

ROB HALFORD HEAVY METAL MUSICIAN

b. August 25, 1951

“Unconditional love will accept you for who you are, and I think that was the blessing I had from the fans.”

Dubbed the “Metal God,” he is the first out gay heavy metal artist.

Rob Halford is a Grammy-winning English rock singer and songwriter, best known as the front man of Judas Priest. Dubbed the “Metal God” by his fans—a nickname he later trademarked—Halford is the first out gay artist in the hyper-masculine heavy metal genre.

Halford was born in Birmingham, England, and raised in the working-class town of Walsall, where he sang in the school choir. In his early 20s, while jamming with his amateur band, Halford met his sister’s boyfriend, the bassist and cofounder of Judas Priest, Ian Hill. In 1973 Halford joined Priest as lead vocalist.

Halford made his recording debut in 1974 on Judas Priest’s first album, “Rocka Rolla.” The band achieved widespread commercial success with their groundbreaking sixth studio album, “British Steel.” Halford recorded and toured with Priest throughout the ’70s and ’80s, defining the studded-leather look and vocal style of metal music.

In 1992 Halford left Judas Priest to pursue his own projects and the more aggressive American metal sound. He formed the band Fight, who released their first album in 1993. Fight produced a second album and toured twice before disbanding in the mid ’90s.

In 1997 Halford and the guitarist John Lowery formed 2wo. They released one album in 1998. That same year, in an MTV interview, Halford inadvertently referred to himself as a gay man. After spending his entire life closeted, the spontaneous revelation thrilled and liberated him. He became known as metal’s gay icon.

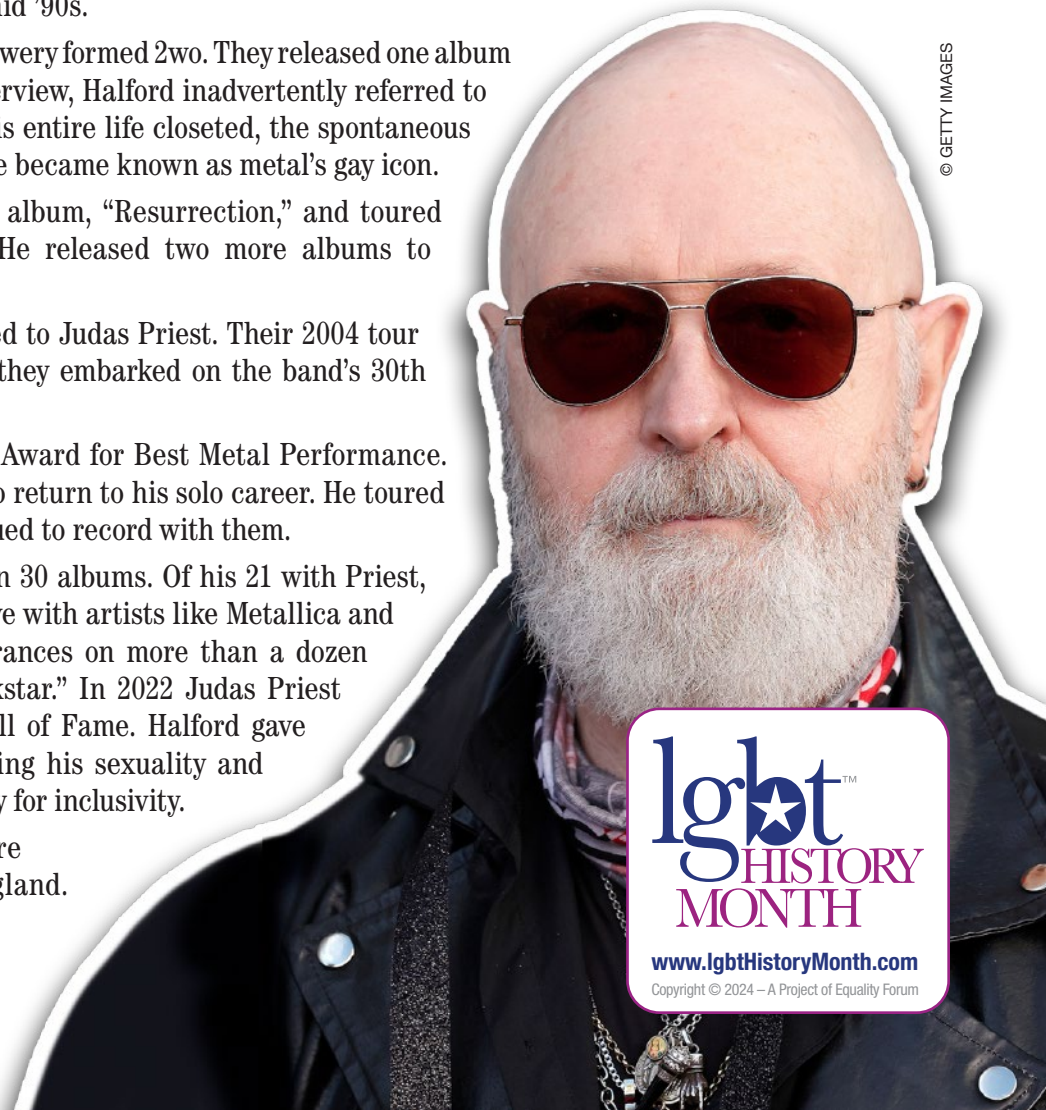
In 2000 Halford released his first solo album, “Resurrection,” and toured with Iron Maiden and Queensrÿche. He released two more albums to critical acclaim.

After an 11-year hiatus, Halford returned to Judas Priest. Their 2004 tour celebrated his comeback, and in 2005 they embarked on the band’s 30th anniversary world tour.

In 2010 Judas Priest won the Grammy Award for Best Metal Performance. A year later, Halford announced plans to return to his solo career. He toured with Priest for his final time but continued to record with them.

All told, Halford has released more than 30 albums. Of his 21 with Priest, six went platinum. He has performed live with artists like Metallica and Black Sabbath and made guest appearances on more than a dozen albums, including Dolly Parton’s “Rockstar.” In 2022 Judas Priest was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Halford gave a rousing acceptance speech, referencing his sexuality and praising the metal community’s capacity for inclusivity.

Halford and his husband, Thomas, share residences in the U.S. and Walsall, England.



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