Dear Humans of Voices,

After one and a half years of PDF purgatory, we’re more than proud to bring you our Fall 2021-2022 issue in print. We hope you can feel the passion and love of our writers, editors, and artists radiating from these pages! With this issue, we aimed to provide a mix of Choate-specific and large-scale coverage of queer issues. We hope that these articles will serve as resources for education, a cause we hope to continue aiding through our publication of advice columns in a pamphlet this winter. In addition, we hope you can see how hard many of our writers worked to produce well-researched articles on queer individuals and movements from 20th-century California to modern-day Wales. Above all, we want you to know how much we love you—Choate’s LGBTQIA+ community and its allies. Thank you for your continued support!

With love,

voices

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Although NCOD celebrates the LGBTQIA+ community, the idea of coming out can have negative connotations due to its derivation from the societal pressure of compulsory heterosexuality, or the pressure to adhere to heterosexuality from birth. However, coming out can be one of the most important parts of a queer person’s life, and the process can lead to positive affirmation and discovery of community and acceptance. In the 1980s, around the time of the National March in Washington, coming out was a form of activism that challenged conventional ideas and fears. Gay and lesbian communities were able to show that they were a part of everyday life, and existed among family, friends, and coworkers. Nevertheless, the term “coming out” implies that homosexuality deviates from the standard and needs to be proclaimed. It further solidifies heteronormativity as the norm in our society. Some people believe that NCOD does more harm than good, that it reinforces the normalized ideal that a gay person must come out. Especially in media representation, coming out is heavily emphasized and seen as a core part of a queer person’s life. An expectation to come out formally puts unreasonable pressure on the lives of queer people, who may be safer or more comfortable living otherwise.

Although societal views around queerness have improved drastically since the 20th century, the U.S. is still in the process of accepting LGBTQIA+ love. It is still hard for many LGBTQIA+ Americans to be their authentic selves. However, queer voices are continually becoming more prominent in the public eye: many celebrities who have shared their coming out stories serve as role models for those that look up to them, especially younger audiences. Jojo Siwa and Lil Nas X are among the many young, modern celebrities that speak openly about their identity and experiences, helping to destigmatize LGBTQIA+ identities and give the community a voice.

Regardless of your opinions on coming out, and whether you identify as LGBTQIA+ or as an ally, National Coming Out Day remains a holiday to celebrate queer love, beauty, and community—both in how far we’ve come and how far we have left to go.

On October 11, 1987, a public rally crowd- ed the streets of Washington, D.C. It drew over 200,000 participants to the U.S. capital, gener-22- ing momentum for the queer rights move- ment and paving the way for present-day ac- ceptance. Organizers collected smaller groups of advocates for LGBTQIA+ rights and unified them in one common goal to ban discrimina- tion based on sexual orientation. They also urged President Jimmy Carter to sign a bill that would stop all discrimination against gays and lesbians who possess federal jobs or are in the military.

In order to continue the momentum and beauty of that march, Robert Eicberg and Jean O’Leary, both LGBTQIA+ activists, inaugurated National Coming Out Day (NCOD) in 1988. This year was the 33rd National Coming Out Day, which falls on October 11, the anniversary of the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. NCOD is a holiday that was created to celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community, and in particular, to encourage members of the community to “come out.” Instead of respond- ing defensively to anti-LGBTQIA+ action, NCOD is designed to promote positivity and outward celebration of queer identity through a day of activism and story-sharing.

NCOD raises awareness of the LGBTQIA+ community and civil rights movement, and promotes coming out as visibility—if everyone knows at least one person that is queer, the community will be less alienated or discriminated against. The holiday is found- ed on the belief that homophobia thrives in an atmosphere of silence and ignorance, and that those who have loved ones that identify as LGBTQIA+ are less likely to maintain discriminatory views; it is easier to discriminate against a faceless community than one that proudly declares their identity and celebrates it. With NCOD, Eichberg and O’Leary hoped to destigmatize the community and give people the courage to share their gender identities and sexual orientation with the outside world.

“Most people think they don’t know anyone gay or lesbian, and in fact, everybody does,” said Eichberg in 1993. “It is imperative that we come out and let people know who we are and dis- abuse them of their fears and stereotypes.”
If you've ever been to San Francisco or flown at the SFO, chances are you've seen the face of Harvey Milk. Harvey Milk was a civil rights activist and politician in the 1960's and 70's. He was the first openly gay elected official in the history of California, working on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977.

Milk was born to Lithuanian-Jewish parents in 1930, and spent his childhood in Long Island, New York. He advocated for civil rights for almost his entire life, first founding a publication at the University of Albany during his undergraduate degree that discussed diversity issues and started a dialogue about World War II. After graduating college in 1951, Milk enlisted in the Navy, rising to the rank of lieutenant general before resigning due to questions surrounding his sexuality. He then moved to New York and became active in politics while working as a school teacher. Milk was known for his vocal opposition to the Vietnam War.

In 1972, Milk moved to San Francisco, California and worked and lived in the Castro, the city's blossoming queer community. He opened a camera and film store and quickly made friends, becoming very popular due to his charismatic nature. After becoming infuriated with the mishandling of small businesses, Milk declared candidacy for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1973, but did not win the election. Even so, Milk continued to advocate for civil rights. After two gay men were prevented from opening a shop in the neighborhood, he founded the Castro Village Association, a coalition of gay merchants, the first group of its kind in America, that organizes and assists LGBTQIA+ owned-businesses in San Francisco to this day. Milk, with the help of the Castro Village Association, organized the first Castro Street Fair, a celebration of queer culture that helps businesses in the Castro bring in immense revenue. His success in San Francisco served as a model for LGBTQIA+ communities all around the United States.

In 1975, Milk ran again for San Francisco Board of Supervisors but narrowly lost. However, his growing presence in the Castro led him to be appointed to the Board of Permit Appeals in 1976. When Milk announced his candidacy for State Assembly, he was fired by the Mayor of San Francisco, who had hired him just five weeks ago. Milk lost the party's nomination by 4,000 votes. Angered that he wasn't supported by the queer and centrist Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club, Milk resolved to start the San Francisco Gay Democratic Club.

In 1976, with the reorganization of the ballot measure into the 11 districts of San Francisco, Milk was an immediate candidate for the Board in the Castro's District. He was heavily supported and endorsed by many organizations including The San Francisco Chronicle.

After his third time running, Milk was finally elected to the Board of Supervisors and sworn in January of 1978. Milk made immense changes for LGBTQIA+ individuals during his time on the board. He passed a reform bill banning discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation, which still stands as one of the country's strongest LGBTQIA+ policies. Milk spent the majority of his time on the board working against Proposition 6, an initiative seeking to bar LGBTQIA+ teachers or their supporters from working in California schools. Milk gained immense support on this issue, including from presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, and defeated the bill in November of 1978.

Milk changed the lives of the queer communities in San Francisco and California for the better, but this isn't to say his road wasn’t filled with discrimination and controversy. He faced immense homophobia, even receiving death threats daily for his outspoken queer activism. On November 10th of 1978, Milk was assassinated by former supervisor Dan White, who had resigned from his position months before. White was denied re-entrance to the board and, enraged, killed both Mayor Moscone and Milk. He plead the “gay panic defense,” a legal strategy where a defendant blames their violent crime or reaction on a victim's sexuality, and was sentenced to less than eight years in prison for voluntary manslaughter. The queer community was enraged, following the announcements of the sentences with demonstrations now known as the White Night Riots.

Although he only spent 11 months in office, Milk's legacy lives on. He has been the center of many books and movies, including the critically acclaimed film Milk. Many schools, as well as a San Francisco Airport Terminal, have been dedicated in his name. In California, May 22nd is formally recognized as Harvey Milk Day, and in 2009 he was awarded the Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama. Harvey Milk's numerous services to LGBTQIA+ communities, from forwarding queer rights within California legislature to increasing gay visibility among politicians, mark him as a pioneer within social activism and a historical figure who deserves remembrance.
Chances are you've met someone who uses multiple sets of pronouns before. Perhaps you've struggled to tell which pronouns to use or how often to use them. If that's something you've experienced, worry no longer: this simple guide is here to help! Please note that this is by no means a complete guide; there are countless different ways to use pronouns and every person's experience is different. When in doubt, ask the person in question what they're comfortable with and how you should use their pronouns.

People might use multiple sets of pronouns for a variety of reasons. Some have a preference, which you should respect, and others might not care how you refer to them. A key thing to remember is that you should not refer to people who use multiple sets of pronouns with multiple pronouns at once. For example, don't say “xe/they went to the store” while talking about someone who uses xe/they pronouns, unless they have specifically asked you to.

Whew, that was a lot! As a general rule of thumb, always ask for someone's pronouns before referencing them, and use whatever pronouns they specify to you.

Let's look at some examples of some students around campus who use multiple sets of pronouns, and how you can refer to them.

Meet Tristin!
Tristin is a student who uses he/they pronouns, and his comfort level with different pronouns differs depending on what context he's in. Around people they're close to, they use they/them pronouns. In classroom situations, they use he/they pronouns. And in some extreme situations, he uses he/him pronouns.

This is how you would refer to Tristin in an intimate, comfortable setting:
“This is my friend Tristin. They're sitting with us for lunch today. Their favorite food is calamari.”

This is how you would refer to Tristin in a classroom setting:
“Referring back to what Tristin said, I think they brought up a valuable point about gay rights for corgis. I’d like to build off his point and bring up trans rights for corgis as well.”

Meet Athena!
Athena is a student who uses any pronouns, specifically they/them, he/him, and she/her. They use multiple pronouns because the fluidity gives them comfort and validity in their identity. He knows that people often default to she/her, but he'd rather people use each set of pronouns equally, and switch it up from time to time. If you're ever unsure what pronouns to use for any reason, they'd prefer that you default to they/them.

Here's how you might refer to Athena on one day:
“ Athena is so cool. I see him in orchestra all the time, and he's so good at playing the cello! He always has the best plaid shirts.”

Here's how you might refer to Athena on another day:
“I heard Athena say the other day that they believe in gay rights for corgis. Do you think they believe in trans rights for corgis too? I’ll ask her the next time I see her.”

And here's how a conversation about Athena might go:
Person 1: “Have you seen Athena recently? I feel like I haven't seen him in a while.”
Person 2: “They live at the KEC now, so I haven't seen them on main campus too much.”
Person 1: “Oh, that makes sense! I didn’t know they lived at the KEC.”

One thing to note is that Athena doesn't like it when people switch pronouns in the same sentence. For example, you shouldn't say: “Is Athena going to be here? She said he could make it today.”

Those are just a few of the many ways people may use multiple pronouns! Let's reiterate a key point from earlier: when in doubt, ask. Usage of multiple pronouns can be confusing at first! If you're ever unsure about how to use someone's pronouns or how you should refer to them, the best course of action is always to politely ask and take whatever they say to heart. No one knows better about their own pronoun usage than themselves.
America's immigrant detention centers hold a diverse population of people, so it should come as no surprise that LGBTQIA+ people are detained in such institutions. In conjunction with the unfair treatment that these immigrants and refugees are subject- ed to, queer immigrants face a much greater amount of discrimination because they must endure harassment from officials on the basis of their immigration status as well as their queer identity.

Transgender people, specifically trans women, in detention centers often face the harshest extend of violent prejudice. Many transgender people flee their countries of origin to avoid cultural ostracization and escape violence. In the United States, trans women are disproportionately harmed by the detention system: a trans refugee is more likely to be detained, housed with men and misgendered, subjected to sexual violence, denied vital medication, or exiled to solitary confinement, but less likely to win an asylum case. If that run-on sentence didn’t bring to light the myriad of absolutely disgusting and inequitable conditions transgender people face, reread it. The list should not be that long. There shouldn’t be a list at all. While the experiences of detained trans women are riddled with injustice, they are compounded by the trauma of reliving the negative social effects many fled in the first place. Imagine leaving your entire life behind in the hopes of escaping persecution and ostracization, then being confronted with even more hatred and bigotry. This is the experience of queer immigrants in detention centers.

The story of Alexander Martinez is one example of the psychological consequences of these hardships. Martinez is a 28-year-old gay man who fled homophobia and threats from the infamous MS-13 gang in El Salvador. Martinez crossed the border illegally in April and has since been passed through six different facilities in three different states. Throughout that time, he has contracted COVID-19, experienced extreme racism, and has been constantly harassed for being gay.

“I never imagined or expected to receive this inhumane treatment.”

Martinez cleared an initial screening to seek asylum, but still remains trapped in a seemingly endless rotation between detention centers. This inefficacy is a structural flaw in the current immigration system—a fracture in our justice system that remains unchallenged and therefore unchanged.

President Joe Biden’s lack of initiative regarding the unfair treatment of immigrants detained in the United States is not only a cause for frustration amongst queer people, immigrants, refugees, and human rights activists worldwide, but a violation of his own commitment as President to justice and its prevailance throughout the systems that comprise this country. Despite President Biden’s campaign to end prolonged detention and the use of private prisons for the containment of immigrants and refugees the number of people in immigration centers has not decreased substantially to support this promise.

This is not to say that Biden’s overall actions are necessarily worse than the previous Administration’s. Under the Trump Administration, in July 2020, there were around 22,000 immigrants and refugees detained, a number that ballooned to 55,000 in August 2020. In comparison, there were 27,000 immigrants and refugees detained on July 22, 2021 under the Biden Administration. While the number of detainees has decreased, individual experiences cannot be equated to numbers. Each person has a life and their lives have value. 27,000 lives being disrespected and discarded is utterly unimaginable, yet it occurs on the daily.

It is my personal hope that in the com-
In recent years, immigrants and refugees fleeing persecution and seeking better opportunities will be able to find a home in the United States. Highly restricted access to safe and legal methods of immigration, however, makes this hope a pipe dream under current conditions, especially for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ immigrants. Asylum, citizenship, safety, and security shouldn't be unattainable goals for the majority of American immigrants. People like Alexander Martinez who are fleeing for their lives should not continue to live in fear by simply existing in the United States. The current conditions in detention centers are absolutely detestable and the treatment of detainees by Immigration and Customs Enforcement is unacceptable.

People are not dispensable, no matter their identity. It is despicable that the U.S. immigration and judicial systems treat so many individuals, especially of specific demographics, as if their lives do not matter. As a nation, we must acknowledge that these systemic injustices, just like any of the others that are disproportionately affecting different groups—LGBTQIA+ people and BIPOC individuals. There remains only a pinprick of a spotlight on queer immigrants of color, and it is our responsibility to brighten that light until it blinds people with the truth.

Queer fashion history: covert, bold, and deviant

Gigi Chen

LGBTQIA+ fashion, though seemingly only coming into prevalence recently, has roots reaching back to the early 18th century. Throughout history and modern day, it has served as a discreet identifier for members of the community, but really, the importance of LGBTQIA+ fashion extends far beyond that. Fashion would not be what it is today without the influence of famous LGBTQIA+ designers in the last century and the impact of the queer community as a whole on the evolution of different fashion movements. Fashion theory in particular has served to spotlight the queer community, bringing discussions of gender and sexuality to light. As Annamari Vänskä, researcher at the University of Turku, says, “For someone coming to fashion from critical gender studies, all theories about gender and sexuality have started to make sense in a new way—how important a role everyday sartorial practices have played in fashioning theories about gender and sexuality.”

The modern definition of queer identity emerged in the early 18th century, coinciding with the rise of gay subculture. Shifts from the 1700s to the 1800s meant that as the century progressed tolerance for effeminacy, homosexuality, and bisexuality declined, cementing heteronormativity and othering queerness, leading the LGBTQIA+ community to be cautious in their expression—including with fashion. London in particular was home to taverns known as “molly houses,” which functioned both as meeting places for the gay community and also spaces for cross-dressing men. In this time period, the overly-dressed, effeminate, elite man was made a caricature of homosexuality, even though those arrested from molly houses were often from a variety of social backgrounds. Homosexual representation was usually coded, rather than outright open. However, there are cases where queer people rose to fame as well as notoriety. One famous example is Madame de Raucourt, a French actress who frequently dressed as a male and gained infamy for her numerous affairs with both men and women. She often appeared as a figurehead of French lesbians in pamphlets, although the cultural connotations around her often painted this group as anti-revolutionary, as same-sex relationships were associated with aristocracy and turpitude. This led to her specifically cross-dressing for the role of a countess disguised as a soldier on stage, being heavily criticized. Hallmarks of women’s cross dressing were stylish and admirable menswear, or, as stated by the Bath Journal, “very gay, with Perriwig, Ruffles, and Breeches.”

De Raucourt’s dress choice was an important part of her undoubtedly queer identity.

Queer historical dress in the early early 20th century also developed through the lens of sapphism. This connects back to Sappho 1900, a Parisian salon frequented by many sapphics in the early 20th-century. Groups of queer, literary women, such as Virginia Woolf, Renée Vivien, Gertrude Stein, and Natalie Clifford Barney developed a style that included combined breeches and trousers with
long wool coats nipped at the waist, worn with men’s shoes not unlike Dr. Martens, the queer boots of today. Woolf’s style in particular inspired many fashion houses, including Givenchy, to sharply tailored suits with ruffled shirts for women.

With the rise of high fashion, haute couture, and fashion designers in the last century, LGBTQIA+ subculture came to prominence through the work of famous, queer designers. From Marc Jacobs, to Christian Dior, to Alexander McQueen, to Yves Saint Laurent, many of the most influential fashion designers of the last century were gay. The 20th century also saw the development of movements stemming from gay culture, such as androgyny, dandyism, idealizing and transgressive aesthetic styles, and the influence of subcultural and street styles. The gradual social acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people also affected fashion and its community, not only by taking the lives of gay designers such as Perry Ellis, Halston, and Bill Robinson, but also dominating consciousness of the LGBTQIA+ community at large.

In the 21st century, queer fashion has entered the mainstream. Aspects that were historically considered part of queer culture—such as “masculine” boots, flannels, and effeminate prints—once veered from conventional trends in favor of ones that subvert social niceties, but have ironically become trendy in the modern day. Derek Guy, in his article “Straight Copying: How Gay Fashion Goes Mainstream,” stated that “the border between the queer community and popular fashion is porous. The first will often take things from broader culture, remix it, and make something their own. Then the more general public will adopt a look once it’s reintroduced as fashionable (and then, the original in-group meaning is lost).” Despite this aspect of fashion between subcultures being quite universal, the critical importance of fashion to the LGBTQIA+ community specifically cannot be understated nor ignored. Previously manifesting in discreet accessories that would signify sexuality, during and after the Stonewall riots fashion became radical, bold, and brash. Queer fashion, particularly in drag, became a political act of questioning gender and outright proclaiming sexuality.

The history of queer fashion encompasses much more than just the title subject—it explores the very definition of queerness, cultural connotations, landmark fashion movements, social movements, and much more. As a crucial component of LGBTQIA+ identity itself, it is vital to understand the historical and cultural context around queer fashion as it is gradually absorbed into the norms of today’s fashion landscape.

In May of this year, Owen Hurcum was elected to become the mayor of Bangor City, Wales, becoming the first openly non-binary governor anywhere as well as the youngest governor in Wales’ history. Currently 23 years old, Hurcum was born in Harrow, London, and moved to Bangor City in 2015 to attend Bangor University. In Bangor Hurcum could start to truly be themself. “I could never be myself in London, I knew I was LGBT when I was about 12. And I desperately hid it from everyone, like my family, and my friends, and the community. I didn’t feel safe, or feel comfortable being ‘out’ in London. It was only when I came to Bangor that I became comfortable in being out.” they said in an interview with The Guardian. While in Bangor, Hurcum co-organised a protest in January of 2019 against proposed cuts at Bangor University to save 60 staff members’ jobs and the university’s Chemistry department. They also organised a protest in September of 2019 against Boris Johnson’s prorogation of Parliament before the Brexit withdrawal treaty deadline, showing an interest in social justice and leadership.

Hurcum, who identifies as queergender or agender, was initially supposed to run as a Plaid Cymru candidate, belonging to a center-left political party dedicated to Welsh independence from the United Kingdom. However, they withdrew from the party due to transphobia and a lack of action from the party leader, Adam Price. Although Hurcum was ready to return to their role as councillor in Bangor, the other council members insisted that they run for mayor, believing them to be a good fit. Although they had already served as a councillor for five years and a deputy mayor for one year in Bangor, Hurcum was still shocked when they were asked to put their name
When the mayoral vote came through, Hurcum tweeted that they were “beyond humbled” to be the first openly non-binary mayor “of any city anywhere,” especially because of their fear of being ostracized due to their gender identity. Hurcum also made sure to show their love for the town and its council, saying, “The council has been fantastic. There was a trepidation because, obviously, local government has this unfair reputation of possibly being old and backwards, and I was worried that those views may come from fellow councillors. But I have had the exact opposite. Every single councillor has been extremely supportive, and the previous mayor has called me when he has seen that I have been getting hate online, and he has said he is there if I need him. It has been really nice.”

Since their election, Hurcum has been the target of much hate on social media. Despite how terrible the abuse is, Hurcum actually finds a lot of the stupidity of the online abuse funny. “They may say I have low testosterone or I am effeminate or I look like a woman,” they explained. “I am like, ‘Oh my God, you are trying to insult me by calling me feminine, even though I am explicitly telling you that I have feminine traits that I want to celebrate because I am non-binary?”

This young nonbinary mayor is a change of pace for Wales’s oldest city with a lot to offer; they hope to get more representation at high levels of government while also focusing on local politics to, in their words, “put Bangor on the map.”

Music has evolved alongside historical standards of societal acceptance. Countless artists have risen to prominence within the past few decades, pioneering everything from jazz in the 1940s to punk rock and disco in the ‘70s. However, with the change in genre and society itself came a shift in lyrics, with musicians using songwriting to create cries for social change and outlets for discussing justice. This evolved into the greater range of acceptance that the music industry sees today, particularly with mainstream artists supporting and being open about queer identity. Queer artists have been around just as long as their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts, insofar as the modern definition of LGBTQIA+ identity has existed. With the popularity of musicians such as Sylvester James Jr. and Freddie Mercury...
in the 20th century, the push for queer people and representation in music accelerated alongside the wider queer rights movement. Popular queer artists greatly influenced the increasing representation that we see today, but messages of acceptance from cishet musicians also helped push for embracing queerness with music.

The release of You’ve Got To Hide Your Love Away by The Beatles in 1965 left fans wondering about the message of some forbidden romance, but the implied theme of homophobia is clear today. Brian Epstein, the Beatles’ manager, was gay, and the song is rumored to be a message to him. The song implies intolerance on the level of societal oppression, not just surface-level disapproval from community members. By sending a strong message about the effects of homophobia, You’ve Got To Hide Your Love Away became one of the first rock songs with queer representation. Despite not being incredibly clear about its meaning, the importance of the song still shows. The track was written before homosexual acts were decriminalized in the United Kingdom, so the message spoke volumes about the effects of British society on queer individuals.

With the release of David Bowie’s Rebel Rebel in 1974, trans fans saw themselves in a song that also brought us a truly iconic guitar riff. The simple and direct way that Bowie sang about the process of questioning and experimenting with gender not only resonated with trans people, but also showed his acceptance of trans and gender nonconforming individuals. The song was released during a difficult time for the trans community, which was fighting for basic rights in many countries, one of them being England. While it was not the first pop-rock song that had explicit trans representation, it helped pave the way for other songs to give the trans community the visibility it deserved. The song shed light on the difficult reality that many trans youth face, as well as giving the trans community casual representation.

Sylvester James Jr., who was active in disco, rhythm and blues, and soul, was not only openly gay but also challenged traditional gender roles through his style of dress. His work in the music industry was notable and brave for the 1970s and ‘80s. As a Black, queer individual, he was rarely talked about, but his way of challenging traditional gender expectations gave others the courage to break the figurative barriers of societal pressures. Sylvester would walk around California and openly crossdress, at a time when crossdressing was illegal, not only to make a statement, but to show that the threats he received did little to deter him from living his life. The courage he exemplified and his blatant queerness made a memorable mark on the music industry.

With the wide variety of topics explored by the songs of Canadian rock band Rush, it is no surprise that Nobody’s Hero, released in 1993, not only showed the band’s acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community, but also depicted how the worldview of main drummer and lyricist Neil Peart was expanded by a gay friend. The song sends a powerful message about the nature of society’s heroes, but it also explicitly mentions Neil Peart’s friendship with a queer person. While the people listening to Rush were of a specific niche, as it remains so today, millions of fans heard the song and, therefore, the band’s outward support of the community. Rush’s acknowledgement of the AIDS epidemic and the song’s message about societal heroes not only set forth an important example for future rock songs, but gave queer fans the vital message of support from the band.

Today, there are a multitude of queer artists and songs with direct queer representation. Taylor Swift’s You Need To Calm Down sent an aggressive message of support, while girl in red’s songs give the LGBTQIA+ community the causal representation many have wanted. Clairo’s Sofia is consistently rated as one of her top three songs, and Daya’s public coming out in 2018 led to an overwhelming message of support from fans. The list goes on, and the rise of social media platforms for queer artists to publish and individually promote their work on only adds to it.

While queer representation has a long way to go in all industries, music goes further in its efforts than many of them. The foundation that previous queer artists and songs with representation gave way to the wide range of music we see today. Despite the difficulties the LGBTQIA+ community still faces, music has been and will likely continue to be a safe space and propellant of social justice for the community, as it has been throughout history.
The Origins and Meaning of National Coming Out Day


The Story of Harvey Milk


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A History of Queer Representation in Music
