

Play Like a Man: My Life in Poster Children

Rose Marshack

University of Illinois Press (Feb 28, 2023)

Softcover \$19.95 (254pp)

978-0-252-08696-0

Bass guitarist Rose Marshack's memoir *Play Like a Man* chronicles her experiences with the indie rock band Poster Children and with Salaryman, Poster Children's "electronic alter-ego."

Raised in the Chicago suburbs, Marshack was a self-described geek who knitted colorful Dr. Who-style scarves. Her father was a dentist who also played jazz trumpet and piano, while her mother opted for the violin. Since music lessons were mandatory in her family, Marshack studied both piano and violin.

By the mid-1980s, Marshack was attending the University of Illinois. She majored in computer science—like punk rock and martial arts, a "mostly male space." Between classes, she perused local record shops for dark and driving punk and alternative albums. After meeting her future husband, guitarist and lyricist Rick Valentin, she learned how to play bass and became part of Poster Children. From the band's earliest days to their later American and international tours, its "midwestern humility and practical choices" kept expenses and drama to a minimum.

As Poster Children traveled cross-country in the 1990s, Marshack used her tech prowess to send dial-up listserv dispatches to fans, years before blogging and a decade before Twitter and Instagram. And her martial arts training also helped her with focus and endurance while performing.

Play Like a Man is filled with unique indie music remembrances from a time before and during "alternative" music's shift to mainstream commercialism. Other bands of the era, including Nirvana and the Smashing Pumpkins, are recalled alongside seminal groups like Hüsker Du and Naked Raygun. And there are insights into the fashion statements of the genre's women musicians, from Courtney Love's ravaged yet empowered sexuality to Kim Deal's more androgynous "loose dark clothing."

Reflective, humorous, and rousing, *Play Like a Man* is an exuberant memoir—a musical and feminist testament.

MEG NOLA (March / April 2023)

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