

SKIPPING OUT

NEW HOPE

2021



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Cover work by *Darya Davidovich*

### ABOUT SKIPPING OUT

Skipping Out is a pupil-led magazine; it aims to give all students in the Senior School a voice and freedom to express their opinions, passions and interests.

## Dear readers,

What weird times we live in! Sometimes it can all weigh us down, but it's important to keep trying to find the joy in life: flowers pushing through the earth, the sun warming your skin, maybe some reawakened political activism. With that in mind, we have called this issue A New Hope, and these articles are each aiming to find some light in the dreariness, the force within.

Happy reading!

If you would like to write for future issues of Skipping Out, please get in touch with Ms K Wilkinson.



Hannah Davis



Grace Abraham



Charlotte Parrott



Anna Milsom



Emmy Charalambous



Amelia Marriott



Fi Collins



Darya Davidovich

# A Voice We Need

Hannah Davis celebrates Lily O'Farrell's @vulgadrawings and why she is the voice we need

Despite this being universally regarded as a pretty terrible year, with an overwhelming, and seemingly ever-renewing, stream of tragedy in the news, you can nonetheless find positives if you search hard enough. The surge in awareness and understanding of pressing global issues is undeniably one of these positives. And, whilst it's crucial that we don't fall into traps of performative activism or virtue signalling, the momentum that a particular post or petition can gain over social media is demonstrative of what an incredibly useful tool it can be.

Within this movement, various voices have emerged online as leaders of the revolution. One such voice is that of Lily O'Farrell, better known as @vulgadrawings on Instagram. She uses comic-esque cartoons and text to convey the frustrations of the modern everywoman, managing to capture them succinctly and wittily.



This first sketch depicts what I like to call 'The "What makes you beautiful" Complex'.

When searching for mainstream evidence of the accuracy of this particular post, one needs look no further than the One Direction classic: 'What makes you beautiful'. As all five band members serenade the same girl (which is undeniably strange when you think about it; why is it so standard to have songs sung by a group of people about one unified target?) they emphasise that the thing that 'makes her beautiful' is her really cute, really charming insecurity. She doesn't know she's beautiful. And that's what makes her beautiful.

Immediately, we can recognise that this is a flawed argument which encourages women to act less confident than they are in order to appear more attractive. We see countless examples of this behaviour in movies - Cady pretends to be bad at maths so that Aaron will tutor her, Ariel literally

becomes voiceless to get Eric to fall in love with her, Sandy changes basically everything about herself so Danny will like her. This may appear to be a concept which has flaws so obvious that people would recognise its stupidity and ignore it. But, even if it isn't as overt as it is in film or TV, it most definitely permeates the psyches of most women. And, sometimes, by identifying a standard so ludicrous and calling it out - even just by drawing attention to it like this - we can contribute to its dismantling.

This next sketch is actually 10 slides long, but I've condensed it here. If you're interested enough to have read this far, I definitely recommend looking at it in full, along with all her other work on Instagram. Here, she breaks down Whataboutism and demonstrates the way in which people who feel attacked use hypotheticals or redirection to shift focus and blame.



This is another example of how identifying behaviour can be so empowering. By giving this tactic a name and laying out not only how people employ it, but why they do so, O'Farrell gives her audience the tools necessary to criticise its use and see the intentions of its users. At the point of release, the online debate and confusion about white privilege (which, for the record, is the way in which being white or white-passing means that your race hasn't been something you have been discriminated over - it doesn't mean that you haven't faced other obstacles and that your life has been easy, but it means it's been easier) was leading to excessive use of this tactic so that people who felt attacked by this discussion could shift the focus elsewhere. By labelling that manipulative behaviour and educating people about how it works, as well as how it's been used in the past, creators make it clear that it's something that their audience needs to stand up against. Plus, with a healthy dose of Matt Damon bashing, Lily O'Farrell centres her activism

and education in pop culture in a way that many more wordy resources do not - of course, detailed information has its place as a tool within this movement, but the effectiveness of expressing ideas simply and in an attractive way to the target audience mustn't be underestimated.

I really can't recommend looking at her page enough. The combination of concise education and comedy is unbeatable and her charm emanates from the screen. In a time of darkness, she genuinely does bring a bright light in the form of laughing and learning.



# Internalised Misogyny: How I became a Taylor Swift Fan. Again.

By Grace Abrahams

Psychology Today defines 'Internalised Sexism' as "the tendency of some women to regularly put down, make disparaging remarks about, and/or sabotage their own or other women's and girls' identity, potential, and success."

I don't remember the first time I was called 'Bossy'. I don't remember the second, third, or fourth time I heard that word thrown at me. I have always been too loud, too shrill, too aggressive and I have never been spared from being told as much. I have learnt to hate parts of myself that are too confident or too outspoken, so I have learnt to hate those parts in other women. I heard that other women were bossy and arrogant, and I believed it. I heard that boys were different, that they were leaders and outgoing, and I believed it. I learned to take up less room and to know when to shut up, and eventually I hated those that didn't shut up, not because they were wrong, but because I was jealous.

## Identity

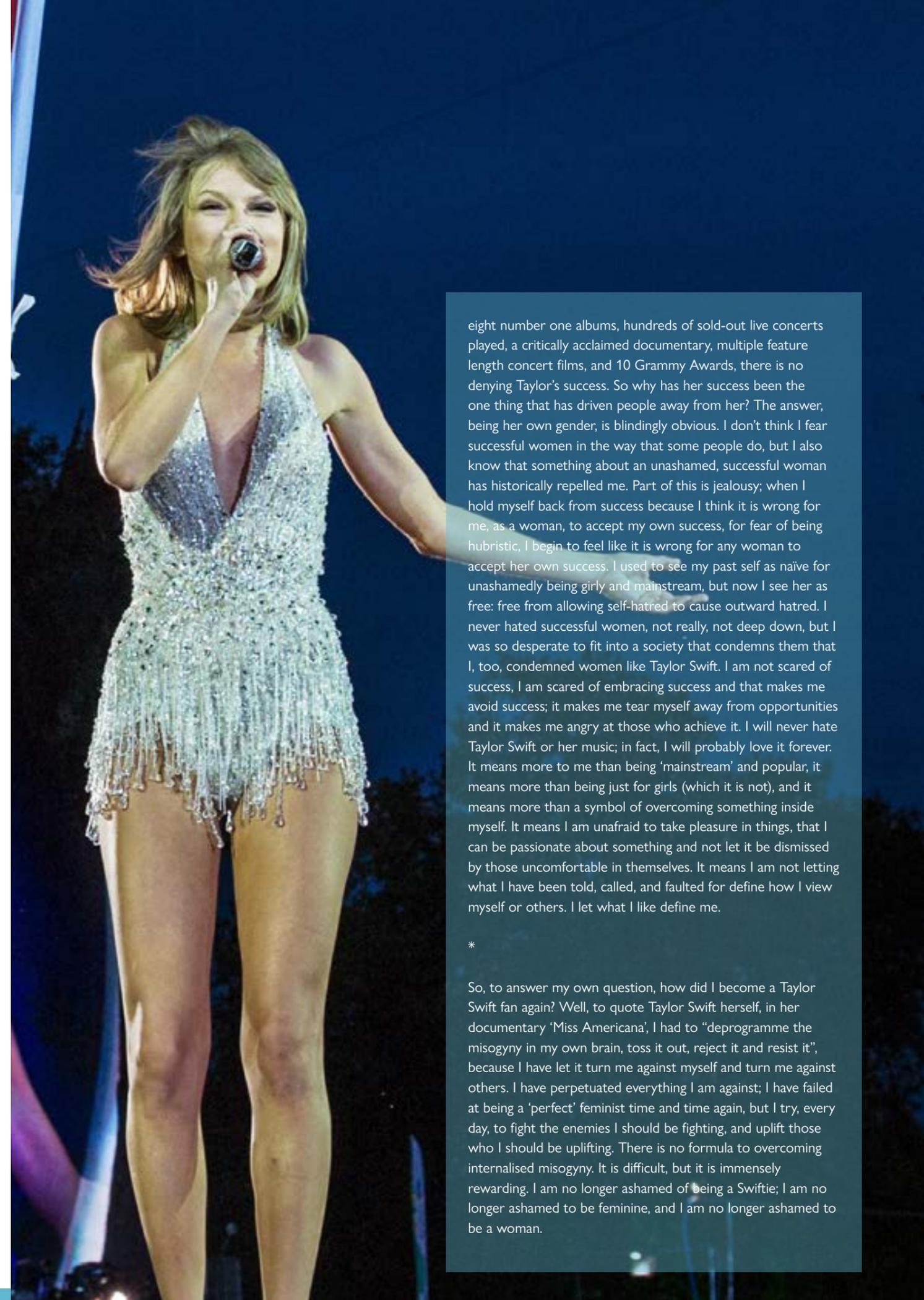
At the age of 10 I knew every lyric to every song on the album '1989' by Taylor Swift. I would mouth along to the songs on my ipod on car journeys; I would belt them out around the house; I would have them stuck in my head all day, and I was lucky enough to scream them along with Taylor herself when she toured in the UK. But, Taylor fell into a very distinct category in my mind: someone who makes music for girls. As I grew up I began to hate the colour pink; I hated skirts; I hated glitter; I associated my flaws with my femininity, and I rejected anything that made me feel feminine because it made me feel weak. I stopped doing things that brought me joy, like listening to Taylor Swift, because I had put myself in a box that I couldn't get out of. I believed it when I heard that she only writes sappy breakup songs for girly girls, that she is overrated, that she 'plays the victim'. I believed and believed and believed it until I had projected all of my own insecurities of being this loud, annoying woman onto someone living 5,000 miles away. I had tried so hard not to be loud, so I wasn't confident; I had tried so hard not to be arrogant, so I was never proud of my successes; I had tried so hard to be different, so I became exactly like every other self-loathing teenage girl. I lived in a world where feminism and femininity were polar opposites, where, if I wanted equality, I had to act how the patriarchy wanted me to act. I tore down other women, in my own head, to protect myself, and I called it feminism. I cut pleasures like Taylor Swift's music out of my life to prove some point to myself about not being like other girls, because I hated other girls.

## Potential

In her 2019 single 'The Man', Taylor remarks on how her career would be different if she were a man. The lyric "If I was a man, then I'd be The Man", is a perfect summarisation of how women, especially those in the public eye, are punished for what they would be praised for if they were the opposite sex. It's not a criticism of Taylor, but a criticism of the media and the music industry, to say that the incredible amount of success she has garnered would be insurmountably different if she were a man. Women are constantly held back and pitted against each other to gain any success and the result is that we become more suspicious of and threatened by other women than we are of the institutions that put us in those positions. It becomes impossible to uplift other women when I am taught to hate that I am a woman. We become blind to the struggles of other women. If we let all other women fall behind us in this fruitless race to reach any goal, we ignore that it isn't a fair competition. This is what the patriarchy wants. Misogyny thrives on women tearing each other down, so it doesn't have to. You feel forced into competition with others, so when you see their success it directly correlates to your failure. Instead, inspiration should be taken from those who are able to reach their potential and help should be given to those who have even more systematic obstacles. When we as women focus on our own struggles and isolate ourselves from other women, because we think they are the obstacles, we ignore what is most crucial to feminism, the concept of intersectionality. If every other woman is an enemy to my potential and success, how can I challenge the oppression faced by women of colour, trans women, disabled women without them being a direct threat to me? Understanding internalised misogyny gives you the ability to support other women and support and believe in yourself. We fight within ourselves and within our gender to beat an obstacle that we don't deserve. For so long I fought traits in myself and in other women, as if they were the problem. The problem is that I fought something as trivial as what music I liked instead of fighting why I felt that that was so important.

## Success

This brings me onto the key reason that Taylor Swift is the focus of this article: success. Two things have been consistent throughout Taylor's long career: misogyny, from the media, from other artists, and from other women; and success. With



eight number one albums, hundreds of sold-out live concerts played, a critically acclaimed documentary, multiple feature length concert films, and 10 Grammy Awards, there is no denying Taylor's success. So why has her success been the one thing that has driven people away from her? The answer, being her own gender, is blindingly obvious. I don't think I fear successful women in the way that some people do, but I also know that something about an unashamed, successful woman has historically repelled me. Part of this is jealousy; when I hold myself back from success because I think it is wrong for me, as a woman, to accept my own success, for fear of being hubristic, I begin to feel like it is wrong for any woman to accept her own success. I used to see my past self as naïve for unashamedly being girly and mainstream, but now I see her as free: free from allowing self-hatred to cause outward hatred. I never hated successful women, not really, not deep down, but I was so desperate to fit into a society that condemns them that I, too, condemned women like Taylor Swift. I am not scared of success, I am scared of embracing success and that makes me avoid success; it makes me tear myself away from opportunities and it makes me angry at those who achieve it. I will never hate Taylor Swift or her music; in fact, I will probably love it forever. It means more to me than being 'mainstream' and popular, it means more than being just for girls (which it is not), and it means more than a symbol of overcoming something inside myself. It means I am unafraid to take pleasure in things, that I can be passionate about something and not let it be dismissed by those uncomfortable in themselves. It means I am not letting what I have been told, called, and faulted for define how I view myself or others. I let what I like define me.

\*

So, to answer my own question, how did I become a Taylor Swift fan again? Well, to quote Taylor Swift herself, in her documentary 'Miss Americana', I had to "deprogramme the misogyny in my own brain, toss it out, reject it and resist it", because I have let it turn me against myself and turn me against others. I have perpetuated everything I am against; I have failed at being a 'perfect' feminist time and time again, but I try, every day, to fight the enemies I should be fighting, and uplift those who I should be uplifting. There is no formula to overcoming internalised misogyny. It is difficult, but it is immensely rewarding. I am no longer ashamed of being a Swiftie; I am no longer ashamed to be feminine, and I am no longer ashamed to be a woman.

# The E-Pandemic

Charlotte Parrott examines Glow Up Culture

Upon hearing the title of the new edition of *Skipping Out*, my initial reaction was a feeling of dread. The phrase 'A New Hope' immediately filled me with memories of early March and the announcement of Lockdown. During this time, I was focused on building my expectations for the months ahead; suddenly, my schedule was completely free for the foreseeable future. I was daunted and acutely aware of the vast amount of free time I had ahead of me.

I looked to social media for inspiration, where I soon became bombarded with online Glow Up programmes. Scrolling through apps such as Instagram and TikTok, it was impossible to ignore the pressure to physically transform over the Lockdown period. My Instagram feed was saturated with 'before and after' pictures from influencers competing for my trust and #LockdownGlowUp was trending on TikTok with over a million views. It was clear that how I would use my time was already decided for me. I was not alone.

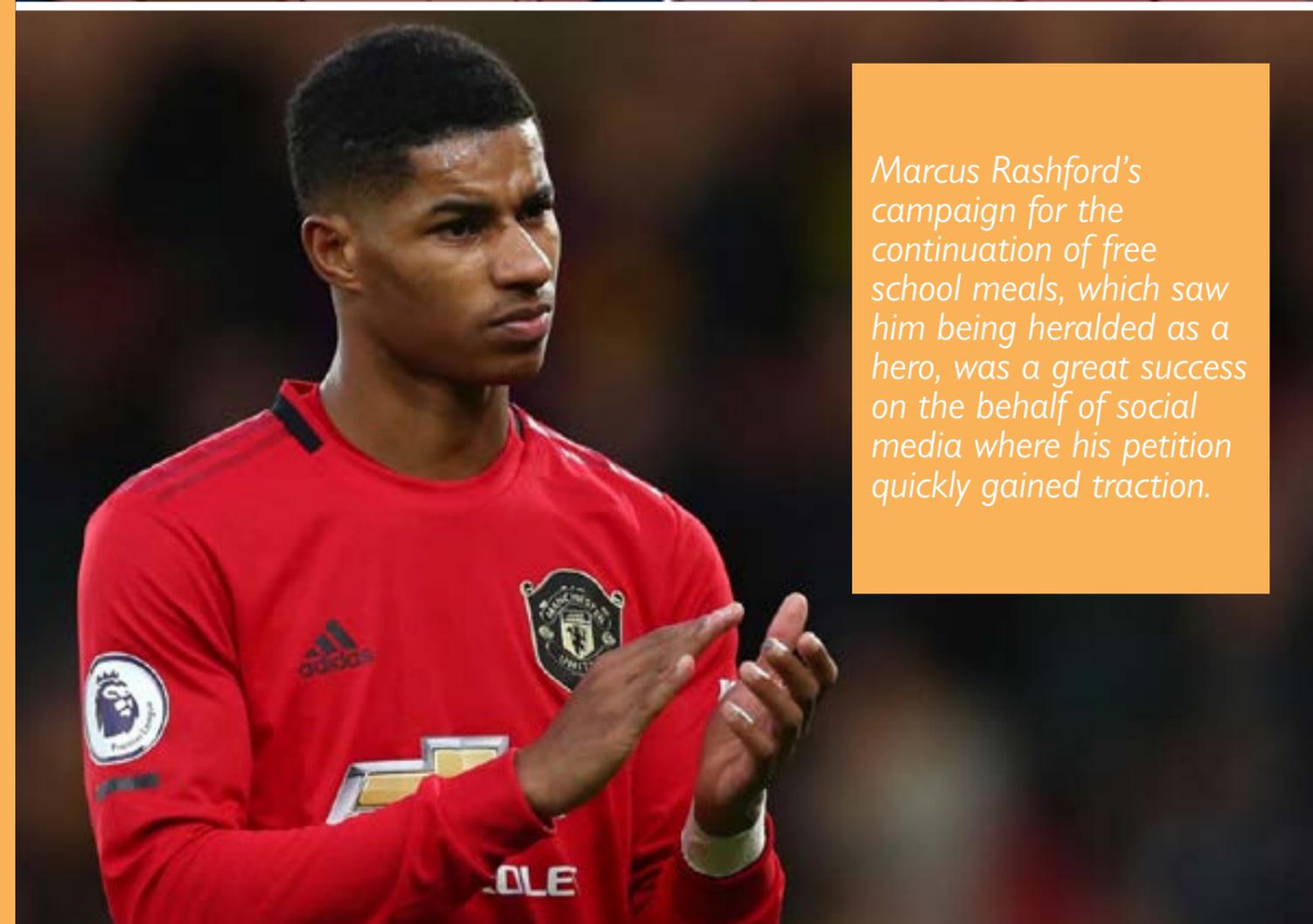
According to Urban Dictionary, 'a Glow Up is a mental, physical, and an emotional transformation for the better.' It is a social media phenomenon which perfectly highlights our world's obsession with physical appearance. The most common type of Glow Up post is where the user uploads two side by side pictures of themselves, one of them taken a certain amount of time ago and the other taken more recently. The aim is to highlight the positive physical change that this individual has undergone and the comment section is invariably filled with approval. Crucially, the 'mental' and 'emotional' aspects of the Glow Up are excluded from the viral social media posts dominating the internet. It often resurfaces through various recurring trends, most typically the 'Lockdown Glow Up'. It is thought to have its roots in the 'makeover' movie trope, as seen in films such as *Pretty Woman*, *The Devil Wears Prada*, and even Disney's *Cinderella*. The concept evidently appeals to most, if not all, demographics, which could be part of the reason these social media posts seem to gain so much attention.

While this is likely to be simply because an internal transformation is often hard to capture with two side by side pictures, the unrelenting focus on an individual's external presentation can be dangerous. Over time, casually consuming this media causes people to subconsciously accept the narrative that a 'physical [...] transformation for the better' will be praised without exception, and, worse, that they are unworthy of praise as they are. Even during a pandemic, a time of global turbulence, the focus of many seemed to be on constructing a drastic physical change in hopes of gaining the same approval they have seen previously given to others. Online, it had almost become a duty to improve one's looks during Lockdown.



Admittedly, scrolling through other people's Glow Up posts has occupied me for hours in the past; the entertainment value is undeniable. However, it is important to examine where this social fascination stems from. It is undisputed that the media in general pushes harmful expectations onto people, ultimately making many of them feel inadequate. It could be said that the rise of social media, unfortunately, has made this even worse. The easy associations drawn between the social media poster and consumer perpetuates the illusion of normality around these drastic transformations. All too often, this fantasy leaks into reality when people begin to hold themselves to these impossibly high standards. Perhaps the reason for the expansive impact of the Glow Up is the human tendency for comparison, eventually resulting in feelings of inadequacy. This means that when someone or something - an influencer, fellow Instagram user, or brand - suggests that they have found a solution to this seemingly perpetual state of inadequacy, we are hooked. This has been especially harmful during the pandemic, where getting out of bed in the morning has become a challenge in itself for many. As a result of the already vulnerable state of consumers, it was easier than ever for the Glow Up to take over, commercially and socially. During a time where everything down to the everyday routine has become disrupted, the additional pressure to use the time in Lockdown to metamorphosize is unhelpful at best.

I would like to imagine that, in an alternate universe, people used social media as a way to support each other during the pandemic. But what if this reality is not so distant after all? Human collaboration over social media made significant positive impacts in 2020. For example, Marcus Rashford's campaign for the continuation of free school meals, which saw him being heralded as a hero, was a great success on the behalf of social media where his petition quickly gained traction. Maybe, A New Hope comes not from the enticing prospect of physical transformation. Maybe, A New Hope comes, instead, from self compassion and human collaboration during this challenging time.



*Marcus Rashford's campaign for the continuation of free school meals, which saw him being heralded as a hero, was a great success on the behalf of social media where his petition quickly gained traction.*

# Never Going Back Again

Anna Milsom explores what it was like to be a teenager in the 1970s

From flared jeans to Mick Jagger, 'peasant' blouses to Blondie, it seems that, recently, everyone is hopping on the 70s' trend. I too have become a victim of the vintage obsession. During the initial lockdown, I sorted through my parents' record collection and began to widen my musical spectrum. From my dad, I discovered Kate Bush and an extensive collection of vinyls from the 80s such as *The Queen is Dead* by The Smiths. From my mum, I found everything from Motown, to Carole King, the Beatles to Northern Soul.

One album that stood out from the rest was Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* released in '77. I was immediately struck by the magic mix of Stevie Nicks' folkish vocals with Lindsey Buckingham's anarchic guitar solos. *Rumours* was the perfect catalyst that sparked my 70s' obsession. During the first Lockdown, some people took up sewing, others learnt an instrument, but my time was devoted to living vicariously through the music, fashion and culture of the 70s. For one blissful moment, my research was limited to the battle between the rock scene and the hippie movement, where I could buy extravagant flares and how I could style my new 'shag' haircut. However, that honeymoon period abruptly ended when I started to delve into the social history of the 1970s. I started to discover the not so glamorous side of the decade and questioned whether I really did wish I had been a teenager in the 70s.



My mum, having been a young girl during the feminist movement of the 70s, enlightened me that my idea of life in the 70s came from various rockstars' memories of their days of fame. The decade that most people experienced was not one of liberation, but one of frustration. Despite the progressive legislation implemented at the end of the 1960s, society's view on minority groups remained discriminatory. Looking at gender equality, the Equal Pay Act was brought in in 1970; however, no real change was seen to improve the sexist views of society. Women were still seen as sexual objects whose purpose in life was to serve and please a man. The Equal Pay Act did little to bring about equality when women continued to face sexism in other ways.

Women were hugely outnumbered in the workplace, especially in leadership roles and were often judged for 'abandoning their

children to pursue a career'. My parents grimacingly remember the misogyny that was a normal, unquestioned part of family TV. Women wearing gold bikinis were used to advertise prizes on game shows such as *Sale of the Century*. This reinforced the sexist idea that women were prizes to be won and shown off by men. My mum recalls finding this uncomfortable at a young age and remembers that it was a challenge to find a media representation of a woman who wasn't a sex symbol, a mother or a 'prude'.



Another example of the sexist standards of the 70s was in a television series called *Butterflies*. In one scene, a distressed housewife exclaims 'I want to be raped!' This not only enforces the idea that women want to be sexually assaulted but also makes rape, a very serious topic, into something to be laughed at. The fact that this was the message that young women were given by the media is horrifying.

However, this misogyny was not only shown through fictional characters: interviewers, nearly exclusively male, constantly objectified and patronised their female interviewees. The most famous example of this is Micheal Parkinson's interview with Dame Helen Mirren. Mirren was a sexually liberal icon and actress during the 70s who, of course, shocked as many people as she inspired. Firstly, Parkinson introduces her by saying 'she's especially telling at projecting sluttish eroticism'. He then begins by asking her 'Do you find that your figure, your physical attributes that people always go on about (*gestures to her chest*) hinder you in your pursuit of becoming a successful actress?' She replies coolly and intelligently asking if he is insinuating that a successful actress can't have 'big bosoms'. Her ability to display defiance whilst keeping her cool is admirable even now, so I can't imagine what a positive impact it had on young girls during a time where they were constantly controlled and judged. And, of course, she proved him, and so many other men who doubted her success, wrong by becoming a Dame in 2003. This research showed me how, for many women, despite the legislation changes, the 1970s was still very much an era of discrimination, doubt and despair.

In my mind, the 1970s was a turning point in LGBTQ+ rights. In 1967, the Sexual Offences Act was passed meaning that homosexual acts were decriminalised. In addition, men in the media such as David Bowie, Elton John and Mick Jagger began to experiment with the ideas of gender and sexuality. However, it

would be naive to think that they did this with little backlash or that their examples of artistic freedom reflected society's views on the LGBTQ+ community at that time.



First of all, the legislation was discriminatory in itself. The law only decriminalised the acts under very strict conditions. For example, the age of consent was 21 for a homosexual couple, whereas it was 16 for a straight couple. This strengthened society's view that young men were coerced into gay sex by older men, a view that is discriminatory, offensive and wrong. Furthermore, any sexual acts had to be carried out in one of the partner's homes, with the windows closed and became illegal if anyone else was in the house. It was also illegal for gay men to partake in polyamorous sexual acts. It has also been shown that as a result of the law being passed, there was a rise in homophobia. The anti-gay laws that still remained were policed more heavily and it has been estimated that more than 15,000 gay men were convicted in the years that followed 1967<sup>1</sup>. You may be questioning why I have not mentioned other groups that are part of the LGBTQ+ community, such as lesbians, pansexuals and those who are transgender. However, the law did not even acknowledge that these sexualities or gender identities existed. It was believed that it was impossible that sexual acts between women occurred and, as a result, the law has only ever applied to male homosexual acts.

This discrimination towards lesbian women has left a mark on the legacy of Dusty Springfield. Although we are uncertain whether she was bisexual or lesbian, I believe that Dusty Springfield was a member of the LGBTQ+ community. However, this did not fit with the media's desire for a young, attractive singer and so her true sexuality was kept relatively quiet. This is an example of how even those who were out and proud of their sexuality were still silenced. I understand now that I previously generalised the era as one of sexual liberation by focusing on the brave, experimental singers, like Bowie, John and Jagger, and that the 1970s was not the accepting, modern era I once was convinced it was.

One thing that I was not disillusioned about was the fact that racism was rife in the 70s. It is obvious from the racism still plaguing society today that we are still far from racial equality, over 50 years after the Race Relations Act was passed in the UK. This bill was passed in 1965 and outlawed discrimination on the grounds of colour, race or ethnic or national origins in public places in Great Britain.

First, notice how it says 'in public places'. This means that hate speech and other forms of discrimination were allowed in private places. I was further shocked when I discovered the ways in which 1970s' television treated race. Once again, my parents shudder as they think back to the blatantly racist shows that would be on TV in the 70s. An example of this is *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. This horrifying programme consisted of white men performing in black face whilst playing into offensive stereotypes of people of colour. Lenny Henry, a famous comedian who was just starting his career in the 70s, took part in this show. He now recalls with guilt how he felt like he had to make a joke out of his race and put up with discrimination in order to make it in the industry as a person of colour. During an episode of *Grounded with Louis Theroux* in 2020, he said: 'it was almost seen as a funny thing, like 'hey let's go see *The Black and White Minstrel Show* where the real black guy is in it!' That was the marquee value of that.' He explained that him being a 'real black guy' was the entertainment and that the audience wasn't really there for his comedy. Not only has this left Henry with extreme guilt and shame but it had a detrimental effect on how young people of colour in the 70s valued themselves.

Another show that displayed this discrimination was *Love Thy Neighbour*. It was a British sitcom about a white family whose neighbours were black. The show is full of extremely racist jokes as well as Jack referring to his neighbour using hateful slurs. Although this show was trying to show how idiotic racism was by Jack always being outsmarted by his neighbour Bill, it did it in a crude way that made hate speech seem light-hearted and funny. So, although many people think that the 1960s' Civil Rights Movement brought about historic change in regards to race relations, racism was still the norm in the majority of society and was, shockingly, often laughed at.

My desire to have been a teen in the 1970s has definitely been destroyed. The idea that life would have been free, exciting and full of rock and roll is one that is often portrayed by modern-day media. But perhaps by glorifying those years we overlook the struggles and horrors of the decade. So, although I often fantasise about seeing Fleetwood Mac live on their *Rumours* Tour, frolicking in fields with Californian hippies and attending late-night discos with friends, I definitely no longer wish I was a teen in the 1970s.

<sup>1</sup>From the Guardian Article by Peter Tatchell titled *Don't fall for the myth that it's 50 years since we decriminalised homosexuality*

# Rebel Girls

Emmy Charalambous examines the Riot Grrrl movement and its legacy

*"When she talks, I hear the revolution/ In her hips, there's revolutions"*

- Rebel Girl, Bikini Kill

The Punk movement is famous for being free thinking, alternative, a space for different kinds of people, fashion trends and ways of living. However, although the punk subculture was anti-establishment and stood for rejecting societal norms, it was still not inclusive to many groups of people, one of these groups being women. The scene was fuelled by toxic-masculinity and did not allow for many women's voices to be heard.

In the early 1990s, Riot Grrrl began as feminist punks started making 'zines', small self-published magazines of their writing and images, to express and share their views and beliefs with a wider audience. These usually covered topics such as sexism, sexual assault, body image, and our patriarchal society.

One of the first big zines of this scene was *Bikini Kill* written by Kathleen Hanna and Tobi Vail, who would later join with Billie Karren and Kathie Wilcox in October 1990 to form the famous Riot Grrrl band of the same name. Other famous Riot Grrrl bands included Bratmobile, Sleater-Kinney, and Heaven to Betsy.

The term Riot Grrrl itself is a play on 'girl riot' with a triple 'r' in the word girl as an attempt at a growling reclamation of a word often used to degrade them.

Many men in the punk scene hated the Riot Grrrl movement and harassed and belittled its members. However, there were also lots of men that loved and supported them, one of the most famous examples being the Seattle grunge band Nirvana. It was Kurt Cobain's close friendship with Bikini Kill that influenced Nirvana's hit 'Smells Like Teen Spirit'.

The movement's influence can be seen around the world, such as with Pussy Riot, a Russian Riot Grrrl band who use their music to speak out against Vladimir Putin and his policies and famously staged a performance inside a Cathedral in Moscow. This controversial performance led to their incarceration and the case was adopted by Amnesty International which designated the women as prisoners of conscience.

*"The head of the KGB, their chief saint,/ Leads protesters to prison under escort/ In order not to offend His Holiness/ Women must give birth and love"*

- Punk-Prayer, Pussy Riot

Although Riot Grrrl had been painted as an inclusive feminist movement for all, it has received wide-spread criticism for



being a space for white, middle-class, cis women only. It was reflective of third-wave feminism at the time which lacked any real intersectionality. Ramdasha Bikceem, a black girl from Olympia, wrote in her 'zine', *Gunk*:

*"Riot Grrrl calls for change, but I question who it's including ... I see Riot Grrrl growing very closed to a very few i.e. white middle class punk girls."*

It was also criticised for its lack of inclusion for trans women, especially as many big Riot Grrrl bands played at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, a trans-exclusionary event for "womyn-born womyn". However, Kathleen Hanna has since tweeted her support for the trans community and regrets playing at the event.

By the late 1990s, Riot Grrrl had majorly declined and many of the big bands had split, so what came next for women led punk?

Many women wanted to revive the Riot Grrrl movement; however, even Hanna herself suggested instead to make it something better. Misogyny still runs rampant in the punk scene, as does homophobia and racism, meaning women need to work with LGBTQ+ punks and punks of colour to create a new wave of a Riot Grrrl inspired movement made up of intersectional feminists creating an inclusive scene for all.

This can be seen forming as the Riot Grrrl and Queercore scenes are now beginning to overlap more than ever and there are many bands that include trans and non-binary punks with strong feminist messages, even if they don't use the label Riot Grrrl. As well as this, many in the subculture have instead started to adopt the term Riot Ghoul as a gender neutral way to describe themselves.

In the face of growing political and social tension, I am excited to see how women in the punk scene evolve their music and keep the riot going.

*"Don't wanna be somebody's mother/ Don't wanna be a wife/ Tell me I'm all that you're scared of"*

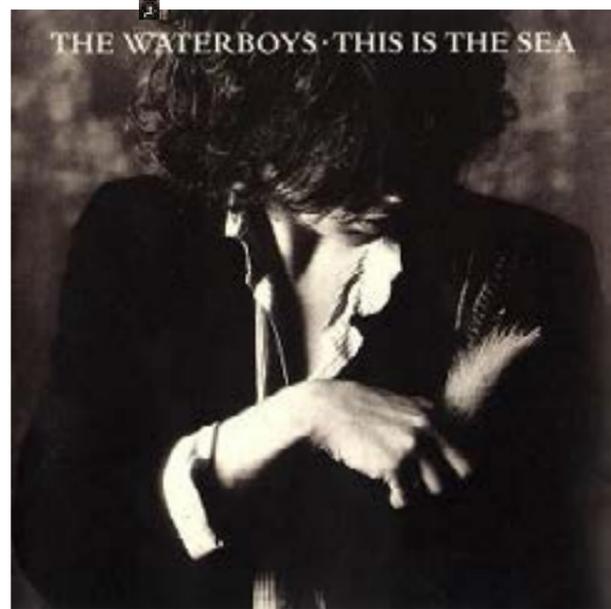
- Sweet Cis Teen, Dazey and the Scouts



# Thank You For The Music

By Amelia Marriott

By the time I was four, I had listened to the soundtracks of 'Saturday Night Fever' and 'Pulp Fiction', the whole of Lily Allen's 'It's Not Me, It's You' and Amy Winehouse songs on repeat until every note and lyric was ingrained into my memory. To quote Benny and Björn, 'Thank you for the music'. In a year of unpredictability, music has helped ground me and stopped me feeling overwhelmed by everything. According to the record label body the BPI, there was an 8.2% increase in listening to music in 2020, with the artists Dua Lipa and Harry Styles being the most streamed artists. However, this isn't a review of last year's tunes but some personal recommendations of music which gave me hope in a time when hope seemed difficult to find.



My first of three album recommendations is 'This is the Sea', by the British band The Waterboys. Released in 1985, this album is famously shamanistic (believing in spirits through states of consciousness) and each song has a distinct, individual theme. These themes vary from shamanism, spiritualism and romantic love, all the way to anti-Thatcherism in the song 'Old England', which for such a short album is pretty incredible and highly difficult. This album contrasts with many of its contemporaries, such as The Smiths, as The Waterboys sing of the wonderfulness of the world, showing how art and music can be profound without being depressing and cynical. I think the lyrics from 'The Whole of the Moon': 'Unicorns and cannonballs, palaces and piers, trumpets, towers and tenements' really expresses the album's philosophy of the wondrousness of the universe. One of the album's most notable features is how orchestral the songs are; drummers, saxophonists, organists, guitarists all play in various arrangements making this the ultimate celebration of 'big

music' with a rich, panoramic sound. Mike Scott, the principal song writer and leader of the band, intended the album to be where he 'achieved all [his] youthful musical ambitions' and let go of the overdubbed music of the previous albums. Aspiring to create poetic lyrics for his music, Mike Scott was particularly inspired by the poetry of W.B. Yeats and Robert Burns. My personal favourite song, 'This is the Sea', uses the metaphor of the river flowing into the sea to encourage a person to become untethered to the past and let go. The song is breathtaking, every verse flowing into the next, then eventually you find yourself at the end where Mike Scott whispers, 'Behold the Sea'. 'This Is The Sea' is a masterpiece musically, but its message of embracing transformation, letting go of the past and the power of freedom, I found incredibly comforting during a time where feeling trapped was the everyday norm. During a year of being locked inside our own homes and with the world seemingly getting further away, it is important to remember that there is still a sea waiting for us.



Perhaps a more obscure album choice for this recommendation, but nonetheless brilliant, would be Arvo Pärt's 2010 album 'Portrait, performed by Angèle Dubeau. To understand this album, I think you must understand Arvo Pärt. An Estonian composer, initially of ultra modern serialist music, Pärt, after experiencing a creative and religious crisis, studied medieval and renaissance music to ultimately create his new musical style of 'tintinnabuli', from the Latin meaning bells. This complete self-reinvention was fascinating so I tried to understand what does tintinnabuli actually mean, but either the translation of his interview is poor or 'I could compare my music to white light which contains all colours' is quite a confusing way of describing music. Very much a rebel against the Soviet Union, his music angered the Communists with

its overt religiousness; however, Pärt persisted in creating sacred music. Every piece in this album is soul soothing with the silences as meaningful as the notes. In 'Tabula Rosa' (blank slate) Pärt expertly shifts between dissonance and consonance creating a soaring, spiritual atmosphere where there is no melody, just instruments in an endless state. 'Spiegel im spiegel', or 'Mirrors in the mirror', referring to the image created by mirrors reflecting each other infinitely, was a piece composed by Pärt in 1978 after his 8 years of musical study where his self created musical style really takes form. The piece is unquestionably beautiful, but it does not follow any typical musical rules of a clear melody and accompanying harmony but instead relies on the interaction between the instruments and the simplicity, which defines his self-proclaimed 'holy minimalism'. "I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played," is truly what this album embodies where the beauty of sound is paramount. Above all, this album is moving, mesmerising where every piece is sublime.



My final selection, Fleetwood Mac's album 'Rumours', was given a new lease of life in 2020 as sales and streaming increased after a Tik Tok video sparked a trend in listening to the song 'Dreams', where even Mick Fleetwood took part. I have always liked Fleetwood Mac's music, but I was fascinated by how a 40 year old album, my father (not my mother as she pointed out very clearly) listened to at the same age I am now, has become so popular with young people. The album was written at a time where all members of the band were having personal issues: Christina McVie (background singer) and John McVie (bassist) had divorced, Lindsey Buckingham (vocalist and guitarist) and Stevie Nicks (vocalist) had an off and on relationship, and Mick Fleetwood (drummer) had discovered his wife was having an affair. Due to the tensions within the

band, the only time the band members spent together was when recording; however, these recording sessions were usually accompanied by parties where alcohol and drug use was commonplace. During the composing of the songs, the main songwriters - Nicks, Buckingham and Christina McVie - worked separately; only on 'The Chain' did all members of the band work together. One of the reasons this album has resonated with people is how for every melancholy number there is a song that is joyful: for every 'Go Your Own Way' there is a 'Don't Stop', which for young people living through tough times is uplifting. The song featured in the Tik Tok video I previously mentioned is Stevie Nicks 'Dreams'. A song about her relationship with Buckingham, Nicks warns how her lover will be left alone after his refusal to commit to a relationship and the regrets that will follow. One of the greatest ever musical performers, Nicks manages to convey anger and sorrow at her ex lover's choices, her distinct nasal voice being most impressive in this song. However, even when Nicks criticises Buckingham quite harshly, the raw emotion of her vocals shine, her vulnerability and pain expressed with such power. The reason Fleetwood Mac has really resonated with young people is the combination of melancholy and happiness in all their work. With so much pain and uncertainty, Fleetwood Mac songs really appeal to the current disillusioned generation with their frank lyrics and soulful performances. 'Rumours' is a nuanced album that could be taken as a collection of great sing along songs, but it is dark in places too, tackling broken relationships and addiction. The reason I love this album is because it feels vulnerable and tender. It is, undoubtedly, Fleetwood Mac's greatest album.

Music is so personal because it's not just about what you hear but what you feel. Irrespective of your personal tastes and choices, listen to any music. These are just personal recommendations from albums that helped me get through a challenging year. All these albums are very different, but they all have the same key message: hope.



# 2020 Was A Year Of Hope

Fi Collins investigates the eradication of polio and ebola, illnesses that have killed millions



Although you may not have heard, 2020 was actually a great year in terms of fighting infectious diseases, but, once again, Western media has focused on the obvious stories regarding covid and ignored successful progress against other equally deadly diseases in the developing world.

No matter which newspaper you read, radio or TV channel you tune in to, you can't go a day without hearing about the coronavirus, whether it be good or bad news - in terms of articles with covid in the headline the BBC alone has published thousands. It seems as if newspapers and news outlets are unable to talk about anything else.

However, what you might not know is that the Western media have failed to report on the success of doctors, researchers and civilians halfway across the world in new, medical breakthroughs that are sure to bring happiness to many. The 5000 year battle with wild poliovirus seems to be coming to an end, with the strain only existing in 2 out of 195 (UN recognised) countries. Furthermore, The Republic of Congo has managed to put an end to their 11th outbreak of ebola and, at the end of last year, sent their last patient home from their specifically designed ebola treatment centre. Here are some of the unreported stories that brought hope from 2020.

For over four years there have been no reported cases of wild polio virus in Africa. The first reported case came out of Egypt over 5000 years ago and the last reported case came out of northeast Nigeria a little over 47 months ago. Since the 25th of August 2020 Africa is officially wild poliovirus free. Polio is a disease that is predominantly contracted by children and leaves its victims paralyzed and in pain, many require amputations or are never able to walk again; 1 in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis. Although some African countries have been polio free since 2004, the continent of Africa has officially been declared polio free by the ARCC in 2020, but it's likely that you haven't heard about this. Once again Western news agencies have broadly ignored these successes, with the headlines remaining dominated by Covid and its impact on the people and economics of the Western world. 2020 may go down in history as one of the worst years in terms of infectious disease, but there's evidence to argue that it was actually one of the best. A 5000 year war with a disease that has destroyed millions of lives has come one step closer to the end. Wild poliovirus now only exists in Pakistan and Afghanistan where a lack of inoculation leads to transmission among children and nomadic groups. In addition to the future lives that will be saved, there have been other ways in which Africa has benefited from the fight against polio.



Africa accounts for 11% of the global population, yet it has only 3% of the world's healthcare workers, despite the fact that it carries 24% of the global burden of disease. Thousands of people were trained as part of the 'polio surveillance and immunization campaigns' which has helped to fill one of the biggest gaps in Africa's healthcare system. These staff have also been key in the fights against Covid and many other diseases, for example, in Chad, the polio teams have taken a central role in rolling out yellow fever and meningitis vaccines. Many of these workers have gone door to door handing out personal protection equipment and other resources to people during the pandemic and surely they deserve our applause just like the NHS, but how are we meant to recognise these workers if we don't hear about them?

The development of *community health agents* has not only helped to provide education on polio but also on covid. Community health agents were introduced to help gain the trust of communities as many people with lack of awareness about health often developed suspicion around the government and NGO activities, with the polio programme itself having faced vaccine refusal due to rumors and miseducation. Thousands of volunteers (mostly women) were recruited from within communities to speak with local caregivers about the importance of the polio vaccine for their children; this reduced the amount of suspicion, which in turn increased the number of people who were accepting of vaccines. In 2020, as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic, more than 7,000 community health agents in Nigeria (most from the polio programme) worked with families and communities to help educate them on the disease and to teach them prevention measures.

Africa has also improved the outbreak response capacity and this has seemed to come at the perfect time. Africa has more disease outbreaks than other WHO (World Health Organization) regions. For the last 30 years polio teams have been the first on the ground to respond to non-polio health emergencies and infectious disease outbreaks, the most recent being Covid. The polio team's huge network of community volunteers and health workers, as well as experts in communication, surveillance and logistics, have had a vast impact on saving lives far beyond polio. The creation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) model - which serves as a central 'command centre' for rapid decision making - has inspired outbreak response and preparedness strategies for other diseases across the continent. First initiated in Nigeria in 2012 for polio, the EOC model was replicated in the country two years later to successfully contain an outbreak of ebola.

This news is hopeful as it provides a new hope for all the children in Africa and parents who can now rest assured that they aren't subjecting their child to a lifetime of hardship by letting them play with other children. The Western news has been filled with bad news whilst ignoring the hope coming from the developing world. So let's put our hands together for the NHS but also two hands together for the eradication of polio in Africa.



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