

MTV RULED THE WORLD: THE EARLY YEARS OF MUSIC VIDEO BY GREG PRATO



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Review

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There have been few times in modern music history that an instant shift in how we listen to — and view — music has occurred. However, the launch of MTV on August 1, 1981, was certainly one such occurrence. Instantly, music fans were now “listening with their eyes” rather than relying solely on their ears. 'MTV Ruled the World: The Early Years of Music Video' is the first book to focus solely on the channel's important building-block years, specifically from the channel's launch to when MTV's original group of VJs left the channel. Comprised of over 70 all-new interviews ("Weird Al" Yankovic, Daryl Hall, John Oates, Joe Elliott, Phil Collen, Rob Halford, Stewart Copeland, Rick Springfield, Jerry Casale, Geddy Lee, Ann Wilson, Chuck D, Alan Hunter, Nina Blackwood, etc.), the book is not only an eye-opening account of the early years of MTV, but also of the music industry, important music developments/events, and the “Big ‘80s” in general.

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Features

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Most helpful customer reviews

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

A two-star book

By Ernie-D

I bought this at the same time I bought the MTV oral history, which is a much better book. By comparison, "MTV Ruled the World" is a cursory and thin survey of the era.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Pretty Good

By Kevin Caffrey

"I Want My MTV" that came out around 2012 is better and features a wider array of musicians and insiders, but this book is very good as well. Not sure if we need 2 1/2 page commentaries from Oran "Juice" Jones (!), but it's an enjoyable quick read.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

I Want My MTV

By mrbluesman

In some ways, it's hard to remember just how huge MTV was in the early to mid 80s. Today, you can find

virtually any song or video with the click of a computer mouse. But, 30 years ago, it wasn't that easy. I turned 16 in 1981 and, in our town, we didn't get MTV on our cable system until 1982. I had spent most of the mid 70s to 1982 listening to FM radio. I can't even estimate how many days and nights I'd listen to the radio, singing along with the better known tunes and grinning from ear to ear when some deep track was played. In my mind, it seems almost like a magical time. The first time I saw MTV, I was hooked. It was the same feeling that I had with radio, heck, even more so. I remember all the hours watching MTV, it seemed to always be on. I, like a lot of people, would wait and wait for a certain video to be played and keep my eyes glued to the TV during the 3 or 4 minutes that song aired. To this day, when I hear certain songs, I think of the images from the video as the song plays (for example, just heard "Don't Answer Me" by Alan Parsons and all I could think of was the cartoon video of that song).

I have wanted, forever, to read an in-depth book about the early days of MTV. Thankfully, Greg Prato wrote this fantastic book. Every single angle of MTV is covered here. From it's start up, to the VJs, to discussions about the making of and look of countless classic videos, to the genesis of the "I Want My MTV" slogan and on and on. No area is left uncovered. MTV's story is told, in this book, through the eyes of the people that were there and made MTV what it was (Nina Blackwood, Alan Hunter, Fee Waybill from the Tubes, Mike Reno from Loverboy, Joe Elliot from Def Leppard - you name a person and they've probably been interviewed for this book). Prato covers the basic stuff (how the studio was actually set up, how the VJ segments were taped and not live) to the more complex (for example, Prato tackles the age old criticism of MTV [that it was racist in the beginning because it played no videos from groups or singers that weren't white] and looks at it from all angles). No point of view is left out, here, and by the end of the book, you're really amazed at all the info that's been put forward in this book.

I really couldn't put this book down. I devoured chapters each day and always looked forward to reading more. More than anything, though, Prato somehow captured the magic of the early MTV days. I found myself feeling incredibly nostalgic as I read through the book. I found myself heading to the internet to watch so many of the videos discussed in the pages of this book. It's not just a trip down Memory Lane, indeed, it felt like I was reliving the early 80s and the genesis of MTV as I read this book.

I am an avid reader and am not always easy to please. This book, though, was one of the best books that I've read in years. I do not have a single criticism of this book. Buy it, read it and, I assure you, you'll find yourself countless times humming Duran Duran's "Rio," doing Bowie's moves from "Let's Dance" and saying, more than once, "I want my MTV."

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