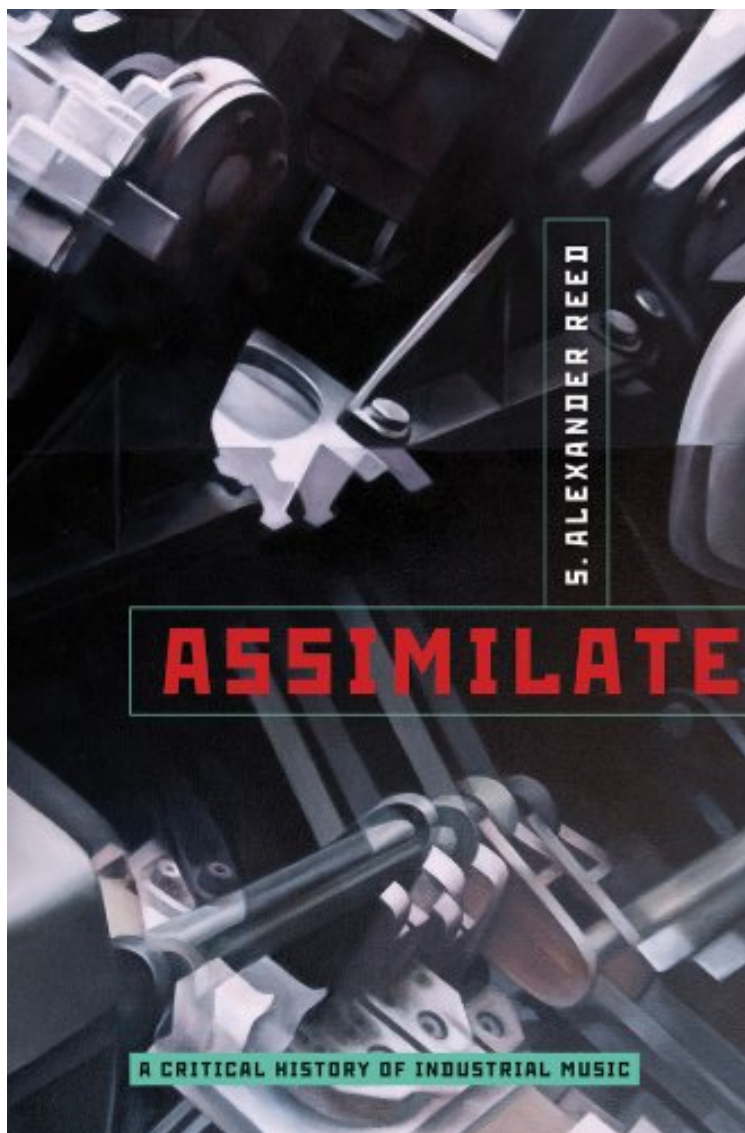


Assimilate: A Critical History of Industrial Music

S. Alexander Reed

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S. Alexander Reed : Assimilate: A Critical History of Industrial Music before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Assimilate: A Critical History of Industrial Music:

36 of 36 people found the following review helpful. One of a KindBy Eric StuevilleASSIMILATE by S. Alexander Reed has written a solid history of industrial music. The much maligned "industrial" moniker is addressed by the players involved and queried by an astute researcher. This is probably the first comprehensive study of Industrial music presented on a wide scale (at least, the first I've read). In addition to multi-page discussions of fan favorite industrial/electronic songs like "Mindphaser" by Frontline Assembly, cultural ramifications of the industrial genre are addressed. As an aside, I've from time to time wondered about some of the racial, political, and sexual implications

made by this awesomely demonstrative form of music and Reed's book does not shy away from these subjects. Reed embarks on rich exploration of the roots of industrial via literature, philosophy, and film and provides compelling histories of the origins of Skinny Puppy and the rise and fall of the seminal WaxTrax! label. Reed pushes into the next wave, discussing recent favorites such as Covenant and VNV Nation. This is a thoughtful summation by a readily apparent fan and capable author. If the text suffers, it is in its pursuit of academic defense which should not diminish its veracity, just that the narrative can drag and apparent points are made redundant. However, that criticism should not dissuade you from a definitive discussion of "industrial"/ hard electronic music. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Strong on concepts and early history, weak on later developments. By Pope Guilty This is an excellent book which is far more interested in the hows and whys of industrial music than it is on chronicling it. The author lays out the philosophies and theories that underlie and animate industrial, giving the genre the serious theoretical treatment it deserves. The history of industrial music that is given is focused quite firmly on the early years, and the history starts to really suffer around 2000 or so, as the mass popularity of industrial rock faded. I got the impression that the "history" in the title was very much in service to the "critical", rather than being an equal partner. That said, I don't want to oversell it- this isn't "Please Kill Me", that history of punk rock which has the Ramones show up late in the book and pretends that punk rock was nearly over at that point- but if you want information about the last ten years of industrial music aside from futurepop, you won't find it here. With that caveat, however, I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed it and would recommend it to anybody with an interest in the subject. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Superb review of Industrial culture and music. By J. T. Gotsick This is a thoroughly researched, well written, and comprehensive survey of Industrial Culture, especially the music that brought so many of us into it. It's unique in my experience that someone treats a fringe cultural movement like this with such care and objectivity. I can only assume this was a labor of love for the author, and he deserves high praise for his accomplishment. I lived through much of the early days of the movement, but he filled in a lot of gaps in my knowledge, and lead me to a few new finds.

"Industrial" is a descriptor that fans and critics have applied to a remarkable variety of music: the oil drum pounding of Einstürzende Neubauten, the processed electronic groans of Throbbing Gristle, the drumloop clatter of Skinny Puppy, and the synthpop songcraft of VNV Nation, to name just a few. But the stylistic breadth and subcultural longevity of industrial music suggests that the common ground here might not be any one particular sound, but instead a network of ideologies. This book traces industrial music's attitudes and practices from their earliest articulations--a hundred years ago--through the genre's mid-1970s formation and its development up to the present and beyond. Taking cues from radical intellectuals like Antonin Artaud, William S. Burroughs, and Guy Debord, industrial musicians sought to dismantle deep cultural assumptions so thoroughly normalized by media, government, and religion as to seem invisible. More extreme than punk, industrial music revolted against the very ideas of order and reason: it sought to strip away the brainwashing that was identity itself. It aspired to provoke, bewilder, and roar with independence. Of course, whether this revolution succeeded is another question... *Assimilate* is the first serious study published on industrial music. Through incisive discussions of musicians, audiences, marketers, cities, and songs, this book traces industrial values, methods, and goals across forty years of technological, political, and artistic change. A scholarly musicologist and a longtime industrial musician, S. Alexander Reed provides deep insight not only into the genre's history but also into its ambiguous relationship with symbols of totalitarianism and evil. Voicing frank criticism and affection alike, this book reveals the challenging and sometimes inspiring ways that industrial music both responds to and shapes the world. *Assimilate* is essential reading for anyone who has ever imagined limitless freedom, danced alone in the dark, or longed for more noise.

Well-written and impeccably researched, *Assimilate* is worth a look not only by music fans looking to learn about this industrial wall of sound, but also by scholars of pop culture wondering why the kids feel the way they do. * Electric * *Assimilate* succeeds in providing an absorbing and extensive introduction to the industrial scene. * Rob Upton, University of Nottingham, Music and Letters * About the Author S. Alexander Reed is Assistant Professor of Music Theory at the University of Florida. He has published and presented research on vocal timbre, embodiment, postpunk music, and the recordings of Nine Inch Nails, Laurie Anderson, Rammstein, and Tori Amos. Reed has released five albums with his own gothic-industrial band, Thou Shalt Not.