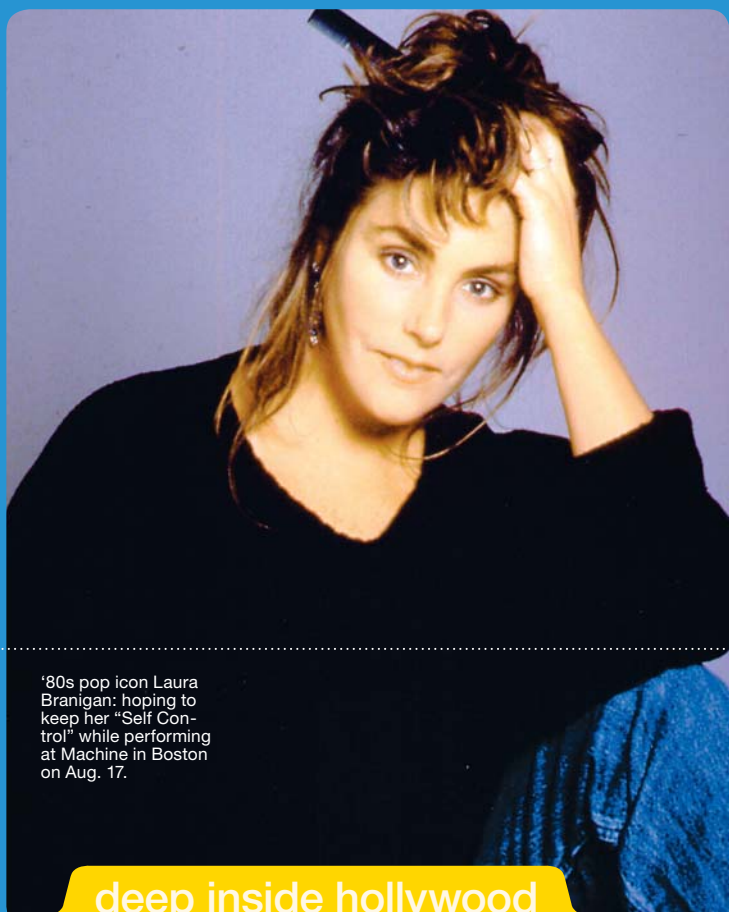


## arts

## The lucky one

1980s pop icon Laura Branigan reemerges, bringing her new show to Machine in Boston Aug. 17



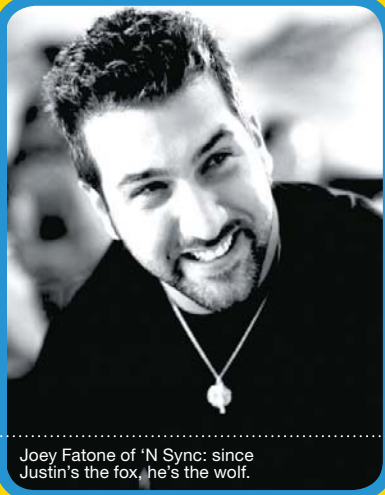
'80s pop icon Laura Branigan: hoping to keep her "Self Control" while performing at Machine in Boston on Aug. 17.

deep inside hollywood

## bio



Romeo San Vicente is much too young to remember disco. He can be reached care of this publication or at [Write2Romeo@yahoo.com](mailto:Write2Romeo@yahoo.com).



Joey Fatone of 'N Sync: since Justin's the fox, he's the wolf.

by Tony Giampetruzzi  
associate editor

BOSTON — When you think of Laura Branigan, you think of one of the most famous ladies of the 1980s — “Gloria.” The platinum hit song made Branigan a household name and set the stage for a slew of other hits through the decade, including “Self Control,” “The Lucky One,” and “How Am I Supposed To Live Without You.” What with a five-octave range, an obsession with her craft, and as many as four Grammy Award nominations, Branigan was riding high.

The '90s, however, weren't as generous to Branigan. Her singing career never halted although she never reclaimed her place at the top of the charts, she lost her husband to cancer, and she suffered a devastating accident.

Still, Branigan says she's a survivor and, with eight albums under her belt and another one on the way, Branigan is thrilled to be touring and will soon be swinging through Boston with an appearance at Machine on Sunday, Aug. 17.

This week she spoke with in newsweekly about her career, her latest tour, and what has kept her going over the past 20 years.

in: How do you feel when you hear

“Gloria” on one of those '80s flashback radio shows that make us all feel so old?

Branigan: You know, I just love hearing it because, the truth is, it really wasn't my biggest hit, but it is certainly my signature song. And I always get the same reaction whenever I go and whenever I perform it. Of course, “Self Control” was a big hit and “How Am I Supposed To Live Without You” was absolutely huge, but there is nothing like “Gloria,” especially with the gay community which really made that song a hit. And audiences never, ever tire of it. I have to end every show with that song and people just go crazy. “Gloria” was just a great girl!

in: What was it about the song that made it so popular in your opinion?

Branigan: Originally, it was an Italian song, and it was a much softer love song that was a huge hit in Italy. Still, my manager in Germany at the time brought it to me, but I really thought it was too soft, so we rewrote it and gave it a really good American shove. I can really tell just by singing something the first time whether it's going to be a hit and even though it was my first song, I knew I had a hit. Nonetheless, I was just shocked by the reaction.

I have to say though that at first,

■ Branigan ► on page 35

by Romeo San Vicente  
columnist

## In the “Hood”

Openly gay director **Randal Kleiser**, who helmed such homo faves as “Grease” and the semi-autobiographical “It's My Party,” is going to work on a real fairy tale. Kleiser has signed on to direct a movie musical adaptation of “Red Riding Hood,” the classic children's story about a plucky girl making her way through the forest to see her ailing grandmother, only to find herself matching wits with a hungry wolf.

'N Sync's **Joey Fatone** is playing the wolf, while his “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” co-star **Lainie Kazan** will portray grandma. **Debi Mazar** (“Goodfellas”) will play Red's mother, Brit hunk **Henry Cavill** is on board as the

hunter, and **Cassandra Peterson** — whom you probably know as horror queen Elvira — is taking on the role of the hunter's wife. There's no word yet, though, on who will play the hooded one.

## John Waters' next “Baby”

**Traci Lords** and **Iggy Pop** on Broadway? Don't laugh. Anything could happen when casting for “Cry-Baby” gets underway. The musical version of John Waters' 1990 film, which starred **Johnny Depp** (as well as Traci and Iggy), is headed for Broadway, thanks to the success of “Hairspray.”

For those who missed the movie (and according to its box-office performance, that would be most of you), it's about a poor thug in love with a society girl, with class warfare replacing “Hairspray”'s racial strife. **Brian**

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► Branigan from page 30

## The lucky one

it was the gay audience that picked it up and it was playing in clubs all over the country. The gay community took it and ran with it because a lot of radio stations just thought that it was too European. I have to say that it was my boys and girls that helped me with that one and look what happened.

**in: Even though "Gloria" was a great break-out hit and the song you're best-known for, you were not a one-hit wonder. In fact, you've had tons of top 10 and top 40 hits. What is your favorite song?**

Branigan: Ugh. I hate being asked that question. Well, I really love "Power of Love" because I'm really an emotional singer and that song represents the ultimate in emotion. It also shows the ultimate power in my vocal range. I'm also currently in the process of recording a couple songs that are certainly in my top five songs ever. Of course, "How Am I Supposed to Live Without You" and "Gloria" are right up there as well. Wait, so many songs are flooding back to me right now, I think we should probably move on.

**in: In recent years you've had to deal with a lot of personal struggles, namely the death of your husband to colon cancer. How have you been able to recover and get back into a career of recording and touring, both of which must be grueling at times?**

Branigan: Hey, it's really a process, and you never really recover. It was really devastating when he was diagnosed with

cancer in the '90s, and I really had to stop everything including promoting the record that I had just released. I was just too afraid to leave him. I also tried to search the world for a cure because I really think that there is one out there. In his case, it was too far-gone. Colon cancer is just one of the worst things that you can be diagnosed with because it can be slow growing for years and his doctor let it go undiagnosed. By the time we found out, it was just too late. They gave him two months to live with chemotherapy, but we did all the natural stuff and, with some of the things I came up with, he held on for two and a half years.

**in: It must have been an incredibly difficult journey.**

Branigan: Yes. It was very rough. And soon after he died, I fell 20 feet from a roof and broke both of my femurs, so I had to go into the hospital and have rods put into my legs. That, of course, meant that I had to cancel all of my shows. But I'm back.

**in: And coming to Boston.**

Branigan: I can't wait.

**in: You recently portrayed Janis Joplin in the show "Janis" on Broadway. What did you make of that experience?**

Branigan: Well, it was certainly interesting. For the most part, I learned a lot about Janis. She was really before my time — I knew some of her songs, but that's about it. What I found out is that she was just brilliant and so deep and so misunderstood and her life was incredibly tragic.

There were drawbacks. I'm obsessed with sound and theaters really aren't obsessed with sound, so I really thought something was lacking there. It was interesting.

**in: Would you do it again?**

Branigan: No. I love doing my own stuff and performing with my band.

**in: You're obviously something of an activist and a huge hit with gays and lesbians. How do you explain the appeal?**

Branigan: I think it has a lot to do with what society has done with gays and with all the adversity they have had to overcome and with all the emotions they have had to keep inside. My music is so emotional and I think that the gay community really latches onto that emotion. As a singer, when I get letters from fans, they are always about emotion. Plus, I grew up very insecure and ashamed and I kept a lot of emotion inside as well. I really think that's where we have a meeting of the minds.

**in: The last time you were scheduled to appear for a gay audience in Boston was the big Pride washout of 1998. Are you psyched to be coming back?**

Branigan: New England is home to one of my strongest fan bases. I love it there. ... I'll be singing some of my new stuff and of course all the hits. ■

*(Laura Branigan will appear at Machine for the club's fifth anniversary celebration on Sunday, Aug. 17. Machine is located at 1256 Boylston Avenue, Boston. For ticket information, connect to [www.machineboston.com](http://www.machineboston.com) or call 617-536-1950.)*

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