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# A Girls' *Girl*

Through her satirical, bimbofied political commentary and unapologetic self-love anthems, Chrissy Chlapecka is championing the 'girls, gays, and theys.'

By JUNO KELLY



If your TikTok and Instagram algorithms are geared toward the girls, you may have happened across Chrissy Chlapecka. Often lensed in the street, blonde pigtails swinging, performing sexually empowering anthems, or in her room, espousing leftist ideology, the 23-year-old content creator-cum-pop star has amassed a loyal online following of—in Chrissy parlance—“girls, gays, and theys.”

After joining TikTok in 2019, Chlapecka unwittingly became one of the faces of #bimbotok, an online movement that reclaims the hyper-feminine, dumb-blonde stereotype through a gauche pink aesthetic, an exaggerated saccharine lilt, and self-sexualization (see also #bimbocore). “I think a lot of times people, especially women, are told to tone down who they are and what they love. And even as a kid I was so just against that. I was like, ‘I want to be as big and glittery, and I want to be seen for who I am,’” Chlapecka tells me. On our call, her voice is marginally more subdued than it is online, but it retains a high-pitched, Ariana Grande quality.

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In 2024, four waves of feminism down (or three, depending on who you ask), you would hope society had overcome its habit of judging women—and everyone else, for that matter—based on their appearance. But Chlapecka, with more than five million TikTok followers and an endless stream of comments, has learned firsthand that it hasn’t. “Dressing the way I do and presenting the way I do online, and in my music as well, people are still going to have those stereotypes about me, and I welcome them because I love to challenge them,” she says. Through her strategically clueless persona, she disarms viewers, placing them in a prime position to be educated. “Listen, Karen, a modern-day bimbo doesn’t need to know what a ‘mortgage’ is, or how to ‘file taxes,’” she opines in one video that has amassed over 400,000 likes, “but we do know that it’s time to let go of those who are in prison for marijuana charges when the states that they’re in have decriminalized marijuana.” “No one can really conceptualize you doing anything else other than being pretty and doing x, y, and z,” she adds now. “And then it’s so insanely amazing to them when you do anything else, which is sad in a sense, but also it is just like, you set yourself up for that by immediately looking at someone and being like, ‘I know everything about you.’”

But it’s not just archaic preconceptions about intelligence that Chlapecka’s appearance rouses. “I still think there’s a lot of discussion, unfortunately, around the way you present yourself and how that makes you a target to men. I still see this conversation circulate very often and I think people will post and they’ll use very intellectual words and make themselves seem above certain things. But really, to me, it sounds like, ‘You should be blamed for what happens to you if you were wearing something that welcomed it.’” It’s an age-old argument stoked anew by the internet. Chlapecka is having none of it. “In my experience, as someone who has dealt with violence with men and also assault in that way, it has happened to me whether I’m wearing what I am right now [a velour hoodie] or I’m in the Chicago winter, layered in three coats and in null makeup. It doesn’t matter.”

It was getting out of an abusive relationship at the dawn of the pandemic that galvanized Chlapecka’s TikTok presence and the self-love she proselytizes to her legions of followers. Such content oscillates between irreverent reality checks—“He is not the love of your life, he is literally just a guy. Hit him with your car!”—and earnest advice: “In all seriousness, remember that you are not defined by the way people have treated you in the past.” It’s through such guidance that Chlapecka became the internet’s big sister, with tributes like, “I love u so much, literally your videos have always helped me regain my confidence & self love in so many ways,” flooding her comments daily.

Proudly bisexual, Chlapecka is deeply enmeshed in the thriving LGBTQIA+ community, both online and in person. She is also an outspoken advocate for gay rights and staunchly anti-Trump. “It is such a disheartening thing to have a government that feels to be constantly going against the LGBTQ+ community, and any marginalized community, period,” she laments. “It’s really scary



when it seems like, at such a wide level of the world, the literal people running for president are going against us or doing things in secret that you see in a headline and you’re like, ‘Whoa, how did that happen? When did we get here?’”

For queer people contending with America’s increasingly hostile social and political landscape, Chlapecka recommends cultivating a community. “When I lived in Chicago, I was always out in the nightlife community and hanging out with all the drag queens and the other queer people who really care,” she recounts. (Chlapecka’s hyperbolic femininity takes ample cues from drag culture.) “These

are the people that are going to be sticking up for you and fighting for you, because we all have a common goal, and it’s to be able to live freely, to love, to be who we are, to exist as we are safely,” she counsels. But if IRL connections and nights out aren’t feasible, online friendships are just as valid, she adds. “Online spaces, like online friends, online communities, they’re just as relevant, they’re just as there and there’s just as many people who are hoping for connection, hoping to lean on other people.”

Over the past few months, Chlapecka has been interrupting her steady stream of pink empowerment to lend her platform to





another cause: the bombardment of Gaza. Unlike the vast majority of influencers who have skirted around what is likely the most contentious conflict in recent history, Chlapecka took to TikTok to encourage her followers to boycott allegedly pro-Israel brands and to refute arguments weaponizing the region's LGBTQIA+ laws to justify the conflict.

For this, she has been greeted with an onslaught of online vitriol (which unfortunately is nothing new for Chlapecka), including death threats. "It gets pretty intense," she admits with an uneasy laugh. But they haven't deterred her: "At the end of the day, that's such a problem to have in the United States. It's not comparative to the literal genocide that is going on currently in Palestine... I am protected by my phone and the house I am in and the country I am in. There's so much worse happening and so much to speak up about because these people have a voice, but there's Israel-targeted ads everywhere. The propaganda is propaganda-ing," she remarks in internet lingo, likely referencing the pro-Israel ads blasted to 123 million viewers during the Super Bowl. "Yes, people are able to speak up about it while they're there, but it's also very important for us to amplify their voices."

In early 2023, Chlapecka changed gears, launching a long-brewing music career with "I'm So Hot," an empowering pop single with a catchy, reverberative chorus advocating self-love (literally—its hook is "I'm so hot I'd fuck myself"). "I just love to make people feel good. Honestly, I feel like my calling as a musician and a content creator and just a person... I think there's just so much love to give other people and I really do want to show that through my music," she says. Fittingly, her latest single is titled "I'm Really Pretty."

Chlapecka's sound harks back to the 2000s: stylistically overproduced pop that calls to mind the likes of Paris Hilton and Britney Spears. But despite her music oozing the same infectious moxie that has come to define her videos, not all of Chlapecka's followers have supported her lane switch. "I've gotten a lot of unfollows because it's not what people are used to... When you change up, people don't tend to like it," she says. In a rebuttal to those questioning her musical ability, she posted a powerful, pitch-perfect rendition of Lady Gaga's "Speechless," proving, without a doubt, that she can sing. After all, Chlapecka was a musical theater kid who dreamed of Broadway's bright lights long before TikTok came along. "Music has just always been my goal. That's always been my passion, and I'm so grateful for the platform I've built. But I feel, in a slight sense, it's time for change... I want to reach the world in the way I did just by being a person, but with my music," she says.

But despite the naysayers, for someone with Chlapecka's infectious presence and distinctive voice (literally and figuratively), music was a natural next step. And whether she's channeling it through viral TikTok skits tapping into women's chagrin with today's men, bimbofied political commentary, or brazen self-love anthems, Chlapecka's goal remains the same: to empower others. "I don't

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think anyone, as a woman or as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, or as a minority in any sense, should have to feel that they come with accommodations... I just think we deserve to feel safe and protected in the world that we've been given. I'll always be an advocate for this, for every single person, every single woman. I'm a girls' girl. I'm always gonna care about the girls. Every kind of girl."

@chrissychlapecka on Instagram