

The Call

It was a rainy Thursday in November 2019. I was in my car on my way to Munich, with no idea of what was coming my way or what significance it would take on. Somewhere in the heart of the Bavarian capital, my phone rang and pulled me away from the sounds of Dr. Sane echoing from my car radio. It was Yuma. I hadn't ex of excitement that resides in anyone planning something big, something great... The result of that exhilarating idea is what you're holding in your hands right now.

But let's start from the beginning. EBM. An acronym that every reader of this book probably knows. Yet, everyone associates different things, although perhaps not so different, with this acronym. There are widely varying opinions about what this term means or where it originated. The internet is filled with numerous attempts to categorise, countless explanations, and interpretations. That alone shows that there's no clear consensus on the subject and the perspectives are diverse.



EBM is guitar music without guitars.
Eli van Vegas, Zweite Jugend



1981/1982

Let's briefly turn our attention to Belgium, to the beautiful city of Brussels. In October 1981, the band **Front 242** is formed and releases the maxi single "Principles/Body To Body" in the same year. With the release of this maxi single, and especially the song "Body To Body", **Front 242** marks the beginning of the EBM movement.

In an interview found in *Entry* magazine (Issue 1/1998, page 58), Daniel Bressanutti states that Electronic Body Music is a term **Front 242** used when founding their own label, *Another Mask Music*, in 1982.

1985

In February, **Front 242** releases the mini-LP "No Comment" on *Another Mask Music*. On the back of the inner sleeve is the line "Electronic Body Music composed and produced on eight tracks by **Front 242**", subsequently coining the name for an entire genre.

EBM is nothing other than the continuation of rock'n'roll by other means.
Prager Handgriff



Source: <http://www.peek-a-boo-magazine.be/en/interviews/various-artists-2017/>



Die Krupps live 1981 in
Matchmoore, Düsseldorf
Photo: ar gee gleim



While one might assume that Kraftwerk coined the term Electronic Body Music in 1978, for our part, we don't want to destroy the myths about its birth and/or origin but rather leave it up to you to decide.

Tiredness is spreading, creeping, tormenting. My body is screaming for rest. The cigarettes don't taste good anymore either! I want to go to bed and no longer think about tomorrow.

“ For me, EBM is a genre melting pot of enormous size and diversity. ”

This flexibility and range creates opportunities to live out as a musician and to inspire as a listener.

From minimal to highly complex, from angry, monotonous to melancholic, from powerful and noisy to filigree - you can find it all and combine it all - a playing field without limits and without a big set of rules.

Axel Kleintjes (Page 12, Cycloon, Cyber Axis, Mindware, Onenine)

EBM: Subculture or scene?

What is EBM actually – apart from the music? Is it a subculture or a scene? A question that is not easily answered. During our research, we encountered an overwhelming amount of literature where both terms are used differently and rarely provide clear definitions or distinctions.

The term “scene” is widely used but lacks a clear distinction from subculture. Commonly, it refers to a focused network of individuals as a community of like-minded people. With its own culture to create or update a sense of belonging, scene-typical events and clothing style, as well as codes, symbols, or an attitude, become part of this community.

However, the subculture goes further. In addition to overlapping attributes related to interests, attitude, and aesthetic visualisations of individual identity through clothing, codes, or symbols, the subculture also puts conscious criticism of the prevailing culture and a clear distinction from it at the forefront. Over time, music also becomes an important differentiating feature from mainstream culture, established as an individual link or identification marker in many countercultures.

From these two – albeit very rough – definitions, we can formulate the following thesis: In a scene, the primary focus is on belonging. You share common views and interests and are thus a part of it. Through attributes like clothing or jargon, one seeks to show affiliation with the scene. In a subculture, the primary focus is on distinction. It sees itself in opposition to mainstream culture, but also to other subcultures. This goal is achieved through attributes like clothing and jargon.

But these boundaries seem to blur today. To what extent is self-presentation in clothing and language an expression of belonging, and to what extent is it about differentiation?

Is it perhaps possible for a subculture to exist within a scene? Are the terms even comparable, or is it like comparing apples and oranges?