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Metal Music: Classification and Division

Just like organisms were classified and divided by the great Carol Linnaeus with his taxonomy concept in the 1700's, Sam Dunn, a Canadian anthropologist and die hard Metal fan, has classified and divided all Metal sub-genres under a genealogy tree, which accurately depicts the history of Metal music. In different countries, Metal is portrayed diversely. For example, in Norway it's seen Christianity's biggest enemy, while in the U.S., many conservative families see Metal as a gateway to hell. From the birth of Metal music, Metal music has branched out into different territories, symbolizing different ideals, while defining its public.

In the documentary, "Metal: A Headbanger's Journey", Dunn begins his voyage across the world, by trying to find the first band that had the most influence in Metal history. Arguably, the most influential band in Metal history is Black Sabbath. Along with Black Sabbath, bands like Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, and the Stooges are considered early Metal, because of its distinctive sound. Early Metal defied the common psychedelic rock most bands played from 1966 to the early 1970's. Early Metal band were inspired by the southern blues music in America. However, Black Sabbath implemented the tritone, or devil's triad, which is a musical dissonance where a set of musical notes are not normally played together. According to Finlo Rohrer, when the notes in the tritone are played, they have a sound that would seem darker and

evil, giving it the name devil's triad. Other bands inspired by Black Sabbath, also used the tritone, later to be a signature sound in Metal music.

In the decades of the 1970's and 1980's, more Metal sub-genres were born from the inspiration early Metal brought. Dunn proclaims some of the most popular Metal music was heard in just two decades. The New Wave of British Heavy Metal or NWOBHM, Power, Glam, Doom, and Trash Metal were all powerful forces that shook the world. The most recognized NWOBHM bands are Iron Maiden, Motorhead, Saxon, Angel Witch, and Judas Priest. NWOBHM were most famous in the 1980's, however a decline in popularity began in the late 1980's, but the introduction of the internet to the public, caused more popularity in the late 1990's and in the twenty-first century. Trash and Glam Metal began in America. Trash Metal bands like Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth, and Anthrax have become some of the most popular Metal bands in history because it's characteristic sound. The most common characteristic between all Trash Metal bands is the speed of the guitar playing. Metallica has had commercial success due to its amazing guitar playing, which has become a one and only sound, no one can mimic.

Most Metal artists argue that Glam Metal killed Metal. Metal artists like Dave Mustaine from Megadeth, and Ronnie James Dio from Rainbow and Black Sabbath, have considered that Glam Metal slaughtered the symbolization that Metal music portrays. In the autobiography, "Mustaine", by Dave Mustaine, throughout his career as a musician, Mustaine believed Glam was an acronym for "Gay L.A. Music". In other words, Mustaine always disagreed with Glam Metal musicians associating themselves as Metal acts. Dio believed Metal was a way of life that wasn't supposed to be used associated with bands like Motley Crue, or Poison. Glam bands have

been accused for representing Metal in the wrong context for their use of makeup, and dressing up like women, while performing in concerts.

Power and Doom Metal have a different sound than most Metal bands. Power Metal bands like Rainbow, Manowar, and the Scorpions have a majestic sound. For example, the band Rainbow used an organ in some tracks of their albums, something completely new in Metal, experimenting with other instruments. Doom Metal also had characteristics that were new in the world of Metal. Doom bands like Candlemass, and St. Vitus created darker scenery in their music, and introduced their public to the occult, something Black Sabbath had already done, however Allmusic.com believes Doom Metal bands had a slower and heavier sound that mystified their crowd.

The first wave of Black Metal came in the early 1980's, inspiring Black, Norwegian Black, and Swedish Death Metal. Dunn explains in the documentary how bands like Venom, Bathory and Hellhammer were similar to Trash Metal but while Trash Metal lyrics were more focused on violence and war, the first Black Metal bands associated with Satanism, and the occult, which was to be common in the Black Metal genre later. While bands like Venom were not actual Satanists, Norwegian and Swedish bands like Mayhem, and Burzum were known for glamourizing Satanism and publicly accepting their appreciation for paganism.

According to Dunn, Varg Vikernes, a Norwegian Black Metal musician, is considered to be the most, "notorious metal musician of all time". Vikernes is known for being in the band Norwegian Black Metal band, Mayhem, which was openly Satanist. Vikernes is known for leading Black Metal enthusiasts in Norway and burning churches, and killing Mayhem's front man, Øystein Aarseth. Church burnings in Norway were popular in the early 1990's causing

paranoia, and fear amongst the population. Vikernes' objective was to get rid of Christianity all around the world, comparing Christianity to fascism, because it spread around the world just like an imperialist regime would.

Swedish Death Metal might be closely associated to Norwegian Black Metal due to its connection with Satanism, but the style of music is different. Swedish Death Metal bands include Dissection, Amon Amarth, and Dismember and others. Dan Mariscano states Swedish Death Metal bands have more of melody and symphonious sound, rather than the chaotic sound Norwegian Black Metal displays. Swedish Death Metal focuses on harmonious, long guitar solos, which haunt and awe their audience. However, Swedish Death metal doesn't expose their appreciation for Satanism as much as Norwegian Black Metal artists do. Swedish Death tends to have a more provocative sound more Metal audiences would approve of rather than the rambunctious compositions Norwegian Black Metal plays.

Metal music has crossed through frontiers, and traveled to different continents, for many people to define and change to their own. During the latter of the twentieth century, many artists have changed Metal into different sub-genres, audiences can enjoy. Each Metal sub-genre defines a certain region. Trash Metal represents northern California, while Heavy Metal illustrates the aggressiveness of the British, later to be loved by many all over the world. While other music genres rule the world, Metal remains the most controversial, powerful, and aggressive. To this day, Metal remains strong amongst its public because of its raw sound. Metal music entices a different crowd that isn't afraid to be exposed to destructive, yet resilient sound Metal music has.

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