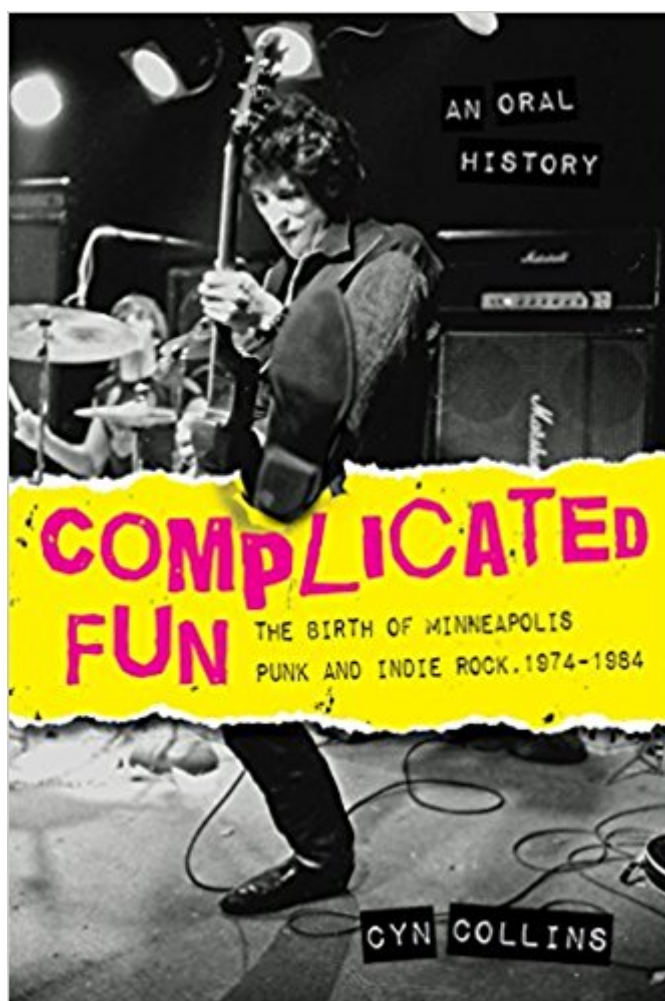


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# Complicated Fun: The Birth Of Minneapolis Punk And Indie Rock, 1974-1984 --- An Oral History



## Synopsis

In the early 1970s, the Minneapolis music scene was no scene at all. Radio stations played Top 40 music; bars and clubs booked only rock cover bands and blues bands. Meanwhile, cities like New York, Detroit, and London were spawning fresh and innovative—and loud and raw—sounds by musicians creating a new punk and rock movement. A small but daring group of Twin Cities musicians, artists, entrepreneurs, and enthusiasts wanted a piece of that action. To do it, they had to build it themselves. *Complicated Fun* brings together the recollections of the men and women who built Minnesota's vibrant and vital indie rock scene. Through interviews with dozens of musicians, producers, managers, journalists, fans, and other scenesters, Cyn Collins chronicles the emergence of seminal bands like the Suicide Commandos, the Hypstrz, Curtiss A, Flamingo, the Suburbs, Hüsker Dü, the Replacements, and more. The subjects reflect on the key role that Oar Folkjokeopus record store, Jay's Longhorn bar, and Twin/Tone Records played by providing outlets for hearing, performing, and recording these new sounds. *Complicated Fun* explores the influences, motivations, moments, and individuals that propelled Minneapolis to its status as a premier music scene and, in turn, inspired future generations of rockers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Advance Praise: "Complicated Fun is a great rock book that works the same way as a great rock song. Find the right voices, lead with a riff, spit some truth, then watch everything explode. The result? Punk messing with punk, and birthing indie rock." Marlon James,

author of *A Brief History of Seven Killings* —“Cyn Collins —,’s indispensable and incredibly entertaining history puts the reader inside the record store, at the club, and in the practice space with the music geeks who brought one of America’s greatest music scenes to life. The only thing this book is missing is the music — you’ve gotta buy that separately.”

• Mark Baumgarten, author of *Love Rock Revolution: K Records and the Rise of Independent Music* —“In 1984, Minnesota music owned the world. While it may seem like it exploded out of nowhere, such a vibrant scene doesn’t happen overnight. *Complicated Fun* tells the story of the pioneers, misfits, punks, and musical mavericks who paved the way for what became the most original and exciting music scene of that era. Cyn Collins does a fantastic job coaxing the stories from the people who lived it. This is a tale that needed to be told about bands that need to be heard.”

• Kevin Cole, KEXP-FM radio in Seattle, former DJ at First Avenue/7th Street Entry —“A comprehensive, intensively reported tribute to a creative scene that is too often overlooked by rock historians, written by someone who cares deeply about the music and the people making it.”

• Melissa Maerz, music writer and senior producer for *VICE News Tonight* —“Occasionally, genius flows from geographically isolated communities. The Minneapolis music scene in the early ’80s is an excellent model and shows how the passions of an inspired community can lead to broad cultural influence. *Complicated Fun* faithfully examines this story through detailed commentary from many of the scenesters and artists that made Minneapolis happen. This is a must read for fans of punk/indie culture.”

• Bruce Pavitt, author of *Sub Pop USA* and *Experiencing Nirvana* —“You had to be there. Well, no, you didn’t! Laden with earnest, firsthand anecdotes of a window in time when the Minnesota punk and indie music scene created itself, Cyn Collins’s book is fun to read and perhaps instructive for anyone who wants to change the world themselves.”

• Chris Osgood, singer/songwriter/guitarist for the *Suicide Commandos* —“Cyn Collins’s oral history of Twin Cities punk and indie rock depicts the iconic events and people with the cheerful one-upmanship of tales told around the campfire. More remarkably, it also uncovers the parts played by lesser knowns, like the *Commandos*’ explosives expert Linda Hultquist, the after-show party host Jody Kurilla, and the barely recorded but essential NNB. Best of all, *Complicated Fun* shows how a vital and nurturing network erupted from a few dedicated music lovers, illuminating how hungry people were (are) to create — not just music, but community. So, what are you waiting for?”

• Terri Sutton, freelance writer and former *City Pages* arts editor —“To this day, the so-called counterculture has always been my family — the punk movement is more infiltrated with rogue intellectuals, as opposed to derelicts, than people

think. Say what you will, but they're smart people, and they're great mentors - my mentors. • Dave Pirner, singer/songwriter/guitarist for Soul Asylum  
"In Complicated Fun, you can almost hear the voices of the players from the fertile late  
-70s/early -80s Minneapolis music scene. Memory is a strange beast, but the wide scope of interviewees ensures that this is a fair summary and a damn good documentation of the era. • Peter Jesperson, music industry professional and cofounder of Twin/Tone Records  
"Cyn Collins has diligently collected prodigious stories from the memories of musicians and fans who experienced the greatest moments of Twin Cities music history. • Lori Barbero, drummer/singer/songwriter for Babes in Toyland

Cyn Collins is host of KFAI radio's "Spin with Cyn" and author of West Bank Boogie: 40 Years of Music, Mayhem and Memories. She has contributed arts and culture articles to the Star Tribune, City Pages, Twin Cities Daily Planet, and others. Collins lives in Minneapolis.

Great

Fantastic book

Minneapolis before prince

Great book on the creation of a music scene. In this case it happened to be Minneapolis in the late 70's but it could be what happens in any town, when people are inspired and energized by an idea, a song, or a new style and then they decide to create that where they live. I loved learning more of the people I had heard of but didn't know intimately. This book is a telling of their stories and their secrets; of parties, of songs and happenings that finally we all can now read. These bands came out of the post glam, no wave and punk movements of elsewhere and paved the road to what would later rock and roll down the MN avenues of Husker Du and the Replacements. From these streets, inspirations of 80's hardcore, Grunge of Seattle and the power pop punk of the bay area followed.

I had the best time reading this oral history of the '70s and '80s Twin Cities rock 'n' roll scene, with great bands I knew and saw and people I grew up with. I love oral histories, with the shifting mix of voices, and this is really well done on that level. I thought it was best on the '70s, from a New York Dolls appearance at the Minnesota State Fair in 1974 and culminating in the M-80 festival in

September '79. So many things were happening so fast in those five years, and I only caught a fraction of them. This book really fills in the gaps on how the Oar Folkjokeopus record store, Longhorn nightclub, and Twin/Tone record label provided the foundations for a revolution in the regional indie aesthetic that scripted the future in many ways. Exciting to be so close to it and to see as much of it as I did, and fun to relive it a little here. This book went by too fast. I wanted more. Excellent.

The author captures an incredible time in music history through the voices of those that created incredible new sounds and lyrics that spoke to a generation that was wary and uninspired by the narrow array of music being sold to them on the radio. Through the voices of those that witnessed the emergence of Minneapolis as a place to make pro gal music, the author gives readers a front row seat and an authentic, well chronicled history of how it all came to be and how truly special the era was.

Great book - I couldn't put it down! Captures the oral history of an important time for indie music starting in the 70s in Minneapolis.

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