

Saturday



TRAILBLAZERS
Clockwise from right:
Betty Boo, Roxanne
Shanté and Monie Love



MUSIC

First Ladies of Hip Hop

9.35pm, 10.35pm **BBC2** Full series on *iPlayer* from today

**NEW
SERIES**

Amid the many documentaries marking 50 years since hip hop's inception in the Bronx, this three-part series offers something a little different. Focusing on artists from both sides of the Atlantic, it is a thrill to hear from Brits like Monie Love, Cookie Crew and the She Rockers (featuring Alison Clarkson, who later found fame as Betty Boo), as well as American pioneers such as Roxanne Shanté, MC Sha-Rock and the Mercedes Ladies. The women prove to be every bit as braggadocious as the men, all the way back to Millie Jackson.

The influence of women on the business is also given long overdue credit, from Sylvia Robinson hatching not only *Rapper's Delight* but also *The Message*, to championing the nascent Eminem and Nas.

Tonight's double bill offers both scrappy origin stories and Golden Age glory. Some milestones are missed – not least narrator Neneh Cherry's performance on *Top of the Pops* while heavily pregnant – but it is still an inspiring broadside in a genre where men too often hog the mic.

GABRIEL TATE