

VOLUME !

Volume !

La revue des musiques populaires

9 : 2 | 2012

Contre-cultures n°2

William PHILLIPS & Brian A. COGAN, *Encyclopedia of Heavy Metal Music*

Brian Hickam



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/volume/3342>

DOI: 10.4000/volume.3342

ISSN: 1950-568X

Publisher

Association Mélanie Seteun

Printed version

Date of publication: 15 December 2012

ISBN: 978-2-913169-33-3

ISSN: 1634-5495

Electronic reference

Brian Hickam, "William PHILLIPS & Brian A. COGAN, *Encyclopedia of Heavy Metal Music*", *Volume !* [Online], 9 : 2 | 2012, Online since 15 December 2012, connection on 24 August 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/volume/3342> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/volume.3342>

This text was automatically generated on 24 August 2022.

All rights reserved

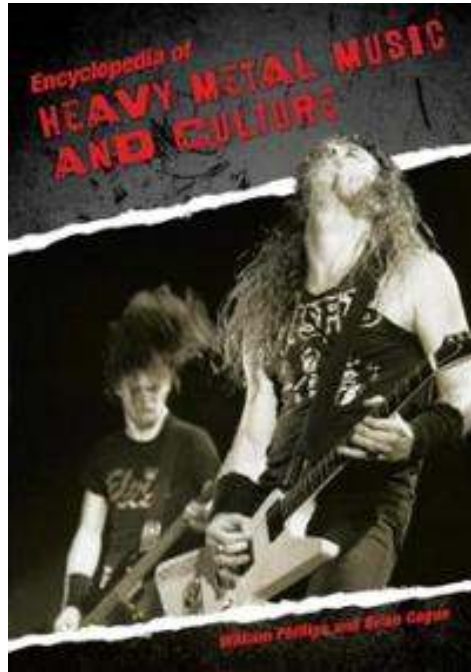
William PHILLIPS & Brian A. COGAN, *Encyclopedia of Heavy Metal Music*

Brian Hickam

REFERENCES

Westport, Greenwood Press, 285p.

- 1 A single-volume encyclopedia of 285 pages forces the authors/editors to make decisions on the number and length of entries and on which topics to include and which to omit. The most telling aspect of Phillips and Cogan's *Encyclopedia of Heavy Metal Music*, a book of about 350 entries, is which major bands have been neglected.
- 2 The history of heavy metal cannot be written without discussing the influence of bands such as Saxon, Pantera, Entombed, Opeth, Cradle of Filth, and TOOL. Their omission is a telling sign that this encyclopedia was not properly researched. It's disappointing that entries are present for Filter, Nickelback, Incubus, Insane Clown Posse, Kid Rock, Limp Bizkit, and others, but not for Obituary, Autopsy, Unleashed, Vio-lence, Annihilator, Satyricon, Paradise Lost, Nuclear Assault, Coroner, Samael, Suffocation, Fear Factory, My Dying Bride, Nightwish, The Cro-Mags, or Atheist. The entries for bands are comprised of biographies, critical analyses, and discographies. Consequently, novice heavy metal enthusiasts wouldn't learn of many "essential recordings." To the authors' credit, they do have entries for Blue Cheer, Dust, Sir Lord Baltimore, Budgie, Sarcófago, Melvins, John Peel, and other notables that are often neglected. One has to wonder why a band such as Goblin Cock, who had only one album released when this encyclopedia went to press, and which one hundred Rateyourmusic.com reviewers give 2.7 out of 5 (2012), was selected over other bands. To boot, the band is mislabeled as doom. While it is appropriate to describe At The Gates with the adjective "quintessential," listing them as "black metal" and affording them only three sentences is not (29).
- 3 Besides bands and musicians, Phillips and Cogan include entries for sub-genres, aspects of heavy metal culture, festivals, sound engineers, radio disc jockeys, films, record labels, record producers, engineers, authors, and books. Given the historical importance of zines and magazines to heavy metal culture a few such entries (e.g. *Slayer Mag*, *Metal Hammer*, *Kerrang!*, *Decibel*) would have helped to complete this work. The bewildering choice of entries continues as "Woodstock 1999" receives an entry, but Wacken Open Air does not. Also missing are entries for power metal, gothic metal, Christian metal, NWOBHM, folk metal, symphonic metal, stoner metal, doom, Swedish death metal, glam/hair metal, sludge, nu metal, Viking metal, or industrial metal.
- 4 The length of entries varies widely. Some of the book's entries are good, others poor; some too long, some just right, and some undeservedly short. Although Uriah Heep is, in my view, worthy of an entry, it is bewildering why the authors give the band, which they themselves describe as "on the periphery of metal" (265), 7 ½ pages while affording the single most important band in the history of metal, Black Sabbath, 1 ½ pages. The inclusion of a six and a half page introduction is commendable, but it too is incomplete. For example, the discussion of musical influences discusses only blues and classical music. Analyses of the contributions of psychedelic, surf guitar, garage rock,



punk, hardcore, and horror movies would have rounded out this foundational overview. The entry on “fashion and metal” is good. There are related entries for “leather,” “spikes,” “piercings,” “headbanging,” “moshing”, and “The Pit,” but none for devil horns, air guitar, crowd surfing, or stage diving. The entry I find most annoying is the one for “‘Cookie Monster’ Vocal Style.” The authors state resolutely that the *Sesame Street* character “has inspired a legion of metal singers to try and emulate his gravely voice”. They add that the creators of *Sesame Street* never envisioned such an influence and they note that it “would be interesting to consider which other muppets will eventually become heavy metal icons” (54). I tend to think the entry wasn’t meant to be satirical. See Fusilli (2006) for another view.

- 5 Additional problems include inaccuracies and typos. The entry for Metal Church describes the albums of a vocalist who never recorded with the band. While the current drummer is noted, as is the 2006 album he appeared on, the current vocalist, who appeared on two of the listed albums, is not mentioned. The authors’ practice of listing, but not always distinguishing EP’s, live releases, and compilations forces readers to investigate which items are full-length studio recordings and which are not. The last record listed in the “DRI” [sic] entry is *Father, Son, and Holy Shit!* Unlike the other items in the D.R.I. discography, this one lacks a record label and year. It is, of course, a record from the band Dr. Know. Deep Purple’s “Made in Europe” is not noted as a live album, but “Last Concert in Japan” and “Live in London” are, just in case those titles are misleading. Additionally, the listings of live albums, compilations, and EP’s are arbitrary as they are very incomplete. Misspellings and incorrect years add to the misinformation. For example, the greatest hits release “Best of Accept” is misspelled “Rest of Accept,” an album which doesn’t exist.
- 6 While the bibliography is titled “selected,” an encyclopedia which the authors claim to be a “resource for historians, students” (xx) should include more of the major works on the subject at hand. Missing are notable books by Christie, Kahn-Harris, Bashe, Gaines, Hale, Arnett, Stark, Berger, Sharpe-Young, Konow, Purcell, Popoff, Baulch, and Ekeroth (to note only some which have appeared in English). This work would have benefited from better consultation, research, and added length. Given its omissions, inaccuracies, and biases, it should be viewed as one that supplements others in a reference library on heavy metal music and culture. Were it one’s sole source on the topic, the history would be very incomplete indeed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(2012), http://rateyourmusic.com/release/album/goblin_cock/bagged_and_boarded [2 April 2012].

FUSILLI J. (2006) « That's Good Enough for Me: Cookie Monsters of death-metal music », *The Wall street journal. From the WSJ opinion archives. Leisure & arts*, <http://web.archive.org/web/20090103110228/http://opinionjournal.com/la/?id=110007902> [2 April 2012].

INDEX

Subjects: heavy metal / hard rock

AUTHORS

BRIAN HICKAM

Brian HICKAM is Director of the Springfield Campus Library at Benedictine University (Illinois). He is the editor of the Metal Studies bibliography, founder & coordinator of the Heavy Metal & Hardcore Punk Archives, and a co-founder of the International Society for Metal Music Studies and its associated refereed journal.