



# Heavy Metal Music in Britain

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Heavy metal has developed from a British fringe genre of rock music in the late 1960s to a global mass market consumer good in the early twenty-first century. Early proponents of the musical style, such as Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Judas Priest, Saxon, Uriah Heep and Iron Maiden, were mostly seeking to reach a young male audience. Songs were often filled with violent, sexist and nationalistic themes but were also speaking to the growing sense of deterioration in social and professional life. At the same time, however, heavy metal was seriously indebted to the legacies of blues and classical music as well as to larger literary and cultural themes. The genre also produced mythological concept albums and rewritings of classical poems. In other words, heavy metal tried from the beginning to locate itself in a liminal space between pedestrian mass culture and a rather elitist adherence to complexity and musical craftsmanship, speaking from a subaltern position against the hegemonic discourse.

This collection of essays provides a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary look at British heavy metal from its beginning through The New Wave of British Heavy Metal up to the increasing internationalization and widespread acceptance in the late 1980s. The individual chapter authors approach British heavy metal from a textual perspective, providing critical analyses of the politics and ideology behind the lyrics, images and performances. Rather than focus on individual bands or songs, the essays collected here argue with the larger system of heavy metal music in mind, providing comprehensive analyses that relate directly to the larger context of British life and culture. The wide range of approaches should provide readers from various disciplines with new and original ideas about the study of this phenomenon of popular culture.

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## About the Editor

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