

Women in Rock? It's almost an abstraction... Shall I ask, 'Men in Rock'? There is no difference. There is no delineation.

Women worked their collective tails off and it wasn't just their voices that the genre needed, it was their talent, it was their Yin to the Wang-Yang. It was and is, also, their sensibilities of style and (usually) calming grace that can be a necessary balance for a band.

If Rock was born and bred from Jazz and the Blues, could you imagine either genre without Billie Holiday or Ella Fitzgerald? Shame on you if you can.

And as Rock grew out of that Southern soulful petri-dish like mosquitoes on a mission, the ladies were there all the way. Though I've no doubt that at times, men with colossal egos built of sand shivered at the thought of a woman drummer, let alone a front 'man', they had but one little chance to step aside when the stark, ruling quality, or simply the music by Divine Right- demanded they shove stage-left.

If you consider the Civil Rights movements coinciding with Rock learnin' its' legs, I'm certain bras didn't need to be burned outside the studio, they weren't even bothered with in the first place.

Take a beat- and then there was Janice... Joplin if you're nasty. Arguably one of the most emotive and soul-eviscerating voices to ever ravage a microphone. Anything else I could say, in no way, would do her justice. *Can you imagine Janice and Grace Slick in an operatic cat-fight? Wow...

Time, as it does, moves on. Styles change, morph and develop. Is it Art that moves society, or is it the other way around? In some cases, technology certainly plays its own role- moving us past Disco and right into Debbie Harry, or Annie Lennox, or Exene Cervenka.

However, I would not be doing my own musical tastes justice without mentioning Yazoo, or Yaz. And who was it? What woman gave us such a warm, but simultaneously chilling voice? Alison Moyet. And I have no shame in telling you, my dear reader, to this day, I could play Upstairs at Eric's on repeat until I remember there's a world outside that needs my attention.

So there's a future we can all hope for. Who's going to come forth and give us what? What bars could still be raised? What new facets, or spectrum of styles and high-art could we be offered by these femme fatales? (...a stupid question if I've ever posed one...)

Meanwhile, as time figures that out for us- whatever you do my dear reader, don't write off those that might have been around and rocking long before you were born. Recently, in Austin, I saw Fleetwood Mac live- and though I'm not a fan of the Erwin Center, Stevie Nicks, and Christine McVie in no way failed to deliver a solid show and I'm certain everyone left satisfied. And that goes for the little ones, brought in tow by parents without a sitter for the evening.

The Women of Rock- it's a smooth, tattered, textured, torn, and stitched together tapestry of talent. What are men without women? And the other way 'round... We all need each other- we all influence and drive each other- seeking new heights and pushing the quality and the tonal depth of our lives- without limits, needed, suggested nor imposed.

Once again, the old becomes new... *A.