



GO-GO'S

When Charlotte Caffey, Belinda Carlisle, and Jane Wiedlin formed the Go-Go's in 1978, few people, themselves included, would have ever predicted that they would become one of the top pop phenomena of the Eighties. The Go-Go's are the first all-female band who write and play their own material to hit #1 on the Billboard Album Charts. Their debut I.R.S. album, Beauty And The Beat, sold over two million copies; their single "Our Lips Are Sealed" went Top 10, and their follow-up single "We Got The Beat" went gold. But the Go-Go's have become far more than just a multi-million selling band with two Top 10 singles to their credit.

As Newsweek's Jim Miller observes,..."There's never been a rock group quite like them....They refuse to play the victim." The Go-Go's have redefined the role of women in rock, proving that they can be masters of their own destiny.

Yet the Go-Go's' struggle to establish themselves would have broken the spirit of lesser women. The Go-Go's honed their instrumental talents on the L.A. club scene, but for three years were virtually ignored by major record labels, who felt that an all-female line-up would not sell records.

In April 1980, the band quit their day jobs to commit themselves totally to the group they'd been playing with during evenings and weekends for nearly two years. Foregoing a regular paycheck was a risky step - the group's manager, Ginger Canzoneri, even took out a loan on her car and pawned her jewelry to keep the band going. The risk was justified. Shortly afterwards, the band was invited to tour the U.K. with the popular English group The Specials. Recalls Charlotte, "We were living on two pounds a day, eating Cadbury chocolate and bread, and sleeping five to a hotel room."

A single for Stiff Records, "We Got The Beat," started a buzz in L.A. on the band, and they were welcomed home as conquering heroines. Assured they would now get a new record deal, the band played a showcase at the Starwood in L.A. for record execs, but still encountered corporate resistance.

Undaunted, they recruited Kathy Valentine on bass, and even without a record label they now had thousands of fans with whom they could sell out any club in L.A. Attracting the interest of I.R.S. Records, the band signed with the label and recorded Beauty And The Beat, but still their fight was far from over.

On the album's release, radio programmers were resistant to the idea of an all-female band; so the Go-Go's set out across America on a lengthy tour. "We didn't have any airplay at the time," says Charlotte, "But the shows were all packed. We'd leave town, and the sales of the album would go up, and we'd start getting some airplay."

By the end of 1981, Beauty And The Beat was climbing the charts, and was being included in just about every critic's Top 10 for the year, including hitting the Top 10 of the Village Voice's annual critics poll. The band landed the opening slot on the Police tour, and suddenly playing before 20,000 people a night, the Go-Go's made a lot of new fans. "Our Lips Are Sealed" took off on the singles charts, followed by "We Got The Beat." The airplay boosted Beauty And The Beat to the #1 spot on the Billboard charts after an arduous seven month climb.

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