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Pointer Sisters Have Crossed Over Into All Musical Genres

By Loretta Manago
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The outlandish costumes and the 40s' style of singing may have been what made people first take notice of the Pointer Sisters, but what has kept admiring fans thoroughly entranced over the years is the trio's electric energy and wealth of talent.

As entertainers, the Pointer Sisters have crossed over into every musical genre there is. In 1975, they won a Grammy award for the song they wrote, "Fairy Tale." Their tune, "Slowhand" first broke on the pop charts before crossing over to the R&B one. And upon hearing them live there will always be a tune that will showcase their fondness for scat singing.

It is, in fact, their virtual defiance of being categorized that has catapulted them to success. And for anyone who knows about the roots of this dynamic threesome, the fact that they were raised on gospel comes as no surprise.

Their parents, both very religious, did not allow Ruth, Anita and June to listen to any type of music, other than gospel. Consequently, the first public exposure the three girls got was singing on the church choir. If, indeed, the Pointer Sisters heard any other musical forms, it was purely by chance. The musical restraints placed on the Pointer Sisters by their parents were not strong enough to quench the varied musical desires of these three. It was just a matter of time before the Pointer Sisters would break away.

When they did, they found themselves in the rich mixture of styles that swirled through the barely post-psychedelic Bay Area of the early seventies. Rock, pop, soul, country—all of this, the Pointer Sisters had to



POINTER SISTERS

—Excitement in action

choose from and what their appetite they did.

They sang back-up behind artists like Dave Mason and Elvin Bishop at the Fillmore West and cut two formula R&B singles for Atlantic. In 1973, producer David Rubinson signed them to ABC-Tom Thumb and in pursue individual projects as well as catch their breath. When they regrouped, the Pointer

Sisters had trimmed down to three members. Originally, sister Bonnie was a member of the group. Once again, ready to recapture thousands of fans, the

May of that year, they played the Troubadour in Los Angeles.

They were on the threshold of taking it all. They were appearing on talk shows, variety shows; already they had two

gold albums, hit singles, tours and even became the first black females on the stage of the Grand Ol' Opry.

But in 1977 the Pointer Sisters decided to take a break, which allowed them the opportunity to trio joined with producer Richard Perry. The combination of Perry and the Pointer Sisters was unstoppable.

"We've managed to find the secret," Perry says of his relationship with the group. "We have complete mutual respect and trust. The chemistry has to be there and it is. I've always wanted the kind of ongoing relationship I have with the Pointer Sisters.

With each new album, the Pointer Sisters have made another notch in musical achievement. While June and Anita have done most of the lead singing, Ruth has quietly emerged as a lead singer, rocking fans with her deep, resonant voice.

Showing unmistakably that singing is not all the three leggy women are good at, the Pointer Sisters' latest undertaking has been a plug on Eddie Murphy's most recent movie, "Beverly Hills Cop." Their hit song, "Neutron Dance" is also included on the movie soundtrack.

One song which has become their trademark, "I'm So Excited," has a line in it that goes: "I'm about to lose control and I think I like it." It is this to-the-exuberance spirit that has always stamped their work with inimitable vitality. Almost a decade has passed since the Pointer Sisters stole their way into the hearts of Americans and since then, they have evolved into one of America's premier, popular vocal groups.