



Your Band Sucks: What I Saw at Indie Rock's Failed Revolution (But Can No Longer Hear)

Jon Fine

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A memoir charting thirty years of the American independent rock underground by a musician who knows it intimately

Jon Fine spent nearly thirty years performing and recording with bands that played various forms of aggressive and challenging underground rock music, and, as he writes in this memoir, at no point were any of those bands “ever threatened, even distantly, by actual fame.” Yet when members of his first band, Bitch Magnet, reunited after twenty-one years to tour Europe, Asia, and America, diehard longtime fans traveled from far and wide to attend those shows, despite creeping middle-age obligations of parenthood and 9-to-5 jobs, testament to the remarkable staying power of the indie culture that the bands predating the likes of Bitch Magnet--among them Black Flag, Mission of Burma, and Sonic Youth --willed into existence through sheer determination and a shared disdain for the mediocrity of contemporary popular music.

In indie rock's pre-Internet glory days of the 1980s, such defiant bands attracted fans only through samizdat networks that encompassed word of mouth, college radio, tiny record stores and 'zines. Eschewing the superficiality of performers who gained fame through MTV, indie bands instead found glory in all-night recording sessions, shoestring van tours and endless appearances in grimy clubs. Some bands with a foot in this scene, like REM and Nirvana, eventually attained mainstream success. Many others, like Bitch Magnet, were beloved only by the most obsessed fans of this time.

Like Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential*, *Your Band Sucks* is an insider's look at a fascinating and ferociously loved subculture. In it, Fine tracks how the indie-rock underground emerged and evolved, how it grappled with the mainstream and vice versa, and how it led many bands to an odd rebirth in the 21 st Century in which they reunited, briefly and bittersweetly, after being broken up for decades. Like Patti Smith's *Just Kids*, *Your Band Sucks* is a unique evocation of a particular aesthetic moment. With backstage access to many key characters in the scene—and plenty of wit and sharply-worded opinion—Fine delivers a memoir that affectionately yet critically portrays an important, heady moment in music history.

From the Hardcover edition.

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