



LOGOS

*The origins of iconic images
from NYC's musical history
explained.*

THE FACE PAINT AND high-heeled boots have come and gone, but KISS's logo is forever. Few insignia are as potent as that bold-lettered K-I-double-lightning-bolts. As striking as everything else about the NYC rockers, it's barely been altered since the mid-'70s—with the exception of a neutered version used in Germany since 1980, in response to accusations that the band was glorifying the Nazi SS insignia (both of which use runic-style lettering).

By all accounts, lead guitarist Ace Frehley had a knack for art and designed it. According to one story, Frehley wrote the name over a poster for Wicked Lester—the band Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley left to form KISS—and came up with those S's on the fly. What doesn't get mentioned is that some of Wicked Lester's artwork used a jagged lightning bolt in place of its own single S. What's also unknown is Paul Stanley's role in making the logo.

Hand-letterer Michael Doret, who created the elaborate artwork for the

band's 1976 *Rock and Roll Over* and 2009 *Sonic Boom* LPs, recalls that while he was working on the latter, "Paul was over here at my studio and I asked him about that logo. And he said to me that he drew that on his kitchen table very early on, with a T-square and a triangle and some technical pens." In a 2004 *Billboard* interview, Simmons stated that Frehley designed it but Stanley drew it, creating the original logo that would be used on every cover. Not Doret's, though.

"I never really liked the way it fit together," says Doret, whose iconic work includes the New York Knicks logo. "On both the album covers that I did, I redrew it," he admits, noting that Stanley told him, "You're the only one I've ever allowed to redraw this logo."

So, what needed fixing? "I look for geometry in things, and just nothing really lined up. The two S's were at different angles and kind of leaning. It just bugged me," says Doret. "The first time around, [on] *Rock and Roll Over*, I never even told them. But I think Paul knew." -SUE APFELBAUM