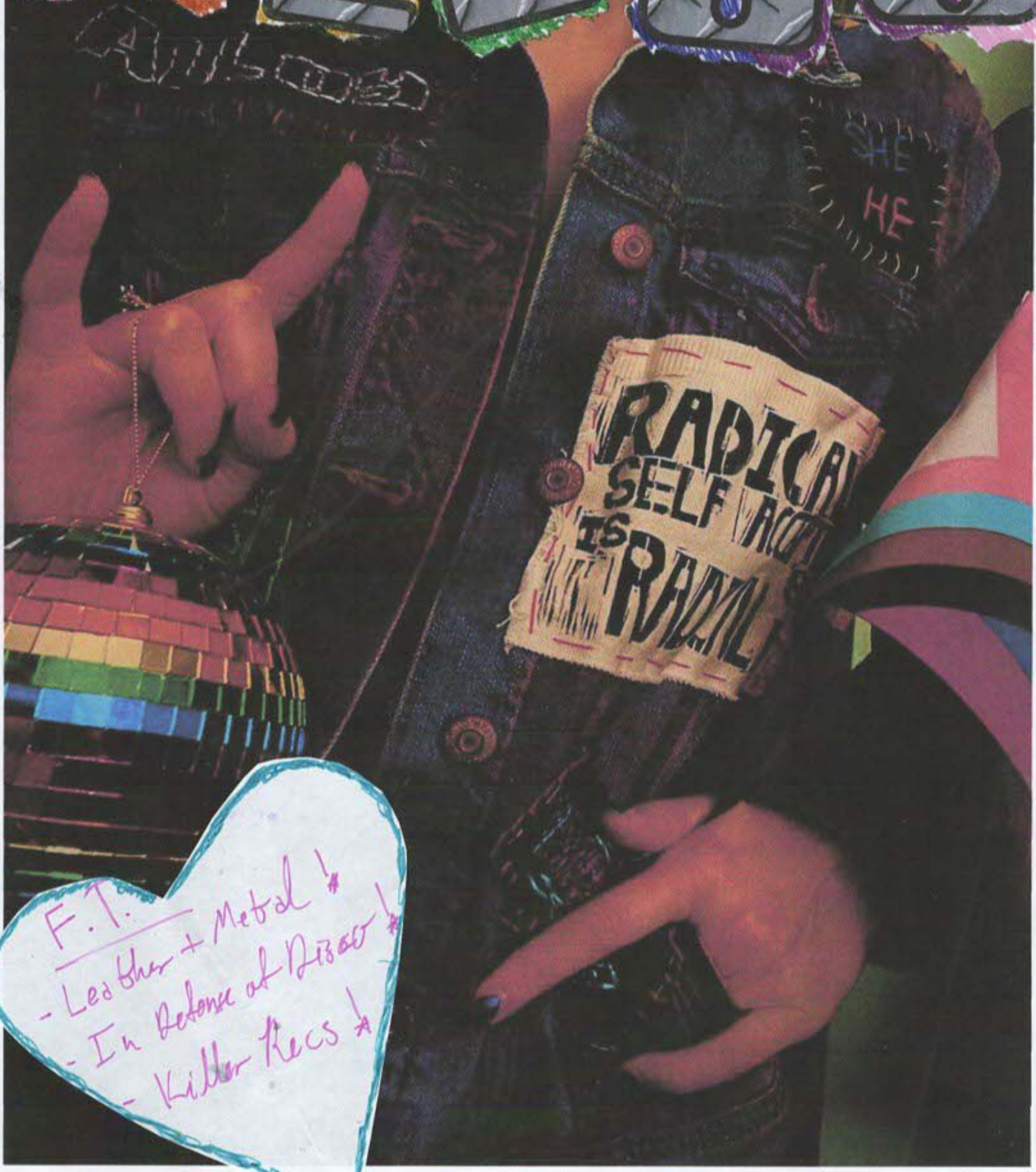


ALLIANCE



F.T.
- Leather + Metal !
- In Defense of Disob !
- Killer Recs !

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Hello again, Dear Readers!

We are so sorry for the long delay between our previous issue and this issue. As we said before, time and life got to the best of both of us - we lost track of it on both of our ends, and before we knew it, it had been about 2 months since our last ALLOY zine issue. However, we are coming out of our impromptu hiatus strong with an issue near and dear to our rainbow covered hearts- the Pride issue. So here we are, with our meandering articles about our queerness, a renewed fervor, and a whole lotta love. We sincerely hope you all enjoy, because it's fucking great to be back.

In Rage and Love,

Rebel Blaze

IN DEFENSE OF DISCO

By Rebel Blaze

I am what I am
I am my own special creation
So, come take a look
Give me the hook, or the ovation
It's my world, that I want to have a little pride in
My world, and it's not a place I have to hide in
Life's not worth a damn
'Til you can say, I am what I am

When you're queer, there are a few different red flags you learn to look for to know you're safe in any rock circle.

1. How do they talk about openly queer artists? *(Do they complain about Rob Halford's in-your-face-ness post coming out? Do they brush over or ignore David Bowie or Marc Bolan's bisexuality? Do they try and say Freddie Mercury's queerness wouldn't have influenced his art?)*
2. If they notice queer imagery on people, how do they react? *(Do they ignore obvious pronoun patches and pins? Do they make a weird face? Worse, do they say something about it?)*

And, the biggest one of all:

3. Do they say "Disco Sucks"?

Pitchforks down, dear readers. Drop it. Yes, we've all said it at least once, likely when we were twelve or so, just getting into old rock music and trying to prove how different we were by mindlessly repeating a decades old slogan seeped in homophobia and racism. Now, most of us outgrew this when we developed critical thinking skills and started broadening our horizons. Most of us know not to trust people who dismiss an entire genre out of hand. At best, they're just boring. At worst, there's bigger prejudices at play.

And no, I'm not exaggerating about the racism and homophobia. If you think it's a coincidence that there was such vitriol slung at a genre born of underground queer clubs and pioneered by mainly black and brown artists, then you are either willfully ignorant, or incredibly naive.

First, let's take a quick peek into the pre-Stonewall era. Don't ask, don't tell. If you can, stay invisible. Try not to dance together. Hide behind violets and friends of Dorothy and lavender marriages. Clubs were still segregated in some places. Still, some people would dress as they pleased- dressed for their own gender, dressed in drag, make their way to a club with the knowledge that they could be arrested if the police found reason to raid it. If they felt there was a reason to check up their skirts or down their pants. Of course, eventually you get fucking sick of that shit, and you start throwing bricks.

And where do you go to catch a break from fighting for your life? Rock N Roll wasn't safe anymore. Long gone was Sister Rosetta Tharpe's queerness, Little Richard's flamboyance, so long to the shock and horror at the Beatles hair and the time Mick Jagger wore a dress on stage. Rock N Roll had become its own breed of masculinity and heterosexuality, edging out the queerness and otherness that helped build it. Rock N Roll had gone *mainstream*.

What do you do when you can't find a safe space? Why, you make your own.

The discotheque got its name from the djs. Most bands couldn't play there safely- there was still always a risk of being raided, remember. So they would play discs. Donna Summers, Gloria Gaynor, Sister Sledge. A distinctly feminine sound that male artists had to jump up to meet. Dance that drew on traditional hispanic and latin dances, like the cha-cha and the tango, full of energy and exuberance and hard to do alone. The fashion was loud, campy, androgynous, and bold.

The disco was *the* safe space. Even as disco grew in popularity, even as places like Studio 54 had lines around the block, the entry of queer and trans individuals was still prioritized over the rich and famous.

Of course, Disco was very good at pissing people off- in fact, it might be the only genre to boast its own death date- July 12, 1979, at Comiskey Park in Chicago. During a lackluster season, the White Sox decided to partner with shock-rock radio host and leader of the Disco Sucks movement Steve Dhal (who is, in all honesty, a comic book villain. Seriously, he's a parody of himself) to host the promotion- anyone who brought a record to be blown up in between games during a twi-header got a discounted entry. Dhal's devotees filled the stadium to watch the destruction, leading to an infamous riot. And they did it. They could pretend they killed disco.

But they didn't. Obviously. I'm sat here in 2024 writing about it. You're reading about it. Because, you see, we're not a people who die easily. You can shove us back underground, but we will claw out eventually, and we will always have our spaces to fall back to. They tried it then. They relished in it then. But we still had disco.

A few decades after demolition night, when I was a teenaged bisexual in Catholic school, around people who tried to paint a smile over the fact that they believed I would burn in hell for daring to be happy while I exist, I had disco. ABBA was a favorite, because they'd sometimes play Dancing Queen at dances. And when you're gay and scared, it stops being a simple call to the dance floor. It becomes three minutes and fifty seconds of safety.

This is, probably, the world's briefest overview. Mostly because, at its core, I just want to say that disco doesn't suck and you need to broaden your horizons. That you need to use some goddamn critical thinking skills before parroting this kind of shit. That disco sucks has been reborn in how people talk about rap and hip-hop. That maybe it doesn't need to be your favorite genre in the world, but you need to look at its roots because some people wanna drive us back underground. That you taste the same venom when people talk about drag queens and trans people and leather. That it is never just fucking about Disco.

I am what I am

I don't want praise, I don't want pity

I bang my own drum

Some think it's noise, I think it's pretty

And so what, if I love each sparkle and each bangle?

Why not try to see things from a different angle?

Your life is a sham

'Til you can shout out

I AM WHAT I AM

- "I Am What I Am", Gloria Gaynor

Leather & Metal: How Leather & The Look of BDSM Became Influential & Popular in the Metal Scene

By Vyv Riff

Note: I use the phrase "metal scene" and "metal community" interchangeably in this article. When I use one or the other, I mean the same thing. :)

Most, if not all, metal fans - from cisgendered folks to us gender-diverse folks alike - tend to share at least one (1) thing in common when it comes to what we wear: Leather. The look of leather is a staple in the metal community & amongst almost all metalheads around the globe. From whips; to boots; to studded & spiked belts and wristbands; to even leather jackets, leather is an article of clothing that almost any metalhead does not wear at least once a day.

Of course, not all metalheads - both gender-diverse & cisgendered alike - wear leather. Some of us simply do not prefer to wear it. Some of us may get too hot easily. Some of us may simply not like wearing leather, but love the looks of it. Others may just not be into leather at all, which is perfectly fine. That is the fun part about it all - you are not required to wear an article of clothing to be considered part of the subculture.

Rob Halford pioneered and heavily popularized the look of leather in the metal community around the mid-late 1970s, while at the same time giving metalheads one of the first few established metalhead-esque pieces of clothing. Around the years of 1976 to late 1977, Halford had begun to wear more tight-fitting clothes as compared to the loose, flowy, hippie-inspired clothes he had worn previously. Very quickly, he had started to sprinkle a small bit of leather and spikes into parts of his outfits. In less than a year, by 1978, every member of Judas Priest was wearing full - or at least large amounts of - leather in their outfits. Les Binks, K.K. Downing, Glenn Tipton, Dave Holland, and even Scott Travis were all wearing leather as far as into the 1990s. Halford still rocks leather to this day, donning it in just about every photo of him seen both on and off stage. The overall look was, according to guitarist K.K. Downing, first introduced to the band by himself, and Halford helped to popularize it.

While the rest of the band was taking it easy with the leather, simply wearing jackets and some studs, then-closeted singer Rob Halford had quickly taken it to the next level - so much so that I feel like if you were a closeted queer in the 80s and hadn't seen Halford in a gay bar yet, you'd be smelling the homosexuality from the 2010s.

Halford rapidly took up the look of wearing and using bullwhips on stage and lashing them out towards the audience; wearing handcuffs and a

countless amount of chains along his waist; donning spandex and/or leather pants and/or chaps; leather boots; leather jackets; and a seemingly infinite amount of spikes and studs across his wrist and arm cuffs, shield guards, boots, and his jackets. Even on his head, he donned leather caps - a handful of them with simple, yet noticeable, chains decorating the rim.

Throughout the years, Halford's influence of wearing leather on stage led to other bands and fans alike being inspired and wearing their own leather jackets. In the 1970s, metal was first starting out. By the 1980s, when leather was quickly becoming a staple in the metal community and the metal scene overall, the average metalhead had something new to add to their daily style of clothing. Instead of wearing just band tees and jeans, they could now experiment more with leather, let alone denim.

In the 80s, with Halford & the rest of Priest donning leather, more and more metal bands became influenced and inspired to wear their own leather. While many bands took it easy and just kept it nice & simple with jackets and pants, bands such as **VENOM**, for example, had already taken it to another new level. Early black metal bands, and even metal bands that weren't black metal, were beginning to wear leather cuffs and arm shields, but with literal long metal nails poking out - most notably Kerry King of Slayer, which is painfully ironic because he hates gay people.

→ Foreign in his
Self-hating gay
erd - RB

One of the very very few, if not the only, BDSM-themed metal bands that has been important when it comes to connecting leather to metal is female-led metal band **BITCH**. Led by Betsy "Bitch" Weiss, Bitch is a band with a cult following that has only released a handful of albums. On their debut album, appropriately titled "Be My Slave," themes of degradation and humiliation, Bondage/Discipline, Dominance/Submission, Sado/Masochism (BDSM), as well as themes of leather, including being bound by/in leather, and - of course - sex litter the album. Upon its release, Bitch was dubbed "dominatrix metal" due to the themes in the lyrics. During performances, Betsy would frequently be portrayed as a dominatrix, often humiliating a male "slave" on stage. On top of that, there was also lots of bondage clothing and paraphernalia.

While not only important for being one of the much smaller amount of female-led metal bands, Bitch was also important for bringing the sexuality of leather and the fetish(es) related to it into the mainstream audience of heavy metal. Of course, not every metalhead will or does know the history of leather within the queer community, but Bitch brought the main topic of leather subculture and its sister BDSM into metal. Non-queer metalheads tend to see leather as a simple clothing item and/or as an accessory to liven up their already established look. For us queer metalheads, when it comes to leather, it has a long history in queer fashion and culture, as well as kink culture.

When it comes to leather in the queer community specifically, leather became popular amongst queers around the 1950s and 1960s, when greasers were popular and when tight motorcycle gear was becoming popular in general, especially towards men. The true leather subculture in queer history began in San Francisco, CA, USA, when Alan Selby visited, and soon founded Mr. S Leather. The institution helped to mark the importance of leather in queer fashion, as well as kink culture (for those who don't know already, leather is usually seen as a sexual fetish amongst us queers). As time went on, the leather subculture dressing style quickly expanded to motorcycle and leather jackets, leather chaps, and more. There were even friendly and fun competitions and contests to see who could win Mr. Leather or Ms. Leather in areas like San Francisco, and even globally - most notably the International Mr. Leather contest that has been held annually since 1979.

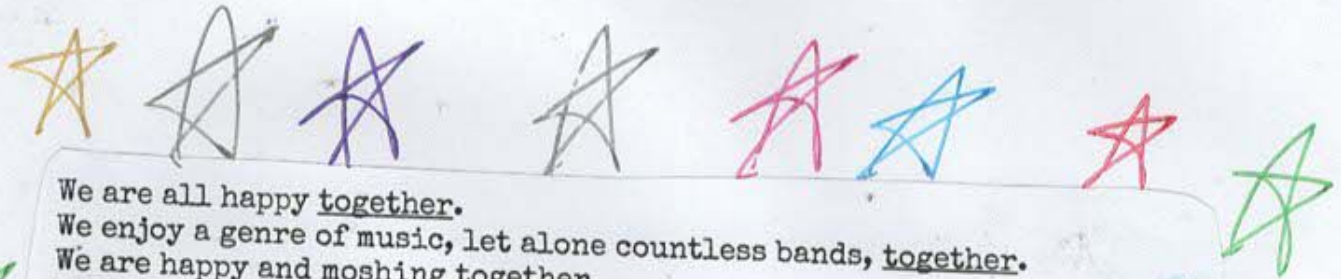
Nowadays in the leather subculture, there are fetish harnesses and collars, of which are often accompanied by chains/leashes; fetish masks; and more beautiful leather items. The leather subculture in the queer community has always had a massive message about consent, especially seeing as how leather is often seen as a kink to some degree for many people, as well as being happy & being about chosen family. Many leathermen are at least 40 years old or over, but as of recent years, there have been a lot more younger leathermen coming into the leather community. There are a high demographic of lesbian women as well, most of whom are lesbians.

In the modern-day metal scene and community, especially with the help of the internet and first-hand accounts and stories from metalheads in the scene back in the 80s and of those who were in bands, we can now look back at photos and see the history, the influence, and the importance of leather in the metal community. When metal as a genre was first beginning and was getting its first baby steps made into the universe of the music world, metalheads really had no style of clothing. When then-closeted gay man Rob Halford came around with Judas Priest and started wearing leather, metalheads had one of the first pieces of clothing that they could forever fit into their outfits, no matter where they were. Whether it be through wearing a spiked cuff, a leather jacket, or even leather boots, the look of and the article of clothing that is leather rapidly became popular amongst metalheads, both queer and non-queer alike.

Leather brought queer and non-queer metalheads together in harmony. Whether you are into the sexualness of leather or not, as a metalhead, there is a high chance that you wear at least one (1) article of leather clothing somewhere on your body. Pioneered, by a gay man, leather brought both queers and non-queers who enjoy a genre of music together as a family. Ironically, many metalheads are homophobic, transphobic, or just

queerphobic as a whole... *while wearing leather*. Whenever you wear leather as a metalhead, you are paying homage to Rob Halford, a now openly homosexual man, who popularized and pioneered the look and clothing of leather into a scene that has always been about being against the norm.

The leather subculture has always been about happiness, expressing and being yourself, chosen family, art and craftsmanship, and - of course - sex and kink. When a queer metalhead meets another queer metalhead, we most likely pick out a new member of our chosen family - both in the queer space and in the metal space/community. When a non-queer metalhead meets another non-queer metalhead, they most likely also pick out a new member of their chosen family - but just in the metal scene. Leather brought queers and non-queers who enjoy a genre of music together as a family - a chosen family, if you will. Whether you identify as queer or not queer, or identify yourself within the leather subculture/community, while also being a metalhead and you're in the metal scene, we are all one big chosen family towards one another. Metalheads love to hang out together. We go to and meet each other at shows together, we have fun together, we create life-long friendships with one another. We are all one big chosen family - which is one of the main importances of the leather subculture.



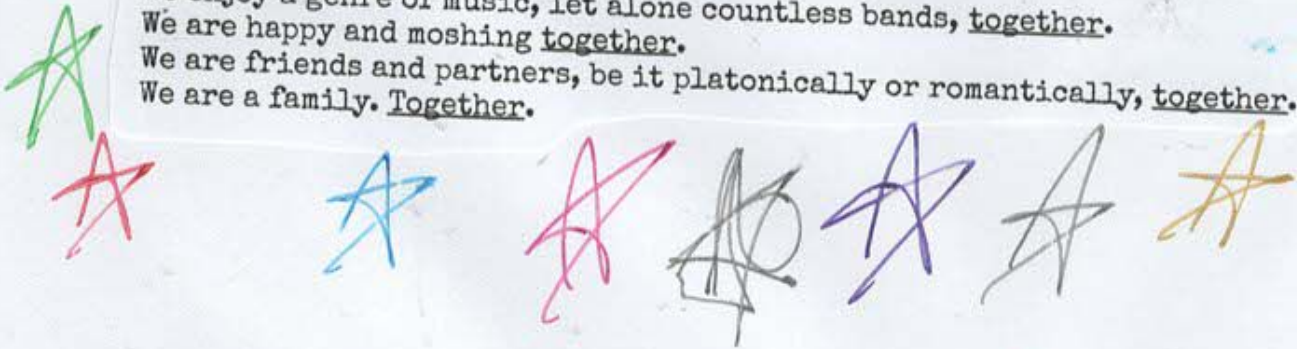
We are all happy together.

We enjoy a genre of music, let alone countless bands, together.

We are happy and moshing together.

We are friends and partners, be it platonically or romantically, together.

We are a family. Together.



Songs from rock/metal/punk bands with at least 1 queer member

Of course, these are not the only bands with queer members. There are countless others. Sometimes, you have to dig - especially for metal.

1. Jawbreaker -- Judas Priest (*Rob Halford - Gay*)
2. True Trans Soul Rebel - Against Me! (*Laura Jane Grace, MTF*)
3. Returner - Liturgy (*Haela Hunt-Hendrix, MTF*)
4. Zero - Starbenders (*Ex-drummer Emily Moon, WLW/Sapphic*)
Emily has never stated publicly, but she has posted photos of her and her girlfriend before.
5. Losing My Religion - R.E.M. (*Michael Stipe - Gay*)
6. Hatred In A Mask Of Flowers - Primal Rite (*Lucy Xavier, Genderfluid*) (*They/She*)
7. Dragged By a Truck - Sanguisugabogg (*Ex-guitarist Cameron Boggs*)
Cameron is nonbinary; they use they/them pronouns.
8. Atrocities from a Story Book Perspective - SeeYouSpaceCowboy... (*Connie Sgarbossa, MTF*)
9. Tough Guys - King Cobra (*Ex-vocalist Marcie Free, MTF*)
10. Just Like You - Limp Wrist (*Most if not all members are openly gay*)
11. Blood Pigs - OTEP (*Otep Shamaya, Lesbian*)
12. Together As One - Death (*Ex-members Paul Masvidal & Sean Reinert, Gay*) *They were a couple until Sean's death in January of 2020. Both members were also in the band Cynic after Death ended.*
13. 53rd & 3rd - Ramones (*Dee Dee Ramone, bisexual*)
14. Crimson & Clover - Joan Jett & The Blackhearts (*Joan Jett, WLW*)
Jett has never stated what her sexuality is, but has neither confirmed nor denied rumors of being lesbian or bisexual.
15. 20th Century Boy - T. Rex (*Marc Bolan, Bisexual*)
16. Ever Fallen in Love (With Someone You Shouldn't've?) - The Buzzcocks (*Pete Shelley, Bisexual (RIP)*)
17. Back to the Old House - The Smiths (*Morrissey, Bisexual*)
This is a case where you separate the art from the artist entirely. -VR
18. I'm A Cruiser - Village People (*Multiple members are/were gay*)
19. Heart of Glass - Blondie (*Debbie Harry, Bisexual*)
20. Mr. Roboto - Styx (*Chuck Panozzo, Gay*)
21. First Of The Last Calls - Hüsker Dü (*Bob Mould, Gay*)
22. Velvet Green - Jethro Tull (*Dee Palmer, MTF and Intersex*)

Songs by Queer Artists From Any & All Genres

1. Strange Things Happening Every Day - Sister Rosetta Tharpe
(The Godmother of Rock & Roll - literally created the genre before Elvis & the others came around. This is the song that has been known to people that officially invented rock & roll, all the way back in 1939. -VR)
2. Prove It on Me Blues - Gertrude "Ma" Rainey
(Another queer Black pioneer of the blues, which led to the invention of rock & roll. Rainey recorded songs from 1923 to 1928. -VR)
3. 'Tain't Nobody's Bizness If I Do - Bessie Smith
(Yet another queer Black pioneer of the blues in the 20s! -VR)
4. How Much Can I Stand? - Gladys Bentley
(You guessed it - another Black queer blues singer! Much less known than Bessie, Rainey & Tharpe - a wonderful artist. -VR)
5. Gummy Bear - Ginger Minj / Gummy Bear *(DRAG QUEEN SUPREMACY! -VR)*
6. we fell in love in october - girl in red (Single)
7. Bigotry Is Not Rebellion - Helo Revolt
(Obscure & openly gay metal band from the early 90s. It's a shame they never got big - they only released an EP. -VR)
8. IT GIRL - Aliyah's Interlude
9. I Am America - Shea Diamond
10. Born This Way - Lady Gaga *(HOW COULD WE NOT????? -VR)*
11. Piece of My Heart - Janis Joplin
12. You Think You're A Man - Divine
13. Y.M.C.A. - Village People
14. Ponyboy - SOPHIE *(RIP to Sophie; she died in 2020 :(-VR)*
15. Tutti Frutti - Little Richard
16. You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real) - Sylvester
17. I Wanna Take You Home - Patrick Cowley *(Pioneered EDM! -VR)*
18. Like I Can - Sam Smith
19. MAMMAMIA - Måneskin
20. stupid horse - 100 gecs
21. GAY BARZ - Bob the Drag Queen
22. Rebel Girl - Bikini Kill
23. Be Still - Jobriath
24. I Just Want to Be Beautiful - Morphine *(Trans DSBM project! -VR)*
25. Always On My Mind - Pet Shop Boys *(A beautiful Willie Nelson cover, honestly my favorite version. -VR)*



Queer-coded metal & rock songs to headbang to for Pride Month

1. Practically any Judas Priest song. Even if you squint, their not-so-obvious lyrics have queer undertones - at least to me, that is. -VR
2. We're Not Gonna Take It - Twisted Sister / *Stay Hungry*
3. Love Child - Accept / *Balls To the Wall*
4. Hunger - King Kobra / *Ready to Strike*
5. My Girlfriend's Girlfriend - Type O Negative / *October Rust*
6. Straight as a Die - Tygers Of Pan Tang / *First Kill*
7. Rainbow In The Dark - Dio / *Holy Diver (If you know you know-RB)*
8. The Unforgiven - Metallica / *Metallica (The Black Album)*
9. I Am (I'm Me) - Twisted Sister / *You Can't Stop Rock 'N' Roll*
10. Angels Fall - Breaking Benjamin / *Dark Before Dawn*
11. Headbanger - Pansy Division / *More Lovin' from Our Oven*
12. Angry Inch - Type O Negative / *October Rust*
(This is actually a cover from the musical "Hedwig & The Angry Inch" - it's about a trans woman in a rock band! -VR) (I also just wanna throw out the fact that my favorite song from that musical is Origin Of Love -RB)
13. Straight As A Die - Tygers of Pan Tang / *First Kill*
(Criminally underrated NWOBHM band actually -VR)
14. Losers and Winners - Accept / *Balls to the Wall*
(In full honesty, this entire album is ragingly queer-coded. Every goddamn song on this can be seen through a queer lens. -VR)
15. Side By Side - Kreator / *Gods of Violence*
(This is a song from the band to their/us queer fans showing support for us queer fans. This is massive for a metal band that isn't Judas Priest, especially a thrash band. -VR)
16. Mama - My Chemical Romance / *The Black Parade (How could I not -VR)*
17. Odd - Gaylord / *Wings Of the Joyful*
(The person behind Gaylord has a shit ton of other projects as well! Check out their Metal Archives page under the name Pope Richard & check out their work. :) -VR)
18. He's A Woman, She's A Man - Scorpions / *Taken By Force*
19. Stand 4 What U R - Accept / *Eat the Heat*
20. Rebel Rebel - David Bowie / *Diamond Dogs (This is my song!-RB)*
21. I'm Still Standing - Elton John / *Too Low For Zero*
22. Don't Stop Me Now - Queen / *Jazz*
23. Good Grief - Bastille / *Wild World*

