

MY MENTOR



Sisters who play together stay together: Nancy Wilson, left, and older sister Ann say they united against the sexism of the music business in the early years of Heart.

really defensive and protective. There were so many things music industry people would want us to do—really sexist and humiliating things that we wouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole. People always asked us to wear skimpy clothes or prodded us to act sexy—we fought against all that stuff *together* because we were watching out for each other. The band was always part of the family, so this wasn't just a job; this was a whole life. In the process, we were constantly consulting and inspiring each other."

Nancy Wilson

"We know each other so well that when we make music, we don't even have to be critical. We have a type of musical ESP. One look from me to her, or vice versa, tells us everything. We don't even have to speak half the time. We just read each other's body language and the whole story is there. Ann also always stood up for us and helped Heart keep its focus. In the beginning it was so unusual for more than one woman to be out front in a rock band, but Ann wouldn't have it [otherwise]. She told the music execs that both of us were to be in the front of the stage because we both sang and played instruments. She told them that neither one of us would become a Linda Ronstadt—we were rockers! She inspired us to conquer region by region, and territory by territory—come hell or high water! Damn the torpedoes! That's what was always our method. We grew up around that because my dad was a military man and Ann helped keep that alive in Heart. It obviously worked."

Damn the torpedos!

Rockers Ann and Nancy Wilson of Heart prove that you don't mess with the sisterhood

BY ELIO IANNACCI

Fifty-six-year-old Nancy Wilson and her sister, 59-year-old Ann, have been hailed as the first ladies of arena rock ever since their chart-topping songs—"Crazy on You," "Magic Man" and "Barracuda"—hit the big time in the late '70s. Managing to transform their sound and style completely in the '80s, '90s and 2000s, the sisters have toured the world with their brand of high-octane pop and rock. Aside from going on the road, the Wilsons recently released a brand-new album, *Red Velvet Car*. It was produced by

Canadian Ben Mink and is their first studio album since *Jupiter's Darling* in 2004. So, the question remains: What has kept the Seattle musicians so inspired throughout three decades of rock 'n' roll? Answer: Their strong sisterly bond.

Ann Wilson

"People were always saying things to Nancy that were really backhanded compliments like, 'Wow, you play really good for a girl! Is your amp really plugged in?' I, of course, being her older sister, would get