



We Gotta Get Out of This Place: The True, Tough Story of Women in Rock

Gerri Hirshey

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Rock and roll has traditionally been a boys' game. A male-controlled field, it forced female artists to work twice as hard, usually for half the recognition. No matter the obstacles, however, women have always been drawn to the restless life of the road, to the glamour of the stage, to the need to make a joyful noise. Beginning in the early days with Bessie Smith, Mahalia Jackson, and Maybelle Carter, Hirshey takes us on a wild ride through a century of popular music and the women who made it. We are whispered to in the dark night of Janis Joplin's soul and pinioned to the studio wall by Aretha's mighty pipes. We listen in as Phil Spector and Ellie Greenwich build the Ronettes' perfect pop moment, "Be My Baby." Joni Mitchell rewrites womanhood, and Debbie Harry and Patti Smith tear it down again. We meet Madonna at nineteen, debating what she's willing to do for a record deal, and find out what Tina Turner thinks of being called a victim. Hirshey gleefully deconstructs vitriol queen Courtney Love, country darling Dolly Parton, neohippie Sarah McLachlan, and provocateur fatale Lil' Kim. Whitney Houston and Cher elucidate the meaning of diva, while Lauryn Hill and Missy Elliott look to the female rock star of the future. Through it all, one of rock's best journalists delivers a passionate history of women in rock that is deft, provocative, and always deeply entertaining.

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