

## Best gay songs: 10-1

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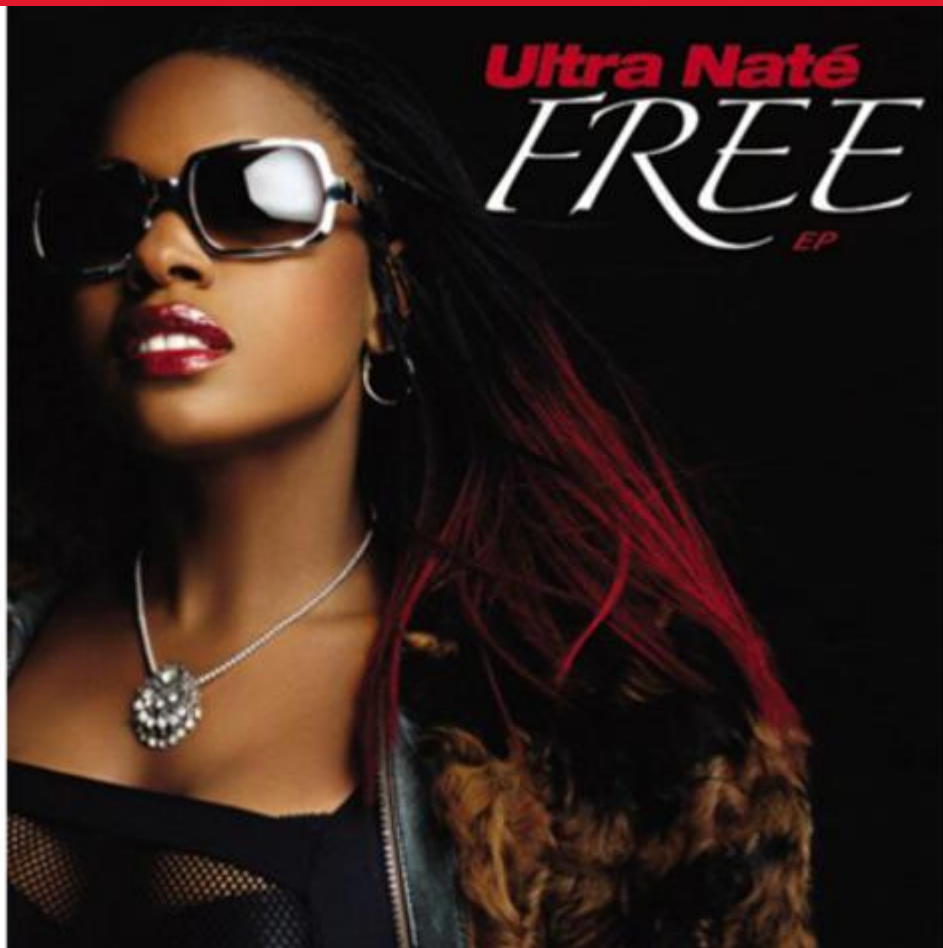


### “A Little Respect” by Erasure

“What religion or reason could drive a man to forsake his lover?” sings Andy Bell on this stirring synth-pop classic – a hit for British duo Erasure in 1988, and a perfect, piquant response to the British government’s outrageous Section 28 act. Word is that at the time, Bell would introduce the song onstage saying, “When I was a little girl, I asked my mummy, ‘Can I be gay when I grow up?’ She replied, ‘Yes, if you show a little respect.’” – *Sophie Harris*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=x34icYC8zA0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x34icYC8zA0)



### **“Free” by Ultra Naté**

A global smash for dance diva Ultra Naté in 1997, “Free” offers liberation not as a luxury but as an imperative: “You’ve got to live your life – do what you want to do,” urges the singer. The melancholy guitar riff that kicks off the song gives way to an ecstatic, celebratory chorus that’s the musical embodiment of throwing your hands in the air. So don’t hold back! – *Sophie Harris*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgRBkjgXHro](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgRBkjgXHro)



### “Born This Way” by Lady Gaga

No one has ever campaigned so openly for a gay fan base as Lady Gaga, and her 2011 hit "Born This Way" was her most obvious gift to our demographic. The song has its detractors – it's basically a rewrite of Madonna's "Express Yourself," it's got some questionable lyrics ("Orient"? Really?), and the concept of being "born" gay is kind of irrelevant and unsubtle. Still, it's hard not to be moved by its message of self-acceptance, and no other song composed in recent decades sounds better blaring from a float in a Gay Pride parade – and that's all you can really ask from a great Pride anthem. – *Ethan LaCroix*

[Download on Amazon](#)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTWoTR2a7JM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTWoTR2a7JM)



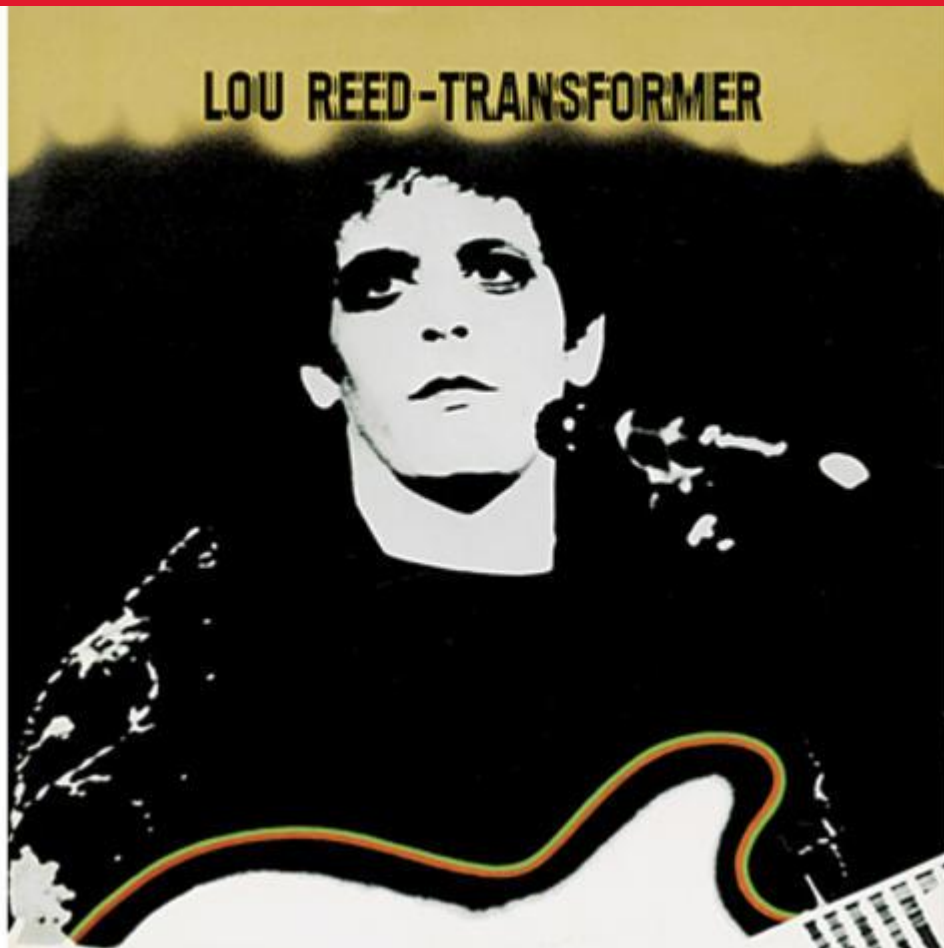
### **"Y.M.C.A." by Village People**

For any guy who's ever wanted to be (or sleep with) a cowboy, cop or leather-clad biker, the Village People reign supreme as gay-anthem chart toppers. Songs like "Macho Man," "Go West," "Cruisin'" and "In the Navy" are full of double entendres, and 1978's "Y.M.C.A." – which became one of the most popular singles of the 1970s – is no different. In fact, the Young Men's Christian Association was so appalled at the song's implications that it threatened to sue, until it noticed that membership had significantly increased in the wake of the tune's success. Turns out any press is good press – eh, boys? – *Kate Wertheimer*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS9OO0S5w2k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS9OO0S5w2k)





### **“Walk on the Wild Side” by Lou Reed**

With this dry, wry, bass-driven paean to sexual outlaws from his 1972 album, *Transformer*, Reed cemented his street cred as the epitome of New York cool. The subjects of his seen-it-all narration are five colorful characters from the crowd that Andy Warhol had declared, by fiat, “superstars”: early trans icons Holly Woodlawn, Candy Darling and Jackie Curtis, plus a couple of very irregular Joes (Dallesandro and Campbell). The song became a top-20 hit (though the radio edit scrubbed out a reference to backroom blow jobs), and helped raise the voltage bar on what was considered shocking. – *Adam Feldman*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEYyQIIGQcc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEYyQIIGQcc)

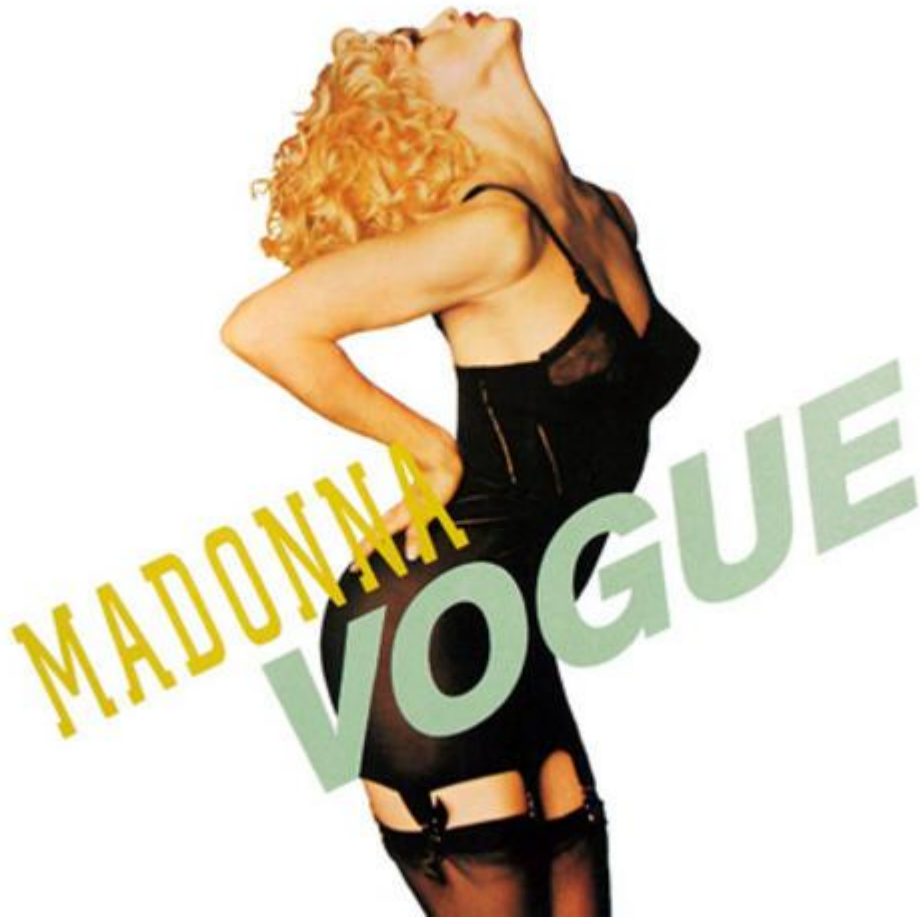


### **"I'm Coming Out" by Diana Ross**

Yes, this song is about that kind of "coming out." Chic's Nile Rodgers was inspired to write this funky 1980 gem for Diana Ross after seeing multiple drag queens dressed as the iconic singer at a gay disco in New York. For her part, Ross was in the process of extracting herself from her long relationship with Motown when "I'm Coming Out" arrived on the charts, giving the song additional significance for the music legend. Today, Ross still opens her shows with "I'm Coming Out," and the song remains a quintessential anthem of liberation – gay or otherwise. – *Ethan LaCroix*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeXnRSCU5Ac](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeXnRSCU5Ac)



### **“Vogue” by Madonna**

"Look around: Everywhere you turn is heartache." That's not exactly a fluffy opening shot for a dance-pop song – and that's the point. Recorded at the height of America's AIDS crisis and inspired by New York's underground gay ball scene (famously documented in the 1991 film *Paris Is Burning*), Madonna's deep-house-inflected 1990 smash commands you to leave the heavy stuff aside – if only for a few minutes – and find salvation on the dance floor. Nearly a quarter century later, this classic track from one of the most gay-beloved artists of all time sounds no less imperative. – *Ethan LaCroix*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuJQSAiODqI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuJQSAiODqI)



### **“Over the Rainbow” by Judy Garland**

For generations who grew up as “friends of Dorothy,” yearning to escape into a realm of Technicolor urban fantasy, the tacit gay national anthem was Garland’s wistful ballad from 1939’s *The Wizard of Oz* (with a gorgeous melody by Harold Arlen and touching lyrics by social activist E.Y. “Yip” Harburg). Garland’s later performances of the song on TV and in concert – older, battered by life, but still dreaming of a happier place – had even greater power. But even now that so many closet doors have opened, “Over the Rainbow” – and don’t you dare call it “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” lest someone threaten to revoke your gay card – still inspires pride and reverence. Listening to it feels like saluting the rainbow flag. – *Adam Feldman*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Xw36T\\_PfJU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Xw36T_PfJU)





### **"Freedom! '90" by George Michael**

Six years after scoring a No. 1 hit called "Freedom" with Wham!, George Michael crushed the charts with this tune of the same name. The redundancy was the point. Michael was destroying his past, writing over it, melting it away with acid house. In the video, the symbols of his "Faith" fame burned and crumbled – his leather jacket, the guitar, the Wurlitzer. The pop star didn't appear in the video himself, instead putting his words in the mouths of godly women from the golden age of supermodels – Campbell, Evangelista, Turlington, Crawford. The lip-synching proclaimed: Take this song, anyone, everyone, it is yours. (Though the less said about the Robbie Williams version, the better.) – *Brent DiCrescenzo*

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=diYAc7gB-0A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diYAc7gB-0A)



### **"I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor**

It starts off slowly, shrouded in fear; then the beat kicks in, the song builds in confidence, and by the end, now backed by a string section, it's a full-bore disco anthem of self-assurance. On its beautiful face, Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive" is about a woman getting over the guy who done her wrong; but in 1978, as gay liberation was gathering steam in heated nightclubs around the world, it also played like an declaration of hard-won pride ("I used to cry / But now I hold my head up high") and independence from the hetero norm ("I'm not that chained-up little person still in love with you"). In the 1980s, when AIDS wiped out tens of thousands of those celebrants, the song took on new layers of resonance. Today "I Will Survive" carries all of that baggage, and lifts it up along with the spirits of anyone who hears its message. Did you think we'd crumble? Did you think we'd lay down and die? Think again. We're going to dance. – *Adam Feldman*

[Download on Amazon](#)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZGwHtGBZJU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZGwHtGBZJU)



<https://www.timeout.com/newyork/music/ultimate-pride-playlist-50-best-gay-songs>



Obviously the fifty tracks above are the opinions of the authors. I'm sure we all looked at the list and thought, "what about that one"?

If you would like your favourite gay pride anthem added to the list above please email [hiya@haemosexual.com](mailto:hiya@haemosexual.com)