

MHM FOREWORD

The idea for the Modern Heavy Metal (MHM) Conference emerged during the “Heavy Metal and Popular Culture” Conference organized at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, USA, 4-7 April 2013. There, I was asked whether I would be interested, and able, in hosting the next major metal conference in Helsinki. The initial idea was that it would continue the Bowling Green Conference as a major meeting for the international “metal academia” and become the first official meeting of the newly-founded International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS). Helsinki, and Finland of course, was seen as a relevant place for such an important milestone, given Finland’s reputation as a heavy metal nation. I welcomed this task immediately, not yet sure just what I had promised. So we were already able to announce the fresh plan and invite people to Helsinki at the wrap-up session of the conference.

Since then, I am not lying if I say that the conference has been on my mind every single day. The planning and organisation have mainly been highly inspirational and overly cool things on which to embark. Obviously, a tremendous amount of work and time has been required to get every piece into place, but it has been fairly easy to justify all the effort – both in terms of personal gratification generated through this project, and the good support from the school and people around. It has also been highly motivating to notice that the idea of this event already seems to be bringing metal research a step forward, making an impact on the global metal map, and contributing to a wider recognition of the genre and its research.

And now, after 795 days, after around 5,000 emails received or sent, hundreds of phone calls, Skype sessions, meetings and discussions, the MHM conference is finally about to start. The conference week is a fully interesting programme, I must say, not only referring to the wide collection of extremely interesting papers and keynotes, but also all the other metal bits in it. I really hope that you, the MHM guests, will enjoy every minute of the event and expose yourself to the multitude of markets, practices and cultures of the modern heavy metal scene. **Welcome to Helsinki! Welcome to Aalto University!**

Obviously, this kind of a project would not have been realized without the great help and support of many individuals and organisations. They are far too many to mention here, so I’d like to raise a collective horns-up for everyone involved. You know who you are! However, particular thank yous must be directed to Anna Salo-Toyoki and the rest of our local organizing team, the Finnish co-hosts, the members of the international paper review committee, the financial sponsors (Aalto University, Academy of Finland, HSE Foundation, Federation of Finnish Learned Societies), Music Finland, as well as our industrial partners, Tuoni Studios and Tuska in particular. Heidi Henrickson needs to be acknowledged for proofreading numerous articles in this book. And of course, every single author and guest making this conference a significant international and interdisciplinary meeting, please give yourselves a big slap on the shoulder!

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