
Catherine Hoad

Editorial introduction

This special edition of *Perfect Beat* focuses on heavy metal, punk and hardcore music, scenes, practices and cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Metal Music Studies as an academic field has grown rapidly and diversified significantly since the turn of the millennium, with scholars looking beyond metal's ostensibly 'traditional' centres in the USA and UK to explore metal scenes in Northern Europe (Beckwith 2002; Spracklen 2010), Indonesia (Baulch 2007; Wallach *et al.* 2011), Africa (Banchs 2016), Australia (Overell 2014; Hoad 2019) and the Middle East (Hecker 2012). Despite this widespread expansion of Metal Music Studies, relatively little attention has been paid to the history, scenes and cultures of metal and hardcore in Aotearoa. Extant scholarly discussions of metal and hardcore in Aotearoa have focused on individual bands (cf. Goossens 2019) and distinct local scenes (cf. Snell and Hodgetts 2007; Heath 2015; Hoad 2021), offering insights into the nuances and complexities of metal across the motu.

There is still much to be studied in relation to metal, punk and hardcore in Aotearoa, and further, the relationship of these scenes to those in the Pacific more generally. While this special edition focuses specifically on Aotearoa, there is an established gap for critical engagement with metal, punk and hardcore as they are experienced in the Pacific. Heavy metal and hardcore's history in the Pacific is a rich area for further attention, particularly given the growth of anti-colonial hardcore bands such as Hawai'i's Kūka'ilimoku, the recent staging of events such as Metal United World Wide in Port Moresby and Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and the legacies of bands such as Solid Black, Bokz Boyz, Sound Temple, Black Centipede and Red Star Unit in the Solomon Islands. Studies of metal in the Pacific Islands are nonetheless relatively sparse, with the exception of Bendrups' (2011) study of metal in the Easter Islands, Olson's studies on metal scenes in Hawai'i (2012; 2017), DeHart's (2018) discussion of Guam in the context of metal's international distribution, and Tecun and Petelo's (2021) exploration of 'rebellious' music within Kava collectives in Tonga. Such scholarship establishes a robust platform for future research in this context.

This special edition explores the histories, scenes, practices and cultures of metal, punk and hardcore in Aotearoa. Metal, punk and hardcore have a long and nuanced history in Aotearoa, where all three genres have interfaced with localized aesthetics and colonial histories, and responded to deindustrialization in complex

and multi-faceted ways. Moreover, metal's position within and uses for *Te Ao Māori* and *māoritanga* has a similarly long history, despite only recently coming into international focus with the success of Alien Weaponry's use of te reo Māori. The position of metal and hardcore for Pacific peoples within Aotearoa has also gained attention via South Auckland band Shepherd's Reign, whose track 'Le Manu', a reinterpretation of the Samoan Siva Tau, fuses pātē with metal riffs. Work in this issue thus addresses the position of Aotearoa within the wider geographical flows of metal, where, as Wallach, Berger and Greene argue, metalheads in diverse settings have 'sounded their own particular aesthetics and sociopolitical concerns' (2011: 8). However, in undertaking this research, scholars must remain cognizant of cultural tourism's propensity to 'create' and affix identities (Baulch 2007) and thus map the conflict and fluidity of 'localness' and 'foreignness', and their representations therein, as they emerge in metal and hardcore scenes in the region.

My hope for this special edition, then, has been to acknowledge the tendency of Metal Music Studies to offer collections of scholarly work focusing on 'metal in X country'—certainly, as a guest editor, I readily concede that this edition can be seen to operate in this vein—but also to explore how such collections might also invite new ways of studying and talking about metal in scholarly contexts. Through the varied approaches represented in this special edition, I hope that such work can contribute to an emergent body of scholarship that redraws the methodological parameters of Metal Music Studies. The special edition is divided into two sections accordingly. In the first, three research articles proffer varied methodological approaches to examine different aspects of metal scenes, practices and discourses in Aotearoa. First, Wes Robertson and Jessica Kruk analyse a curated excerpt from their podcast *Lingua Brutallica*, an ethnographic investigation into language in extreme metal, presenting an annotated interview transcript of their interview with Matt Hyde of Beastwars. In their article, 'An annotated interview with Beastwars: Language, identity and place in New Zealand metal', Robertson and Kruk note the importance of responding to calls in metal studies, ethnography and sociolinguistics to prioritize the knowledge, beliefs and practices of research subjects as the central authority. In the next article, Catherine Hoad, with Ian Moore, uses critical textual analysis and interviews with four established metal bands in Aotearoa to critically explore the lived realities of metal music as a profession in Aotearoa. 'Making metal work' then seeks to analyse the coincidence of genre with geography, to understand how factors such as national music industries and domestic practices intersect with generic expectations to impact upon metal careers in Aotearoa. Finally, Elise Girard-Despraulex's article 'Immersion and metal music videos: Aspects of Māori culture in *Kai Tangata* and *Hatupatu*' applies visual analysis to two of Alien Weaponry's music videos to explore how

these forms, as creative artefacts themselves, can both engage a wider international audience in specific stories and imagery from *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world), whilst simultaneously offering agentic and meaningful representation for indigenous artists and audiences alike.

In the second section, the three 'Riffs' offer a range of novel and creative approaches to scholarly writing on metal, punk and hardcore in Aotearoa. In the first, 'Will you remember: Notes on Neil Roberts Day and sites of community memory in Aotearoa punk and hardcore', Lauren Deacon explores how Neil Roberts Day, a community-led day of celebration and remembrance, challenges a 'generalized forgetting' of punk and hardcore in Aotearoa's official histories. Here they examine Neil Roberts Day commemorations through Pierre Nora's concept of generational consciousness and the *lieux des memoires*, or sites of memory, and what this might mean for the punk and hardcore communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Following this, Giordano Calvi's 'A sense of displacement: Longing for past heritage in Olde throne's black metal' utilizes an interview between the author and Olde Throne's Harrison McKenzie to consider, in practice, how Timothy Rice's 'subject-centred ethnography' can offer an understanding of how an individual musician constructs meaning amidst the global dissemination and transnational reinterpretation of black metal's themes and sounds. For Calvi, such a methodological approach enables an analysis of how a musician born and raised in Christchurch is able to express, through black metal, a sense of displacement and lost belonging to a Celtic past. In the third and final Riff, Pōneke/Wellington art duo 'Prickly Jim' offer a visual essay discussing the relationship between aesthetics and community in metal in Aotearoa. Such an approach offers direct insights into the visual culture of the Wellington scene and its community identity and aesthetics as experienced by two young participants. In the visual essay, the two artists—Lydia Hill and Sam Stonnell—discuss their own relationship to metal and hardcore and its communities in Wellington, and analyse select examples of their own creative work as it functions within a DIY-based metal ecosystem.

The articles in this special edition engage with a range of histories, identities and experiences within metal, punk and hardcore scenes in Aotearoa, and in doing so, seek to provide an expanded repertoire of voices and approaches to Metal Music Studies. There is, certainly, much that remains to be explored in metal, punk and hardcore in Aotearoa, as well as the wider Pacific region. This special edition is thus one contribution within an ongoing body of developing work, offering insights into the nuances and complexities of metal across the *motu* (the country); it has also been quite a time-consuming and prolonged edition, as editors, contributors and reviewers alike dealt with the ongoing impacts of the pandemic. On a final note, I offer my appreciation and thanks for everyone involved in the production of this special edition—*arohanui*.

References

- Banchs, Edward. 2016. *Heavy Metal: Africa: Life, Passion and Heavy Metal in the Forgotten Continent*. Pennsylvania: Word Association Publishers.
- Baulch, Emma. 2007. *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk and Death Metal in 1990s Bali*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Beckwith, Karl. 2002. "'Black Metal is for White People': Constructs of Colour and Identity within the Extreme Metal Scene'. *M/C Journal* 5/3. Online at <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0207/blackmetal.php> (accessed 6 April 2020). <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.1962>
- Bendrup, Dan. 2011. 'Nako'. In *Metal Rules the Globe*, ed. J. Wallach, H. M. Berger and P. D. Greene, 313–32. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- DeHart, Cameron. 2018. 'Metal by Numbers: Revisiting the Uneven Distribution of Heavy Metal Music'. *Metal Music Studies* 4/3: 559–71. https://doi.org/10.1386/mms.4.3.559_1
- Goossens, Didier. 2019. "'Māori metal": Analysing Decolonial Glocalisation in the Themes, Performances and Discourses Surrounding Alien Weaponry's Debut Album *Tū* (2018)'. MA thesis, KU Leuven, Belgium.
- Heath, Doug. 2015. 'Heavy Metal from the Antarctic Ends of the Earth: Investigating the Metal Music Identity from Invercargill, Southland, New Zealand'. In *Modern Heavy Metal: Markets, Practices and Cultures*, ed. Toni-Matti Karjalainen and Kimi Kärki, 230–39. Helsinki: Aalto University.
- Hecker, Pierre. 2012. *Turkish Metal: Music, Meaning, and Morality in a Muslim Society*. London: Routledge.
- Hoad, Catherine, ed. 2019. 'Critical Introduction: What is Australian about Australian Heavy Metal?' In *Australian Heavy Metal: Scenes, Practices, Identities*, edited by Catherine Hoad, 1–18. Bingley, UK: Emerald Books.
- Hoad, Catherine. 2021. 'Polar Fate: Mapping Metal at the Southern Edge of the World'. In *Living Metal*, ed. Bryan Bardine and Jerome Stueart, 35–54. Bristol: Intellect.
- Olson, Benjamin H. 2012. 'This isn't Paradise, This is Hell: Discourse, Performance and Identity in the Hawaii Metal Scene'. Doctoral dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Manoa.
- Olson, Benjamin H. 2017. 'Within the Perpetual Pentagram: Religious Discourse in the Hawai'i Metal Scene'. *Metal Music Studies* 3/1: 47–62. https://doi.org/10.1386/mms.3.1.47_1
- Overell, Rosemary. 2014. *Affective Intensities in Extreme Music Scenes: Cases from Australia and Japan*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Snell, Dave, and Darrin Hodgetts. 2007. 'Heavy Metal, Identity and the Social Negotiation of a Community of Practice'. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 17/6: 430–45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.943>
- Spracklen, Karl. 2010. 'True Aryan Black Metal: The Meaning of Leisure, Belonging and the Construction of Whiteness in Black Metal Music'. In *Metal Void: First Gatherings*, ed. N. R. W. Scott, 81–92. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Tecun, Arcia, and Taniela Petelo. 2021. 'Seleka's Profane Potency: Kava Artists and Rebellious Music in Tonga'. *Perfect Beat* 20/2: 134–54. <https://doi.org/10.1558/prbt.40000>
- Wallach, Jeremy, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene. 2011. 'Affective Overdrive, Scene Dynamics, and Identity in the Global Metal Scene'. In *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World*, edited by J. Wallach, H. M. Berger and P. D. Greene, 3–33. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.