

Best gay songs: 40–31

40



“Hang with Me” by Robyn

Fuck buddies, open relationships, one-night-stands...gays don't have the market on casual sexuality cornered, but we certainly have it figured out a little better than our straight brethren. Critically adored pop sensation Robyn proved she could hang with the gays in 2010 when she released this single spelling out the pros and cons of friends with benefits. – *Ethan LaCroix*

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=83vhhEQIRy0



“Battle Cry” by Angel Haze

The young rapper, who identifies as pansexual, doesn't directly address sexuality in this second single from 2013's *Dirty Gold*. But the track's themes of working away from a repressive religious upbringing and relying on inner strength to overcome obstacles ("I realized I was a teacher, not just one of the heathens / I'm going to destroy the fallacies, start creating believers"), combined with a seductively uplifting Sia-sung hook, make for gold indeed. – *Kris Vire*

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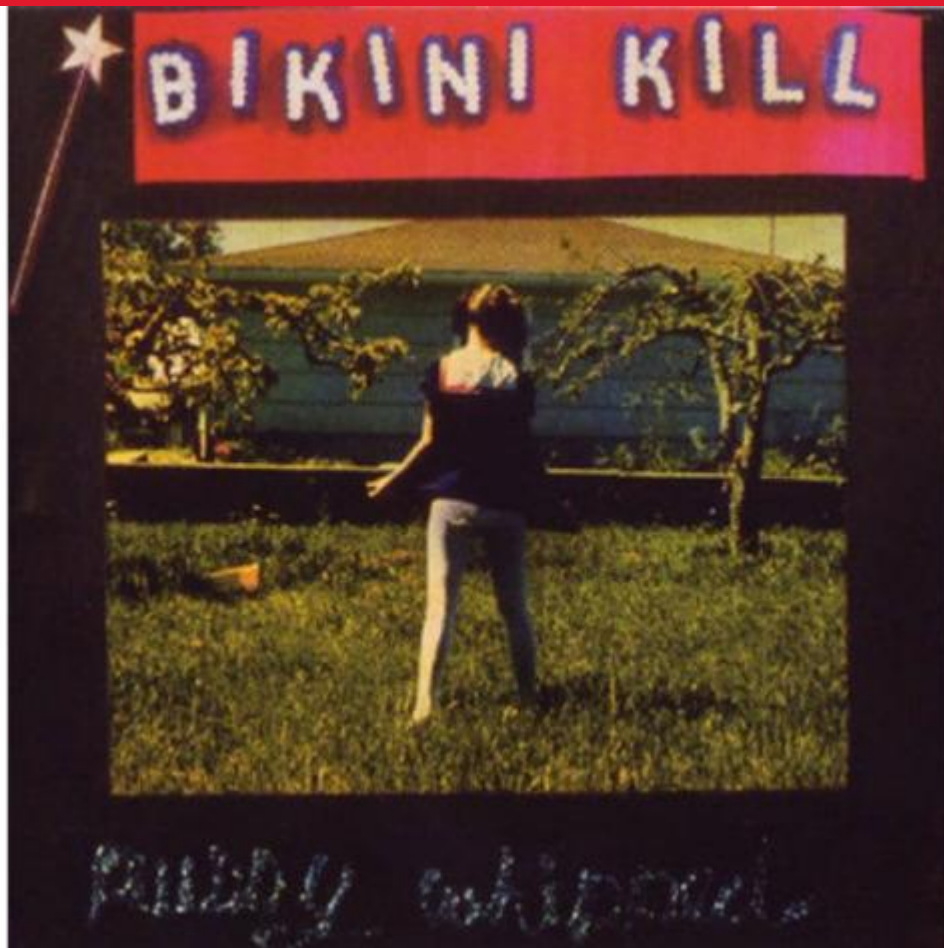


“Sweet Transvestite” by Tim Curry

High-school and college boys looking for an excuse to wear sexy black lingerie in public found a perfect one in Richard O’Brien’s B-flick musical spoof and midnight-movie cult smash *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Tim Curry’s outrageous camp charisma as the antiheroic Dr. Frank-N-Furter – alien, mad scientist and deviant seducer in one gartered package – dragged cross-dressing out of the shadows and strutted it as a virtue. Shamelessness has never seemed so easy. – *Adam Feldman*

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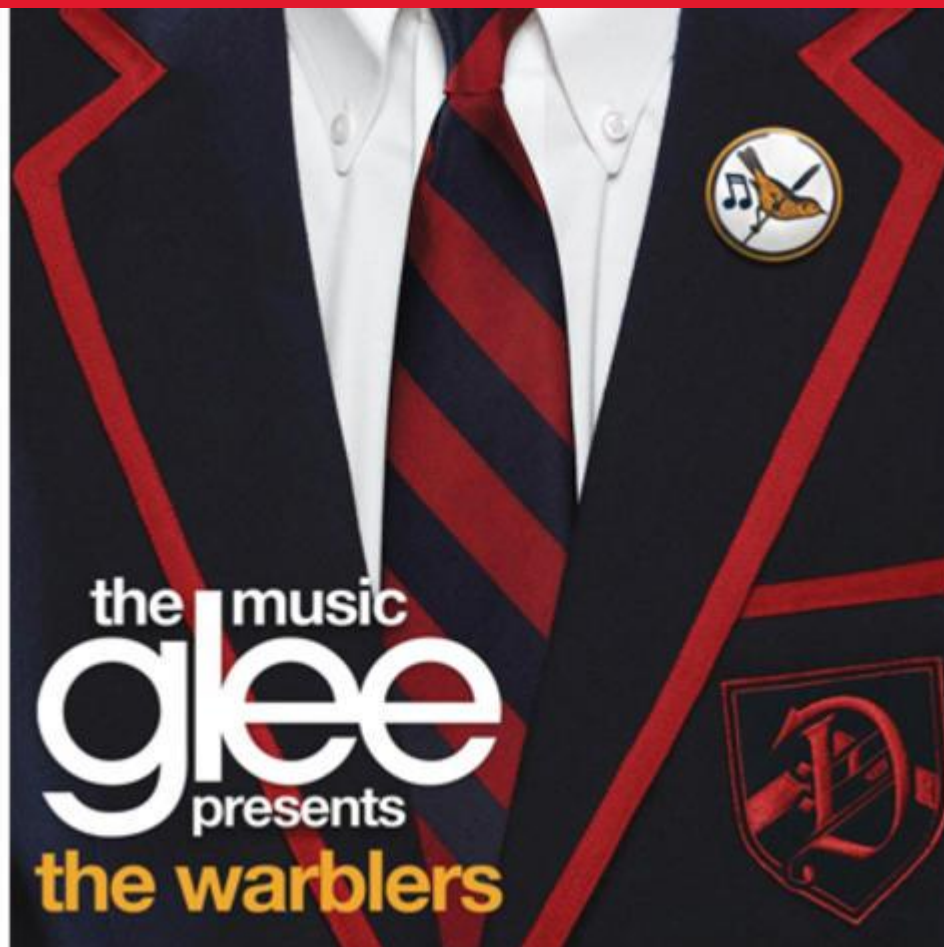


“Rebel Girl” by Bikini Kill

This muscular riot-grrrl anthem finds singer Kathleen Hanna straddling the line between platonic crush ("I think I want to be her best friend") and flat-out sapphism ("In her kiss, I taste the revolution!"). If you want to see a room full of gay girls (and more than a few boys) lose their shit, play this 1993 classic on the jukebox. – *Ethan LaCroix*

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=WreQbMIFEjU

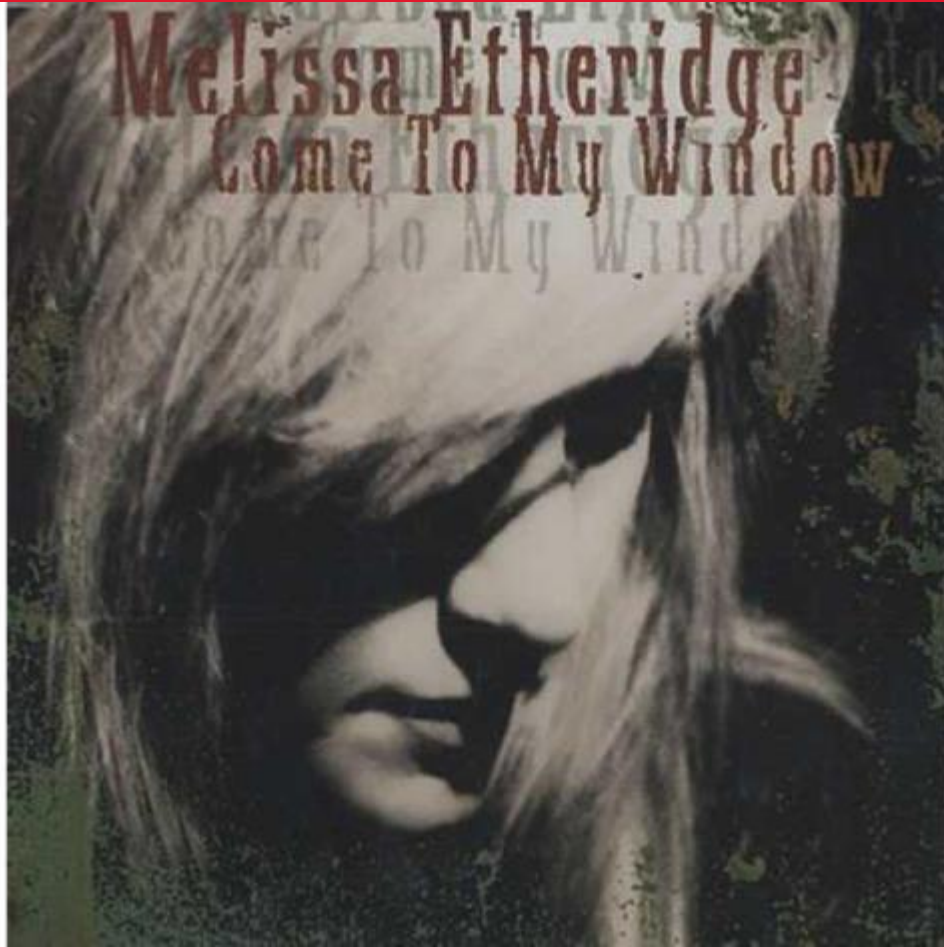


“Teenage Dream” by Darren Criss

In 2010, *Glee* struck a chord among gay viewers (more so than usual, even!) when new cast member Darren Criss sang a cover of Katy Perry's pop trifle to another male character on the show. It was a sweet, mildly subversive moment, the cover became a Top Ten Billboard hit in the U.S. – and Criss became an instant sex symbol among gay fans. – *Ethan LaCroix*

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PX2_9LNa2E



"Come to My Window" by Melissa Etheridge

Four years before Ellen declared, "Yep, I'm Gay," on the cover of *Time*, Melissa Etheridge titled her 1993 album *Yes I Am* after publicly coming out as a lesbian at an inaugural event for Bill Clinton. The rocker won a Grammy for this single, an appeal to a lover that's steeped in tumult and possible secrecy. The terrific bridge – "I don't care what they think, I don't care what they say / What do they know about this love anyway" – seemed almost tailor-made to inspire gay listeners to come out with confidence. – *Kris Vire*

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaY5-LGYJKc



"True Colors" by Cyndi Lauper

Cyndi Lauper's spunky 1983 debut album, *She's So Unusual*, overflowed with coded queer messages (including a reference to *Blueboy* magazine and a Prince cover that didn't change the gender pronouns), but the title track of her 1986 follow-up endeared her even more to LGBT listeners tired of being judged for being different. "I see your true colors / And that's why I love you," Lauper sings in a voice of tenderness tinged with urgency. "So don't be afraid to let them show / Your true colors are beautiful like a rainbow." In her long history of gay activism – perhaps no other straight pop star has been more actively engaged on that front – Lauper has always been willing to speak colorful truth to power. – *Adam Feldman*

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"Last Dance" by Donna Summer

All good things must come to an end, and Donna Summer's 1978 disco smash is an invitation to go out with a bang. Written for the movie *Thank God It's Friday* by gay disco composer Paul Jabara – who won an Oscar for it – the number begins in a sleepy, reflective space, then rouses itself and its listeners to get back in the swing of things. Not surprisingly, it is often played as the final tune of a long night, offering one last shot to party like there's no tomorrow (and then, tomorrow, to party again). – *Adam Feldman*

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“Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)” by ABBA

ABBA may be synonymous with '70s soft rock, but this galloping disco anthem proved the Swedes could also turn up the tempo. Singer Agnetha Fältskog wails about the frustration of being lonely (and maybe horny) late at night while parked in front of the TV. It's a familiar scenario to anyone who's ever spent a long night flipping through Grindr (or Scruff or Manhunt or whatever). – *Ethan LaCroix*

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEjLoHdbVeE



"Tainted Love" by Soft Cell

Okay, the gay experience is not all about empowerment and acceptance and rainbows and unicorns. Sometimes it's about toxic narcissists who break your heart, and Soft Cell's 1981 single – a cover of a forgotten 1964 soul track by Gloria Jones – captures all the anger and hurt that unrequited love can bring. The confusion, too: "Don't touch me, please / I cannot stand the way you tease" quickly relents into a "Touch me, baby" fadeout. And gay lead singer Marc Almond gave it a subtle edge of queer insider knowledge. – *Adam Feldman*

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