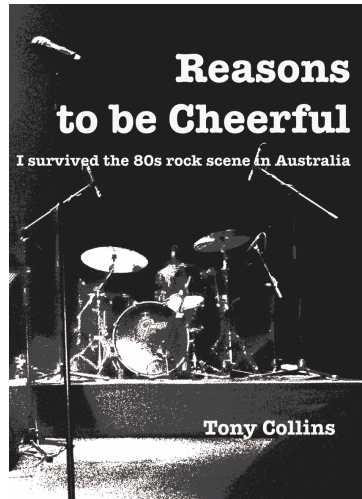


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Closure for the Countdown Generation!



In 'Reasons to be Cheerful', former Triple J journalist Tony Collins plunges us headfirst into an express ride through four decades of modern music. From a mud soaked Bob Dylan concert at the end of the hippy era to a thrash punk festival in Nimbin; from the birth of trance on the beaches of Goa to techno on the streets of Berlin; and from a near religious experience of Vivaldi in Venice to a late conversion to the music of the Eagles in the Pitjantjatjara Lands of South Australia, this collection of stories finally makes sense of the wasted lives of the Countdown Generation whose search for meaning through the portal of popular culture is far from over.

Apart from reviewing some landmark concerts in the history of rock, this book explores the social and political fabric that underwrites the music of our times. Collins maps some previously uncharted territory for the annals of Australian music and writes with eloquence about the drug and alcohol fuelled subcultures of the 80s and 90s. Whether bouncing on the sprung dance floor of Brisbane's iconic Cloudland Ballroom or scraping up change for a beer at the Half Moon in Putney, Collins takes you into a time tunnel and gets you up close to some truly sublime moments in the last two decades of 20th Century music. This is a real scratch-and-sniff rendering of the backstage world of rock and roll.

In this book, an award winning journalist provides an important contribution to the social history of Australia documenting the youth movements of the era from within a fluid and rapidly evolving sub-cultural milieu. As a fully-fledged member of the Countdown Generation, Collins himself is on a relentless quest for meaning. He stalks Nick Cave backstage at Glastonbury, shoots the breeze with John Lydon over sushi in London, argues with Jello Biafra about tobacco in joints and hangs around with a bunch of junkies, punks and cowboys. From anarchist squats in East Berlin to Aboriginal communities in the Western Desert, it's all about the music and what the music says about us as human beings and the way we live our lives.

The writing is frank and funny, the escapades bizarre and outrageous, the mood is uplifting and the ultimate goal is enlightenment. With 24 concerts in 240 pages it's a fast read!

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