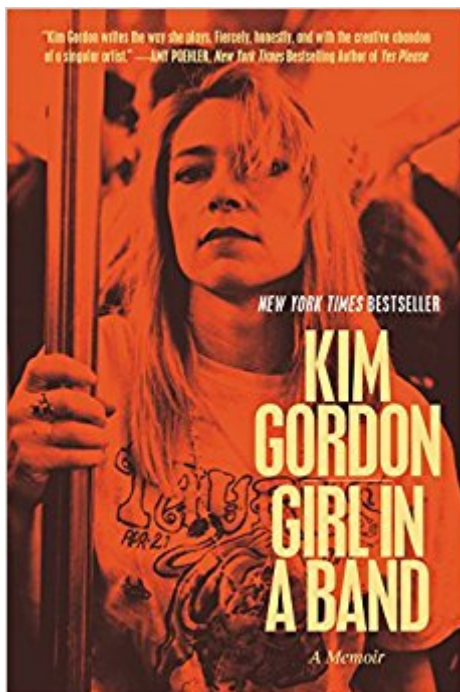


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# Girl In A Band: A Memoir



## Synopsis

**NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER** Kim Gordon, founding member of Sonic Youth, fashion icon, and role model for a generation of women, now tells her story—a memoir of life as an artist, of music, marriage, motherhood, independence, and as one of the first women of rock and roll, written with the lyricism and haunting beauty of Patti Smith's *Just Kids*. Often described as aloof, Kim Gordon opens up as never before in *Girl in a Band*. Telling the story of her family, growing up in California in the '60s and '70s, her life in visual art, her move to New York City, the men in her life, her marriage, her relationship with her daughter, her music, and her band, *Girl in a Band* is a rich and beautifully written memoir. Gordon takes us back to the lost New York of the 1980s and '90s that gave rise to Sonic Youth, and the Alternative revolution in popular music. The band helped build a vocabulary of music—paving the way for Nirvana, Hole, Smashing Pumpkins and many other acts. But at its core, *Girl in a Band* examines the route from girl to woman in uncharted territory, music, art career, what partnership means—and what happens when that identity dissolves. Evocative and edgy, filled with the sights and sounds of a changing world and a transformative life, *Girl in a Band* is the fascinating chronicle of a remarkable journey and an extraordinary artist.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Kim Gordon writes the way she plays. Fiercely, honestly, and with the creative abandon of a singular artist.” (AMY POEHLER, actor, producer, writer) “I’ve always

admired Kim Gordon. She is cool, smart, and dignified. *Girl in a Band* is a fascinating and honest memoir full of raw emotion and insight. (SOFIA COPPOLA, filmmaker) “The best thing one of your heroes can do is make you feel heroic yourself. Kim Gordon has done just that in her memoir; it is full of beauty and power, inspiration, kindness, boldness and hope. (CARRIE BROWNSTEIN, writer, actor, musician) “Written with the same cool passion she brings to her lyrics, Gordon delivers a generous look at life inside the punk whirlwind. (Kirkus Reviews) Everybody loves Kim Gordon. So it’s pretty much my bet that everybody will be hanging on the words of anyone who reads her forthcoming memoir (which is reportedly phenomenal). [Ed. note: It’s even better than you’re probably expecting.] (Flavorwire) “From beginning to end, the icon chronicles the evolution of music, art, and herself, set in and out of an ever-changing New York. (Interview) Gordon’s career as a musician, artist, critic, performer, producer, and designer spanned the last truly hip era of downtown New York. The names and the nostalgia-for those who remember or who wish they did-are well worth the price of admission. (Booklist) An intriguing memoir. . . [Gordon’s] unique sensibility never fades. (Publishers Weekly) “heartbreaking, raw, articulate, and inspiring. (Bust Magazine)

“Unconventional. . . . Not a garden-variety rock memoir . . . [but] a strange and lovely book about a woman finding and losing herself onstage and off and crafting a complicated creative life when none of the molds quite fit. (Los Angeles Times Book Review) “Engaging and surprisingly intimate. (Vanity Fair) “More than a memoir, though one of the most riveting music biographies ever penned. (Examiner.com) For many, Kim Gordon, vocalist, bassist, and founding member of Sonic Youth—one of the most influential and successful bands to emerge from the post-punk New York scene—has always represented the epitome of cool. And almost as celebrated as the band’s defiantly dissonant sound was the marriage between Gordon and her then husband, Thurston Moore. When it was announced that the couple was splitting after twenty-seven years of marriage, fans were devastated. In *Girl in a Band*, this famously reserved superstar speaks candidly about her past and the future. From her childhood in the sunbaked suburbs of Southern California, growing up with a mentally ill sibling, to New York’s downtown art and music scene in the eighties and nineties and the birth of a band that would pave the way for acts like Nirvana, as well as help inspire the Riot Grrl generation, here is an edgy and evocative portrait of a life in art. Exploring the artists, musicians, and writers who influenced her, and

the relationship that defined her life for so long, *Girl in a Band* is filled with the sights and sounds of a pre-Internet world and is a deeply personal portrait of a woman who has become an icon.

I wanted so badly to LOVE "Girl in a Band." A lot had been written on the internet regarding this book; a scathing excerpt here concerning Courtney Love, another about Thurston Moore, etc. By the time the book came out, I bought into the hype. I couldn't wait for equal parts Sonic Youth history from the source, '80s NYC life, behind-the-scenes '90s alternative s\*\*\* talking, and scenes from a failed marriage. In reality, "Girl in a Band" manages to offer all of that, just never fully. We get an interesting background about her upbringing, her childhood, moving around the world at a young age. From there, Kim Gordon focuses on growing up in the '60s, her budding love of the art, and her travels around the country, offering up interesting, albeit brief tidbits and interesting namedropping along the way. Upon explaining her arrival in New York, Gordon tackles the Sonic Youth sections by focusing on each album. At first, I was excited when she presented the history so concisely. However, Kim Gordon speeds through each album so quickly, it's sometimes disappointing. She tends to focus on certain sections of lyrics rather than the dynamics of the band at the time, or their travels, recording, etc. (for a easily enjoyable book on the history of Sonic Youth, check out "Goodbye 20th Century" by David Browne). While many sections offer a fresh perspective, I can't help but wish she would have expanded on certain areas. The book is a quick read, at times very well constructed, and page turning. However, certain sections are written as if it managed to dodge an editor, suddenly taking on a sloppy casual tone following a well crafted previous chapter. All in all, Kim Gordon's memoir is a welcomed addition from a strong female voice and true artist. At the end of the day, I wished this book could have been longer. It left me wanting more in a "there's more to say" sense rather than "I can't put it down." In the end, if all of the story hasn't been set straight, at least we have a glimpse into the mind of a living legend.

Really wanted to love this book as I love Kim Gordon and all her music dearly. But the emotional thread about the breakup with Thurston was not enjoyable (or imo necessary), and took away from the experience. As some others have noted there are some nice insights about her childhood.. and I liked the who's who of NY and 1980s alternative music culture. The details on Sonic Youth projects in the middle was my favorite part. But as a book it felt unfinished, emotional, raw, and disjointed in parts. Still love you, Kim. But didn't love the book like I hoped.

For a life so full of art, music and interesting people, I found surprisingly little joy in this narrative

from one of rock's singular iconoclasts. I hoped for a more engaging, less controlled read, but it makes more sense when you come to understand that Kim Gordon is a shy, self-conscious person who was betrayed by her husband of many years. This is a valuable rock artifact, in any case. One day people will wonder even more than they do now what being in a rock band was like pre-Internet. Here ya go. She lived it analog. The real sonic deal.

I went into this book without any preconceptions. I'm not a huge Sonic Youth or Kim Gordon fan but I do enjoy their music. In the age of oversharing, I really did not know all that much about Kim Gordon's personal life. And frankly, I'm totally fine with that. I appreciated Kim's perspective on her life. The portion about her brother and how his personality shaped the person she became was interesting. She came across as completely honest about her feelings toward her ex husband and how their marriage ended. It really was not that long ago so the feelings, I'm sure, were still fresh while she wrote the book. Kim seemed to focus more on her art background and other things going on in her life, than the music. I enjoyed this book and have been re-reading portions that struck me as interesting. The book was a fairly quick read.

A tactile and insightful overview of a remarkable career. Kim takes you right in there, into the LA where she grew up, the scruffy New York art scene where she established her remarkable career, and introduces us to an array of equally influential artists and musicians who crossed her path. This is not a tell-all, gossipy account of Sonic Youth's career, and don't expect any tales of drugs, debauchery and 'unauthorised' revelations about famous rock musicians. Rather it's an honest and matter-of-fact insider's perspective of a deeply flawed industry. Her perspective on celebrity culture is refreshing, as is her position on how women are treated and viewed in society and pop culture. The array of names can be overwhelming, especially if you don't know the art scene she describes, and images of some of her artwork or installations might have given more insight to readers who mainly know her because of Sonic Youth, but that's a minor complaint in a book that's well-written, easy to read and thought-provoking,

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