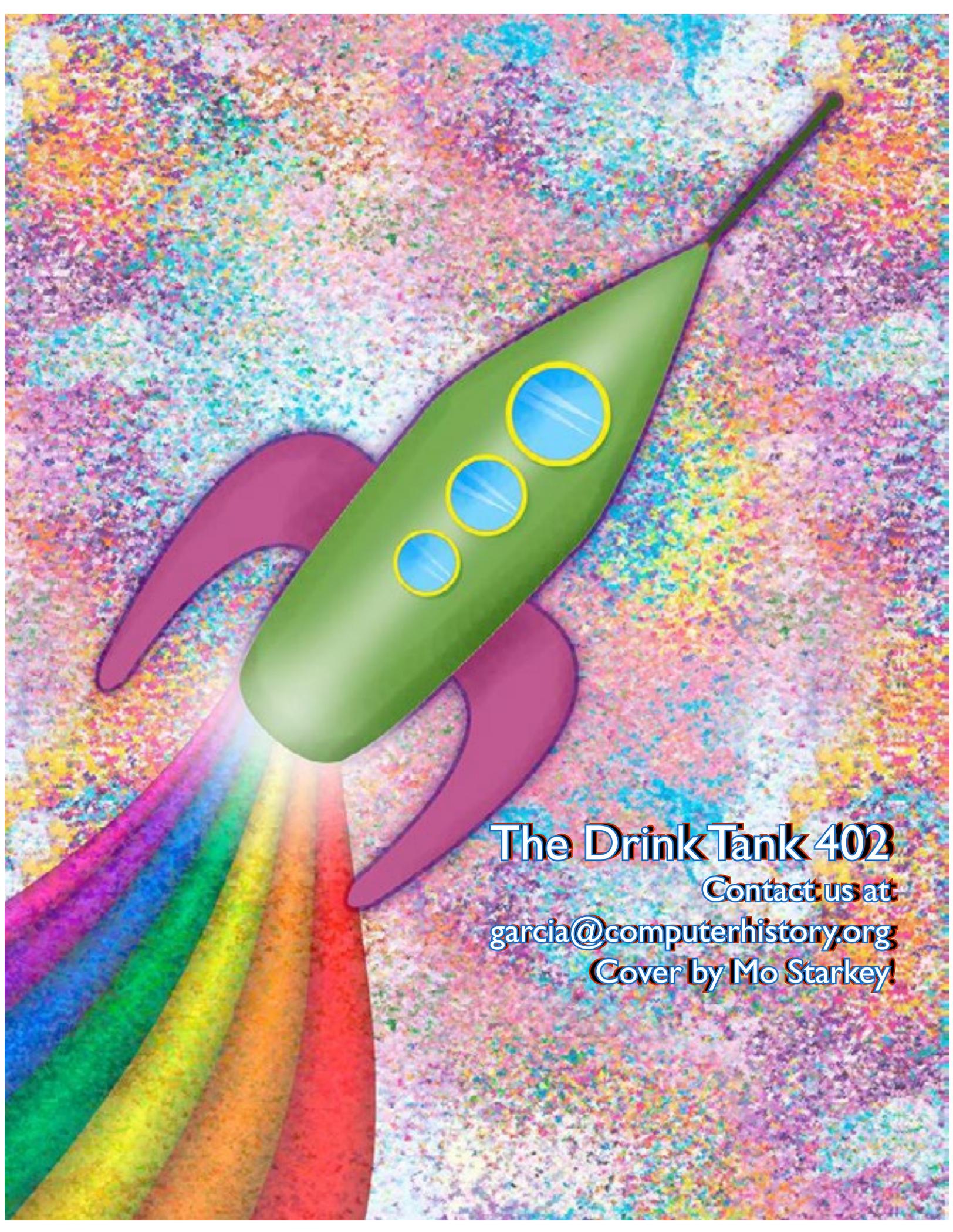


DRINK TANK





The Drink Tank 402

Contact us at
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Cover by Mo Starkey!

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~Editors~

Chris Garcia & Alissa McKersie

Editorials

Alissa

I entered the decade as a three-year-old and left at 14. That's a lot of growing! I learned a lot in that decade! I can't say that I maintained any of the style, but I think what I have held onto the most was the music. I still love so much music from that era: The Cure, Depeche Mode, etc. It's so much of this that set me up for the rest of what people would introduce me to later in my life.

The clothing style of the 80's is not something that I would keep for the rest of my life, thankfully. Also, the hairstyles...I would always have to have a friend do my hair, just because I could never quite get it right. It just really didn't suit me.

However, the MOVIES of the 80's...I LOVED the movies this decade brought us! My all time favourite movie is The Princess Bride (1987), so I'm not biased. And, of course, all of the amazing John Hughes films we were blessed with: Sixteen Candles (1984), The Breakfast Club (1985), Pretty in Pink (1986), and Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986), among many more.

I am super excited for the contributions we have for this issue! Thank you to all of the people that have taken the time to write and do art for this issue! We appreciate all that you do and have done to bring back Drink Tank!

Also, thanks Chris! So happy to be here!
Read on, reminisce, and enjoy!



I love the 80s. I know that my vision isn't universal, that for a great many folks it was a dark time, but like a Grandfather who is a bastard to everyone but you, I will always have some love while not pretending it's perfect.

Except for the music. The music was incredibly. The introduction of electronica to the mainstream, the impressive list of talent like Prince, Madonna, The Smiths, XTC, Squeeze, Thompson Twin, Oingo Boingo, and on and on and on. The movies were nearly as good, with standouts like Top Gun, Top Secret, Johnny Dangerously, Ghostbusters, and Garlic Is As Good As Ten Mothers are among my favorites of all-time. So many.

So, here's our look at the things that we most connect with from the decade I love!



Chris

Part 1

Music





1.1

Musical Education in 120 Minutes

by Christopher J Garcia

I missed the first video they ever played on MTV. I saw the second video. And the third. Fourth. Fifth. Probably up through the 10th or so before I went out to play. I remember Madness had a song played. And I think *Bedsetland* by XTC. It was a good time to be alive, young, and watching TV.

I grew up in music fast. I had listened to punk as a baby, knew ska well enough to love The Specials and hate The Selecter, and to think that Bob Dylan was the most boring performer in the history of the world. These all went without saying to a Christopher J Garcia who was under the age of 10. So, of course, I was drawn to Alternative music.

Late Night TV and I had a hit-and-miss relationship. I would watch David Letterman, sometimes Johnny Carson, often *Nighttracks* or *USA Up All Night*. These were my faves when I was young. It was late one Friday night in December 1986 that I watched *Wrestlemania 2* all the way through and was completely convinced that wrestling was the only thing in the world that mattered.

Christmas is a great holiday. Around Casa de Garcia Grande, it's a time for family to gather, give me presents, and spend the afternoon at the movies. Christmas time 1989 was a special time. I was a freshman in high school, the NWA heavyweight champion was Ric Flair, who was having one of the greatest years in the history of wrestling, and I was enjoying music. That night, after everyone else had gone to sleep, I was up and watching TV in the living room of the little house at 718 Pritchard Court.

As I remember it, I tuned in literally as the last frame of the final commercial before the show started was fading and it was the *120 Minutes* logo. I had no idea what I was about to watch, though it being MTV meant that I was certainly going to be watching music videos (something you can't say these days). The episode was weird, as there was this guy I'd never heard of called Trent Resner on the show, and he was having these whacky Christmas hijinks. There were a couple of members of the Ramones. It was funny, and it was fun, and they showed videos!

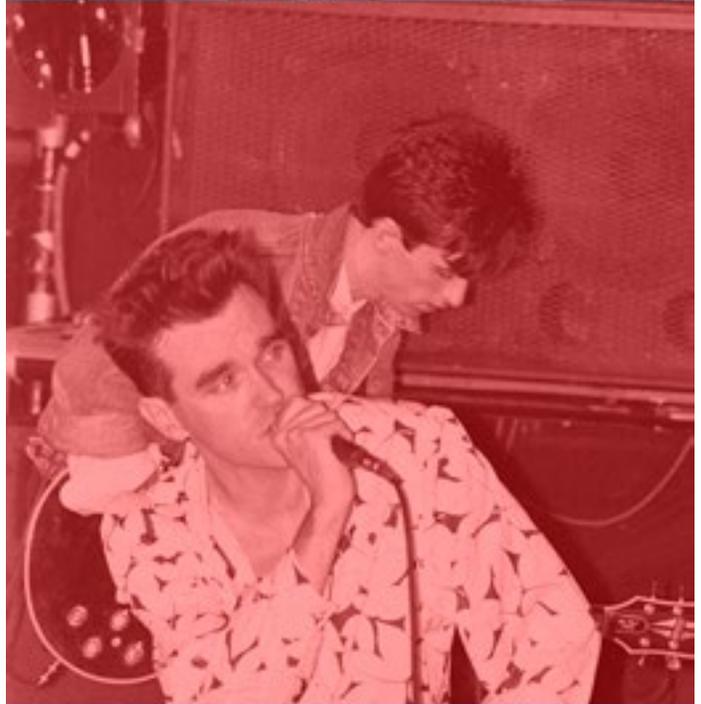
And the videos they showed!

I seem to remember the first one that came on was REM's *Stand*. It wasn't as awesome as *It's The End of the World As We Know It*, but it was fun. There was a B-52s song, *Roam*, some Psychadelic Furs, and a bunch more. *There was How Soon is Now?* by The Smiths, and for the first time ever, I heard *Personal Jesus* by Depeche Mode. It was transformative. I had been listening to what was then called Alternative Rock for ages, but this was a new thing for me. I had never heard so many amazing bands. The Smiths I knew, B52s, REM, but I had never been exposed to The Sugarcubes, Kate Bush, and the Jesus & Mary Chain. It was amazing, and bands I heard that night, alone in my light green soccer jammies were the bands I would listen to for the rest of my life.

And that's what was amazing about shows like *120 Minutes* and *Nightflight* and so on. They introduced kids to things like new awesome bands. They had vignettes that helped shaped young kids senses of humor. They displayed videos that told simple stories, or that made you aware of how to tell a story visually. I fully maintain that we've raised a generation of filmmakers who understand how to use music in their films because of MTV, and the most experimental of all music videos, the ones like Bjork's *Human Behavior* or Too Much Joy's *Making Fun of Bums*, were on *120 Minutes*.

120 Minutes ran weekly until 2003. It's back in one form or another on MTV2. which is cool, but is there Alternative Music anymore?

I dunno, YouTube may have killed the entire concept.





How Not Living in the 80s is the Best Way to Love 80s Music

By Jared Dashoff

The year I was born, Aretha Franklin became the first woman inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Michael Jackson released *Bad*, his third album.

Three years later it was 1990. That's all I got of the 1980s. Three measly years, most of which, as is expected, I don't remember.

That doesn't mean I don't know 80s music.

Everyday that I rode to school in my mother's car the radio was tuned to 102.9 WMGK, Philadelphia's Classic Rock station. She was listening for the nostalgia. I was listening to learn. I heard instruments harmonizing with one another; voices doing the same. Sure, the 90s had their fair share of good bands (Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Green Day (before they went off the deep end), RHCP and Foo Fighters, etc.) but 80s rock seemed to

have something more. I could never and still can't put my finger on it, but as much as the 90s was a revitalization of rock in the minds of some, the 80s was the last of the real good stuff for me.

Why did I go to the Concert for Valor last year on the National Mall? Well, to honor America's veterans, but also SPRINGSTEEN. (Holds back anger that I never got to see him live while Clarence was alive).

Why did I ruin my ear drums and brain cells listening to my mother "sing" at Citizens Bank Park? A Face to Face concert with Billy Joel and Elton John.

Why did I bust my "good" knee at the wedding of two of my close college friends and have to spend the goodbye brunch the next day on a lot of Advil? "Don't Stop Believin'" by Journey.

Sure, growing up or living in the 80s for more

than three years might have been beneficial to my knowledge of how 80s music was created. I could have lived through the references in “We Didn’t Start the Fire.” I could know who was copying whom or who was “honoring” whom by playing in their style. But does not living in the segregated South mean I can’t understand *The Color Purple*. Do I have to have lost a brother or gone to some prep school to truly grok and love *Catcher in the Rye*? For that matter, can a child born tomorrow not be entertained and fall in love with Buzz, Woody and Mr. Potato Head the same way I did when I watched *Toy Story* for the first time?

Nowadays, as I listen to Eric Church’s “Springsteen”—Yes, I listen to country music. Get over it.—the “melody sounds like a memory.” Not of listening to Church’s song, which I have great memories of, but of

standing on the National Mall listening to The Boss play acoustic, the grain in his voice coming through with each word of “Born in the USA.” It also brings back the memory of that Face to Face concert and the artist who sang another melodic memory, one we were “all in the mood for” that night in Philadelphia—yes, I know Piano Man came out in the 70s; cut me some slack for the sake of poetic license.

Point being, my musical tastes today, the artists and songs I listen to and like, are tied to the music I heard in my formative years, piping through the sound system of a Mercury Sable LS station wagon. 80s music gave me my baseline for what good music is, and I didn’t even have to wear Jordache or Zubaz for the benefit. I call that a win-win.





Music Piracy In... The 1980s

by Robbert van Ooijen

During the last weeks, several blogs wrote about what can be expected of the music piracy debates in 2011. While these articles pointed at the future of 'the war' on music piracy, here I will continue to raise some historical awareness to place today's and tomorrow's anti-piracy efforts in perspective. After I previously discussed what music piracy looked like before the advent of the music industry, in the 1900s, the 1910s, and in the 1950s, this post will continue with an analysis of music piracy in the 1980s.

In the 1980s the character of music piracy breaks radically with the character of the piracy cultures in the decades before. In contrast with the industrial and centralized music piracy cultures that were common until then, music piracy from the 1970s on really becomes a decentralized and domestic practice. This decentralized character of music piracy, which continues until today, was initiated by and can largely be attributed to the popularity of tape.



First appeared as a part of Robbert van Ooijen's Masters Thesis.

A Revolution Initiated By Tape

The roots of tape, and thus of music piracy in the 1980s, can be traced back to the late 1940s. At that time tape entered the domestic sphere for the first time with reel-to-reel tape systems that became a presence in several U.S. households. These reel-to-reel systems, although still being bulky in their nature due to the large size of the actual tape, made the recording and copying of music easier than ever before. Looking back, the reel-to-reel systems may seem complicated machines but as domestic habits of use developed, these systems initiated a revolutionary shift in the place where creation and reproduction took place. A shift from the factory to the home.

The Success Of The Cassette

In 1963, while vinyl was still the dominant medium for music, Philips introduced the Musicassette that would eventually become popular as the Compact Cassette. It was smaller, cheaper, and much easier to use than reel-to-reel tape and thanks to open standards, other companies were encouraged to license it, which increased the speed of the spread

of this technology. The cassette became the standard format for tape recording and thus the standard for music piracy in the 1970s and 1980s.

A real mass market for home recording emerged. One could record LPs onto cassettes and swap these cassettes with friends. The cassettes could also be rerecorded and by making mixtapes for friends and family, individuals for the first time could feel a sense of authorship. In 1983, partly due to the introduction of the Walkman, the sales of cassettes even surpassed the sales of vinyl.

Anti-Piracy Campaigns

The success of the blank cassette did not go unnoticed by the music industry. It sold prerecorded tapes but because of the decentralized nature of home taping and the domestic sphere in which it took place the tactics used to prevent for music piracy had to change. Therefore, the industry began with

campaigns that stated that home taping was a threat to music. The most famous example of this was the Home Taping Is Killing Music campaign, initiated by the British Phonographic Industry. It reasoned that a decline in music sales due to home copying could result in less revenue for the music industry, negatively influencing the investments in new music and thereby ruining the future of the industry. A narrative that is still being used today.

What contrasted the music piracy culture surrounding cassettes in the 1980s with the previously described piracy cultures was the noncommercial nature of it. Before, music piracy often came forth from ideals but it was largely a commercial enterprise. From the success of the cassette on however, music piracy became a decentralized, noncommercial, and domestic practice. Music piracy was being democratized

HOME TAPING IS KILLING MUSIC





The English Beat at the US Festival by Marco On The Bass

While I was walking around Ska Weekend at the World's Fair Park in Knoxville, Tennessee this past weekend, I was reminded of the US Festival which took place in San Bernadino, California in 1982 and 1983. The US Festival (US pronounced like the pronoun, not as initials) were two early 1980s music and culture festivals sponsored by Steve Wozniak of Apple, Inc. and broadcast live on cable television. The first was held Labor Day weekend in September 1982 and the second was Memorial Day weekend in May 1983. Wozniak paid for the bulldozing and construction of a new open-air field venue as well as the construction of an enormous state-of-the-art temporary stage in San Bernardino, California. (This site is still the largest amphitheatre in the United States.)

The two US Festivals were the first major festivals since Woodstock that were not charity concerts—they were intended to be celebration of evolving technologies; a marriage of music, computers, tele-

vision and people. They were the first large concerts to include video screens to bring the action on stage closer to the audience at the rear of the amphitheater, as well as to cable-television viewers at home. Each of the two festivals had hundreds of thousands of people in attendance, but were resounding commercial failures. It is estimated that Wozniak lost nearly \$20 million over two years. This past May was the 25th anniversary of the 1983 US Festival. There is a great multi-media story on the anniversary that was printed in the Press Enterprise which is located in Riverside, California where the festival was based. There is also a great Video featuring the memories of concertgoers who attended and some amazing pictures.

The only band to be invited to play both the 1982 and 1983 US Festival's was The English Beat. The two invitations are a testament to the hard work they put into breaking the U.S. The release of "Special Beat Service" in the US in 1982 had solidified them as a "new wave" band rather than a ska band and that helped to expand their audience here. The band are at the height of their game at the 1983 festival, performing an eclectic mix of songs from all three albums. Its bittersweet to listen to their performance because the band came to an end a few short weeks later.



First appeared at

<http://marcoonthebass.blogspot.com/2008/07/english-beat-us-festival-may-28-1983.html>

Dave Wakeling has related to me that he and Roger had decided shortly after the US Festival to quit the band and he described how he wrote a resignation letter and slipped it under the door of their management. That night David Bowie called and said "You were amazing at the US Festival. I want you to be the opening band for my entire "Serious Moonlight Tour." Dave said that when he received that news he ran back over to the management office late that night and tried in vain to use a metal coat hanger to get the letter back from under the door but it was too far under and he failed to snare it. He says he took it as a sign that the band was meant to end.

Here is the set list:

Mirror In The Bathroom
Doors Of Your Heart
Two Swords
Jeanette
I Confess
Too Nice To Talk To
Spar Wid Me
Get A Job
Stand Down Margaret
Tears Of A Clown
Ackee 123
Twist & Crawl
Ranking Full Stop
Save It For Later
Jackpot

Here is an audio download of their performance:

[The English Beat - 1983 US Festival](#)

[A great Documentary being made!](#)





You Never Can Tell by Richard Lynch

1.5

You never can tell what you'll find on the Internet that'll end up leading you on a trip down memory lane. Hey, let's be honest about it – it happens to most of us and probably more often than we'd like to admit. I had been telling a friend about my wife Nicki's and my early January mini-vacation in New York City, and he asked if we had tried to get tickets for *Springsteen on Broadway*. My answer was no – the show was in hiatus the week we were there. But just for the fun of it, I did a web search to see if tickets would even have been available and the answer, to no surprise, turned out to be: Not a Chance. Bruce is doing that one man show through the middle of December and every performance is sold out.

But during that Internet search I came across something that took me back more than 30 years – a photo of a souvenir tour tee shirt from Bruce's "Born in the U.S.A." world tour of 1984-85. The front of the shirt depicts the iconic "Pink Cadillac" that was the title of one of his songs from back then, while the back shows the names of the cities where the tour touched down. Most of them seem pretty obvious – places like Cleveland, Toronto, Tokyo, Paris, and London – but about halfway through the list there's one city that I doubt many people would otherwise recognize: Murfreesboro.

It's located at the exact geographical center of Tennessee and is the home of Middle Tennessee State University. Murfreesboro is only about a 35 mile drive

down Interstate 24 from Nashville, and back in the 1980s the Country Music Capital of the World did not have a suitable venue which could accommodate large indoor concerts. But MTSU did – its Athletic Center, which had been designed with really good acoustics. And that's where Bruce and his E Street Band played.

Back in 1984, Nicki and I were living in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and I was employed by the Tennessee Valley Authority. I worked as a project engineer which often took me up to one of TVA's power plants in the coal fields of western Kentucky, and the route to get there brought me right past Murfreesboro. It was on a chilly Friday evening, November 16th, as I was passing through Nashville on my way back home from a week on the road, I heard on one of the Nashville rock music radio stations that Springsteen would be playing a December 9th tour date at MTSU and that tickets would go on sale in Murfreesboro the next morning.

What followed was a night that severely tested my endurance. I found a pay phone and called Nicki, telling her I wouldn't be home that night, and by the time I reached MTSU's Athletics Center a lengthy queue had already formed. After I took my place in line it continued to grow and grow, extending all the way down the side of the building and around the corner. In another hour the tail end of the line emerged from around the opposite corner. And all the while the temperature kept dropping.

I wasn't nearly as prepared as were many of the

others in line – I had only a medium-weight jacket with a lightweight hat and no gloves. And also no food. But that didn't mean there *wasn't* any food – as time went on a camaraderie developed among people in line, where snacks were shared and your place in line was saved when you had to go use the restroom. Inevitably, standing in line became a spectator activity in itself. Just down the hill at an athletic field we observed a high school football playoff game being played, with the local team eventually emerging victorious. (To this day that has been the only football game that I have ever seen in person.) And every so often there was a mini-drama where something happened that caused voices elsewhere in the line to be angrily raised until somebody else interceded as peacemaker. Some of that was no doubt alcohol-fueled – I saw many empty beer cans and even a few bourbon bottles – and by morning there were people who appeared to be sleeping it off as the line wended past them.

I ended up getting three tickets, pretty good seats, two of them for Nicki and me and one for a contractor friend from California who was a big Springsteen fan. I had enough money for more yet – they were a very affordable \$16 each – but when I called a couple of close friends in Chattanooga from a nearby pay phone to tell them about it they decided to take a pass. I remember being absolutely stunned.

Including Nicki and me, there were more than 11,000 people who were at that concert on December 9th. And it was a long one – two sets plus an encore, 29 songs total – lasting more than four hours. He opened the show with a bombastic version of “Born in the U.S.A.” that supercharged the crowd and ended it with a playful version of “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town”, which sent us all home in a pleasant warm glow. But, for me, everything else in between I had remembered as a dense kaleidoscopic mix of sight and sound. That is, until I found the complete set list online – Bruce's fan base is obsessively and relentlessly completist – which brought back more memories on how it all happened. But it's still all somewhat disjointed – there was sensory overload being in that arena for the concert, and what I have left are a lot of bits and pieces.

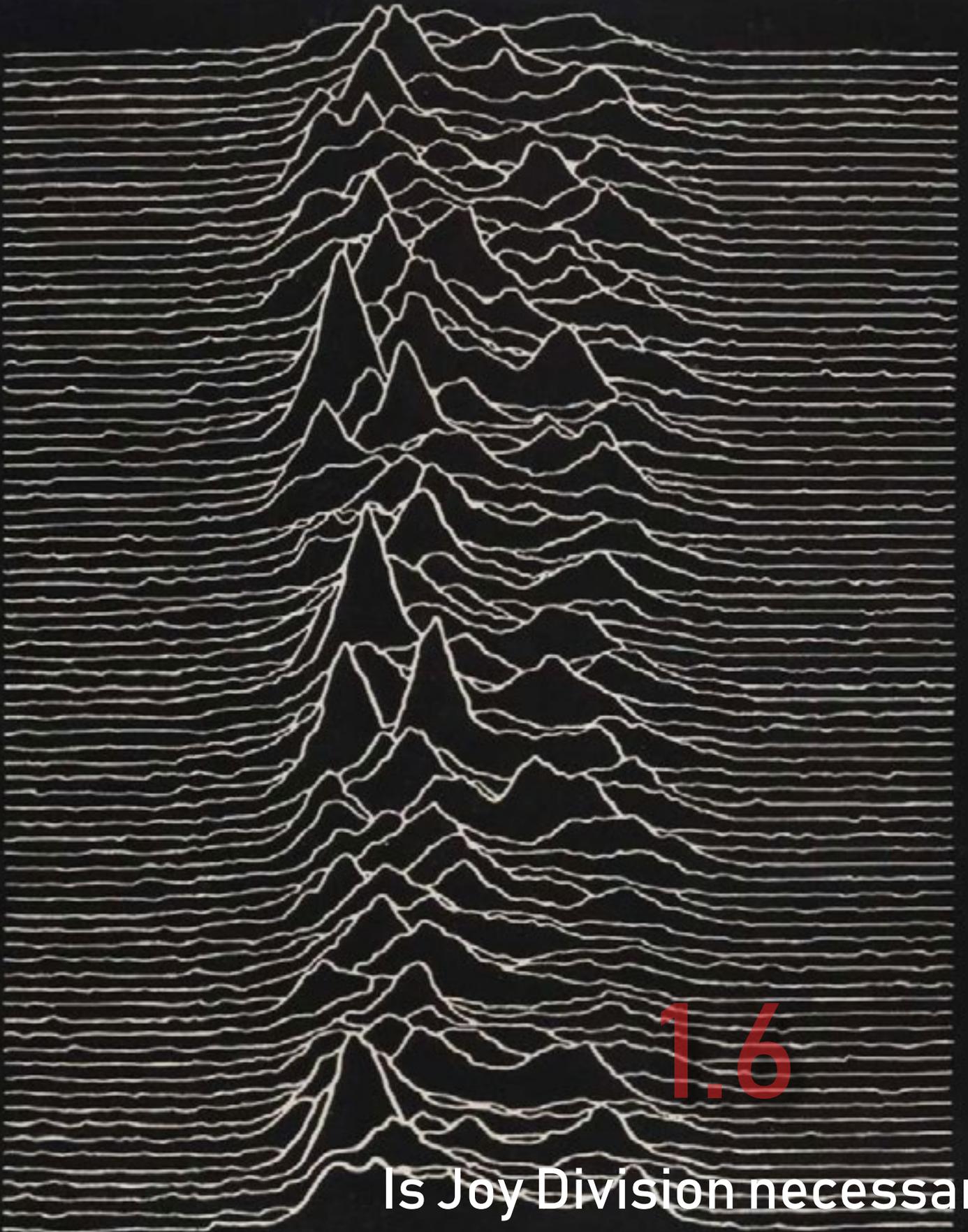
I'd often wondered if there were any notables in the crowd that night, and I'm sure there must have been several. But in my Internet search I could find record of only one – the famous rock-country singer and songwriter Steve Earle, whose breakthrough 1986

album *Guitar Town* was listed by *Rolling Stone* magazine (in 2012) as one of the 500 greatest albums of all time. He came away so inspired that he went home and wrote most of the songs for the album. Makes me wonder if he was anywhere near me in line on that cold November night.

It has now been 34 years – fully half a lifetime for me – since Nicki and I went to that remarkable concert. And for Bruce as well, as he and I are separated in age by only a few months. Since then Bruce has released eleven studio albums, eight compilation albums, five concert albums, and six boxed sets. That's a lot of music! If there are any regrets I have from my concert experience, it's that in all of that subsequent music there are many songs I wish I could have seen him perform – originals like “Murder Incorporated”, “Blood Brothers”, and “This Hard Land”, and covers such as the excellent one he did of Chuck Berry's “You Never Can Tell”. That December 1984 concert was the one and only time I've ever, or probably *will* ever, see Bruce live – tickets to his shows are invariably either unavailable or else only obtainable at totally unreasonable prices from ticket resellers. But in this Brave New World of the Internet and YouTube, there are plenty of Springsteen performances from various concerts that I *can* see again and again if I so desire. And often, I do.

And it even turns out that it's possible, in a way, to relive parts of the Murfreesboro concert. The so-called “BruceBase” online wiki has transcripts of Bruce's intros to many of the songs that he played that night. And there's also a bootleg three-disk LP set! It was produced, soon after the concert, by some obscure record company in France and I found out about it during my Internet search because one set, which had been owned by a collector in South Africa, was auctioned back in 2014. The annotation to the sale stated that: “This is a limited edition of 400 worldwide, and amazingly rare. Good luck.”

There was no indication on who won the auction, but the winning bid really wasn't very high – just \$130. I don't think it's ever been re-released in any format and now that I know it exists I'd like to think that someday I'll find a place where I can buy a CD or a download. On the other hand, there's the realization that I probably have a better chance of winning the lottery, and my luck has *never* been anywhere near that good. But I'll keep on hoping. You know, you just never can tell.



1.6

Is Joy Division necessary?
Ian Curtis and the Birth of the 1980s
by Jesse Christopherson

Somebody produced a t-shirt that says Joy Division is not a genre. Presumably the makers were exasperated by thirty years of the band's canonization by fanboy critics and the fetishization of singer Ian Curtis.

It's not hard to sympathize with the sentiment. Each new generation finds its parents' music a little bit tedious, even tinged with ridiculousness. The NME, a clever step ahead, regularly deflated its own product in a Sacred Cow column (later a blog). But not even the NME ventured a stray word about Joy Division's iconic albums - the first having invented Indie Rock and the second Goth.

But in the United States - the arbiter of popular music success and the seat of critical theory - there is an urgent reevaluation of a lot of assumptions underlying popular culture. What passed with a wink, maybe a half whispered joke, since the co-opting of feminism in the 1980s is suddenly subject to revisionist scrutiny. Bright young people don't laugh about sexual consent, racial stereotypes, transies, or the patriarchy any more.

There is a swell of support for art that's "necessary." Art that's on message. Because with Donald Trump and his money-laundering cronies peddling influence from the White House the stakes are high. With dominionist cabinet appointees preaching creationism the stakes are high. With the emergence of a new white supremacy and with resentful incels shooting dozens of their high school classmates with AR-15s the stakes are high.

And the criteria are emphatically retroactive.

Fashion victims?

"Any group, even the simplest, has political and social implications. Look for example at Boney M. Their message is simple and can be summed up in a word: dance. And if a group doesn't offer any explicit message, there are always implied messages – escape, breaking free from the daily grind."

-Ian Curtis

In late-'70s Britain young punks at the cutting edge of fashion adopted a Nazi chic, led by Johnny Rotten. It was designed to provoke their parents' cohort -- WWII veterans and survivors of Germany's V2 rocket barrages.

Ian Curtis and his bandmates grew up in a city pockmarked with bomb craters, but the Manchester Blitz of 1940 was not a living memory for them. Thousands of Mancunians were killed or injured,

England's existence was precarious, but everything kids knew about the War came from relatives' boring stories, dry history lessons, and a stultifying cultural demonization of the enemy. For people like Joy Division guitarist Bernard Sumner, raised in Salford, Nazis weren't real people who subscribed to a militarized, genocidal social vendetta and almost conquered the world. They were caricatures. Who had a great sense of style.

"Everyone calls us Nazis."

-Ian Curtis

Joy Division experimented with Nazi and other Germanic themes from the beginning. They were originally called Warsaw (perhaps after David Bowie's Warszawa). The term joy division was lifted from Kaczynski's Nazi exploitation novella House of Dolls. TFW their debut release featured a Hitler Youth member banging a drum on the sleeve.

Band members would always deny nefarious intention, admitting at most to a certain admiration for an aesthetic that was associated with the previous generation's (parenthetically genocidal) mortal enemy. In a 1978 interview Sumner, either naively or disingenuously, said of Joy Division's Nazi fetish, "People tend to take a radical viewpoint on everything, whereas if they would just think for a change they would see that it was absolutely nothing." Regardless of their motives, Joy Division eventually shed both their raw punk sound and their Nazi references.

Originally moved to create music by quasi-peer punks the Sex Pistols and Buzzcocks, after a couple of years the confluence of Curtis's emerging star-quality talent and his creative exploitation of the tensions of his personal life pushed the band to a higher level. Their themes were authentically dark and their music eventually sophisticated enough to evoke critical interest. With producer Martin Hannett, who encapsulated their rock songs in echo-y sci-fi capsules, they invented what later came to be called post-punk - virtually simultaneously with Siouxsie and the Banshees, Public Image Ltd., and Magazine.

A successful legacy

Without a chart hit and a legendary suicide Joy Division might have been relegated to the Cabaret Voltaire/A Certain Ratio bin instead of requiring a chapter in music history all to themselves.

Ian Curtis lived a bifurcated life from adolescence and as each half of him grew, matured, rooted, he began to split in two. At 16 he met 15-year-old Deborah

Woodruff, at 17 he got engaged, and before he turned 20 he married her and moved in with his in-laws. All the while he fantasized of rockstardom and plotted the practicalities of it.

Punk rock created a path for Curtis and thousands of dreamers like him to swarm the music industry, where before there was only unreachable glamor and celebrity.

By the time Joy Division's lineup stabilized, they had played enough to feel confident of their set, and they had a record contract, their punk roots had sprouted a new kind of music. As Tony Wilson, Joy Division's label boss, put it, "Punk enabled you to say 'fuck you,' but it couldn't go any further. It was a single, venomous, two-syllable phrase of anger. Sooner or later, someone was going to say more; someone was going to want to say 'I'm fucked.'"

Curtis suffered from epilepsy, occasionally triggered on stage while he performed his music. His bandmates learned how to see the seizures coming and take care of him afterward, but for Curtis there was a psychological toll too. He felt out of control, at the mercy of a worsening condition. He worried about burdening his friends and family, derailing his career, and endangering his baby daughter.

His teenage marriage had become difficult too. He was jealous and controlling. His wife had put up with a lot in order to support his rock star dreams, but now there was a baby girl with needs that couldn't be negotiated or put off. Her resentments made him feel isolated and he began to crave less conditional affection.

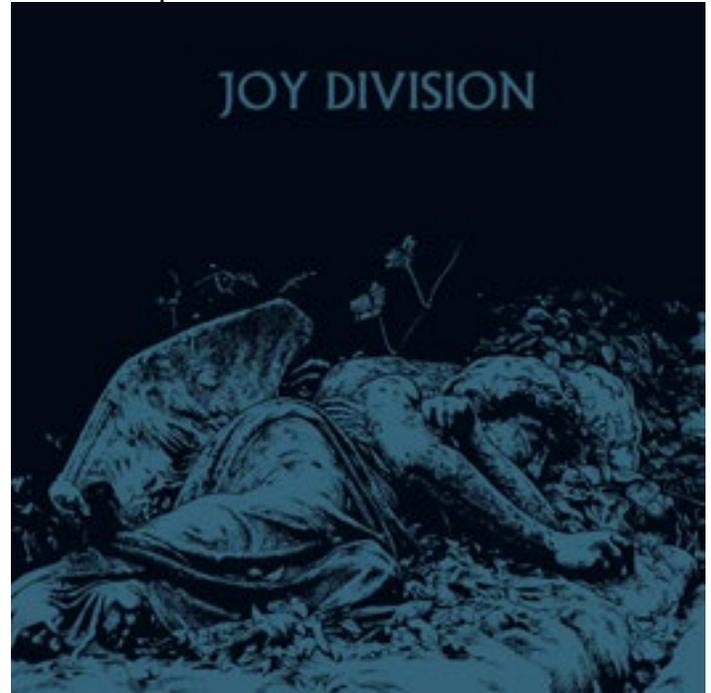
In August 1979, aged 23 with just seven months left to live, he met Annik Honoré, a music fanatic with taste complimenting Curtis's who worked at a record label. She was exotically Belgian and didn't make any demands, and Annik and Ian quickly began a fantasy love affair. She became his preferred companion on tour, displacing the lads in the band, and they would talk for hours on end.

"I think I just came at the right time when he needed comfort, affection, tenderness and that my presence was soothing for him....," she wrote. "Our relationship was very platonic and very pure and romantic but also quite abstract... He told me how much he loved his little daughter and how lovely she was but again it appeared very unreal. He seemed afraid to hurt her and not being able to look properly after her."

In an interview Honoré underscored the

nonsexual character of their romance: "It was a completely pure and platonic relationship, very childish, very chaste... I did not have a sexual relationship with Ian."

Before long Curtis's romance with Honoré rocked his marriage past a tipping point and he and Deborah separated and headed for divorce.



The present is well out of hand

"Something has to happen here, a conclusion that contains a certain contradiction, either there is something worse than this, after all, or, from now on, things are going to get better, although all the indications suggest otherwise."

-José Saramago, Blindness

Curtis believed in marriage, loved his baby girl, and felt tremendous responsibility to achieve professional success not just for his family but also his band and label. He supported Margaret Thatcher and the Conservatives' takeover of Parliament in May 1979 (though to be fair, this was before Thatcher had manifested her full political agenda).

Curtis also dabbled in androgyny, idolized gay and bisexual icons David Bowie, J.G. Ballard, William S. Burroughs, Iggy Pop, and Lou Reed. His songs were peppered with transgressive themes. He was very close friends with sexual libertarian "third-gendered" Genesis P-Orridge. He was just beginning to have access to the rock 'n' roll lifestyle he always wanted.

Curtis's Joy Division bandmates say they were too young and naive to realize that his distress signals were serious. But in retrospect, although some of his lyrics were just Ballardian sci-fi horror vignettes, others

autobiographically described a soul splitting in half, passion vs. duty, both before and after his relationship with Honoré exacerbated the tension. *Something Must Break*, recorded the month before Ian and Annik met, is a narrative of paralyzing indecision: “Two ways to choose/Which way to go/Decide for me/Please let me know.”

On *Heart and Soul*, *Twenty-Four Hours*, and *Isolation*, all written in late 1979 or early 1980, the narrator’s desperation and anxiety reach an impossible intensity. While Curtis was in the hospital following a drug overdose Bernard Sumner presented him with two new songs thinking they would cheer him up. The end results were *Ceremony* and *In a Lonely Place*, two of the best but bleakest songs of Joy Division’s oeuvre -- and the last ones they ever wrote.

Ian made plans to see his wife and daughter on the day before Joy Division was to fly to America, to be made or broken, and he arranged for Annik to see him off at the airport the next day. She waited there, but he never arrived. Instead of touring America, instead of being a rock star, instead of divorcing or reconciling with his wife, instead of raising his daughter, he listened to Iggy Pop’s *The Idiot* and hanged himself at home.

“Maybe he was torn between what he should do and what he wanted to do. Maybe Annik wasn’t the one, but he felt he needed to go. I don’t know,” Deborah Curtis said. “I’ve spent a lot of time wondering because there were so many other things he could have done besides commit suicide.”

Love Will Tear Us Apart

Joy Division’s posthumous single *Love Will Tear Us Apart* was their only hit, reaching number 13 in the U.K. Stamped and sealed by sincerity inferred from his suicide, over time *Love Will Tear Us Apart* became the seed of Joy Division’s apotheosis. Its disco beat, driving guitar, impeccable keyboard hook, vivid lyrical depiction of a failing relationship, and Curtis’s singular croon (used to better effect here than on any other Joy Division recording) ensured its status as a genre-transcending classic.

But is Joy Division necessary? Which ideologies could Joy Division be construed to serve? What is the political implication of Joy Division in the context of *Me Too*, Donald Trump’s criminal presidency, and the cultural dominance of Beyoncé?

Ian Curtis was a white man who participated in a patriarchal social structure and aspired to success in the sexist, racist entertainment industry; he voted

for Margaret Thatcher, exploited white supremacist imagery, followed and enforced gender norms (as far as we know), had an extramarital romance, and effectively abandoned his family and friends.

There is no way for us to ask him what he meant, hear his more mature, considered work, hear a story about how he overcame his despair and resumed a productive artistic life, hear his take on Theresa May or Brexit. Curtis is dead but his music has a life of its own now. And don’t look to fans for answers. Joy Division fandom is like a religion several generations after its guru is gone. Interpretation has drifted from original intention.

William S. Burroughs described his famous “cut-up” composition method as a reflection of how life really works: “Let’s take an example: a young man goes for a walk. You can describe this situation, but you can also intersperse in the story the young man’s interior thoughts. These are generally absurd, illogical, unreal images... Life is a cut-up.”

We think of ourselves as conglomerations of memories and sensory experience. We talk about our “minds” and our “personalities.” But we’re never all the parts of ourselves all at once. We can only think one thought at a time. The field of our vision is actually very small. Our brains are constantly busy with far more than just our consciousness. But if even just our conscious mind could be printed out in real time, I doubt we could make a sensible narrative out of the results without a lot of cutting and pasting.

Music, though, is like a thread that leads us from one beat to the next. Recurring motifs bring us around in pleasingly melodic spirals. Voices reminding us subconsciously of our family members fulfill our sense of belonging. Music - from the simplest lullaby to the grandest symphony - gives us a break from the chaotic experience of living and allows us a few moments of harmony.

I predict the legend of Ian Curtis, should Twitter ever inexplicably turn its attention that way, wouldn’t stand up to an analysis of its ideological utility to the social justice struggle.

But if his music, and maybe this applies to art in general, can provide us with anything it’s an ideology free, limbic experience. Temporarily intensified consciousness and a better understanding of ourselves.

Excuse me now while I cue up a New Order record and think about where my kids might be in 30 years if I can follow the beat a while longer.



Part 2 Culture



You may, or probably not, be familiar with my [Three Minute Modernist](#). It's an art podcast, and one that I'm rather proud of. I've managed to do more than 150 episodes, which is made possible by doing eps that tend to be less than 3 minutes long. It's a fun little project, but most importantly, it's allowed me to investigate art that I would never have come in contact with.

So, why am I talking about it in the 1980s issue of *The Drink Tank*? Because of *Good Morning Mr. Orwell*, that's why!

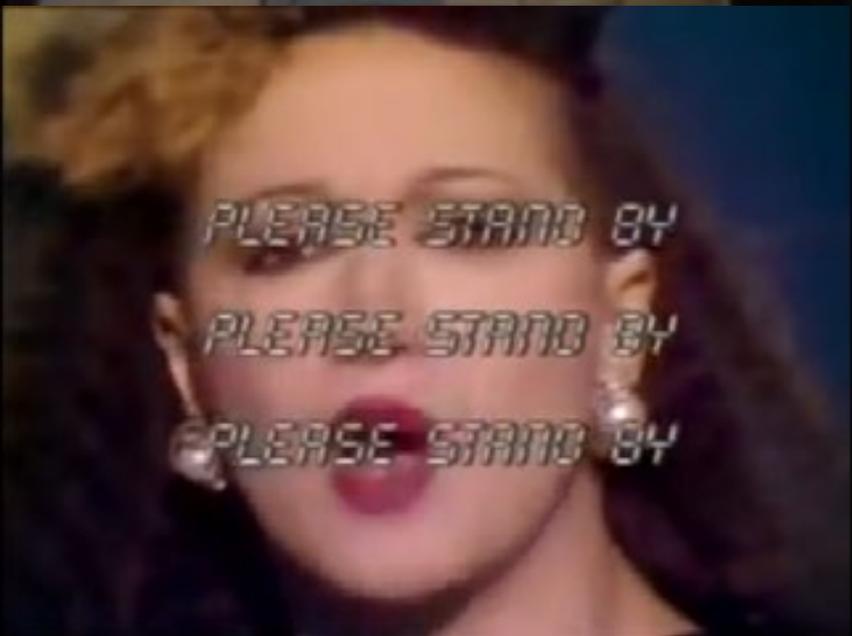
You see, Nam June Paik was the father of Video Art. Dating from the 1960s, he created some of the first important works of video art, pieces that were referenced throughout the 1970s and 80s, especially in early music videos by the likes of Peter Gabriel, Laurie Anderson, and The Talking Heads. He was working at a time when portable video cameras made it possible to actually record in a non-studio scenario, which was freeing, allowing for the new idea of Video Art to flourish.

In late 1983, there was a hysteria. The novel *1984* was back in the news, and because of the way the world was looking, folks were afraid of Big Brother becoming a real thing. Paik, ever tied-in to the zeitgeist, figured that doing an international video thing would be

a great way to celebrate the coming of 1984, either as a rebuttal to Orwell's dark vision, or as a confirmation of such. Both readings are equally valid in this case. The idea was to originate the show from New York, the Pompidou Centre in Paris, and San Francisco. The idea was to utilize the satellite network to enable performers from all those locations, plus some neat, delay-based effects. It was an ambitious project, and the technical issues showed through quite a few times, which is only to be expected. In fact, I'd say that Paik knew they'd happen, and thus the basis for a couple of the skits happened to be technical problems, which I guess is like the baker who puts slits in the top of his pie as a way to avoid the cracks from looking unplanned.

Now, the reason this has to be the most 1980s thing ever is not the form, the concept, or even the delivery; it's the cast list. The performers for the show are not only a who's of the most 1980s of all 1980s stars, but they are all working in the most 1980s of ways.

The entire thing starts with what I believe is computer-generated imagery of a Rocky Horror-like mouth uttering the words "Good morning, Mr. Orwell." and that is followed by the mouth saying "Bonjour, Mr. Orwell." That's the opening, and after that, we're right



into Peter Gabriel, pop star in the extreme for 1984, and Laurie Anderson, both decked-out in white suits, on a video manipulated background of endless sky. It's a creepy image, actually. They perform the song *This is the Picture (Excellent Birds)*, which is about as 80s art rock as you can get without being *Shock the Monkey*. Laurie, whose music video *Oh, Superman*, I'll talk about someday, is great, and while there's a detachment to everything that Peter does, she's dialed in. I love that about her as a performer, she never gets too far away from the idea that you're there, watching her, and she seems to be trying to connect. The video uses all the early 1980s video tricks, and it's weird, but it certainly shows what almost 20 years of Video Art had been preparing music videos to become.

This is followed by a brief introduction by George Plimpton. Let me say this right now - George Plimpton is proof that reincarnation exists, because he could only have been Ben Franklin in another life. He's that bad ass! He gets comedy, dry and whacky both (as evidenced by his appearance on *The Simpsons* not long before he passed away) and here he's the intellectual backbone for the exercise. He was walking credibility, and here he is perfectly used.

I must admit, I only knew the French Pop Star Sapho from an old French film where they referenced her. She performs a song that is critical of media consumption called *TV is Eating Your Brain* which is a lovely piece of 1980s pop that feels as if she had purchased a new synth while on an Edith Piaf binge listening phase. She's also my new 1980s crush, as she's equally Punk Rock in the Jane Child form, and French pop star. She's lovely, and has the voice that I can not get out of my head. Interspersed with the song and her performing is footage of some break dancers, which really shows how far the state of the art in that discipline has come in 35 years.

Now, there's the first recurring bit, where we are treated to Big Brother watching us, an office drone stares into the camera for a while, silent.

That's followed by Cavalcade of Intellectuals, which is a good gag. It's supposed to be a regular segment featuring Susan Sontag and Michel Foucault, but instead it's two actors, and they pretend as if there are technical issues, no one is supposed to be able to hear them, and they discuss the question he'd asked her the night before,

and when she hesitates, he threatens to kill himself. Threatens to kill himself by drinking monosodium glutamate. It's a funny segment, but funny in that dark humor, avant garde sort of way. In fact, here's the first instance of the writers recognizing that they're in a strange land. At one point, the dude says "I don't care about the avant garde!" which really only serves the purpose to get the ears of those smart enough to know what they're watching out of the mode that this is serious business.

And then, peak 80s.

A major part of the show was the idea that there was a collapse in the high and the low, which was something significant that video art was famous for, because video was not seen as serious like film. So, having a band like Oingo Boingo perform was no great strangeness. Danny Elfman, in his own way, is every bit the Avant Garde performer, and thus he fits, right? More on that in a bit.

So, live from San Francisco (I believe KQED studios) was Oingo Boingo playing the perfect Oingo Boingo song - *Wake UP (It's 1984.)* It is beyond perfect, and it's just a gorgeous song to demonstrate what Boingo was all about. The background is all the processed video tricks you would expect for 1984. Then, it goes to what is billed on the lower-third as Live From Paris, a fashion show of haute couture, the finest of real-time fashions. It's not as weird as you'd think, though.

Ultimately, it is Elfman himself who provides the weird here. He's not the flailing mad man you might expect, but he's not on the same show as the rest of his band. He's basically in his own world, and that makes it possible to transcend the scenario he's been placed in. It's a great, very Boingo performance, and it's well-worth watching the entire show just for this performance, as it's really something to behold.

Now, whiplash! We're treated with the sight of an older guy sitting behind a table with a couple of others, and there's some sort of contraption and you can see he's holding a feather. It's John Cage, and he's playing cactuses.

Yup, that's John Cage, playing a cactus. We then cut to Joseph Beuys and he's doing a performance piece.

Now, we cut from Oingo Boingo to two of the leading conceptual artists of the day, working in their media, on a show that is the Avant Garde equivalent of Dick Clark's *Rockin' New Year's Eve*.





They follow this with what I think is a Jean Tinguely self-destructing piece of sculpture and fireworks, though it's hard to tell. It's an interesting thing to watch, but it's way too short.

This is followed by a wonderful piece from Laurie Anderson. Not a song, but a monologue with an electronic harmonizer. It's a story ostensibly about a near plane crash, but is really about the transition of the world into a digital age. It's an interesting piece, and the way it was shot, with Anderson in a silver suit shot against a black background with a gentle green-blue light providing fill. Such a simple piece, but so much more effective than almost anything else in the work at getting across the idea that this is a work of avant garde performance.

And then it crashes.

Yves Montand was a French cultural icon. A song-and-danceman par excellence! He was discovered by Edith Piaf (which I only mention because it's the only French cultural reference I know without having to use Wikipedia!) Here, he sings and dances to the song *Les Grands Boulevards* while behind him there is a series of cut-outs of walking people in three rows where you can see a generated video background behind them. This would have been a significantly difficult technique to pull off in 1969, you can see it used in the masterpiece of film-video hybridization *OnOff* and a few other works by the likes of Ed Emshwiller.

The problem I have is here is a mainstream star of the 1950s and 60s, who was still a star of the likes of Tom Hanks today, but performing a song that he had been known for something like twenty years. It was a good performance, but it goes so far against everything else that's in the piece. It's about taking a known-figure and putting him on a video-synthesized background and thinking that makes it avant garde.

I disagree, but it is also so very 1980s.

Look at the classic Frank Sinatra album *Trilogy* and you'll see how often this was tried. Take someone known and try and update them with the application of something that is a signifier of the present times. It deminishes it as an expression of avant garde art in my eyes, but it certainly manages to express what the 1980s were all about - taking the past and milking it for all its worth. Just look at how fashion of the late 1980s and the heavy use of 1950s imagery. So guess, OK?





During his number, they cut to a couple of guys doing graffiti-type art outside the Pompidou, which is actually really cool.

And, of course, the moment after we're given the least, we arrive at the most. Philip Glass. Devotees will know my love (and my son JohnPaul's fondness) for Phil Glass' wonderfully repetitive and soothing work. Here, it is his wonderful work *Act III* against a computer-animated background, which is so very very very good. Now, if you're a computer graphics history-type, and I'm sure it's probably just me of all the people who might one day read this, you'll see the influences on this work are John Whitney and Ed Emshwiller. So powerful is the Emsh influence that I went and checked it out to make sure he had not actually done the work itself. It's a lovely example of what was possible in the early 1980s. There were still significant matters in graphics that needed to be solved, such as the Motion Blur problem, but watching this segment was amazing, as it perfectly played with the minimalist music in a way that heightened the abilities of both. I loved this so very much, and I can't believe that it was the first public performance of the piece, I believe.



There's a fair bit of breakdance footage, and in the section that follows Glass is a brief portion that I think uses scratching either from Herbie Hancock's *Rockit*, or at least by the same scratcher. That fades into a saxophone orchestra, and then a yodel section, which was supposed to have a Transatlantic echo yodel, but the technique did not actually work.

And then, Merce Cunningham.

I love him, He's a legend, one of the most influential figures in the history of modern and conceptual art, with his instrument being his body. Here, he dances with himself, or at least with delayed images of himself, obviously stored within a frame buffer and replayed over again, until they cut to footage of Salvador Dali, giving an interview that may or may not have been custom made for this work, partly because it just looks so different, almost certainly shot on film, but also because his words fit Paik's concept so well.



Cunningham's dance is not beautiful, but you can see what he's trying to do, trying to communicate, and the music that Cage and co. had been making before, along with French accordion music, and the interview, and on and on. It's the single best work within a traditional avant garde structure, if such a thing were to exist.



And then, Thompson Twins.

Now, they were one of the biggest Pop acts in the mid-1980s, and they were presented in a way with very little video adornment. They simply played the song *Hold Me Now* and while there was a cut away to the Fashion Show again, it was mostly just them performing.

And that was perfect!

You see, I'm 100% certain that Nam June Paik simply loved the song, and decided to put it in. In works like this, it is often less about what is included than what is left out. Here, with almost nothing done to them, the song and the performance, stand as a testament to the year 1984 and what most people will remember of the year. It was a clear portion of Pop, even more so than the Oingo Boingo performance. The purpose of this had to be to anchor the work in 1984 in more than merely name.

Then, it's Allen Ginsberg singing a song about Transcendental meditation, with Allen playing a squeezebox. It's weird, because it's a song that was obviously written in the 1960s, what with the dying in Saigon line, but it's not done in a mode for 1980s fans who would have been tuning in to see Thompson Twins. It feels so very out of place.

That's followed by another interesting, though again, not entirely real time segment, with the magnificent Charlotte Mormon and Nam June Paik's TV Cello. There are technical difficulties when Plimpton plays it, and it's followed by a very Mormon performance against a background where a man is being shaved. It's not a bad segment, but it also feels like the only time Paik is looking back at himself.

We end things with Peter Orlovsky playing his banjo and an old-timey song featuring plenty of yodeling. It's another miss, but it's also the thing that closes us out, though there is a bit of fade-in of Thompson Twins playing *Lies, Lies, Lies*, and Mormon on the TV Cello.

Let me say this - this is ballsy. It's not about making a document of a moment, it is about creating a moment that reflects not the fear of the year, but of what we hope will last as the monument to the year. This is Paik saying that 1984 is going to be the year that technology begins to define us. It's the central theme of the Anderson piece, of the Boingo song, of the Sapho piece, of the Glass piece. It's what makes Ginsberg and Montand stand-out,

so badly, what makes the Thompson Twins shine in contrast. It is about the moment that is being defined by the performers, so the ones that look more back than forward feel like failures, even if that isn't exactly fair. The power of the piece is not that it perfectly reflects 1984 as it happened, or how perfectly deflects Orwell's criticism of what he viewed as becoming possible in that year, but it is that Paik has convinced those watching that it was what 1984 really was going to be, and those of us lookign back at it that it is what it could have been. It was pure science fiction, and good scifi at that!

I've watched a lot of video art over the last couple of years, and I've come to understand a thing or two about what it tries to do, and especially about what it's best at. It's good when it is trying to give an immediacy, to convey NOW! in all it's myriad forms. This works for stuff like Chris Burden's *Shoot*, or the better works of Laurie Anderson, or many of Nam June Paik's works, but it also hinders a lot of the applications of Video Art

that happened in the 1980s, ie. MYV. When taken out of the context of the gallery, or at least the affienado's space, and placed on cable tv, only the rare work such as *Once in a Lifetime* still retains any of its power as a work of video art. This has informed internet art as well, and the more I look at something like Chris Milk's *The Wilderness Downtown*, the more I am understanding what video art can still mean. Too often now, it is looking backwards, trying to take the look and feel of the 1970s and bring it back, allowing it to attempt to flourish in the current gallery space. This means nothing these days, but within Internet-based video art, you get the same sensation as you did when the world of video art was new.

As a piece of 1980sana, it is unrivaled. It presents the optimism of the time, the sounds of the time, the fact that the 80s were an age of collapsing distinctions, and of three generations of artists of all types still living, still working, still changing the ways we viewed the world.





22

The Erotic Thriller: Film Noir After the Sexual Revolution

by R.M. Porter

Origins

When we think of 80s movies, several genres come to mind. Many of us fondly remember our teenage years via the films of John Hughes, particularly *The Breakfast Club* and *Sixteen Candles*. Richly imaginative fantasy movies such as *The Princess Bride*, *The Never Ending Story*, and *Labyrinth* enjoy a cult following to this day. Classic science fiction was well represented by the original *Star Wars* trilogy, the *Star Trek* series, and lighter entries like *Flash Gordon* and *Krull*. But Hollywood of the 80s was also memorable for introducing a new genre that first appeared in the early part of the decade, peaked in popularity in the late 80s and persisted throughout the 90s. This new genre was a blend of classic Film Noir and modern sensuality commonly referred to as the Erotic Thriller.

The Erotic Thriller was a direct descendent of the Film Noir movement of the 30s and 40s, and shared many of its defining characteristics. Coming from the French for “dark film,” Film Noir features nighttime action and dark urban settings. The genre added mystery to its settings with stylish direction: quick cuts, deep shadows, wafting cigarette smoke, city lights streaming through office window blinds. Danger and romance are essential elements of Film Noir. Someone will be killed, another is being pursued, somebody else (usually the protagonist) is getting set up to take the blame, and all the while the leading man is falling for the mysterious

heroine. The stars of Film Noir stood apart from the criminals, detectives, hustlers, and other denizens of a dark city. Leading women rose above the setting with high fashion and soft focus glamour, with the male protagonists tougher yet just a shade more handsome than their colleagues. The mix of romance and urban danger could be summed up as beautiful people in ugly situations, being pushed into making hard choices.

The Erotic Thriller brought Film Noir into the cosmopolitan world of the 80s. In truth, movies often referred to as Neo Noir were already doing this. The Erotic Thriller, however, combined the stylish elements of Film Noir with bold, shocking sexuality. Importantly, the sexual element was present not just for the sake of titillation but as an essential factor in the development of the story and its characters. In Film Noir, the protagonist is typically pushed into crossing a moral line in exchange for some reward. The Erotic Thriller added sex to this decision. In these movies sex, usually of an unconventional nature, is used as inducement, a method of indoctrination, or a means of blackmail. The protagonist is often caught between the lure of sex and the motivation to do what is right, and must decide what sacrifice they must make to achieve either end. The successful Erotic Thriller leaves the viewer asking what lines might I cross? What might I be willing to risk? What would be my price?

The Woman in Trouble

The central figure of any Erotic Thriller is the woman in trouble. In the Noir genre, the female lead is usually a victim, but this is not true of an Erotic Thriller heroine. In this genre, the female lead is wealthy, highly intelligent, and usually a professional. Publishing editor Alex Forrest, played by Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction*, and *Body Heat*'s Matty Walker, played by Kathleen Turner, exemplify this. Also unlike Noir, the Erotic Thriller heroine asserts herself sexually and is seldom dependent on men. As vividly portrayed in *The Temp* and *In the Cut*, she's fond of masturbation and may, like *Basic Instinct*'s Catherine Tramell (Sharon Stone), be bisexual. While a Noir heroine was often in physical danger, the Erotic Thriller woman's troubles are more often legal in nature, or may be threats to her professional standing. Because of the importance of the heroine, the Erotic Thriller genre was one of the first in which the female lead really carries the picture.

When *Basic Instinct* was released in 1992, star Michael Douglas was already an established Academy Award-winning actor, but it was newcomer Sharon Stone's daring performance that truly sold the movie.

The Conflicted Man

Where there is a woman in trouble there must, at least in the movies, be a man to save her. Like Film Noir, the male Erotic Thriller protagonist may be a detective or private investigator (*Basic Instinct*, *Night Eyes*, *Traces of Red*) but he may also be a lawyer (*Body Heat*, *Fatal Attraction*) or a businessman (*Wild Orchid*). One of the most notable characteristics of the Erotic Thriller male protagonist is his level of internal conflict. Deep inside, he knows he should never get involved with the woman in trouble, but he just cannot help himself. He knows the risks such an involvement poses to his career, his family, or even the cause of justice, and is torn between these driving forces and his lust. Much of the suspense of the Erotic Thriller derives from the audience helplessly watching the male protagonist's downward slide as he tries to manage this conflict. Unlike the Film Noir hero who rescues the lady in danger, the male protagonist of the Erotic Thriller is often lucky just to save himself.



Graphic, Unconventional Sex

By the mid 80s, explicit sex scenes had already migrated from the downtown X-rated theatre to the suburban multiplex. Comedic coming of age sex romps were as much a part of the spring movie release cycle as the summer blockbuster. The audience had also been exposed to more serious adult offerings such as *American Gigolo* and *Last Tango in Paris* that had garnered critical praise despite graphic sex scenes. Clearly, nudity and sex did not set the Erotic Thriller apart from other movies of the time. What did, however, was the depiction of sexuality that was not only graphic but jaw-droppingly intense, animalistic in its passion, and, in some cases, even brutal. Erotic thriller sex scenes were seldom romantic. In *Fatal Attraction*, when the characters Dan (Michael Douglas) and Alex (Glenn Close) have sex for the first time, they nearly wreck Alex's kitchen. *9 ½ Weeks* is particularly noteworthy for its rough, often sadomasochistic sex scenes between Elizabeth (Kim Basinger) and John (Mickey Rourke). In *Wild Orchid*, Carre Otis's character is visibly shaken after watching a couple passionately make love in an alley. Perhaps the most noteworthy example is an opening scene from *Basic Instinct*, which was edited in the original theatric release to avoid an X

rating. In it, an unknown woman ties her lover's hands, mounts him, and soon frenetically stabs her bound lover while continuing to enthusiastically couple with him. An excellent example of how Noir differed from Erotic Thrillers in this regard is seen in the Neo Noir *Tequila Sunrise*. When heroes Mac (Mel Gibson) and Jo Ann (Michelle Pfeiffer) finally consummate their relationship, they do so in a romantic, steamy hot tub scene that resulted in a soaked dress but no bruises.

Decline and Legacy

The Erotic Thriller genre persisted well into the 90s, finding renewed popularity in the home video market. Many of the first direct-to-video hits were Erotic Thrillers, particularly the sequels to *Night Eyes* and numerous movies starring Shannon Tweed, Tonya Roberts, and Joan Severance. It is likely these videos were particularly appealing to people who were looking for sexy entertainment but were unwilling to venture into the back room many video stores maintained for

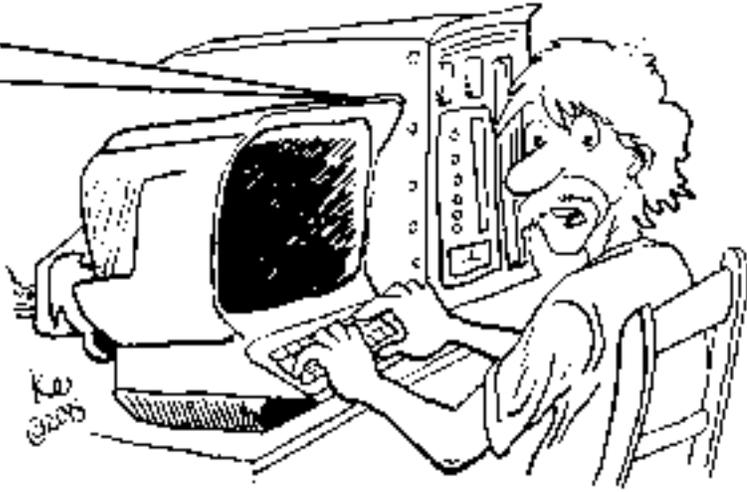
more explicit videos. On the big screen, *Sliver*, *Jade*, and *Traces of Red* were well made (if not well received) late entries into the genre. Despite all this, it would not be unfair to say that the Erotic Thriller has gone the way of teased hair and padded shoulders. While it is possible that the direct-to-video market cheapened the genre, it is more likely that audiences are just no longer provoked or even entertained by the sexuality portrayed in Erotic Thrillers. In an era where explicit pornography is freely available online, graphic sex no longer brings people into movie theatres. While the Erotic Thriller genre may be gone, many very fine Film Noir and Neo Noir movies continue to be successfully produced and released. As long as people continue to live in the big city and hope for a life a little more interesting, there will be a demand for Noir.

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D o e s N o t C o m p u t e

I've got my own computer! It's Science Fiction coming to life!!



by M Stevenson 2.3

“Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” – Clarke’s Third Law

Science fiction and fantasy go hand-in-hand in our cultural lexicon, and why wouldn't they? For the most part they tell stories of surreal new places, full of awe-inspiring creatures and impossible devices; aimed to trigger a sense of otherworldly wonder and discovery. But the distinction used to be much more clear, and science fiction used to be much more defined by an absence of fantasy elements. Not since the culture of fiction in the 1980's came about did science fiction start to embrace the fantastical.

So what is science fiction, really? The literary concept has always been about taking existing and/or theoretical concepts of science and technology, and extrapolating from them. Good sci-fi, at least in its own time, seems eerily real, almost prescient. The future it describes seems like it could happen eventually, if not in the next 5 minutes. A lot of old-school sci-fi writers take pride in creating that sense of theoretical realism.

So why did this line start to blur in the 1980's? One contributing factor to the shift is obvious: Computers. Computers are a subject on which the line between science and fantasy has always been blurry, and the pinnacle of that way of thinking happened in the 80's.

Now, here's the issue: Computers are not a "new" concept anymore. Personal, home-owned computers have been part of our collective culture for generations now, but we still, collectively barely understand how they work, and assume they can do basically anything. That assumption obliterated that line between fantasy and technology, and computers became capable of literal magic in the minds of story creators and consumers.

While sci-fi computers date back much further than the 80's, the cultural awareness of personal computers really started kicking off around that time, and media began to follow suit. The rift between computers as technology and computers as magic started happening almost immediately: 1983's *War Games* is fairly straightforward, scientific, and accurate. *Tron* came out the same year, and is none of those things.

But the very next year, there was a new book, and a revolutionary new movement in sci-fi. The movement became known as "cyberpunk", and the book was William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.

Gibson's story (not actually the first in the setting, but the first full-length novel) was notable for

painting a future that was dark, dirty, overpopulated, broken-down and miserable; but also incredibly advanced, relatable and real. "High-tech low-life" became a common descriptor. Hand-in-hand with *Blade Runner*, it helped birth the aesthetic of neon and grime. These concepts birthed a genre full of such disparate ideas as the endless, joyful, madness of the Lord-of-the-Rings-but-with-hackers Shadowrun role-playing game, and Neal Stephenson's self-aware masterpiece *Snow Crash*, containing both the first concept of an online "avatar" and a main character named Hiro Protagonist.

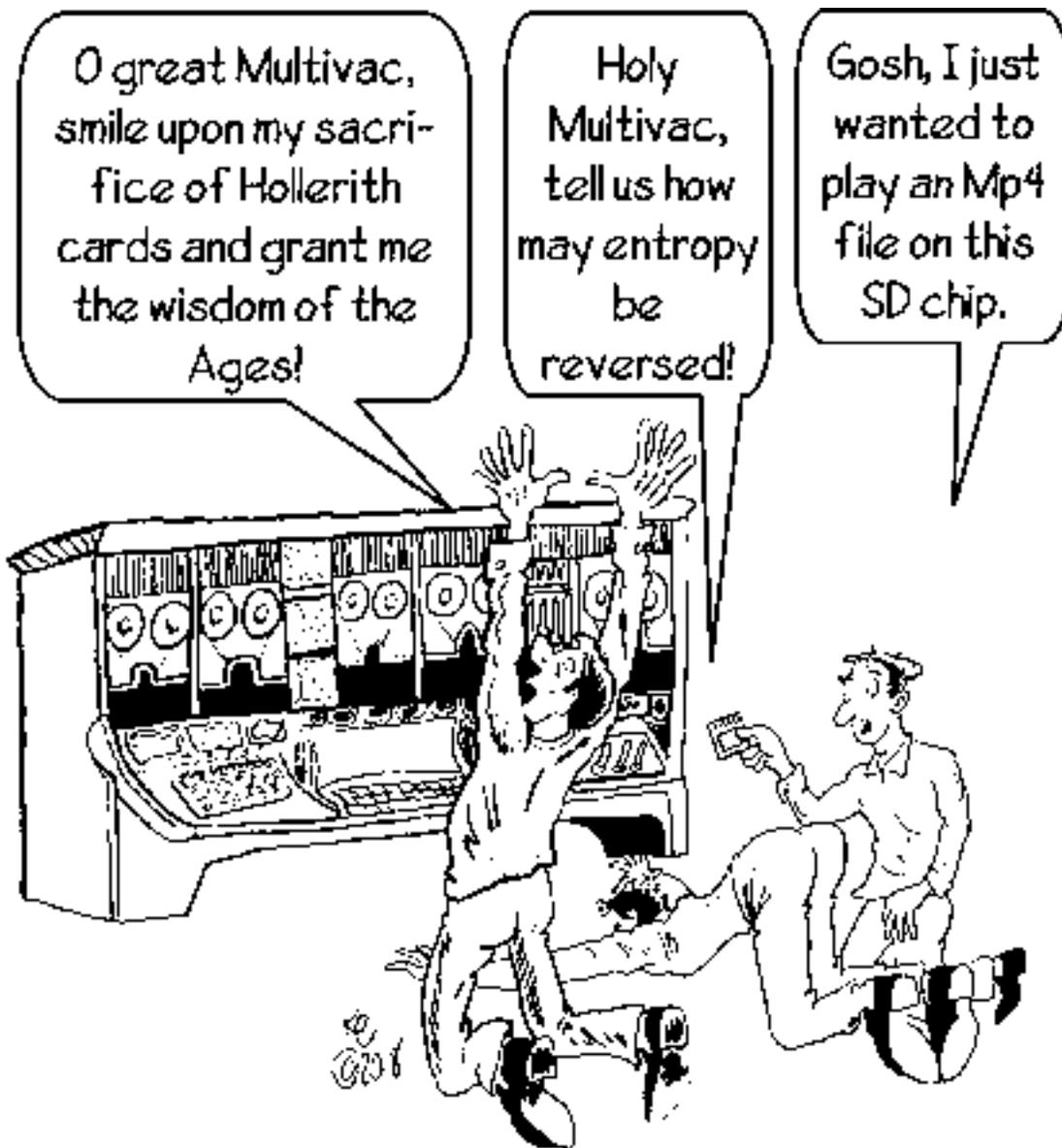
Gibson's later works are honestly better novels, delving with equal gusto into topics ranging from economic warfare by means of time travel, to a pre-YouTube concept of viral videos, and if computers can create art. Hints of his fascination with ideas like these are present in *Neuromancer*, but the book will always be most famous for his fantastical vision of a totally immersive cyberspace as a plane of existence navigated through virtual realities.

And it's all based on ignorance.

Here's the rift: William Gibson had no idea that computers could store information. His vision of cyberspace is based off of having to navigate a virtual space "physically", along with every other user connected to the system, to access any kind of information. He later went on to say that upon learning of them, he found hard drives to be "Victorian" and "not sexy", and that he probably would not have written the book had he actually known how computers work.

That's right! One of the most important movements in science fiction, ever, is all based on misinformation. But that, and of other classic uses/misuses of computer technology/magic, helped define the world of wondrous science fiction and fantasy that we enjoy today. And as a true fanboy of both, I will always appreciate that history.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to a re-watch of *Tron*.





Before YouTube, you had VHS. That was how you started a movement, by taping as much as you could, and then distributing it around to video stores. Hundreds of young filmmakers, after having either bombed out at festivals or trying unsuccessfully to four-wall theatres, turned to direct-to-VHS releasing as a way of making back even a fraction of their investments. There was also the shot-for-video films that were being created by small companies as a way to increase their exposure. This was perfected by Powell-Peralta, the legendary skateboarding company, with their series of Bones Brigade skateboarding videos.

You see, these videos, taken as a whole, comprise a documentary that chronicles the rise of 1980s skateboarding culture, and all that entails, from the athleticism, to the fashion, to the music. They're also the best example of the humor that thrived within skateboarding culture at the time. The music video segment

'Skate and Destroy' is the perfect example. In *Bones Brigade II: Future Primitive*, we're shown amazing skating of two distinct eras: the 1970s low and intricate style that we see from Rodney Mullen, and the cutting-edge flying style that we see from Lance Mountain, Steve Cabellero, Mike McGill, and a young young young Tony Hawk. It's amazing the difference between them, and they're both great to watch. You can't watch segments like the downhill portion, where guys on boards wearing heavy, welding-style gloves go down a mountain road at high speed, and not see the influence it would have over the evolution of things like the X-Games.

The series was amazing. The first Bones Brigade video was simply called *The Bones Brigade Video Show*. It was rather simple, but it wasn't just a series of moves, like earlier skateboarding videos and even 1970s films and TV clips, but there were skits. They came to fruition with *Bones Brigade II: Future Primitive*, where the

skits were wedged into the skateboarding demos, and the classic song, *Skate and Destroy*, and a lot of comedy mixed it. The third one, *The Search for Animal Chin*, had a through-line. The story is about the search for a wisened old Chinese skater, Emerson “Won Ton Animal” Chin. It’s not exactly an appropriate character, but the skating is amazing, especially when you see what Tony Hawk, then 14 or so, was able to do. Other titles, like *Search and Destroy*, *Public Domain*, and *Ban This*, were more typical of the first two, but none were nearly as good as the first three.

The idea of the early age of home video as exposure platform could only exist because of the rise of the video store. The ability to rent these videos instead of buying was what made them effective marketing tools. The rental market was flooded with titles, and people like me, kids mostly, would rent two or three a weekend, watch them, and then go back for more. Titles that were different often got support from people who rented all the new releases and wanted something different. I would troll the Sports-Fitness sections of Hollywood Video or Rangoon, mostly looking for wrestling, but would see these and rent them and fall in love.

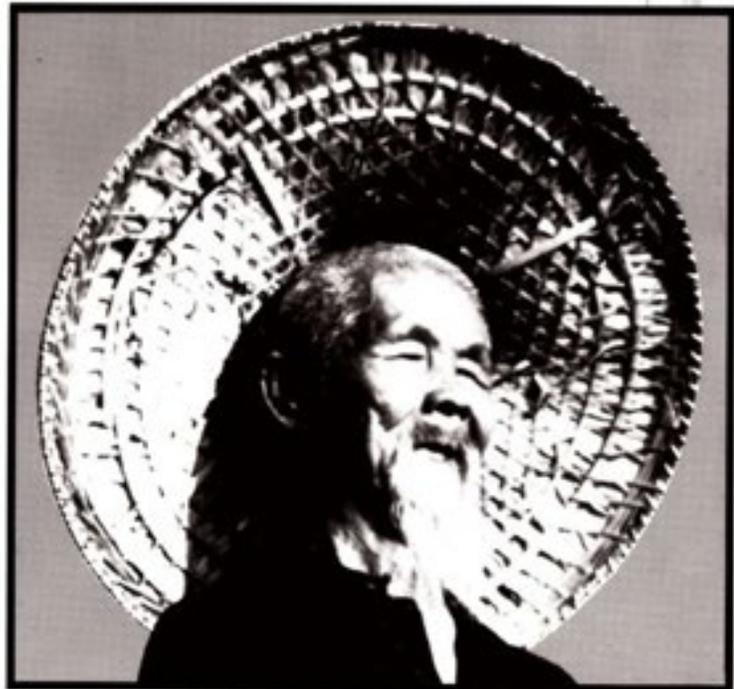
Aesthetically, these are influential pieces because you can see hundreds of imitators of these in the 1980s and 90s, in both the skateboarding and inline skating worlds, but also in the way that almost every extreme sports video took the imagery and use of music and applied them in the same way, from YouTube to ABCSports. Historically, it’s a perfect record of this movement, in a way that is much more natural than a documentary. I know one doc will end up listed on the National Film Registry - *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, which was also directed by Stacy Peralta, who has a great eye no matter what he’s shooting on, no matter the market he’s shooting for. Culturally, this serves as a record of a culture that has been ignored, for the most part, by the film world. It is the record of the 1980s skating scene, as well as the entire Teen world, and while documenting the sports and artistry of

these young masters, it also records the lives that kids lived through *Thrasher* and *Skateboard* magazines.

I wasn’t a skater. I lived next to Rich Casem, who was, and I used to go to Raging Waters when the skaters would be there. I saw McGill and Christian Hosoi, and Lance Mountain. My faves, to this day. I loved these films because they were amazingly silly movies, they were ideal entertainment. When I watched, I didn’t wish I was on the ramp, or dropping into the bowl; I wished I was lugging the video pack, setting the tripod, getting that shot where Alva and Mountain did the High-Low right over the camera set-up. That was what I wanted to be, I wanted to hold the camera, set the shot.

The video is low-res at heart, and should be enjoyed as such. It’s the DIY heart of 1980s skating. These videos are reason enough to keep a VCR in good working order.

HAVE YOU SEEN HIM





The Most 80s Art by Chris Garcia

I fell in love with the Fine Arts in High school, so just as the 80s were fading and the 90s starting to take hold. I was also an absolute nut about MTV, which was ultimately the signifier of all levels of design and aesthetic.

Over the years, I've gone to many museums and whenever I find a work that feels of the 1980s, well my little heart sings. Here are some of my absolute faves.



Hoarding My Frog Food by David Gillhooly

David Gillhooly is an artist who plays with, well, just about everything. Meaning within imagery, titling, materials. His donut cart in the Stanford Hospital's cafeteria is wonderfully ironic, and this work in the Anderson is hilarious.

It's a call out of American food ideas. It's about gluttony, about the precarious balance of American food production and consumption. The moose at the top is an interesting touch, and maybe it's just me that makes it into a sign of Canada, but maybe not.

What makes it 80s? Look at the characters? That Moose, the Dude. They're straight up 1980s ideas of what they should look like. Add to that the colors, and ultimately the idea of the hamburgers. Little

screams 1980s food than a good hamburger. While sushi got a lot of play in the 80s, it was the burger that actually started to explode and make the rounds into becoming the higher-end dish that some places made it. We also saw Fast Food restaurants become even bigger phenomenas in the 1980s, especially Wendy's with "Where's the beef?" I would argue the Burger is the food of the 1980s, and that alone would make this a great addition to the list.



Howard Arkley Triple Fronted

Yes, this list is going to be including a lot of views or reactions to suburbia. One, because I was a kid in the 1980s in suburbia, and two because I really like that Pet Shop Boys song. So, let's take a ride along with the dogs today, into the work of Howard Arkley. Arguably Australia's greatest Pop Artist (I will get hell for that from a lot of Australian Art Historians, I think) he had an amazing eye for the color and forms of the 1980s, and when you look at his series Houses and Homes, you can see exactly how 1980s he was. The color palette is bold, simplified, much like the famed Nagel idea, and the forms are stiff. Arkley was documenting Suburbia in a way that is non-realistic in presentation, but which feels completely realistic in sensation. This is

what it felt like to live in Santa Clara as a kid; everything was bright and bold, and even our clouds were merely there to add distinctive contrast in the sky.



Elizabeth Murray Mouse Cup

The work Mouse Cup is one of the coolest at the Anderson Collection at Stanford. It's an oil work on a shaped canvas, but it's also something that calls back to a lot of different stuff. It's giving multiple views of a single object, a cup, which was a favorite thing of the Cubists and the Futurists, but at the same time, it's done in a color mode with teal and ellows playing along with each other, and some sort of mouse-like grey biomorphic form seeming to either crawl into or swirling around the edge of the cup. Murray's works of the 1980s were impressive, partly because she would break from the idea of the 2D painting on rectangles to something more fluid.



David Salle Muscular Paper

David Sally is my favorite Post-Modernist painter. He's just about the most interesting painting from the 1980s, and this is easily my favorite of his works. It is a combination of three panels, each depicting a portion of another work of art – a Picasso, a 17th Century painting called The Club-footed Boy, and a Max Beckmann painting. Then, he arranged various images, such as two floating heads, and a fountain that kinda looks like a manual orange juice juicer. It's rendered in a style that takes a lot of mental gymnastics to make fit together, and that's the challenge of post-modernism. At some point, each viewer has to decide whether or not there's anything there other than the imagery, and that, in turn, means that the image is both supreme, and without significant meaning as such. That's 1980s – sound and fury, signifying nothing... maybe.



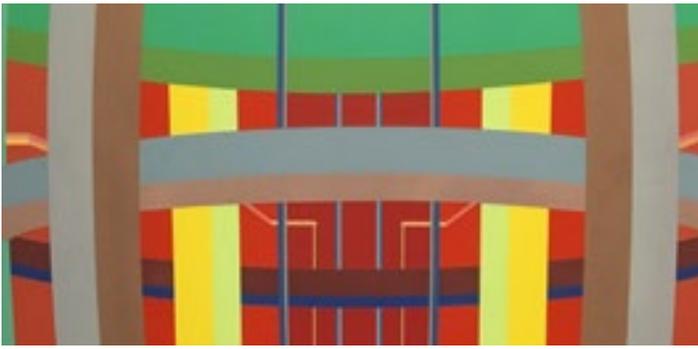
Robert Arneson Study California Artist

The large ceramic California Artist by Robert Arneson is one of my all-time favorite sculptures. The study for that work, though, is so incredibly 1980s. It's the colors, but also the multiple views. It shows his bare chest, and the shirt, and all at the same time. It's not contemplating them as separate entities, it's showing them as a single concept to be constructed, but he's not creating as simply a blue print. In essence, what he's doing is creating an emotional impact pathway map. He wants the ceramic work to impart the same feelings that encountering the study bring up, which in turn will make the study not only a work tied to the final statuary piece, but as a work that enhances it, and walks



Nancy Graves Telestitch

I love combines like this, and with the combination of colors, and recognisable forms comprising a non-recogniseable outcome, Telestitch is awesome. It looks as if it te slightest breeze could send the piece tumbling in all directions. There are circular sawblades and toy abacuses on a sort of tightrope of iron, bronze, and steel. It's a lovel, and strange piece, and by using forms that we're instantly aware of, there's no question as to what it means. On the bottom, a star and a flower, representing the literal, eternal Earth and the universe that has long been here, and long will be here. On the tightrope, there are the two saw blade, walking, the representation of the Industrial that traipses on the natural world, though on a fine line that may snap. On a tightrope stretched between those two sawblades is a pair of abacus, the representation of figuring, technology, accounting; these art have taken over industry. Above that, held aloft by colored rays of light or hope, an ideal: a representation of a stained glass window without the glass, perhaps. It is the over-seer, and in its judgment the rest sit. The colors and forms are beautiful, but the message is so goddamned 1985 it hurts!



Al Held – Hadrian's Court I

If science fiction was the genre of the 1980s, this is the most science fictional of all the 1980s paintings. It also exhibits the perfect color selection to make you think of the 1980s. At the moment of its creation, those colors would have been edgy. The teal-ish blues and those purples and yellows are impressively contrasting, but what's more impressive is the imagery that looks like the internal framework of a dirigible, with a semi-football shape, and the entire effect is one of deep interaction throughout the work, and the way that the colors and the structure play off each other makes this feel very 1980s. Held, a hard-edge painter at his heart, was doing 1980s-like paintings as early as the 1960s.



Charles Arnol di Untitled I

This is another where the colours are what define this as the 1980s, but even more so, it is the fact that the paint exists on a set of tree limbs that have been melded into a roughly cube shape. The use of natural materials as the basis for such a false set of colors, none of which may be found in nature. It's a very powerful piece when you look at the contrast between the colors and the base for those colors, and for a decade that was so environmentally conscious, but at the same time, the decade that was most thoroughly dedicated to the consumption of natural resources. So 80s. Totally.

The shape is also interesting, though this may be one of those things that only I have. There was a machine on display at the Computer Museum in Boston when I worked there, currently in storage at my museum, called the Tinkertoy Computer. Developed by Danny J Hillis, it played Tic-Tac-Toe, and it seems to be an organized version of this Arnol di!



A Pile of Crowns for Jean Michel Basquiat by Keith Haring

Haring was one of the most identifiable artists of the 1980s. Warhol had set the stage for the 80s, and was around for most of it, but he wasn't producing works that felt specifically feeling like the 80s... though he did in the 60s and 70s, oddly. Haring on the other hand, defined what the 80s looked like in art. If there's one thing about the 1980s, it was all about the combination of styles (hence, post-modernism) and Haring was that perfect blending of Pop Art and Minimalism with street art. He was, in essence, pushing the world of Fine Art further towards art that could be encountered on the streets... though not nearly as much as Basquiat. No single concept feels more 80s than the image that is shaped, and the 80s were about fitting art into non-regular spaces not forcing the art into forms that have existed for years. The imagery is very Haring, the crown is a wonderful symbol, another combination of the Fine Arts with concepts of street art, with the crown being a sign of the legendary artist who brought street art into the gallery. Oddly, Basquiat isn't on this list. Why? Because the stuff he did in the 1980s was so far ahead of the line, that it feels so much more than the 1990s than the 80s.

This Haring work, referencing one of the greatest artists of the time, is the perfect combination that makes it feel so much like the 80s, despite the almost pathological lack of color in a piece dedicated to one of the artists who best understood modern color application to build meaning.

It is the most 80s of all paintings.





Jeff Koons Michael Jackson and Bubbles

This one works on two levels. There is almost nothing more 1980s than Jeff Koons. His entire concept, making money as his art process, could only have thrived in a decade like the 80s... and the ones that came after. There is LITERALLY no image more 1980s than Michael Jackson. NONE. His look defined that decade, and while we now know he was a monster, in the 80s, he still had the gleam, like the top of the Chrysler Building. What was then the largest cast porcelain piece ever created, Koons developed an amazing idea: that celebrity could be the sole target of art. That may not seem like anything strange, I mean Warhol did all those portraits of Elvis and Marilyn Monroe in the 60s, but this was something different. It wasn't an homage, or that Koons was obsessed with his image. It was about selling the most saleable image of the 1980s. It was about money, and that was his intention. Koons is a genius, and money is what the 80s was about, and thus, this is the most 1980s static art work ever made.



Girls Just Want to Have Fun...at the Galleria Andrea Ahlsen

The Galleria? Where? Wasn't there a song about girls and fun?

If your memory cells are stirring, you must be an 80's fashionista! The 80's have now become nostalgia for many and an inspiration for youth. 1980's hair days, parties, prom themes and even timeless styles such as Madonna's rubber band bracelets and "Members Only" jackets are still thriving in wardrobes. The only way to know the 80's was to actually live through it. It was a time when going to the mall was culture. Rumors of huge fashion districts like New York, LA, Paris, and Rome were fantasies for many. Large shopping centers were called the gallerias in the western states. Indoor malls were big in the central and east. If you wanted a job, you went to the mall. If you wanted a party, you went to the mall. If you wanted an album, you went to the mall. And, if you wanted to fall in love, you went to the mall. The stores were thriving and the credit card industry was booming. It was a great economic time for families and to grow up.

Head to toe styles for the ladies came in many forms. In the 80's, there was a strong urge to dress like your favorite music star or band. Did you rock out to *Pat Benatar*? Maybe you had an edgy haircut, a little red and purple in your wardrobe and liked to wear off-the-shoulder shirts. Were you a *Duran Duran* devotee (I was supposed to marry Simon LeBon!)? *Duran Duran* drove fashion strong for the New Wave era. Highlighted hair, a little mesh, side-zipped shirts, and the flat jazz shoes were the rage of teen girls who donned *Duran Duran* buttons on jackets and shirts. If you had those little, flat jazz shoes aka taps, you were stylin'. Love the hard rock? Go with the hair bands! *Motley Crue*, *Poison*, *Bon Jovi*, and others had the metal faces, the leather rock gear, and some had better make-up and hair





than a woman could dream! Both guys and gals loved to have their hair done and it was not uncommon for both to get permanent waves (yes, that smell!), used a lot of gel, and even fight for the hair spray (gotta love the staying power of Aqua Net).

Brands mattered. As much as we love our clothing brands today, the 80's had its own icons for fashion. Capezio Shoes, Jordache Jeans, Calvin Klein, Gloria Vanderbilt, Members Only, Bugle Boy, Gucci, MCM, Forenza, Giorgia Armani, Izod, Kangol, Coogi, and Liz Claiborne were a few of many brands.

To truly look the 80's meant that you wore not just one item but all the items including accessories and the hair to go with the look. If you were representing New Wave, you may see a female wearing flat shoes, torn lace gloves, have multi-colored hair with spikes, and lots of edgy jewelry including spikes and safety pins. You were a rebel and you made a statement.

If you were a preppy person, khakis were a staple with penny loafers and argyle socks or Topsiders. Your carefully pressed oxford shirt was Ralph Lauren or your collared shirt was Izod with the collar flipped up. Prep was the cheerleader cool and a pretty boy had all the girls lining up for dates.

Madonna and Prince were huge fashion posters for the 80's. Madonna's "Like a Virgin" album sparked the lace revolution, lots of pearls for the front and back of dress, a bra as an external fashion piece, black bangles by the dozens on the arms for men and women, and torn clothing. Our Material Girl eventually calmed

down a bit when she married Sean Penn and rebelled after her divorce to Vogue and...less clothing.

Prince had the slicked hair with the slick moves and also promoted lace and leather. Not to mention, purple. **Purple** made a huge impact on the scene for men and women. No wonder Purple Rain is still a celebrated classic album and movie today. Sadly, we lost Prince in 2016.

Times have changed and fashion has evolved on through a few decades. If you are invited to an 80's theme-party, the best bet is to look up your favorite musician or star and track the timeframe. Study their clothing brands and looks from end-to-end. Or, maybe you miss the good times and the dancing. Why not bust-a-move and break out the looks? You can find original relics on Etsy, eBay, or in vintage stores. Or, go to Amazon.com for replicas. Whatever your heart desires, wear it with pride and go ahead and get stuck in the 80's.

I think we can all agree there are worse places to be in 2018.



Dear Mr. Vernon,

We accept the fact that we had to sacrifice a whole Saturday in detention for whatever it was. We did wrong, but we think you're crazy to make us write an essay telling you who we think we are. You see us as you want to see us. In the simplest terms and the most convenient definitions. But what we found out is that each one of us is a brain, and an athlete, and a basket case, a princess, and a criminal.

Does that answer your question?

Sincerely yours,

The Breakfast Club





The Drink Tank