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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, £14.95). Pp. 398. ISBN 978 0 5202 5717 7.

Steve Waksman's analysis of the relationship between heavy metal and punk begins in the early 1970s, an era in which several influential contemporary critics believed that rock music, the prime medium of 1960s countercultural rebellion, was in danger of losing its core audience. By late 1969, US entertainment corporations were beginning to appreciate the enormous commercial potential of rock (as opposed to pop) music and its appeal to an affluent audience of young Americans from the "Woodstock Generation." New forms of rock music, including the "soft rock" of reflective "mature" artists such as the singer-songwriter James Taylor and the "country rock" of artists such as the Eagles and Jackson Browne were beginning to dominate US FM radio airwaves. Reacting to this trend, both heavy metal and early punk were, in Waksman's words, based upon the notion that rock music should be "visceral rather than reflective, Dionysian rather than Apollonian" (301).

Waksman traces the idea that to a small cabal of music critics, musicians and entrepreneurs, "authentic" rock should always remain wild, outrageous, loud and dangerous. These included Detroit-based political activist and MC5 manager John Sinclair; Terry Knight, manager of the ear-splitting, monolithic heavy rock three-piece Grand Funk Railroad; the late journalist and rock critic Lester Bangs (author of provocative articles with titles such as "James Taylor Marked for Death" (51)); and Lenny Kaye, founder member of the Patti Smith Group and compiler of the seminal 1972 proto-punk/garage rock/psychedelic compilation album *Nuggets*. Their ideology was based on the belief that the only guarantee for rock to remain a vital and perpetually relevant medium was the demand that it continually adapt to the shifting tastes of teenagers (or in Terry Knight's parlance "the people") rather than degenerate into a "mellow" impotent dotage.

The title of *This Ain't the Summer of Love* is taken from the opening track of the 1976 album *Agents of Fortune* by Blue Öyster Cult, the US proto-metal band critically acclaimed by key members of the contemporary rock cognoscenti for their ironic assault on the platitudes of complacent ex-hippy baby-boomers. The fact that the song's refrain was reechoed almost twenty years later in the track "Swallow My Pride" by the seminal Seattle "grunge" outfit Green River is seen by Waksman as illustrative of the persistence of the idea that heavy rock music, as demonstrated in a bewildering variety (e.g. arena rock, speed metal, thrash metal, death metal, hardcore, grunge, etc.) of generic hybrids, should retain its essentially transgressive sonic power.

Employing an iconoclastic and interdisciplinary approach characteristic of much of the best American studies scholarship, Waksman bases his analysis on theoretical approaches to the study of genre, focussing on the ways in which seemingly antagonistic literary and musical genres have been shown to actually encourage one another's survival by providing cross-currents of symbiosis. In the case of heavy metal and punk he focusses on the semiotic rules that helped define both genres – including the significance of physical performance space, the relative significance of

musical virtuosity, whether or not the “authentic audience” should be exclusively young and local, whether gender norms should be upheld or challenged, whether rock’s historical legacy should be celebrated or rejected and the relative value of amateur as opposed to professional production techniques.

Despite the profusion of academic literature devoted to American popular music, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to heavy metal – a global genre that despite sustained critical opprobrium remains hugely popular and profitable, particularly within the United States. The few academic studies of heavy metal which do exist – such as Robert Walser’s *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* – tend to treat the music as if it were a homogeneous phenomenon and largely avoid analysing its hybridization into multiple subgenres from the 1980s onwards. Waksman’s ambitious book attempts a different approach. Blending theoretical insight, archival analysis of a plethora of contemporary music journals and his own deep appreciation of the metal and punk genres from the perspective of a fan, record-collector and practising musician, he manages to analyse and contextualize the complex genre-to-genre relationships between heavy metal and punk in a sustained, systematic, readable and often highly amusing fashion.

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