

20 Changing openness and tolerance towards LGBTQ singer-songwriters

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A characteristic feature of the singer-songwriter idiom is the perceived confessional and personal nature of communication from musician to listener. The most commercially successful singer-songwriters use lyrics to describe personal experiences in ways heard by the listener as shared, universal experiences (falling in love, breaking up with a partner, and so on).¹ Allan Moore concurs, describing this validation of listener's life experiences as 'second-person authenticity'.² In most cases in the Anglophone pop mainstream, these assumed shared life experiences between creator and receiver reinforce the expected norm of the heterosexual, usually white, Western adult.³

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) perspectives complicate this universality.⁴ In this chapter, I consider how three LGBTQ singer-songwriters have used musical styles, lyrics, and extramusical actions and activities to effect and respond to changing social attitudes and tolerance over the last fifty years.⁵

Elton John

Reginald Kenneth Dwight was born in Pinner, Middlesex (UK) on 25 March 1947. He began playing the piano aged three, and was awarded a Junior Scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music aged eleven. In 1962, he began performing in a local pub, playing the piano to accompany himself singing cover versions of contemporary hits as well as his own songs. Two years later he joined his first band, The Corvettes, which later reformed as Bluesology. Dwight took his stage name from the Bluesology saxophonist Elton Dean and their lead singer Long John Baldry, and legally changed his name to Elton Hercules John in 1967.

In 1967, Elton John answered a 'Talent Wanted' advert in the *New Musical Express*. Ray Williams of the *NME* put him in touch with lyricist Bernie Taupin, and thus began the longstanding songwriting collaboration that persists to this day. (For more biographical detail, and issues of authorship and performance, see Chapter 11.)

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The collaboration began remotely, with Taupin sending John completed lyrics to set to music. This can be seen as a modern-day counterpart to the ‘Lied singer-songwriters’ of the nineteenth-century (see Hamilton and Loges in Chapter 2) – although a distinction may be drawn between the latter’s tradition of setting established poetry to music, and John setting lyrics that Taupin had written for the purpose. Despite changing environments – the pair shared bunk beds at John’s mother’s Pinner home in the 1970s and later flat-shared – they have continued working in series to this day (2015).⁶ Due to their longstanding working relationship, the popular persona known as ‘Elton John’ embodies Taupin’s lyrics and John’s musical and performing input. Elton John has continued to record prolifically, and at the time of writing has recorded and released over thirty studio albums and four live albums.

In Britain, centuries of intolerance meant that that, by the 1950s, the official mood towards homosexuality was hostile. In 1952, the commissioner of Scotland Yard Sir John Nott-Bower, began to eliminate suspected homosexuals from the British Government.⁷ (At the same time in the United States, Senator Joseph McCarthy carried out a federally endorsed witch-hunt against Communists and, on a lesser scale, homosexuals.) In the late 1960s, Elton John became engaged to secretary Linda Woodrow (who is mentioned in the song ‘Someone Saved My Life Tonight’), publicly showing his involvement in a relationship that was socially acceptable.⁸

‘Your Song’ (1970)

One of John and Taupin’s best-known collaborations was ‘Your Song’, released on John’s self-titled second album (1970). ‘Your Song’ was released in the United States in October 1970, as the B-side to ‘Take Me to the Pilot’, eventually replacing the latter as the A-side due to its popularity; it reached Number 8 in the US charts, and Number 7 in the UK.

‘Your Song’ has a contrasting verse-chorus structure, where each chorus is preceded by two iterations of a four-line verse with changing text.⁹ The song has an acoustic soundworld that builds throughout. The lyrics of the chorus are self-referential, as John sings about writing the song for his loved one.

And you can tell everybody this is your song
It may be quite simple but now that it’s done
I hope you don’t mind
I hope you don’t mind that I put down in words ...
How wonderful life is while you’re in the world

The lyrics are gender neutral; the addressee is always referred to in the second person (‘you’, ‘your’). The ambiguity allowed by these terms enables

listeners to create their own interpretation: heterosexual listeners will interpret this as a straight relationship, while LGBTQ listeners will hear representations of their own sexual preference. John's use of unmarked gender terminology leaves room for listener interpretations.¹⁰ However, given the societal and officially encouraged norm of heterosexuality in 1970s Britain, 'Your Song' can be assumed to be documenting such a relationship – ambiguously creating Moore's second-person authenticity by validating the emotions and experience of mainstream culture as understood by the listener. The ongoing resonances of these emotions are reinforced by the song's popularity, and the numerous cover versions by singers of both sexes over the decades.¹¹

Despite the fact that at this point John's biography was carefully managed to keep his sexuality ambiguous, the low and expressive vocal quality and unobtrusive recording techniques used in 'Your Song' begin to subvert traditional notions of masculinity. In subsequent decades, traditional notions of masculinity as labour were reversed by vocal and recording qualities that suggest directness and intimacy, as Ian Biddle notes.¹²

Homosexual acts between men (two consenting adults, in private) were decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967. In 1976, Elton John publicly came out as bisexual in an article in the music magazine *Rolling Stone*, claiming that he had not felt the need to acknowledge it openly before.¹³

In the same interview, Elton John explained that his first sexual relationships were with women. He was married to record producer Renate Blauel from 1984–8 – a relationship that could be seen publicly as conforming to the socially accepted heterosexual norm, but privately reinforced his bisexuality. However, by 1992 John informed *Rolling Stone* that he was 'comfortable being gay', explaining that he had settled with a male partner and felt happy and optimistic about the future.¹⁴

In October 1993, John entered a relationship with Canadian/British film producer David Furnish. The couple was one of the first in the UK to form a civil partnership when the Civil Partnership Act came into force on 21 December 2005. They have since adopted two children, Zachary Jackson Furnish-John (b. 25 December 2010) and Elijah Joseph Daniel Furnish-John (b. 11 January 2013). Furnish has since stated their intention to marry, since same-sex marriage was legalised in the UK on 29 March 2014:

Elton and I will marry ... When it was announced that gay couples were able to obtain a civil partnership, Elton and I did so on the day it came into law. As something of a showman, [Elton] is aware that whatever he says and does, people will sit up and take notice. So what better way to celebrate that historic moment in time. Our big day made the news, it was all over the Internet within minutes of happening and front page news the next day.¹⁵

A significant change can be seen in societal attitudes towards homosexuality in the forty-eight years since John's public career began. In the 1970s, he was reticent about his private life, but by 2015, he and Furnish felt able to use their fame to bring general attention to some of the social and civil restrictions faced by same-sex partners.

k. d. lang

Kathryn Dawn Lang was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on 2 November 1961. She started singing at the age of five, and became fascinated with the life and music of country singer Patsy Cline while attending the Red Deer Community College. At the same time, Lang expressed her creativity in a series of performance art shows. She also formed a tribute band (the reclines), and adopted the stage name k. d. lang.

Their debut album, *A Truly Western Experience*, received positive reviews and national attention on its release in 1984. k. d. lang and the reclines released two further albums in the country style, *Absolute Torch and Twang* (1987) and *Angel with a Lariat* (1989). Richard Middleton comments on the rigid conventional gender politics of the country music scene, suggesting that lang's complex gender identity began with *Absolute Torch and Twang*:

Here is some form of female masculinity ... applied to country (including covers of songs 'belonging' to men), yet also performing torch songs (a genre traditionally associated with submissive, suffering femininity) ... Her bluesy articulations come from torch song, but are smoothly integrated into a full range of country vocal conventions (growl, falsetto, catch in the throat) so that the overall impression, particularly in light of her powerful, gleaming timbres produced through a wide range of registers, is one of (phallic?) control.¹⁶

lang released her first solo album in 1988. As well as overt stylistic traits such as yodelling, steel guitars and the lush strings of the Nashville sound, *Shadowland* was linked to country and western music through producer Owen Bradley (who had produced *Patsy Cline*, 1957; *Patsy Cline Showcase*, 1961; and *Sentimentally Yours*, 1962). The performing persona that she developed was androgynous and grungy: she favoured short haircuts, and low-maintenance outfits such as jeans, check shirts, and dungarees. Again, lang used the strictures of country music and the associated cowboy scene to develop and nuance her gender identity: as Corey Johnson explains, at that time sartorial decisions based on cowboys were used by the LGBTQ community to satirise aggressive heteronormative masculinity, and to inform drag costumes.¹⁷

In 1990, lang recorded Cole Porter's 'So in Love' for *Red Hot & Blue*, a compilation album to benefit AIDS research and relief.¹⁸ Themes of

non-heteronormative sexualities pervade her cover version: although he married Linda in 1919, Porter is described variously as bisexual and homosexual.¹⁹ In the accompanying music video lang wears androgynous dungarees while doing a woman's laundry. She buries her face in a negligee, lending weight to the rumours that were circulating of her lesbianism.

Her next solo album, *Ingénue*, was released in March 1992, and represented a change in musical direction from her previous work. Lang and her musical collaborator Ben Mink drew influences from many styles, including '1940s movie musicals, spiritual hymns, Russian folk music, American jazz, Joni Mitchell-like tunings and harmonies, Indian folk music and more'.²⁰

'Constant Craving' (1992)

'Constant Craving', featured last on *Ingénue*, is lang's most famous song. It was the first single released from the album, and charted at number 38 on the Billboard 100 and number 2 on the Adult Contemporary Chart. The following year, k. d. lang won multiple awards with the song, including Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal, and the MTV award for Best Female Video.

The soundworld is established with a gentle rock beat, strummed acoustic guitar and melancholy harmonica, and is later enriched by a vibraphone counter melody. The minimal lyrical content depicts the relentless yearning of the song title. lang sings two verses, alternating with a chorus, with further repetitions of the chorus to finish. Her solo vocal is supported by a backing choir that echos her lyrics.

In contrast to 'Your Song', the lyrics of 'Constant Craving' do not refer to a loved one. Instead, they document and reflect upon the emotion of yearning. lang's biographer Victoria Starr states that this 'tormented splendor' applies to the whole album, and refers to an unrequited love experience – exhibiting second-person authenticity.²¹ However, as explained below, in combination with lang's biography, the lyrics create something more akin to *first*-person authenticity – where the listener believes that the musician is expressing their own lived experiences, in a direct and unmediated format.²²

lang publicly came out as lesbian in a June 1992 issue of LGBTQ magazine *The Advocate*, and has actively championed gay rights causes since.²³ Taken in combination with her personal life, the gender-neutral pronouns of the songs and the lyrical descriptions of love, yearning, and loss, take on a different meaning.

lang's plea in the fourth song on the same album, 'Save Me', can be understood as an appeal to either gender, as she sings to an unnamed

addressee: 'Save me from you ... Pave me/The way to you'. However, a closer reading of the album shows playfulness with gender construction and ambiguity. The song's video depicts lang in an exaggeratedly feminine manner, surrounded by bright colours and bubbles. This stands in contrast to the persona that lang has chosen to adopt: a brief glance at her album covers, media presence, and performances show that she prefers androgynous hairstyles and clothing. The caricatured account of femininity lang creates on the 'Save Me' video perhaps satirises the fact that the English-language Canadian magazine *Chatelaine* once chose her as its 'Woman of the Year'.

The following year, lang famously appeared in a cover photo and photo spread in the mainstream magazine *Vanity Fair*. The cover of the August 1993 issue featured a seated lang being shaved by supermodel Cindy Crawford. In contrast to the singer's stereotypically masculine pinstripe suit and waistcoat, Crawford is dressed in a revealing swimsuit and high heels. As anthropologist Joyce D. Hammond explains, the photo shoot (conceived by lang, photographed by Herb Ritts, and willingly participated in by Crawford), challenges typical gender constructions by subverting both expected power dynamics in heterosexual relationships and those of lesbian and homosexual couples.²⁴ The photo caricatured the stereotypical lesbian combination of butch and femme, by placing lang (dressed as a man, complete with shaving foam and the masculine stance of a crossed leg balanced on the opposite knee) in the submissive role of being tended to by an overly feminised and hypersexualised female supermodel in a dominant standing position, complete with careful makeup and hair. Although she claims that she came out publicly for personal, rather than political reasons, lang's public profile, her 1992 article in *The Advocate*, and her photo shoot for *Vanity Fair* all contributed to a mainstreaming of lesbianism. Neil Miller concludes: 'Nineteen ninety-three was the year of the lesbian. The print media discovered lesbians ... Television discovered lesbians.'²⁵

A subversion of traditional gender roles can also be seen in lang's 1997 album *Drag*. The album is a covers album, with songs (such as 'Don't Smoke in Bed', and 'My Last Cigarette', 'The Old Addiction', and 'Love is Like a Cigarette') supporting the album's ostensible theme of smoking. However, the term 'drag' has been used in British slang since the late 1800s to refer to clothing associated with one gender but worn by the other. The term 'drag queen' is used to identify (often homosexual) men in women's clothing, while 'drag kings' refers to women in men's garb. The album art for *Drag* features a close-up portrait of a carefully made-up lang in a men's formal black suit, with a white shirt and burgundy cravat, thereby reinforcing the gender ambiguity of the album but reversing the expected gender roles of drag queens.

On 11 November 2009, lang entered into a domestic partnership with Jamie Price, who she had met in 2003. They separated in September 2012, and lang filed for a dissolution of the marriage. Since coming out in 1992, lang has used her position as a famous musician to raise public awareness of lesbians.

Rufus Wainwright

Rufus Wainwright was born on 22 July 1973 in Rhinebeck, New York, to parents Kate McGarrigle and Loudon Wainwright III, both of whom were successful and well-known folk singers. They divorced when he was three, and he spent much of his childhood in Kate's home town of Montreal, Canada.

Societal tolerance of non-heteronormative sexualities was growing: in June 1969 police raids on the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village, New York City had prompted members of the gay community to violent demonstrations, physically showing their dissatisfaction with the status quo; while in the year of Wainwright's birth, the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its diagnostic manual (suggesting it had been considered an illness until that point). This social tolerance was tempered by a fear and lack of knowledge about the growing AIDS epidemic at the time, which public misconception frequently linked to homosexual activity.

Wainwright accepted his own homosexuality early on, stating in a 2009 documentary: 'I knew when I was very young, when I was about fourteen, that I was gay.'²⁶ As a teen, he spent many of his evenings sneaking out to gay bars, where he was 'a Lolita-esque character, a fourteen-year-old boy who looked no older than his years, leaning at the bar, craving attention from older men.'²⁷ In the summer of 1988, he engaged in similar behaviour while visiting Loudon in London, and suffered a violent sexual assault while walking in Hyde Park with a man he met at a bar. He subsequently entered a period of reclusivity and sexual abstinence. At around this time, Loudon and Kate sent him to finish his high school education at Millbrook, a private boarding school in upstate New York. Wainwright therefore went through initial experiences of his sexuality without the support of his family and friends, choosing to come out to his parents a few years later.

After beginning and dropping out of a music degree at McGill University in Canada, Wainwright returned to Montreal in 1991 and began building a repertoire of original material, performing frequently on the cabaret and club circuit. Like Elton John, his instrument of choice was the piano – but Wainwright differed in that he wrote the music and lyrics

to his songs.²⁸ Wainwright has an enormous vocal range, which he utilised more in performance and recordings as his career progressed. He is able to slide smoothly through a warm tenor, chest alto voice, head voice into falsetto, and a true falsetto, enabling a range of vocalised gendered personas.²⁹ Wainwright has candidly displayed a queerness in his performance and recordings, which is supported by his developing performing person, his lyrical content, and his vocal qualities.³⁰

The second song on *Rufus Wainwright*, his 1998 debut album, 'Danny Boy', describes his infatuation with a straight man named Danny. Apart from the fact that the lyrics are sung by a man, they could refer to a heterosexual relationship. Unlike either John or lang before him, though, Wainwright names his addressee, singing: 'You broke my heart, Danny Boy/Not your fault, Danny Boy'. Other songs on the album deal with his sexuality more implicitly: 'Every kind of love, or at least my kind of love/Must be an imaginary love to start with' (from the closing song 'Imaginary Love').

The early 1990s saw a wave of critical and cultural theory that explored queerness as an alternative to binaries apparent in previous society and scholarship. Rufus Wainwright associates his awareness of his homosexuality with discovering opera in his teens, a connection also drawn by influential literary figures such as Wayne Koestenbaum and Sam Abel.³¹ 'New musicology' echoed conventions of literary criticism by introducing interdisciplinary approaches, focusing on the cultural study and criticism of music. In *Queering the Pitch: The New Lesbian and Gay Musicology* (1994), a collection of 'mostly gay and lesbian scholars' aimed to challenge binary tactics and positivistic approaches to previous musicological scholarship, claiming that they found it less interesting to 'out' composers and musicians (such as Franz Schubert, explained in more detail below and on accompanying website) than to reveal the homophobia present in previous scholarship and readings.³² By the mid-1990s, cultural awareness of LGBTQ music-making and appreciation went outside the media 'year of the lesbian' cited by Miller: it had become an academic discipline.

'Pretty Things' (2003)

In 'Pretty Things', the fifth song on Wainwright's 2003 album *Want One*, he subtly expresses his sexuality. The assumed autobiography of his songs means that Moore's authenticity is reinforced, but rather than validating listeners' experiences (second-person authenticity), here the listener is encouraged to believe that Wainwright is sharing his own experiences (first-person authenticity).³³ In line with the singer-songwriter idiom, his songs are perceived as more truthful because they appear unmediated.

From a compositional/songwriting perspective, the song pays homage to the nineteenth-century Austrian composer Franz Schubert (to whom Wainwright had already paid tribute to with the line ‘Schubert bust my brain’ in the aforementioned ‘Imaginary Love’). Wainwright scored ‘Pretty Things’ for solo piano and voice, and marketed the song as a twenty-first century Lied (piano and vocal song, usually written for pre-existing text in the German vernacular, made famous by Schubert).³⁴

The lines ‘Pretty Things, so what if I like pretty things/Pretty lies, so what if I like pretty lies’ give an insight into the tastes that Wainwright chooses to share. He continues by lamenting his alienation from society and his loved one: ‘From where you are/To where I am now’. It is but a small step to unite the two lyrical features: a man who is attracted to the typically feminine ‘pretty things’ may be ostracised and alienated from society. In his 2010 analysis of ‘Pretty Things’, Kevin C. Schwandt makes a connection between the isolating and ostracising device of Wainwright’s (assumed autobiographical) protagonist’s taste for pretty things (going against the masculine norm), and the standard Western musicological reading of Schubert as Beethoven’s feminine Other. Schwandt suggests that by associating himself and his music with Schubert, Wainwright implicitly aligns himself with these domestic and feminine readings.³⁵ Schwandt implies that Wainwright was aware of the academic controversy that surrounded Maynard Solomon’s ‘outing’ of Schubert in 1989, and the longstanding tradition of homosexual oppression associated with Schubert’s life and music, and deliberately associated himself with it, in order to align himself with historic homosexuals.³⁶ The lyrics are gender neutral, but Wainwright’s male voice and evocation of ‘pretty things’ make his subject position clear.

Wainwright maintained and developed his autobiographical subject matter and flamboyant performing persona, and made his sexuality more explicit in later songs and performances. While touring the *Want* albums, Wainwright routinely performed the overtly political ‘Gay Messiah’ (*Want Two*, 2004) dressed in heavenly garb, descending from the sky on a crucifix. The lyrics evoke a Gay Messiah, sent to save homosexuals the world around, and entangle religious stories with themes of salvation and sexual practices.

The song opens with a suggestion that listeners pray for salvation, before announcing that the gay messiah is coming (as in arriving). This final word is transformed at the end of the second stanza, when Wainwright claims to be ‘baptised in cum’ (the lyrics in the *Want Two* liner booklet use the spelling commonly associated with the male ejaculate). Wainwright continues twisting and conjoining sexual and biblical imagery, referencing the story of John the Baptist by suggesting that ‘someone will demand my head’. Again, he turns it back to a sexual metaphor, with a word play

on 'giving head', a common expression for oral sex. 'I will kneel down', he sings, 'and give it to them looking down'.

The lyrics to 'Gay Messiah' are an extreme example of sexual openness from a member of the LGBTQ community. Lake remarks upon Wainwright's 'gleeful' smile at some of the more sexually explicit lines, when he first performed it on the national talk show *Jimmy Kimmel Live* in March 2004, and explains how the song also served as an expression of Wainwright's opposition to the increasingly right-wing, conservative and intolerant government under George W. Bush in the post-9/11 years. By intertwining lyrical references to biblical stories, Wainwright implicitly shows his dissatisfaction with the intolerance shown by fundamentalist Christians.³⁷

In 2007, Wainwright moved to Berlin to work on and record *Release the Stars*. During this period Rufus Wainwright met Jörn Weisbrodt, who at the time was working as Head of Special Projects at the Berlin Opera. The couple got engaged in late 2010, and Lorca Cohen (daughter of Leonard) gave birth to a daughter fathered by Rufus, in February 2011. Wainwright explains that when he met Weisbrodt, he began openly campaigning for legalised gay marriage in the United States. He explicitly connects this to the social climate in North America in the 2010s:

I am very aware of living in the US, of the conundrum that you can't marry your gay partner and give him citizenship. He has to apply for a green card and he may or may not get accepted, which is annoying when you're in a committed relationship. If we were straight, we could get married and he'd get his American passport and it would make a lot of sense.³⁸

Until recently, in the United States of America, the legality of marriage regulation was enforced by state legislature. New York legalised same-sex marriage in November 2011, before the 2012 election. On 24 July 2012, Rufus and Jörn married at their family home in Long Island, New York State. On the 26 June 2015, the US Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage be legalised in all fifty states.

Conclusion

The life and work of selected LGBTQ singer-songwriters has provided a useful lens through which to view the increasing social tolerance of sexualities and perspectives outside the heterosexual norm. A major upswing in social awareness occurred in the early 1990s, and since then John, Lang and Wainwright have actively used their fame to promote LGBTQ causes and same-sex marriage. In addition, each of the case studies under consideration has supported activism in other areas: in 1992 Elton John

founded an eponymous AIDS foundation to support research and work into HIV and related illnesses, and in 1997 reworked and reissued the 1973 tribute to Marilyn Monroe 'Candle in the Wind' in memory of Princess Diana, which raised millions of pounds for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund to support humanitarian causes in the UK and worldwide. k.d. lang's popstar persona lent heft to the PETA 'Meat Stinks' campaign in 1990, and Rufus Wainwright began promoting the environmentally conscious Blackoutsabbath in 2008.³⁹

LGBTQ singer-songwriters have become more open in expressing their subject position, both as cause and effect of changing attitudes and increasing social tolerance. As a result, more perspectives on life and love are heard and understood by fans.

Notes

1 Sheila Davis, *The Craft of Lyric Writing* (London/New York/Sydney, Omnibus Press, 1985), p. 3.

2 Allan F. Moore, 'Authenticity as Authentication', *Popular Music* 21/2 (2002), p. 220. He extends his listener-centric perspective on popular song in his monograph *Song Means: Analysing and Interpreting Recorded Popular Song* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

3 Here I must acknowledge my own position as a white British heterosexual woman. I have attempted to maintain neutrality in the issues and laws I discuss, but my cultural position is undoubtedly affected by the environment in which I grew up.

4 Although many of these terms (LGBTQ) historically carried stigma and negative social connotations, since the 1980s they have been reclaimed as unifying and empowering terminology for people who do not feel part of the heterosexual norm.

5 These case studies are drawn from the white Anglophone world. I acknowledge that the issue of ethnicity when exploring otherness in pop is a complex and multilayered one. Space prevents me from expanding my discussion to include it here, but Kevin Fellezs' Joni Mitchell chapter in this volume offers one racial reading to nuance the white female singer-songwriter trope (in Chapter 18).

6 Rumours abounded about John's close relationship with Bernie Taupin, but he always strenuously denied any romantic involvement, and has been keen to emphasise the fact that it was a close *working* relationship. Cliff Jahr, 'It's Lonely at the Top', *Rolling Stone* 223 (1976), p. 17.

7 The British mistrust of homosexuals at this era is portrayed in the 2014 film *The Imitation Game* (dir. Morten Tyldum), where

homosexual computer scientist Alan Turing is lauded for his codebreaking efforts in WWII, but lambasted by the government in the years that follow for his personal life. In 1952 police arrested him for gross indecency. Turing accepted oestrogen 'treatment' for his homosexuality, but died from self-inflicted cyanide poisoning in 1954.

8 The relationship ended in the summer of 1970, just months before the planned nuptials.

9 John Covach and Andy Flory provide a taxonomy of popular song forms in *What's That Sound: An Introduction to Rock and Its History*, 3rd Edition (New York/London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2012), pp. 10–16.

10 Bethany Lowe deconstructs the use of 'marked' and 'unmarked' gender terminology affecting listener assumptions in 'On the Relationship Between Analysis and Performance', *Indiana Theory Review* vol. 24 (Spring–Fall 2003): p. 82. Her use of the term adopts and manipulates Douglas Hofstadter's theory in 'Changes in Default Words and Images, Engendered by Rising Consciousness' in *Metamagical Themas: Questing for the Essence of Mind and Pattern* (London: Penguin, 1986).

11 A demo version of 'Your Song' was included in John's 1990 box set *To Be Continued...*, and it was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998. Duet performances include Billy Joel in 2001, Alessandro Safina for Comic Relief in 2002, and Lady Gaga in 2010, and there are cover versions by artists such as Al Jarreau in 1976, Rod Stewart in 1991, Ewan MacGregor in the 2001 film *Moulin Rouge*, Celine Dion in 2008, Harry Connick, Jr in 2009, and Ellie Goulding in 2010.

12 Ian Biddle, 'The Singsong of "Undead Labour": Gender, Nostalgia, and the Vocal

- Fantasy of Intimacy in the “New” Male Singer-Songwriter’, in Freya Jarman-Ivens (ed.), *Oh Boy!: Masculinities and Popular Music* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 126.
- 13 Cliff Jahr. ‘The Rebirth of Elton John’, *Rolling Stone* 626 (1992), p. 17.
- 14 Philip Norman, *Rolling Stone* no. 626 (19 March 1992), p. 23.
- 15 David Furnish, quoted in Nick Levine ‘Elton John and David Furnish reveal plans to marry’, *Attitude* (2014). Available at attitude.co.uk/elton-john-david-furnish-reveal-plans-marry/ (accessed 9 December 2014). The couple converted their civil partnership to marriage on 21 December 2014: www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-30568634 (accessed 10 February 2015).
- 16 Richard Middleton, ‘Mum’s the Word: Men’s Singing and Maternal Law’, in *Oh Boy!*, pp. 116–17.
- 17 Corey Johnson, “Don’t Call Him A Cowboy”: Masculinity, Cowboy Drag, and a Costume Change’, *Journal of Leisure Research* 40/3 (2008), pp. 385–403.
- 18 This cover of ‘So in Love’ is also included on her 2010 greatest hits album *Recollection*. In 1999 she recorded ‘Fada Hilario’ (sung in Portuguese) for the Red Hot AIDS benefit album *Ondo Sonora: Red Hot & Lisbon*.
- 19 J. X. Bell, ‘Cole Porter Biography’, available at: www.coleporter.org/bio.html (accessed 3 July 2015); Stephen Citron, *Noel & Cole: the Sophisticates* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005), 142.
- 20 Paul Zollo, *Songwriters on Songwriting* (New York: Da Capo, 1997), p. 605.
- 21 Victoria Starr, k. d. lang: *All You Get Is Me* (Toronto: Random House, 1994), p. 191; Moore, ‘Authenticity as Authentication’, p. 220.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- 23 Brendon Lemon, ‘k. d. lang: a quiet life’, *The Advocate* (16 June 1992).
- 24 Joyce D. Hammond, ‘Making a Spectacle of Herself: Lesbian Visibility and k. d. lang on Vanity Fair’s Cover’, *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 1/3–4 (1997), p. 11.
- 25 Neil Miller, *Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present* (New York: Alyson, 1995), p. 551. The first lesbian kiss on US national television had aired in 1991, between the characters Abby Perkins and C. J. Lamb in an episode of *LA Law*.
- 26 *Prima Donna: The Story of an Opera* (dir. George Scott, 2009), at 10:08.
- 27 Kirk Lake, *There Will Be Rainbows: A Biography of Rufus Wainwright* (London: Orion Books, 2009), p. 52.
- 28 Kevin C. Schwandt makes a compelling case for the ‘queerness’ of the piano in Chapter 4 of his PhD dissertation “‘Schubert Bust My Brain’: Musical Cyborgs and Wainwright’s Queering of Art Song’, in “‘Oh What A World”: Queer Masculinities, the Musical Construction of a Reparative Cultural Historiography, and the Music of Rufus Wainwright” (PhD Thesis: University of Minnesota, 2010), pp. 151–204.
- 29 Shana Goldin-Perschbacher comments on a similar vocal ability in Wainwright’s contemporary Jeff Buckley, explaining that Buckley could shift between ‘multiple and changing gender identifications’. While Wainwright almost always sings his own songs in the first person, occasional pronoun shifts (‘I was just a girl then’ in *Want Two’s* ‘The Art Teacher’) enable some play between genders. Buckley exploited this still further by singing both male and female covers in their original ranges, with their original pronouns. “‘Not With You But of You’: “Unbearable Intimacy” and Jeff Buckley’s Transgendered Vocality’, in Jarman-Ivens, *Oh Boy!*, p. 214.
- 30 Stan Hawkins locates Wainwright’s voice as a knowing musical representation of camp in ‘Chapter 5: Talking Blah Blah Blah: Camp into Queer’, in Stan Hawkins, *Queerness in Pop Music: Aesthetics, Gender Norms, and Temporality* (New York: Routledge: 2015).
- 31 Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen’s Throat: Opera, Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), and Sam Abel, *Opera in the Flesh: Sexuality in Operatic Performance* (Boulder: Colorado, 1996).
- 32 Philip Brett, Elizabeth Wood, Gary C. Thomas, ‘Preface’, *Queering the Pitch* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. x.
- 33 Moore, ‘Authenticity as Authentication’, p. 213.
- 34 Anon., *Want One* Press Materials, DreamWorks Records, 2003.
- 35 Schwandt, “‘Oh What a World”, p. 170.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp. 159–70.
- 37 Lake, *There Will Be Rainbows*, pp. 192–3.
- 38 Rufus Wainwright, quoted in ‘Rufus Wainwright Wants to Marry His Partner’, available at: www.starpulse.com/news/index.php/2010/04/02/rufus_wainwright_wants_to_marry_his_pa (accessed 28 November 2014).
- 39 See www.rufuswainwright.com/blackoutsabbath-2009/.