

Violence Girl: East L.A. Rage to Hollywood Stage, a Chicana Punk Story

Alice Bag

The proximity of the East L.A. barrio to Hollywood is as close as a short drive on the 101 freeway, but the cultural divide is enormous. Born to Mexican-born and American-naturalized parents, Alicia Armendariz migrated a few miles west to participate in the free-range birth of the 1970s punk movement. Alicia adopted the punk name Alice Bag, and became lead singer for The Bags, early punk visionaries who starred in Penelope Spheeris' documentary *The Decline of Western Civilization*.

Here is a life of many crossed boundaries, from East L.A.'s *musica ranchera* to Hollywood's punk rock; from a violent male-dominated family to female-dominated transgressive rock bands. Alice's feminist sympathies can be understood by the name of her satiric all-girl early Goth band Castration Squad.

Violence Girl takes us from a violent upbringing to an aggressive punk sensibility; this time a difficult coming-of-age memoir culminates with a satisfying conclusion, complete with a happy marriage and children. Nearly a hundred excellent photographs energize the text in remarkable ways.

Alice Bag's work and influence can be seen this year in the traveling Smithsonian exhibition "American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music."

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Editorial

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