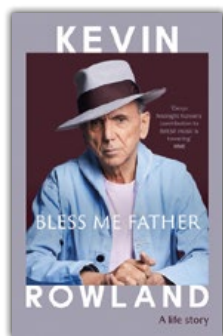


# THE BUSINESS BOOKS



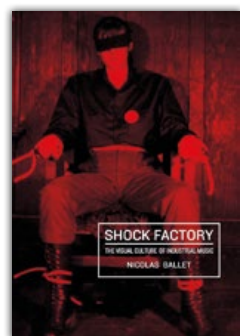
## **BLESS ME FATHER** KEVIN ROWLAND (Penguin/Random House)

9/10

The title indicates a confession – as you might expect from a good Catholic Irish boy, but it actually reads far more like an exorcism, as Kevin Rowland lays out and lays bare in unsparing detail, the life that has led him to where he is now, finally financially solvent, content, and still creating music. To say that he was insecure as a child, and an adult, would be a serious understatement. Coupled

with his almost-never-achieved obsessive need for approval from his dominating father, Rowland's profound absence of belief in his own personal and professional worth, either as a musician, or as a man, makes harrowing reading. To his credit, Rowland is absolutely even-handed in detailing his personal and professional success and failures, attributing both blame and credit where each correctly lie. The salutary tale of a talented and popular musician having an eight-figure reward slowly pilfered away from him by a combination of management chicanery and poor business decisions, coupled with large and frequent bouts of head-burying, are an object lesson to anyone planning to try and navigate the treacherous waters of pop stardom anytime soon. Fiercely determined to present his art, no matter what the cost, Rowland endured bafflement and ridicule for appearing on stage notably at Reading Festival in 1999 in a dress. His bankrupt cocaine addition, explained in utterly harrowing detail, should put potential dabblers off the stuff for life, I am sure he hopes that it will. But there is a tenacity of steel that has kept Rowland surviving and eventually thriving once again, as his lost royalties are finally returned to him, allowing him to resume his passion for making and releasing music, because that is really what he was born to do. With rare and admirable honesty, Kevin Rowland details his early life of petty crime, his difficulties in getting the word to understand his way of approaching it, and his rise and fall as a musician. His interaction with his family runs through this story, not so much as a thread, more like an unbreakable steel cable, as he fought for the understanding and respect he deserved, but never quite received. If this book has helped Kevin to finally reach a peace about himself, then it has been worth it. Having gone through the undoubted trauma of remembering all of it, and setting it down in print, it's a peace he absolutely deserves.

Andy Hughes



## **SHOCK FACTORY – THE VISUAL CULTURE OF INDUSTRIAL MUSIC**

NICK BALLETT  
(Punk Scholars Network)

9/10

This gigantic tome of a book offers up an exploration of the visualisation that accompanies the music of the industrial releases, utilising an in-depth and considered examination as to why certain imagery was exploited by the likes of Throbbing Gristle, Coil, Laibach, Test Dept, Psychic TV and interrelated protagonists. Coming in

at over 580 pages, the book scrutinises the utilisation of the imagery used on bands' artwork, releases and in videos with a detailed, academically concise methodology. Examining the origins of a number of pieces, their cultural and political impact and their repurposing by a specific band opens up an enormous void of knowledge that even those who have explored the industrial genre since the '70s may well not know about. Creating a beautiful and somewhat seminal exploration of industrial culture that would certainly appeal to aficionados of the genre, but also to those who want to explore the more academic elements of a scene that ran side by side with punk.

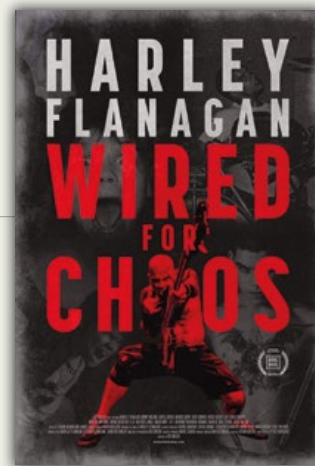
# FILM

## **HARLEY FLANAGAN: WIRED FOR CHAOS** (Repix Media)

9/10

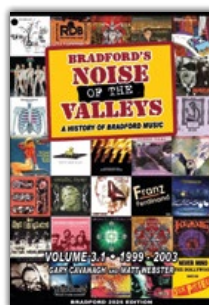
Tellingly, the opening scene to 'Wired For Chaos' perhaps sums up Harley Francis Flanagan, the founding member of Cro-Mags and arguably the heart and the soul of the New York hardcore scene best: he's bare-chested, running uphill on a road in just a pair of shorts, carrying his iconic Fender Precision bass. And playing it as he goes. A reflective voiceover from the man himself intones that "I feel like I've been angry for almost fifty years and I'm only starting now to realise that this is not really who I am." As John Lydon rightly sang, "anger is an energy". Harley is a cautionary tale on how anger can easily turn from convenient fuel to consuming funeral pyre. Watching the early footage of Harley as a young teenager drumming for the Stimulators and then bringing together Cro-Mags and Murphy's Law in the early '80s, it's like watching an exposed, raw nerve in person form. Surviving his formative years, Harley would find expression and acceptance in music. In New York. In the '80s. When it was essentially like the Purge. 'Wired For Chaos' is a hard watch. The tales of basically child abuse that are stated matter-of-factly, the rough living, the violence and so much more, contrasting with these heartbreaking glimpses of an ordinary kid who would pinch Darryl Jenifer's hat, being "a rascal". Moved along by talking head segments from the likes of Henry Rollins and Ian MacKaye as well as revealing footage of Harley chatting with the late Anthony Bourdain. Showing a man who is coming to terms with himself and embracing both the good and the bad, 'Wired For Chaos' is a compelling, deftly handled look into a man who, at nearly sixty, is still pushing forward and progressing.

James Sharples



With a plethora of illustrations and exhaustive details collated together, this is a vade mecum for those who opt to explore more than just the clang of industrial music and how this is reflected visually to a wider populace. The level of research and detailed descriptions offers up a majestic read, and its straightforward scholarly approach may initially be off-putting for some, yet the author manages to present his work in such a way that it's still easy to dip in and out of, if that's more your thing.

Lee Powell



## **BRADFORD'S NOISE OF THE VALLEYS: A HISTORY OF BRADFORD MUSIC VOLUME 3.1**

GARY CAVANAGH / MATT WEBSTER  
(L S Arts)

6/10

Punching above its weight in terms of music history, the West Yorkshire city of Bradford has built a sound reputation over the years with bands like New Model Army, Terrorvision, Southern Death Cult, My Dying Bride, Fun-Da-Mental as well as '70s chart-botherers Smokie, while iconic venues such

as St George's Hall and the 1 in 12 Club have been a regular stop for national and international touring bands. The latest in a series of phonebook-size tomes, this volume covers the years around the turn of the Millennium from 1999 to 2003. Writers Cavanagh and Webster dig deep into the minutiae of the local scene with eye-witness accounts of numerous gigs, festivals, demos featuring the great and the not-so-great plus sundry factlets – who knew that Jimmy Cliff once lived in Bradford? – with the text broken up by an eye-challenging array of photos, gig ads and hand-drawn family-trees detailing the comings and goings of local musicians and bands lost to time – step forward, The Wankys! Obviously an incredible amount of work has gone into what for some will no doubt be a valuable resource, but maybe of less interest to those outside Yorkshire.

Gerry Ranson