television viewers was “Poppycock's love letter back to America.” He adds that the number was his way of thanking the American public – who had put him through to the Top 10 – for embracing him. “I wanted to show,” Poppycock says, “that America is a place that has room for everyone.”

And his response, when he heard on Wednesday's live results show that he'd be voted into the Final Four, made it clear that he viewed his election as a victory for that vision of American inclusiveness as well as a testament to the power – and the essential Americanness – of remaining true to yourself even when you fall outside the norm. As he told the “America's Got Talent” audience after his win, “To every kid out there who gets picked on or feels like an outsider: I want you to believe that life is magical, and I want you to look at me right now and understand that dreams can come true.”

Prince Poppycock competes in the final round of “America's Got Talent” on Tuesday September 14th on NBC at 9/8c.

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