



I'm Coming Out

In between recording new songs for an upcoming album, rapper Mykki gave us an exclusive interview and photo shoot

January 6, 2020 By [Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.](#)

I still remember how excited I felt in 2015 when I heard about a rapper by the name of Mykki Blanco coming out about living with HIV. I didn't really know much about Mykki back then, but I understood the potential stigma-busting aspect of this disclosure.

After the initial posts via social media and the accompanying media coverage—including on POZ.com—I was eager to see what was next. After all, POZ is at its best when we tell the stories of people living with HIV. Artistically, things moved along nicely for Mykki. So much so that I admittedly was just hoping for a moment that made sense to reach out for an interview.

Then, in 2019, the Madonna music video happened. In “Dark Ballet,” Mykki plays a persecuted Joan of Arc, at times lip-synching as Madonna sings. The video ends with a quote from Mykki: “I have walked this earth, Black, Queer and HIV positive, but no transgression against me has been as powerful as the hope I hold within.” Well, I had found my moment.

I immediately did a little searching and found out that Mykki's second full-length album was slated for 2020. The next step was reaching out. As luck would have it, Mykki was going to give a master lecture at the 2019 United States Conference on AIDS. The stars aligned. We connected at the conference. Mykki wanted to share with POZ.

In between recording new songs for the upcoming album, Mykki gave us an exclusive interview and photo shoot. The cover image and the accompanying photos were taken in Lisbon. POZ thanks Mykki and all the people who helped make this happen. [Click here](#) to read how the rapper, poet and activist is thriving with HIV.

One of the joys of working at POZ is the ability to uplift the voices of all people living with HIV—from the famous, such as Mykki, to the maybe-not-world-famous-but-famous-to-us, like Mark S. King. Mark never disappoints in eloquently sharing his personal views and, in the process, channeling the emotions of so many people. [Click here](#) to read his essay on believing in hope in 2020.

Providing opportunities to those among us who are often overlooked and underrepresented is also what the organizers of HIV2020 are trying to do. The alternative to the AIDS 2020 conference will

be held July 5 to 7 in Mexico City. To learn more about HIV2020, [click here](#) to read a Q&A with George Ayala, founding executive director of MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights, one of the event's organizers.

This special issue on African Americans also includes a profile of Joyce Turner Keller. [Click here](#) to read about her journey living with HIV for nearly two decades. [Click here](#) to learn more about He Is Valuable, an Atlanta group for Black queer men giving new meaning to HIV. For a remembrance of the late activist Sean Sasser, [click here](#).

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