

# Back to the future

Sin City comes to Texas with the Ancient Babylon Tour

By Arnold Wayne Jones



If only the real Pittsburgh were as gay as it seems on *Queer as Folk*. The television Liberty Avenue bustles with hot guys and constant excitement, much of it centering around Babylon, the impossibly high-energy disco that's wall-to-wall hunks and booming house music.

The real Club Babylon might not exist in Pennsylvania, but for a few nights, it will exist in Texas. For the third year, the Babylon Tour makes its way south. And as in the past, they are changing things up.

"The first year we decided to do a tour, it was billed as the *Queer as Folk* Tour and was tied into the soundtrack," according to Adam Gill, president of Embrace Productions, the company that produces the event. "But then we decided to theme it after the Babylon experience and we took actual pieces from the set on the show."

For 2004, the tour looked forward to Future Babylon for a futuristic style. But for 2005 it looks back to the origin of decadence — Ancient Babylon's namesake "was the original Sin City where the boys would have their fun," says Gill.

This year, both Houston and Dallas will be treated to the event, with South Beach and Station 4 hosting the event. The traveling circuit party features some dazzling elements — elaborate décor, top talent behind the turntables (DJ Abel spinning in Houston; Roland Belmares in Dallas) and the performance of RKM. In addition, stars from the show will make guest appearances, including Robert Gant, Hal Sparks and Scott Lowell.

"We try to pick the DJs that we feel fit the mission statement of *Queer as Folk*," says Gill. "Abel just put out the new *Queer as Folk* CD, and we think Roland is the new superstar — he's been around in Texas forev-

## Empower returns

Being gay is personal, but increasingly, it's also business. With growing openness and visibility — and lots of disposable income — the GLBT consumer market is among the most desirable in America these days.

The Greater Houston GLBT Chamber of Commerce recognized this early on, and for the ninth year hosts Empower, its annual two-day expo designed to bring the gay business community together to build a platform for expanding its impact as a specific market.

The event features vendors of all kinds — from health to sports to gardening — as well as entertainment, a career fair and seminars by community leaders. New this year is A Taste of Montrose, where area restaurants allow attendees to sample their cuisine.

George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas, Houston. June 18, 11 a.m.–5 p.m., June 19, noon–5 p.m. Cost is \$5 to \$25, depending on events and number of days attended. For more information, call 713-523-7576 or visit [ghgcc.org](http://ghgcc.org).



## IN THE CLUB

Queer as Folk —  
The Ancient Babylon Tour

Station 4, 3911 Cedar Springs Road, Dallas. June 10, 9 p.m.–4 a.m. 21 and over only. \$10 in advance/\$15 at the door. 214-521-5104.

South Beach, 810 Pacific Ave., Houston. June 18, 9 p.m.–4 a.m. \$15 in advance/\$20 at the door. [Circuiticket.com](http://Circuiticket.com).

In each city, the first 100 people get a free Roland Belmares CD courtesy of tour sponsor Midori.

er, but we think he's coming into the league of the Manny Lehman and the Abels."

RKM, a performance and design group out of Miami, not only put on a show but create the look and feel for Ancient Babylon, which Gill says appeals to a panorama of interests, much the way the *Queer as Folk* TV show does.

"We offer an environment where we let the patrons create their own experience," Gill says. "We cater to everyone's needs: over-the-top decadence, stunning visuals, ancient garden, gladiators — the whole nine yards."