

This is an ARC Stockton Production in association with myself, The Queer Historian

This piece is called **Twenty Twenty** and dedicated to the Brighton Supper Club, Prosecco Friends Forever, Hot Gossip, A List Gays, Bear Road Queers and those 4 little pills.

We recommend you listen to this piece with headphones but I understand this might not be accessible for everyone so please do listen to this piece to what is comfortable and accessible for you.

When I started to make this piece around lifelines I realised the space that the last year was taking up and wanted to release some of it free. We hope it lets you think about your own lifelines during the last year and allows you to give space to those moments that might be taking up unnecessary room.

To them times we won't forget
To them times we remember
Some with fond smiles
And some without
Some we might even want to forget
And some we will keep locked away forever
Or perhaps only brought up at drunken parties

But here's too
The drunken chats
The broken Zooms
Thanking the internet for just working
And asking where was we due to it when it wasn't

To sitting by the fire
Especially in minus 2
Around a fire pit
Whilst we pretend we're not cold
And the endless quizzes
To telling you I really like the boyfriend you've just dumped

To the M&S snack tubs
Storming out of group chats when you slag Jessie Ware off
To group film watches
And debating "that was a weird film you've just chosen"
To co-ordinating Val shout "ding dong"
With our Glow Up weekly watch
Knowing nothing's changed because you still don't finish all of your drink
And finding comfort in something as small as that

To the gift of vinyl
And crying at the doorstep because there's you and an Easter Egg
To driving around looking for flour so we could just bake you a cake
And leave it on your front doorstep
And knowing that we won't bang pots and pans for the NHS any longer
So we don't want to come across as Tories

To falling over in the garden and thinking I might need to move out the next day
To finding vitamin d tablets all over the kitchen floor
And mysterious cocktails over the fence that no-body could drink

Whilst you WhatsApp me and tell me you've just been sick in the shower
Knowing our relationship had changed but for the better

The glass of wine in your conservatory
Debating whether that was fine or not
And I'm still laughing about "How to make no friends and influence no one"
Or "how to moan yourself thin"
Or "how to deal with a mother that wants your husband dead"
Or "just go fuck yourself" when that wasn't even one you typed

To Zoom Birthdays galore
The Cote at Home
To timing our dinners
To bingo with a fat drag queen
And watching Cats - the film
Whilst we all debate "what exactly is a jecile cat?"
And how can we watch the bum hole edit next?

To group playing Skyrim and shouting
"OH HE'S RUNNING AWAY AGAIN"
The endless dirty martinis and glittery gin shots
To the endless booze we drank
Those empty, empty, empty, empty, empty, empty bottles
And regretting them the next day

With the haze of the night before
I often think about coming off you like I did back in 2012 and then I worry about that time in 2012 and my time without you. I dream often - perhaps more fantasise about what coming off you is like and slowly taking less and less like I did with my addiction. But my brain somehow tells me once an addict, always an addict and I try to justify my addiction to you because you make me feel something else.

I think about what life would be like without you and how my life might be. I think about what that future looks like but it scares me back and I fear my life without you. Perhaps the constant worry about running out or the fear of when I remember I forgot to take you but then I remember the safety net you've cast around my life and I always think about you in a negative light and don't let you take up the space it often deserves and that thing you've given me back like an ever lasting Christmas present wrapped up in a big box and with a big bow like a cartoon.

I don't remember our first time nor do I remember when you increased from 2 to 4 but I'll always remember the blanket of hope you put over my life. You make me safe. Wanted.Alive. You make me feel whilst making sure I don't feel and there's something about you that I can't imagine life without. You make me feel like I'm a human. Whatever that feels like. And I can survive and fight and yet there's only 4 of you, and I'm sure one day you're going to increase to 5, then 6, then 7, then 8 and maybe 9 and I try to not worry about our time ahead but you've given me something I could never give myself.

You've given me life. My lifeline from 2012 to the rest of my life and I feel annoyed. I can't tell you how grateful I am because you're just 4 little pills that sit in my hand and always will. Just 4 little pills that I'll never be able to tell how you actually mean to me. Nothing more but just 4 little pills.

To sharing bread tips
And Ottengengli recipes
Moving our friendship into the top 3%
And apologising that these flowers aren't in brown paper
To explaining the difference between Stork and butter
To receive a cookie in the post because you just wanted to do something nice.
And constantly thanking the Amazon delivery driver once again for delivering me more parcels.

To walking in the rain, frost and snow so we could just see each other
To those cold, cold moments in a gazebo that was about to take off
To making sure we was always walking in twos
And saying "shall we just walk that little bit extra?"
To crying in a carpark because I couldn't touch you
Or because you just said "I just really want you back to ours"

To the constant question "are we not hugging yet?"
To the constant debate of "oh of course his on holiday again!"
To the constant weekly message of "are we watching Eurovision again?"
To the constant eye rolling of "oh of course it's rule one rule for them and one for us"
And the debate of whether I should use this time to just get into porridge or start my
TikTok channel or perhaps try and lose some weight and laugh at each other when we
say "What would Chris do?" with the answer always being pour yourself a drink

This is for those moments I'll never forget
Those moments you made special
Those moments you might've missed
Those moments you were there
To those moments you helped me just
Survive