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## Glam “Heroines”. Gaps in Glam Historicisation from Black Self-Feminised Musicians to the Herstory of Glam Rock

### Introduction

As few other musical genres, glam rock is attributed to be revolutionary when it comes to gender aesthetics and identities, which recently even led to a common interpretation of the whole genre as queer. This assumption remains valid even when the usual canon of male white icons known from other genres is retained. Yet, several scholars such as Caroline Schubarth, Kristen Sollee and Maiken A. Kores have stated their doubts about the certainty of the effects of gender experimentation in male glam rock (see Schubarth 2009, Sollee 2011, Kores 2020). For example, Kores argues with Sollee:

When these male musicians wore makeup, was this a form of liberation that opened a space for women to experiment with sexual expression? Was their seemingly more relaxed view of permissible appearance for men and women reflected in their lyrics? Or, was the feminine aesthetics adopted simply because it ‘got them laid’? (Kores 2020: 93)

In a similar manner, Schubarth reflects on male glam aesthetics as a specific type that makes the actual presence of women performers “obsolete” (see Schubarth 2009: 208). In connection with these considerations, my contribution focusses on the fade-out of female agents in glam historicisation as well as it advocates to reconsider feminised stage performances by black musicians as hitherto little-noticed precursors of glam rock. Their feminisation manifested in the usage of voice, makeup, clothing and performance elements. First, I shall clarify how glam or glitter rock is negotiated in popular music studies by exploring which artists recently have represented glam in research and journalistic publications.<sup>1</sup> The limited canon can mainly be illustrated by the example of the «Bowiefication» of glam, which

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<sup>1</sup> I shall focus on the very specific discourse on glam as queer music here as a recent phenomenon. For reflections on the broader discussion of gender at the break of the 1970s, e.g. cultural studies provide a vast number of both theoretical concepts and empirical analyses of hegemony, power, *race*, gender/sex and women’s rights as a context for glam women and glam feminisation. Exemplarily, Ward 1998 reflects upon *race* for the context of the American

is problematized from deliberations on gender and *race* diversity. Secondly, I shall highlight findings on popular music performances and racism by Brian Ward that so far have barely been included in the musicological analysis of glam in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thirdly, two recent isolated and sexualized female tropes attached to one certain singer in recent academic glam memory are discussed. In concrete terms, the narration of the supposedly «only significant»<sup>2</sup> female glam rock star, Suzi Quatro, is called into question, as well as the circumstance that Quatro is even introduced as a «feral cat» (Reynolds 2017)<sup>3</sup> in a current text that is close to academic discourse. Such a *male gaze* (Mulvey 1985) is marked by over-focussing the appearance instead of the repertoire, success, tour life or music technical particularities of female music makers, and it goes hand in hand with overlooking whole careers on the other side. Thus, I add portraits of the work of two non-canonised female artists of the 1970's, namely Bobbie McGee and Cherrie Vangelder-Smith. This addition could not have been done without what Sarah Baker refers to as «affective archiving» (Baker 2015). While Baker locates this term in practices in «DIY archives, museums and halls of fame» (ibidem: 47), I transfer it to digital archivists (paid and unpaid), e.g. lyric transcribers and journalist authors who digitalize music material and its discourse so that academic analyses can draw onto them. Their biographic and text related practices lead to digital archives that enable lyrics interpretation of the two songs, *Goodbye Guitarman* and *Silverboy*, by glam heroine Cherrie Vangelder-Smith in this paper. Consequently, the combination of the music biographic approach as well as the interpretative text analysis can be understood as a methodology of «counter-memories» (Reitsamer 2015).

The equation of queer, authentic and masculine is problematized in this analysis, too. With regard to Jack Halberstam's concept of «female masculinity» and Carrie Paechter's response in 2006, I exemplarily focus on the ambivalent adaptation of the concept of «female masculinity» in the ways Philip Auslander refers it to Suzi Quatro. At that, it is asked which concepts and theorems of queer theory might question stereotypical gender constructions without positioning masculinity in a hegemonic position again. Finally, recent further intersectional analyses of glam are introduced that consider class backgrounds and provide postcolonial perspectives. I aim to motivate further analyses of the «lost women» of rock music (Reddington 2012), specifically for the scene and styles of glam rock, as well as research on the Black history of glam music in order to expand the limited musical canon (Citron 1993) – and to intensify the notion on power relations in some of its origins. Overcoming (more) gaps and gazes in music discourse is not a «completion»

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music industry, while Reddington 2012 explores the practice of gatekeeping in music media that lead to the invisibilisation of female punk musicians since the 1970s.

<sup>2</sup> While the privileged access to power resources within music contexts and beyond based on gender bias is not denied, the narration of an almost absolute absence of any female artists in rock music is clearly questioned.

<sup>3</sup> All remarks on Reynolds that include year 2017 refer to the German translation of his book as “Glam. Glitter Rock und Art Pop von den Siebzigern bis ins 21. Jahrhundert” (publishing house: Ventil Verlag).

approach but rather an interdisciplinary strategy that combines the findings of popular music studies, cultural studies and intersectional feminist musicology.

### **David Bowie as a Monument for Billie Holiday & Queercore? Reflections on the Limitations in Journalist and Academic Glam Historicisation**

In 2017, Darryl W. Bullock published the monograph *David Bowie Made Me Gay. 100 Years of LGBT Music*. He spans an arc from Billie Holiday’s *Strange Fruit* to queercore, deals with Ma Rainey’s *Bull Dyker’s Blues* and pays tribute to lesbian artists, including Cris Williamson. However, these diverse agents are all subsumed under the figurehead of David Bowie, who died in 2016. Bowie’s status as the recent personified glam memorial has not only been applied to him since his death, yet it has shaped the common practice of glam rock historiography before. In general, male glam is considered to be subversive and has rarely been questioned. One of the few exceptions is Caroline Schubarth’s essay «I’ll Be a Rock’n’Roll Bitch for You (Pictures of Masculinity in Glamour Rock of the Seventies)» (Schubarth 2009, title translated by the author) Schubarth criticizes the specific containment of femininity in male glam performance as something that makes female presence and its recognition superfluous. This finding can be applied to the academic discourse on glam, as it will be shown below.

Despite this critique, the listing of the usual male glam icons has been continued in the last ten years in studies of queer music. In *Queer Tracks* (first released in German 2010, translated into English 2012), Doris Leibetseder identifies an early evidence of glam in Elvis Presley’s performance (cf. Leibetseder 2012: 6) with reference to Todd Haynes: «For a brief time pop culture would proclaim that identities and sexualities were not stable things, but quivey and costumed» (Haynes quoted *ibidem*: 6).<sup>4</sup> After listing some of the most prominent glam men – Marc Bolan, David Bowie, Andy Warhol, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop – the author emphasises the subversive expressional character of glam/glitter, being close to drag and homosexuality (*ibidem*).<sup>5</sup> The canon of mentioned male artists appears almost identical in other works. In *Playing It Queer* (2012), Jodie Taylor impersonates glam with David Bowie, Lou Reed and Iggy Pop, adds a few more male (US) glam punk icons such as the New York Dolls or Alice Cooper, and maintains that Bowie and Alice Cooper have challenged the dominant cultural standards (cf. Taylor 2012, 122). A third example of the identification of queerness in glam is the *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Queer Culture* (Cleto 2006). Here, some particularly elementary names are printed in bold, while the selection of musicians largely corresponds to the two studies above.

These volumes only dedicate a few pages towards glam rock, if at all. Yet, it is predominantly white male glam that appears again and again as a kind of progres-

<sup>4</sup> Secondly, she mentions Little Richard as a «glittering representative of rock music» (*ibidem*).

<sup>5</sup> Leibetseder also traces the «offshoots» of glam rock up to films such as *Velvet Goldmine* (1998), which promoted a glam revival in parts of the queer community. In a separate chapter, she turns to camp instead of glam.

sive side note, whereas the intersectional claim of many queer and queer feminist analyses to include racism, for example, has so far remained unfulfilled. While Leibetseder at least argues that in the context of glam, «[g]enderbending was initially a masculine privilege, just as the glam rock of the New York Dolls, of Lou Reed and Iggy Pop, etc.», (Leibetseder 2010: 116, translated by the author), it has to be added that the practice of genderbending also has not been a privilege for every man in the context of glam. In particular male black musicians applied it as a strategy to secure themselves from attacks by a hostile white audience in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, first of all other men. This origin of glam elements in music performances deserves a deeper analysis.

### **Glamorous Origins? Racism and Feminisation in the 1950s as Gaps in Glam Historicisation**

In a desk book on pop culture, Elena Beregow emphasizes the «queer hippie appeal» (Beregow 2017: 63) of glam. Here, she refers to the New York based performance collective The Cockettes, which was active from the late 1960s. She also mentions Amanda Lear – though not as a glam singer, but only as the cover girl of a Roxy Music record (cf. ibidem: 65). About the influences of David Bowie and Marc Bolan, Beregow writes: «Instead of being satisfied with a modest scene celebrity, they picked up stylistic elements of makeup and drag *in queer, avant-garde scenes* and made them popular with a larger audience of teenagers and twens» (ibidem: 64, highlighted by the author). While I agree with the understanding of glam as a music scene inspired by several avantgardes and developed also in subcultures, earlier strategies in music performances by Black musicians have to be included in this understanding of how, by whom and in which sociocultural contexts glam elements were included in music performances even since the 1950s.

Leibetseder understands glamour to have always been an important part of rock and show business (Leibetseder 2010: 16). American (cultural) studies scholar, Brian Ward, specifically refers to the appearance of glamorous elements in the 1950s in the course of upheavals on stage as well as in society. He illuminates the beginnings of glam presentations among musicians and singers who were confronted with racism. In *Just My Soul Responding. Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness and Race Relations*, Ward deconstructs the «pattern of white preferences» (Ward 1998: 53) within the entertainment industry, that continues to have effects today. As pioneers of an androgynous or ambiguous style, he introduces musicians such as Little Richard and Antoine «Fats» Domino, who feminized themselves with colorful clothing and makeup. Using these dressings and coverings, the artists were less in danger in the presence of new listeners and were less perceived as sexual competitors by heterosexual white men in their audience.

Ward understands this feminization as a strategy to remain physically intact and as a necessary visual and also auditory adaptation to a new white audience. Quoted in his study, several contemporary witnesses and artists describe the atmosphere of that time as threatening. Speaking of Fats Domino, for example, music producer and entrepreneur Harold Battiste is quoted in Wards study, saying: «He was

just a happy jolly guy. He wasn't a sexual *threat*. He might have been, but he didn't appear to be. He was more like Santa Claus». Little Richard himself explains that he used «eyelashes longer than Josephine Baker's» (Little Richard in *ibidem*), since «[b]y wearing this makeup I could work and play white clubs [...] I wasn't a *threat* [...] They was willing to accept me too, cause they figured I wouldn't be no harm» (*ibidem*, highlighted by the author).

The aesthetic strategies of heterogenous black artists within the «racial and economic configuration of power in the broadcasting industry» (*ibidem*: 36) deviated from each other. While Fats Domino represented a gentle, friend type, Little Richard rather feminized his performance with (entertaining) glitter outfits. At that, male R'n'B groups such as The Platters or The Clovers were famous for their high, tender voices, an auditive aesthetics which Ward characterizes as «sweetening the sound» (*ibidem*: 54). Other groups such as The Coasters or Huey Smith and the Clowns performed in a humorous and cheerful way (cf. *ibidem*: 50–55). The strategies of these musicians have been left out as origins of glam music such as glam rock in historicisation, but they were not the only ones. While selected female glam rockers are actually mentioned in discourse, they are included in a very specific way.

### **A “feral cat” and the “only significant female star”.** **Tropes of Glam Memory and Male Gaze**

Makeup due to fear is not the only blank space in current (queer) music studies, when it comes to glam rock. Studies that read glam as queer also do not include female artists such as The Runaways, Suzi Quatro's previous garage glam band The Pleasure Seekers (and later Cradle, with whom she was active until 1973), the band Heart with two frontwomen Nancy and Ann Wilson, or less popular artists such as Bobbie McGee or Cherrie Vangelder-Smith. Leibetseder mentions Annie Lennox and Grace Jones as «offshoots» of Glam Rock (Leibetseder 2012: 17). The trend to historicise female music makers as late bloomers or heiresses of glam can also be found in Simon Reynolds's recent glam memories.

In pop musicologist contributions, Suzi Quatro and The Runaways as two more prominent examples of artists have appeared rarely as glam musicians for a long time. Up to now, still very few female artists in general are included. If female musicians are included in glam canon, mostly they are narrated as the rare specimens, exotics, «excavations» – as if The Runaways had not toured the world successfully for years, especially in Japan, and as if Suzi Quatro had not conquered the charts almost simultaneously with Alice Cooper. According to Reynolds, Suzi Quatro is still the «[o]nly only significant female star» of glam rock (Reynolds 2017: 201), whereas Auslander at least defines more precisely: «Quatro is the only female musician to be included in the glam canon» (Auslander 2006: 195). The respective kind of singularisation narrative is also described in studies on music and gender beyond glam (e.g. Hachmeister 2019).

Marcia Citron has emphasized reception as an essential component of the musical canon; reception and historicisation are closely interwoven (Citron 1993). Such

a canon of glam is still limited by an unpleasant male gaze, to refer to a term by feminist film scholar Laura Mulvey. To give a specific example of this ongoing gender specific gaze, Reynolds compares Quatro's sound to that of a feral cat (see Reynolds 2017: 198). While aware of her critical remark that «you're supposed to be soft, you're supposed to be cute» (Quatro, quoted *ibidem*: 200), he describes her performance in gender stereotypical terms: «Onstage and in TV appearances, Quatro screwed up her eyes when she screamed the chorus, looking mean but cute» (*ibidem*). The appearance of female musicians as the central object of writing about music instead of their actual *music* grounds in a long tradition of misogynist over-focusing how female musicians look instead of how they sound. It is surprising that these ascriptions were not noticed at all in reviews of one of the most extensive glam books. For example, German queer feminist *Missy Magazine*, among others, rather dedicated a laudatory interview to promote Reynold's Glam narration. In the interview, less pejorative and more reflective statements by the author were quoted such as «When a man adorns himself with makeup and costumes, it is seen as transgression of social norms». (Mohr 2017: 60, translated from German by the author).

Besides singularisation and objectification, a third and rather implicit devaluation is remarkable in the journalist and academic discourse on female glam rockers: sometimes, they are even described as “not queer enough” to be included as adequate representatives in the current glam canonisation.

### **Suzi Quatro and the Measurement of Queerness (or Rather: Authentic Menace)**

It is astonishing what references to queer theory have been made recently in popular music studies with regard to glam rock. For example, Jack Halberstam's concept of «female masculinity» has been applied to Suzi Quatro by Philip Auslander in 2006. The chapter «Suzi Quatro Wants to be Your Man» in his monograph on gender and theatricality in glam rock refers back to a cover song of Quatro, the Rolling Stones' song «I Wanna Be Your Man».<sup>6</sup> Auslanders regards Quatro with Jack Halberstam basically as an artist who does not only imitate male performance (cf. Auslander 2006: 212), yet who has opposed the masquerade of normative femininity. He refers the term *butch* to Quatro and quotes an interview in which she has used the term herself. Finally, the following passage on Halberstam's theory can be found in his analysis:

Although Quatro (...) creates gender trouble for a rock-and-roll classic, it does not *disturb* [highlighted by the author] the overwhelmingly heterosexual frame of reference from which the meanings of rock music normally derive. As Halberstam indicates, female masculinity always 'menaces gender conformity' but is relatively *nonthreatening* when presented in a heterosexual context. But, when and where female masculinity conjoins with possible queer identities, it is far less likely to meet with approval' (*Female Masculinity* 28) (*ibidem*: 215).

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<sup>6</sup> Principally, it could be asked whether such a fixation on a cover song could be considered to be representative of the musical work of male musicians.



The concept of threat, which became evident in a very different way in the analysis of black glam performers reappears here. However, Quatro is analysed as not being capable of a threat to heterosexism. Her music in the «heterosexual context» is considered to be relatively harmless, or in Auslander's borrowed terms, «non-threatening». Consequently, Quatro cannot menace or endanger gender conformity. Following this assumption, Quatro has no queer aesthetics and identity, even though being butch, and queer theory suddenly functions as a gatekeeper. According to the author, Quatro does not represent a (here somewhat hierarchized) queer identity, which is defined and argued by male reception again, yet arguing with queer studies now. Indeed, numerous devaluations in music journalism express how Quatro's success was accompanied by an irritation and consequent disturbance of rigid gender norms. A rhetoric of sexism, social sanctions and attempts of marginalization accompanied not only her early music career, e.g., authors of established music media such as the *New Music Express* called Quatro «Penthouse-fodder»; or in the *Rolling Stone* magazine she was labelled a «pop tart» (Gaar 1993: 218).

The lock-out potential of queer as a label is just as problematic as a concept of queer authenticity that can only be established by disturbing and endangering. To illustrate the first consideration, Teresa de Lauretis has turned away from the term queer again early on, in 1994, in order to return to the term «lesbian» (cf. Rauchut 2008) and to maintain the visibility of this term and its subjects. In the essay «Habit Changes», de Lauretis has justified her decision by the desire to distance herself from a hypothesis that had turned out to be a «conceptually vacuous creature of the publishing industry» (De Lauretis 1994: 297). After de Lauretis' early objection to no longer use the term *queer* arbitrarily, Carrie Paechter formulated a replica of Halberstam's theorem of female masculinity in 2006. Paechter notes that the dependence on the term masculinity as an unclearly defined term might be problematic (Paechter 2006: 2). She criticizes Halberstam's emphasis on physical appearance<sup>7</sup> and the implicated neglect of the self-perception of gender (cf. *ibidem*: 12). Also, Paechter argues that Halberstam might not be not aware enough of the grammatical and sociological implications of the terminological order in the phrase «female masculinity». «Female» remains secondary as an adjective and only defines the fixed noun masculinity closer. The singular form at that might suggest that there is a predominant form of «feminine masculinity», namely the kind of it that is oriented towards dominant masculinity (cf. *ibidem*: 16–19).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The question of an unambiguous, clearly identifiable queer style probably leads itself ad absurdum. Trans female rapper FaulenzA already noted that the (stereo)typical style is usually oriented towards male dress and appearance codes (FaulenzA/Schipkowski 2018). Lloyd Whitesell also questions the «queer eye» in the context of film analysis: «What meaning does it hold for queers with lesser talents in the visual department» (Whitesell 2006: 263) – whereby «talent» could possibly be replaced more generally by «(preference of) expression».

<sup>8</sup> Halberstam hints that there was something «all too obvious» (cf. *ibidem*: 16) adhering to the term. However, this evidence did not inspire (self-)reconsiderations of the concept – until eight years after the publication of *Female Masculinity*, Paechter expressed unease about the term and its implications.

Mostly, queer studies understand language as speech acts and thus certain ascriptions and descriptions as actions themselves. Queer studies' high potential is to continuously point to politics of visibility, hegemony and marginalization, as hardly any other academic discipline and approach does similarly. Yet, it could be concluded that Halberstam's queer theory in the way that Auslander applies it rather preserves certain gaps in glam historicisation than overcomes them. Also, queer theoretical analyses based on a terminology that leaves masculinity at the center might be reflected closer in general. Overall, the transfer of queer theory into specific contexts and onto specific agents, as shown above, requires (more) carefulness and power consciousness.

Outside academic discourse, current contributions in digital media seem to expand the memory of glam. They can be understood as products of «affective archiving» and broaden the canon of glam. To give two examples, the music work of female glam rockers Bobbie McGee and Cherrie Vangelder-Smith are recently collected and reconstructed online, in formats such as blogs, lyrics pages, and compendia, which are explored below.

### **“Goodbye, Guitarman”. Bobbie McGee and Cherrie Vangelder-Smith as Two Previously Non-Canonised Glam Rock Heroines**

In the online rubric «A girl's best friend is her guitar», music journalist Christopher Bickel has portrayed female glam rocker Bobbie McGee in 2015. Documenting her presence on a Swedish trading card, in magazines and her cover of *Rock n Roll People*, he summarizes McGee's well documented career of several years as follows: «Her 1973 UK glam rock single, *Rock and Roll People*, brought her some degree of cult status which resulted in a few TV appearances, music press articles, and at least one vintage Swedish rock and roll trading card—but not much else» (Bickel 2015). His biographic article documents the singer's birth in London and the beginning of her musical career in Zanzibar<sup>9</sup>. In the headline, is also noticeable that the author uses quotation marks for the term «lost», thus suggesting that McGee's non-historicisation has not happened accidentally.

According to an article shortly published after her debut single release and included in Bickel's portrait, the music press had nicknamed McGee *Gladys Glitter* after a very short time. That text highlights the singer's Polish ancestry and presents McGee's civil name Teresa Anna von Arletowicz, stressing that she also has a South African accent. McGee herself is quoted saying that she sold 100,000 copies of her single *Zanzibar*. The author of the republished earlier text describes her single *Rock n Roll People* as a «female Gary Glitter»<sup>10</sup> sound and even documents a dialogue with the singer on «how about being labelled as the female Gary Glitter» (Ray Fox-Cumming, *ibidem*). Furthermore, this text suggests a competition with Suzi Quatro,

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<sup>9</sup> On Zanzibar as Freddy Mercury's childhood place see Stockdale 2016.

<sup>10</sup> For a critical analysis of *Glitter*, see e.g. Wykes/Welsh 2009: «Glitter was cleared of under-age sex charges but convicted of downloading child pornography from the Internet» (*ibidem*: 17).



which McGee avoids. The journalist's article concludes with the assumption that McGee could soon challenge Quatro regarding pop charts success.

It remains unanswered what has happened after articles like this, somewhat spiked with stereotypical gender statements (such as attributing the singer to a male reference or suggesting disharmony among female artists), yet cheering. How did McGee's musical and reception develop?

A blog website named *Iamintheband* reveals closer information, dating her «Zanzibar» single to 1972<sup>11</sup> (A.u. 2019) and mentions five further singles on EMI, three in 1974 – *Nickles and Dimes*, *Johnny Come Quickly* and *It's Christmas – I Forgot to Sing* in 1975 and *When You Walk In The Room* in 1976. Also, Bobbie McGee's appearance on compilations such as *Glamstains Across Europe* and *Glitter Girlz* is remembered. Furthermore, McGee appeared in the German TV show *disco*. On October 27 in 1973, she shared the stage with glam rock band The Sweet and Netherlandic solo glam rocker Cherrie Vangelder Smith.

Vangelder-Smith is a second artist that seems to not have been portrayed in any of the academic glam analyses of the last decades. Obviously from her TV appearance, she was also musically active in 1973. In her music work, several ironic treatments of gender identity stand out. As an example, the songs *Goodbye Guitarman* and *Silverboy* are briefly examined here.<sup>12</sup>

The first song describes the farewell of a guitarist from a «big smoke city» who has become a rock star and whose partner is not satisfied with the (new) position of adoration. Therefore, the main character of the song leaves him with the words: «So goodbye, Guitar Man. Do you think that I'm your private fan?». This line forms the beginning of the chorus, presented by the singer. While singer and the lyrical character of course are not to be equalized, Vangelder-Smith's performance, especially her striking high voice (an element that is very typical of glam rock) allows an interpretation of a critical female standpoint (among further ones).

The protagonist of *Silverboy* takes a more ambivalent attitude. The person is also implicitly distanced from a fan identity, yet seeks contact with a male stage performer in a different way: «I try to write and tell you / there are some things I want you to know». The addressed singer wears shiny clothes, but is an «image of a dreadful world» at the same time. What the main character of the song also conveys is anything but a gesture of veneration for the music of the male performer: «Silverboy, silverboy / up on stage you're like a little boy / shinin' toy, silverboy / please come back again and bring me joy». The narrator simply reframes the popular to be the tool of her desires, the person infantilizes him and reinterprets his "purpose" and success.

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<sup>11</sup> It appears as if one sentence of Bickel's article has been used here, too («Her 1973 UK glam rock single, «Rock and Roll People, » brought her some degree of cult status which resulted in a few TV appearances, music press articles, and at least one vintage Swedish rock and roll trading card»).

<sup>12</sup> Both lyrics are documented at [https://lyrics.fandom.com/wiki/Cherrie\\_Van\\_Gelder\\_Smith:Goodbye\\_\(Guitar\\_Man\)](https://lyrics.fandom.com/wiki/Cherrie_Van_Gelder_Smith:Goodbye_(Guitar_Man)) and <https://muzikum.eu/en/123-1171-17059/cherry-vangelder-smith/silverboy-lyrics.html#ixzz6UzKlhpOo>.

Vangelder-Smith's performance at *disco* is documented via YouTube, where an enthusiastic fan named Volker Bauer has replied: «For years I thought that this song was lost. But since I knew the name of the singer as well as the name of the song, I finally found it with you. Thank you very much for putting it in»<sup>13</sup>. From the account *Raised on Beers* who has re-published the performance, it can additionally be learned that Vangelder-Smith was supposed to be backed by several bands from the early 1970s to 1980s, such as Cardinal Point (1972), Album (1973), Mailbag (1974), Cherie (1975), and the Heavy Smith Band (1981). Moreover, *Goodbye Guitarman* seems to have been covered by male British rock band Rosetta Stone.<sup>14</sup> Not least, Vangelder-Smith was featured on several music compilations such as *Clap Your Hands and Stamp Your Feet*.

These two glam vocalists and «lost» heroines just performed their music when other bands such as April Wine still sang «You Could have been a Lady» (1973). While female glam rockers did not have an easy time breaking with gender norms, they were definitely part of the music scene and business. Thus, of the tasks of pop musicology is to provide further information on the work of glam rock heroines, which up to now has received so little or limited attention compared to other female agents, in particular to genres such as punk rock, under the pretence that there have been no further popular female artists than Suzi Quatro. Especially female band formations such as the *Runaways* – who have been portrayed in a major movie starring Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning in 2010 as well as two biographies in 2010 and 2013, written by former band member Cherie Currie and Evelyn McDonnell – or *Heart* singers and guitarists Ann Wilson and Nancy Wilson deserve more academic attention in the current glam canonisation.

### **Conclusion: Towards a Diverse Glam Historicisation, away from the Usage of *queer* as a New (Normative) Placeholder for Authenticity**

Lately, a change in the interpretation of glam rock can be observed. While the genre was once spurned by subcultural research to be an apolitical, post-war consumerist culture (cf. Beregow 2017: 64), it advances to become a queer «statement music». Glam repeatedly serves as a progressive reference, and the Queer Sixties, Seventies or even earlier decades are identified as the initial periods of today's queer cultural practices. In fact, the backdating of queer pop culture booms. In 2008, Dietrich Diederichsen arrived at the 1950s, editing the volume *Golden Years*, a study on queer subculture and avantgarde between 1959 und 1964. With Bullock's *100 Years of LGBT Music*, the time after the “queer First Word War” might be reached by now. Certainly, these chronicles have their justification, and it should actually be clear that, for example, lesbian musicians made music even earlier before

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<sup>13</sup> The original comment was made in German in 2012: «Das gibt es doch gar nicht. Ich habe jahrelang gedacht, daß dieses Lied verschollen ist. Da ich aber den Namen der Sängerin sowohl als auch den Namen des Liedes kannte, habe ich ihn endlich bei euch gefunden. Vielen Dank fürs Reinstellen», <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7v2uuJy5C0>.

<sup>14</sup> Their first self-titled album was released in the United States in May 1978. *Rock Pictures*, the Japanese and UK release of that same album, was also released in 1978.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, the search for the earliest and queerest cultures may drift away to mere date hunting and pure celebrations, instead of keeping the heterogenous glam scene and also their contradictions in mind that extend in academic and journalist discourse. One of these contradictions is that the term *queer* has recently rather been used as a synonym for «authentic», which seems to coincide with «male», at least in the current canon of glam memory. As shown above, several contributions to pop musicology still contain a «mono-gendered» (Plesch 2013: 46) representation of the history of glam rock and its protagonists.

Though at the same time, glam rock is not the only genre anymore that represents glam music: the word «rock» has been occasionally left out and the queer potential was also attributed to other genres such as pop and R’n’B.<sup>15</sup> Also, K-Pop and Brazil’s «tropical glam» are finally contextualized in reflections of «global glam» (see Laurie 2016, Caso/Ribeiro 2016). Current glam analyses also include postcolonial theory to understand the aesthetics and biography of Freddie Mercury/Farrokh Bulsara (cf. Stockdale 2016), or the class origins of the band Slade (cf. Gildart 2013).

After aspects of theatricality or staging have so far been examined in detail in glam analyses (e.g. Jooß-Bernau 2010) – and half essays have been spent on of David Bowie’s costume changes at the farewell concert of his stage character, Ziggy Stardust – a tendency of combining glam (rock) studies with intersectional theory becomes evident in recent research. This tendency of a diverse glam historicisation might still be broadened by including the categories of gender and *race* from further perspectives, such as the ones exposed above.

The gender specific usage of *queer* as a quality label or placeholder for authenticity is indeed to reconsider.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to black musicians, more detailed analyses of the extent of threats (from their own audience) would be insightful. Concerning female glam rockers, their performances respective audiovisual material, media and texts can be analysed further, as well as further musicians need to be portrayed. Thanks to affective archivists and their music related practices online, the missing knowledge of these non-canonised musicians decreases further.

Probably, more female glam rockers might be identified by carefully evaluating music compilations, videos and articles provided by affirmative archivists, often

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<sup>15</sup> In Reynolds’ book however, this extension is based on the implicit dichotomy that at least early glam rock belonged to men, while punk and pop “heiresses” such as Poly Styrene, Siouxsie Sioux, Beyoncé, Kesha or Lady Gaga became glam representatives later. This listing not only stands in contrast to his narration of glam rock in the 1970s, that hardly knows or notices any female glam rockers but Suzi Quatro and The Runaways. At that, the respective biographies are studied in a very reduced dimension, e.g., Reynolds tells Suzi Quatro’s story in a space-saving way on five pages, while Alice Cooper’s career is allowed to shimmer on 41 pages (the amounts refer to the German language edition, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Since queer studies aim at overcoming gender based exclusion on the one hand and both popular music studies and feminist musicology problematize unwritten music history (Barber-Kersovan et al. 2000) or blind spots of music history (Kreutziger-Herr 2009) on the other hand, there are several approaches to draw on.

in the context on publishing individual music memories.<sup>17</sup> As valuable as these contributions are individually, often sharing a DIY publishing culture, the isolation of certain female artists in recent glam narrations should be kept in mind.

The permanent disregard and concealment of certain music agents is as a distortion of music history and its analysis. Popular music studies are not limited to the most known artists only, they also investigate power relations and should stay interested in the question, why some musicians actually became popular and others did not achieve appreciation. Also, the singularizing narratives of women and originality narratives that relate to white men predominantly can and need to be questioned further in future glam research, from intersectional and interdisciplinary perspectives.

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<sup>17</sup> Further analyses could also include deeper discourse analysis of Vangelder-Smith's and McGees presence in music press and audiovisual media such as TV shows, rock magazines or radio.

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### Abstract

The narration of glam music, especially glam rock, as queer is countered by a canonisation of male white icons in pop musicology, which is illuminated and expanded in this article. Early glam performances by self-feminised Black musicians (Ward 1998) as well as the music making of female agents of glam rock are at the center of this exploration. Firstly, an outline of the current gender and *race* specific remembrance of glam rock is given. Secondly, the “glamorous” origins of glam music are questioned with Ward; musical canon of glam is also re-arranged regarding the category of gender by adding the basic biographies of two further female heroines, Bobbie McGee and Cherrie Vangelder-Smith. They are present in digital (DIY) media within practices of affective archiving (Baker 2015), which enable lyrics interpretation in this paper.

### “Bohaterki” muzyki glam. Luki w historyzacji glamu od czarnoskórych samo-sfeminizowanych twórców muzycznych do herstorii glam rocka

#### Streszczenie

Narracji muzyki glam, szczególnie glamrockowej jako queerowej, przeciwstawia się w muzykologii popularnej kanonizacja męskich białoskórych ikon, co zostaje omówione i rozwinięte w niniejszym artykule. Podstawę tego opracowania stanowią analizy wczesnych występów glamrockowych w wykonaniu samo-sfeminizowanych czarnoskórych muzyków (Ward 1998), a także omówienia twórczości wybranych przedstawicielek glam rocka. Po pierwsze, ukazano zarys aktualnej genderowej i *rasowej* specyfiki pamięci o glam rocku. Po drugie, wskazano, że “glamourowe” pochodzenie muzyki glam jest kwestionowane przez Briana Warda; muzyczny kanon glamu ulega również re-aranżacji w odniesieniu do kategorii gender, ze względu na ukazanie podstawowych biografii dwu bohaterek gatunku, Bobbie McGee oraz Cherrie Vangelder-Smith. Są one obecne w mediach cyfrowych (DIY) w ramach praktyk afektywnej archiwizacji (Baker 2015), co umożliwiło interpretację tekstów w prezentowanym artykule.

**Keywords:** glam rock history, female glam singers, Black glam singers, musical canon, digital archives

**Słowa kluczowe:** historia glam rocka, glamowe piosenkarki, czarnoskóre glamowe piosenkarki, kanon muzyczny, archiwa cyfrowe

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