



**Name:** Frederick the Great

**DOB:** 1712

**Place of birth:** Berlin, Prussia

**Education:** Tutored (the man is a king after all...)

**Why inspirational:** He revolutionised Prussia, turning it into a powerhouse. He was ***the*** masculine role model of Prussia and he was gay!

**Career:** King of Prussia (1740-1786), one of greatest military commanders in History.

**Impact:** There is a lot of debate amongst historians as to whether Frederick was gay, there is certainly a number of biographies about him which stink of homophobia! You'll find that with a lot of powerful figures in history who don't fit in with the 'normal' idea of a strong ruler (think Alexander the Great and Abraham Lincoln...).

At 18, Frederick watched his lover, Hans Hermann von Katte, be executed but this didn't stop him from finding love again with a man who stayed by his side for the next 27 years. He married in 1733, as was expected of him, but he never had children. When he became king in 1740, he took Prussia from a weak military power, suffering from bouts of plague and transformed it into a modern country! He championed the ideas of the Enlightenment; supported freedom of speech, the press and religion. He repealed the death penalty (for most crimes). He strengthened the economy, promoted education, increased trade and made sure there was food for the poor available in times of hardship. He also re-opened the Prussian Academy of Sciences. He was an animal lover too and spent his later years surrounded by greyhounds.

**"He who defends everything, defends nothing"**



**Name:** Carol Ann Duffy

**DOB:** 29th December 1955

**Place of birth:** Glasgow

**Education:** Stafford Girls' High School

**Why inspirational:** Duffy used her poetry as a way of creating a voice for females forgotten by history.

### **Career:**

When Duffy was 15, she sent her poems to Outposts, a publisher of pamphlets. There, they were read by the bookseller Bernard Stone who published a selection.

In 1974, Duffy went to the University of Liverpool. She had two plays performed at the Liverpool Playhouse and received an honours degree in Philosophy in 1977. She went on to win the National Poetry Competition in 1983.

Duffy worked as poetry critic for The Guardian from 1988–1989, and was editor of the poetry magazine, Ambit. In 1996, she was appointed a lecturer in poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University, and later became creative director of its Writing School.

A testament to her career, she was appointed as Poet Laureate on 1st May 2009 and elected as an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy in 2015.

### **Impact:**

She is the first woman and first outwardly LGBT poet to hold the position of Poet Laureate. To this day, she is studied in many schools, sixth forms and universities. Having personally studied her poetry collection 'The World's Wife' at A Level, I find her style innovative and believe the voice she has given to various historical figures is both inspiring and important.





**Name:** Nicola Adams

**DOB:** 26th October 1982 (age 38)

**Place of birth:** Leeds, England

**Education:** Agnes Stewart Church of England High School, Leeds

**Why inspirational:** Nicola Adams is the first woman to hold Commonwealth, European, World and Olympic boxing titles. She was also the first openly LGBT+ person to win an Olympic boxing gold medal at London 2012. In the same year, Adams was named the most influential LGBT+ person in Britain. "I went into boxing and I'm bisexual and I still achieved and performed at the highest level and I came away with gold and made history so with that said, anything is possible."

**Career:** Adams was an amateur boxer up until she turned professional in January 2017. In her early career, she became the first woman boxer to represent England, as well as becoming the first English female to win a medal at a major tournament at the 2007 European Championships. This led to Adams famously taking Gold at London 2012 and she followed this up with Gold at Rio 2016. In her professional career, Adams became WBO champion and remained unbeaten during her 6 professional fights before retiring due to injury in November 2019.

**Impact:** Nicola Adams has had a huge impact on boxing and the LGBT+ community. Her success and impact means there are now facilities for girls to go and box, which wasn't always the case when she was a child. Adams has completely changed the way female boxers are perceived and accepted.



**Name:** Judith Butler

**DOB:** February 24, 1956

**Place of birth:** Cleveland, Ohio, USA

**Education:** Studied Philosophy at Yale

**Why inspirational:** Butler's work on Gender Performativism is ground-breaking

Butler has a fascination with gender and identity. Coming from a Hungarian Jewish family and losing many members of her family to the Holocaust she faced discrimination when coming out as a lesbian at 15. Her tireless work seeks to show gender is not something we choose or something that we can get wrong, but as something that belongs only to us.

Butler's book *Gender Trouble* is considered the most important work in Gender Studies and has moved the discourse on Gender so far in academics. Butler believes that gender is something we perform. This isn't performance like a character in a play though, it is not an actor in a costume, pretending to be someone else. For Butler, gender isn't just an expression of a self buried within us, it is who we are. Butler goes further by arguing that because gender is who we are that there is no argument to say that anyone is doing their gender wrong.

Butler, like many Philosophers and Sociologist before her, agrees that gender is something our society gives us, what is considered normal and natural is anything but! It is society imposing it's ideas of gender onto us, but she suggests that the "new" terms for gender are not wrong, they are just signs that our society is changing it's relationship with gender.

Butler continues on her works with her partner, Wendy Brown, to advocate for improved rights of people within the LGBTQ+ community.





**Name:** James Baldwin

**DOB:** August 2nd 1924

**Place of birth:** Harlem, New York

**Education:** De Witt Clinton High

**Why inspirational:** Writer, Poet, Civil Rights Activist

**Career**— One of the best selling Black authors of the 1950's and '60's, the height of the Civil Rights Movement

**Impact**— Baldwin realised he was gay as a teenager and to escape from racial prejudice and homophobia he moved to Paris in 1948 to gain greater cultural freedom and mix with other writers, poets, musicians and artists. He published 'Go Tell it on the Mountain' in 1955 which examined the Black church as both a source of restriction and hope. Baldwin wrote eloquently about Race, Class and Culture at a time when African-Americans were challenging the restrictions to their lives. Baldwin was directly involved in the Civil Rights movement, attending rallies and giving lectures. His intellect and ability as a speaker made him a popular guest on TV but was also a direct challenge to a racist society and he was investigated by the FBI. Even within the Civil Rights movement his sexuality met with disapproval from some. Baldwin observed the great changes in the USA in the 1950's and 60's and his writing expressed those upheavals with great style and intelligence.

**'Ignorance. allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have.'** James Baldwin



**Name:** Wendy Carlos

**DOB:** 1939—

**Place of birth:** Rhode Island, USA

**Education:** Columbia University

**Why inspirational:**

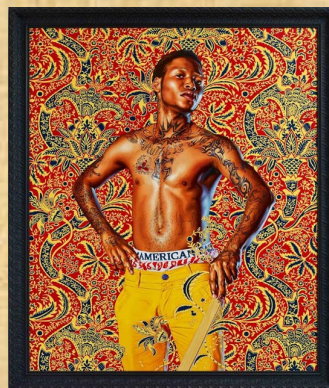
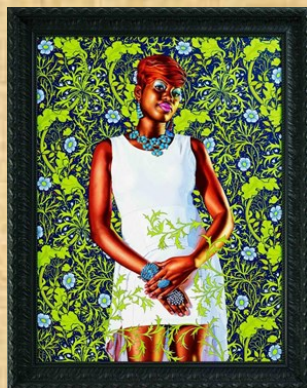
Film composer, and one of the earliest pioneers of modern electronic music.

- Growing up in Rhode Island, Wendy Carlos inherited a love of piano from her mother. She began taking piano lessons at six, and wrote her first composition when she was ten.
- She also had an early interest in electronics, building her own computer in high school which won her a scholarship. She went on to earn a master's degree in composition from Columbia University, which housed the first centre for electronic music in the US.
- In 1967, with the support of her close friend and collaborator Rachel Elkind, Carlos began transitioning, though she would keep her gender identity a secret among her closest friends for the next twelve years of her career.
- The following year, she released her first album, *Switched-On Bach*, which used the Moog synthesizer to tediously compose the music of Bach note by note. It became the first classical album ever to go platinum, won three Grammys, and lent new credibility to electronic music. Her 1969 follow-up, *The Well-Tempered Synthesizer*, was also well received.
- In 1971, she was asked to work with Stanley Kubrick on the iconic score for *A Clockwork Orange*. She continued to enjoy a successful career after coming out, working with Kubrick once again on *The Shining*, and composing the music for the Disney film *Tron*, as well as releasing a number of her own albums.
- Today she is recognized as one of the important early pioneers of electronic music. She's also a passionate photographer of solar eclipses.





# Kehinde Wiley



Born in 1977, Kehinde Wiley has already achieved international recognition for his highly naturalistic paintings of contemporary urban men adopting heroic poses directly referencing classical portraiture. 'The World Stage', Wiley's vast and celebrated body of work, has previously focused on Brazil, China, Israel, Nigeria, Senegal and Sri Lanka, with exhibitions held in museums and galleries in Europe and the USA.

Kehinde Wiley is a painter whose work features Jamaican men and women assuming poses taken from 17th and 18th Century British portraiture, the first one in the 'World Stage' series to feature portraits of women. The juxtaposition between the sitter and the art historical references reflects on the relationship between the island and her former colonial power. Kehinde Wiley is restaging this history, transforming the race and gender of the traditional art-historical hero to reflect the contemporary urban environment. The subjects' proud posturing refers to both the source painting and the symbolism of Jamaican culture, with its singular people and specific ideals of youth, beauty and style.

Kehinde Wiley is a constant source of inspiration for The West Bridgford School Art Department due to his imaginative and symbolic crossing of cultures and time periods. He addresses narratives of race and gender in an extremely accessible way.





**Name:** Marlene Dietrich

**DOB:** 1901

**Place of birth:** Berlin, Germany

**Education:** Auguste-Viktoria Girls' School & Victoria-Luise-Schule

**Why inspirational:** She experimented with the ideas of womanhood whilst sticking it to the Nazis!

**Career:** Hollywood actress and singer. A star of the stage and screen!

**Impact:** Dietrich broke the rules on what it meant to be a woman in the 1920s. She enjoyed playing with the idea of womanhood- attending 'gay balls' and boxing. She was openly bisexual (but kept it out of the public eye). She called her female lovers her 'sewing circle' and her male lovers her 'alumni association'. Some of her rumoured partners were President Kennedy, Frank Sinatra and Greta Garbo.

In the 1940 and 1950s, she turned her attention to politics. After Nazis had asked her to return to Berlin, she renounced her German citizenship, helped Jews and others flee the country, sold American war bonds, and performed on the front lines. For this work she received the highest civilian honours from the Americans, the French and the Belgians. She spent the latter part of her career as a cabaret singer, performing numbers in her signature top hat and tails.

**"When you're dead, you're dead. That's it"**