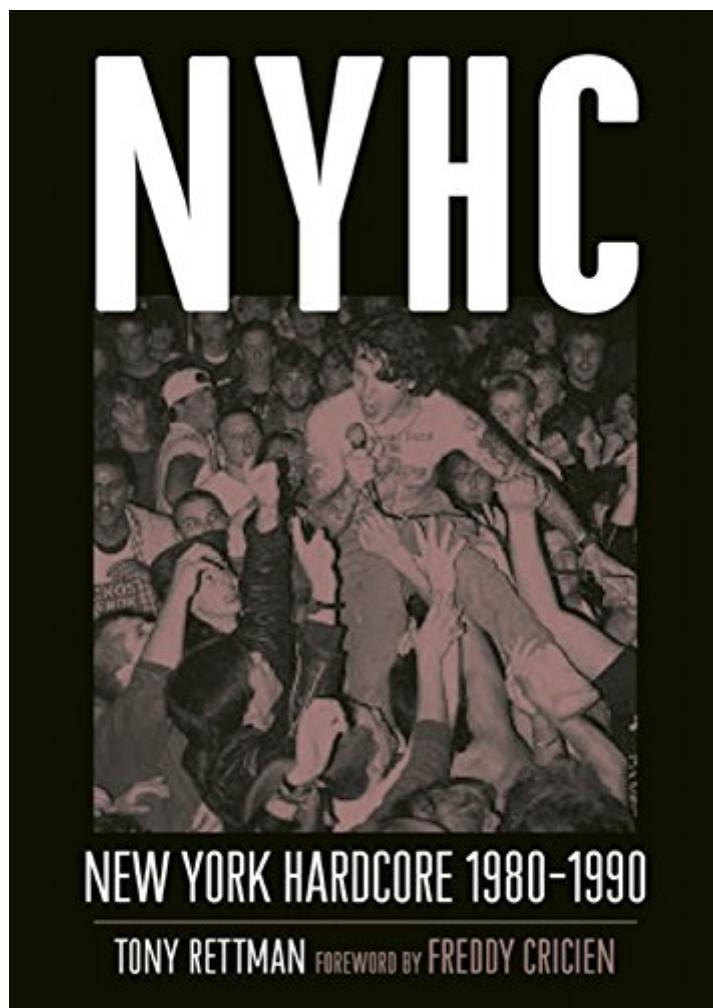


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NYHC: New York Hardcore 1980–1990



Synopsis

Known for its glamorous 1970s punk rock scene, New York City matched the grim urban reality of the 1980s with a rawer musical uprising: New York hardcore. As bands of misfits from across the region gravitated to the forgotten frontier of Manhattan's Lower East Side. With a backdrop of despair, bands like Agnostic Front, Cro-Mags, Murphy's Law, and Youth of Today confronted their reality with relentlessly energetic gigs at CBGB, A7, and the numerous squats in the area. Tony Rettman's ambitious oral history captures ten years of struggling, including the scene's regional rivalries with D.C. and Boston, the birth of moshing, the clash and coming to terms of hardcore and heavy metal, the straightedge movement, and the unlikely influence of Krishna consciousness. With a foreword by Freddy Cricien of Madball, who made his stage debut with Agnostic Front at age seven, NYHC slams the sidewalk with savage tales of larger-than-life characters and unlikely feats of willpower. The gripping and sometimes hilarious narrative is woven together like the fabric of New York itself from over 100 original interviews with members of Absolution, Adrenalin O.D., Agnostic Front, Antidote, Bad Brains, Bloodclot, Bold, Born Against, Breakdown, Cause for Alarm, Citizen Arrest, Cro-Mags, Crumbsuckers, Death Before Dishonor, Even Worse, False Prophets, Don Fury, Gorilla Biscuits, H20, Heart Attack, Inhuman, Into Another, Irate, Judge, Kraut, Leeway, Lifeâ€s Blood, Major Conflict, Maxâ€s Kansas City, Murphyâ€s Law, Nausea, Nihilistics, Nuclear Assault, Numskulls, Outburst, Pro-Pain, Quicksand, Rat Cage Records, Raw Deal, Reagan Youth, Rorschach, S.O.D., Sacrilege, Savage Circle, Sheer Terror, Shelter, Shok, Sick of it All, Side by Side, Skinhead Youth, Straight Ahead, the Abused, the Cryptcrashers, the Mad, the Misfits, the Misguided, the Mob, the Psychos, the Ritz, the Stimulators, the Undead, Token Entry, Underdog, Urban Waste, Virus, Warzone, Youth of Today, and many, many more. MOSH IT UP!

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Customer Reviews

If youÃfÃ¢re old enough, the scene you came up in helped shape who you are - the people you surrounded yourself with and the music you listened to and the drugs you took (or didnÃfÃ¢t take). I was shaped by the early 2000s in Morgantown, WV. There were various scenes there, centered on one of the hippie bars, or the 123, which drew some national acts but was filled most nights with local bands. The punks centered on a house on Pearl Street, that burned down under mysterious circumstances. I was part of all this, and the bands and the people went their way, with no real hit on the national consciousness. Some scenes stick though. One of those was the birth of Hardcore music out of the refuse of the punk scene in New York in the early 80s. Some of the bands that came out of that scene still have national relevance today, like Agnostic Front and Sick of It All, and it helped shape other scenes national from Chicago and DC to LA. In NYHC: New York Hardcore 1980-1990, Tony Rettman explores that scene in considerable depth, bringing the reader the memories of the people who were in the scene and in the bands and worked at the clubs and radio stations. The chapters are structured as brief conversations about certain aspects of the scene, so there are chapters on a band or a club or a record store. It gives the fan who was not there context for the music as it was developed and the people who put it together. There are also a lot of nice visuals from show pictures to flyers to illustrate the total artistic aspect of the Hardcore scene. It is an amazing document, but it does have some weaknesses. It was as if the writer interviewed the participants in depth, but he cut those interviews up to apply directly to the topic that was being covered. I havenÃfÃ¢t read much oral history of music, but I am a big fan of the oral history as Studs Terkel did them, allowing the people he interviewed to share their full stories. I think the method here eliminates some depth of the experience. A second concern is that when people are interviewed, they are identified only on their first appearance. This means that

if you don't recognize how they fit in the broader narrative the author is trying to create, you have to page back and try to figure it out for yourself. There is a listing in the back, but I only found that out after I finished the book. Overall, I enjoyed it a lot, and I bought a couple of similar titles, hoping that they can deepen my appreciation of the music I listen to. One odd bit that didn't fit anywhere: Vinnie Stigma comes off as a very flat character. He just loves being Italian and eating Italian food. There's got to be more to him than that.

As a long time fan of the NYHC scene, I eagerly anticipated reading this book. NYHC is a fun and enjoyable read, though it comes off more like a fanzine than an extensive biography. It chronicles the scene from 1980-1990 with a brief history of each hardcore heavyweight and is abundant with interviews from an exhaustive list of prominent band members. Many great photographs that capture the essence of the scene are provided. There is nothing too revealing or groundbreaking about what Rettman has to offer but it's a nostalgic trip down memory lane. All the essential bands that spearheaded the scene are acknowledged: Cro-mags, Raw Deal, Killing Time, Bad Brains, Breakdown, Sick Of It All, Sheer Terror, Agnostic Front, Gorilla Biscuits, Madball, Leeway, etc, etc. All true fans of the scene should own a copy of this, if not only for the entertaining interviews and sentimental value.

This verbal history of NYHC is comprehensive and entertaining. The format, zine excepts from various NYHC luminaries organized into a cohesive chronological narrative, is incredibly impressive. The amount of research that went into this text is downright awe inspiring. Basically what you get is many first hand accounts from different parts of the NYHC scene. The book is a treasure trove of info, particularly about the origins of NYHC music and style.

Lots of great info here, especially about the earliest days of the scene. I would've liked more coverage of the '85-'90 years myself, but it could be the author felt that that time period has already been well documented. A couple of funny and/or notable omissions: 1. The Beastie Boys. They're only mentioned a few times in passing, and are heavily dissed when brought up. 2. Billy Milano. There's a few quotes mentioning him here and there, and neither S.O.D. nor M.O.D. get mentioned. The S.O.D. absence is interesting, as there's several quotes from bassist Dan Liliker, and there's a picture of his main band Nuclear Assault in the "metal" chapter. Maybe Billy didn't want to participate? Overall a great book, done in the "oral history" style as "Please Kill Me", "Detroit Rock City", etc.

If you were a fan of the history and never before heard stories of the book American Hardcore, you will love NYHC. The old characters and band members that the author was able to track down are what makes this book stand out. There were a few bands I was surprised didn't get much or any coverage like Token Entry, Life's Blood, Underdog, Sheer Terror (although they get talked about in several chapters, they didn't get their own chapter), but that doesn't take away from the overall greatness of this book. It's a trip down memory lane and a time machine back to a magical time. A must for fans of New York Hardcore.

I may be biased because I'm in the book (the chapter on The Nihilistics) but Tony Rettman did a masterful job of corralling all these participants in one place all these years later. We all know how faulty memory can be but now it's been set down. **LET THIS BE THE RECORD OF THAT PLACE AND THAT TIME!**

Who would have thought that there'd be a book like this back in the mid 80s heyday? Great to read about the stories behind all the thank you lists in the liner notes. The cross-pollination of personalities and bands were interesting to delve into. High quality paper stock. The book is no cheap paperback.

Great oral history of the NYHC scene. The only issue I have is with the Kindle version of the book. Mine didn't include any of the awesome pictures! Bummed, but great read nonetheless.

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