

Timeless Pride

"Raise You Up/Just Be"

"Masculine Women! Feminine Men!"

"Don't Leave Me This Way"

"The Rainbow Connection"

"Wind Beneath My Wings"

Celebrating A Century of Community

Timeless Pride is a celebration of identity, joy, and the music that unites and uplifts us across generations. This month, we honor our LGBTQ+ friends of all ages through songs that have become powerful anthems of pride, acceptance, and belonging. These timeless tunes—many reclaimed by the LGBTQ+ community as expressions of resilience and self-love—invite us all to sing out loud and live authentically. We also pay tribute to the countless LGBTQ+ songwriters—like Cole Porter, Billy Strayhorn, Noël Coward—whose creative contributions helped shape the soundtrack of our lives. Let's celebrate a century of music that continues to inspire courage, connection, and the freedom to be exactly who we are.



Song: "Raise You Up/Just Be" (2013)

Songwriter: Cyndi Lauper

Brief Context:

"Raise You Up/Just Be" is the uplifting finale of *Kinky Boots*, the 2013 Tony Award-winning musical with music and lyrics by pop icon Cyndi Lauper. Featuring the full company, this joyful anthem encourages self-acceptance, compassion, and the courage to be exactly who you are. The song's driving energy and affirming lyrics bring the musical's message home: that changing the world begins with changing your mind. As the closing number, it leaves audiences on their feet—reminding us that kindness is always in style, and pride is something to wear boldly. "Raise You Up/Just Be" is a celebration of chosen family, resilience, and the power of being unapologetically yourself.

Activity: Listening

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Raise You Up/Just Be" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Discussion Prompt

After listening to Perfect Harmony leader Jonathan belt out this iconic number, check out a special rendition of this song put together by Cyndi Lauper and the cast of *Kinky Boots* in honor of Pride! Feel free to dance (or sing) along this time!

[LISTEN TO CYNDI & THE CAST'S RECORDING](#)



Kinky Boots at the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto, Canada. The front of house marquee with its famous giant red Kinky Boots.

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Song: "Masculine Women! Feminine Men!" (1926)

Songwriters: Edgar Leslie & James V. Monaco

Brief Context:

"Masculine Women, Feminine Men" is a jazz-age tune from 1926, written by Edgar Leslie and James V. Monaco. On the surface, it's a commentary on changing fashion and behavior—but it also reveals how conversations around gender expression were already happening a century ago. During the lively and liberated atmosphere of the 1920s, gender nonconformity was becoming more visible in nightlife, performance, and everyday life. From jazz clubs to drag balls, people across the spectrum of identity found ways to express themselves. This song, once considered satirical, now stands as an unexpected window into LGBTQIA+ history—proof that expressions of gender and identity outside the binary have long been part of the human story.

Activity: Listening and Discussion

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Masculine Women! Feminine Men!" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Discussion Prompt

Every person makes decisions on how they dress in order to feel more confident. Some people feel euphoria - or great happiness - when they wear clothes that they feel right in.

Tell someone about a piece of clothing that you find yourself confident wearing.



Sheet music housed in the Songbook Library & Archives



Song: "Don't Leave Me This Way" (1976)

Recorded by Thelma Houston

Brief Context:

"Don't Leave Me This Way" is a dance club anthem written by Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff and Cary Gilbert and first recorded by Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes in 1975. Thelma Houston's single filled the air of practically every nightclub scene for the following two decades. With its pronoun-free lyrics, the song soon became an unofficial theme of the gay community and the fight against AIDS the late 20th century.

The UK-based synth-pop group The Communards released the 1986 Hi-NRG version, which featured vocals from gay-rights activist Jimmy Somerville and became an international club hit.

Activity: Movement

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Don't Leave Me This Way" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Seated Movement

Follow Perfect Harmony leader Kenny or create your own seated movement!

Use movements like . . .

- Roll your head to the right and then left
- Tilt head from side to side
- Move your shoulders up, up, down, down
- Alternate raising each arm to the sky
- Tap your toe front and side (4 slow, 3 fast)



Publicity photo of singer Thelma Houston, 1977.

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Song: "The Rainbow Connection" (1979)

Songwriters: Paul Williams and Kenneth Ascher

Brief Context:

"The Rainbow Connection" is a classic song most famous for its performance by Jim Henson as Kermit the Frog for *The Muppet Movie*. Members of the LGBTQIA+ community identify with the song not only for its use of rainbow imagery, but for the song's faith in a beautiful future and for the movie's theme of finding family in a diverse bunch of ragtag characters.

In 2021, the US Library of Congress inducted "The Rainbow Connection" into the National Recording Registry for its importance in the nation's recorded sound heritage.

Activity: Singing

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "The Rainbow Connection" video ([YOUTUBE](#))
- Perfect Harmony "The Rainbow Connection" lyrics

Suggested Discussion Prompt

"The Rainbow Connection" has become an anthem of hope, inspiring people to chase their dreams.

Tell someone about a dream or goal you have and what inspires you to keep believing in it.



Sheet music housed in the Songbook Library & Archives



The Rainbow Connection

**Why are there so many
Songs about rainbows
And what's on the other side?
Rainbows are visions
But only illusions
And rainbows have nothing to hide**

**So we've been told and some choose to believe it
I know they're wrong, wait and see
Someday we'll find it
The rainbow connection
The lovers, the dreamers and me**

**Who said that every wish
Would be heard and answered
When wished on the morning star?
Somebody thought of that
And someone believed it
Look what it's done so far**

The Rainbow Connection

What's so amazing that keeps us stargazing

And what do we think we might see?

Someday we'll find it

The rainbow connection

The lovers, the dreamers and me

All of us under its spell

We know that it's probably magic

Have you been half asleep

And have you heard voices?

I've heard them calling my name

Is this the sweet sound

That calls the young sailor?

The voice might be one and the same

I've heard it too many times to ignore it

It's something that I'm supposed to be

Someday we'll find it

The rainbow connection

The lovers, the dreamers and me

Song: "Wind Beneath My Wings" (1982)
Songwriters: Jeff Silbar and Larry Henley

Brief Context:

"Wind Beneath My Wings" was written in 1982 by Jeff Silbar and Larry Henley, but it wasn't until Bette Midler recorded it for the 1988 film *Beaches* that the song became a beloved anthem of gratitude, admiration, and quiet strength. Midler's soaring, emotional rendition earned a GRAMMY for Record of the Year and became a cultural touchstone—especially for those who've ever felt different or unseen. For many, especially listeners in the LGBTQIA+ community, Midler's performance was more than a song; it was a lifeline. Her presence, artistry, and unapologetic self-expression offered a model of courage and joy. "Wind Beneath My Wings" reminds us how music—and the artists who sing it—can hold space for us, lift us up, and help us believe in who we are becoming.

Activity: Listening and Discussion

What do you need?

- Perfect Harmony "Wind Beneath My Wings" video ([YOUTUBE](#))

Suggested Discussion Prompt

After listening to Perfect Harmony leader Anna play this song on the piano, listen to a recording by Bette Midler with lyrics.

[LISTEN TO BETTE'S RECORDING](#)

Think of someone who has been a quiet source of strength in your life, someone who has supported you in being your true self.

Tell someone about that person's impact on you.

