

What music-related posters did you have on your wall as a kid?

I was a really big Prince and Michael Jackson fan, so I had a lot of pictures of them everywhere, covering every surface. I also randomly had a poster of Billy Idol – I've no idea why. I'm not a fan, but I obviously liked the picture, so maybe I fancied him.

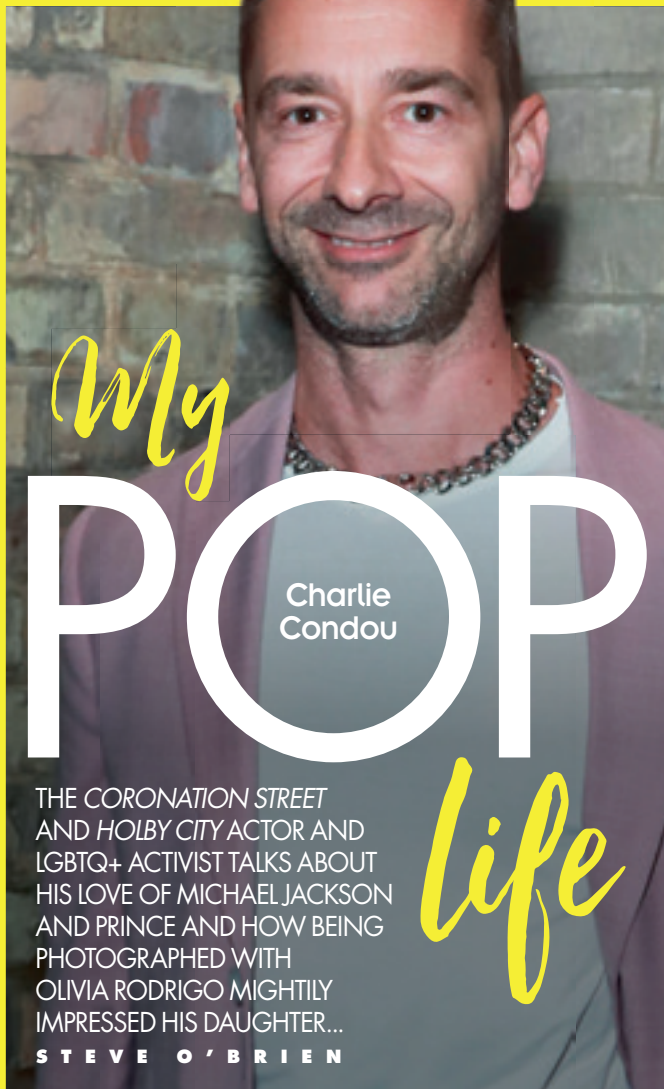


How did you first get into music?

My sister was 10 years older and introduced me to a lot of musicians and artists that I now love, like David Bowie and Fleetwood Mac. She bought me my first ever single which was The Human League's *Don't You Want Me*. That's the one I tell people was my first single, but the one that I actually bought for myself with my own pocket money was the St Winifred's School Choir's *There's No One Quite Like Grandma*, which isn't quite so cool. Then, years later, I ended up on *Coronation Street* working with Sally Lindsay, who was part of that choir and actually sings on the song!

What's the first album you remember truly loving?

Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, that was a big thing for me. I had the making of *Thriller*, too – I used to watch the video all the time



My POP Life

Charlie Condou

THE CORONATION STREET AND HOLBY CITY ACTOR AND LGBTQ+ ACTIVIST TALKS ABOUT HIS LOVE OF MICHAEL JACKSON AND PRINCE AND HOW BEING PHOTOGRAPHED WITH OLIVIA RODRIGO MIGHTILY IMPRESSED HIS DAUGHTER...

STEVE O'BRIEN



and learned all the dances. I was obsessed with that album. I grew out of Michael Jackson as I got older, though, and getting into Prince felt like a progression. I saw him play live a couple of times in London, and he was just such an incredible performer. When you think about, not just the songs that he recorded and wrote for himself, but things he wrote for Chaka Khan and people like that, he really was a genius.

Have you ever managed to meet any of your musical heroes?

A couple of years ago I was walking down the street in Marylebone, and outside a pub, Suggs was sitting with Paul Weller having a pint together. I walked past and thought, I have to go back and say something so I said: "I'm so sorry to interrupt you, but I'm such a big fan of both of yours, you meant so much to me growing up." Suggs was polite enough and said thank you, and Paul Weller said: "You're an



As a big trip-hop fan, Charlie names Bristolian collective Massive Attack among his favourite bands

actor, aren't you?" That made my week! Also, when I was in my late teens, I became friends with Neneh Cherry. I've known her for 40 years. I thought she was so achingly cool, and even though I've been friends with her all these years, she's still somebody that can make me feel nervous for some reason.

If you went on *Celebrity Mastermind*, which musical artist would you choose as your specialist subject?

It could be Michael Jackson, because I had that obsessive thing as a child that I haven't quite had since. I know a lot about Prince and, later on, bands like Massive Attack. I was very much into that trip-hop scene for a while.

You have teenage kids. Do their tastes in music influence you?

I listen to whatever my kids want to put on when we're driving. I've known Lily Allen for years and she had a party last Christmas. I'd just arrived and hadn't spoken to Lily, and she was talking to a young girl. I went over to say hello and this photographer was there taking pictures. My daughter was at her mum's, and she phoned me the next day, because the pictures had appeared online – it turns out it's Lily and Olivia Rodrigo, who I didn't know, and me stood in the background looking like somebody's weird, creepy uncle! So through my children, I'm starting to get a sense who the young crew are now. ■

Charlie still gets nervous around his friend Neneh Cherry



Charlie's music tastes evolved to loving the work of Prince – and he saw the icon play live twice in London

