



Station 2 – The Working-Class Roots of Heavy Metal

The majority of the members of Heavy Metal bands that started before 1980 came from working-class backgrounds. Indeed, the Heavy Metal press tends to stress humble origins. Black Sabbath...were Birmingham "toughs," AC/DC came from a working-class background...

Blue-collar, white, male youth found in the styles and hedonistic pursuits of the 1960s youth culture a means of justifying and enhancing their normal rebelliousness against conforming to the disciplines of a social order that did not provide them with privileges or an attractive future.

--From Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture, by Deena Weinstein

[Black Sabbath guitarist Tommy] Iommi's musical career was nearly derailed prematurely as he suffered a horrible accident at a sheet metal factory, when a machine sliced off the tips of the fingers on his right hand. Depressed and figuring that his guitar playing days were behind him, a friend turned him onto guitarist Django Reinhardt (who lost use of two fingers in a gypsy caravan campfire accident), inspiring Tommy to give the six-string another go, with soft plastic tips attached to the ends of his fingers.

--From www.iommi.com

I would go past the factories and put rhythms in my head to different machine sounds. With the sound of "bommm psssss bommmm psssss", one can't help but join in with that rhythm.

[Birmingham] was a place that had multiple factors. It had constant steam and smoke, so it has a very drab looking landscape. That's where we were brought in.

--Drummer Bill Ward of Black Sabbath, on growing up in Birmingham