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FemJam: A History of All-Girl Bands

Kelsey Hart
Chapman University

Yelena Liepelt
Chapman University

Mackenzie Smith

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A HISTORY OF ALL-GIRL BANDS

More exclusively female groups formed, mostly running in the Vaudeville circuit, making music that cheered the American people through the Great Depression.

The Coon Creek Girls, Lil Hardin's All-Girl Orchestra, Clarice Vries and Her Jazzladies

30

Women stepped into the world of country music in this decade, and more girls picked up the guitar as their instrument of choice.

The Kim Sisters, The Rhythm Ranch Gals, Lina Kidd Quartet

50s

Girls continued to take over the rock movement. While the teenage girl band The Runaways is undoubtedly the most well-known, other bands who defied the standard of boys only rock n roll arose in Europe.

The MO-dettes, X-Ray Spex, The Slits

70s

R&B. Pop. Riot Grrrl. In the 90s, girls began to form groups of every genre. The feminist punk movement prevailed in the Pacific Northwest, while the LA scene brought forth WoC hip hop groups.

Sleater-Kinney, TLC, The Motels

90

1920s



Jazz groups paved the way for women in music, and are considered to be the first known 100% female ensembles.

The Inegenues, Babe Egan and Her Hollywood Redheads, Ivy Benson Orchestra

40s



Faced with WWII, musicians of the 1940s usually toured internationally in order to boost soldiers' morale, ESPECIALLY female groups.

International Sweethearts of Rhythm, The Andrews Sisters, Gloria Gaye and Her Glamour Girls Band

60s



As rock n roll shook the music world, women joined the party. Whereas the bands mentioned before weren't huge successes, all-girl bands started to be legitimate contenders in the biz during this era.

Goldie and the Gingerbreads, The Pleasure Seekers, Fanny

80s



This era was fraught with success for girl groups. Band started combining pop beats and aesthetics with rock guitar riffs. Despite the success, music mags consistently critiqued bands based on their appearance.

The Go-Gos, The Bangles, Bananarama

2000s



The early 2000s welcomed more pop all-female bands, and a new breed of feminism came about. There were acts who embraced their sexuality and made controversial videos that seem misogynistic to many Third-Wavers, and queer bands who chose to focus on the music rather than their image.

The Spice Girls, Destiny's Child, V for Vagina

KELSEY HART

The Supremes

The Supremes were an American all female singing group during the 1960's. Coming out of Detroit, Michigan, they became the most commercially successful of all Motown's acts and are still considered America's most successful vocal group with 12 number one singles on the Billboard Hot 100.

****The success of the Supremes made it possible for future African American R&B and soul musicians to find mainstream success****

The problem with early African American bands is the stereotypes they had to overcome. Motown chief Berry Gordy sought to erase the image of black performers as being unrefined or lacking class by feminizing the Supremes image. They appeared onstage in detailed make-up and high-fashion gowns and wigs, and performed graceful choreography. On the plus side, these colored ladies were viewed as real women. Unfortunately this also created a binary view of female and male bands during that time.



song to listen to: Where Did Our Love Go



women of color

so all girl bands are awesome, right? but unfortunately, the majority of all female and riot grrrl bands we see or hear about are groups of caucasian women. and underrepresentation is lame. the thing is, colored women started entering the music scene by the 1940's. groups like the International Sweethearts of Rhythm played swing and jazz music, while some of the best singers of the era took the main stage. and what's even better? people loved it! they even toured around the united states.

it don't mean a thang, if it ain't in the history books...

****during the 1940's, the Jim Crow laws still existed in the South, so African American singers ate and slept on the bus because they could not eat at restaurants or stay in hotels!!!****

during world war II, the group of women made a tour across Europe. although the Sweethearts chose to go their own separate ways after they returned to the states, their legacy lives on and paved the way for many other African American and female artists to come.

By: Yelena Liepelt

by Yelena Liepelt

BY: MACKENZIE SMITH

BIKINI KILL

MEMBERS:

Kathleen Hanna - vocals, songwriter
Billy Karren - guitar
Kathi Wilcox - bass
Tobi Vail - drums

ALBUMS:

Revolution Girl Style Now! (1991)
Pussy Whipped (1993)
Reject All American (1996)



Tobi Kathleen billy Kathi

1



RIOT Grrrlz

SONG TO LISTEN TO?: "Rebel Grrrl"

Olympia, WA, and played from 1990-1997. They are known as one of the most influential Riot Grrrl bands of the 90s. These bands were part of the third-wave feminist movement and addressed issues such as rape, domestic abuse, sexuality, empowerment, and the patriarchy with their lyrics.

BY: MACKENZIE SMITH

THE BUTCHIES

THE BUTCHIES were a punk rock band from Durham, NC. They formed in 1998 and continued to play until 2005 when they went on hiatus. They were coined as the "queercore crusaders," with lyrics focused on queer and lesbian themes.

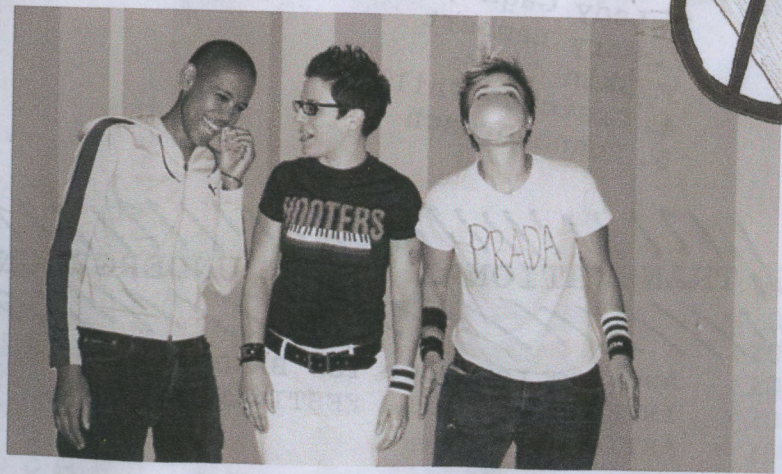
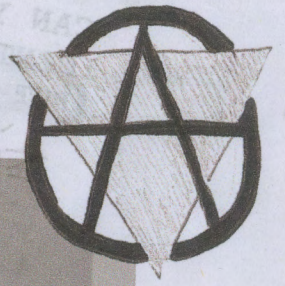
SONG TO LISTEN TO?: "Send Me To You"

MEMBERS:

Kaia Wilson - guitar/lead
Alison Martlew - bass
Melissa York - drums

ALBUMS:

Are We Not Femme? (1998)
Population: 1975 (1999)
3 (2001)
Make Yr Life (2004)



By: Mackenzie Smith

QUEER FEMINIST BANDS

QUEER = NONCONFORMATIVE TO
HETERONORMATIVE ROLES IN SOCIETY;
"UMBRELLA TERM" FOR LGBTQIA
INDIVIDUALS

PUSSY POWER ☆

THEIR HISTORY HAS BEEN NEGLECTED AND
THEY CONTINUE TO BE UNDERREPRESENTED

CAN YOU NAME 5 SUCCESSFUL QUEER-
IDENTIFYING MUSICIANS? PROBABLY NOT
[BUT YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY LOOK THESE
ONES UP]

1. Lady Gaga (obviously)
2. Mary Lambert
3. Skin
4. Gretchen Phillips
5. Donna Dresch

TRANSNATIONAL QUEER UNDERGROUND

Awesome resource for BANDS, REVIEWS,
INTERVIEWS, FILM FESTIVALS, VISUAL
ARTISTS, etc.

Both Tegan and Sara are openly gay and have made comments on the slow evolution of women in the music industry. There are so many amazing women selling records and making hit songs, but none of them are asked to perform at popular film festivals like Coachella and Lollapalooza. Tegan and Sara have performed at such festivals many times, but they are too often the only female band.

ALBUMS:

Under Feet Like Ours	(1999)
The Business of Art	(2000)
If It Was You	(2002)
So Jealous	(2004)
The Con	(2007)
Sainthood	(2009)
Heartthrob	(2013)

TEGAN AND SARA



TEGAN AND SARA are a band formed by identical twin sisters, Tegan and Sara Quinn. They are originally from Calgary, Alberta, Canada and began making sweet music in 1995. Their music is categorized as indie folk, synthpop, pop, indie rock, new wave, indie and on- and off-stage discourse. They are never afraid to bring up identity, politics, and gender in their music.

SONG TO LISTEN TO?: "Closer"

By Mackenzie Smith

JJ FAD



J.J. Fad is an American rap group from Rialto, California. Originally a group of six african american women, their name was based on the first names of the members: Juana Burns, Dania Birks, Michelle Franklin, Anna Cash, Fatima Shaheed, and Juanita Lee. Some of their associated acts were with N.W.A and The Fat Boys.

⚡ Song to listen to: Supersonic ⚡
 **in case you didn't know: Fergie ripped this sample for her hit song Fergalicious

By Yelena Liepelt

PUSSY RIOT is a FEMINIST PUNK-ROCK collective in Russia. Founded in August 2011, the group is a variable membership of approximately 11 women ranging in age from about 20 to 33 years of age. They wear colored balaclavas and use nicknames during interviews.

As the badass rebels that they are, they stage unauthorized provocative guerrilla performances in unusual public locations, which are later edited and uploaded onto the internet. They sing about feminism, LGBTQ rights, opposition to the polices and president Vladimir Putin, whom they view to be a dictator.

RIOT = NOT QUIET!



"the difference is that Bikini Kill performed at specific music venues, while we hold unsanctioned concerts. on the whole, Riot Grrrl was closely linked to western cultural institutions, whose equivalents don't exist in russia." -Pussy Riot

on Feb. 21, 2012 at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral several members performed "Virgin Mary, Redeem Us of Putin" criticizing the Russian Orthodox Church with Putin's dictatorship. they were sentenced to two years in a prison labor camp for this performance

By: Yelena Liepelt

COVER ART by Kelsey Hart

