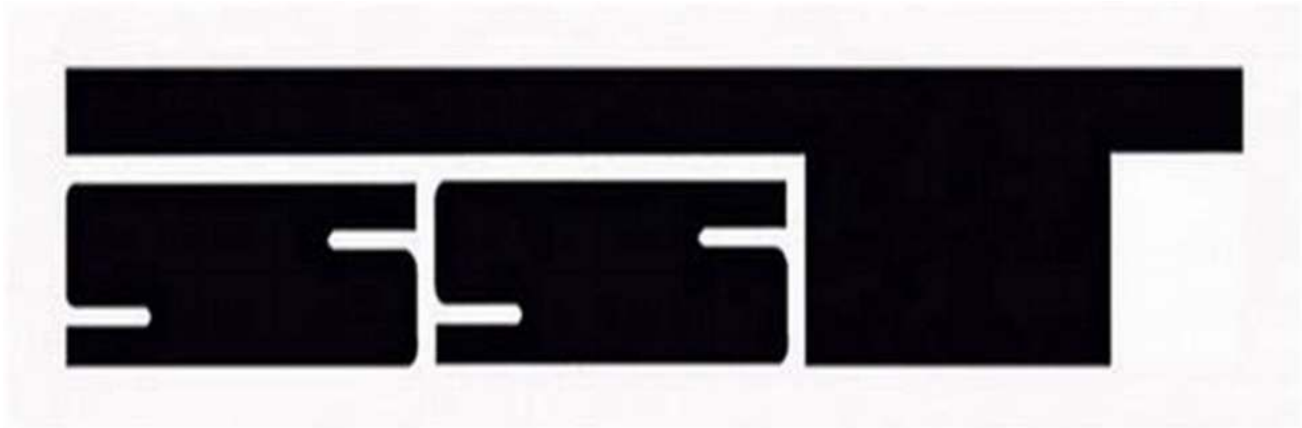


The Rise And Fall Of SST Records



Founded in 1978 by the iconic punk rock musician Greg Ginn, SST Records quickly became a seminal force in the independent music scene. Over the years, the label released groundbreaking albums and nurtured numerous influential bands, solidifying its place in music history. However, despite the initial success and impact, SST Records eventually faced a series of challenges that led to its downfall.

Early Years: The Birth of SST Records

Ginn, widely known as the guitarist and primary songwriter of the influential punk band Black Flag, founded SST Records with the intent of establishing an outlet for his own band's music. Little did he know that SST Records would eventually grow far beyond its initial purpose and become a revolutionary force in the music industry.

Corporate Rock Sucks: The Rise and Fall of SST Records by Jim Ruland (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 78938 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled



Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 522 pages



During the early years, SST Records released a string of monumental albums by punk, hardcore, and alternative rock bands. Notable acts including Minutemen, Hüsker Dü, Meat Puppets, and Sonic Youth were all signed to the label, contributing to its growing reputation and influence in the underground music scene.

The SST Sound and Aesthetic

SST Records became known for its unique sound and artistic approach. The label's releases encapsulated the raw energy and DIY spirit that defined the punk and alternative music genres. The music often featured aggressive guitar riffs, politically charged lyrics, and a disregard for mainstream conventions.

Alongside the distinct musical approach, SST Records' album artwork and packaging also played a crucial role in shaping the label's identity. The iconic black and white SST logo adorned the covers of most releases, making them instantly recognizable. This attention to detail and branding contributed to the label's popularity and cult-like following.

The Peak of Success

By the mid-1980s, SST Records had emerged as one of the most influential and successful independent labels in the United States. Its roster boasted an impressive array of talented bands, and its releases received critical acclaim. The label's distribution network expanded, allowing its music to reach a wider audience, and SST Records became a symbol of artistic integrity and independent spirit.

During this peak period, bands signed to SST Records embarked on successful tours, and their music resonated with a growing fan base. The label's commitment to fostering unique talent and supporting artists' creative visions was a defining factor in its success.

Challenges and Internal Struggles

While SST Records enjoyed a fruitful period of success, internal struggles and financial issues began to emerge. As Black Flag disbanded in 1986, tension grew between Ginn and other artists on the label. Many felt that Ginn's controlling nature hindered their artistic freedom and led to strained relationships.

In addition to internal conflicts, SST Records faced financial challenges. The label relied heavily on distribution deals, and when major distributors like MCA and CBS cut ties with independent labels, SST Records struggled to find alternative means of distribution. This setback severely impacted the label's ability to reach its target audience and sustain its success.

Decline and Legacy

The mid-1990s marked a significant decline for SST Records. Several lawsuits, including a high-profile legal battle with former Black Flag members, drained the label's resources and damaged its reputation. Many artists left SST Records, seeking better opportunities elsewhere.

Despite the decline, SST Records left an indelible mark on music history. The label's contributions to the punk, hardcore, and alternative rock genres influenced countless bands and helped shape the musical landscape. The DIY ethic and artistic integrity it championed continue to resonate with musicians and fans to this day.



“SST Records was a true pioneer in the world of independent music. Its influence can still be felt, reminding us of the power of artistic expression and the importance of nurturing diverse voices in the industry.”

In Retrospect

The rise and fall of SST Records is a testament to the ever-changing nature of the music industry. Despite its ultimate demise, the label's impact on independent music remains significant. It serves as a reminder that innovation, creativity, and a commitment to artistic integrity are key to establishing a lasting legacy.

While SST Records may no longer be active, its music continues to inspire and resonate with new generations of musicians and fans. The label's tumultuous journey serves as a cautionary tale, but also as a source of inspiration for those who dare to challenge the status quo and pave their own paths in music.

Although SST Records may be gone, its influence will forever echo through the halls of punk and alternative rock history.

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A no-holds-barred narrative history of the iconic label that brought the world Black Flag, Hüsker Dü, Sonic Youth, Soundgarden, and more, by the co-author of *Do What You Want* and *My Damage*.

Greg Ginn started SST Records in the sleepy beach town of Hermosa Beach, CA, to supply ham radio enthusiasts with tuners and transmitters. But when Ginn wanted to launch his band, Black Flag, no one was willing to take them on. Determined to bring his music to the masses, Ginn turned SST into a record label. On the back of Black Flag's relentless touring, guerilla marketing, and refusal to back down, SST became the sound of the underground.

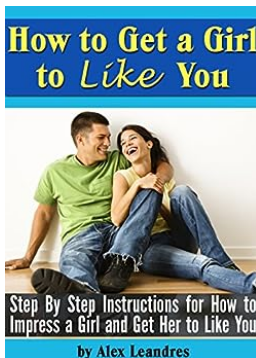
In *Corporate Rock Sucks*, music journalist Jim Ruland relays the unvarnished story of SST Records, from its remarkable rise in notoriety to its infamous downfall. With records by Black Flag, Minutemen, Hüsker Dü, Bad Brains, Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr, Screaming Trees, Soundgarden, and scores of obscure yet influential bands, SST was the most popular indie label by the mid-80s--until a tsunami of legal jeopardy, financial peril, and dysfunctional management brought the empire tumbling down. Throughout this investigative deep-dive, Ruland leads readers through SST's tumultuous history and epic catalog.

Featuring never-before-seen interviews with the label's former employees, as well as musicians, managers, producers, photographers, video directors, and label heads, Corporate Rock Sucks presents a definitive narrative history of the '80s punk and alternative rock scenes, and shows how the music industry was changed forever.



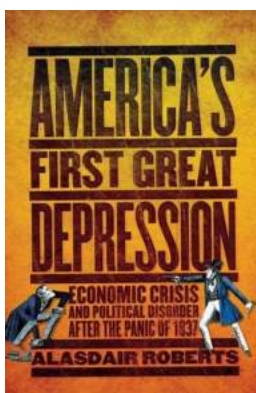
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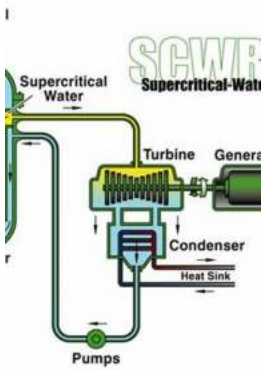
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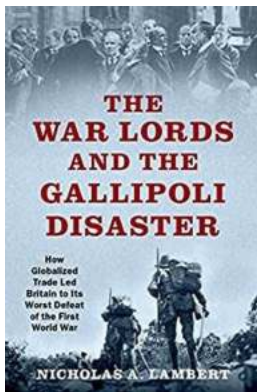
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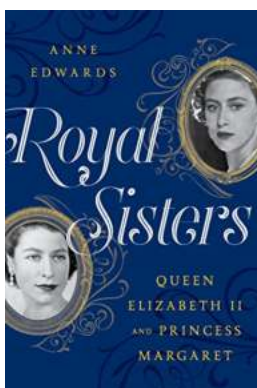
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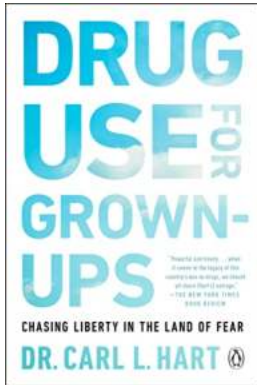
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