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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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A fascinating thesis reflecting the time when everyone seemed to give rock and roll the status of, if not a religion, then certainly that of a spiritual belief system.” Peter Bebergal’s Season of the Witch brought it all back. It’s an absorbing read deserving an important place in rock literature. “--Michael Moorcock "Rather than turning in either a fanboyish rhapsody or a scholarly dissertation, he treads the line between those approaches. The result is passionate, informed, gripping and at times wonderfully lyrical." --NPR “This sharply written narrative illuminates the

centrality of the occult imagination at the heart of rock and roll.â•–Library Journal (starred review)"A thoroughly researched, absorbing, entertaining ride for anyone whoâ™s ever played the Beatlesâ™ âˆ™White Albumâ™ backwards.â•–Andrea Shea, WBUR/ NPRâœKudos to Bebergal for taming the wily spirits of rock long enough to capture their essence in thisâ€”fascinating book. Perhaps more impressive is the bookâ™s comprehensivenessâ€”from Delta blues to beatnik bluster toâ€”acid evangelists toâ€”metal overlords, Season of the Witch puts the hellfire inâ€”highbrow.â•–The Contrarian"Skillfully woven...will delight any music fan and music historian in equal measure.â•–Spirituality Today (5/5 stars)âœThis book is a glorious headlong rush into the dark, full of the electricity of the arcane.â€”I loved it.â•–Warren Ellis, author of Gun Machine and TransmetropolitanâœFrom grimoires to topographic oceans, from heavy metal to hip-hop, Peter Bebergal tracks the Mysteries through half a century of popular music (and some underground noise as well). At once an overview of rock's mystic rebellions and a handy primer on modern esoterica, Season of the Witch suggests that we may need to round out the trinity of sex, drugs, and rock' n' roll with an additional deity: the occult, another primal portal to a re-enchanted world.â•–Erik Davis, author of Led Zeppelin IV and Nomad Codes: Adventures in Modern EsotericaâœTold with clear-eyed scholarship and delectable anecdotes, Peter Bebergal's mind-expanding occult history opened my third eye to Rock & Roll's awesome power over human behavior. Rock & Roll will never sound the same to me again, and I'm glad about it.â•–Mark Frauenfelder, founder of Boing Boing"Bebergal displays an intelligent understanding of the interaction between religion and culture when he argues that the "occult imagination is the vital force of rock-and-roll culture."â•–Publishers WeeklyâœPeter Bebergal has written of his own searching, reconciling spiritual aspirations and personal background, in *The Faith Between Us and Too Much To Dream*. Both are on my bookshelves. Here, in *Season Of The Witch*, Peter presents an overview of one âœalternative influenceâ•–at work on some of those intending to change the world. The world they hoped to change was a dangerous mess. â€”Now, half a century laterâ€”|â•–Robert Frippâ€”âœUnfussy but thoroughly documentedâ€”establishes the occult as a phenomenon above and beyond its debatable status of mere fad in the history of contemporary music.â•–Ralph Elawani, Exclaim! âœAnyone seeking shocking tales of demonic rockâ™nâ™roll would be best served looking elsewhere, but for someone interested in the interplay between music, culture and spirituality, Season Of The Witch is a revelatory and fascinating grimoire.â•–Record Collector âœA must-read for anyone who prefers their music loud, riff-driven, and loaded with lyrics about Satan, wizards, and mystical quests.â•–Cheryl Eddy, io9.com âœBebergal, a Dungeons & Dragons playing rock fanboy and graduate of Harvard Divinity School has exactly the right pedigree for this line of work, infusing what

could be a dry litany of rumors, hearsay, and matter-of-facts with a genuine love for the source material. • --Cooper Berkmyer, Flavorpill

Peter Bebergal writes widely on the speculative and slightly fringe. His recent essays and reviews have appeared in *New Yorker*.com, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Boing Boing*, *The Believer*, and *The Quietus*. He is the author of *Too Much to Dream: A Psychedelic American Boyhood* and *The Faith Between Us: A Jew and a Catholic Search for the Meaning of God* (with Scott Korb). Bebergal studied religion and culture at Harvard Divinity School, and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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.

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!

Listen to this book. Bebergal has an incredible ear for music, pop culture, myth and history. He hears them all at once - harmonizes them all at once. I read it in one sitting and then read it again a few months later. If you are moved by rock and roll and care about the world it comes from and the worlds it makes, this is a book not to be missed. Five stars...

This book hit smack dab in the middle of the Venn diagram of so many of my interests. For that reason alone, it was a pleasure to read but I must also call out the author's exhaustive research, which was impressive in its own right. Draw a pentagram on your floor and curl up with this gem of a rock n roll history from an angle that's too little explored

Unfortunately this book does not live up to the witch hype or teach you to cast witch spells also there is NO WAND included and it is v irresponsible because there is no mention of charging your crystals under the full moon. I am not sure but I am thinking the FDA has something to do with this?? The surgeon general is a powerful warlock with a history of abusing his power and telling ppl that things like cigarettes, heroin, and neti pots are all bad for you when obviously all of those are excellent cures for the common cold (aka "the blue humours"). Get this book if you like white people wearing mumus and taking LSD but remember that these hexes are for entertainment only and will not work on bureaucrats -OR- your spouse.

Season of the Witch is an accessible and well-researched exploration of the convergence of 20th century occultism and pop culture / rock n roll. Interesting analysis and nuggets of historical minutiae make this a satisfying read.

Loved it, Great book for people interested in the occult and Rock Music.

Good book, entertaining but best if you didn't grow up all rock n roll... I did, so I knew most of this stuff. Good times though, glad I fead it. Worth a look!

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