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**Steve WAKSMAN, *This ain't the summer of love: conflict and crossover in heavy metal and punk***

**Brian Hickam**

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**Steve Waksman, *This ain't the summer of love: conflict and crossover in heavy metal and punk*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009, 391 p.**

NEW GENRES OF ART emerge when creators or performers bend and break “rules” and, oftentimes, break “molds.” During an *On point with Tom Ashbrook* radio interview Paul Roberts, Honorary Fellow and Professor of Piano at the Guildhall School of Music, described how Claude Debussy composed music with “strong traces of originality [that] broke away from earlier styles...[making] way for something new” (Ashbrook). During this same interview David Robertson, conductor and music director of the St. Louis Symphony, discussed how Debussy “allowed fellow musicians to hear music in so many different [and new] ways” (Ashbrook). Waksman’s *This Ain’t the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover In Heavy Metal and Punk* (2009) fills a void in the scholarly literature of popular music by emphasizing the ways heavy metal, punk, and hardcore punk artists allowed fans and fellow musicians to take new approaches to understanding and appreciating rock music. As Roberts said in reference to Debussy, the passing of time makes familiar what was once revolutionary and avant-garde. The greatest strength of Waksman’s monograph is the way he conveys the Zeitgeists of various periods and scenes by combining his own recollections and analyses with four decades worth of well-chosen comments and viewpoints from fans, journalists, musicians, industry representatives, critics, scholars, and others.

Waksman’s earlier book serves as a thorough account of the musical and cultural impact of the electric guitar (1999). This second book is a welcomed, meticulous description of the roles of pioneers and outsiders of the music industry and the interconnected evolutions of heavy metal and punk. Waksman’s topic is timely, as evidenced by the growing number of dissertations &

theses that discuss both punk and heavy metal. This book, however, is the first to take an in-depth look at the “transformations—stemming from processes of intersection or opposition, from feelings of sympathy or antagonism—that have constituted the metal punk continuum” (18). Those fond of well-articulated explanations that cite multiple primary sources will appreciate the research and meditation Waksman has put into this work. In my view, it was essential that he explain how genres such as punk, heavy metal, and hard rock were especially amorphous during the early years of their formations. As such, it was not clear in the 1970s how these genres would come to be defined and how bands, such as The Dictators, Grand Funk Railroad, and the Runaways, would come to be categorized and remembered. Due to the theme of this special issue of *Volume!* this review will concentrate on the heavy metal aspects of Waksman’s book.

Lines of reasoning on the origins of heavy metal can be based on albums, individual songs, performance, and/or visual imagery. Waksman puts forth an intriguing argument for heavy metal’s origin that defines the genre’s birth at a point of coalescence between this “loud” music and arena rock concerts, which he describes as a “change in mode of production” (20). He builds his case by referencing the theories of Fabbri, Toynbee, Negus, Dubrow, and others. Waksman provides readers with a self-contained work thanks to succinct explanations of the essential elements and relevancies of these theories. For instance, by referencing Robert Duncan’s theories on concert form and genre, Waksman contends that “the sound of metal...was well suited to the new dimensions of rock performance...

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[and that] the arena became the paradigmatic live setting for the heavy metal concert” and may have been a “precondition” for metal’s coalescence and rapid growth (21). I found Waksman’s discussion of crowds, where he cites Canetti, Bill Graham, and others and his contentions on fan communities and live performance to be convincing. His discussions of Alice Cooper, Iggy Pop, the New York Dolls, androgyny, the “spectacle of death,” stage personae, their influence on glam rock, and glam’s adaptability and influences on metal and punk, are well reasoned. While his arguments on Cooper’s and Pop’s successful theatrical and musical aggregations of violence, pain and torture, victim and victimizer, sex, youth, fears and fantasies, media and identity, and each musician’s recognition of the “needs of the teenage audience” (83) are also convincing, they would be strengthened by some added discussion of films of the era (such as *A Clockwork Orange*, *Dirty Harry*, *Straw Dogs*, *The Vampire Lovers*, or *Pink Flamingos*) and novels (such as *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* or *Portnoy’s Complaint*).

Perhaps the best contribution Waksman offers younger readers is his exceptional depictions of the histories of punk, metal, and crossover as multifaceted musical developments. His use of period album and concert reviews helps his readers understand the complex and intertwined histories of these genres and how, at a certain point, metal was [punk’s] adversary, or at least its other; punk was the new wave, metal was the old (147). Those who follow one genre, but not the other, will gain much insight thanks to Waksman eloquence: In their dedication to loudness, Motörhead managed to strike a balance between the metal idea of loudness equals power and the punk notion that loudness equals noise (165).

Noting that new artistic approaches are both embraced and resisted Paul Roberts described the “enor-

mous criticism,” “resistance,” “envy,” and “complete lack of response” that Debussy received from some fellow composers and the admiration and praise he received from other composers, musicians, and poets (Ashbrook). Waksman’s analysis and synthesis of multiple factors and viewpoints has allowed him to present a similar story for the interwoven genres of punk and heavy metal. His chapter on NWOBHM describes how the movement allowed metal to become “at once more assimilated into the pop music marketplace and more underground” (209). His chapters on grunge describe the complex forces at play between commercial and non-commercial aspects of the music industry and note how the movement was a triumph of both punk and heavy metal. Waksman’s descriptions of thrash, hardcore, and crossover detail points of contact, cross-fertilization, resistance, and ambivalence. Missing, however, are analyses of grindcore and crust punk bands such as Napalm Death, Brutal Truth, Neurosis, Nasum, Disrupt, and Extreme Noise Terror, which would have made for a more complete study of the punk and metal continuum.

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