



Rock On: Women, Ageing and Popular Music (Ashgate Popular and Folk Music)

Abigail Gardner

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For female pop stars, whose star bodies and star performances are undisputedly the objects of a sexualized external gaze, the process of ageing in public poses particular challenges. Taking a broadly feminist perspective, 'Rock On': women, ageing and popular music shifts popular music studies in a new direction. Focussing on British, American and Latina women performers and ageing, the collection investigates the cultural work performed by artists such as Shirley Bassey, Petula Clark, Madonna, Celia Cruz, Grace Jones and Courtney Love. The study crosses generations of performers and audiences enabling an examination of changing socio-historical contexts and an exploration of the relationships at play between performance strategies, star persona and the popular music press. For instance, the strategies employed by Madonna and Grace Jones to engage with the processes and issues related to public ageing are not the same as those employed by Courtney Love or Celia Cruz. The essays in this insightful collection reflect on the ways that artists and fans destabilise both the linear trajectories and the compelling weight of expectations regarding ageing by employing different modalities of resistance through persona re-invention, nostalgia, postmodern intertextuality and even early death as the ultimate denial of age.

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