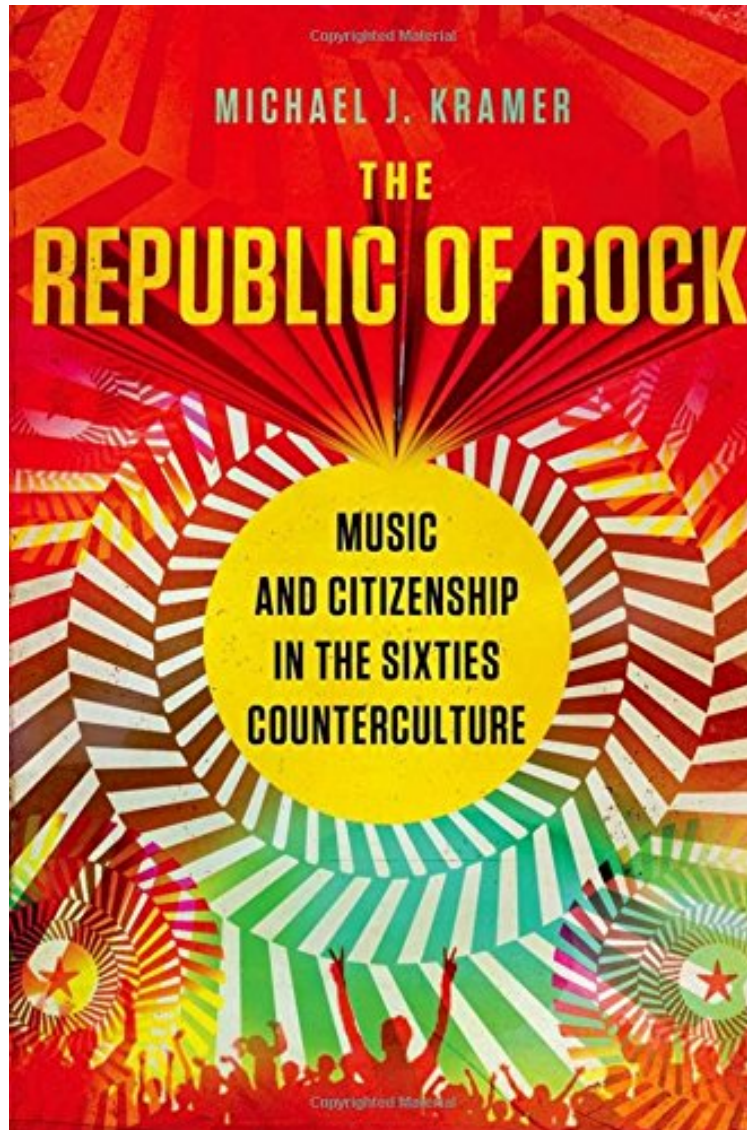


The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture

Michael J. Kramer

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Michael J. Kramer : The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Skip it. By Steve Zee The book's well written and researched but he missed 80% of the people and events that defined rock and counter culture. 9 of 9 people found the following review

helpful. A New Contribution To 60s Rock History By corry342 There are a lot of books analyzing 60s rock history, but they generally suffer from one of two flaws: either they are a trainspotter's guide, busily parsing the difference between Gram Parsons outtakes and the 13th Floor Elevators' last single, or they are excessively theoretical tomes by academic who turn out not to be very knowledgeable about rock music beyond repeated listenings to a few Beatles albums. Both approaches generally hide the fact that the author doesn't really have much to add. Michael Kramer's new book is a refreshing change. Kramer is knowledgeable and analytical, well grounded in both music history and cultural history, but he stands out by having a new way to consider the way in which rock music influenced and gripped the experience of the 1960s. The first half of *The Republic Of Rock* focuses on the rise of KMPX-fm in San Francisco, the first true "underground" rock radio station, as well as the ultimately canceled Wild West Festival. KMPX folded in the wake of a contentious strike by its hippie staff in 1968, supported by the local rock establishment, but the strike unfolded in a variety of ways that set the event apart from typical labor struggles. The broad facts of the KMPX strike are generally known, if somewhat foggily recalled, but Kramer does an excellent job unraveling the confusing threads. Even people well versed in the history of San Francisco rock in the 1960s will learn from these chapters--who knew that the Grateful Dead-managed Carousel Ballroom was one of the few entities advertising on KMPX throughout the strike? Having used the KMPX strike to define a way that rock invested culture in the 60s, Kramer turns his attention to another theater entirely: the Vietnam War. There has been some commentary about music in Vietnam, usually reflected in the movie "Good Morning Vietnam" or in eyewitness accounts of celebrity tours for the troops. Yet Kramer analyzes the way in which rock was both presented as "subversive" and yet apparently tolerated, if not actually encouraged by the US Army, essentially as a morale booster. The story is too remarkable to summarize--who knew that Saigon had a club called Fillmore Far East--but the peculiar saga of the CBC Band anchors a unique and informative approach to 60s rock music that shines a new perspective on the era. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject: you needn't be a 60s rock expert to understand it, but even those who are knowledgeable will learn plenty from Kramer's careful research.

In his 1967 megahit "San Francisco," Scott McKenzie sang of "people in motion" coming from all across the country to San Francisco, the white-hot center of rock music and anti-war protests. At the same time, another large group of young Americans was also in motion, less eagerly, heading for the jungles of Vietnam. Now, in *The Republic of Rock*, Michael Kramer draws on new archival sources and interviews to explore sixties music and politics through the lens of these two generation-changing places--San Francisco and Vietnam. From the Acid Tests of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters to hippie disc jockeys on strike, the military's use of rock music to "boost morale" in Vietnam, and the forgotten tale of a South Vietnamese rock band, *The Republic of Rock* shows how the musical connections between the City of the Summer of Love and war-torn Southeast Asia were crucial to the making of the sixties counterculture. The book also illustrates how and why the legacy of rock music in the sixties continues to matter to the meaning of citizenship in a global society today. Going beyond clichéd narratives about sixties music, Kramer argues that rock became a way for participants in the counterculture to think about what it meant to be an American citizen, a world citizen, a citizen-consumer, or a citizen-soldier. The music became a resource for grappling with the nature of democracy in larger systems of American power both domestically and globally. For anyone interested in the 1960s, popular music, and American culture and counterculture, *The Republic of Rock* offers new insight into the many ways rock music has shaped our ideas of individual freedom and collective belonging.

"Kramer's study of rock provides a model for future work on music's significance for U.S. soldiers in Vietnam that might explore other musical genres and their connections to questions of racial identity and pride...Throughout, Kramer's book is a model of thorough research, with conclusions informed by an extensive body of archival sources and original interviews with musicians, as well as serious engagement with the major scholarship on rock and the counterculture...A groundbreaking study highly recommended to any reader interested in 1960s rock or the role of music in the Vietnam conflict."--*Journal of the Society of American Music* "[A] provocative, always smart, and well-grounded account of the role rock music played in the lived experience of the sixties-era counterculture....Kramer has accomplished what few other historians of the counterculture have done: he has found stories of men and women actively involved in the cultural rebellion of the sixties era who struggled to turn their dreams into actions. Kramer enters this producerist counterculture through the agency of rock music."--David Farber, author of *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* "The Republic of Rock offers valuable insights into the culture of rock music in San Francisco and Saigon during the 1960s. Kramer's book provides an informed and informative retrospective on a decade when sonic expectations for humanity soared, only to be brought back to earth by other musical depictions of ghetto lives, police harassment, mindless capitalism, drug abuse, and military madness."--B. Lee Cooper, *Rock Music Studies* "Kramer probes deeply into the countercultural archives of art posters, underground newspapers, music, press releases, and interviews to establish how the rock music scene in San Francisco presented both a challenge to traditional values, while simultaneously embracing a hip capitalism which commercialized the counterculture. Kramer argues that the acid rock scene in San Francisco became a community in which music was a primary avenue through

which to address issues of citizenship in what eventually was known as Woodstock nation."--Ron Briley, History News Network"Groundbreaking....Draws on a wide range of sources in exploring the role of music, drugs, and the counterculture in San Francisco and South Vietnam from the late 1960s into the early 1970s."--CHOICE"Given my particular interests in history and music, I cracked open *The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties* Counterculture thinking that I would be more reminded than enlightened. I was pleasantly surprised to have been incorrect in my expectations."--Blake Maddux, *Dig Boston*"From happenings to alternative rock radio stations to music festivals Michael Kramer traces the close relationship of what he calls 'hip capitalism' and the emergence of niche marketing to utopian ideas of an open-ended public sphere with unblocked, unmediated sharing between all citizens. His book shows just how inseparable economic, political, and metaphysical ideas grew during the 1960s. He cinches his argument by turning to Vietnam. His chapter on the embrace of rock and soul music by the U.S. military is extraordinarily elegant. By looking into the rock groups that young Vietnamese formed, the book explores why aspects of U.S. culture has had such powerful international influence, even when U.S. political, economic, or military power was failing. The story told in this book shows the power of artists and audiences coming together."--Richard Candida Smith, University of California, Berkeley"In *Republic of Rock*, Michael Kramer skillfully examines rock music as an energizing 'circuit' connecting disparate communities of San Francisco hippies, Vietnam grunts, and South Vietnamese urbanites in a transnational 'sonic space' that fostered civic participation on young people's terms. Deeply researched and with a strong theoretical foundation, *Republic of Rock* helps readers to think expansively about music's power to define social relationships, in the United State and South Vietnam, in the Vietnam War and on the home front. Kramer's smart, witty prose and interdisciplinary approach to sixties counterculture, American military history, and global citizenship make this book suitable for classroom use but also a great read for rock fans of any generation."--Meredith H. Lair, author of *Armed with Abundance: Consumerism and Soldiering in the Vietnam War*"Throughout, Kramer's book is a model of thorough research, with conclusions informed by an extensive body of archival sources and original interviews with musicians, as well as serious engagement with the major scholarship on rock and the counterculture. In short, *The Republic of Rock* is a groundbreaking study highly recommended to any reader interested in 1960s rock or the role of music in the Vietnam conflict."--*Journal of the Society for American Music*About the AuthorMichael J. Kramer teaches History and American Studies at Northwestern University, and writes about arts and culture at www.culturelover.com.