

K-Pop Idol BAIN Came Out Because He was Tired of 'Hiding'

"I want to be an artist who is loved for being true to who I am."



K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM

MAY 06, 2025

♡ 40

💬 18

🔄 6

Share



Courtesy: Bluedot Entertainment

On April 22, the K-pop idol BAIN (né Song Byeong-hee) came out during a concert in Los Angeles.

"Tonight, I'm going to share something with you guys," said the JUST B member. "I'm fucking proud to be a part of the LGBTQ community, as a gay person. To anyone out there who's part of the LGBTQ community, or still figuring it out, this is for you guys. You are seen. You are loved. And you are born this way."

This Substack is reader-supported. To receive new posts and support my work, consider becoming a free or paid subscriber.

And with that, he launched into a cover of Lady Gaga’s “Born This Way,” waving a rainbow pride flag to accentuate his revelation.

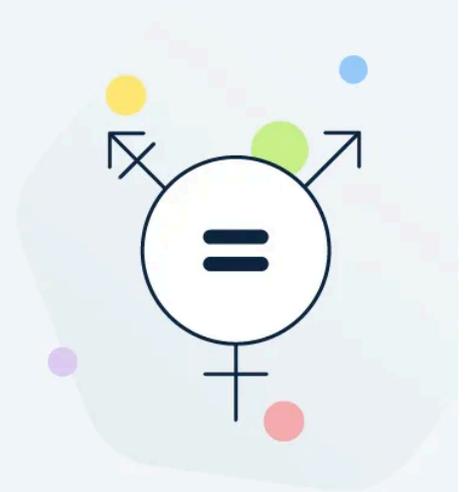
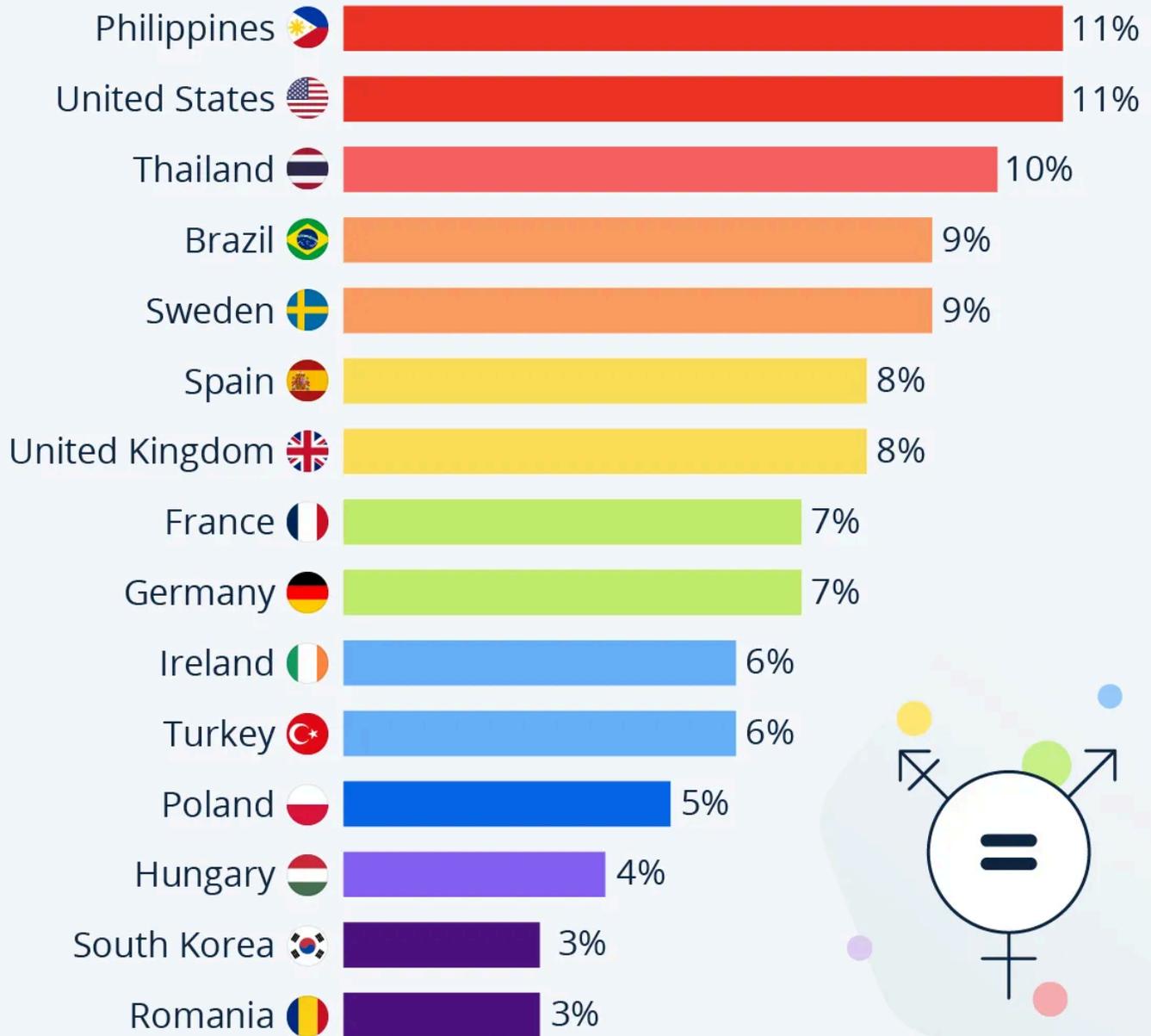
It’s a risk for any performer to announce that they are gay. There is always the concern that their fans may turn on them, especially in conservative South Korea, where there is a dearth of well-known gay celebrities. South Korea has no equivalent of Chappell Roan, Troye Sivan or Lil Nas X. Not yet, anyhow.

“I’m still scared sometimes, and there’s so much I’m still learning. But one thing I know for sure is that I feel freer and stronger than ever. For the first time, I’m not hiding. I’m finally moving toward what I really want — not what I think people expect from me.” —BAIN

While there are certainly gay people in South Korea, few citizens — especially celebrities — have come out, for fear of alienating their fans, being harassed by netizens, and losing job opportunities.

Where It's Most & Least Common to Be LGBT+

Share of respondents who identify as LGBT+, by country



2,000 - 60,300 respondents (18 - 64 y/o) Apr. 2023 - Mar. 2024

Source: Statista Consumer Insights



statista

It's important to remember that only three percent of South Korean adults identify as LGBTQ+.

When Seoul held its LGBTQ Pride parade in July of 2023, some 13,000 spectators came to watch. Which sounds great. But there were more *anti-LGBTQ+* protestors — an estimated 15,000 in attendance. And the National Assembly of South Korea has yet to approve a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, according to the [Human Rights Watch](#). This leaves little protection for the vulnerable LGBTQ+ community.

Understanding all of this — especially that most of his countrymen want to deny any rights for gay people — makes BAIN's announcement not just brave, but extremely powerful.

On May 4 — his 24th birthday — BAIN did an interview with *K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim*.

6a1n__



A post shared by @6a1n_

In the U.S., we hear all the time about how South Korea isn't a gay-friendly country. What are your feelings about this perception?

To be honest, I understand where that perception comes from. In Korean society, discussions about LGBTQ+ issues aren't very active yet. And especially within K-pop culture, it's still approached very cautiously. But I do feel that change is beginning. More people like me are starting to speak openly about their identities, and many of our fans are supportive and respectful of diversity. So I believe there is definitely hope.

Since your surprise announcement at your Los Angeles concert, how has the reception been?

I was honestly surprised and grateful to receive so much warmth and positivity. Not only from fans, but also from people inside and outside the industry. It gave me a lot of

strength. What meant the most was hearing that my story brought comfort to some people. That made it truly meaningful.

Did you have worries that you coming out as an individual could have negative repercussions on you as a K-pop idol, or that JUST B could suffer from some of the fallout?

Yes, it would be a lie to say I had no worries. I'm not just an individual. I'm part of a team. But my members understood and supported me more than anyone, and our company [Bluedot Entertainment] stood by me as we thought through the decision together. Thanks to that, I found the courage. In the end, I think JUST B became even more united, and we were able to build deeper trust with our fans.

Did you tell your band members beforehand that you were going to make this announcement?

Yes, I told the members in advance. It was a really important moment for me and I wanted to share it with them. When I came out on stage, they were all behind the scenes watching and cheering me on. Having them there with me made the moment even more meaningful and gave me the courage I needed.

Before you came out, did people treat you differently then than they are treating you now?

It's hard to say things are completely different, but I definitely feel that my relationships are more relaxed and genuine now. Before, I felt like I was hiding part of myself, which created some distance. Now that I can be honest about who I am, my connections with others feel more sincere and warm.

How did your family and friends react?

I came out to my mom three years ago. She was surprised at first, but in the end, she accepted me and supported me. Most of my friends said, "If you're happy, I'm happy too," and offered their full support. Their reactions meant so much to me. Even after coming out, both my family and friends have continued to stand by me with love and warmth.



Being a young, gay man in any culture isn't easy. What are your concerns now that everyone knows about your sexuality?

There are still moments when I feel nervous or cautious, but the feeling of freedom — of not having to hide anymore — is so much greater now. Of course, there may still be words or stares that hurt me. But I'm working on becoming stronger so I can walk my own path without being shaken. I want to be an artist who is loved for being true to who I am.

Before coming out, how did you react when you heard people make anti-gay remarks?

It hurt a lot on the inside. I pretended to be fine on the outside, but those words stayed with me for a long time. They became one of the reasons I kept hiding myself. That's why now, I feel it's even more important to be open about who I am — to stand up against that kind of hate just by existing honestly.

Do you think you will write about this experience in your songs?

Yes, I think it'll come out naturally. Music is my story, after all. Confusion, loneliness,

freedom, love — all those emotions — I want to express them openly now instead of hiding them.

Whose career do you admire?

I've admired Lady Gaga since I was young. I love her music, of course, but what moves me even more is how she continues to stay true to her identity and message, and how she inspires others through that. I want to become an artist like that, too.

After making this extraordinary statement to the public, do you feel like you can accomplish anything now?

I'm still scared sometimes, and there's so much I'm still learning. But one thing I know for sure is that I feel freer and stronger than ever. For the first time, I'm not hiding. I'm finally moving toward what I really want — not what I think people expect from me. That change alone makes me feel like anything might be possible. And if my decision gives even one person the courage to live more freely, then — to me — that's already a huge accomplishment.

Any final words, Bain?

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to share my story in this interview. It's an honor to speak openly with you, and I hope that my words can inspire others who may be on a similar journey. Thank you for giving me this chance to connect and communicate with everyone.

JUST B (저스트비) 'CHEST' Special Video



© 2025 JAE-HA KIM | All Rights Reserved

K-DRAMA INDEX

K-CULTURE WITH JAE-HA KIM • MAY 1



These are some of my reviews and essays about K-Dramas (and also Korean films and other Korean-centric projects). You may also read more about my take on Korean pop culture in outlets such as Rolling Stone, Mashable, Victoria & Al...

[Read full story](#) →

This Substack is reader-supported. To receive new posts and support my work, consider becoming a free or paid subscriber.



40 Likes · 6 Restacks

[← Previous](#)

Discussion about this post

Comments Restacks



Write a comment...



Aku Ammah-Tagoe So Much Sound 1d

...

♥ Liked by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim

This is a great interview, and Bain is inspiring. I noticed he talks consistently about building bonds with others through authenticity—even noting that by supporting his journey, “JUST B became even more united, and we were able to build deeper trust with our fans”—which is easy to say but so hard to do as a pop artist. He clearly draws from a deep well of honesty and artistry, and that’s what will change the industry for the better.

♥ LIKED (4) [REPLY](#)

[SHARE](#)

1 reply by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim



Lori Simon 15h

...

♥ Liked by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim

I wish nothing but the best for him. His bravery is going to be remembered for many years to come. I can only hope that he lights the way and for others and inspires them to follow when they are ready. I have two adult LGBTQ+ children (my son is a big gay bear, and my former daughter is now agender and bisexual), and would be terrified for them to live in countries where they basically have to hide, and where coming out can have heavy consequences for themselves in every area of their lives. Bain deserves support and applause for taking such a big step. I wish I could give him a big hug. Thank you for such a great interview.

♥ LIKED (2)  REPLY

 SHARE

1 reply by K-Culture with Jae-Ha Kim

16 more comments...