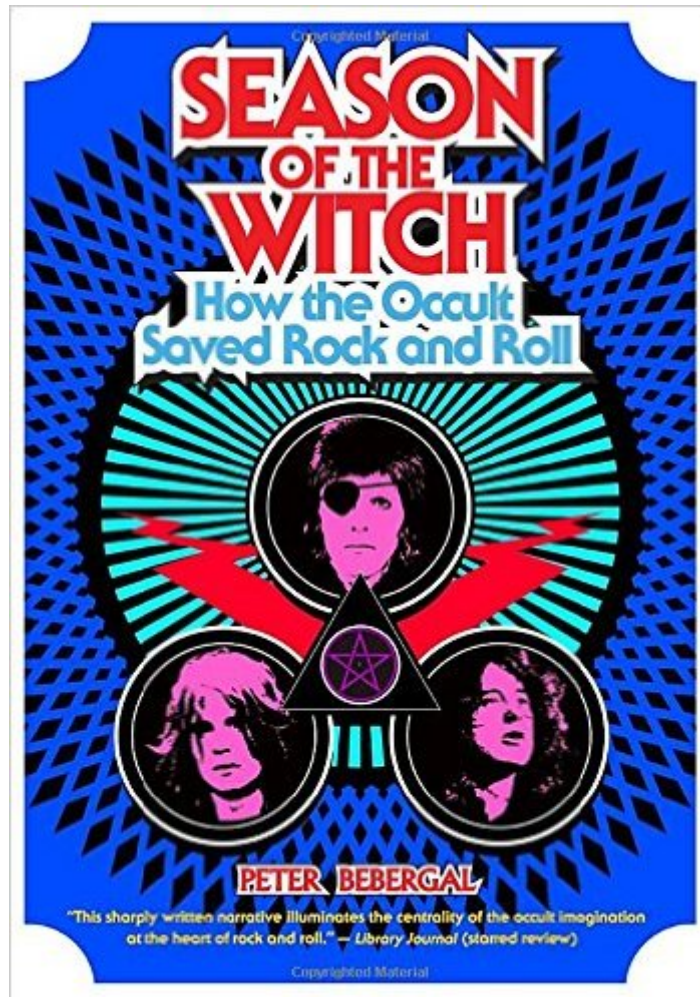


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Season Of The Witch: How The Occult Saved Rock And Roll



Synopsis

This epic cultural and historical odyssey unearths the full influence of occult traditions on rock and roll -- from the Beatles to Black Sabbath -- and shows how the marriage between mysticism and music changed our world. From the hoodoo-inspired sounds of Elvis Presley to the Eastern odysseys of George Harrison, from the dark dalliances of Led Zeppelin to the Masonic imagery of today's hip-hop scene, the occult has long breathed life into rock and hip-hop and, indeed, esoteric and supernatural traditions are a key ingredient behind the emergence and development of rock and roll. With vivid storytelling and laser-sharp analysis, writer and critic Peter Bebergal illuminates this web of influences to produce the definitive work on how the occult shaped -- and saved -- popular music. As Bebergal explains, occult and mystical ideals gave rock and roll its heart and purpose, making rock into more than just backbeat music, but into a cultural revolution of political, spiritual, sexual, and social liberation.

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Customer Reviews

This book provides a very intelligent and well researched perspective on how mysticism and ancient mythologies inspired some of the greatest rock musicians, and how that enhanced the experience for us as listeners and fans. He takes no sides and promotes no ideologies here, but clearly shows how this aspect of rock was able to tap into our curiosities, tribal tendencies, and search for greater meaning and self enlightenment. He also identifies well with how fun it was to contemplate and experience this music, even writing about the wonderment of album covers, which were often a

stand-alone art expression, that could move one to far away places and deeper thought. Good work Peter!

Sorry, but I cannot join in the big kudos you see in the other reviews. There's an AWFUL lot of padding in this book and not a lot of 'meat'. The intro and first portion of the book read "the occult affected rock and roll" over and over and over again, but reworded each time. It reminded me of how newspaper writers write their final paragraphs as a series of small summations so that if the end of their articles got chopped off, they'd still have some kind of ending to the thing once the editors finished. He drones on much longer than necessary about Africa and voodoo, and then gives something like "Cynthia Lennon got left off the train to Wales" in repeated emphasis for TWO PAGES. Things like Killing Joke get 2-3 pages that focus solely on the 'escape to the isles at the end of the earth' back in the early Eighties while their leader Jaz Coleman has been actively creating magickal statements and happenings for DECADES. The ceremonial magick movement in the 1980s gets short shrift along with every other item herein. Most of the pertinent occult information here are in buzzlines that could have been culled from news items in old Melody Makers and NMEs. You can skip whole sections of the book and not miss an 'occult item' about a rocker. Basically, this was a 40 page book padded out to be bigger than, and it doesn't seem worth all that extra verbiage. Was he paid "by the word"????

Really wanted this to be better than it was. It is a great overview, but the threads quickly disappear into other threads. Also had a hard time getting past some initial factual errors (Pat Brown was the California governor who outlawed LSD in 1966 not his son Jerry, and Art Deco is a 20th century art movement not a 19th century movement.) All in all though, if you're not in it for a deep read it's a fun read.

I'm really impressed with this book. Rock journalism tends to be lame nerd ramblings and occult writing is usually flaky. This book tracks a solidly enjoyable line between academic rigor and pop enjoyment. I would totally love to play D&D with the author while the first four Black Sabbath albums played in the background. If you liked Lords of Chaos, you'll probably enjoy this one.

I came to this book as a curious skeptic, believing that while the occult, broadly defined, clearly played a role in the evolution and development of rock music, it was probably a minor one. I have just finished the book and Bebergal has persuaded me that indeed, "without the occult imagination

there would be no rock as we know it." I had always felt that country blues were the essential root, but once Bebergal showed me the role of the occult in the birth of the blues, he had me. The authority of this thesis for me lies mainly in his persuasive connection of the softer hippie side of the occult with its darker side. "It's in the Dionysian, intoxicating madness that the human drive for creative freedom was born and from which rock would one day derive its essential vitality." This book also has a great sense of fact, rooted in formidable historical research, which adds considerable authority to his astute observations and judgments. I can't believe this book won't soon become definitive on this subject.

Like an ecstatic frenzy through an olive laden grove, what a journey Peter Bebergal has woven in his new book, *Season of the Witch: How the Occult Saved Rock and Roll*. Pan, Dionysus, Bacchus, and those chthonic gods of old, take on new shape and form, rising up from the underground stream known as rock and roll, to burn off the dross of conventionalism through mayhem, spectacle and revelry. For those who know the glamour, and how to howl deep into the night while gyrating to your favorite song, then shake a tailfeather and get this book. You will not be disappointed!

Fascinating topic and written with proper balance of levity and studiousness. The occult practices of several individual musicians has been widely known, and the individual stories are unlikely to be new to most rock history readers. However, the thesis drawing it all together is fascinating, and I'd never before considered that the reason the music of the era was so powerful, emotionally and intellectually, was because it was being written with much more than mere entertainment in mind. Fascinating topic and written with an easy mastery.

Very absorbing and enjoyable book about a still controversial topic. It's not a definitive history, but more a series of anecdotes about performers who left their own occult stamp on popular music. Some of them I'd never heard of, others I had. The best part for me is a deeper understanding of music's influence on popular culture in my own early lifetime. While I don't agree that the occult saved rock and roll, I see how it increased the allure of the music and expanded the frontiers of the culture. Definitely worth a read for anyone interested in rock music and its times.

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