

Wine, Women and Winehouse, From Dionysus to Dietrich: Two Bad Girls of Pop

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Abstract

This article will discuss just how in control of their lives and image two modern rule-breaking performers were and, how as casualties of their own success, both Dietrich and Winehouse, legends in their lifetimes, remain intense subjects of interest and scrutiny. Their unrestrained and passionate romanticism is shown to better understand the allure and power of music and stardom, audience participation and the boundaries they cross. Yet such patterns of wild behaviour are not new, many with their roots in ancient civilizations, from Phoenicia to Ancient Greece. Indeed, fertility cults such as those outlined by Robert Graves in his seminal *Golden Bough* were a major influence of global culture. Further, it is the very excesses of spectacle in Jonson's plays that brings the audience to their senses. Such lessons, transmitted through visual methods, as medieval stained glass reach a popular audience long before a Latin text ever could. as well as modes of performance and content.

Keywords: *divas, comedienne, mores, excess, jazz, fabliaux, intercultural, diachronous, lacrymosa*

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Introduction

Born 82 years apart, two of the most quintessentially edgy singers of the twentieth century were Marlene Dietrich and Amy Winehouse. Both addicted to alcohol with sensational private lives, each broke countless societal norms, yet captivated the hearts of millions with effortless pizzazz. With her outlandish performance skill set, from defiant on-screen lesbian kisses to daring pantsuits and throw away one-liners, the excesses of the Weimar Republic were transformed into screen performances, that memorized millions on the one hand and disarmed privately on the other. Yet while Dietrich lived on into a ripe old age tragically, Amy died before her time, the victim of an overblown life-style. Both women were musical giants, who wowed the stage with their iconic delivery, yet the similarities underscore also a huge differentiation. On the one hand, the German-American gloried in her attraction to both men and women, having a string of publicized affairs, and on the other a young Jewish Londoner, who had had her heart broken and did not handle rejection or solitude well. This paper will highlight their contributions and ebullient personalities, as eponymous figures of their time and who gave enjoyment to so many, yet defied almost every rulebook, each with contrasting outcomes.

Dietrich as Diva

It is the voice which is the most intimate of instruments, and in Hitchcock's *Stage Fright* (1950), Marlene Dietrich excels in her portrayal of Charlotte Inwood, the great crooning *femme fatale*. The character Charlotte is not a passive victim, but a spirited woman, unlike many others so horridly acted upon in Hitch's film corpus. She is at the zenith of her career in 1930, delivering Cole Porter's 'The Laziest Gal in Town' reclined on a back-lit chaise longue with exceptional élan, the blond coquette's thrilling, throaty voice is unmistakable:

It's not 'cause I wouldn't
It's not 'cause I shouldn't
And you know it's not 'cause I couldn't
It's simply because I'm the laziest gal in town.

Later, in the film, *La Vie en Rose* is equally sensational in its delivery as she intones: 'Quand il me prend dans ses bras, Il me parle tout bas, Je vois la vie en rose.' (Piaf, 1947). Dietrich's *sang froid* marries the part of comedienne, singer, seductress and murder's moll with consummate ease. She is the icon many needed to emulate, to attain stardom, defined as, "The very incarnation of ancient Babylon and ancient Rome, that continental Magdalene" (Price, 1992, p72). While Piaf's own life echoed moments sadness and sexual exploitation, living some of her life in a Normandy brothel, there is little doubt but that this choice of song was deliberate by Hitchcock to in some way celebrate her contribution to art. Piaf's own life, circumscribed by tragedy and abuse, the comparison of the fate of Yeats's Leda in 'Leda and the Swan,' seems an apposite tribute, where the rape is symbolic of male aggression Piaf experienced in her own life:

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

The words Yeats uses are graphic, "... her thighs caressed/ By the dark webs," an emphasis on "helplessness" (1965, p.241). The woman in this image portrayed by the poet has been rendered utterly supine.

Amy, too, used explicit language herself many times and even entitled one song, 'Fxxck me Pumps' and there are even more allusions to the act of intercourse scattered throughout her work. So many singers may be referenced in regards to personal loss, drug addiction and excess that it might be

possible to suggest that their soulfulness is derived in some part from their own suffering. While Bakhtin refers to the ‘connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships ...in literature’ as a ‘chronotope’ which acts as means of entry to cultural expression (1981, p.84), such transitions from the past to a modern era is applicable to lyrics also. Hence, Amy’s own personal life experiences may be referenced to previous artists, affected by difficult loves and knocks from earlier times.

By contrast, in the film *Stage Fright*, Wilding, the winsome detective, continues the musical motif on the piano, akin to the celebrated Sherlock Holmes and his use of music, choosing a classical piece to underscore his foil to Dietrich’s unrestrained and passionate romanticism. Inwood’s excess contrasts with her nemesis’s cool head and in so doing, epitomizes the virtues of restraint and the need for the golden mean. With cerebral substance wins over style in the plot of the film, yet off the set he and Dietrich had a torrid affair, as she did with so many other co-stars during filming.

Nor was this Dietrich’s only screen triumph. From her first film appearance in *Manon Lescaut* (1926), she was a compelling presence, with her striking hair, edgy attitude and remarkable bone structure. Yet it was during the Weimar period that she attracted most attention. Wearing men’s suits by way of protest, her openly bisexual persona on and off the screen, attracted both approbation and disapprobation alike from the critics (Schell, 1984). The flouting of her own sexuality epitomized this period yet was ultimately feminist and political; pushing conventional boundaries to their limits. One of her most famous songs was from *‘The Blue Angel’* (1930), which saw Dietrich transformed into Lola Lola and deliver in German, the Englished lyrics below:

Falling in love again
Never wanted to
What am I to do?
Can’t help it
Love’s always been my game
Play it how I may
I was made that way
Can’t help it
Men cluster to me like moths around a flame
And if their wings burn, I know I’m not to blame.

As a member of the ‘The Sewing Circle’ she thrived among Hollywood’s underground bi-sexual community, the onscreen kiss in *‘Morocco’* (1930) bringing her notoriety, yet a grudging admiration also. It was this assured poise and charisma, that audacity and front, that swept others objections away. Her close confidante Tallulah Bankhead also scandalized the set of *Lifeboat* (1944), appearing without underwear. This habit, when reported to Hitchcock, elicited the now famous response, “I don’t know if this is a matter for the costume department, make-up, or hairdressing”, as is reported by Spoto cited in Price, (1992).

Yet such flamboyant excesses are not a twentieth-century invention. While Marlena’s early work in vaudeville showed a willingness to perform live and also be *risqué*, in their respective seminal works, both Frazer and Graves outline how early societies made use of a female fertility goddess as emblems of early magical practice (1890; 1961). Such traditional cults were outlawed by monotheistic religions, which replaced or amalgamated such ideas. Exeter Cathedral has a famous carving of a Green Man, linked to procreation, regeneration and rebirth, for example, and these were a feature of the how the church adapted many of the literary and farming practices of the country. Such medieval references are also present in the literature of the age and Chaucer’s Wife of Bath in *The Canterbury Tales* had this to say on the subject of her own sexual encounters; “In wyfhood I wol use myn instrument / As frely as my Makere hath it sent” (149-150). Married a total of five times, she advocates freely on the topic of seduction and thus remains one of the more memorable characters in the poem. Her Tale is arguable one of early feminism, featuring the rape of a young and beautiful maid by one of King Arthur’s knights and which ends with a prayer that: “And eek

I pray Jhesu shorte hir lyves,/That wol nat be governed by hir wyves.” This outspoken woman presages many of the later, modern narratives of eponymous women’s rights advocates, both in and out of the literary sphere and is ably portrayed in vivid terms by Chaucer in the poem.

Additionally, speculation has been rife over another literary icon, Shakespeare’s own sexual orientation and drive, as represented in the sonnets. Allusions to both men and women in these poems suggest that his love-life may not have been as conservative as other critics, keen to sanitize the bard, have speculated. Yet how does this reputation influence his enduring place at the forefront of English literature? The bard was essentially a populist, contrasting with Marlowe, who is considered more an esthete, and Shakespeare lived both off his patronage at court and his success in theatre. Using excess to demonstrate the tragic flaw in his characters, who step outside the social mores, he buoyed the system through appeal to balance, order and harmony in plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*. Therefore, social order was reinforced, rather than challenged in visual terms on stage. The music of the spheres, which imposed harmony through the application of a Pythagorean formula, was said to have magical qualities; the harmony of the planets, the order of the heavens, social mores, physical health and mental sanity are all connected to the dominance of music (Tillyard, 1943).

Furthermore, in his Dedication to *The White Goddess*, Graves celebrates moderation in its form as a divinely inspired rule: “All saints revile her, and all sober men/Ruled by the God Apollo’s golden mean-” (1961). Yet as these lives under the world’s microscope show, there was no such virtuous restraint of practice. Formative in the process of visual myth-making and storytelling, as is found in cinema, often alongside musical accompaniments as in the early silent era, were tableaux and fabliaux. These prescribe through drama moral outcomes from actions linked to excess. Older, Middle Eastern sources such as the *Fables of Bidai: the Morall Philosophie of Doni* (1570) use exaggeration and excess, amongst other techniques, to promote moral attitudes. If you compare this to the actions of Dietrich and Winehouse, parallels may be drawn. Translated from Sanskrit into Pahlavi and Arabic, the 3rd century Indian tales were collected by Sharma, as *The Panchatantra or Five Principles* (Weiss and Green, 1985). As they traversed the globe, an 8th century Greek translation was used for a Hebrew and Persian version in the twelve centuries, while de Bezier translated the work from Castilian into Latin (O’Kane, 2003). As *Kalila and Dimma*, the work was the earliest known collection of *belles lettres* in Arabic. They were suggested by Lessing as inspiring Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1999), and are among the cautionary tales such as inspired Voltaire’s *fabliaux*.

Stories in Medieval Bestiaries have also links to the Middle East; the *Historica Animalium* and the *Phisologus* influenced *The Nun’s Priest’s Tale* and show typological links to Aesop, according to Trapp (1973). Formative was also the *Heẓar Afsann*, also of Indian origin, adapted by the Persians into *The Thousand Myths* is well known in the Emirates as *Elf Leyla wa Leyla*. It became *The Thousand and One Nights* (Vakilian, 2012). Such animal motifs used in these sources reoccur such as birds in Chaucer’s *Parlement of Foulys*, where the noble eagle requesting her free choice be respected, as befitting her rank among the birds represented. Therefore, once again the cerebral and educated response is set out as a cultural and social standard that other lesser birds deviate from (Robinson, 1986). The top of the social order, or high-born, wealthy Dietrich is juxtaposed with the younger woman whose father abandoned a young family and who is said to have missed her father dreadfully (Kapadia, 2015). Thus the category of entertainer and entertainment could therefore mean both either a very high or very low social status performer and audience and the wide spread of social rank among the characters in the *Canterbury Tales* would again indicate a similar pattern: the knight, the franklin, the pardoner, the wife of Bath and the merchant all are delineated first and foremost with reference to their status in society in a “series of words and gestures, images and sounds, which ought to be studied on more than one level” (Bal and de Vries, 2001, p.1). This occurrence is key in live performance throughout the ages and may be applied to modern registers and modern times.

While these older tales were recorded and shared, it was through the visual medium that much of Church morality was inculcated. The frescoes and later stained-glass windows depicted scenes from the Bible that the illiterate could apprehend. Medieval Morality plays featured actors wearing masks to depict the Seven Deadly sins and Marlowe, Ben Jonson and other playwrights continued this tradition in plays such as *Dr. Faustus* (1592) and *Volpone* (1606). This method of using excess or depicting annals may be compared to the use of stills in the early photographs of cinema. Later in the development of cinema, the morality police soon ushered in censorship boards to adjudicate on the decency or lack of it in such screenings and these developed as the content became more and more *risqué* (Lugowski, 1999). Moreover, such stories are often related to groups of people who use their ability as wordsmiths to barter among their social peers for favours in lieu of cash (Niles, 1999). As such they understood that the expressive manner of how they told their tale could win favours and position. The *Elf Leyla Wa leyla* collection, for example, was not in fact a high brow academic work, but rather the very opposite, a group of semi-literate stories with little association with high art made for the popular palate. Boccaccio's *Decameron* borrows from Arab influences has also a content of bawdiness. Hence, there can be argued that there is a continuity of narrative across time and place to the present day, if evaluated in terms of excess in human behaviour.

In such a story-telling tradition, as discussed above, music was equally important, as many songs were accompanied by roving musicians. Troubadours, Medieval musicians who brought the courtly love tradition through the Moors, their name associated with the Arabic verb to sing (*tarrab*) to Spain spread rapidly (Boase, 1977). Oral tales of Andalusia, derived from the Persian frame tales and cycles are also referred to as *maqamat* (musical modes and picaresque tales) and found popularity associated with troubadour performances. The occasional-styled situations and characters were brought to Europe by the Moors as a form of entertainment from their courts in North Africa, as Young has pointed out and mediated to other countries (2004). The levels of sophistication vary in the tales and these have not been treated with the same regard as other registers. Since the artists' delivery of the musical performance is linked to the nature of Arab scales and music, which features a special idiosyncratic tonic linkage, this range of delivery has been described in the following way as being: -

The alteration between a free rhythmic-temporal and fixed tonal-spatial organization on the one hand and a fixed rhythmic-temporal and free tonal-spatial structure on the other. This alteration results in exciting musical contrasts. (Touma, 2003, xx)

This improvisational aspect and keen love of a melancholy air, is reflected in many of the performative arts and the same might even be said of certain aspects of jazz.

Hence, Dietrich is on the one hand, the diva who flouts normal social protocols on screen and off – McLellan has even speculated of an affair with Garbo (2000). However, her own sense of self-worth was enough to carry her through the maelstrom of public life to end her days well as a proud German-American, anti-Nazi gay icon. She did receive intense criticism for leaving Germany for the United States, but campaigned during that time to support the troops morale (Schell, 1984). Hence it is this work as a supporter of the United States in World War II that has endeared her to the establishment. By extension, the use of translation from her native German allows for a democratic exercise and benefits from the cross-fertilization of ideas and language available through the films of Josef von Sternberg, such as *Der Blaue Engel* (1930). Such an exchange combines lyrics, screen scripts, cultural history, performance art and themes such as sexual exploitation through the prism of stardom. Therefore, Dietrich may sit in a line of robust female stars, traced through history and cross-reference.

Winehouse the Wild

By contrast, the child of Ashkenazi émigrés, while Amy Winehouse (1983-2011) received accolades such as ‘Best Female Solo Act’ early in her career, ‘Rehab’ became the anthem for all rule breakers across the globe. Her drug-fueled supernova burned brightly for all too short a time, the thrilling, deep-set vibrato tones mesmerizing the audience. While Dietrich lived to a ripe of age (1901-1992), regrettably Amy fared less well and had little sense of self-preservation. The consequences of her excess were indeed tragic; and echoes the need for moderation as appears in Medieval fabliaux. However, it is her voice that, like Dietrich, enthralls the audience and resonates passion, humour and resounding loss. She had, according to Tony Bennet, “The Complete Gift” (Kapadia, 2015). Likened to Billie Holliday and Ella Fitzgerald, Amy did indeed share some of the drug excess of Holliday, together with her attraction to a man who used hard drugs and who was later her became her choice of marriage partner. For this fatal attraction contributed to a lack of balance in the singer’s emotional metabolism and her husband’s later imprisonment caused the star great sorrow (Kapadia, 2015).

Amy was also pronounced as “gobby” with accolades such as “edgy” and “sincere” also bandied about. In an interview with Mullholland, she said of fame, “I don’t think that I could handle it” and so her own self-fulfilling prophesy was realized (2015). Her sister also is recorded as saying of her, “She would have died eventually, the way she was going, but what really killed her was the bulimia” (Day, 2013). The world of music and her friends and family mourn her passing.

A Medievalist or Elizabethan might ascribe the star’s early dependency on anti-depressants as a surfeit of black bile, causing melancholy. This theory originated with the Greeks-Galem of Pergamon and Hippocrates, and was associated with Dionysius, whose philosophical school gave rise to the theory of The Great Chain of Being, according to Tillyard (1943). This early theory links all harmony to numbers, based upon Pythagoras’s theory and orders the universe, keeping social order, physical and mental health. However, it was not unusual in the Middle Ages to juxtapose the sacred and the profane as a means of teaching the benefits of a moral life Hence warning signs were aplenty in the case of the star, from an early age.

The Romantics, however, associated illness with a poetic state of mind- for Keats suffered from consumption and died young, his pallor and lethargy almost fashionable. The emotionally charged poetry of the period reflected a shift in subject and tone from the neo-Classicism of the previous age. Wallis’s *The Death of Chatterton* (1856), which hangs in the Tate, London is eponymous with the period, whilst de Vigny portrayed Chatterton as: “representative of all those original minds which compulsively challenge authority,/a youthful genius crushed by the forces of materialism and philistinism, the poet martyr” (Pointon, 1981, p.89). Arguably, this description could be applied to the soulful Amy herself (Kapadia, 2015). The natural small club jazz singer caught in the cogs of world premier promoters -a victim of her own over-whelming success.

In fact, so defining was that moment that Keats, Coleridge, Browning, Wordsworth and Flaxman also were inspired to write of him or draw him (Pointon, 1981). Nor is this the only excess akin to the ‘erotic sensitivity’ explored in Praz’s *The Romantic Agony* (1930). in ‘Love is a Losing Game’ (2006) released in the album *Back to Black*, Amy writes:

Though I battle blind
Love is a fate resigned
Memories mar on my mind
Love is a fate resigned
Over futile odds
And laughed at by the gods
And now, the final frame
Love is a losing game.

These lyrics were the result of her former lover, later husband, Blake Fielder abandonment of the singer for another lover, and so she had fallen into a state of self-neglect and depression. The resulting concerns for her well-being and spiral of decline were a feature of her life and the singer had many, celebrated mood swings, resulting eventually in her own early demise (Kapadia, 2015). Amy reflects on her ill-fated affair as being the derision of unkind divine action; a movie in which her last act or “final frame” is the viewed as a failure of the heart’s desire and her “battle” lost.

Earlier in her career, in ‘Stronger than Me’ from *Frank* (2003), while she had crooned in her husky tones of her then boy-friend, Chris Taylor in the tract ‘Stronger than me’ “Feel like a lady, and you my lady boy”, this more up-tempo punning with transgender references, had perhaps been a less serious encounter emotionally for Amy. This vehicle for a jazz delivery was an immediate success and rocketed Amy into the spotlight. This allusion to Middle and Far Eastern traditions through the use of the term, “lady-boy” may be highlighted through a modern literary reference. “In ancient Arabia there was no legal code or religious sanction to enforce law and order. Poetry was the most effective means of encouraging conformity to accepted standards of social behaviour” (Sowayan, 1985, p.152). Influenced by both John Keats ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci’(1819) in the English version and by Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857) in the French version, this transliteration and translation of the Emirati poet Khalfan Musabab’s, ‘The Disease of Love’ below (2018) is an Emirati example of love unrequited.

Dā’ al-ḥubb
Yaquluna al umura ila intiha’
Wa-inni la ara minha intiha’
Bulitu bi a’zāmi al adwa’i fetkan
Wa-dā’u al ḥubbi laysa lahu shifa’. (Rainey, 2016).

The Disease of Love
Things must come to an end they say,
Though to my mind, there is no end,
Cursed with the worst malady,
There is no cure for love. (Trans. Al Afeefi and Rainey, 2012).

This love poem (*ghazal*), translated into French, as a tribute to Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857) as *Le Mal d’amour* is featured below:

Le Mal d’amour
On dit que tout doit finir,
Mais à mon avis, il ne finit pas,
Maudit de la pire maladie,
Il n’y a pas de remède pour l’amour. (Trans. Rainey, 2018)

What do such comparisons tell us? Firstly, and specifically, texts and lyrics have a wider window on the world, than those only written in English and may be juxtaposed would renew interest in both cultural bases. The positioning of these poems by the author emphasizes the barren topographical landscape to parallel an emotional state, akin the stricken knight in Keats ‘La belle dame sans merci’. The stress, heightens this sense of hopelessness, the unremitting nature of the condition or malady (Rainey, 2017b). Fugues apparent in birdsong and the mimicking of phrases and their wringing tones in poetry across the world become the pleading of the lover in Persian poetry, or Keats’s ‘*Ode to a Nightingale*’ Baudelaire, is known to have been addicted to opium and alcohol, and enjoyed an unrestrained love-life. His own poetic outpourings are rife with depressive nuance (Pichois and Ziegler, 19981).

Amy observes of her inconsolable loss as below, accompanied by a syncopated back track that she has cried herself out, processed and developed from the nadir described in other of her song lyrics, which bring air of pathos and plaintiveness that is very marked:

Tears Dry
He walks away

The sun goes down
He takes the day but I'm grown
And in your grey
In this cool shade
My tears dry on their own. *Back to Black* (2006)

The sensory cues trigger memories of a torn relationship and, while the singer has sublimated her feelings of loss into an emotional reflection, herself in a penumbra state, away from his sun, she is left bereft.

Contrast these lyrics with those of Desdemona from *Othello* 4:3:

The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,
(Sing all a green willow, willow willow willow.)
With his hand in his bosom and his head upon his knee.
(Oh willow, willow, willow
Shall be my garland.)
He sighed in his singing and made a great moan...
am dead to all pleasure, my true love she is gone...
The mute bird sat by him was made tame by his moans...
The true tears fell from him, would have melted the stones..

This song presages the death of the heroine, at the hands of her husband. In the play, he is duped by the evil Iago, who is jealous of the Moor. Here, the garden setting, the tears, the dejection, the topography and the situation all echo the concept of romantic agony, that is very marked. Desdemona is a victim, just as Amy encapsulates this ambience in her own song, and her raw emotional delivery of her situation took the world by storm. In Nature, consolation is found, the green “willow” the sign of grieving, associated with an older form of religion that pre-dated Christianity (Graves, 1961).

It could be argued that a love lyric is the most intoxicating form of poetry, for many reasons, certainly it is perhaps the most popular. As the legacy of Dietrich and Winehouse continue to be evaluated, these two remarkable singers will continue to inspire musicians, audiences and critics alike. However, placed in a line of comparative literature, world music and gallery of internal cinema, the takeaway from such juxtapositioning is a sobering tale of excess, unrequited love, élan and exploitation.

Conclusion

In this article, the author has juxtaposed a selection of texts from diachronous time periods and regions to benchmark the lyrics of both women to extend the scope of this paper. This not only enhances understanding of perennial themes and permits a wider audience to appreciate the texts in context, but also heighten appreciation of musical lyrics internationally, as well as modes of performance and content. Contrasting the material with poems helps to identify context-sensitive characteristics.

However, it is through the medium of music, cinema and live performance, these two bad girls of pop lived their lives in the public gaze. In his *Descent of Man* (1870), Darwin is keen to suggest that music as a vibrant means of communication precedes language (Rainey, 2005). It is certainly the case that nursery rhymes and lullabies are said to sooth children and assist cognitive development (Askenazi and Ravid, 1998). Such primary skills sets are attributable to both Winehouse and Dietrich through their many international accolades. Both attracted notoriety, yet one lived to be a centenarian, while the other perished in her second twenties.

The lasciviousness both women displayed at times in front of the camera is legendary. Dietrich excelled at provoking the audience from her first vaudeville appearances, while Winehouse is photographed and interviewed with her underwear on display. The popularity of both women,

however, was based primarily upon their exceptional musical talents. By introducing contrasting musical, narrative and visual materials to place the output of these two popular artists into a larger, historical tapestry, it is hoped to better understand and represent their strengths and weaknesses.

The fertile imagination of each performer represents a legacy, including one of a cautionary tale of the effect of stepping outside of prescribed norms. Yet one woman triumphed in her jettisoning of social constraints, while the other was subsumed by the machine. How best celebrate such talent, élan and edge? It is my own belief that these two prodigies need to be co-celebrated and their contributions place in a larger, more universal frame. In order to do this, their *lacrymosa* and irreverence together is connected to the past through register, representation and regard. Hence their musical cameos are evaluated with those thoughtful and provocative souls that have gone before.

Thus, from the ancient music of the spheres to the present contemporary world, music, song, the ode, its celebrants and co-celebrants, their enduring and integral place in our social fabric is demonstrated. While there is no music here, only the echo of lost voices who light our time on earth, let us recall them, while we are still able, as best we can. (Rainey, 2025, p.4).

These bad girls of popular art stand as reminders of how lack of self-control and loving too intensely can destroy as well as inspire individual talent. The wounds of some may heal for a time but for those acted upon by agents with poor intentions and rash or indifferent hearts, carry the ultimate responsibility for their actions upon other more loving and vulnerable souls. For Winehouse was a true romantic, while Dietrich was a romancer-both were seen as wild women, both great artists and both icons of live performance art. Dietrich and Winehouse, immortalized in song, sit in the firmament of celebrity, burning as comets in the music of the ancient spheres.

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