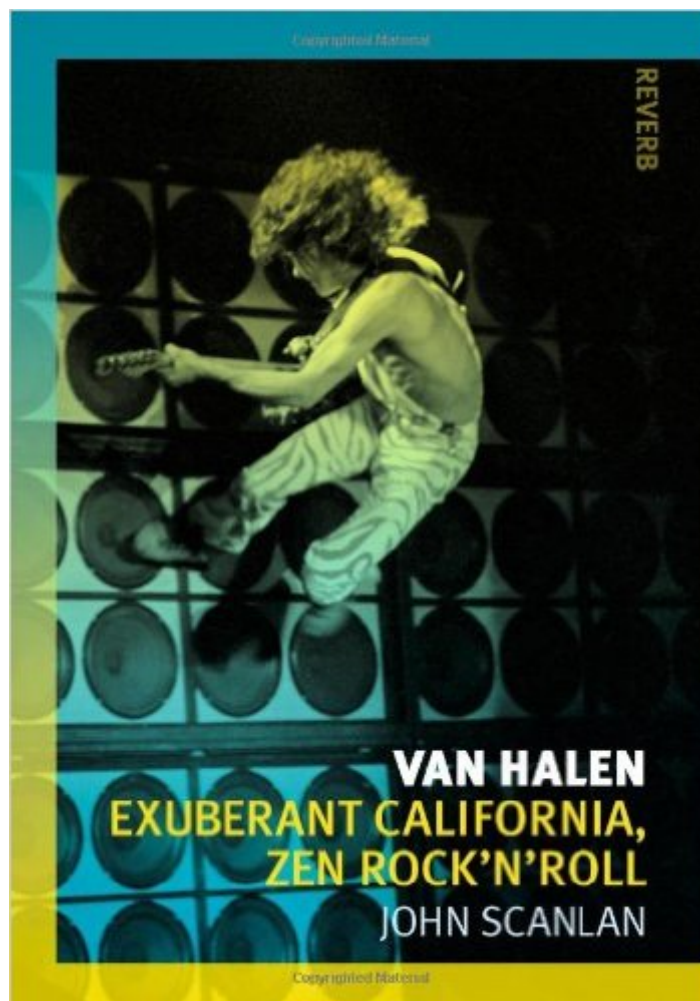


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# Van Halen: Exuberant California, Zen Rock'n'roll (Reverb)



## Synopsis

Van Halen are known for classic songs like "Runnin' with the Devil," "Panama," and "Jump," but also for the drama surrounding the exits of its former members. While many have attempted to discover the secrets of Van Halen through an analysis of their musical role models, John Scanlan looks at deeper aesthetic and philosophical influences in Van Halen, a groundbreaking account of this extraordinary band. Following the band's pursuit of the art of artlessness, Scanlan describes how they characterize what historian Kevin Starr terms "Zen California" "a state of mind and way of being that above all celebrates the now, and in rock and roll terms refers to the unregulated expenditure of energy and youthful exuberance destined to extinguish itself. Scanlan sheds light on key events and influences: the decaying of Hollywood in the 1970s; Ted Templeman's work as a producer at Sunset Sound Studios; Top Jimmy, a blues rock singer who performed at the Zero Zero club; and the building of Eddie Van Halen's Hollywood Hills studio in 1983 that show how 1970s California was the only time and place that Van Halen could have emerged. Along the way, Scanlan also explores the relationship between David Lee Roth and Eddie Van Halen, the climate of Southern California and its relation to a sense of cultural exuberance, the echoes of Beat aesthetics in David Lee Roth's attitude to time, Eddie Van Halen's bebop sensibility, and the real roots of the so-called "Brown" sound. An illuminating look at a classic rock group and the cultural moment in which they came of age, Van Halen is a book for fans of the band and the history of rock and roll.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I had been looking forward to buying this since reading the John Scanlan's cover story about Van Halen's '1984' in Classic Rock magazine last year. If you liked that, you'll also like this. The first thing to say, though, is BUYER BEWARE. There are \*no new interviews\* in this book. It makes use of interview material you might be familiar with if you are a die-hard fan, but the book's not a biography, so the material crops up in unusual ways to suit different purposes that a conventional biographical narrative - a lot of the book is about trying to get into the state of mind of a time and place (Calif in the 70s) and the heads of the two main characters (EVH and DLR). The writer's a college professor, according to the cover - but it's an easy read, and never boring. I read it in one day. An odd and fascinating book, really, about the 70s and the Southern California ... and Van Halen, and Ted Templeman, and Top Jimmy, and all sorts of other characters, etc etc. Van Halen, really, are the like the main players at the centre of a wider story about the culture and music of those times. It even has a Soundtrack listed at the end, which includes lots of non-Van Halen songs - so, that's probably a good way to think about it. It's a bit like a film set in 1970-83, which flashes back to the early 60s, etc. If you are interested in the deeper artistic motivations of David Lee Roth and Eddie Van Halen, then you'll probably find it pretty interesting. There are long chapters on Roth's Zen influences and how it fed into his creativity, and Eddie's 'brown' sound - but for what it reveals about his creative instincts.

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