

Freedom

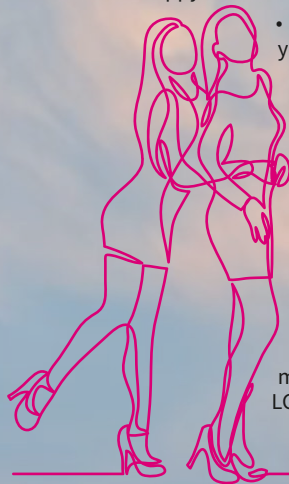
Freedom – LGBT+ rights

According to an Office for National Statistics survey in 2019, 2.7% in the UK over the age of sixteen identify as LGBTQA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, asexual, or any other sexuality or gender identity that does not conform to the cisgender heterosexual norm). The proportion of people who are not public with their sexuality or gender identity is potentially even greater. Why, then, is this large and valued community continually discriminated against?

The continual resistance to completely ban conversion therapy, something which the evidence clearly shows is a form of abuse, demonstrates how successive governments are not prioritising the LGBT+ community's rights. However, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and the United Nations has released a statement saying, "The equality and non-discrimination guarantee provided by international human rights law applies to all people, regardless of sex, sexual orientation and gender identity or 'other status'."

Although this could not be clearer, several nations actively discriminate against the LGBT+ community. Within the 69 countries where being openly gay, bisexual, or transgender is illegal, ten have the death penalty for "homosexual acts". Even in countries where this is not the case, state sponsored discrimination is rife – from President Andrzej Duda of Poland's comments that "Homosexuality is a worse ideology than communism" to Florida's Parental Rights in Education bill, which prevents schools from teaching young people about LGBT+ issues, or even that they exist at all. These politicians and law makers are creating an environment where homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are prevalent. In 2018-19, 16,824 hate crimes were reported in England and Wales caused by these toxic beliefs. These incidents not only cause intense emotional, and often physical pain, but also can lead to more serious crimes. Therefore, everyone benefits by supporting the rights and freedoms of LGBT+ individuals.

How can we ensure that people of all sexualities and gender identities are free to be happy with who they are?



- Call out homophobia and transphobia if you see or hear it. Remember, it is never OK to discriminate against someone because of their identity.
- Don't 'deadname' – use people's preferred names and pronouns so they can feel more accepted.
- Write to your local MP to lobby the government into action to protect people's freedom from hate.
- Educate yourself – there are plenty of courses, newsletters, and articles out there that can keep you up to date on the most pressing issues affecting the LGBT+ community.

THOMAS YIANNIKOU

Freedom in Music

Finding the solace you have been searching for in music is indescribable, there is nothing else like it. It's as if the notes (and lyrics) were written especially for you (even though it should be impossible for someone else to understand so profoundly your situation).

Music has been present throughout human history and forms an intrinsic part of our highest moments of victory and our lowest cries of suffering. A particular song can strike a chord within us, touching our heart and helps us feel, share and remember. Music allows us to return to a time, a place or even a feeling.

The most liberating time in all musical history was the rapid succession of musicals in the early 1900s when the foundations for all modern music were laid and musical expression became unrestricted in a way it had never been before.

All western music up until this time had been a progression of the subversion and development of established structures: the Romantic era (which spanned from the late 1700s to the early 1900s) was a succession from Classical which itself succeeded Baroque. As the world became increasingly culturally integrated, however, so did its music.

Jazz, for example, challenged the very fabric of music theory. It began in West Africa, the birthplace of many slaves. The songs that they sang as they worked in America were an amalgamation of tribal African music and the music of Christian missionaries. When the American Civil War ended in 1865, many of these slaves found jobs as musicians, and in this new world of emancipation and freedom blues and jazz found their place. The melancholy and brutal sorrow, united with broken hope would lay the foundations for rock and roll, and hip-hop respectively. It was ground-breaking.

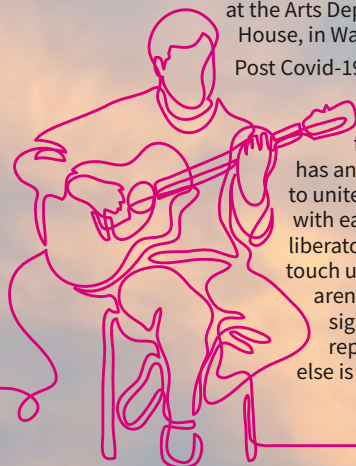
The call for equality in struggle is timeless. Whether in Bob Marley's Exodus, or Nina Simone's voice and fight for the civil rights movement, both remain as important a message today, as they were in the 1960s and 70s.

For me (Oscar), music plays a big part in my daily life. Throughout the lockdowns, it provided me with escape, inspiration and enjoyment (as it continues to now). Whatever kind of day I have, whatever mood I am in, there is always an album I can play which reflects my mood. I have enjoyed collecting albums for well over a year and have also recently loved finding freedom in creating my own music. There is something fascinating in the depth contained in just a few notes, and in my experience, music is the greatest liberator.

Live music is particularly freeing. It's powerful and bonding. North London is a brilliant place to see all kinds of live music, whether that be at the local Proms at St Jude's (running this year from the June 25th to July 3rd) or other shows happening nearby like musical performances at the Arts Depot in North Finchley or Lauderdale House, in Waterlow Park, Highgate.

Post Covid-19, people's spirits need lifting, and the beauty of music is more important than ever. As an art form, music speaks universally. It has and always will be a way for humans to unite, empathise and communicate with each other. It is the greatest liberator. We behold music's power to touch us collectively in a stadium or arena, yet its power is no less significant on a personal level as we replay a song on repeat when no one else is listening...

JONAH PHILLIPS & OSCAR GRAHAM



In this issue, we are looking at the idea of 'freedom'. Freedom is simultaneously a deeply personal and yet universally recognised idea: it is something we all relate to, yet all find different meanings in. For some, freedom may show itself in society, in our rights and responsibilities and in our governments. For others, it is historical and emerges again and again over all of time as the liberation of the oppressed. Currently, we may all be feeling a sense of freedom as we emerge from the Pandemic. However freedom is interpreted, it is ultimately fundamental to our coexistence.

Oscar Graham

(Adeena, Riya & Smruthi attend The Henrietta Barnett School and Ava, Jonah, Oscar, Susana & Thomas attend The Archer Academy)

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