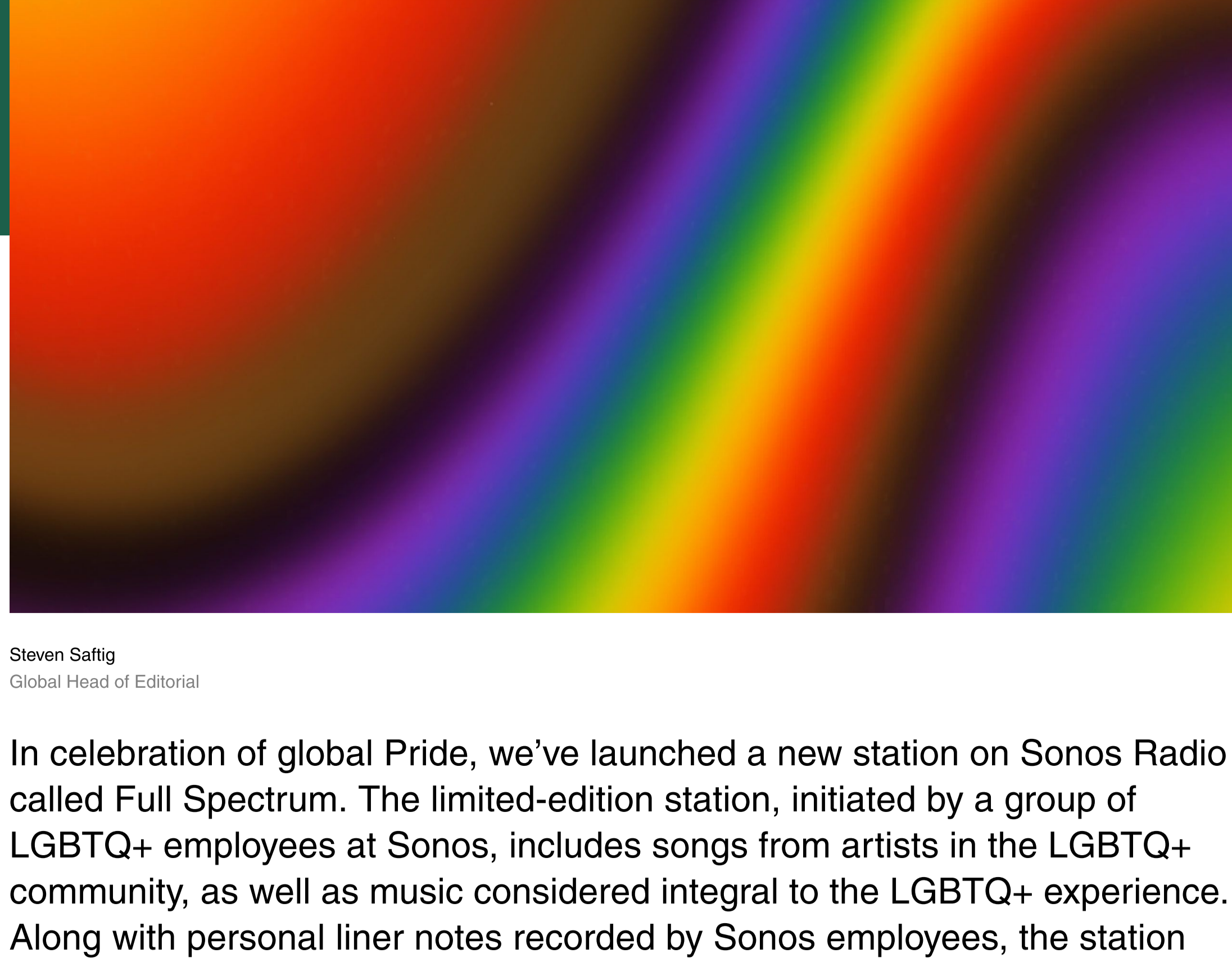


## Full Spectrum on Sonos Radio: The Story Behind the Station

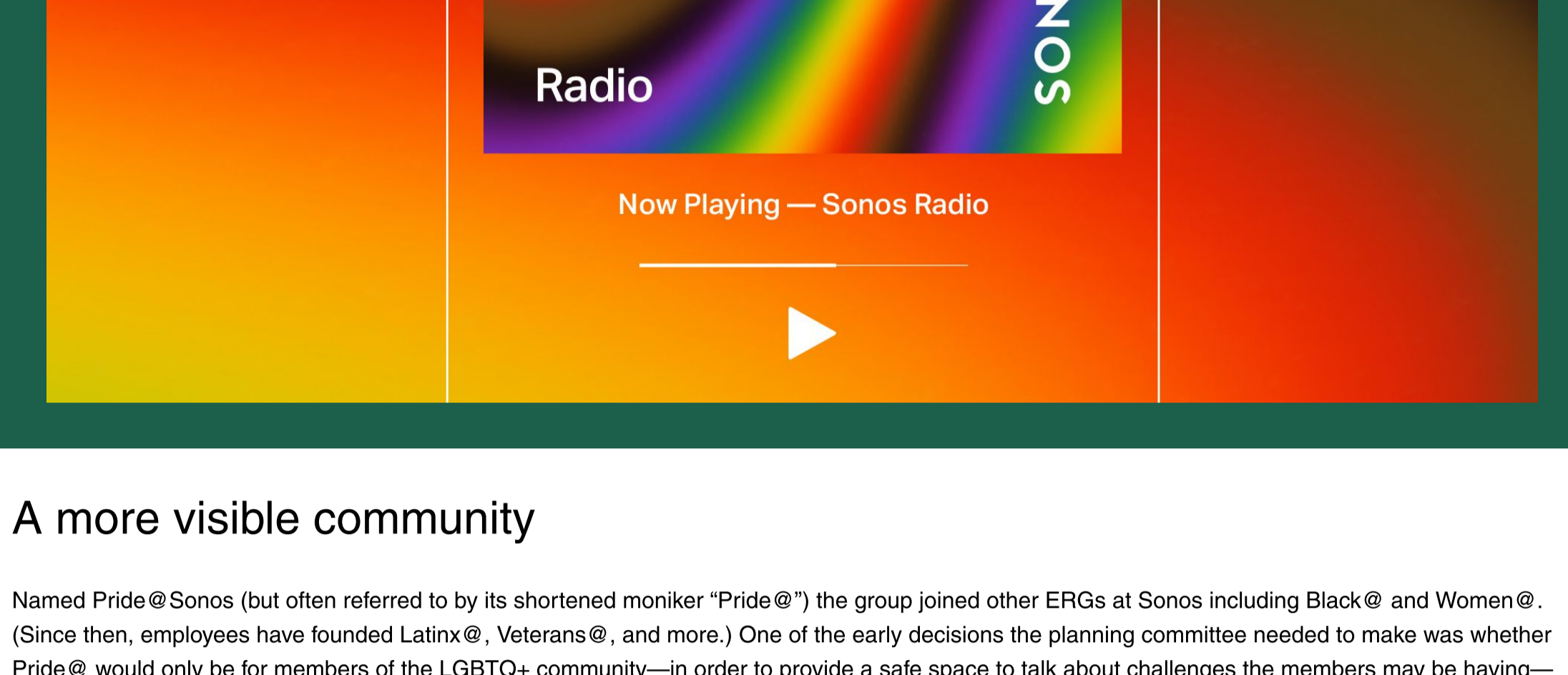


Steven Sattig  
Global Head of Editorial

In celebration of global Pride, we've launched a new station on Sonos Radio called Full Spectrum. The limited-edition station, initiated by a group of LGBTQ+ employees at Sonos, includes songs from artists in the LGBTQ+ community, as well as music considered integral to the LGBTQ+ experience. Along with personal liner notes recorded by Sonos employees, the station features exclusive interviews by Rita Houston with beloved LGBTQ+ artists, including Brandi Carlile and Laura Jane Grace. Below we tell how the station came to fruition and why it may sound different from what you're used to hearing during Pride season.

Our personal stories are what bond us together. Even in the workplace, it's the human connections we create with colleagues that make it possible to get the job done. Built by sharing stories of our weekend activities, family life, and hopes for the future, these bonds reinforce trust, provide outlets for stress, and help us dig deep when it's midnight and we're trying to get a project over the finish line. Now imagine trying to build those relationships while hiding major aspects of your life. It's next to impossible to really get to know someone if they can't tell you about their struggles, the songs that make them want to get up and dance, or the person they've chosen to spend their life with.

While the LGBTQ+ movement has made increasing strides in the past decade, for many in the community, the workplace is still a challenging place to be their most open, authentic selves. With that in mind, a small group of employees at Sonos joined together in early 2018 to establish an employee resource group (ERG) to help the entire company work towards creating a more welcoming, supportive atmosphere for all LGBTQ+ employees.



## A more visible community

Named Pride@Sonos (but often referred to by its shortened moniker "Pride@") the group joined other ERGs at Sonos including Black@ and Women@. (Since then, employees have founded Latinx@, Veterans@, and more.) One of the early decisions the planning committee needed to make was whether Pride@ would only be for members of the LGBTQ+ community—in order to provide a safe space to talk about challenges the members may be having—or whether it would be open to everyone at Sonos, including allies. Ultimately, the group felt that the LGBTQ+ community has always been about being open and that the ERG should reflect that. This decision also ensured that those who were questioning their sexuality or gender identity could receive the support of the group without calling attention to themselves simply by being a member.

From the outset, the group found support from Sonos leadership. Dmitri Siegel, VP Global Brand, extended his support into an official capacity, becoming Pride@'s official executive sponsor. "I am so grateful to have the opportunity to be an ally in the Pride@ group," he said. "As a straight white male, it's common to feel intimidated or uncomfortable engaging on LGBTQ+ issues because you feel like you are going to say the wrong thing or be offensive in some way. Being a part of Pride@ has given me the opportunity to do my work—listen and learn. Getting over insecurity and discomfort unlocks all these amazing people and a whole aspect of the human experience that I would otherwise miss out on."

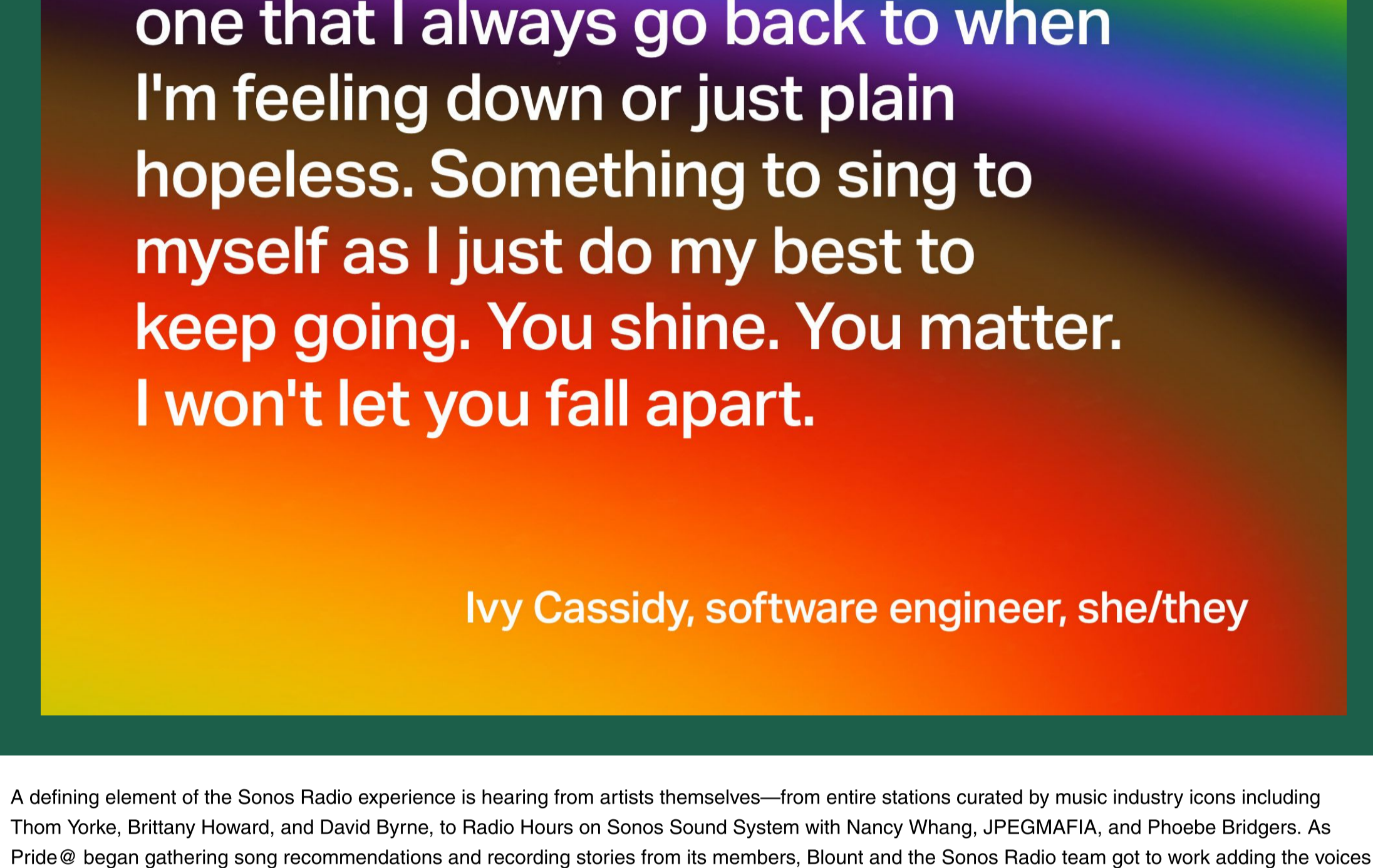
Pride@ has continued to grow its size and impact at Sonos. Since its founding, the group has brought in presenters to increase awareness of LGBTQ+ issues, donated to local and national charities, organized employee participation in local Pride events, and hosted a LGBTQ+ youth group in Santa Barbara for a lab tour and Q&A session with Sonos employees.

## The full spectrum of experiences

As Pride@ began preparing for Pride season this year, it became increasingly clear that an in-person activation or event was unlikely. "When we started discussing ideas, we weren't even sure that anyone would be back in the office by June," said Shelby Branam, Pride@'s current chairperson and a software engineer at Sonos. "So we started to think, how could we do a really meaningful activation in a way that felt inclusive, even if we weren't together in the office?"

At the same time, excitement was growing within the company for the launch of Sonos Radio. From its inception, Sonos Radio was designed as a way for Sonos to provide owners with an incredible radio experience, while at the same time, sharing more about who we are as a company. Members of Pride@ realized that doing something on Sonos Radio would enable them to support Sonos employees as well as the community at large. So they reached out to the Sonos Radio team to see what was possible.

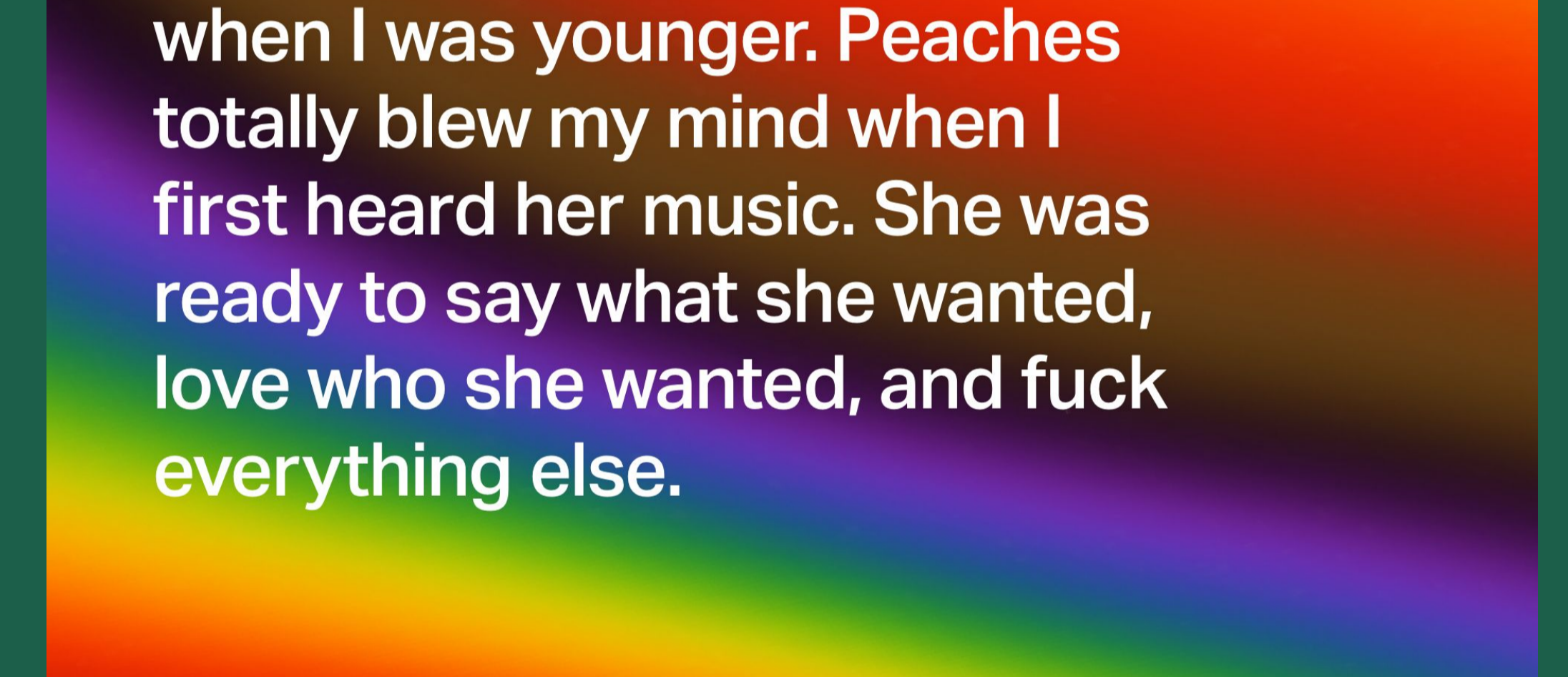
"Now that we had this amazing platform of Sonos Radio, doing something with Pride@ felt like a perfect fit," said Saidah Blount, producer on the Sonos Radio team and curator of Sonos Sound System. "And it started out very simply—let's get a whole bunch of tracks together and have this be a representative station. But Pride@ is a crazy talented, cross-organizational group of people, with diverse interests outside of what they do at work. We realized that this could be an incredible discovery moment for Sonos Radio, while at the same time, tapping into the emotions of what global Pride is all about."



A defining element of the Sonos Radio experience is hearing from artists themselves—from entire stations curated by music industry icons including Thom Yorke, Brittany Howard, and David Byrne, to Radio Hours on Sonos Sound System with Nancy Whang, JPEGMAFIA, and Phoebe Bridgers. As Pride@ began gathering song recommendations and recording stories from its members, Blount and the Sonos Radio team got to work adding the voices of artists from the LGBTQ+ community. But first, Blount wanted to find the right person to do the interviews. At the top of her list was Rita Houston, Program Director at WFUV in New York City and the host of The Whole Wide World with Rita Houston. "Rita is known within the radio community as one of the best interviewers in the business," Blount said. "She has a rapport with artists that makes it feel more like a conversation than a promotion. Additionally, she's been out and very vocal about being a member of the LGBTQ+ community."

With Houston on board, the station began to fall into place. "We reached out to some of the team's favorite LGBTQ+ artists and invited them to pick the songs that meant 'Pride' to them and share about their experience as a member of the community," said Rita Houston. "They responded as enthusiastically as we could have hoped." Throughout the three-month-long global Pride season, listeners will hear from Brandi Carlile, Laura Jane Grace, and other celebrated artists in a format similar to Radio Hours on Sonos Sound System. Siegel added, "I think that the tremendous response from artists speaks to the strength of our brand and the Sonos Radio team, but mainly, I think artists responded to the authentic nature of this effort."

But the heart of the station are the songs and stories shared by Sonos employees. Listeners can expect to hear about the full spectrum of the LGBTQ+ experience—from the hidden struggles to the triumphant highs. "You'll hear the celebratory songs of our community, of course, but also songs about rage, confusion, hopelessness, and protest," said Eric Bowers, member of Pride@ and an attorney on the Sonos legal team. "Whether it be a trans artist struggling to be heard, a disco song that celebrated our community, or a modern country singer expressing his support for inclusion, we have it. We wanted the station to be true to life, not a corporate approximation of our community."



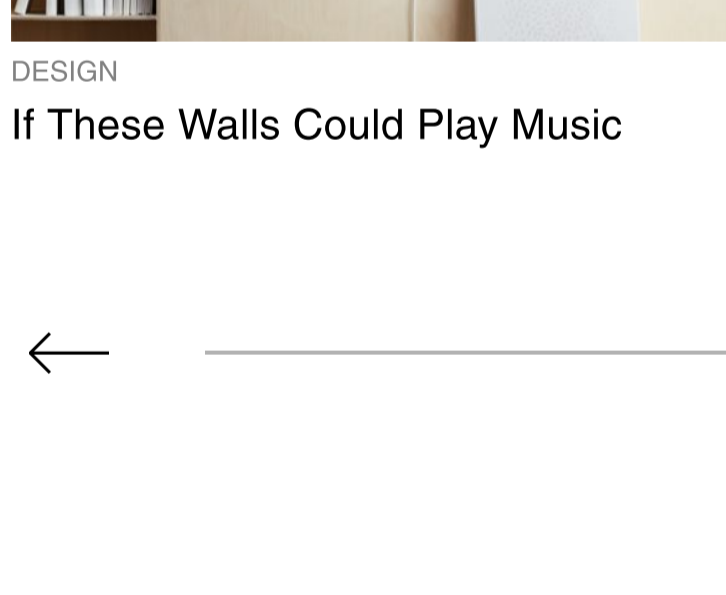
## On the same wavelength

Unsurprisingly, collaboration on Full Spectrum has had a huge impact on everyone who participated. "As an ally, working on this station has been transformative for me," said Blount. "To hear about the process of coming out and actualizing oneself is deeply moving. It's been such a privilege to work on this station in collaboration with Pride@."

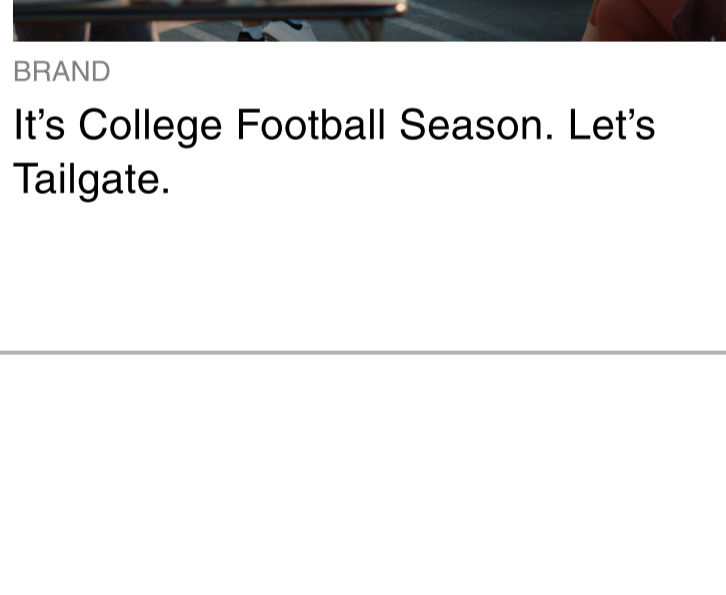
From Bowers's perspective, the feeling is mutual. "This has been a real partnership between the Sonos Radio team and the Pride@ ERG. The Radio team listened to all of our comments and suggestions and responded to each with compassion and understanding. Our ERG members were included as seminal participants in the creation of the station from the very beginning all the way through to the final finishing touches," he said.

Starting today, you can listen to Full Spectrum on Sonos Radio in the app under Sonos Presents. And if you're interested in starting your own LGBTQ+ employee resource group at your company, you can learn more [here](#). "I think ERGs are important because they give a platform to the needs of different communities at Sonos," said Branam. "And when a company supports them, it's a step above saying that it cares about its employees—it shows that it's willing to celebrate the differences of its employees as well." Happy Pride!

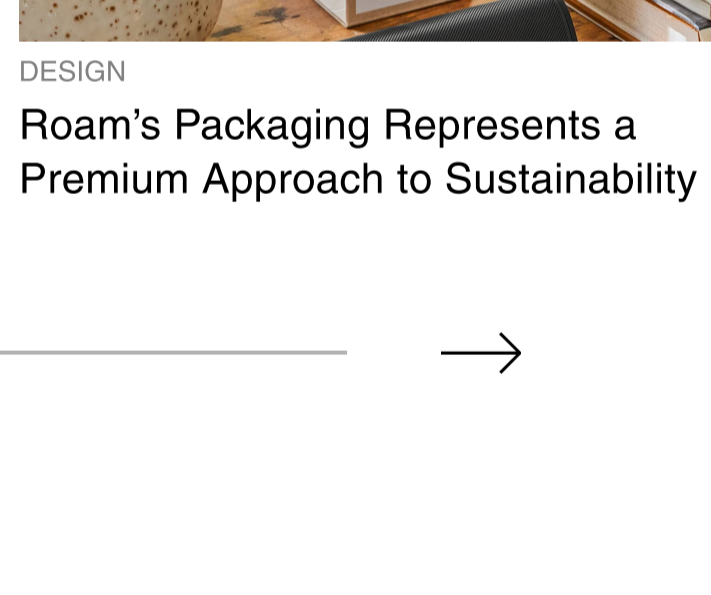
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