

# The making of a matriarchy

Pop-punk superstar girli talks queer rebellion, sapphic songs and creating space for us all to be free **BY ELLA GAUCI**

Oysters being slurped off naked bodies. Steamy make-out sessions in bubble baths. Renaissance goddesses tangled in bed. It is quite literally a “sapphic celebration in your bedroom”. This is, of course, girli’s viral music video for her song Matriarchy, the titular track for her new album.

Ever since the release of her first single, So You Think You Can Fuck With Me Do Ya, in 2015, Milly Toomey (aka girli) has been bringing sapphic love to the forefront of pop-punk. Songs like More Than A Friend have taken the internet by storm, gaining more than 58 million streams on Spotify alone. After blowing up on TikTok with her single Matriarchy, it seems like Milly’s music empire is ever-expanding.

“The inspiration behind the song Matriarchy was queer rebellion really,” she laughs as we start our call. “I was inspired by my relationship with my girlfriend and the fact that the one time that I felt truly free of the male gaze and truly free of the patriarchy was when it was just me and her. It felt like we were in our own little bubble.”

If the gorgeously decadent music video for Matriarchy didn’t spell it out to you already, this new era of girli’s music is set to bring fans even more sapphic love songs, heartbreak anthems, and the antidote for spiralling in your 20s. Milly wrote the album in the aftermath of a major breakup, living out of a suitcase as she moved between friends’ and family’s homes. “I was trying to find grounding and figure out who I was without this person I had just lost,” she explains. “A lot of these songs came from a place of going inward and thinking about myself and healing.”

After coming out as bi as a

teenager at a Tegan and Sara concert (it’s a rite of passage), Milly’s music has always been unapologetically queer. Her passion for LGBTQIA rights extends far beyond the recording studio. She’s used her platform to educate her fanbase on queer figures throughout history. From sword-swiping medieval sapphics to icons like Josephine Baker, paying homage to the LGBTQIA pioneers who came before us is one of Milly’s passions.

The video for Matriarchy was, in fact, inspired by our sapphic ancestors. “I was so fascinated by the fact that so much of queer history has been erased or not documented,” Milly says. “I was excited by the idea of historical princesses having sapphic love affairs!”

While Milly may be looking to the past, her music is certainly the sound of the future. Fans everywhere have adopted lyrics like “Kiss me ‘cause we don’t have to be sorry” and “We fuck to fuck the patriarchy” as ways to unashamedly celebrate sapphic love. For Milly, love songs on this album like Crush Me Up celebrate one romance in particular.

After going to one of drag icon Bimini Bon Boulash’s shows, Milly couldn’t quite take her eyes off the cute guitarist. A year and a half later, and the pair are now writing songs about each other. “We’ve made a rule that she’ll never be my guitarist and go on tour with me, as I feel like that could get messy,” Milly jokes. “It’s



“The music industry is still a boys’ club”

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amazing dating another musician and artist. You understand each other on another level.”

Although Milly has found a home within the LGBTQIA community, being a queer woman in the industry is not without its challenges. “As a queer woman, you have to fight 10 times more than male, straight counterparts to just be respected and to get in the club,” she explains. “The music industry is still a boys’ club.”

Despite this, it’s Milly’s fanbase which keeps her going. She recounts

a time she was performing a sold-out show in Prague where the entire crowd surprised her with paper hearts during her set. Naturally, she burst into tears. Milly has been informed that her song More Than A Friend has been responsible for matchmaking queer couples across the world after chatting with listeners on the instant messaging site Discord.

Her new album Matriarchy is an offering of sorts for her fans, in gratitude for their love and support.

“I hope that they take away that this album is a safe space for them,” she smiles. “It’s a space for me to fully be who I want to be.”

“A matriarchy to me is a place where queer people and women can live free of all of the bullshit of a patriarchal, heteronormative society. It’s this space where we can be free.” We can’t wait. **D**

girli’s new album Matriarchy comes out 17 May on all platforms

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