

Orstralia

A Punk History 1974–1989

Tristan Clark

With appeal to more than just punk history obsessives, *Orstralia* offers an unprecedented snapshot of an underacknowledged segment of Australian life and history.

Far from punk's more modish North Atlantic core in the late 1970s, discontented youth in Australia were enacting similar musical and cultural reckonings. Yet in spite of the Australia's purported "laid-back" national demeanour, punks there were routinely met with insult, fist, or the police baton.

More subterranean than the national scandal that was punk back in "homeland" Britain, Australia's own bands nonetheless came to be heralded internationally. *Orstralia* represents the first definitive account of the country's initial years, from progenitors the Saints and Radio Birdman in the mid-70s, through the emergence of hardcore in the 1980s, to the stylistic diffusion that accompanied transition to the 1990s.

Based on over 130 interviews, *Orstralia* documents the most renowned to the most fleeting and obscure acts the nation produced. Included are equally engrossing and shocking personal narratives befitting such a passionate and intemperate cultural form, as well as punk's placement within broader Australian society at the time.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tristan Clark is a Melbourne-based educator, musician, and writer. His involvement in punk has spanned over three decades and encompassed a near gamut of roles: band member, roadie, merch person, show organizer, Food Not Bombs volunteer, community radio DJ, as well as having written sporadically for local zines and other publications. He now routinely encounters the young students he spends his week working with at local DIY shows and is heartened by punk's continued ability to self-reproduce.

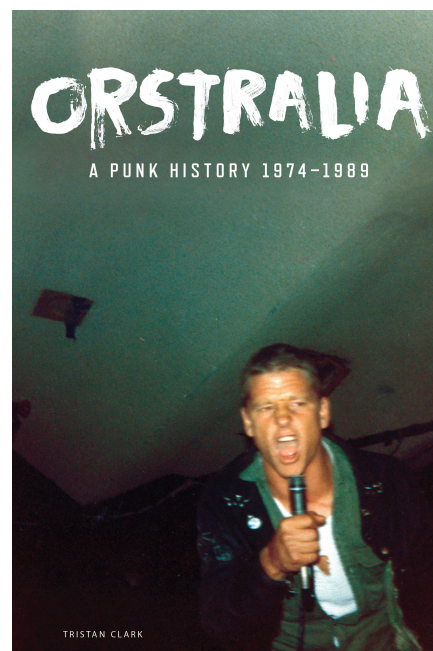
ACCOLADES

"Australia has some claim to being a punk founder nation, most obviously through the influence of the Saints and Radio Birdman. In *Orstralia*, Tristan Clark explores the wider terrain to recover a vibrant prepunk, punk, and postpunk history that captures the vibrancy and excitement of a culture brimming with ingenuity and teenage verve. A brilliant book and essential reading for all those interested in punk's cultural past."

—Matthew Worley, author of *No Future: Punk Politics and British Youth Culture, 1976–84*

"If your knowledge of Australian punk grinds to a halt at the Saints, Radio Birdman, the Hard-Ons, and Vicious Circle, *Orstralia* is a deep dive into that country's turbulent alternative underground of the late 1970s and '80s, when rebellious youths clashed with the police (not to mention the church, the government, the media . . . authority in general), rival subcultures, their parents and even themselves. Proving that an oppressive police state is no match for subversive creativity in the long run, Australian punk evolved and thrived in the face of such adversity—very much its own beast given its isolation from London and New York—and this forensically researched tome is its story, written in such detail and with such fascinating insight, you can relive it all vicariously without having your nose broken and discover a treasure trove of passionate noise into the bargain. This is an important and entertaining piece of work."

—Ian Glasper, author of *Burning Britain: The History of UK Punk 1980–1984*



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