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Death Metal Music



Synopsis

Death Metal is among the most despised forms of violently themed entertainment. Many politicians, conservative groups and typical Americans attribute youth violence and the destruction of social values to such entertainment. The usual assumptions about the Death Metal scene and its fans have rarely been challenged. This book investigates the demographic trends, attitudes, philosophical beliefs, ethical systems, and behavioral patterns within the scene, seeking to situate death metal in the larger social order. The Death Metal community proves to be a useful microcosm for much of American subculture and lends insight into the psychological and social functions of many forbidden or illicit entertainment forms. The author's analysis, rich in interviews with rock stars, radio hosts, and average adolescent fans, provides a key to comprehending deviant tendencies in modern American culture.

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Customer Reviews

Death Metal Music is valuable for its history of death metal, as it knowledgeably jumps from band to band and provides helpful descriptions that will likely lead readers to discover new bands. However,

in Chapter 3 (pp. 39-49), which describes the lyrics of death metal, the author makes some surprising mistakes that soil her credibility and call into question how accurate her findings might be. The biggest problem occurs during her discussion of the social messages in death metal. She writes, "Anti-abortion messages may be found in songs like 'Altering the Future'" (48). I have seen this mistake made before, but anyone who has heard this song by the band Death knows that the lyrics are not anti-abortion, but in fact pro-choice. The first verse describes the rotten life that follows for a baby born to a mother that is not capable of being a fit parent. The verse ends with this statement: "To exist in this world may be a mistake / The one who is with child, it's their choice to make." Clearly, Chuck Schuldiner is advocating a woman's right to choose. The second verse describes the necessity of capital punishment for murderers, but the chorus makes a clear distinction between abortion and murder. The chorus goes, "Abortion, when it is needed / Execution, for those who deserve it." The whole point of the song is that sometimes lives need to be ended to improve the future. To call it anti-abortion is to deny part of the legacy left behind by a death metal giant, and if any band should be well represented in this book, it is Death. Chuck described his views on abortion in a 1995 interview as follows: "It should be legal. If I was a woman surely I would like to have a choice to have a child or not. In [the] U.S. [a] lot of new-borns are killed because they were unwanted."

Hello, potential readers. I'm the author of this book, and I just wanted to write a little something to let you know what the book does and does not do, and what some of its strengths and weaknesses are. While some critics have said the book reads like a grad school thesis or dissertation, this it was not. I actually wrote it while I was in college, but it was a labor of love that I produced on the side. Most of it was written when I was around 19-20 years old, though it took me a couple years to edit it and get it published. I really do feel this is a unique look at the Death Metal subculture from an insider angle. I spent many years penetrating every part of the scene (shows, "metalfests", labels, zine-producers, touring bands, radio stations, etc.), and really became a member of it myself. I was surprised at how fully I was able to embrace and enjoy the music as well as all of the social aspects of the subculture. At the same time, I did plenty of research on what had already been published about metal heads, horror fans, and similar groups. With that said, a lot of the research done for this book was very informal. Because nothing had really been published on death metal in particular (with the exception of some pretty unreliable sources), I relied to an unusual extent on "authorities" in the scene. I built a rough history of the scene through extensive interviews with death metal fans and musicians who lived through it. Quotes from these scene personalities and authorities are

scattered throughout. These are not the most reliable sources, but they were definitely the best available. I feel confident that I ended up with a thorough and accurate sketch of the Death Metal scene.

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