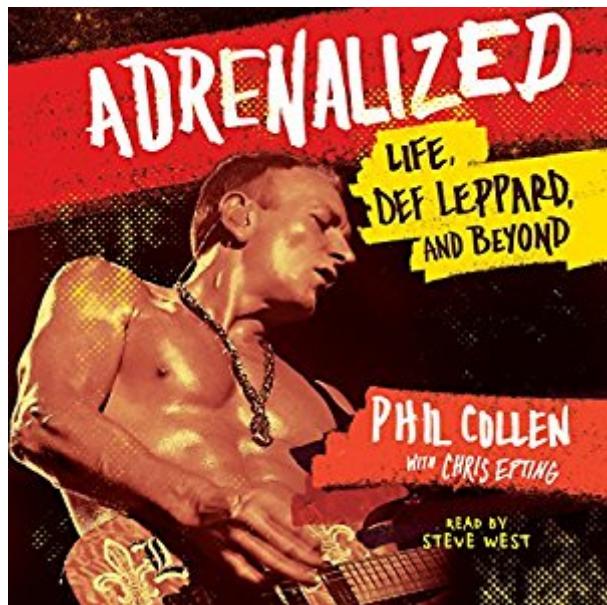


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Adrenalyzed: Life, Def Leppard, And Beyond



Synopsis

A revelatory and redemptive memoir from the lead guitarist of the legendary band Def Leppard - the first book ever written by one of its members - chronicling the band's extraordinary rise to superstardom and how they've maintained it for three decades. Meet Phil Collen. You may know him as the lead guitarist in Def Leppard, whose signature song "Pour Some Sugar on Me" is still as widely enjoyed as when it debuted in 1988. Maybe you've heard of him as the rock star who gave up alcohol and meat more than 25 years ago. Most likely you've seen him shirtless - in photos or in real life - flaunting his impeccably toned body to appreciative female fans. But it wasn't always like this. Collen worked his way up from nothing, teaching himself guitar from scratch as a teenager by imitating his heroes. He slogged it out in London-based pub bands for years, long before Def Leppard formed and transformed from unknowns to icons (all thanks to a little album called Pyromania), from playing openers in near-empty arenas to headlining in those same stadiums and selling them out every night. But as Collen discovered, true overnight success is a myth. Like the other band members, he had to struggle and fight his way to the top; in the end, he says, "Our work ethic saved us." Just as it still does. This is Collen's story, starting with his first real taste of success and wild rock and roll excess as a member of the seminal glam rock outfit Girl. But once he joins Def Leppard, it's also an amazing underdog tale featuring a bunch of ordinary working-class lads who rose to megastardom, overcoming incredible obstacles - such as drummer Rick Allen losing an arm in a car crash and the tragic death of guitarist Steve Clark, Phil's musical soul mate, who lost his fight with alcoholism. Adrenalized is a fascinating account of the failures, triumphs, challenges, and rock-hard dedication it takes to make dreams come true.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I wondered who would be the first member of Def Leppard to release a book, and to be honest I didn't think it would be Phil Collen. In *Adrenalized* Collen covers his childhood in Hackney to his foray in the band Girl and of course, Def Leppard. It's interesting to finally get a book from someone in the Leppard clan. I see some reviews making a big deal about this book, and others claiming it was boring and had little to offer. I fall somewhere in the middle. I consider myself a seasoned veteran of the rock autobiography and I can make distinction between the divide. First things first, Collen's childhood offered nothing out of the ordinary or fascinating. It was much more informative to read about his days in the band Girl, who achieved some moderate success in the U.K. He really takes us back to that scene and era with the makeup, the androgyny, hanging out in gay bars and behind the music of Girl. It's well-known that Collen wasn't a member of Leppard's first two albums and he gives his stance on them and how it felt for him to join an already established band. There's an interesting moment where Phil discusses High N' Dry vs Pyromania and goes deeper into Mutt Lang's contributions and ideas for the band and their sound. Collen believes Pyromania was original and a stepping stone but that "...the band's originality culminated in the *Hysteria* album". There's a lot going into *Adrenalize* and *Slang*, then the content becomes less and less. It becomes more about tours and which band they toured with and anecdotes than story-telling. Up until then he gave good amounts of stories and information on the band's biggest years and tours. *Adrenalized* is very quick read at just about 200 pages.

In the "Coda" section of *Adrenalized*, Def Leppard guitarist Phil Collen makes some profound statements. I'm not talking profound statements for a guitarist in Def Leppard; I'm talking statements that would make philosophers think hard. After reading this book, I like Phil Collen even more than I did before. He's a killer guitarist and an awesome songwriter who is always striving for more. At the same time, he also turns off light switches in his house to save money, doesn't believe in stereotyping whatsoever, and doesn't care much about celebrity. Like all of us, Collen is a mix of contradictions, talents, feelings, and flaws, and he seems to understand this. *Adrenalized* doesn't begin as interestingly as it ends. Collen's retelling of his childhood felt like a book report, an obligatory section to get out of the way before the more glamorous rock 'n' roll parts. In my view, he could have added an exciting adolescent story or

two to spice things up. But the tale heats up quickly when the guitarist hooks up with Girl, his first notable band. Collen was wild in his early years, taking drugs and drinking with abandon. Unlike many rock stars, however, he doesn't revel in this aspect of his life today, saying plainly in the book that he never intended to write about such debauchery when he was practicing it. Collen tells a few wild stories and offers more than enough background info to give readers the general idea: "Rock and roll is no safety net," as Def Leppard themselves once conveyed on the great "High 'n' Dry" album. Reading about Collen's relationship with the deceased Def Leppard guitarist Steve Clark, who was his best friend, is one of the coolest parts of "Adrenalized."

The impression I get from reading some of these reviews is that if you are a Def Leppard fan, you will love this book. I am a Def Leppard fan (admittedly the last new album of theirs I purchased was 'Euphoria' and have stayed far away from anything they've released since then, but still absolutely love them live in concert) and I am also a fan of rock and roll biographies. Phil is an interesting guy and, I think, a great guitar player. So it was a no-brainer that I ordered this book the moment it came out. The fact is this is painfully mediocre. No reflection on Phil, or Def Leppard. But as a rock and roll biography, it's mostly a waste of time. If you've read "Animal Instinct" by David Fricke, you won't need to read this. As other reviewers have noted it's short -- about 200 pages -- and pretty ho-hum in its storytelling. Phil is not a writer, nor are his editors, apparently, as I lost track of how many times he punctuated a sentence with "all of a sudden" and "really" (as in "I really like that.") I loved hearing him admit that "Adrenalize" sounded dated the moment it was released, and other off-hand quotes. But there's nothing really revelatory in this book that couldn't be gleaned by online surfing. I was expecting more about his lifestyle -- his diet, his exercise regime, some intimate stuff like that. Honestly, just a chapter about his personal workout would have made sense in his book, as he has become almost as well known for his incredibly healthy lifestyle. But that's relegated to some pithy "why kill animals" mantra of veganism. (No disrespect intended, but he didn't sound very convincing about his lifestyle change.

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