

**LIVE TO THE METAL MUSIC
ŽIVI UZ METAL MUZIKU**

Autori:

**JOVANA KAZIMIROVIĆ
IVA NICULOVIĆ**
VIII razred, OŠ “Branko Radičević” Negotin

Regionalni Centar za talente Bor

Mentor:

VESNA PRVULOVIĆ
prof. Engleskog jezika i književnosti,
OŠ “Branko Radičević” Negotin

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Abstract

Metal is a movement of music that started essentially with the heavy rock movements. While there was not actual metal during that time, bands were experimenting with heaviness, and it was no surprise that the first metal band (Black Sabbath) was soon to be born.

Metal music is a worldwide form of music that has held the attention of younger generations for over 50 years. Metal music has branched off into different sub genres, but one thing is the main motivator for the survival of metal music through all the generations. That is a need for younger generations to rebel against the status quo, to express themselves and their frustration of an outdated way of life.

This paper presents the development of metal music from the 1960s to the present day, with special emphasis on some of the metal sub-genre of music. Originally, metal was one genre. But as time passed more genres were born. Today metal is a global movement and has hundreds of sub-genres such as Heavy, Death, Black, Doom, Power, Thrash, Speed, Folk, Industrial, Symphonic, Gothic & Nu-Metal, to name just a few. They range from sheer brutality to smooth and melodic rhythms. The bass and drums are often played in sync while the guitar plays the main rhythm with riffs, licks, and chords.

Groups that marked the Metal are: Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Metallica, Black Sabbath, Motörhead, Megadeth, Anthrax, Slayer, Pantera, Testament, Venom and many others.

Key words: metal, development, subgenres, groups

Rezime

Metal je muzički pokret koji je u suštini počeo sa *heavy rock* pokretom. Iako tokom tog vremena nije bilo pravog metala, bendovi su eksperimentisali sa težinom, i nije iznenađenje da se uskoro rodio prvi metal bend (Black Sabbath).

Metal muzika je vrsta muzike rasprostranjena širom sveta koja je održala pažnju mlađih generacija preko 50 godina. Metal muzika se grana u različite podžanrove, ali jedna stvar je glavni motivator za opstanak metal muzike kroz sve generacije. To je potreba mladih generacija za pobunom protiv postojećeg stanja stvari, da izraze sebe i svoje frustracije zbog zastarelog načina života.

Ovaj rad predstavlja razvoj metal muzike od '60-ih do danas, sa posebnim osvrtom na neke podžanrove metal muzike. Prvobitno, metal je bio jedan žanr. Ali, kako je vreme prolazilo, više žanrova je rodjeno. Danas je metal globalni pokret i ima stotine podžanrova, kao što su *Heavy, Death, Black, Doom, Power, Thrash, Speed, Folk, Industrial, Symphonic, Gothic i Nu-Metal*, da pomenemo samo neke. Oni se kreću od sirove brutalnosti do glatkih i melodičnih ritmova. Bas i bubnjevi su često svirani sinhronizovano, dok gitara svira glavni ritam sa rifovima, improvizacijama i akordima.

Grupe koje su obeležile metal su: Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Metallica, Black Sabbath, Motörhead, Megadeth, Anthrax, Slayer, Pantera, Testament, Venom i mnoge druge.

Ključne reči: metal, razvoj, podžanrovi, grupe

Introduction

Music is just sequences of sounds and sometimes vocals put together. Now, it has become a category in which today's people want to express themselves and state their emotions or attitudes through the sound. Categories/subcategories called “genres” can be metal, pop, punk, hip-hop, jazz, R&B, folk etc.

Metal is a genre of music characterized by its cacophonous wall of sound and accelerated tempo which is achieved through distorted electric guitars playing fast-paced riffs, with the driving drumbeat often utilizing hypersonic double bass rhythms and emphasizing the continuous pumping action, the bass guitar often plays similar to the guitar, but more with the drums, so as to add to the overall heaviness and depth. It can be manifested in many different forms and the spectrum of intensity is usually quite varied. Forms vary from slow and heavy melodic grooves, to complex and precise blinding rhythms, odd time changes, and sheer brutality.

Metal, much like rock, is made up of many sub-genres. Metal genres can at times be difficult to differentiate as they seem similar, and the differences in overall structural, temperamental, instrumental and vocal expression are minimal.

This study attempts to present the development of metal music, from its beginnings to the present. It aims to present subtle differences in different metal subgenres, which are hard to distinguish, even to experienced listeners. The study also shows other aspects of listening and playing this kind of music, such as fashion, prejudices and unconventional metal dance.

Metal music

Heavy metal (often referred to simply as Metal) is a genre of rock music, which developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, largely in the United Kingdom and the United States. With roots in blues-rock and psychedelic rock, the bands that created heavy metal developed a thick, massive sound, characterized by highly amplified distortion, extended guitar solos, emphatic beats, and overall loudness. Heavy metal lyrics and performance styles are generally associated with masculinity and machismo.

In the late 1960s the term heavy metal was used interchangeably with hard rock, but gradually began to be used to describe music played with even more volume and intensity. While hard rock maintained a bluesy rock and roll identity, including some swing in the back beat and riffs that tended to outline chord progressions in their hooks, heavy metal's riffs often functioned as stand-alone melodies and had no swing in them.

Led Zeppelin defined central aspects of the emerging genre, with Page's highly distorted guitar style and singer Robert Plant's dramatic wailing vocals. Other bands, with a more consistently heavy, "purely" metal sound, would prove equally important in codifying the genre. The 1970 releases by Black Sabbath (Black Sabbath and Paranoid) were crucial in this regard. Black Sabbath had developed a particularly heavy sound in part due to an industrial accident guitarist Tony Iommi suffered before forming the band. Unable to play normally, Iommi had to tune his guitar down for easier fretting and rely on power chords with their relatively simple fingering. Deep Purple had fluctuated between styles in its early years, but by 1969 vocalist Ian Gillan and guitarist Ritchie Blackmore had led the band toward the developing heavy metal style.

Judas Priest arrived to unify and amplify the heavy metal aesthetic from hard rock's sonic palette. For the first time, heavy metal became a true genre into itself. Though Judas Priest did not have a top 40 album in the United States until 1980, for many it was definitive post-Sabbath heavy metal band; its twin-guitar attack, featuring rapid tempos and a nonbluesy, more cleanly metallic sound, was a major influence on later acts.

Many subgenres of heavy metal developed outside of the commercial mainstream during and after the 1980s.

Today there are many sub-genres of metal, such as: Thrash, Speed, Doom, Death, Gothic, Nu and others.

Influences

Rock music historians maintain that the Heavy metal from Western pop music adopted elements of escapism, a way of running from the reality, which found expression in the futuristic and fantastical lyrics of songs. At the same time, the movement embraced realistic elements from the African-American blues, which are visible in the insistence on loss, depression and loneliness. While fans argue that dark themes are not dominant in Heavy metal, many critics condemn the entire genre for promoting the negative aspects of reality.

Themes of darkness, evil, power and apocalypse are, in fact, a metaphor for real-life problems. As a reaction to "love and peace", a slogan of hippie subculture of the sixties, heavy metal is a typical expression of the counterculture, where the darkness suppresses the light and where the happy ending in the pop is replaced by images of crude reality, which is not always so carefree as it appears.

As for classical music, the strongest imprint on heavy metal was left by the baroque, the romantic and the modernist composers like Bach, Paganini, Wagner and Beethoven, and to a lesser extent, Mozart or Haydn.

Instruments

The most common setup of a heavy metal band consists of a drummer, bassist, rhythm guitarist, solo guitarists and singers (who do not play any instruments). In certain types of heavy metals keyboards are used, while other genres neglect the same although with the appearance and the development of new subgenres, keyboards are becoming increasingly popular. The sound of the guitar, which has a strong distortion is the main feature of the heavy metals and a way of rendering the "heavy" sound more powerful. With the passing of time, more complex solo guitar riffs and sections begin to dominate heavy metal. Heavy metal guitarists use "sweep-picking", "tapping" and other sophisticated techniques of fast playing so that, in many subgenres the virtuosity has got the upper hand over simplicity. Besides, as a result of the rapid technological development, many new ways of generating artificial guitar sound have appeared.

Dance

What is characteristic for many heavy metal musicians is jumping off the stage (stage dive), moshing, playing an invisible guitar and performing a headbanging or shaking their heads to the beat of the music, the effect of which is inevitably highlighted by tossing of their long hair. It is believed that the term 'head-banging' was originally coined in connection with the heavy metal group Led Zeppelin and dates back to their first US tour, in 1969. Apart from swaying their heads, the heavy metal performers unfailingly display the so called "devil horns", which was popularized by James Roni in the 80's when he was the lead singer of the group Black Sabbath and the group Dio.



Picture 1: James Roni's 'devil's horns'.

Fashion

A number of bands put special accent on their appearance to hallmark their music. The image characteristic of the metal bands was defined in the late '70s and is characterized by long hair, which critics generally identify with the hippie movement and a rebellion against nothing in particular. Outwardly, the fans of metal bands are recognizable by their typical leather clothes, chains, skulls and crosses. Many performers often dyed their instruments in order to appear different and some bands painted their faces as was the case of the groups Kiss, Alice Cooper, Mercyful Fate.



Picture 2: Kiss

Prejudice

Metal music is widespread, and rather underrated. Fans of this music are seen as drug addicts and mentally incompetent people and are labelled with many derogatory names. This relation is not intended to offend people who do not listen to metal music, though. Its purpose is to dissipate some deep-rooted doubts, which are common amongst non-metal audience. It cannot be denied that some metal music artists died of overdose, but this fact does not prove that metal music is promoting the use of drugs. It is known that exponents of other music genres have experienced this kind of addiction.

The New Wave of British Heavy Metal

The New Wave of British Heavy Metal (frequently abbreviated as NWOBHM) was a heavy metal movement that started in Britain, in the late 1970s. It achieved international attention by early 1980s. The movement developed as a reaction, in part, to the decline of early heavy metal bands such as Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath. NWOBHM bands toned down the blues influences of earlier acts, incorporated elements of punk, increased the tempo and adopted a “tougher” sound, taking a harder approach to its music. It was a scene directed almost exclusively at heavy metal fans. The era is considered to be major foundation stone for the extreme metal genres; acts such as the American Trash Metal band Metallica cite NWOBHM bands like Saxon, Motörhead, Diamond Head, and Iron Maiden as a major influence on their musical style.

Reviled or ignored by many mainstream critics in both the UK and the US, the NWOBHM nonetheless came to dominate the hard rock scene of the early-mid 1980s. NWOBHM was musically characterized by fast upbeat tempo songs, power chords, fast guitar solos and melodic, soaring vocals, with lyrical themes often drawing inspiration from mythology and fantasy fiction. Many of the bands of this era were signed to Neat Records, who has released volumes of NWOBHM compilations in later years.

Sub-genres of Heavy Metal

Speed Metal

Speed metal is sub-genre of heavy metal music that originated in the late 1970s from NWOBHM and hardcore punk roots. It is described as “extremely fast, abrasive, and technically demanding” music.

Motörhead is often credited as the first band to invent/play speed metal. Some of speed metal’s earlier influences include Deep Purple’s “Fireball” and Queen’s “Stone Cold Crazy” , from their a974 album Sheer Heart Attack, and Deep Purple’s song “Highway Star”, from their album Machine Head. The latter was called ‘early speed metal’ by Robb Reiner of speed metal band Anvil. Led Zeppelin’s “Communication Breakdown”, first released in January 1969, could also be said to be an early template for speed metal.

Speed metal eventually evolved into trash metal. Although many tend to equate the two subgenres, there is a distinct difference between them. In his book Sound of the Beast: The Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal, Ian Christe states that “...trash metal relies more on long, wrenching rhythmic breaks, while speed metal...is a cleaner and more musically intricate subcategory, still loyal to the dueling melodies of classic metal.”

Thrash Metal

Thrash metal is a subgenre of heavy metal that is characterized usually by its fast tempo and aggression. Songs of the genre typically use fast percussive and low-register guitar riffs, overlaid with shredding-style lead work. Lyrics of thrash metal songs often deal with social issues using direct and denunciatory language, an approach which partially overlaps with the hardcore genre. The “Big Four” bands of thrash metal are Anthrax, Megadeth, Metallica and Slayer, who simultaneously created and popularized the genre in the early 1980s.

The origins of thrash metal are generally traced to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a number of bands began incorporating the sound of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, creating a new genre and developing into a separate movement from punk rock and hardcore. This genre is more aggressive compared to its relative, speed metal, and can be seen in part to be a reaction to the lighter, more widely acceptable sounds and themes of glam metal.



Picture 3: Metallica

Death Metal

Death metal is an extreme subgenre of heavy metal. It typically employs heavily distorted guitars, tremolo picking, deep growling vocals, blast beat drumming, minor keys or atonality, and complex song structures with multiple tempo changes.

Building from the musical structure of thrash metal and early black metal, death metal emerged during the mid 1980s. English heavy metal band Venom crystallized the elements of what later became known as thrash metal, death metal and black metal with their 1981 album *Welcome to Hell*. Metal acts such as Slayer, Kreator, Celtic Frost were very important influences to the crafting of the genre. Along with the band Death and its frontman Chuck Schuldiner, who is often referred to as “the father of death metal”, bands such as Possessed, Obituary and Morbid Angel are often considered pioneers of the genre.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, death metal gained more media attention as popular record labels like Earache and Roadrunner began to sign death metal bands at a rapid rate. Since then, death metal has diversified, spawning a variety of subgenres.

Traditional Doom Metal

Doom metal is an extreme form of heavy metal music that typically uses slower tempos, low guitars and much “thicker” or “heavier” sound than other metal genres. Doom metal is among the oldest forms of heavy metal, rooted in the music of early Black Sabbath. Black Sabbath’s music is itself stylistically rooted in the music of early Black Sabbath. Black Sabbath’s music is itself stylistically rooted in blues, but with the deliberately doomy and loud guitar playing of

Tony Iommi (who often used the triton), and the then-uncommon dark and pessimistic lyrics and atmosphere, they set the standards of early heavy metal and inspired various doom metal bands to come.

At the beginning of the 1990s, experimentation within doom metal became widespread, and the genre diversified as a result. Today, bands which continue the style of the genre's pioneers are often referred to as traditional doom metal. Traditional doom metal bands more commonly use higher guitar tunings, and do not play as slow as many other doom bands. Traditional doom bands typically play slow to mid-tempo songs with a thick and heavy sound. Vocals are usually clean with the occasional growl or scream. The Lyrics in traditional doom usually are eerie and fark like other doom metal divisions.

Goth Metal

Gothic metal or goth metal is a sub-genre of heavy metal music that combines the aggression of doom metal with the dark melancholy of gothic rock. The music of gothic metal is diverse with bands known to adopt the gothic approach to different styles of heavy metal music. The genre originated during the early 1990s in Europe originally as an outgrowth of doom/death, a fusion of death metal and doom metal. Lyrics are generally melodramatic and mournful with inspiration from gothic fiction as well as personal experiences.

Norwegian band Theatre of Tragedy developed the “Beauty and the beast” aesthetic of combining aggressive male vocals with clean female vocals, a contrast that had since been adopted by many gothic metal groups. During the mid-1990s, a number of bands brought the gothic approach to black metal. By the end of the decade, a symphonic metal variant of gothic metal had been developed.

In the 21st century, gothic metal has moved towards the mainstream in Europe, particularly in Finland where a number of groups have released hit singles or chart-topping albums. In the Us, however, only a few bands such as Evanescence, Lacuna Coil, and H.I.M. have found commercial success.



Picture 4: Evanescence

Symphonic Metal

Symphonic metal is a term used to describe heavy metal music that has symphonic elements; that is, elements that are either borrowed from classical music or, as with progressive rock music, create a style reminiscent of it, e.g. operatic female lead vocals; instrumentation that includes acoustic guitars and different types of keyboards instead of relying solely on electric guitars; classical thematic material in addition to characteristically heavy metal power riffs. The roots of symphonic metal are found in early death metal and gothic metal bands, who made some use of symphonic elements in their music. Particularly important was Therion's use of a live orchestra and classical compositional techniques; gradually these elements became a more important part of Therion's music than their death metal roots.

Nightwish and Within Temptation both released their first albums in 1997, each heavily influenced by Therion's symphonic turn. Within Temptation was more influenced by gothic metal, and therefore musically simpler than the more power metal-influenced Nightwish, but both bands shared two key symphonic metal elements – powerful female lead vocals from Tarja Turunen and Sharon den Adel respectively, and the heavy use of classically influenced keyboard playing.

Many new symphonic metal bands appeared or came to wide attention in the early 2000s, including Rain Fell Within, After Forever, Epica, Haggars, and Edenbridge, all featuring the characteristic keyboards and female vocals.



Picture 5: Epica

Nu Metal

Nu metal (also known as n-metal or agro-metal) is a subgenre of heavy metal. It is a fusion genre which combines elements of heavy metal with other genres, including grunge and hip hop. The genre gained mainstream success in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The origin of “nu metal” is often attributed to producer Ross Robinson, who worked with bands such as Korn, Limp Bizkit, producing their first albums and helping create the sound that defined them. He has even been called “The Godfather of Nu Metal”. Nu metal album sales declined and rotation of nu metal artist on rock radio began to diminish in the early 2000s. Several factors contributed to this including oversaturation of the market, and a negative stigma associated with the genre.



Picture 6: Korn

Conclusion

Metal music is definitely a kind of music which can't please every ear. Many would find the sound unpleasant in different ways, from simple rudeness to destructive aggression. However, metal bands seem that they couldn't care less for the opinion of the public, furthermore they try hard to foster the image of bad, mean eccentrics who you wouldn't let near your loving family.

Maybe that's the reason why a lot of teenagers go through a metal phase – they embrace it as a kind of rebellion, as a way of deliberate bitterness and malice towards their parents, whom they want to show that they are not sweet little children any more. Hopefully, the heavy metal step of growing up usually ends after the period of adolescence.

Still, it would be unfair to call such a massive music faction, a teenagers' occult land of saying 'no' to authorities. Its genres and subgenres, as well as its long-lasting existence, prove that there are many, both younger and older devoted listeners, who understand the subtleness between Nu and Symphonic metal. They are the ones whose ear can feel the music in screams, fast-paced guitar riffs, and heavy metal sound.

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