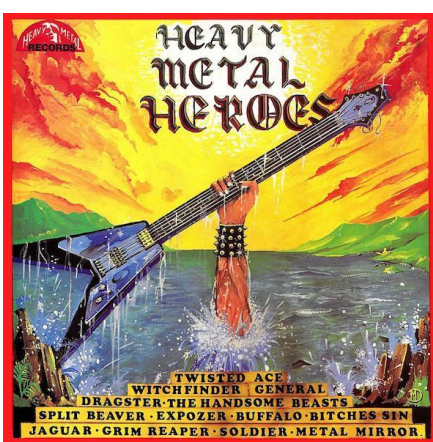
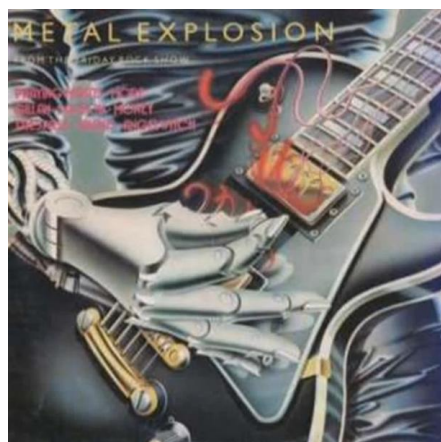
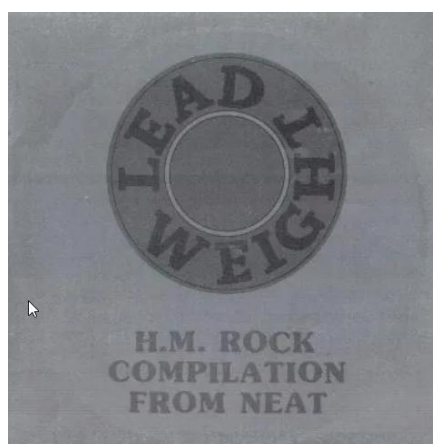
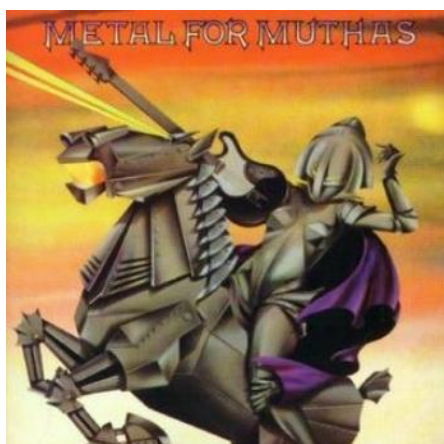




HISTORIC BRITISH HEAVY METAL COMPILATION ALBUMS

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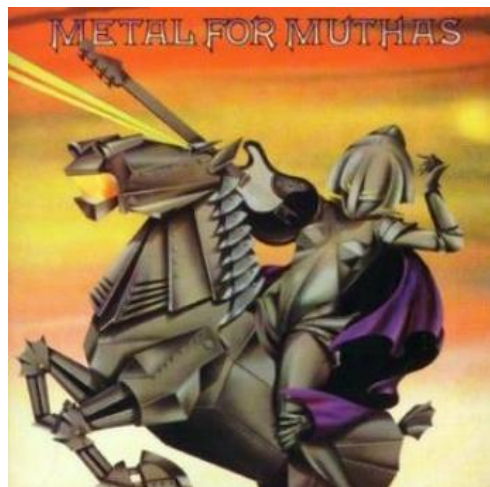
HISTORIC BRITISH HEAVY METAL COMPILATION ALBUMS

Four Records That Helped Carry the New Wave of British Heavy Metal Around the World

Before the internet, YouTube, streaming music, and social media, discovering a new heavy metal band took real effort. Fans depended on record shops, imported albums, British music papers, tape trading, pen pals, radio programs, and word of mouth. For many young bands, appearing on a compilation album could be their first opportunity to reach listeners outside their hometown.

Four records in particular captured the excitement and raw energy coming out of Britain at the beginning of the 1980s: Metal for Muthas, Lead Weight: H.M. Rock Compilation from Neat, Metal Explosion – From the Friday Rock Show, and Heavy Metal Heroes. These were more than collections of songs. They were snapshots of a historic moment when dozens of young British bands were creating a heavier and faster style of music that became known as the New Wave of British Heavy Metal.

METAL FOR MUTHAS



Metal for Muthas — EMI, 1980

The best-known of the four was Metal for Muthas, recorded in 1979 and released by EMI on February 8, 1980. The album was compiled by DJ Neal Kay, whose Heavy Metal Soundhouse disco had become an important gathering place for British heavy metal fans and musicians.

Neal Kay understood that a major movement was developing. Bands were recording demos and independent singles, but most did not have national record deals. By bringing several of them together on one album, Metal for Muthas gave listeners the opportunity to hear the strength and variety of the emerging scene.

The album opened with Iron Maiden's "Sanctuary" and also included their early recording of "Wrathchild." The other bands were Sledgehammer, E.F. Band, Toad the Wet Sprocket, Praying Mantis, Ethel the Frog, Angel Witch, Samson, and Nutz.

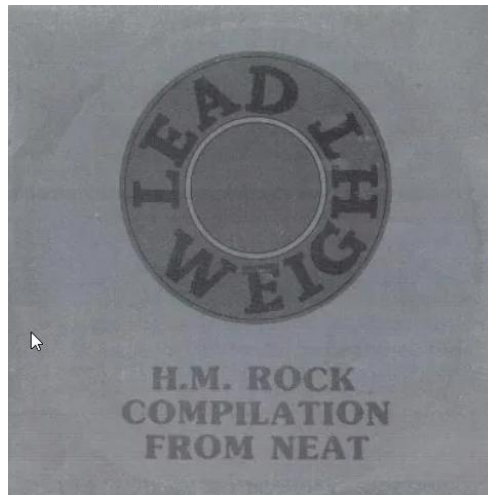
Iron Maiden was still at the beginning of its career, with Paul Di'Anno singing, but the two songs made it clear that this was a band ready to move to the next level. Angel Witch contributed “Baphomet,” Samson offered “Tomorrow or Yesterday,” and Praying Mantis was represented by “Captured City.”

Metal for Muthas reached No. 12 on the British album chart and led to a supporting tour headlined by Iron Maiden. It proved that this new generation of heavy metal bands had an audience. The album was followed by Metal for Muthas Volume II and the four-song Muthas Pride EP.

This record also has a personal connection to my own story. When I traveled to England in 1981, I visited Neal Kay at the Soundhouse. I brought him a copy of Mike Varney’s American U.S. Metal demo. At the time, I was witnessing the same underground network that had made Metal for Muthas possible—DJs, writers, fans, musicians, and independent promoters working together to get new heavy metal heard.

I also saw Angel Witch during that trip and later had firsthand experiences with Iron Maiden. To me, the names on Metal for Muthas are not simply names printed on the back of an old record. They represent the bands, places, and people who were part of my life during that remarkable period.

LEAD WEIGHT: H.M. ROCK COMPILATION FROM NEAT



Lead Weight: H.M. Rock Compilation from Neat — Neat Records, 1981

If Metal for Muthas represented the growing national movement, Lead Weight captured the raw sound coming from northeastern England.

Released by Neat Records in 1981, Lead Weight: H.M. Rock Compilation from Neat was originally issued as a cassette. Neat Records, based near Newcastle, became one of the most important independent labels of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal. It gave young bands an outlet when the major record companies were not yet paying attention.

The compilation began with Raven’s “Inquisitor,” followed by White Spirit’s “Cheetah,” Venom’s “Angel Dust,” Axe’s “S.S. Giro,” Blitzkrieg’s “Inferno,” Aragorn’s “Noonday,” Fist’s “Throwing in

the Towel,” Axis with “Messiah,” Bitches Sin’s “Down the Road,” Warrior’s “Flying High,” and Satan’s Empire with “Soldiers of War.”

That track listing demonstrates how many different directions British heavy metal was taking. Raven delivered frantic, athletic heavy metal. White Spirit featured guitarist Janick Gers, who would later join Iron Maiden. Blitzkrieg’s name and music would become familiar to Metallica fans, while Venom went in a much darker direction than the traditional heavy metal that I preferred.

For me, the most important song on Lead Weight was “Inquisitor.” My friend Ken “Scorch” Dallas and I loved that original Raven track. Raven had the energy, musicianship, personality, and excitement that made this period so special.

All these years later, Raven played “Inquisitor” when they performed here in St. Louis. Hearing that song again brought the story full circle. Something Scorch and I discovered on a British compilation in the early 1980s was still being played live decades later.

That is the lasting value of a record such as Lead Weight. It preserved songs that might otherwise have been known only to fans living near the bands. The cassette carried that northeastern England scene far beyond Newcastle.

METAL EXPLOSION – FROM THE FRIDAY ROCK SHOW



Metal Explosion – From the Friday Rock Show — BBC Records, 1980

BBC Radio 1’s Friday Rock Show, hosted by Tommy Vance, was another lifeline for heavy metal fans who wanted to hear bands that were not getting regular mainstream radio exposure. Metal Explosion – From the Friday Rock Show collected eight performances recorded for the program and put those radio sessions onto vinyl.

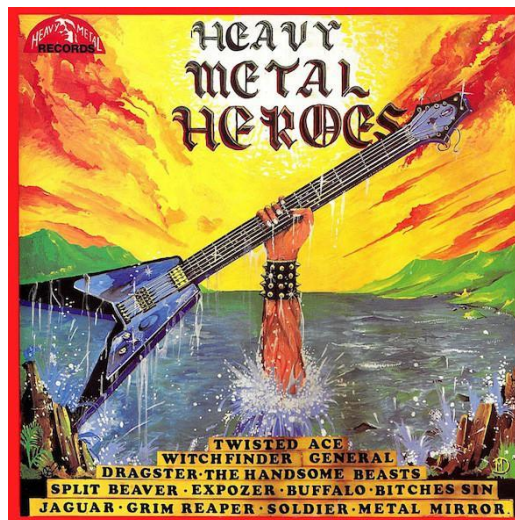
The track listing was Samson – “Take It Like A Man,” Praying Mantis – “Johnny Cool,” Tresspass – “Visionary,” Taurus – “Paper Chaser,” More – “Soldier,” Money – “Leo The Jester,” Gillan – “If You Believe Me,” and Angel Witch – “Extermination Day.”

For an American fan trying to follow what was happening in Britain, the Friday Rock Show material was a gateway into bands we might otherwise never have heard. I do not consider every track on the album essential heavy metal, but three performances have always stood out for me.

Samson's "Take It Like A Man" has always meant something to me personally. More's "Soldier" is another strong heavy metal track, and Paul Mario Day had the kind of powerful, true heavy-metal voice I have always liked. I strongly recommend More's first two albums, Warhead and Blood & Thunder, to heavy metal fans.

But the track that makes this compilation indispensable to me is Angel Witch's "Extermination Day." It remains one of my all-time favorite Angel Witch recordings. The session was recorded for the Friday Rock Show on March 14, 1980, and the performance later appeared among the BBC material included on the 25th Anniversary Expanded Edition of the Angel Witch debut album.

HEAVY METAL HEROES



Heavy Metal Heroes — Heavy Metal Records, 1981

Also released in 1981, Heavy Metal Heroes was an LP compilation issued by Heavy Metal Records. Like Lead Weight, it focused on bands still fighting for recognition rather than established stars.

The album featured Twisted Ace with "I Won't Surrender," Grim Reaper's "The Reaper," Jaguar's "Stormchild," Soldier's "Storm of Steel," Bitches Sin's "Strangers on the Shore," Metal Mirror's "Hard Life," The Handsome Beasts with "Local Heroes," Buffalo's "Cold as Night," Expozer's "Rock Japan," Split Beaver's "Running Wild," Dragster's "Do It!" and Witchfinder General's "Rabies."

Some of these bands went on to build lasting reputations. Grim Reaper later gained international attention with singer Steve Grimmett. Jaguar became respected among collectors of fast, early British metal. Witchfinder General developed a heavy, Black Sabbath-influenced sound and became an important influence on later doom metal bands.

Others remained underground names known mainly to collectors and the fans who were there. That does not make their contributions less important. In many ways, those lesser-known groups demonstrate why compilation records mattered so much. A fan could buy one album and hear a dozen bands that might otherwise have remained completely unknown outside their local clubs.

WHERE THE BANDS CAME FROM



One of the things these records demonstrate is that the NWOBHM was not one London scene. The bands came from industrial cities, smaller towns and regional scenes all over England — and in the case of E.F. Band, from Sweden before relocating to Britain. The list below follows the bands as they appear on the four original-period compilations.

METAL FOR MUTHAS

Band	Home town / origin
Iron Maiden	London
Sledgehammer	Slough, Berkshire
E.F. Band	Göteborg, Sweden; relocated to London in 1979
Toad the Wet Sprocket	Bedford, Bedfordshire
Praying Mantis	London
Ethel the Frog	Hull, East Yorkshire
Angel Witch	London
Samson	London
Nutz	Liverpool

LEAD WEIGHT: H.M. ROCK COMPILATION FROM NEAT

Band	Home town / origin
Raven	Newcastle upon Tyne
White Spirit	Hartlepool
Venom	Newcastle upon Tyne
Axe	Newcastle upon Tyne
Blitzkrieg	Leicester
Aragorn	Macclesfield, Cheshire
Fist	Newcastle upon Tyne
Axis	Stockton-on-Tees
Bitches Sin	Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
Warrior	Newcastle upon Tyne
Satan's Empire	Dundee, Scotland; later based in London

METAL EXPLOSION – FROM THE FRIDAY ROCK SHOW

Band	Home town / origin
Samson	London
Praying Mantis	London
Trespass	Sudbury, Suffolk
Taurus	Middlesbrough
More	London
Money	Birmingham
Gillan	London
Angel Witch	London

HEAVY METAL HEROES

Band	Home town / origin
Twisted Ace	Wolverhampton, West Midlands
Grim Reaper	Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire
Jaguar	Bristol
Soldier	Northampton
Bitches Sin	Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
Metal Mirror	Ruislip, Greater London
The Handsome Beasts	Nuneaton, Warwickshire
Buffalo	Accrington, Lancashire
Expozer	Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
Split Beaver	Wolverhampton, West Midlands
Dragster	Todmorden, West Yorkshire
Witchfinder General	Stourbridge, West Midlands



NEW WAVE OF BRITISH HEAVY METAL '79 REVISITED

New Wave of British Heavy Metal '79 Revisited — 1990

Ten years after the original explosion, Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich helped assemble New Wave of British Heavy Metal '79 Revisited as a retrospective look at the movement that had influenced him so deeply. This makes the album a natural final chapter to these earlier compilation records. Metal for Muthas, Lead Weight, Metal Explosion from the Friday Rock Show, and Heavy Metal Heroes captured the music while it was happening. '79 Revisited looked back a decade later and asked which bands and recordings best represented that era.

In an interview about the project, Lars explained that he wanted the collection to be as all-encompassing as possible. He personally contacted Steve Harris about using an Iron Maiden track and approached Def Leppard's management as well. He did not want the record marketed simply as Iron Maiden and Def Leppard surrounded by lesser-known bands. To Lars,

the smaller groups were part of the history too, and the compilation would lose its purpose if too many important bands were missing.

Choosing the songs was another challenge. Lars remembered that bands such as Samson, Holocaust, and Tygers of Pan Tang had several strong tracks, making it difficult to reduce their contribution to a single song. He also deliberately included lesser-known groups such as Hollow Ground, Holocaust, and Gaskin because he believed some of those recordings still sounded tremendous ten years later.

His comments about Venom are especially interesting. Lars acknowledged that some people might argue about whether Venom belonged within the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, but he believed they deserved to be included. He felt Venom had never received enough credit for the influence they had on the thrash movement. He also said Venom's attitude influenced him personally and that their impact could be heard in early Metallica, including "Whiplash."

When Lars discussed Metallica's musical influences, however, he singled out Diamond Head as the biggest. He pointed to their longer songs, arrangements, riffs, and the way the vocals worked around the music. That connection became obvious throughout Metallica's career as they continued to acknowledge Diamond Head and record their songs.

Perhaps the most important observation Lars made was that the New Wave of British Heavy Metal was a category without being one narrow musical style. He described it essentially as British hard rock and heavy metal from 1979 through 1981. The movement could stretch from White Spirit to Venom and from Angel Witch to Praying Mantis. By 1990, he felt hard rock and heavy metal had become divided into so many subcategories that bands with very different sounds were no longer viewed as belonging to the same larger movement.

That point means a lot to me. Looking back from St. Louis, I never needed every band on these records to sound alike. I was searching for heavy metal, and these compilations were maps. Some songs grabbed me immediately and others did not, but they exposed me to bands I might never have discovered otherwise. Raven, Angel Witch, Jaguar, Venom, Blitzkrieg, Samson, Diamond Head and many others were all part of the same exciting period, even though each band had its own sound.

There is also an interesting parallel between Lars's story and mine. He was a young fan in Los Angeles being influenced by what was happening in Britain. I was a young fan in the St. Louis area doing much the same thing—buying imports, reading the British music press, trading tapes, corresponding with people in England and eventually traveling there in 1981. Lars later became part of Metallica and helped preserve the movement with '79 Revisited. My own path was different, but these records were part of the soundtrack that led me directly into the people, bands and experiences documented in Metal Child.

Seen together, the five compilations tell the story from two directions. The first four are documents from the explosion itself. New Wave of British Heavy Metal '79 Revisited is the look back, assembled after the influence of those early records and bands had spread far beyond Britain. By then, what had once been an underground collection of demos, singles, club bands and independent labels had become one of the foundations of modern heavy metal.

Research source: Lars Ulrich interview discussing New Wave of British Heavy Metal '79 Revisited (1990), transcription supplied by Wade Brooks. Background reference: Wikipedia, "New Wave of British Heavy Metal '79 Revisited."

WHY THESE RECORDS STILL MATTER

Metal for Muthas, Lead Weight, Metal Explosion from the Friday Rock Show, Heavy Metal Heroes, and New Wave of British Heavy Metal '79 Revisited each represented a different view of the same historic movement.

Metal for Muthas showed that the New Wave of British Heavy Metal could reach a national audience. Lead Weight documented the fierce independent scene surrounding Neat Records in northeastern England. Metal Explosion preserved BBC Friday Rock Show sessions and carried those performances beyond the radio audience. Heavy Metal Heroes gave another group of underground bands a chance to be heard on vinyl.

These compilations helped bridge the gap between a homemade demo and a record contract. They allowed fans in the United States and other countries to hear what was happening in British clubs, rehearsal rooms, and small recording studios.

They also inspired others. Only a few years later, Brian Slagel used a similar idea in America with the Metal Massacre series. Those albums gave unsigned bands exposure and helped introduce Metallica and many other groups to a larger audience.

Looking back, it is easy to focus only on the bands that became famous. But the explosion of British heavy metal between 1978 and 1985 was much bigger than Iron Maiden, Def Leppard, or Saxon. It was built by hundreds of musicians, independent labels, DJs, record shops, music writers, tape traders, and dedicated fans.

The first four records allowed us to hear that explosion as it was happening—raw, exciting, and before anyone knew which bands would become legends. '79 Revisited then showed how significant that movement looked ten years later, after its influence had spread throughout heavy metal.

RESEARCH SOURCES

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Lead Weight: H.M. Rock Compilation from Neat release listing:

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Band hometown/origin research checked against NWOBHM.com, Encyclopaedia Metallum, Wikipedia, AllMusic and specialist band histories.

Bringing My Memories of Heavy Metal's Explosion — 1978–1985

A NOTE TO READERS

This is a fanzine. I do not charge for it. It is available at www.metalchild.com to read online or download. If you have a pdf, I encourage you to forward copies by email to old heavy metal friends. Get your own memories going with old mates. The memories, facts, photographs and corrections are mine; I supplied the story in segments, and ChatGPT helped organize them and recommend how to weave them into a readable narrative. I had a reality check in April with a heart attack. 99% blockage on one artery needed 3 stints 4 in all. I am retired, our daughter and grandkids live with us. Retirement has given me the time. Memories pour back. It is pretty easy to upload photos to ChatGPT and start telling the stories around them. Many hours of editing but it's a blast. Sincerely, Wade 'Metal Child' Brooks, my grandkids call me Opa and my wife Oma (I married a German)

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If you need to mail me, contact me and I will give you my current address.



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