Special Topics in LGBTQIA+ Popular Music Culture

Materials related to “Special Topics in LGBTQI+ Popular Music Culture” in the collections of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University

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What does LGBTQIA+ mean?

LGBTQI+ is an acronym that stands for “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Transsexual, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and more (+). The term is meant to represent various sexualities and gender identities that have been historically marginalized either by ignorance, segregation or extermination. It is also meant to respectfully emphasize the diverse human expressions of gender and sexual identities. The acronym has gone through different iterations over the years. Variants include: LGBT, GLBT, LGBTQ, LGBTI, LGBTQI, LGBT+ and perhaps even more. Public discourse around the term continues to evolve as people’s ideologies expand, contract and engage with forms of critical analysis, solidarity and inclusion. Like the community itself, the term remains fluid.

Why does LGBTQIA+ research matter?

By examining the stories of marginalized people and groups, opportunities emerge to consider whose histories are told or untold, why those experiences were voiced or silenced, and how these inclusions or absences effect society and our understanding of the various truths of individual and collective pasts.

What can this LGBTQIA+ research guide do for me?

This guide demonstrates just a few of the innumerable ways history might be understood by framing the LGBTQIA+ experience in your research. Types of primary and secondary sources include: sheet music, rare books, performance documents, sound recordings, video recordings, manuscript collections, and trade magazines.

The guide is divided into broad categories (LGBTQ+ Culture: general knowledge; Gender and Identity: cross-dressing, drag culture and the transgendered self; and
Women’s Music: music made by women, about women’s experiences; Related Special Sub Topics: Important LGBTQ+ Cultural Figures) and formatted as a bibliography (Chicago style, 17th ed.). Each category includes examples of primary and secondary source material housed at the Center for Popular Music that could be used to frame one of these aspects of LGBTQIA+ culture in recent or earlier popular music history. For example, sound recordings from our Olivia Records and Ladyslipper Records collections could be read against our Youth Empowerment Through Arts & Humanities Collection to understand more about LGBTQIA+ women. Additional research materials have been included at the end of the guide (outside databases, online repositories, academic syllabi, and other research guides).

These are just a few examples of ways primary and secondary documents at the Center for Popular Music can be sourced to encourage deeper, critical and creative insights about LGBTQIA+ related histories. What the sources say is up to you, the researcher, to determine and argue! What will you uncover in our library and archive, and what will it say about history that hasn’t been said before?

“How do I search for these primary source materials?”

Online Searching:

Most of these primary source materials may be searched online through the Center’s website. Sound recordings may be searched in the Center's Reading Room through the in-house database.

To search for these materials online, visit the CPM’s website. This catalog will search for materials in the following collection categories: Manuscript Collections, Rare Books and Scores; Sheet Music; Song Broadsides; Posters, Playbills, and Programs; Trade Catalogs; Photographs; and Periodicals: Secondary Collection.

For an overview of each of the major collections, see the detailed menu to the left of the screen under “Search Our Collections.”
You should search for individual titles, artists or songs in Quick Search or Advanced Search. If you do not have any specific names in mind, you should first examine secondary source materials. There are no keywords that will specifically yield LGBTQI+ music. Searching for terms like “lesbian,” “gender identity in music,” “queer” or by genres like “disco” will yield long lists of items that may or may not directly correlate to the topics. The combined keywords “LGBT music” or “LGBTQ” have not been used in the cataloging process, so will not yield any significant results.

Click on the Advanced Search link to take you to a more detailed search screen. You may limit your search to a particular field or type of material.
At the Center (in-house searching only):

To search for Sound Recordings, please visit the Center and use our in-house database or email Rachel Morris Rachel.Morris@mtsu.edu or Martin Fisher Martin.Fisher@mtsu.edu.

Some photographic and manuscript materials will also require staff assistance to locate. Please contact Rachel Morris with questions.
“What secondary source materials do you have?”

To search for Secondary Source Materials available in the Center’s Reading Room– go to MTSU’s [Walker Library catalog](#) and use search terms like “Lesbian,” “Gender in music” or “Madonna.” If you need additional ideas for related search terms, Indiana University has provided a key based on the categories issued by The Library of Congress, [here](#). You may also search for individual LGBTQI+ artists or genres. Materials include histories, song books and video.

If you are only interested in materials held at the CPM, click on “Library Catalog” at the bottom of the Search box.

Then select “Center for Popular Music (Mass Comm.)” under the “Collection” menu.
Special Topics in LGBTQI+ Popular Music Culture

Bibliography

LGBTQ+ Culture: general knowledge

Primary Sources

Video

Lisa A. Lewis research videos collection


Sound Recordings


Manuscript Collections

Lisa A. Lewis Papers (see: “Series II: Research resources”)  
Press Kit Collection (see: “B-52s, Cher, Depeche Mode, Erasure, Madonna, New Order, Dolly Parton, Prince, and Donna Summer” et al)  
Patrick W. Farmer musical theater collection (see: “87 page annotated list of 342 Broadway musicals”)
Rare Books and Scores


Secondary Sources

Books


Gender and Identity: cross-dressing, drag culture and the transgendered self

Primary Sources

Sheet Music


Sound Recordings


Secondary Sources

Books


Women’s Music: music made by women, about women’s experiences

Primary Sources

Song Books


Sound Recordings


**Manuscript Collections**

*Women in American Musical Life Symposium records*
Secondary Sources

Books


Trade Catalog

Ladyslipper Music, Inc. | Call Number: CAT-00372

Related Special Sub Topics: Important LGBTQ+ Cultural Figures

David Bowie

Primary Sources

Performance Documents


Mojo (magazine), and Mick Rock. *Bowie Changes #1*. [London]: [Bauer], 2015. | Call Number: BIO-POST-000029


**Secondary Sources**

**Books**


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**Lady Gaga**

**Secondary Sources**

**Books**


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**Prince**

**Secondary Sources**

**Books**


Madonna

**Primary Sources**

*Performance Documents*


*Sound Recordings*


**Secondary Sources**

*Books*


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**Marc Bolan**

**Secondary Sources**

**Books**


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**More Archival Resources**

**Other Databases and Online Repositories:**

- Archives of Sexuality & Gender
- JD Doyle Archives
- Encyclopedia of Popular Music, 4th Ed.
- GLBTQ Archives Encyclopedia Project
- Houston LGBT History
- Internet Archive
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
- Library of Congress
- OutVoice, the oldest GLBT Musicians ranking system archives
- Open Culture
- Oxford Music Online
- Queer Music Heritage
- Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
- Women’s Liberation Music Archive
- Women's Music Archives records and collected music at Smith College
Syllabi & Other Academic Research Guides

GSAFE. A Timeline of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in the United States.


Morris, Prof. Mitchell. LGBTQ Perspectives in Popular Music, Herb Alpert School of Music, UCLA.