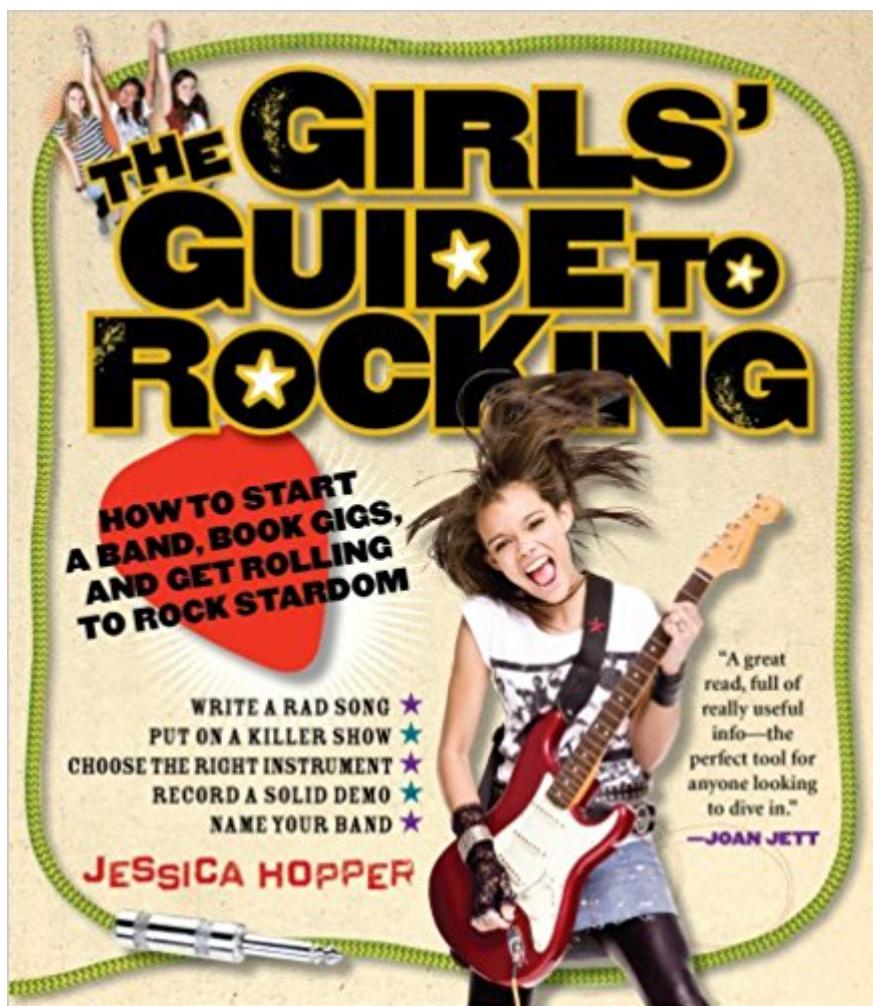


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# The Girls' Guide To Rocking: How To Start A Band, Book Gigs, And Get Rolling To Rock Stardom



## Synopsis

From greats like Patti Smith and Joan Jett to legends-in-the-making like Taylor Swift and Demi Lovato, girls want to rock. They want to start bands, write songs, get up on stage, and kick out the jams. Here's the book to teach them how. Written by an obsessive music lover who's spent her life playing, performing, publicizing, and writing about rock 'n' roll, *The Girls' Guide To Rocking* is a hip, inspirational guide for rad girls who want to make their rock dreams come true. It's everything a rocking girl needs to know: how to choose the right instrument for you, where to shop for instruments and where to avoid. How to get your band together and keep it together—tips on playing in a band with your friends and staying friends. How to turn your bedroom into a soundproof practice space. Giving your band the right name, plus a cautionary glossary of overused words (Wolf, Star, Crystal, Earth, etc.). How to set-up and promote your own shows. The freedom of going solo, and how to handle performing alone in the spotlight. Songwriting tips, with eight prompts to get the lyrics flowing. The ins and outs of recording, whether at home or in a studio. Taking care of business: publicizing your band, making T-shirts, legalese and the creative personality, and the four signs that say "time to hire a manager"—in other words, you've arrived. Includes a girls-in-rock timeline, essential listening lists, and quotes from the greats: Nina Simone, Hayley Williams, Gwen Stefani, Carrie Brownstein, Amy Lee, Kim Gordon, and more. Now get out there and rule the world.

## Book Information

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Grade Level: 9 - 12

## Customer Reviews

This highly informational and inspiring do-it-yourself resource will guide girls toward their rocker dreams. It will also appeal to the young-at-heart who dream of being a rock star and readers and researchers of girl culture. —Elizabeth M. Wavle, Elmira College Library, NY

Jessica Hopper is a music and culture critic whose work regularly appears in Chicago Reader, LA Weekly, SPIN, ANP and Chicago Tribune and has also been included in DaCapo's Best of Music Writing 2004, 2005 and 2007. She is also the music consultant for the public radio show, This American Life. Her widely-anthologized essay, "Emo: Where the Girls Aren't" was described as "influential" by The New York Times. Holding fast to the music-is-my-life credo, Hopper has also done time as a tour manager, band publicist, DJ, touring bassist, Girls Rock Camp booster, and fanzine publisher. She lives in Chicago.

good

Girl bands are HOT. Just had to get that out. The Girls' Guide to Rocking is a terrific, easy read that has everything one could possibly want to know about starting up a rock band and soaring to the heights of the music business. Who would believe that EVERYTHING you could possibly want to know about being a rock star is in this one book? Well, almost everything, and a good start. And if not reach the heights, at least have a lot of fun along the way. I first heard about this book when its youthful author, Jessica Hopper, was being interviewed on the local television news station. The author has played in bands since fifteen and is a writer and music critic, so the book is very well-written in her own folksy, whimsical style. She speaks with the authority of someone who has been around the block. Although titled to young girls, boys and adults will be equally informed as well. You will probably find it in the kid's section in your library. Just say you are checking it out for the grandchildren. It's a fast, easy, interesting and enlightening read about the music business even for those who (like me) will never stand on a stage or in a recording studio but are just music fans. It is a step-by-step A-to-Z guide from buying your first guitar or drum to launching your first road tour. In particular, it is filled with really good, sound technical advice and even some solid brand recommendations so noobs will have a starting point and not be totally lost on that first visit to the music store. A couple specific comments: - Page 21: Consider a guitar stand - Page 37: The book was light in the keyboard department after some very informative and detailed discussion about guitars and drums. Should have said a little more about the B-3, its history, its use in rock and real tonewheels versus clonewheels. Vox Continentals were phased out in the early 1970's, Farfisa in

the mid-1970's and only live on in the used market. Used Continentals go for the big bucks to collectors and had reliability issues even when they were new(er). The sound of the Continental will be most familiar to listeners on the intro. to the Doors Light My Fire. Farfisa with Sam the Sham (Wooly Bully). The Nord C1 (now C2) reportedly performs excellently in simulating the B-3, Continental and Farfisa, but is very expensive at \$3k. Software simulation has also come a long way in the past couple of years and, combined with a computer and basic MIDI keyboard, can produce a decent sound at minimal cost. Where "electric" (really electronic) pianos are concerned, Yamaha is a top brand to look at. As for synths, Moog is the original and while the first device was sold in the early 1950's, significant public recognition was not achieved until 1968 with the release of Switched-on Bach. So there is a long line of Moog devices in existence, including current production. But Roland, Kurzweil, Korg and Yamaha are the top brands keyboard players usually consider. - Page 104 et al: Even after reading the book, I am still not sure exactly what a "producer" really is and does, what real value he or she adds to the venture and why one always seems to be involved. - Page 216/Appendix B: GarageBand software runs only on Apple's McIntosh computers where it comes already installed. There are similar reasonably-priced software products on the market for MS Windows such as Mixcraft. Google on "garageband for windows" (without the quotes) to find them. One issue I do not recall the book addressing is "ownership" of the band and its name. It discusses inventing the name and trademark registration, but not how to reach and record an agreement among band members about ownership and how the inevitable personnel changes will affect it. That always seems to be the subject of expensive legal wrangling for bands that do make it. Naturally, the music business is complex, competitive and filled with sharks that will eat your lunch, so once a band begins showing glimmers of success, further professional advice is necessary as the book wisely counsels. But for starters, *The Girls' Guide to Rocking* is unique, essential and enjoyable reading for all rock wannabees, their groupies and music fans in general. Jessica, YOU rock. Six stars. Buy it!

My daughter (who's a college student these days) was in several bands throughout her HS days. I like to think that I passed on my passion for music to her. So when I heard an (entertaining) interview on NPR not too long ago with the author of this book, I decided to check it out, for no reason other than to see how she would explain this all. (In the interview, the author readily admitted that even though the book is geared towards teenage girls, much of it would equally apply to boys, safe perhaps the "woman empowerment" theme that runs through the book. In "*The Girls' Guide to Rocking: How To Start a Band, Book Gigs, And Get Rolling to Rock Stardom*" (238 pages), author

Jessica Hopper (herself a musician, among other things) brings a boatload of practical tips on how to get started, and I mean starting from scratch. How to pick out and find an instrument ("I bought my first guitar when I was fifteen. I found it by calling around stores and asking for the cheapest guitar they carried.") Whether music lessons make sense and are worth the money ("I sat in a basement for half an hour watching a very frustrated ancient dude try to teach me the lamest classic rock beginner tune of all times 'Smoke on the Water', a song I didn't know and didn't want to know, from an era of music I hated. I never bothered with my third lesson.") How to land a gig ("When you go see bands, introduce yourself and say you have a band and that you think you'd be good on a bill with them.) And on and on. Tons of hands-on tips. The overbearing theme of the book is that when you start a band, your main thing is to have some fun. Without it, there is no point to it. The latter part of the book takes things a bit more up-level (such as what to do when a label expresses interest in your band (get a good lawyer!). Overall, I found this very enjoyable reading. My daughter did a lot of the things that the author talks about here, scored some local gigs, issued a couple of EPs, got a band website, etc. It seemed to me she had a lot of fun doing during those HS days, even if it never lead to "rock stardom" (not that that was the main goal anyway).

A terrific guide that answers just about every conceivable question one might have about starting a band. I love that it's aimed at girls but think it's sound advice applies to boys and all adults too. One of the better books about the nuts and bolts of playing rock and roll with your friends out there.

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