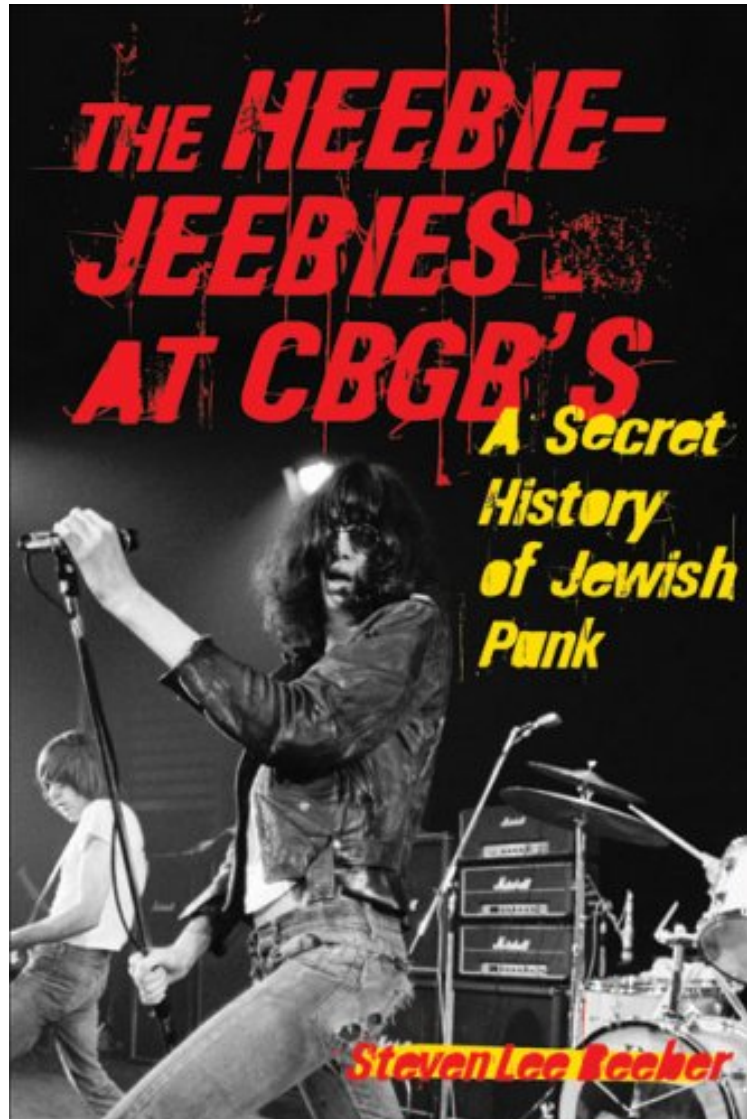


## The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk

*Steven Lee Beeber*

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**Steven Lee Beeber : The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Heebie-Jeebies at CBGB's: A Secret History of Jewish Punk:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Only the Good . . . .By Daniel millsA great history of the punk music evolution. It is interesting to note WHO these people really were and who inspired them.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Highly RecommendBy E. SiegelAmazing account of the genesis of "punk". Not sure the

author "proves" his hypothesis of punk as partly an expression of the post-holocaust generation, but the history of the movement and the people involved is enlightening. Very well written. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I'm a fan of the origins of punk and of ...By RKI'm a fan of the origins of punk and of all the early artists. As a Jew I was well aware of the many of the Jewish connections to the NYC music scene at that time. The author does start to reach a little too much trying to find Jewish connections for the book.

Based in part on the recent interviews with more than 125 people among them Tommy Ramone, Chris Stein (Blondie), Lenny Kaye (Patti Smith Group), Hilly Kristal (CBGBs owner), and John Zorn this book focuses on punks beginnings in New York City to show that punk was the most Jewish of rock movements, in both makeup and attitude. As it originated in Manhattans Lower East Side in the early 1970s, punk rock was the apotheosis of a Jewish cultural tradition that found its ultimate expression in the generation born after the Holocaust. Beginning with Lenny Bruce, the patron saint of punk, and following pre-punk progenitors such as Lou Reed, Jonathan Richman, Suicide, and the Dictators, this fascinating mixture of biography, cultural studies, and musical analysis delves into the lives of these and other Jewish punks including Richard Hell and Joey Ramoneto create a fascinating historical overview of the scene. Reflecting the irony, romanticism, and, above all, the humor of the Jewish experience, this tale of changing Jewish identity in America reveals the conscious and unconscious forces that drove New York Jewish rockers to reinvent themselves and popular music.

From Publishers Weekly In this welcome addition to the annals of punk, journalist Beeber does a commendable job of illuminating the Jewish backgrounds of many of punk's pioneers, including Joey Ramone (Jeffrey Hyman), Tommy Ramone (Tamas Erdelyi), as well as Lou Reed, Lenny Kaye, Blondie's Chris Stein, CBGB owner Hilly Kristal right up to the heir-apparent to the Jewish-punk crown, the Beastie Boys. The scene was centered in 1970s New York's Jewish Lower East Side, so it's fitting that punk might have a strong Jewish tradition. Beeber ably cobbles together interesting biographical sketches of the preeminent Jewish punks, rather astutely placing the punk rockers among the pantheon of Jewish entertainers, including the controversial comic Lenny Bruce. He also neatly ties the irreverent punk ethos to the American Jewish experience. Still, the book overreaches at times, straining under the weight of too much tangential cultural history and an overly academic tone. Beeber, however, has clearly done his homework, with more than 100 primary interviews and a clear grasp of the Jewish traditions within which he places punk. And just in time: with "Jewish-owned punk landmark" CBGB slated to close on September 30, Beeber's book will open a hidden chapter for many fans. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist From Al Jolson and Irving Berlin to the Brill Building and beyond, Jewish influence on American popular music is well documented. Less known is the role Jews played in the seventies New York punk-rock scene. Profiling performers Lou Reed, Jonathan Richman, Lenny Kaye, and the Ramones as well as key journalists, club owners, managers, and producers, Beeber discloses that prime movers in creating, supporting, and popularizing punk were Jews. Jewish identity is a touchy subject, however, and Richard Hell, aka Richard Meyers, refused interviews for the book because he disassociates himself from Judaism (Beeber insists he is still defined by it, anyway). Beeber draws a line from confrontational comic Lenny Bruce to Reed to the Beastie Boys and John Zorn. As perennial outsiders, especially as immigrants, urban Jews have traditionally straddled the sacred and the secular, adopting their new homeland's popular culture and adapting it with comedy, anger, and social commentary. An interview with Malcolm McLaren and an attempt to explain the Jewish punk fascination with Nazi imagery also prove fascinating. Benjamin Segedin Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "A unique new perspective on the history of punk rock." Tommy Ramone, The Ramones