

MAD MAX

DRINK TANK

305

Well, folks have spoken up, at least a couple of them, about the whole LoCs mention. You'll see a couple of them in the LoCs section. John Hertz sent a note reminding me that I had forgotten to run a card he had sent about issue 290 (the post-Hugo win issue) and he was correct. I remember the card, though I haven't seen it in ages. I'm bad with physical mail, and I apologize for forgetting it. I remember it saying something along the lines of clarifying the statement that now I had to get better I had mentioned in 290. He said that it had to be better by my standards, which is odd because there isn't really a better when it comes to my view. It's either bad (not out in the wild) or good (done and out there). I see his point, though. I wish I knew where the card was now so I could transcribe it. Perhaps it will show up in a cleaning of my car. Perhaps my greatest flaw, and to choose from the many is difficult, is that I really have terrible organizational skills, and what's worse, when I try to get real organized, it just gets worse and things go seriously missing. It's a terrible problem. I used to teach Organizational Skills (along with Public Speaking, Confidence Building, Study Skills, etc) and I can follow every bit of advice and it always fails for me. I dunno why, it just doesn't work. So yeah, it's my fault that there was one less LoC than there should have been.

I never said I wasn't part of the problem.

In fact, I'm probably the entire problem.

If I'm willing to go on without LoCs, then it's my fault, no? Taral and I had a lovely exchange, and he wrote an article I believe for his up-coming zine Broken Toys, that called me on it. I can see his point, but I just don't see it the same way. I understand that I'm not exactly traditional in my views, I see zines as less of a communicative form...

Well, we'll get into that a little later.

This last week, my Grandfather died. He was in his 90s, I think 94, maybe. I only met him a couple of times, and there are no existing photos of the two of us together. I can't remember the last time I saw him, probably 20 or 25 years ago, though he would usually call every Christmas, and sometimes on Thanksgiving. The portion of the Disher clan I belong to, my Mom, Aunt Susie and Uncle Wayne, don't tend to communicate much with the rest of the family, and thus, I seldom saw Granpa. These things happen. It's odd to me that his passing wasn't a bigger blow to me, when passings like Rusty, Jack Speer, and especially Forry, had a big impact on me. Sadly, I couldn't come up with a Tribute issue for him because I just don't really have anything to say about him. Still, it sucks that he's gone. Ralph Disher, here's all I can say: Thanks for giving rise to the family I'm a part of, and I wish I could have known you better.

I also got into a traffic accident. It wasn't that bad. I was fine. Car needs work. Sucks. These things happen and it won't break me. Hopefully, I'll get my car done shortly. Luckily, the damage wasn't too bad. It was a low-speed crash and it wasn't full-on, it was more of a glancing strike.

I've been getting books to review! I'm trying to read faster and faster, and at least I'm making it through books at a better clip. The Mark Hodder book I'm reading right now is pretty good so far! I'll have more to say about it and the Ian McDonald book Planesrunner, which is great also and has the most amazing cover of last year by our pal John Picacio!

Also, I may have set a new record with the last issue. I believe that the period between the first running of Taral's piece in issue 301 and it's reprint in 304. Remember what I said about organization? Yeah...

So, what's all this then? I got a whole bunch of images of the Las Vegas Convention Center from the early 1960s! I love them! This issue features Mad Max, one of the best examples of a post-Apocalyptic film, and a piece from Taral and LoCs and more! I also take my quadrenial look at the list of my favorite albums. Albums seem to mean less today that they did, but three of my faves are from the last 5 years. There's still good stuff coming in the form of albums, they're just not as important than individual songs.

Plus, I love albums!

And, of course, a wonderful Mo Starkey cover! I'm a lucky, lucky boy!



Letter Graded Mail

sent to garcia@computerhistory.org
by My Loyal Readers



Let's start with the aforementioned Eric Mayer!

Chris,

I was figuring I owed you a LoC even before I read your editorial and so here's a....well, not really a LoC because it isn't particularly responsive to the issue...call it a response.

And so it shall be called!

First of all, you should've been around back in the seventies. LoCs were a huge big deal. So many fans wrote so many LoCs the zines could become overwhelmed with them. Faneds often had to decide whether they wanted a loczine, which was mostly a self-generating loccol (kind of a like an Internet discussion group) or whether they ought to slice and dice the letters and relegate many to the WAHFs to preserve room for articles.

I ran across a few letterzines from the 1960s and 70s. I had a hard time getting into them because the conversations seemed to continue far and wide and they kinda felt like you had to be in with them from the beginning. I kinda see them as what morphed into Twitter and Facebook (more so than blogs, which seem to be what zines turned into)

I used to type out pages and pages of letters every day it seemed, but still I was a piker compared to fans like Harry Warner and Mike Gliksohn and Buck Coulson. I had more energy then, I guess, and free time. And that's probably true of many fans who don't loc as frequently as they did decads ago. Heck, I rarely loc Drink Tank although I read and enjoy it.

And ultimately, that's what counts, I think. If you're reading it, even if you don't reply, you're giving the zine reason to exist! I always enjoy Buck Coulson LoCs, and Harry Warner, now that was a LoCer!

But there's more to it than lack of time and energy, I think. The same fans who never loc, chatter on endlessly in Internet groups. I'm not saying it's either bad or good. It's what fans seem to prefer these days. That's

their choice. But when you remove reader response from zines, you lose half of what fanzines were about. Heck, maybe more than half. As I understand it fanzines came about because fans got to talking in the letter columns of the prozines and decided to move the conversation to their own publications.

Now, this is where I differ, kinda. Folks seem to like immediate feedback, and some issues of The Drink Tank get far more response on Twitter and Facebook and some LJs. I dunno about mailing lists, since I'm not really on any, but I've been told that things have popped up from time to time. I guess I could turn them into LoCs somehow, run them in the zine, but that's not really how they're intended. The responses on social networking sites are meant to be immediate, and fading. That's one of the reasons why I love zines, because there is a permanence to it, even when they're eZines..

If the conversations have now moved on to the Internet what are fanzines for? If fans back in the thirties had had the Internet would they never have invented fanzines?

I think they would have and I think that the zines they would have created would have been less about communication and more about presentation. Art zines would have flourished, and zines which focused on Full-Length Articles. Wait, they did that, didn't they?

Way back when, LoCs were viewed as vitally important -- the lifeblood of fandom -- or at least the currency. Writing LoCs was part of being a fan. It wasn't anything fans debated. They just did it.

That's what makes eZines getting fewer comments so fascinating. I would never have been able to be a LoCer if we were still in the times when a letter would have been required. I'm just no good at the writing and mailing of things, but now it's so much easier to just zip off an eMail and no writing or mailing is required. That would make it seem to me that the eZines would be the ones getting all the LoCs, but that's not the case. I've always thought that it was a part fo the whole TV idea. You don't write letters to TV programmes, and the computer is really closer related to a television than a paper anything, so there's that.

E-Ditto got a decent number of locs for an e-zine. I enjoyed doing every issue. And plus there were some contributors, like Taral and Brad Foster, who I was in touch with constantly and that's feedback too. I don't know how much feedback you get. Obviously winning a Hugo is a big deal, but I'm imagining it's kind of like Mary and I seeing sales figures for our books. It tells us, intellectually, that someone is reading the books, and likes them, which is gratifying, but the reviews we get and occasional letters, are what make us actually feel like people are



reading them. Those are what give us a sense of being read, a sense of having a real connection to an audience. ***Yeah, you got a great response, though part of it, and one of the reasons I really believe the Drink Tank will never get a lot of LoCs, is that E-Ditto was a great zine! I don't think The Drink Tank is a great zine, though he have some really strong issues and I think we tend to be a fun zine, but ultimately, folks aren't going to go out of their way to comment on stuff they think is excellent. I don't actually know how many folks read an average issue of The Drink Tank, I always assume it's something like 50, maybe 75 for a regular issue, maybe a couple of hundred for the specials that folks like Paul Cornell or Scalzi mention on their blogs. Those are guesses, and they're probably way off in one direction or another. I'll almost guarantee that The Drink Tank is less-read than any of the other zines to win the Hugo in recent years.***

Maybe when you go to cons you have people talking to you about your zines or at least telling you they read them.

Folks at cons mention The Drink Tank once in a while, though not too often and it's usually the folks I expect to. I get a lot of folks from the Museum who read some of my stuff, which I find surprising.

When did fandom's attitude to letter of comment change? Or has it merely changed in relation to ezines? I was out of fandom too long to have any idea and I confine myself to the e-world.

My guess is that it's a general thing, but particularly pronounced in eZines. I seem to remember that Claire wrote a brief bit about it (in Journey Planet) about how numbers for LoCs in Banana Wings have dropped as well, though it still stronger than most. It's a hard road for some, especially for folks who are used to getting a lot of response. Still, zines like Alexiad, Knarley Knews, Banana Wings and Trad Door get a lot of letters. Maybe not Historically a lot, but a lot.

One admission I will make is that I almost never loc long zines. I just don't feel up to it. I don't feel like I can do a long zine justice. What do I mention and what do I neglect? So Drink Tank 300, or most File 770s, Challenger, SF Commentary....No, I'm more likely to dash off a note to a short zine.

Really? That's an interesting thing to note. It takes me longer to LoC longer zines, but I'm not much of a completeist. I'll mention a few things of their what jumps out at me, and leave the rest uncommented on.

And having said that, now I'll just plain dash off.

Best,
Eric

Thanks, Eric! Always great to hear from ya and some great comments too! also, I think may have actually been a legitimate LoC!



And now... John Purcell!

Chris, there's a very good reason that you received only one loc on the 300th issue of Drink Tank: the Fannish Union of Crackerjack Knowledge-sharers, a.k.a., the loc-writer's union, decided to leave it up to the only member up to the task, Lloyd Penney. The rest of us were so overwhelmed by that issue that only Lloyd and Lloyd alone stepped forward and announced, "I'll do it! For the good of the F.U.C.K. group!" I mean, really: anytime Lloyd says "fuck" it's best to step aside and leave him alone.

That is a good point!

Anyway.

I am nevertheless supremely impressed that Lloyd locced what is probably the biggest single issue fanzine since Warhoon #28. Well done, thou Canadian letterhack. We are all proud of you and bow in your direction. (Better than waving our private parts in Lloyd's general direction.)

I think one or two of the issues of Dark Matter might have topped out at around 300, but I take your meaning!

Scanners is a movie that I have only seen once. Like you said, that exploding head scene is the thing that people usually remember the most, although there was a lot more to that movie. Good review/analysis of it, Chris, and I see the parallels you make between Scanners and X-Men. That makes sense, and I also like Cronenberg's movies, especially The Fly, which was so much better than its sequel. My feeling is that David Cronenberg is one of those directors who will always fly under the public radar since he really doesn't create films that appeal to the mass market. But mention the head exploding scene in Scanners and folks will say, "Oh, yeah! I remember that! Great stuff!" An iconic moment in cinema; and considering when it was made (1981), quite unique and therefore effective.

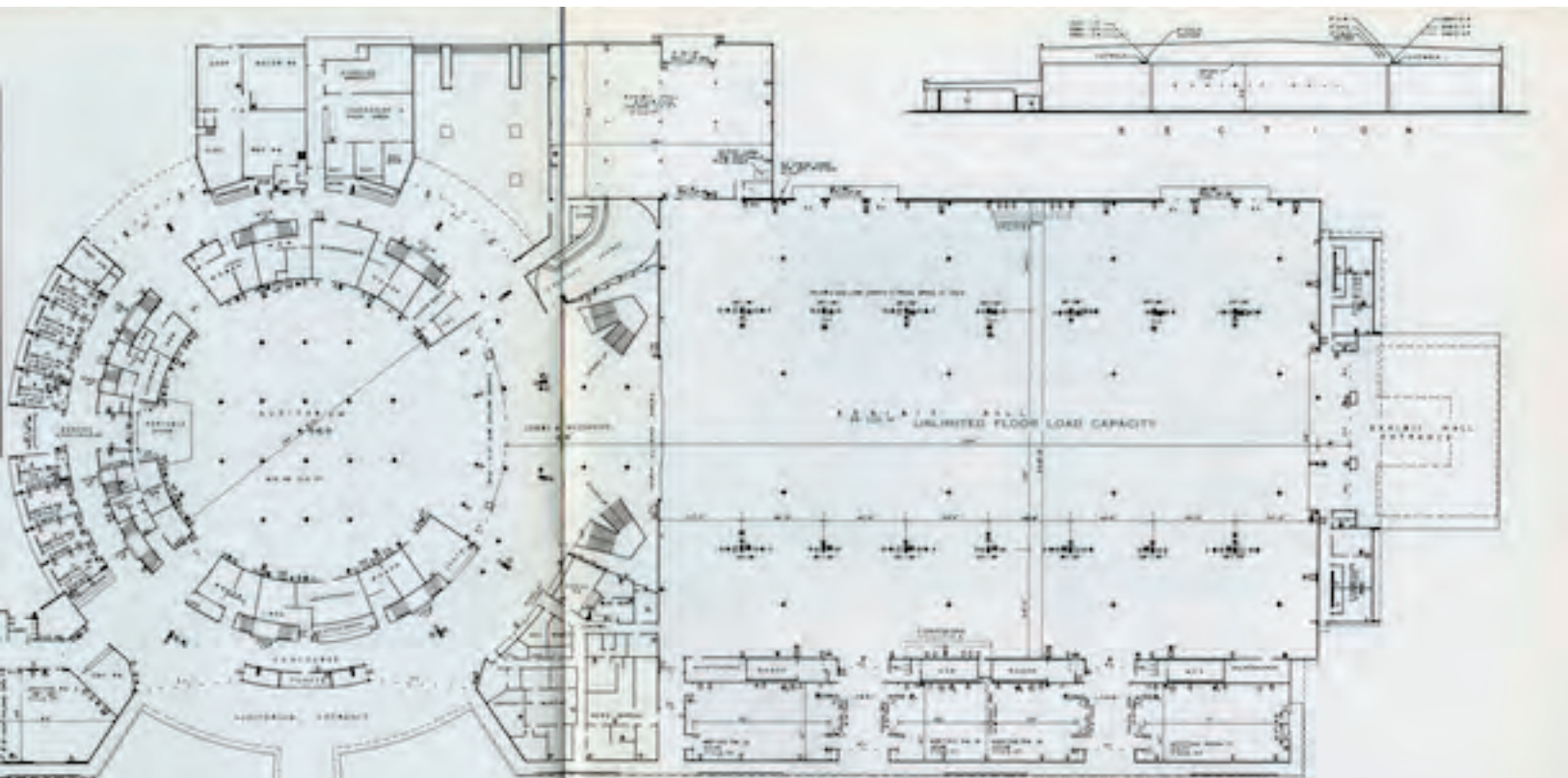
I loved Scanners, but am not as big a fan of the rest of Cronenberg's work. I really wanna see his Freud/Jung film that's out right now. It sounds awesome!

Ah, me. Another loc done for the day. I'm trying to catch up, really I am. It is just that things on the fanzine front seem to be picking up again, and that to me is a very good thing. No complaint, but I just wish I had more time to write locs. As it is, time is going to be at a real premium this year, so I need to be selective in my loc writing. Oh, well. So be it.

All the best,

John Purcell

You da man, John!



In an ongoing attempt to clear space in my apartment, I have previously weeded out my comics collection, taken unwanted books to a used-book store, sold smaller toy cars and thrown out unnecessary supplies I no longer use – such as mimeo ink and floppy disks.

Inevitably, it has come the turn of my old furry zines to be cropped.

At one time, collecting these early furry fanzines seemed terrifically important. Back in the 1980s, furry fandom seemed to have a future that might have followed the upward arc of other fandoms. It would grow in popularity, amateur publications would become professional, the more talented artists and writers would go on to respected careers, and the hobby would gradually be accepted by the



mainstream. But furry fandom has gone off on a completely unexpected tangent, one that has no future in any sense I can appreciate. Instead of the growth and maturity that was envisioned in the mid 1980s, furry fandom has suffered arrested development, and will likely remain the domain of role-playing and make-believe indefinitely. It is a fandom shaped by fans who want nothing more.

Science fiction fandom gave us professional writers and editors. Star Trek fandom gave us writers too, and also the producers of ST:The Next Generation, Deep Space 9 and Voyager, Babylon 5 and other series. Comics fandom brought us some of Marvel and DC's brightest stars. What has furry fandom given the world? Guys in floppy dog suits and padded busts.

Furry Fandom has no future – I see now that it never did – only a permanent adolescence.

Sigh. A long time ago, however, I was lost in the illusion that this fandom mattered, and I kept all those crappy fanzines that common sense should have led me to throw out the same day I got them.

In going through several boxes of old furry zines, I've naturally kept those I think are best. Others I kept because I have some sentimental attachment to them – usually the editor is a friend. As you might expect, I also kept anything in which my own work was published. Unfortunately, that's still an awful lot of zines – not all of which I'm proud of. The collections of Vootie and Rowrbrazzle I'm keeping. Also my Galleries. Gallery alone fills nearly two boxes, Brazzle and Vootie three more. The cream of the cropping adds another three. In fact, the rejected pile of fanzines emptied only two measly boxes. No doubt the newly won space will quickly fill up with new SF zines, and eventually it will be their turn to be cropped. Again. But at least not for another year or two.

In the meantime, there is a foot-tall pile of furry zines in the corner that I need to dispose of. There is always the dumpster, of course, but I'd prefer they went to a collector who might value them.

So, this is the deal. Anyone can have them who wants to pay for the postage. I'm guessing it will be no less than twenty bucks. Alternately, you can fly, drive or use your Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe to get to my place and pick them up.

A partial list of the material can be had by requesting it in a private note.

The last thing I want to do is hurt the feelings of well-meaning people who sent me their zines in the first place. At the time, they were appreciated. But time has a way of putting old aspirations in disappointing perspective.

Postscript. Acting on good advice, I contacted "Second Ed," a dealer of mail-order comics and fanzines. I've done business with Ed Zolna on more than one occasion in the past, and should have remembered him. He agreed to buy the zines from me for a nominal sum and cover the postage. Most likely, the money will go toward a pizza and a pre-viewed movie. But, hey – that's better than when getting the zines out of the house was all I bargained for.



My Top Ten Albums by Christopher J Garcia

Every four years, I re-establish my list of Top Ten Albums of All Time. I first did it in 1992 with the legendary album *Fear of a Black Planet* as Number 1 (it fell off the list for a while) and then in 1996 appeared Frank Black's *Teenager of the Year*, which repeated in 2000, and dropped for 2004, returned 2008, and is off the list this time 'round. *Appetite for Destruction* took the top spot in 2004, I was on a big metal kick, and 2008 (the first year I did it in *The Drink Tank* in issue 186) it was Fleetwood Mac's *Rumors*, leading me to quip that it is obvious I am now in my 30s.

This year's list is slightly heavier on recent-ish records, with 3 albums from the last 5 years, the return of three albums that were on the list in previous years (1992 and 1996 for one, the first four for the others) and then fell off only to return this year. Only three of the last list are back this time.

Enough of this! On to the list!

10) *Lungs* by Florence + The Machine

I was late onto the Florence bandwagon, but I'm glad I hopped on because the combination of her voice, smart and surprisingly dark lyrics, and her fondness for airy and somewhat spacey backing tracks makes for amazing listening. Her style is half-way between Tori Amos and Lady Gaga. The songs *Dog Days*, *Kiss With A Fist* and *Between Two Lungs* are all amazing and it has stayed in my CD for the better part of a year.

The closest albums to it in the same vein come from Lily Allen (her debut was an awesome record) and Gaga (say what you will about her, but that girl can flat-out sing!) and Jane Child's *Album* that featured *I Don't Wanna Fall in Love*. Oh, and *Tongues & Tails* by Sophie B. Hawkins. A great and largely forgotten record. Plus, some of the work of Eddie Brackell and *The New Bohemians*. Maybe *Souixie Souix* would battle, but I really never felt like she did a great album, more that she did wonderful songs that she scattered across many albums. Of course, there's also Nick Cave, whose work with *The Bad Seeds* has a lot of similarities with Florence, though much darker.

9) *Back to Black* by Amy Winehouse

This was the album of 2007. I had it around number 12 in 2008, and re-discovered it when she passed away last year. Winehouse had a helluva voice, and a very smart producer. The songs that really grab me are *Back to Black*, the amazing *Tears Dry on Their Own*, and especially *I'm No Good*. Those are great tunes, but it's really as a whole, as an entire album, that *Back to Black* works best. It plays with its style, gives us *Blue-Eyed Soul* with a backbone.

The albums that come close here are Adele's album *21*, which might end up on this list in 2016. There's also Lily Allen, whose album came out about the same time that *Back to Black* did. Also, and this may sound strange, but you can hear a lot of the rawness of Amy Winehouse in Joss Stone's albums, and even in Florence's voice.

8) *If I Should Fall From Grace of God* by The Pogues

For years I loved this album, but lost it in the late 1990s and it fell off the list. I picked up a copy a couple of years ago after we did a Karaoke to *Fairytale of New York*. It's easily the most impressive performance album on the list, and it's got songs on it that swing like noboy's business (*If I Should Fall From Grace of God*) and that are strife-ridden and amazing (*Turkish Song of the Damned*). Sadly, it doesn't have my favorite Pogues song, *Sunside of the Street*, but every song on this one feels perfect and it's as tight an album as you'll ever find. Plus, you can get contact drunk from just listening to Shane McGowan.

There are so many albums that could compete for this slot, including one that appeared on my first list ever, *The Chieftans & Van Morrison's* album, plus at least one *Dubliners'* album. *Flogging Molly* certainly competes. Perhaps the most direct ancestor of The Pogues in popular, mainstream American music was *House of Pain*.

No, I am NOT kidding!

7) Mashin' Up The Nation Vol. I

Ska. I love Ska. I've loved Ska for a long time. Mashin' Up The Nation was one of the first Ska tapes I ever bought. It's got a sampling of Ska bands from around the US in the late 1980s. While a few bands of some significance are missing (most notably Skankin' Pickle, The Toasters and Op Ivy), but it's a great collection of songs by most of the top bands in Ska in the US at the time. The stuff from bands like Gangster Fun (especially I'd Buy A Gun) and The Bosstones (Wallet) make it the most skankable album of the decade. It's amazing at how much the sound has evolved and also stayed the same. Go figure!

There are a couple of albums that could have taken the place as well. Skamageddon, another large-scale American Ska sampler done about 5 years after Mashin' Up The Nation, is right up there, as is Mash It Up, a Boston-area Ska compilation. If any band could be said to have been hugely influential at helping revive Ska for the US radio, it's The Mighty, Mighty Bosstones, and their album Devil's Night Out is also a classic. Also, the 2-Tone stuff, especially Dance Craze (another great Compilation), and The Specials, comes very close to inclusion. Oh, and Fishbone's first album. It's been on and off the list over the years, and fell off this year.

6) Fear of a Black Planet by Public Enemy

A former number one that fell off the list. This is the ultimate angry rap album of the 1980s, with Chuck D and Flava Flav at the top of their game. While their albums It Takes A Nation of Millions To Hold Us Back and Apocalypse '91 are both also classics, neither is as powerful in every way as Fear of a Black Planet.

There are a few rap albums that I'd consider, including Sex Packets by Digital Underground, the amazing De La Soul album 3 Feet High and Rising, or even the incredible work of Us3, which has been over-looked in recent years, though they had an incredible effect on the direction of Hi-Hop. I'd also say that if I had a Mr. B Gentleman Rhymer album, it'd be up here!

5) Night & Day by Joe Jackson

Joe Jackson is amazing. He's incredibly talented, has a wide range of sounds, from Punk and New Wave, to Jump Blues to something I'd call straight Pop. He's awesome and has put out three albums that I'd consider for the list. The other two, Volume 4 and Jumpin' Jive, are amazing in completely different ways. His first two albums, Look Sharp and Beat Crazy, are both great examples of the slurry of punk and New Wave that happened in the last days of the 1970s and early 1980s. On Night and Day, THE New Wave album as far as I'm concerned, he had two hits, Steppin' Out and Breakin' Us In Two. It's often cited as a tribute to Cole Porter, which is interesting, but the real treat here is the instrumentation on Cancer and Another World. One of the best openers in the history of Album-Oriented Rock. It completely sets the table.

There are several albums that Joe Jackson brought to my view. The works of Elvis Costello come the closest to my heart, especially with the album King of America, though both This Year's Model and Spike are right up there. The Talking Heads also come close with a number of releases. Also, Susan Vega and the work of Tori Amos has a Joe Jackson influence all over it.

4) Appetite for Destruction by Guns 'n Roses

A Former number 1, down a couple from last time. They were inducted to the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame, not without detractors, but to me, it's an obvious in for the band that really pushed Hair Metal into the mainstream. The album contains what I consider to be the perfect Metal song to define the 1980s (Welcome to the Jungle), the ultimate Hair Metal song (Paradise City), and my favorite down-beat tune from a Hard Rock band in Patience. It's just a great record with awesome songs, and more importantly, it's so well constructed. I'm glad I bought another copy recently.

It's interesting to look at related bands and albums. I would say that Poison and AC/DC come the closest, but really, it's the other Guns 'n Roses albums, especially Use Your Illusion, that do it for me. I even quite liked Chinese Democracy, their 2010 album. Also, RATT had a couple of great albums!





3) Little Earthquakes by Tori Amos.

It's 20 years old. Hard to believe. Tori Amos has been one of the most solid singer-songwriters-pianists of recent decades. She's amazing and has put out nothing but solid albums. Little Earthquakes is not a solid album: it's an amazing album. There is no weakness, as even light and airy tunes like Happy Phantom plays perfectly with the heavier stuff like Me and a Gun or Precious Things. It's an intense and obviously personal album. It's one of the best albums of the 1990s. While Little Earthquakes is amazing, and all the others solid, this is the only completely amazing Tori album.

Of course, you've got folks like Billy Joel and Elton John, who were the piano kings of the 1970s and even 80s and I'd say are Lady Gaga's most director ancestors (even more than Madonna). There would be no Amanda Palmer without Tori. Well, I'm pretty sure that there'd have been no Amanda Palmer (despite the fact that she went a very different direction) and The Dresden Dolls Album A For Accident almost made this list as well.

2) The Suburbs by Arcade Fire

There is no CD in history that has spent so much time in my player. It's an amazing album, one that grew on my over time, but was also a major impact when I first heard it. I wasn't sure I liked it at first, but going over it again and again, I realized that it was exactly the kind of album that moves me. It varies styles, it rocks, it looks inwards and it explodes outwards with greater force than you'd ever expect. The songs We Used to Wait and Sprawl II (Mountain Beyond Mountains) are just amazingly good. It's a powerful, powerful album, full of impotent rage in a way, but also full of a sort of humanity that you don't expect from Hipster Rock. It's amazing.

And there's two bands, Talking Heads and Roxy Music, who remind me of The Arcade Fire, and the second Arcade Fire album, Neon Bible, was also close to this list.

1) Rumors by Fleetwood Mac

OK, it repeats. It's just such an amazing complexly emotional album. It's simply an album that rolls through these people's lives, works on every level and produced not only amazing songs, but also a flow that only the best albums have. It defines the 1970s, There is no album that hangs together better and with more perfection for my taste.

As far as other albums that could be there, there's stuff from The Eagles, and other Mac stuff, but nothing comes close.





52 Weeks To Science Fiction Film Literacy - Mad Max

Films about the times after the fall of civilization are awesome. My pal Jordan wrote his thesis on post-apocalyptic films, from Planet of the Apes to Zombieland. I love them, and perhaps the best examples of them have several things in common. There was a fall of mankind, usually through human hubris, there rises a hero to take back the Wastelands from the ruffians/mutants/hyper-intelligent animals that have taken over, and most importantly, that there's violence to be done. There's an almost perfect example of it in Mad Max.

Australia has, at times, been a hot bed for film. The first Australian movies were made not too long after the debut of the Lumiere Brothers' camera/projector. Arguably the first feature film, The Story of the Kelly Gang, was shot in Australia in 1906. By the 1920s, the Australian cinema was on a roller coaster of boom and bust, but starting in the 1970s, there was a boom that could be seen as similar to the one that was taking hold in the US at the same time in that genre films flourished. One specific genre that arose was what's been referred to as "Outback Gothic". These tended to be stories of folks who go into the Outback portion of Oz and end up fighting for their lives with animals and the locals who were always portrayed as uncivilized folk just this side of monsters... and once in a while on the other side as well. Films like Razorback are worth finding. It was from these films that Mad Max roared out onto the highway.

The world has fallen largely into lawlessness. There are biker gangs. They're the bad guys. One of them, Nightrider, escapes and the Main Patrol Force (MPF) chases him with their best man – Max Rockatansky. Mad Max. It's a great chase and in the end, Nightrider crashes and burns. This upsets the biker gang that Nightrider was a member of. Max and Goose, another MPF, arrest a totally wasted young biker member after finding him at the scene of one of the biker gang's attacks on a couple. This leads to a trial which is thrown out after no witnesses appear, apparently frightened to testify against the gang. This is a standard element of gang films, and oddly it seems to have arisen out of 1930s films produced by Union Sympathizers. There will a lot of these produced and a ton of them had trials where the Union Busters were being tried but no one would testify against them. Even the way it was shot looked a lot like those films.

The gang goes on the offensive, including sabotaging Goose's bike and lighting him on fire. That makes Max mad, which leads him to go nuts. The gang then kills Max's wife and son, leading to the great reign of terror that Max unleashes. He basically kills them all in the best possible way.

The Biker Gang movie dates back to 1953 and The Wild One. These films grew out of fear of biker gangs starting with the Hollister Riots in 1947. The genre reached its peak in the 1960s with films like Motor Psycho, The Born Losers and Naked Angels. These had several varieties, ranging from gritty commentaries to silly comedies, but often they told the stories of a motorcycle gang terrorizing a town and clashing with law enforcement. Mad Max takes that concept and goes further, setting it in a post-Apocalyptic world and ramped to the maximum.

And that was a big deal. Mad Max is undoubtedly one of the most violent movies of the 1970s. It was a

beautiful movie, the burnt landscape shot with an immaculate eye, but heavy on the violence. This led to it being banned in a few countries, notably New Zealand, where the burning of Goose rang a little too much like an actual killing there, and Sweden, where it wasn't released in any form until 2005. It only did OK in the US, and it was marketed as an Action-heavy sci-fi thriller.

One of the areas of influence of Mad Max was in fashion. Several designers, including guys like Gaultier, have bought into the idea of Post-Apocalyptic as an image and have released outfits and even entire shows, with it as a theme. This ideal, along with the various images from other post-Apocalyptic films (and even in *Weird Science*) are all a part of the impact of Mad Max, a film that far more people have knowledge of than have ever seen it.

They couldn't market it on the back of Mel Gibson, could they? He was a nobody and here, he becomes a star. It's odd because when you find films like *From Dusk 'til Dawn*, the vehicle that was pretty much shot to make George Clooney a star, or *Desperado*, with Selma Hayek getting the treatment, they have certain things they do to make it happen. Here, it wasn't done. No heroic speeches, his bad assedness happens with him looking a little like a psychopath, but nevertheless, he became a massive star off of the film. I really think that the sequel had a lot more to do with launching him into the stratosphere, which isn't a rare thing. Look at the *Austin Powers* movies. The first one was a big success, and Mike Myers was made into a bigger star off of it, but not a huge star. After video releases, and especially the DVD, the second Powers film made a huge splash, turned Mike Myers into an international sensation, and made more money in its first weekend than the first one did in its entire run. The same thing sorta happened with Mad Max, and the third one, *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*, made the biggest impact culturally of all the Mad Max movies, partly because of Tina Turner and partly because of *Thunderdome* itself. One of the only reasons I would ever subject myself to Burning Man is that I really wanna play in the full-scale, working version of *Thunderdome* they've built. I really really wanna. If only there was a way to do it without the dirty hippies...

There was also a problem with the American release. Back in those days, there was little faith in Foreign films being able to make money as they were in the US. These were often re-dubbed instead of subtitled, and in the case of Mad Max, they had Americans redub the Australian voices and change the vernacular so that Americans would get it. Having seen both versions, I have to say that the dubbed version is just plain awful in comparison. Now that's not to say that the dialogue is so sparkling that the film is ruined, it really is an actioner, but it lacks the different tone that Mad Max in Australian has. It really is transforming.

Mad Max is one of those films where a Good Cop becomes a Bad Cop for Good Reasons. It's a classic, but it's played here very firmly. The worst fears of anyone are realized here. Cops gone rogue is a massive fear, especially in places like the US where the police can, and often do, use deadly force. The 1970s saw crime rise in the US and in many areas of the world, especially in gun violence. That helped Mad Max by giving a fear for the movie to play off of. This is utterly important for all of the dark genre films. Something we can understand, when abstracted to its terrifying maximum, is required for these kinds of pictures. The violence in Mad Max does just that, and the remorselessness in the killing of Johnny by Max is incredibly effective.

Mad Max is the only Australian film on the list, and really, it's the only one you need.

