

The Girl Singer

Female singers in Popular Music
since the 1950s

1950s Female singers of Jazz and R&B

1. Heritage of great Jazz singers -
Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday
2. 50s saw solo performers
(e.g. Peggy Lee) give way to girl-
singer groups both black and
white. E.g. Bobbets, Chantelles

1960s and the formula

- Once a winning formula had been identified it was repeated in subsequent singles until the hits ended (Shirelles)
- Shangri Las and Crystals - White teenage angst
- Manufactured bands with no control (Ronettes)
- Svengali producers (Phil Spector)
- Recording label held all the cards.

Back to solo singers

- Case of Supremes and the promotion of Diana Ross
- Brassy soulful white singers using black singing styles - Petula Clark, Dusty Springfield, Sandie Shaw, Lulu, Cilla Black

Talkin ` Bout a Revolution

- Female singers become empowered
- Arethera Franklin - Respect (1967)
- The Case of Tina Turner
- Joan Baez
- Mama Cass
- Janis Joplin
- Carole King

Womens Liberation

- Helen Reddy - Hear my Prayer. The impact of feminism.
- Olivia Records - female owned recording company
- Girl groups begin to come back - The Deadly Nightshades, Svelts
- Gay Beginnings - Redwood Records
- Case of Karen Carpenter

Diverse Directions

- Female Singer Songwriters - Carole King, Joni Mitchell, Judy Collins, Carly Simon
- British female Singer Songwriters and the folk connection
- Black singer songwriters - Joan Armatrading, Tracy Chapman

Pre-Punk

- Suzi Quattro and the breakthrough into metal
- Experimentalism and Yoko Ono - underground art scene
- Patti Smith and US scene

Punk Liberation

- All girl groups - Slits, Penetration, Delta 5, B-52s
- Performers - X-Ray Specs, Siouxsie, Toyah Wilcox, Hazel O'Connor
- Punk influenced rock/pop lead fronted by a distinctive female singer - Pretenders, Blondie

Post Punk - Girls in Control

- Go gos - all girl band
- Laurie Anderson - mixing pop with art music
- Individualist female singers - Kate Bush, Annie Lennox,
- Girls in rock - Pat Benata,

The 70s and dance

- US all girl disco groups - e.g. Sister Sledge,
- Donna Summer
- European disco and ABBA

The 80s and the girls on top

- The Madonna phenomena - dance based singers with huge video potential
- The influence of MTV
- Eurythmics and gender play
- KD Lang and the gay angle

90s phenomenas

- Bjork
- The all girl 'manufactured' band with attitude - Spice Girls, All Saints, Destiny's Child
- Multi Media personalities and 'R&B'