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Rip It Up And Start Again: Postpunk 1978-1984



Synopsis

Rip It Up and Start Again is the first book-length exploration of the wildly adventurous music created in the years after punk. Renowned music journalist Simon Reynolds celebrates the futurist spirit of such bands as Joy Division, Gang of Four, Talking Heads, and Devo, which resulted in endless innovations in music, lyrics, performance, and style and continued into the early eighties with the video-savvy synth-pop of groups such as Human League, Depeche Mode, and Soft Cell, whose success coincided with the rise of MTV. Full of insight and anecdotes and populated by charismatic characters, Rip It Up and Start AgainÂ re-creates the idealism, urgency, and excitement of one of the most important and challenging periods in the history of popular music.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Don't make the mistake of buying the US versionGet the whole story and buy the UK version. It contains chapters on US bands on the SST label, 2nd Gen. Industrial bands (Foetus, Test Dept.) a very important part of the post-punk aural landscape.Ironic (or maybe typical) that a book on the highly political post-punk era is as cut up and censored as the US edition is.from Simon Reynold's blog:DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UK AND US EDITIONS* the chapter sequence is different from the UK version* three chapters are cut for reasons of space: the Devoto/Subway Sect chapter; the Conform to Deform Second Wave of Industrial chapter; and the SST/Blasting Concept chapter* two chapters compressed into one for reasons of space, the Goth chapter and the Glory Boys/Big Music chapter* Timeline is absent for reason of space* in the US edition, the Appendix on MTV and the Second British Invasion is folded into the chapter on New Pop's peak* no illustrations in the US

edition* the Mutant Disco chapter is written up as proper historical prose in the US edition, as opposed to the oral history in the UK edition* no bibliography in the US editionI don't understand this "reason of space" explanation. Wonder if they cut out some words from the dictionary for "reason of space"?Approximately 200 pages missing from the US edition.Very Very LameDon't waste your money. Get the UK edition and skewer the US publishers.

A definitive history of post-punk has been long in coming. Though this may or may not be that definitive history (one book can't possibly fully address this fertile era), it is well worth a read.True fans of post-punk should read this book, however they should read the UK version and not this shortened US version. Three chapters have been cut in their entirety and portions of other chapters have been cut or shortened. In total, the US version of the book is nearly 200 pages shorter.The cover of the UK edition is also much cooler.

Let me admit right up front that I am not a fan of 95% of the music chronicled in this book. But several of my friends are, so I thought I'd dip into it to see if it would make a nice gift. With that in mind, I read the one chapter that covers music I really love, the chapter about the rapid rise and fall of the 2-Tone ska movement. Those twenty pages were enough to convince me that Reynolds is best kind of music writer, able to write evocatively about the music itself while providing the social, economic, and political context for its creation. He hits the nail firmly on the head in his analysis of The Specials' songs as "cheerless" -- tying them to social-realist cinema and the bleak post-WWII concrete jungle of their native Coventry. Reynolds also does a nice job of describing the origins of ska, it's development in England, and rather complicated ties to the mod and skinhead subcultures. He's also brimming with details about the major bands and why it all fell apart so quickly. Two quibbles do present themselves. One is that some of the transitions are a bit choppy, and I later learned that the US edition I read is an abridged version of the UK edition (nowhere is this obviously stated on the US edition). Some 300+ pages were cut, which would explain some of the choppiness I found, and I have to say that I'll be buying the more expensive UK version for my friends. The second reservation I have with the book is the total lack of documentation. It's great to quote Dammers, Hall, Staple, and all these other musicians, but it would be nice to know where these quotes came from so that one could do follow-up reading or research -- there's not even a bibliography! These caveats of abridgement and referencing aside, this appears to be an excellent, well-written account of an overlooked era of music history and should stand as the definitive work for many years to come.

Simon Reynolds' *Rip it Up and Start Again* is an engaging look at the British side of the collective of genres we call "post-punk": the dub reggae experimenters, the Burundi-beat-plundering New Romantics, the "angular" guitar-wielding do-it-yourselfers. However, my purpose in writing this review is not to discuss the book. It suffices to say that despite the two-star review, this is really a four-star book, and is highly recommended to anyone with post-punk listening experience who wants to understand the sociopolitical, economic, and musical histories of post-punk. Instead my purpose of this review is to advise you against buying the US edition, since it is an abridged version of the longer (and more comprehensive) UK edition. What's been cut from the US edition is a little over a hundred pages of material, including three complete chapters. Off the top of my head, there's a chapter on Magazine that got cut, a chapter on industrial music that got cut, and a chapter on the American SST scene that got cut. I'm also told, though I didn't get the chance to do the comparison myself, that there are bits and pieces of the chapters themselves that have been cut out of the US edition. In short, don't be afraid to spend a couple extra bucks on the UK version for the complete experience.

Heard about this book in a review in *Wire* magazine, and my girlfriend kindly ordered the book from .co.uk for me for Christmas. When the book came to the States it had lost about 200 pages and any sections on music that wasn't "as popular" on this side of the ocean. In the day of global information and the lowering of borders, this is just absurd. Buy the full book (a 5 star proposition), it's worth it.

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