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CANADIAN ROCK JOURNALISM: A HISTORIOGRAPHIC MODEL OF «POPOFF'S PLATFORM»

In the contemporary media landscape, rock journalism plays an important role in interpreting and documenting the history of popular music. A special place within this field belongs to authors who combine the functions of music critics, historians, and archivists. The present article examines Canadian rock journalism through the work of one of its most prolific and influential representatives, Martin Popoff. The study analyzes the historical context of Canadian rock journalism and evaluates Popoff's contribution to the systematization of hard rock and heavy metal history.

The methodological framework of the research includes historical, media, and musicological approaches. Historical analysis allows tracing the evolution of Canadian music journalism from early specialized publications of the late twentieth century to contemporary forms of music criticism. Media analysis is applied to examine the role of music magazines and book publications in shaping the discourse of rock culture. The musicological approach makes it possible to analyze Popoff's authorial methodology, including his attempts to classify and periodize the development of hard rock and heavy metal.

The article explores the concept of the so-called "Popoff platform," an interpretative historiographical model that combines encyclopedic documentation, archival research, and analytical criticism. Particular attention is given to Popoff's extensive bibliography, including numerous books, collector's guides, and thousands of album reviews that together form one of the most comprehensive bodies of documentation on heavy music. The author's critical stance, participation in leading music media, and influence on contemporary rock historiography are also examined.

The study demonstrates that Martin Popoff's work represents an important stage in the development of modern rock journalism, where music criticism increasingly evolves into a form of historical and analytical scholarship. The results of the research may contribute to further studies in rock music history, media studies, and cultural research.

Keywords: *Rock Music, Canadian Rock Journalism, Music Criticism, Hard Rock, Heavy Metal, Martin Popoff, Music Historiography.*

Problem setting. Rock journalism has long functioned not only as a form of cultural commentary but also as a mechanism for documenting and interpreting the evolution of popular music. Since the emergence of specialized music magazines in the 1960s, rock criticism has played a significant role in shaping the public perception of musical genres, artists, and historical narratives within popular culture. Despite the extensive body of research dedicated to Anglo-American rock journalism, the development of national traditions of music criticism outside the United States and the United Kingdom remains comparatively underexplored.

In particular, Canadian rock journalism represents a unique phenomenon that developed within a complex cultural environment shaped by both American media influence and the search for a distinct national identity. While Canadian musicians and producers have made substantial contributions to the global music industry, the historiography of Canadian rock journalism has received significantly less scholarly attention.

Within this context, the work of Canadian rock journalist and historian Martin Popoff occupies a special position. Through his extensive bibliography, encyclopedic guides, and thousands of album



reviews, Popoff has created one of the most comprehensive documentary archives of hard rock and heavy metal. His writings demonstrate a distinctive approach that combines elements of music criticism, archival documentation, and historical periodization. However, despite the scale of his work and influence within the global rock community, his contribution has rarely been examined within an academic framework of media and cultural studies. This gap highlights the need for a systematic analysis of Popoff's journalistic and historiographical methodology.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Academic research on rock journalism has traditionally focused on the role of music criticism in shaping cultural discourse and mediating the relationship between musicians, audiences, and the music industry. Scholars such as Simon Frith, Roy Shuker, and Jason Toynbee have examined popular music journalism as an important cultural institution that influences the construction of musical value and genre identity.

Studies of rock media have also explored the historical role of influential music magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *Creem*, and *NME*, emphasizing their impact on the development of rock criticism and the broader cultural narratives surrounding popular music. These publications contributed to the formation of a professional discourse in which journalists often acted simultaneously as critics, historians, and cultural commentators.

In the Canadian context, research has mainly concentrated on the development of the national music industry and the emergence of Canadian rock culture. Works by Bob Mersereau and other scholars of Canadian popular music have highlighted the historical evolution of "CanRock" and the influence of national media policies such as the Canadian content regulations (CANCON). Nevertheless, relatively little attention has been paid to the role of individual music journalists in shaping the historiography of Canadian rock music.

Although Martin Popoff is widely recognized within the international rock community as one of the most prolific writers on hard rock and heavy metal, scholarly analysis of his work remains limited. Existing references to Popoff are usually confined to journalistic or encyclopedic contexts, leaving unexplored the methodological and historiographical significance of his writings.

Task statement. The purpose of this article is to analyze the contribution of Martin Popoff to the development of contemporary rock journalism and to examine the historiographical model that can be described as the "Popoff platform." The study aims

to investigate how Popoff's extensive body of work functions as a system for documenting, classifying, and interpreting the history of hard rock and heavy metal.

To achieve this objective, the article addresses several key tasks. First, it examines the historical development of Canadian rock journalism as the cultural and media environment within which Popoff's work emerged. Second, it analyzes the main characteristics of Popoff's authorial methodology, including his approach to genre classification, historical periodization, and large-scale documentation of musical recordings. Third, the article evaluates the broader significance of Popoff's writings for the historiography of rock music and for the transformation of rock journalism into a form of analytical cultural research.

Through this analysis, the study seeks to demonstrate that Popoff's work represents not merely a collection of music reviews and biographies but a coherent journalistic platform that contributes to the preservation and interpretation of rock history within contemporary media culture.

Research methodology. The research is based on a combination of historical, media, and musicological approaches. The historical method is used to examine the development of Canadian rock journalism within the broader context of popular music culture. Media analysis allows for the evaluation of music journalism as a form of cultural communication and documentation. The musicological approach is applied to analyze Martin Popoff's system of genre classification and his methods of interpreting the evolution of hard rock and heavy metal.

Scientific novelty. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the attempt to conceptualize Martin Popoff's body of work as a coherent historiographical model within contemporary rock journalism. The article introduces the notion of the "Popoff platform," understood as a system combining music criticism, archival documentation, and genre-based historical analysis of rock music.

The study demonstrates that Canadian rock journalism developed within a unique cultural and media environment shaped by both national identity and international musical influences. Within this context, Martin Popoff emerges as one of the most significant contemporary chroniclers of hard rock and heavy metal.

His extensive publications, encyclopedic guides, and critical reviews form a large-scale documentary corpus that contributes to the preservation and interpretation of rock history. The analysis shows that Popoff's work represents a distinctive model of rock

historiography in which music journalism functions as a form of systematic cultural research.

Outline of the main material of the study. Rock and roll, which emerged in the United States in the mid-1950s, rapidly transformed into a global cultural phenomenon. By the early 1960s, the genre was actively developing on both sides of the Atlantic, and the phenomenon of the so-called "British Invasion" radically altered the structure of world popular music. British bands reinterpreted the American rock and roll tradition and returned it to the United States in a revitalized form, which solidified the dominance of the Anglo–American axis in the historiography of rock music.

However, in the shadow of this Anglo–American dominance, the less prominent but highly significant evolution of the Canadian rock scene often remains overlooked. Over the decades, Canadian musicians have not only borrowed stylistic models from neighboring music industries but have also actively participated in the formation of their own national traditions of popular music.

The history of Canadian progressive rock is usually associated either with the Quebec scene of the 1970s – primarily with the groups HARMONIUM and MANEIGE – or with the international success of English-speaking collectives such as RUSH and SAGA. Nevertheless, Canada's contribution to the development of world rock culture is significantly broader. Among the most influential Canadian musicians are Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, THE GUESS WHO, as well as representatives of later generations – Alanis Morissette and ARCADE FIRE. In mainstream pop culture, the Canadian music scene is also represented by artists such as Celine Dion.

Producers have also played a vital role in shaping the international sound of Canadian music. Among them, a special place is held by Bob Rock, Bob Ezrin, David Foster, and Daniel Lanois – figures who exerted a substantial influence on the development of studio technologies and the music industry in the second half of the 20th century.

While producers and musicians created the artistic fabric of Canadian popular music, rock journalists became its chroniclers. The formation of Canadian music journalism occurred in parallel with the search for a national cultural identity and attempts to emerge from the media shadow of the United States. One of the first significant specialized publications was the weekly «RPM» (1964–2000), founded by music journalist Walt Grealis. Initially, the magazine was created as an industry newsletter to track charts

and music industry news; however, over time, a systematic approach began to take shape within its pages. In the 1970s, Canadian rock journalism began to acquire a more specialized character. One of the most notable publications was the magazine «Music Express» (1976–1996), founded by Keith Sharp. The publication positioned itself as a national counterpart to leading international rock magazines and devoted significant attention to such Canadian groups as RUSH and TRIUMPH.

In parallel, French-language rock journalism was developing. In Quebec, an important role was played by the magazine «Pop Rock» (1972–1987), originally published under the title «Pop Jeunesse». It became a key platform for covering the French-language rock scene and contributed to the formation of an independent cultural space within the Canadian music industry.

A substantial influence on the development of music analytics was also exerted by the magazine «The Record» (1981–2001), founded by David Farrell. The publication actively competed with «RPM» and gradually turned into one of the main platforms for professional music criticism in the country.

A special place in the Canadian media discourse is occupied by the figure of rock journalist Jeffrey Morgan. For more than two decades, he headed the Canadian bureau of the American magazine «Creem» and became the authorized biographer of Iggy Pop and Alice Cooper. His provocative style and distinct authorial stance had a noticeable impact on the development of Canadian rock criticism.

Significant contributions to the formation of music journalism were also made by Larry LeBlanc, who collaborated for many years with the magazines «Billboard» and «RPM», and radio journalist Alan Cross. His project «The Ongoing History of New Music» became one of the most famous examples of popularizing rock music history in a documentary radio research format.

Among researchers of the Canadian music scene, a prominent role is played by writer Chris Walter – a historian of punk rock and founder of the independent publishing house GFY Press. His book «I Was a Punk Before You Were a Punk» (2012) [1] serves as a kind of chronicle of the punk culture of the early 1980s and conveys the atmosphere of the emerging alternative scene.

Speaking of the formation of the intellectual foundation of Canadian music historiography, it is also necessary to mention Bob Mersereau – a producer for the CBC corporation and one of the most authoritative researchers of the Canadian rock scene.

Since 1985, he has been actively publishing music-critical materials and writing an authorial column on CBC Radio One. Mersereau is the author of the fundamental works «The Top 100 Canadian Albums», «The Top 100 Canadian Singles», and «The History of Canadian Rock 'n' Roll» (2015) [2].

In his research, Mersereau draws attention to the paradox of Canadian music history: a country with vast geographical distances and a relatively small domestic market managed to produce an extremely diverse musical culture – from the progressive rock of RUSH to the pop music of Celine Dion and the hard rock of BACHMAN–TURNER OVERDRIVE.

The researcher traces the origins of Canadian popular music back to the early 1950s. Nevertheless, in the late 1950s, the music infrastructure within Canada remained extremely limited. Significant distances between cities, climatic conditions, and a weak concert network hindered the development of touring activities. As a result, many Canadian musicians, including country performer Hal Willis, were forced to build their careers in the United States.

Quebec occupied a special position. Montreal, thanks to a more liberal cultural atmosphere, became an important center for jazz and rhythm and blues. Simultaneously, the so-called "Quiet Revolution" was unfolding here, accompanied by a rise in French-language cultural identity. One of its symbols was the chansonnier Félix Leclerc, whose work had a significant influence on the development of the Quebec music scene.

Thus, Canadian musical culture was formed in a complex interaction of Anglo–American influences and national cultural processes. It was in this environment that Canadian rock journalism gradually took shape – a discipline intended to record and reflect upon the evolution of the national music scene.

State cultural policy became an important factor in the development of the Canadian music industry and, consequently, music journalism. In the early 1970s, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) introduced a system of quotas for national content, known as "Canadian Content" (CANCON). According to the new rules, a certain percentage of radio station airplay had to consist of works by Canadian performers.

This measure had a significant impact on the development of the national scene. On the one hand, it stimulated the growth of the domestic music market and allowed Canadian artists to gain airtime previously occupied predominantly by American and British products. On the other hand, the CANCON system created favorable conditions for the formation

of professional music criticism and specialized journalism, as the growing stream of national musical content required systematic analysis and interpretation.

Under these conditions, rock journalism in Canada gradually transformed from an auxiliary segment of the industry press into an independent analytical direction. Journalists and critics acted not only as reviewers of new recordings but also as interpreters of cultural processes occurring within the national music scene.

By the end of the 20th century, Canadian rock journalism had formed its own tradition of historical and analytical writing, combining elements of music criticism, documentary historiography, and genre systematization. It is at this stage that authors seeking to view rock music not only as a form of popular culture but also as an object of systematic research gain particular importance.

One of the most notable figures in this context is the Canadian rock journalist and music historian Martin Popoff. His multi-volume studies, encyclopedic guides, and genre classifications have effectively formed a distinct research model for the analysis of heavy music. Within this model, rock journalism performs the functions of a kind of historiographical platform, combining the archiving of facts, analytical criticism, and the reconstruction of genre evolution.

This is precisely why we propose using the conventional term "Popoff's platform," denoting the set of methods through which the author systematizes the history of hard rock and heavy metal. The examination of this model and the analysis of its influence on contemporary rock journalism constitute the central subject of the present study.

Martin Popoff was born in the Canadian province of British Columbia and belongs to the generation of listeners whose musical upbringing took place at the turn of the 1960s–1970s. During this period, the aesthetics of heavy rock were being formed, with bands such as BLACK SABBATH, DEEP PURPLE, and URIAH HEEP laying the foundations of the genre. It was this musical environment that defined the future author's early interests and subsequently became the subject of his systematic research.

Initially, Popoff earned a Master of Business Administration and worked in the corporate sector for some time. However, in the early 1990s, he focused entirely on music journalism. The starting point of his authorial career was the book *Riff Kills Man!* (1993), published essentially in a self-published format. This work represented a large-scale survey of hard rock and heavy metal and became the foundation for the author's further research.

In the following decades, Popoff developed his own analytical approach to the history of heavy music. One of the characteristic features of his method is an attempt to periodize the genre's development through three key stages. The first stage is "invention", associated with the formation of the foundations of heavy metal in the early 1970s (DEEP PURPLE, BLACK SABBATH, URIAH HEEP). The second stage is "reinvention", symbolically linked to the activities of JUDAS PRIEST in the mid-1970s, when the genre acquired clearer stylistic features. The third stage is "intensification", reflecting the transition to more aggressive and technically complex forms of metal music, which in Popoff's historiography is primarily associated with the METALLICA albums of the mid-1980s.

A significant place in his scholarly and journalistic legacy is occupied by the «Ye Olde Metal» series, dedicated to the early stages of heavy music's formation. In these works, the author explores in detail the transitional period from the proto-metal of the late 1960s to the established hard rock and heavy metal of the 1970s. A characteristic feature of these publications is the attention to understudied albums and peripheral bands, allowing the history of the genre to be viewed in a broader context.

Popoff gained particular fame through the series of reference guides «The Collector's Guide to Heavy Metal», which represents one of the most extensive catalogs of hard rock and heavy metal album reviews. In these editions, the author systematized thousands of recordings, accompanying them with brief analytical comments. This format has made Popoff's books an important reference resource for researchers and collectors of rock music.

Alongside his book-writing activities, Popoff actively collaborated with music periodicals. His articles and reviews have been published in a number of specialized publications dedicated to rock music and vinyl collecting, including the magazines «Goldmine», «Record Collector», «Guitar World», «Revolver», and «Classic Rock», as well as in the Canadian magazine «Chart» and on specialized internet platforms (HardRadio, Lollipop, BraveWords). For a significant part of his journalistic career, he was also associated with the magazine «Brave Words & Bloody Knuckles», where he served as editor-in-chief.

A characteristic feature of Popoff's critical method is his fundamental independence from the consensus of music criticism. A telling example is his assessment of the album *Hysteria* (1987) by the British band DEF LEPPARD. Despite the widespread acclaim

for this release – including its inclusion in various "best albums of all time" lists – Popoff gave the record a zero rating in his review. Later, he repeatedly reaffirmed his position, explaining it by his critical attitude toward the production decisions, lyrics, and, in his opinion, the excessive commercialization of the musical material.

To date, Martin Popoff is the author of more than seventy books dedicated to the history of rock and heavy metal, as well as a vast number of magazine reviews and interviews. In addition to his print activities, he has participated in the creation of documentary projects on rock music, including films about the band RUSH and VH1 television projects («Metal Evolution», «Rock Icons»).

Thus, the body of his work allows Popoff to be seen not only as a music journalist but also as a unique chronicler of the heavy scene, whose activity in many ways resembles the archaeology of rock culture: the systematic extraction, description, and interpretation of the musical heritage of several decades.

The creative legacy of Canadian rock journalist and popular music researcher Martin Popoff represents one of the most extensive bodies of text dedicated to the history of hard rock and heavy metal. In contemporary academic literature, rock journalism is viewed not only as a form of music criticism but also as an essential tool for documenting the cultural history of popular music (Frith, 1996; Walser, 1993; Weinstein, 2000 [3]). In this context, Popoff's work can be interpreted as a unique synthesis of journalistic practice, archival research, and historical-musical analysis.

The corpus of his work spans several decades and includes dozens of monographs, analytical studies, biographies, and reference publications. For a systematic analysis of Popoff's creative legacy, it is useful to identify several key directions of his research activities:

- 1) The album-analytical model of discography research;
- 2) Biographical and historical monographs;
- 3) Culturological studies of genre evolution;
- 4) Monographic studies of individual works;
- 5) Visual-documentary publications.

One of the most characteristic features of Popoff's methodology is the development of a collective discography analysis format, implemented in his «Album by Album» book series. Within this approach, the author acts not only as a researcher but also as a moderator of expert discussions, bringing together journalists, musicians, and producers for a detailed analysis of every studio album by a band.

A prime example is the book «Iron Maiden: Album by Album» (2018; expanded edition – 2024) [4]. In this study, Popoff conducts a detailed inventory of the legacy of one of the key bands in British heavy metal. The book features discussions of all the group's albums – from the early recordings of the Paul Di'Anno era to the band's later period, including the album *Senjutsu*. Methodologically, the work is structured as a series of roundtables where participants analyze compositional features, studio technologies, and the cultural context of each record's creation. Particular attention is paid to the role of the band's founder, Steve Harris, as the primary songwriter and conceptual architect of the repertoire. The performance styles of the ensemble members are also examined – specifically, the technical virtuosity of drummer Nicko McBrain and the characteristic interaction between guitarists Dave Murray, Adrian Smith, and Janick Gers.

A similar approach is implemented in the book «Rush: Album by Album» (2017) [5], dedicated to the Canadian progressive trio RUSH. Popoff organizes discussions involving twenty journalists and musicians who sequentially analyze all twenty of the band's studio albums. The significance of this study lies in its documentation of not only the band's musical evolution but also the internal dynamics of the members' relationships and the changes in the technological and stylistic environment of rock music.

A comparable methodology is used in several of the author's other works, including «Queen: Album by Album» (2018) [6] and «Pink Floyd: Album by Album» (2018) [7]. In the former, focus is placed on the gradual formation of QUEEN'S artistic language and their long path toward international recognition, which culminated in the album *A Night at the Opera*. In the latter study, Popoff analyzes the entire PINK FLOYD discography – from the early psychedelic period of *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* to the band's later works.

The collective discussion format allows the author to combine diverse interpretations and create a polyphonic analytical discourse that significantly expands the traditional format of rock-journalistic research.

The second significant direction of Popoff's activity involves biographical studies dedicated to the history of individual bands and musicians.

A special place in this corpus is held by the three-volume work «Rush Across the Decades», which represents one of the most detailed examinations of the history of the band RUSH.

The first volume – «Anthem: Rush in the '70s» (2020) [8] – is dedicated to the formation of the collective and its early progressive period.

The second volume – «Limelight: Rush in the '80s» (2020) [9] – analyzes the era of the band's greatest commercial and artistic success.

The third volume – «Driven: Rush in the '90s and 'In the End'» (2021) [10] – examines the late stage of the group's career and the conclusion of its creative journey.

A similar scale is demonstrated by the biographical study «Sensitive to Light: The Rainbow Story» (2020) [11], dedicated to the band RAINBOW. This book is based on numerous interviews with members of the band's various lineups and represents the most detailed reconstruction of Ritchie Blackmore's project. It is complemented by the analytical work «Run With The Wolf: Rainbow On Record» (2024) [12], in which Popoff utilizes a discussion-based format for a detailed analysis of the band's discography.

Among the significant biographical works is the dilogy on the band UFO – «Lights Out: Surviving the '70s with UFO» (2017) [13] and «Lettin' Go: UFO in the '80s & '90s» (2019) [14]. These studies cover both the period of the band's greatest success in the 1970s and the difficult stage of lineup changes and artistic crises in subsequent decades.

In addition to biographical and discographical research, Popoff undertakes attempts at a systematic analysis of the history of heavy music as a cultural phenomenon.

One of the most significant examples is the book «Who Invented Heavy Metal?» (2019) [15]. The author examines the development of the heavy sound from the early blues-rock experiments of the 1960s to the final formation of the genre in the early 1970s. The work constructs a genealogy of heavy metal through several historical stages – from early prototypes of heavy sound in rock and roll and blues to the definitive shaping of the genre at the beginning of the 1970s. Thus, this study, based on interviews with 126 musicians, offers a historical reconstruction of the genre's origins.

Another example of culturological analysis is the book «The Big Book of Hair Metal» (2014) [16], in which glam metal is viewed as a product of the interaction between the music industry, the MTV media environment, and the socio-cultural atmosphere of the 1980s.

An interesting example is also the book «The Top 500 Heavy Metal Songs of All Time» (2004) [17], in which Popoff applies a collective voting method. To compile the rating, the author gathered approximately

18,000 votes from musicians, journalists, and listeners, thereby creating a unique database for analyzing the popularity and cultural influence of individual compositions within the genre.

Along with large-scale historical projects, Popoff pays attention to the analysis of individual key works of rock culture.

An example is the book «Pink Floyd and The Dark Side of the Moon: 50 Years» (2023) [18], which examines in detail the history of the album's creation, the specifics of the studio recording, and its cultural impact. In this study, the author thoroughly analyzes the context of the album's creation, its studio technologies, and cultural influence. Particular attention is given to the work of the design studio HIPGNOSIS, as well as the symbolism of the lyrics and the conceptual structure of the album.

The study «The Who & Quadrophenia» (2023) [19], dedicated to Pete Townshend's rock opera, is structured in a similar way. This work analyzes not only the musical structure of the piece but also its connection to the British youth subculture of the Mods.

In recent years, the direction of visual-documentary publications has notably intensified in Popoff's work. These include the books «Bowie @ 75» (2022), «Kiss at 50» (2023), «Van Halen at 50» (2023), and several others. These editions combine analytical texts with extensive visual material – archival photographs, posters, album covers, and other historical artifacts. Particularly indicative is the work «Hawkwind: A Visual Biography» (2023) [20], where visual sources become an important tool for reconstructing the band's history.

Alongside major projects, Popoff continues to publish specialized studies dedicated to individual bands. These include the books «Agents of Fortune: The Blue Öyster Cult Story» (2016), «The Clash: All the Albums, All the Songs» (2018), and «Led Zeppelin: All the Albums, All the Songs» (2018) [21]. The latter represents one of the most detailed analytical reviews of the LED ZEPPELIN discography and contains a thorough analysis of the compositional and studio features of every song. Popoff explores in depth the compositional structures of the songs, studio recording technologies, and the musical specifics of the arrangements.

In the book «AC/DC At 50» (2023) [22], Martin Popoff examines the history of the Australian rockers through the prism of 50 landmark events and an illustrated chronology. This is not the first time he has addressed their incredible history. In his other book on AC/DC, «Album by Album (Volume 1)» (2019), this

rock journalist provided a detailed analysis of each of the 16 studio albums by one of the most influential and revered bands in rock history.

Among Popoff's latest works, the book «Taken by Force: Sixty Years of Scorpions» (2025) [23] stands out, documenting the journey of the Teutonic rock heroes: from the debut album Lonesome Crow (1972) to the triumphant disc Rock Believer (2022). Drawing on interviews with Klaus Meine, Rudolf Schenker, and Uli Jon Roth, Martin breaks down every song in the band's discography.

No less ambitious is the work «Seven Decades of Deep Purple: An Unofficial History» (2025) [24], covering the path of DEEP PURPLE from 1968 to the album =1 (2024). In the same vein are «Midnight Mover: Accept '79-'96» – an updated history of the German titans ACCEPT, and «Dio: The Unholy Scriptures» – a complete chronicle of Ronnie James Dio's solo career. From the classic Holy Diver (1983) to the legendary vocalist's final days, Popoff reveals the stories behind the creation of the anthems «Rainbow in the Dark» and «Don't Talk to Strangers».

In another of his newest works, «Walking in the Shadow of the Blues: The Whitesnake Story» (2025) [25], Martin Popoff once again takes up the saga of David Coverdale, scrupulously tracing the band's transformation from a British blues-rock outfit into a multi-platinum monster of the “big hair” era. The author conducted more than thirty interviews, including conversations with Coverdale himself, Steve Vai, and Adrian Vandenberg, to provide a detailed breakdown of the history behind hits such as «Here I Go Again» and «Still Of The Night».

In his new book «Kiss '76: Twelve Months That Defined The Hottest Band In The Land» (2026) [26], he applies a method of microscopic analysis, focusing on a single, decisive year for KISS – 1976. This is a chronicle of the twelve months during which Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Ace Frehley, and Peter Criss transformed into global icons. The book tracks the band's path step-by-step: from the release of the albums Destroyer and Rock and Roll Over just eight months apart to the global assault on arenas. The publication is filled with rare interviews with Ace Frehley and producer Bob Ezrin, tour analysis, and a rich visual array. For Popoff, 1976 is the point of no return, when KISS officially became the “hottest band in the land.”

Popoff continues to remain at the cutting edge of progress, supporting contemporary acts such as MASTODON and OPETH. His works complement one another, creating a multifaceted portrait of rock and offering unique insights. Despite his status as

one of the most prolific authors in the world, in 2026 Martin Popoff openly acknowledged the existence of serious crisis points in the rock literature industry. In his weekly newsletter, he characterized the current state of affairs with the short word “panic,” caused by the lack of stable income and difficulties with payment for new manuscripts.

Martin admitted that he often “censors” himself, trying not to harm the subjects he treats with deep respect. However, perhaps this is where the main flaw lies: such delicacy sometimes turns a rock biography into a complimentary reference guide, depriving it of the uncompromising honesty and gritty details without which the global history of rock seems incomplete. Furthermore, Popoff is attempting to find new ways to interact with his audience, seeing this not merely as a work process but as a search for the meaning of life according to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. “I will try to handle this challenge as well,” the maestro concluded, demonstrating a readiness to adapt to the new rules of the book market.

Conclusions. The creative legacy of Martin Popoff represents one of the most extensive bodies of rock journalism at the turn of the 20th–21st centuries. His works encompass a wide range of formats – from fundamental biographies and collective analytical studies to visual encyclopedias and thematic culturological surveys.

An analysis of Martin Popoff’s body of work shows that his output transcends the boundaries of traditional music journalism. His research integrates the methods of journalistic interviewing, historical reconstruction, archival work, and musical analysis. Collectively, these publications form a massive corpus of texts that can be viewed as a unique encyclopedia

of hard rock and heavy metal history, created within the framework of the author’s research platform.

Thus, due to the scale of his bibliography, the systematic nature of his approach, and the longevity of his professional career, Martin Popoff’s works have established a distinctive research platform that has exerted a noticeable influence on the conceptualization of hard rock and heavy metal history.

In the context of contemporary rock journalism, Martin Popoff’s activity can be regarded as an essential element of heavy music historiography. Unlike many music critics focused primarily on current review practices, Popoff consistently constructs a systematic picture of the genre’s development, combining elements of journalism, archival work, and cultural-historical analysis. His numerous publications – both in books and magazines – form a unique body of sources on the history of hard rock and heavy metal, utilized not only by fans of the genre but also by researchers of popular music.

Furthermore, the study reveals a significant shift in the professional self-identification of the rock journalist in the face of the modern industry crisis. Popoff’s transition toward microscopic analysis (as seen in his 2026 works) and his adaptation to new market rules through direct interaction with the audience represent a new stage in the evolution of music historiography. This suggests that the ‘Popoff platform’ is not a static archive, but a dynamic model capable of maintaining the relevance of rock-historical discourse in the digital age.

In this sense, “Popoff’s platform” can be viewed as one of the most large-scale attempts to document and interpret the evolution of heavy rock music in the second half of the 20th – early 21st century.

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Синєокий О. В., Синєокий А. О. КАНАДСЬКА РОК-ЖУРНАЛІСТИКА: ІСТОРИОГРАФІЧНА МОДЕЛЬ «ПЛАТФОРМИ ПОПОФФА»

У сучасному медійному просторі рок-журналістика виступає важливим інструментом інтерпретації та документування історії популярної музики. Особливу роль у цьому процесі відіграють автори, які поєднують функції музичного критика, історика та архівіста. Стаття присвячена дослідженню канадської рок-журналістики на прикладі творчої діяльності одного з найвпливовіших сучасних музичних авторів – Мартіна Попоффа. У роботі розглядається історичний контекст формування канадської рок-журналістики, а також аналізується внесок Попоффа у систематизацію історії хард-року та хеві-металу.

Методологічну основу дослідження становлять історичний, медійний та музикознавчий підходи. Історичний аналіз дозволив простежити еволюцію канадської музичної журналістики від перших спеціалізованих видань другої половини ХХ століття до сучасних форм музичної критики. Медійний аналіз використано для вивчення ролі музичних журналів і книжкових публікацій у формуванні дискурсу рок-культури. Музикознавчий підхід дав змогу розглянути авторську методологію Попоффа, зокрема його спроби періодизації розвитку хард-року та хеві-металу.

У статті досліджено формування так званої «платформи Попоффа» – умовної історіографічної моделі, що поєднує енциклопедичний опис музичної сцени, архівування фактів та аналітичну критику. Особливу увагу приділено його численним книгам, енциклопедичним довідникам і тисячам рецензій, які фактично сформували одну з наймасштабніших систем документування історії важкої музики. Окремо розглянуто публіцистичну позицію автора, його участь у провідних музичних медіа та вплив на формування сучасної рок-історіографії.

У результаті дослідження встановлено, що діяльність Мартіна Попоффа стала важливим етапом у розвитку сучасної музичної журналістики, де рок-критика поступово трансформується у формат науково-історичного аналізу. Отримані результати можуть бути використані у подальших дослідженнях з історії рок-музики, медіадосліджень та культурології.

Ключові слова: рок-музика, канадська рок-журналістика, музична критика, хард-рок, хеві-метал, Мартін Попофф, музична історіографія.

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