

PLANORAMA

In This Issue

Introducing key elements of the LGBTQ+ community at Warwick

An in depth analysis of America and its current political climate

Compilation of insights into Warwick students' favourite LGBTQ+ media



WELCOME TO WARWICK!

CONTENTS PAGE



1. WELCOME TO WARWICK...
2. Contents Page
3. What is PLAN?
4. Intro to the Planorama team
5. Editor's note
6. A review of Heartsopper season two
7. But I'm a Cheerleader: an LGBT cult classic
- 8- 9. LGBTQ+ experiences @ uni & beyond: a media portfolio
10. Write for Planorama!

11. The Color Purple
- 12-13. DeSantis on LGBTQ+ Rights:
Opaque in Definition, Clear in Intent
- 14-15. 303 Creative Case
16. LGBTQ+ Representation @ Warwick
17. Warwick's LGBTQ+ Calendar
18. Matty Healy's "protest"
19. Joe Lycett's "Queen's Heath" event



What is PLAN?

Hello!

Welcome to the University of Warwick, and welcome to PLAN! We are the **Professional LGBTQUA+ and Allies Network**, a society dedicated to the development of LGBTQUA+ students. We aim to help you in your university journey however we can, whether you're looking for advice on an upcoming interview, speaker talks from LGBTQUA+ professionals and activists, or just a group of people to go to Loud and Proud with.

We work with our sponsors to run events introducing you to different sectors, with our partner companies ranging from law and finance firms to charities and non-corporates. In the first term alone we will be running an in-person networking event with employees from our prestigious sponsor firms, our weekly Queer Careers Series which takes you through each stage of applications from CV workshops to mock interviews, and a visit to the London offices of both Reed Smith and the *Financial Times*.

We also run socials building our community in Warwick and beyond. These include the return of Leamington's first ever LGBTQUA+ club night and our trip to London for National Student Pride, where we will meet the PLAN societies from other universities that make up the expanding national network we are a part of. We are also launching a domestic tour, as well as continuing to attend as many circles, pub crawls, and Loud and Proud events as we can.

There are so many ways to get involved with us, whether you want to join the team as a fresher's representative (watch out for applications launching next week!), try your hand at writing an article for Planorama or attend any of our events – and if there's anything you'd like to see from us that I haven't mentioned, then get in touch on social media to let us know!

Have a great year, and we hope to see you at our events!



Image: Warwick PLAN / 2022-2023 Exec

Meet the team

Emily Neville (she/her):
Editor in Chief

I'm excited for the opportunity to give new (and old) writers an opportunity to publish some excellent content!



Erin Lewis (they/them):
Deputy Editor

I got involved in Planorama because I've had a long interest in journalism and writing and wanted to get more involved in it at Warwick whilst also writing about queer stuff.

Bradley Barnes (he/him):
Deputy Editor

I am most looking forward to helping grow the paper and reading/editing a ton of amazing new articles from both veterans and newbies!



Will Wroe (he/him): Design Editor

I'm eager to see the fresh direction we can take the magazine. The opportunity to meld captivating designs with powerful stories that resonate with our community should prove a valuable experience for both myself and in making a difference towards LGBTQ+ awareness as a whole.

Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Writing that line is such a Taylor Swift moment! Welcome to my first print of Planorama as the Editor-in-Chief. I am very proud of this paper and the articles within it, written by a breadth of students at the University of Warwick. I also greatly appreciate the work of my team: Bradley, Erin and Will whom you can meet on the previous page.

When designing the contents of this print our key focus has been to introduce the freshers to the LGBTQ+ scene at Warwick. We know that entering a new environment as a young person questioning their identity, whether out or not, can be extremely challenging and adds another element of difficulty to the already daunting concept of moving away from home for the first time and starting higher education. Hence, this magazine hopes to share an insight into the support available at the University and how to find it.

As a team, we have laboured over the curation of a delicate array of article ideas. From the political, to the arts, we hope to provide all writers with the inspiration to take one of our pitches. We especially encourage those who have never written for Planorama, or any student publication, to take the plunge. We recommend choosing a topic that you already have a deep understanding of to make the writing process as smooth as possible, but we are happy to accept articles about anything you have an interest in. Whether that be an international news story you have been discussing in your seminars, or a TV show you have binged multiple times over.

Thank you to those who took the time to read through our pitch suggestions, and especially to those who have agreed to write for this magazine. Through reading this edition, you will see that writers for Planorama are passionate about many aspects of LGBTQ+ issues, from protest to policy. A prominent idea featured in this paper is that of the threat US law poses to LGBTQ+ people. Our writers explore caselaw and criticise damaging legislation that diminishes the positions of LGBTQ+ identifying people within society. Meanwhile, there are also articles reflecting on the positive representation of LGBTQ+ figures, both historically and in the present day, film, TV, literature, and other forms of media.

The PLAN and Planorama teams hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine, and get as much insight from reading it as we gained from making it.

Emily Neville (she/her)

HEARTSTOPPER:

SEASON 2

Amy Adshead (they/she) praises Heartstopper's portrayal of coming out and the more serious tone the TV phenomenon explores in its most recent season.

It's official: season two of Heartstopper is out and, funnily enough, so is Nick Nelson (the rugby-boy, love interest).

The debut of Charlie Spring and Nick Nelson's on-screen love story was met with overwhelming support when the first season aired on Netflix in 2022. Its colourful style demonstrated that light love stories do not and should not be reserved for heterosexual rom-coms. Compared to the stories of struggle we're so used to in queer TV and film, Heartstopper became a refreshing change. For me, the Netflix adaptation of Alice Oseman's graphic novel series supplied all the sweet predictability and exciting rush one requires of a stereotypical, teen romance. Hence, when season two blasted into life with Maggie Rogers' upbeat song 'Shatter' and Charlie's beaming, loved-up smile, I couldn't be happier to see where it would take us.

Now in a committed relationship together, season two focuses on Charlie and Nick as they open up to their friends and family members. Though the characters' chemistry is undeniable, the public sphere certainly isn't without its complications. Charlie, already open about his sexuality, is actively ready to support Nick in coming out. Despite this, Nick must confront long-standing friends and homophobic family members, none of which seem to instantly understand his identity. One particularly charming phrase spoken throughout is the sassy clarification: "I'm Bi, actually." While Kit Connor's short delivery often humorously exposes the prejudice of Nick's peers, it also importantly points out the assumptions around a 'classic' coming out. The scripting of Nick's lines shine in this regard, giving opportunities in the dialogue where he could reveal the truth or just as easily continue to keep his relationship a secret. The effect is a tense but realistic hesitation that is incredibly relatable.



Image: Netflix

More serious moments of the newest season also expose how debilitating the emotions behind coming out can be. Nick's internal world, translated into the series' iconic comic-book style animations, illustrates the conflict of feeling afraid to tell people your sexuality and feeling guilty that you haven't already told them. I imagine, especially for younger audiences, this provides comfort with the message that it's common to feel caught between emotions. The pacing of the show also reminds us that queer people don't owe their identities. One of my favourite moments was Nick's discussion with his rugby coach. It's frankly unrealistic of British schools to have such a kind reception after being caught snogging, but the interaction reinforces Nick's choice, amongst all the pressure, to be openly bisexual.

*a plot abundant with
romance, friendship
and queer joy.*

There are definitely faults with presenting a conveniently queer storyworld. In many instances these environments simply aren't true reflections of LGBTQ+ experiences. Nevertheless, the romance that we so adore continues to uplift, with some very passionate kissing scenes between Nick and Charlie. I enjoyed the added level of maturity this season with less naive characterisation and a heavier emphasis on deeper emotional connections. This isn't just limited to relationships either. When at a party Tao describes himself as "fundamentally unlikeable", Charlie meets him with a tight embrace. The dialogue and acting aren't overdone when portraying these moments considering the almost formulaic settings they take place in. Whether it be a sleepover, prom or the city of Paris, the show continues to have very heart-touching moments that effectively pull an audience in.

I'd definitely recommend the show to anyone seeking a diversion from the everyday. Season two contains a plot abundant with romance, friendship and queer joy. The darker notes that begin to appear this season, in my opinion, add a necessary complexity to the characters' lives for audiences to identify with. Although, the unresolved subplot of Charlie's mental health becomes a point of concern as the season draws to a bittersweet close. The final song featured is 'ur so Pretty' by the show's own William Gao and his sister Olivia Hardy. My feeling is that its delicate piano melody is meant to make us gently aware the unbroken positivity of the show so far will be short-lived with season three.

Could it be that Heartstopper intends to turn over a new leaf? (Knee slap)

But I'm a Cheerleader an LGBT cult classic

By Erin Lewis (they/them)

There may be a subsection of filmmakers who do not think lesbians existed after 1900. Whilst the rise of queer cinema has allowed for voices of different backgrounds to highlight their experiences - there seems to be a gap in lesbian cinema. Whilst queer men and trans people have films centred in both the historical and the present it seems that with the exception of *Booksmart* (2019) that almost all films featuring lesbians are set in a time before the lightbulb was invented.

However, when this appears to be the case it feels important to highlight a film that is able to centre present day lesbian relationships whilst being hilarious and making interesting commentary on heteronormativity and LGBT identities. It also features RuPaul's line "I myself was once a gay" said with an earnestness that should have won him an Oscar.

But I'm a Cheerleader (1999) follows Megan (Natasha Lyonne) who is unknowingly ousted from her conservative American family for being a lesbian. I say unknowingly because Megan believes that her behaviours, having exclusively pictures of girls in her locker, not really liking her boyfriend and being vegetarian, are all entirely normal. It's only when her family sends her to True Directions, a religious conversion therapy camp, that she begins to bond with other queer people and understand who she is more.

Unlike more recent films like *Boy Erased* (2018) and *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* (2018), True Directions is never treated with any seriousness. Each element of it is played to the extremes to show the farcical nature of the gender roles assigned to these characters and the conversion camp itself. All the characters spend their time at True Directions in either fluorescent pink or blue as they are made to spend time fixing cars or hoovering floors with equipment that intentionally looks like they're made from plasticine. When the group are told to talk about their 'root' that 'made' them LGBT each person lists preposterous things like "my mother got married in pants [sic]", "I was born in France" and "Traumatic breasts". There is also the fact that True Directions is run by Raging Bull star Cathy Moriarty who exudes the energy of a malicious Stepford wife and RuPaul who, even in the late 1990, was seen as an LGBT icon - a status likely cemented by his performance in this film.

Once Megan has found her root, which is "seeing Mom kind of being the Dad" when her father became unemployed, she begins to become more integrated with the other members of the camp. Some of the memorable characters, like Sinead, a goth lesbian, and Dolph, a gay varsity wrestler with nineties style gelled hair, only have brief interactions with Megan compared to the others in the group that she grows close to. In particular she develops a close relationship with Graham (Clea DuVall), a rebellious lesbian who was sent away after being caught with another girl. Whilst she seems to be resistant to the programme, rolling her eyes at most things and dragging other people to the local gay bar, she never takes it to the point where she leaves because, like everyone else, she is trapped there.



Image: Netflix

The connection that blossoms between Graham and Megan is sweet to watch, especially when it becomes more of a key factor later on in the film, but it never feels as though it exists in a vacuum. Both of them are constantly aware of what their relationship means and what will happen to them if they are caught.

There are films that seek to explore lesbian relationships and experiences in contemporary settings, most recently the film *Bottoms* (2023) which follows two queer girls who start a fight club in order to get closer to their crushes and *Tár* (2022) which explores the demise of a renowned female conductor partially due to her inappropriate behaviour with younger, female musicians.

But there is still something special about *But I'm a Cheerleader*: the kindness and depth it affords to all its characters, how witty and intelligent the commentary is and how aesthetically pleasing it is.

Upon its initial release, several comparisons were made to the work of cult filmmaker John Waters who's bright, counter-culture films, including one where a drag queen eats dog excrement, brought him to prominence in the 1970s. Instead, *But I'm a Cheerleader* is earnest and heartfelt, presenting holistic views of its characters and treating them empathetically whilst never holding back from making jokes about the world in which these characters inhabit.



A MEDIA LGBTQ+ EXPERIENCES



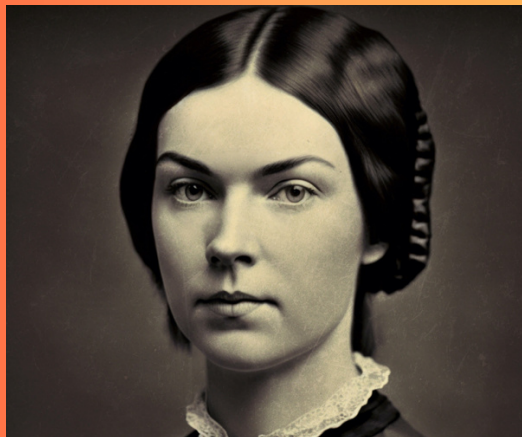
Derry Girls: Specifically Clare



The Village - Wrabel



Asagao to Kase San



Emily Dickinson's poetry



Julia - Hollie Cols



Everything Everywhere All At Once



Heartstopper - Alice Oseman



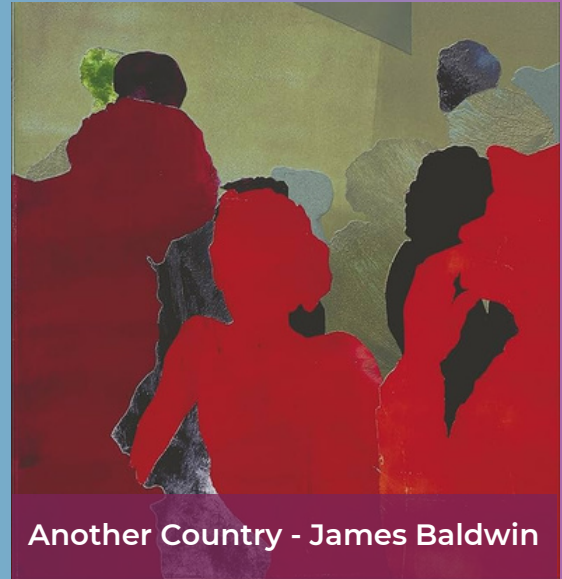
Something to Talk About - Meryl Wilsner

PORTFOLIO

BEYOND UNIVERSITY



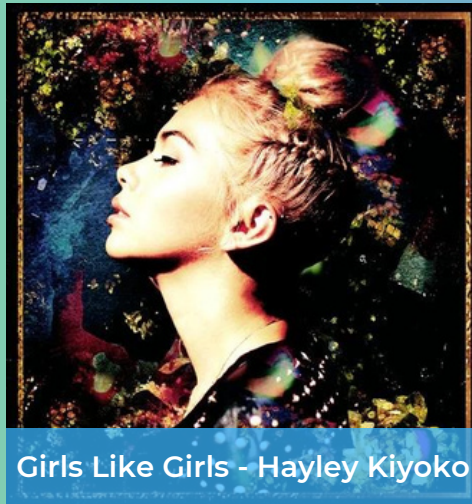
Good Omens



Another Country - James Baldwin



Priory of the Orange Tree - Samantha Shannon



Girls Like Girls - Hayley Kiyoko



The Handmaiden (2016)



Pretty Girls - Renee Rapp



The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf



Our Flag Means Death

Queen's Heath

Joe Lycett's LGBTQ+ Pride event

By Emily Neville (she/her)

Joe Lycett, a King's Heath resident and comedian, hosted his third Pride event within his local Birmingham community in June 2023.

Although this was intended as a joke, Lycett was shocked by what a success the cleverly-coined "Queen's Heath" became, which has now been running since 2021.

Lycett is known for well-intentioned pranks upon unsuspecting scammers, and the threat to shred ten thousand pounds in protest against David Beckham's ambassadorship of the World Cup. In 2022, this was held in Qatar, a country with a poor human rights record and where same-sex relationships are criminalised.

Lycett showed what appeared to be the shredding of this money, but later announced that the money wasn't real: "In many ways, it was like your deal with Qatar, David. Total bulls*** from the start. I'm not even queer! Only joking."

Previously, Lycett told Channel 4: "I didn't choose to be bisexual. But as I've grown I've realised I did have a choice, a choice to be open and brave and say, 'This is who I am'. I think Pride is many things to many people, but to me it's pride in taking that leap."

Key aspects of this year's event included free live musical performances, face painting.

Speaking to the crowd at the event, Lycett stated he had "no idea how important [Queen's Heath] would become and how beautiful it would be".

Taking to Twitter, one fan said: "Pride is always a protest but lovely to see such a celebration on the streets too."

Further, many local businesses are involved in the project, including in hosting the entertainment and providing food and drinks. The Heath Bookshop also held author events. Other entertainment ranged from DJs to cabaret.

Kings Heath Business Improvement District manager, Matt Powell, told *Birmingham Live* that "what Joe Lycett has done to promote Kings Heath, things like Queen's Heath particularly, just wouldn't have worked" without his fame as a comedian.

In addition, the city of Birmingham holds its own yearly Pride within the same month, June.

In the past, Lycett has attended both Queen's Heath and Birmingham Pride and in 2022, he produced a show, *Joe Lycett's Big Pride Parade*, in celebration of 50 years of Pride. This was hosted from Birmingham and boasted a range of guests from Danny Dyer to Boy George.



Images: Jamie Cooper/ Birmingham World (top)
Channel 4 (bottom)



The Color Purple

By Bradley Barnes (He/Him)

The *Color Purple* is a personal favourite of my mum and she has been trying to get me to read it for years now. As often with recommendations from parents, I didn't initially listen but eventually I caved and picked it up. I did not regret it.

To give a basic plot synopsis to those unfamiliar with the work, the book follows the journey of Celie, a gay black woman who is trying to move forward from her traumatic past. Raped by her step father and then married off to an uncaring and abusive husband, she is left stripped of any autonomy. But as time goes on, through her own strength and the support of those around her, she manages to gain freedom and a chance at a happy life. It's a beautiful novel, as uplifting as it can be heart-breaking, and I feel genuinely honoured to be able to talk about it.

However, I'm also slightly terrified. This is due both to the weight of the book's content and the controversy that has surrounded it since its release. Although commended by many for its compelling narrative and unique epistolary style (the book is composed entirely of letters), it has garnered a fair share of criticism; both from conservatives for its depictions of sexual violence and homosexuality, but also from within the black community for what some have complained is a stereotypical and derogatory portrayal of black men.

So, having now read the book, do I feel these assessments have any weight? Well, the conservative argument is insignificant as far as I'm concerned, but what about those within the black community criticising the novel?

In my view, although there are examples of black men committing physical and sexual violence within the novel, Walker isn't doing this with the purpose of demonising that group. I feel the book's purpose isn't to make a caricature out of anybody, but rather to explore the unique, layered discrimination Celie faces as a black, queer, woman within society. This intersectionality lies at the heart of the novel.

As a black person living in America in the first half of the 20th century, Celie is subject to legal, social and economic discrimination.

As a woman, she is a second-class citizen even within her own community.

And as a lesbian, there is no prospect of her ever being able to display her love publicly.

It is not that Walker is unconcerned with racism towards black people as a whole and if you read the novel you'll see the opposite is true; she is simply trying to emphasise Celie's hardships in particular.

And the black male characters, for the most part, are not written as malicious figures but as complex and often sympathetic characters. One of my favourite parts of the novel was seeing Celie's husband gradually redeem himself, leading to a mutual respect between him and his estranged wife which teeters on friendship by the end of the book.

Either way, I think those that focus on the brutality of the book miss that there is an awful lot of love here too. In fact, I would argue that the dichotomy between the two makes the tender moments all the more moving.

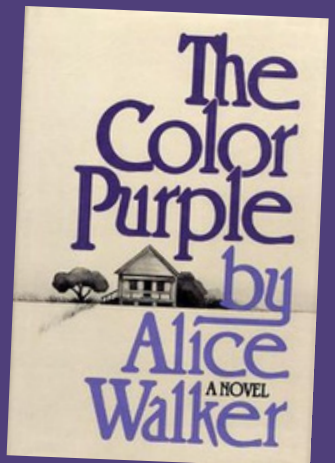
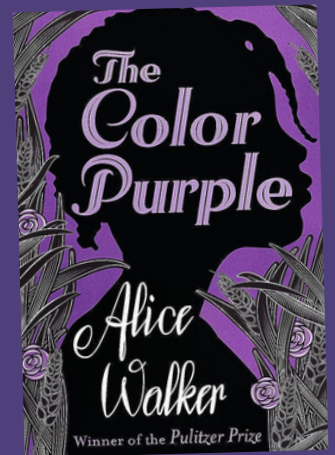
Many of these touching segments involve Celie and her lover Shug Avery, but there is also a subtle beauty to the relationship between Celie and her long-departed sister Nettie; a love that transcends continents. Nettie's letters about her missionary work also bring some variety to the novel as well as some fascinating commentary on the complex relationship between Africans and African Americans.

My personal favourite passage in the novel is when Shug and Celie discuss the nature of a higher power. It's probably my favourite letter of the book and beautifully weaves the novel's title into Shug's reasoning for learning to love God.

So having heaped this novel with praise do I have any points of criticism? Well personally I did struggle a little at first with the epistolary style; it was unlike anything I had read before so it took some getting used to. I also think this novel can be a little slow at points; though your patience in the quieter moments is rewarded with some brilliant pay off later on.

Overall, I thought *The Color Purple* was fantastic. It covers plenty of ground: race, religion, gender and sexuality yet somehow never feels unfocused. Lesser authors wouldn't be able to discuss just one of these issues meaningfully over the course of a book. Alice Walker manages four in a novel which is under 300 pages long.

Great Book. Would Recommend. Go read.



Images: Amazon

DeSantis on LGBTQ+ rights: Opaque in definition, clear in intent

By Dixon Gao-Cheung (he/they)

Presidential hopeful and governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, aspires to escalate his war on “woke” to the national level. Since being elected Florida’s governor in 2019, he has fought what he terms the “woke mind virus” with culturally regressive legislation. Amidst a Republican controlled state Senate and House, the governor, who himself was comfortably reelected with nearly 60% of the vote in 2022, was able to push through a series of unabated conservative policies including bans on trans women in women’s sports, bans on transgender treatments for minors and restrictions on LGBTQ+ inclusion in school curriculums.

Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ+ rights organisation, stated in May 2021 that that year had been the worst for anti-LGBTQ+ legislation since 2015 with 17 anti-LGBTQ+ bills signed into law by May alone. Of these 17, 7 were anti-trans sports bans. DeSantis upped the figure to 8 on 1/6/2021, the first day of pride month.

Florida’s 2021 “Fairness in Women’s Sports” act bases eligibility for women’s sports on biological sex assigned at birth, preventing trans women from participating in sports in women’s competitions. Without any regard to measures such as hormone levels, this policy bases its judgement solely off the identity of its subject as a trans woman rather than considering what would be most fair.

An earlier version of the bill required that students have their genitalia examined.

Whilst these most disturbing elements have been amended, this bill of exclusivity allows students to sue their educational institutions if they suffered “direct or indirect harm” as a result of a trans woman’s participation in women’s sports. It’s a vague condition open to interpretation and potential abuse by those with transphobic agendas.



Nikki Fried, then Agriculture Commissioner of Florida and now Chair of the Florida Democratic Party claimed that “By signing a heartless ban on transgender kids in sports, Governor DeSantis is marginalising an entire community. Signing it on the first day of Pride Month is especially cruel”.

Turning his gaze to education, DeSantis moved to sign the “Parental Rights in Education” act in March 2022, which is legally hazy but clear in intent. It has been commonly referred to by critics as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill due to its erasure of LGBTQ+ issues from the classroom curriculum.

For instance, the bill prohibits “classroom instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity in kindergarten through grade 3” and in a further, more opaque condition, classroom instruction must be “age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students”.

By cementing an ignorance of LGBTQ+ issues, “Don’t Say Gay” legislation incubates a hostile atmosphere for the queer community. Discrimination may not be combated. On the contrary, positive and active discussion of LGBTQ+ culture may be seen as more of a taboo.

If parents believe that schools aren’t teaching in accordance with new regulation set out by the bill, they “may bring an action against a school district to obtain a declaratory judgement” and in the case they receive declaratory or injunctive relief, protesting parents will receive compensation for attorney fees and may be awarded damages.

The Williams Institute, a research centre on sexual orientation and gender identity law and public policy, reported in a survey on the effects & perceptions of the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, that when LGBTQ+ parents were asked “How worried are you about the effects of the Don’t Say Gay bill/law on your children and family?”, 88% of respondents were very or somewhat worried about the effects of the bill on their children and families.



Some parents reportedly said they were now concerned about their “sense of legitimacy”, with 56% of respondents having considered moving out of Florida as a result of the bill.

“I have your back, and my Administration will continue to fight for the protections and safety you deserve”

Joe Biden, US President

DeSantis’s hard headed stance towards LGBTQ+ rights has roused protest from across the state and country, with Joe Biden and The White House as well as numerous LGBTQ+ advocacy groups such as The Trevor Project coming out in opposition to DeSantis’s recent legislation in Florida and culture war rhetoric.

Biden labelled Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” bill as “hateful” and reassured the LGBTQ+ community that “I have your back, and my Administration will continue to fight for the protections and safety you deserve”.

Further concern was expressed by The Trevor Project, a non-profit suicide prevention hotline for LGBTQ+ people, who stated that “The bill would effectively erase LGBTQ students and history by banning classroom discussions about sexual orientation and gender identity in schools”.

Despite continual protest and opposition to the governor’s anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, a further wave of discriminatory reforms were set out in April 2023. Changes included sweeping expansions to the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, with instruction on sexual identity and orientation being banned through all grades at school, a large upwards revision upon the original ban from kindergarten to grade 3.



Images: Bloomberg (left), iStock (right)

Furthermore, in May 2023, DeSantis signed into law a bill making it a felony to carry out gender-affirming treatments on minors, preventing them from accessing puberty blockers or hormone therapy. Similar anti-trans legislation is present in at least 19 other US states, contributing to an environment in which healthy discussions on gender dysphoria are absent, potentially leaving minors who have serious concerns about impending changes to their body in the dark and without any form of control.

Despite this, federal judge Robert Hinkle partially blocked new rulings, allowing a group of families to continue with gender-affirming care. In the decision, Hinkle argued that the state could not “demonstrate any rational basis, much less an important or compelling one, for the transgender medical bans which prevent transgender adolescents from getting safe and effective medically necessary healthcare”.

DeSantis’s sustained culture war offensive has visibly grown more authoritarian and explicit in intent, constructing the unequal legal infrastructure required for sustained structural discrimination against LGBTQ+ communities in Florida.

Whilst DeSantis trails significantly in the polls compared to Trump with figures from July predicting a 20 point lead for Trump against DeSantis in his own home state of Florida, he could stay on as governor of Florida until January 2027. Thus, whilst he may not reach the highest office in the US to project his intolerance, it may very well be localised for years to come.

Can freedom of speech allow

The 303 Creative v. Elenis Case

On the 30th June 2023, the US Supreme Court agreed with a six-justice majority that “the First Amendment exempts a website design company from a state law that prohibits the company from denying wedding websites to same-sex couples if the company chooses to sell those websites to the public.” For some, this has been celebrated as a victory for religious freedom, but it has proved a matter of concern for LGBTQ rights. Justice Sotomayor described the decision as the “first time in history” the Court has granted a business open to the public a “constitutional right to refuse to serve members of a protected class.”

Before expanding her graphic design business to serve couples seeking wedding websites, Lorie Smith sought an injunction to “prevent the State from forcing her to create websites celebrating marriages that defy her belief that marriage should be reserved to unions between one man and one woman.” Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the Christian law firm Miss Smith was represented by, defined the case as a “pre-enforcement challenge... challenging the law before it was used to punish Lorie.” The law concerned was the Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act (CADA), which “prohibits all ‘public accommodations’ from denying ‘the full and equal enjoyment’ of its goods and services to any customer based on his race, creed, disability, sexual orientation, or other statutorily enumerated trait.”

Miss Smith asserted that the CADA violates the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment by compelling her to create websites “celebrating marriages she does not endorse.” She argued this constitutional right to refuse to create same-sex wedding websites due to her belief that such websites would send a “message” for her business that “contradicts biblical truth.” Justice Sotomayor contested this claim in her dissent, arguing that the “act of discrimination has never constituted protected expression under the First Amendment.” Sotomayor continued that although the law does not compel businesses to sell any particular goods or services, “if a business chooses to profit from the public market...the state may ensure that groups historically marked for second-class status are not denied goods or services on equal terms.”

Smith cited the *Masterpiece Cakeshop* case as credible evidence that the CADA may compel her to create websites for same-sex marriages. This case involved a Colorado bakery owned by the devout Christian and baker Jack Phillips, who in 2012 told

the same-sex couple Charlie Craig and David Mullins that he would not create a wedding cake due to his “religious opposition to same-sex marriages.” Like Miss Smith, Mr Phillips argued that compelling him to create the cake to “express a message with which he disagreed,” would “violate his right to free speech,” and “his right to the free exercise of religion.” When Craig and Mullins were interviewed by USA Today, Mullins was asked to address others asserting First Amendment objections to serving same-sex couples due to religious belief. Mullins stated “freedom of religion is essential in our country, but you cannot practice [sic] your faith in a way that excludes others from public life.” He continued that policies like *Masterpiece Cakeshop* “hurt people,” making “LGBTQ people feel like second-class citizens in their own country.” After being denied service, Craig says he “broke down”.

The Supreme Court holding in *303 Creative* that the First Amendment prohibits “Colorado from forcing a website designer to create expressive designs speaking messages with which the designer disagrees” is a “victory for business owners who oppose same-sex marriage for religious reasons,” but there is concern about this unprecedented exception to nondiscrimination laws. Despite the court ruling being described as a “highly fact-specific decision” and a narrow exception, there are concerns about the precedent the case has set.

Sarah Warebelow, the Human Rights Campaign’s Legal Director, expressed to *Time* the potential that *303 Creative* will “inspire discriminatory behavior” and Rutgers law professor, Katie Eyer, noted it has “emboldened much broader claims in the lower courts and among others who might wish to discriminate.” Mary Bonauto, Senior Director of Civil Rights and Legal Strategies at GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders, affirmed that it is crucial that the ruling “remains limited to the highly specific and customised... services the Court found in this case, and is not seen as a green light to assert a free speech defense... in other areas of law.”

In Justice Sotomayor’s dissent, she found the ruling “heartbreaking,” especially in the context of the “backlash to the movement for liberty and equality for gender and sexual minorities.” The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), is currently tracking 492 anti-LGBTQ bills in the U.S. It observes that in the past few years, states have “advanced a record number of bills that attack LGBTQ rights, especially transgender youth.” Justice Sotomayor explains this “reactionary exclusion” as familiar, comparing it to public establishments claiming “based on sincere religious beliefs, constitutional rights to discriminate,” when the “civil rights and women’s right’s movements sought equality in public life.”

Image of the current US Justices via the Supreme Court



for freedom to discriminate?

By Laura van-Diesen (she/her)

Image: Caitlyn Kim/CPR News)



Justice Kennedy made similar comments on the consequences of exceptions to public accommodations laws in the *Masterpiece Cakeshop*, explaining that if people providing goods and services for marriages and weddings began refusing to do so for gay persons, it would result in a “community-wide stigma inconsistent with the history and dynamics of civil rights laws that ensure equal access to goods, services, and public accommodations.”

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The Christian baker in *Masterpiece Cakeshop* and Lorie Smith in the *303 Creative* case were both represented by the Christian law firm Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). ADF was founded in 1994 by a group of leading Christian evangelical leaders, one of which was James Dobson, the founder of the anti LGBTQ Focus on the Family organisation. The causes of ADF include opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage, and social conservatives hail the group as “champions of religious freedom.” They were described by Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as a “designated hate group” in 2016, due to having “supported the recriminalisation of sexual acts between consenting LGBTQ adults in the U.S and criminalization abroad,” and having defended state-sanctioned sterilization of trans people abroad. The ADF discredits the Southern Poverty Law Center, but numerous other advocacy groups have criticised its actions, with GLAAD describing ADF as a “danger to every American who values their freedoms.” ADF have further been reported to have been behind the 15 week abortion ban in Mississippi which prompted a legal case that eventually resulted

in *Roe v Wade*, which granted the right to abortion, being overturned. Emerson Hodges, research analyst at the SPLC, wrote for The Guardian that the ADF is attempting to “undo LGBTQ social and legislative progress... under the guise of religious liberty, and religious freedom. What that means, though, is the religious liberty to discriminate and the religious freedom to invalidate LGBTQ individuals.”

Hodges says “just about every anti-LGBT legislation that you’ve seen probably in the past decade was probably copied or paraphrased off of a model legislation built by Alliance Defending Freedom.” Despite high profile criticism of ADF, NBC reported that from 2011 to 2021, contributions to the ADF more than doubled, from over \$34.5 million to more than \$76 million, as well as 11 other nonprofit groups identified as anti-LGBTQ hate groups by the SPLC taking in \$110 million in contributions during the financial year ending in 2020.

Time has reported a number of cases which may further weaken protections of LGBTQ people from anti-discrimination laws, as attorneys are looking to decipher whether *303 Creative* allows other businesses or entities to refuse services to people based on the decision. Although *Time* affirmed that the Court explicitly said the *303 Creative* ruling does “not apply to employment discrimination,” they cite the potential of cases such as *Braidwood Management Inc. v. Becarra* setting a new precedent. The exception to the CADA is therefore not an isolated threat to LGBTQ protections. The CADA represents a history of civil rights progress that ensures equal access, inclusion, and dignity to communities historically marked for a second-class status. The *303 Creative* case being decided on relatively narrow terms does not lessen its gravity – it is a wider symptom of groups such as ADF attempting to undo LGBTQ social and legislative progress, weakening LGBTQ rights. Despite the value of both the freedom of speech and nondiscrimination laws, it is crucial to ensure that claims of protection under the First Amendment do not enable the protection to discriminate.

LGBTQ+ REPRESENTATIONS

WARWICK SU OFFICERS



**LGBTQUA+
OFFICER:
DIXON**

Hey, I'm Dixon! I'm Warwick Student Union's LGBTQUA+ Officer for the 23-24 year. Our lovely LGBTQUA+ community is spread across university social life, but Pride and PLAN are two great LGBTQUA+ specific safe spaces. They're going to be hosting some great events this year, with Pride organising a variety of liberation and social events and PLAN providing more professional events and schemes. My role is to help facilitate society actions requiring SU movement and to aim at furthering student inclusion through independent campaigns.

My priorities in my role this year are to further build out mental health support & LGBTQUA+ inclusivity on campus by directing student feedback to welfare services, as well as hopefully providing an anonymous support service. Furthermore, I am going to plan an expanded Pride Festival in term 3 for all to enjoy post-exams!

You can get in contact with me via Instagram: [@lgbtquawarwick](https://www.instagram.com/lgbtquawarwick) or via email: dgaocheung@gmail.com.

**TRANS
OFFICER:
DORIAN**



Hello! My name is Dorian Valentine and I'm your Trans Students' Officer for this year, as well as the Trans Officer for Warwick Pride and Warwick Labour and an Anti Exclusion Officer for the Faculty of Arts. As Trans Students' Officer, my role involves liaising with trans students at Warwick to ensure that their issues are heard, understood and responded to by the Students' Union, and leading campaigns to resolve these issues and improve the trans experience here at Warwick. At a point in time where the political atmosphere is so geared against trans people for simply living, our liberation and grouping together as a community to call out and correct injustices is vital. If you'd like to get in contact, you can reach out to me through the trans@warwicksu.com email or on my Instagram at [@d.valentiine!](https://www.instagram.com/d.valentiine)

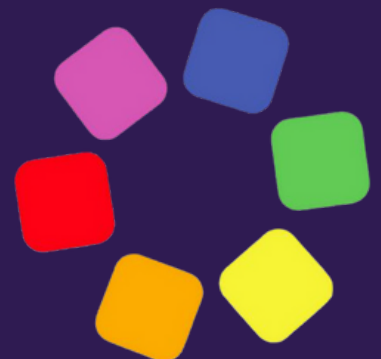
WARWICK SOCIETIES



Hello! Welcome to the University of Warwick, and welcome to PLAN! We are the Professional LGBTQUA+ and Allies Network, a society dedicated to the development of LGBTQUA+ students. We aim to help you in your university journey however we can, whether you're looking for advice on an upcoming interview, speaker talks from LGBTQUA+ professionals and activists, or just a group of people to go to Loud and Proud with.

We work with our sponsors to run events introducing you to different sectors, with our partner companies ranging from law and finance firms to charities and non-corporates.

READ MORE ON PAGE 3!



Welcome to Warwick Pride, the on-campus home of the LGBTQUA+ community.

WARWICK PRIDE

At Pride, we are committed to campaigning for LGBTQUA+ liberation both on campus and further afield, providing advice and welfare services, and running a busy and varied program of social events.

We provide a safe, supportive and friendly atmosphere for LGBTQUA+ people to meet others at Warwick; everyone who attends our events is bound by our safe space policy, and we endeavour to ensure that our events and resources are as accessible as possible.

This year, we're running our parenting scheme again! This entails pairing a newer student with an experienced student to help the newer student settle in and begin building a support system here at Warwick Pride and the university as a whole.

We hope you join us this year!

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK'S

LGBTQ+ CALENDAR

WITH SO MANY MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED!

Freshers week

Tuesday 26th Sept

Thursday 28th Sept

Week 1

Wednesday 4th Oct

Thursday 5th Oct

Week 2

Thursday 10th Oct

week 3

Tuesday 17th Oct

Thursday 19th Octo

Week 4

Thursday 26th Oct

Week 5

Tuesday 31st Oct

Thursday 2nd Nov

Week 6

Week 7

Tuesday 14th Nov

Week 8

Thursday 23rd Nov

Week 9

Friday 31st Nov

Week 10

Tuesday 5th Dec

PLAN's Gaymes Night @ 7pm
in OCI.04

PLAN's Networking Drinks @
7pm in Kevin Gately

PLAN Circle for POP!

QSC

QSC

Loud and Proud @ 10pm in
Copper Rooms

Passages @ 7:30pm in the
Student Cinema

QCS

QSC

Glow @ 5pm in Terrace Bar

QSC

Loud and Proud @ 10pm in
Copper Rooms

QSC

PLAN's Domestic Tour

Glow @ 5pm in Terrace Bar

In This Issue



QCS = Warwick PLAN's Queer Careers Series, a workshop-style event ran almost weekly.

Matty Healy

Effective protest or misguided allyship?

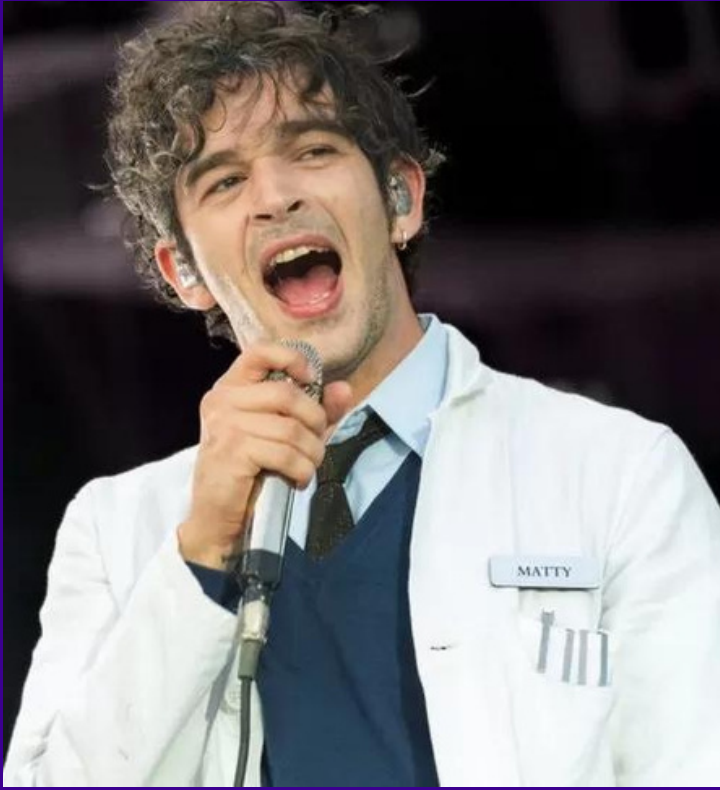


Image: Getty Images

By Grace Lewis (she/her)

Matty Healy and his band, *The 1975*, began playing a gig in Malaysia on 21 July 2023, a country where homosexuality is still illegal. He called out the government and the country's anti-LGBTQ+ laws before kissing one of his fellow bandmates - another man - on the stage, prompting their set to be cut short. This, along with a similar act of so-called allyship in Dubai in 2019 where Matty Healy asked permission and then kissed a male fan, has generated a discussion and debate on whether Matty Healy is using his platform for effective protest and to spark social change, or whether his actions are misguided and even perpetuating the marginalisation and criminalisation that many LGBTQ+ identifying people face.

Some have argued that using the band's status and popularity to challenge the oppression of the queer community was admirable and it was a means of creating discussion and highlighting the discrimination that many face. Long have the LGBTQ+ community called for allyship and using his privileged position as a straight white man to amplify the struggles queer people in Malaysia face, at first glance, could be interpreted to have been effective. However, as much as allyship is valued, when it is done in a reckless and even egotistical way that undermines the fight for equality and even has negative effects on these already marginalised communities, it is simply misguided and performative. One of the key components of being an effective ally is to recognise your privilege and

listen in a meaningful and respectful way to communities facing oppression. This is something that Matty Healy failed to do. Even though he and the rest of *The 1975* might have been well-intentioned, they were shortsighted and misguided in their approach.

It's no surprise that the publicity generated from this has increased awareness of homophobia in Malaysia and started conversations. To what positive pragmatic effect this will have is still unknown and it is highly doubtful that this will fuel a sudden change to the country becoming more accepting of differing sexualities and gender identities. After all, there was little difference in Dubai in 2019. I can't help wondering whether the greater attention drawn to homophobia in Malaysia will polarise the population further and lead to an increase in hate crime and discrimination against gay and trans communities, actually perpetuating suffering as opposed to alleviating it. Without talking to communities directly, it is hard to assess whether the act of solidarity caused more marginalisation, though scrolling through twitter and reading tweets from queer Malaysians suggests that Matty Healy's statement has actually been detrimental to the LGBTQ+ community and was not an effective means of change. Malaysian Drag Queen Carmen Rose writes: "if he [Healy] wanted to advocate for queer rights here, he wouldn't just fly off and leave the mess behind. I don't think he's doing it for the community, he's just doing it for himself ... it was a publicity stunt."

Healy's actions could have massively undermined the work that activists have been doing for years to educate and empower as Joe Lee also expressed: "If anything, what Matt Healy and The 1975 have done is discount and disrupted YEARS of work by local activists who have been pushing for change and understanding AND endangering our vulnerable minority communities".

Matty Healy's actions have most likely exacerbated the marginalisation of LGBTQ+ Malaysians as Healy is fortunate enough to be able to leave and suffer no, or at least very few, consequences for his actions on stage. Whereas citizens and activists can't escape the hostile environment as much as they may need too. Activists speaking out against oppression don't have the same privilege as The 1975 and instead have to continue to endure the hostile environment and focus on surviving and fighting for long-term systemic change through grassroots activism, educating communities and promoting legal acceptance.

Matty Healy's "statement" is not one that will likely incite progression and acceptance of those in the LGBTQ+ community and not one that does anything to actively remove oppression for the queer community. What it has done is propel The 1975 into the headlines and risk the progress grassroots Malaysian activists are fighting so hard for. It has also taught people important lessons of allyship; to actively listen to the communities concerned, recognise the true extent of the oppression faced, and don't assume that you, as an 'ally', know best.

WRITE FOR US!

No experience required

LIFESTYLE

NEWS

REVIEWS

INTERVIEWS



1. CHECK OUR INSTA STORIES AND HIGHLIGHTS TO SEE WHAT THE CURRENT UNCLAIMED PITCHES ARE.
2. DM @WARWICKPLANORAMA TO LET US KNOW WHAT PITCH YOU WANT TO WRITE.
3. WRITE THE ARTICLE WITH 10 DAYS OF ACCEPTING IT - AROUND 600 OR 1200 WORDS.
4. SUBMIT VIA EMAIL TO CONTACT@WARWICKPLAN.CO.UK

