

Class of '73

by Greg Weaver

Prognostication...

AS I MOVE CLOSER TO MY GOLDEN BIRTHDAY, the things I most cherished as a formative teen, in high school and just out, have become more important or fallen by the wayside entirely. There is very little middle ground left on these matters. You may blame this commentary on my growing propensity to reflect on things past and a recent invitation to return to the small town where I spent my teens. My thirty-year high school class reunion has arrived!

I've not seen any of those folks since a few years after graduation. I moved away a few years later, never to return. My recent musing over those long forgotten years brought me many happy, and some less splendid, recollections of events alive at that time. More important to this chronicle, I found myself astonished at how much of the popular music released that year has endured: scratch that, how much music from that year flourished since its release thirty years ago. The invitation to go back to one's youthful haunt struck a chord and made me think about what else was going on that year.

At 17, I had been at my first real job for nearly two years. I was the Staff Photographer for the local newspaper, *The Punxsutawney Spirit!* My days were spent behind two Nikon F Bodies, one with a 5 frame a second motor drive, 7 or 8 Nikkor lenses and a Press Pass. Among other things, including covering Pitt, Penn State and Steeler football games on the sidelines, society, sports and spot news coverage, once each year I got to go up to Gobblers Knob and photograph the world-renowned prognosticator, Punxsutawney Phil! Many of the photos you might have seen published in AP syndicated newspapers in the '70s of that celebrated, if ludicrous, event were taken by yours truly.

I was an avid comic book and pulp science fiction fan and collector, and a large influence on my youth was my fifth and sixth grade art teacher, Joe Wehrle, Jr. Joe had left teaching to become a full time artist and writer, becoming a member of the Science Fiction Writers of America. He exposed me to the works of Clark Ashton Smith, H.P. Lovecraft, Alfred Bester, Cliff Simak, Phillip K. Dick and Sax Rohmer, to name but a few. At least indirectly, he was the major force behind my ramblings. I was inspired by him to take up journalism. However, things from that year either grew more dear or were set aside. I am sorry to say that I sold my extensive comic collection in the early eighties. It was time to move on.



A poor but burgeoning audiophile who had discovered J. Gordon Holt's intermittently published *Stereophile* and Harry Pearson's brand new *the absolute sound*, I stocked my home system with a pair of EPI Standards, the model 100 with inverted dome tweeters, fed by a Rotel RA-210 integrated amplifier through zip cord! After a brief stint with a Gerrard Zero 100C turntable, which implemented a unique, twin armed tone arm to achieve zero degree tracking error as it traced the record, I had settled on a B-I-C 980 belt driven turntable with Sure V15 Type II moving magnet cartridge. The reason for the B-I-C usurping top honors as source was that the arm on the Zero 100c had just been too massive and I was too worried about the possible damage to my investment in vinyl to take the chance. My other source was an RCA branded 8-Track recorder with the new Dolby B noise reduction system. TDK was the favorite blank cartridge and - there at the dawn of music piracy - I copied many a record to tapes for my car and my friends.

My car was where real listening took place. I had gotten rid of my 1967 Triumph TR-4a because it had rusted to the point of no return. Its replacement, a dark blue Volkswagen 410 fastback wagon, was the choice mobile listening vehicle in my town for the Rock 'N' Roll loving crowd. I had dissected a pair of EPI standards, cutting the woofers into its back deck and the mids and tweeters into the front door panels. I wedged the crossovers into the kick panels and wired the whole thing to my Craig Powerplay™ deck with more zip cord.

What a joy. I drove some 25,000 miles a year in those days, mostly so that I could play music at the volume I wanted and not worry about bothering the 'rents. More often than not, I would be awakened to go to school or work with my trusty Koss Pro 4aa headphones still on my head and the tuner dialed in to WYDD or WDVE from Pittsburgh, the predominant AOR (Album Oriented Rock) stations of that period. The Koss phones had great bass and liquid filled ear cups making them the most comfortable closed headphones I had ever had on my silly noggin to that point.

You are now in for a stroll down my three-decade old memory lane: the major events and happenings, the films that were in release and a look at the significant rock recordings, many of which are *still* found in heavy rotation on classic rock stations nationwide and world-wide -- songs and albums that made up that thriving and immortal "Class of '73." Perhaps there are memories, songs, and events you missed or just plain forgot. If that is the case, then time spent here reminiscing will have been a success. With few exceptions, most every recording in this memoir finds itself in rotation several times a year here in South Bend, Indiana. Many are absolute masterpieces. Some are overlooked milestones. Please, dig in.

The Events

First, let me familiarize (or, if you are old enough to recall them, reacquaint) you with some of the major events of that year. Believe this: I've written this from memory! I needed no assistance whatsoever from *The Chronicle of the 20th Century*, pp 1060-1073, which might be an invaluable aid in other instances. A guy just has to follow his faded, flawed sense of things, right?

In science, Carl Sagan, who would go on to become the most popular scientist of the 1980's - first through his book and later the PBS television series on cosmology for the layperson,

Cosmos - told us that life might be possible on Saturn's moon, Europa. Many of us were simultaneously agog and hopeful at that dim prospect of science fiction coming closer to earth than ever realized previously.

It was certainly an interesting year in politics. *Rowe v Wade*, the controversial abortion decision (not the two ways future Vice President Dan Quayle thought you might cross the Potomac River) made by the Supreme Court 7-2. Some 250 members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) seized a hostage filled trading post and church at the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation in Wounded Knee, SD, the site of the Sioux's 1890 last tragic battle. Vice President Spiro T. Agnew fell under investigation on charges of taking kickbacks from government contractors in Maryland, and eventually resigned with a "no contest" plea and Gerald R. Ford was nominated to take his place by Richard Nixon. Henry Kissinger became Secretary of State when William P. Rogers resigned. Juan Peron was elected president of Argentina for the second time, previously ousted in 1955. The OPEC oil embargo began in protest of America's support of Israel, leading to lines at gas stations blocks long. And Egypt and Syria invaded Israel. Blue Oyster Cult and their blazing guitar rock was driving us wild or nuts or happy. Whatever it was, it worked.

J.P. Getty, III, was freed after six months of captivity, his kidnappers never caught. The World Trade centers were completed at a cost of \$750 million. At 110 stories high, the Sears tower in Chicago surpassed them by 104 feet a year later.

The United States seemed intent upon bringing troops home from Vietnam, finally. The U.S. agreed, on paper at least, to stop fighting in Vietnam permitting the first planeload of POW's to arrive in the United States from Southeast Asia.

And who could forget the Watergate incident? G. Gordon Liddy and James W. McCord, Jr., former Nixon aids, were convicted of plotting to spy on the democrats during the 1972 campaign. Four top Nixon aids resigned; H.R. "Bob" Haldeman, chief of staff, John D. Ehrlichman, chief presidential advisor on domestic affairs, John W. Dean, the White house counsel, and Richard G. Klenidienst, Attorney General. Daniel Ellsberg was cleared in the "Pentagon Papers" affair when the federal judge presiding over the case dismissed all charges against him. The Senate panel convened to begin its now famous Watergate hearings. John W. Dean, 3rd, made his accusations that Nixon not only knew about, but actually orchestrated the cover-up in those Senate hearings. H.R. "Bob" Haldeman admitted to the Senate Watergate committee that tapes were made of private Oval Office conversations, and when they were subpoenaed and finally played, Rose Mary Woods admitted to causing the 18-minute "gap" in those crucial Watergate tapes. All the while, we were jumpin' to BTO and Grand Funk Railroad . . . kids had to get rid of bad news with good energy.

Archie Bunker and his family took to the airwaves for their third season after a failed 'Archie Bunker for President' candidacy on Norman Lear's "All In The Family." I've always been an avid film fan, and I am happy to say that with the exception of Altman's *The Long Goodbye*, I saw all these films first run! They have been alphabetized to minimize specific importance I might otherwise attach to several in particular:

American Graffiti, directed by George Lucas, and number 77 on the American Film Institutes top 100 films of all time.

The Day of the Jackal, by Fred Zinnenmann

Dracula, directed by Andy Warhol

Enter the Dragon, starring Bruce Lee, directed by Robert Clouse

The Exorcist, by William Friedkin

The Last Detail, starring Jack Nicholson directed by Hal Ashby

The Last Tango In Paris, starring Marlon Brando, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci.

The Long Goodbye, directed by Robert Altman

Mean Streets, directed by Martin Scorsese

The Paper Chase, directed by James Bridges

Paper Moon, featuring a VERY young Tatum O'Neil, directed by Peter Bogdanovich

Save the Tiger, starring Jack Lemmon, directed by John G. Avildsen

Serpico, starring Al Pacino, directed by Sidney Lumet.

Sleeper, starring and directed by Woody Allen

The Sting, with Robert Redford and Paul Newman, directed by George Roy Hill

Westworld starring Yul Brenner, directed by Michael Crichton

The Pulitzer Prize was awarded to The Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein, age 29, and Bob Woodward, age 30, for their achievements in covering the Watergate affair. And get this, "Sesame Street," the popular children's television show, was *banned* in the Soviet Union for being "veiled neocolonialism." Jeannette Rankin, the first woman ever elected to Congress passed away, as did Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th president of the United States. Classical music conductor, Otto Klemperer, and the drummer for Big Band leader Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, died.

Hollywood lost Edward G. Robinson, known for his gangster films. Also, Lon Chaney Jr., most famous for his monster roles like "The Werewolf," and for simply being the son of Lon Chaney, the silent film era's "Man of a Thousand Faces," passed away as well as the incomparable director John Ford. Ford had won Oscars for 5 of the 130-plus films that comprised his enormous body of work: among which are *The Informer*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *How Green Is My Valley*, *The Quiet Man*, as well as a WWII Documentary.

Literature witnessed the passing of playwright Noel Coward, author of 27 plays, and Pearl S. Buck, one of the most popular American authors of her day, humanitarian, crusader for women's rights, and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938 for her novel, "The Good Earth", that year as well.

Four lives that held great significance to me were extinguished my senior year in high school, one so completely unexpected that it still resonates in the world in which he was a near legend, even before his passing. Bruce Lee died in Hong Kong just weeks before the release of the film that would have allowed him to break through as a huge star in the US, "Enter the Dragon." Bruce, born Lee Jun-Fan (meaning "Return again Lee"), was a veteran Hong Kong actor and martial artist, whose role as Kato in the 1966-67 TV series "The Green Hornet" had introduced him to American audiences. Working in the Hollywood system, he developed the concept for the TV series "Kung Fu," but was passed over as its star because the studio felt America was not ready to accept an Asian American in a lead role. His life and death are the subject of much controversy in the Martial Arts community to this day.

As a junior high school student and voracious reader, I was a fan of "The Lord of the Rings," recently popularized by the successful and remarkable Peter Jackson film series. The creator of the complex and fascinating world of Middle-Earth, J.R.R. Tolkien, lost his fight with pneumonia in '73. We were also witness to the loss of the controversial and brilliant artist, Pablo Picasso. His work gave me my first appreciation of contemporary art forms. Pink Floyd's 'Dark Side of the Moon' and its remarkable buoyant energy kept us romping, bopping, and grooving, no matter what.

Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, the leading American Aviation Ace of World War I and author of "Fighting the Flying Circus," also slipped his mortal bonds. I recall vividly the descriptions of aerial combat he recounted in that book, as well as the feeling of awe at his bravery and, to some degree, the casual contempt for life that pioneering aviators exhibited each time they climbed into the sky in those fragile, lethal flying machines of that era. They were missed by some, forgotten by most.

The sports scene was absolutely *amazing* that year! Bob Griese lead the Miami Dolphins to the first and *only* perfect season (17-0) in NFL history with a 14-7 victory over the Washington Redskins in Super Bowl VII. Bill Walton led UCLA to its seventh straight NCAA basketball title. The year's most popular non-human athlete, *Secretariat*, won horse racing's coveted Triple Crown, becoming the first horse since *Citation* in 1948 to do so. The tennis world was irrevocably changed when 30-year old Billie Jean King handily beat 55-year old Bobby Riggs in the highly publicized "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match in straight sets. And it was also the year that O.J. Simpson, running back for the Buffalo Bills, became the first player in history to ever rush for more than 2000 yards in one season. Elton John was on the scene, too, and pumped some of us way up. Who says that music doesn't have an athletic pulse?

Music!

As the inimitable Frank Zappa would have said if he still hung around these days, we have made it to the 'crux of the biscuit.' Take a look at a list of "musical graduates," and see if you agree. Those with asterisks are absolute "must hears." If you haven't found them yet, you owe it to yourself to track them down at yard sales or on e-Bay!

AEROSMITH - *Aerosmith*

Originally "designed" to look and sound like the Rolling Stones, this first album set these bad boys on the treadmill to success with their classic "Dream On."

*THE ALLMAN BROTHERS - *Brothers and Sisters*

Following their superb 1972 classic *Eat a Peach*, it included the hit "Ramlin' Man." This is vintage Allmans.



BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE - *Bachman-Turner Overdrive & Bachman-Turner Overdrive II*

Former GUESS WHO alumni Randy Bachman and Chad Allen were joined by Randy's drummer brother Robbie and bassist C.F. "Fred" Turner to become this record selling machine. These guys RULED AOR air play in these years, with songs like "Gimme Your Money Please," "Takin' Care of Business" and "Let it Ride."

BEATLES - 1962-66 & 1967-70 Sets

Though these were only compilations of their original work, they allowed a completely new generation of Beatles fans to find and enjoy their music.

BECK, BOGART & APPICE - *Beck, Bogart & Appice*

Vanilla Fudge and Cactus' bassist Tim Bogart and Carmen Appice join the phenomenal Jeff Beck here in one of his early detours. His earlier work, like 1972's *Jeff Beck Group*, and his later solo work, in particular 1975's vital *Blow By Blow* and the 1976 follow-up *Wired*, are much more notable. I recall the days of free form on AOR Stations. WYDD in Pittsburgh would play entire 'white label' albums at midnight in those days; records not available in stores or from distributors yet, but ones pressed and sent ONLY to the most deserving radio stations. Well, *Blow By Blow* aired one midnight about 3 weeks before it was released, and because of my fanaticism (which included staying up to record all those witching hour white labels on my superb Teac A-450 Cassette deck) my friends fell in love with it, as I did. What a different time it was!

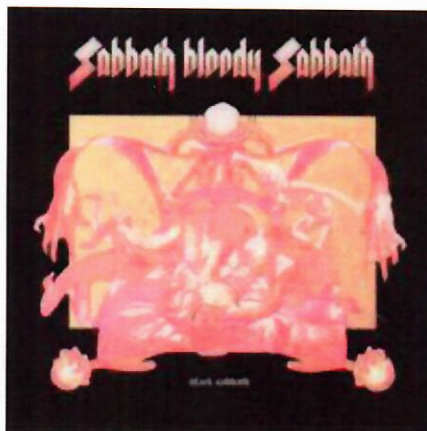
BLACK OAK ARKANSAS - *High On The Hog and Raunch & Roll Live*

This lighthearted and raucous work featured the well-known "Jim Dandy," and these misfits made music that was often the life of a party. And, *Raunch & Roll Live* got

even more attention after the fundamentalists swore it contained backward masked Satanic messages.

*BLACK SABBATH` - *Sabbath, Bloody Sabbath*

Their fifth work in just four years, it was obvious that the boys had made a concerted effort to elevate their musicianship, production quality, the arrangements and even the jacket artwork. The album was an absolute success, a 'must hear.'



BLUE OYSTER CULT - *Tyranny & Mutilation*

Their second album, it crystallized their unique blend of blazing guitars with tunes like "7 Screaming Diz-Busters."

*DAVID BOWIE - *Aladdin Sane* and *Pin-Ups*

A pun on "A Lad Insane," this album took him in a new experimental direction, away from his Ziggy persona. *Pin-Ups* was essentially a 'tribute' album, with David Jones offering superb covers of songs by UK bands that had inspired him, like THE WHO, THE KINKS, the YARDBIRDS and PINK FLOYD. It was a strong transition to his next recreation as the "Diamond Dog." These are covers NOT TO BE MISSED.



WALTER/WENDY CARLOS - *Switched On Bach II*

Born Walter Carlos in 1939, "Wendy" had her sex change operation in 1972 and spent the next seven years hiding from the press while being one of the most famous and sought after composers of synthetic music. What can you say about this gifted experimenter and pioneer? His work with the moog synthesizer which led to the original *Switched On Bach* in 1968, and his soundtrack for Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* in 1971, set him up as the real father of true synth music. Or, is that mother?

CHICAGO - VI

Recorded at the new, super Caribou Studio in Nederland, CO, this album spotlights the brass section that had become the signature sound of this now very popular group. The album produced two Top Ten singles: the easygoing James Pankow (trombone) ballad, "Just You & Me" as well as the up-tempo rocker, "Feelin' Stronger Every Day," which Pankow co-wrote with Peter Cetera. It does not have the edge of earlier works, but is definitely a crowd pleaser.

ALICE COOPER - *Billion Dollar Babies* and *Muscle of Love*

Never known for his reverence, Vincent Furnier (aka Alice Cooper) put on shows that were more theatrical and violent than anyone in the era. But these two albums show a refined level of musicianship. BDB received tremendous airplay with songs like "Hello, Hooray," "Elected" and the title cut. It still contains some of the old 'grit' -- "I Love The Dead," and "Sick Things." With *Muscle of Love*, Cooper's work took a step back to earlier work and yet carried newer, more polished refinement. Important tracks here are "Big Apple Dreamin'," "Hard Hearted Alice," "Crazy Little Child," and "Muscle of Love."

JIM CROCE - *Life and Times*

With this release, the simple balladeer, who capitalized on his blue-collar, common man look and demeanor, came into the mainstream with string of AOR hits like "You Don't Mess Around With Jim," "Bad, Bad, Leroy Brown" and "Operator." As so often happens, his career took off (in 1974) just after he and four others lost their lives in a small plane crash in Louisiana.

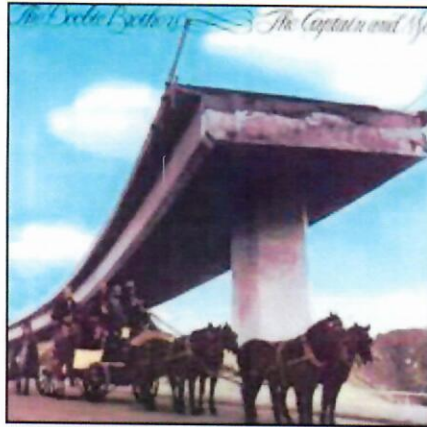
DEEP PURPLE - *Who Do We Think We Are*

The last work by the DP11 grouping of musicians (they suffered MANY changes over the years), with the exception of "My Woman from Tokyo," this album lost all the drive and fire that was the previous years monster album, "Machine Head."

*THE DOOBIE BROTHERS - *The Captain and Me*

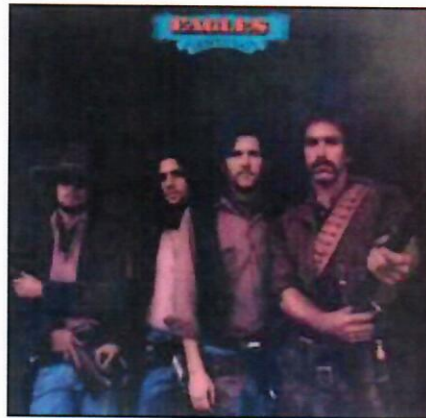
To my thinking, this album represents the best of the Doobie's work, pre-Michael McDonald, who joined them after a notable stay with Steely Dan. Though they might have earned more money and sold more albums under his direction away from boogie-rock toward a polished, jazzy blue-eyed soul sound, they were never as

convincing as their playing on this work. It is one of the best of '73.



**EAGLES - Desperado*

Their second album, the concept of the old West under the primary direction of Don Henley, has a magic that is inescapable. This is one of the most natural sounding records of its period and made the world take notice of these very talented artists. A 'must hear.'



**EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER - Brain Salad Surgery*

Keith Emerson (the NICE), Greg Lake (KING CRIMSON) and Carl Palmer (ATOMIC ROOSTER), had come together in 1970 to become progressive rock's first super group. BSS was a technical and progressive rock stunner, in part due to the opus "Karn Evil 9" in three movements. This was the first show I ever saw with four banks of speakers in the arena, left and right front, and left and right REAR. They put on one of the most unforgettable shows of the early 'seventies, including the final destruction by massive pyrotechnical explosion of Keith's Z3 Moog synthesizer as a finale!



**BRIAN ENO - Here Come the Warm Jets*

His first solo work, not released in the US until '74, Eno's album is hard to categorize. In fact, he calls himself a non-musician. Though he spent time in the early glam scene with Brian Ferry and Robert Fripp, it is his solo career that is remarkable. He was a pioneer of ambient music (check out Ambient-4: On Land!), a hit producer and a multi-media guru. This album was eventually re-issued on the EGO label, but the must have version is the British Polydor, sonically superior to any later issues I've heard.



FLEETWOOD MAC - Mystery to Me

Initially conceived as hard-edged British blues rockers in the late '60s, the band gradually evolved into a polished pop/rock act over the course of a decade, especially when the duo of Lindsey Buckingham and Stephanie Nicks joined them in 1977. This album is one of the best works from their early period. It features strong work from John and Christine McVie and the madman himself, Mick Fleetwood.

RORY GALLAGHER - Blueprint and Tattoo

Born in the Irish Republic and known for his marathon live blues shows, Gallagher will likely never get the respect and attention he deserves due to his illness and untimely death in 1995 at age 46. Though his studio albums never captured his live feel, they were works to be reckoned with.

GENESIS - *Selling England by the Pound* and *Live*

There are two distinct groups known by the name Genesis; the one fronted by Peter Gabriel and the one fronted by Phil Collins. This is some of the best of the Gabriel era, period.

*GOLDEN EARRING - *Moontan*

This album is one of the most overlooked works of the seventies, mostly because of this Dutch band's lack of staying power in the US. I can't imagine anyone unfamiliar with the highway anthem, "Radar Love." Yet that is not the strongest track on the record. Better cuts - "Vanilla Queen," "Candy's Going Bad," and "Big Tree, Blue Sea"- fully reveal the band's musical ability. This is a must have, plain and simple. The original Track gatefold is the one to have.

[graphic at top of article]

GRAND FUNK RAILROAD - *We're An American Band*

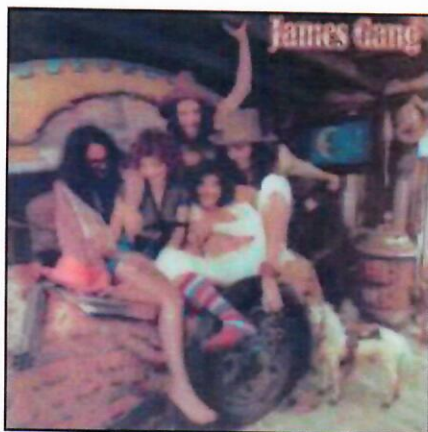
Produced by Todd Rundgren, of UTOPIA fame, this is Grand Funk's (no "Railroad" attached) most successful album. For many reasons. The addition of keyboards, high production values, and songs such as "The Railroad," "Creepin," and the title track all make this one of the essential GFR records. The original release was on translucent gold virgin vinyl.

GEORGE HARRISON - *Living In The Material World*

Ex-Beatle George Harrison remains controversial. Following the huge success of *All Things Must Pass*, the critics were let down and disliked this album. Don't let that fool you. There are great cuts here: 'Give Me Love,' 'Sue Me, Sue You Blues,' as well as the title cut. This is a winner.

*THE JAMES GANG - *Bang*

Sans Joe Walsh, motivated by Tommy Bolin's imaginative guitar work, this album may represent the best of its genre from the era. I've yet to play this sleeper for anyone who has not heard it without receiving a version of this question, "How did I miss this one?" Songs like "Standin' In The Rain," "The Devil is Singin' Our Song," "Ride the Wind," and the unexpected a cappella track, "I'd Rather Be Alone With You" (while arguably uninspired lyrically), collectively are in a class of their own. Murky recording mix notwithstanding, this is a 1973 stand out!



DR. JOHN - *In The Right Place*

Mac Rebennack was a formidable boogie and blues pianist who fused New Orleans R&B, rock and Mardi Gras into one unique sound. *ITRP* is one of Dr. John's best summations.

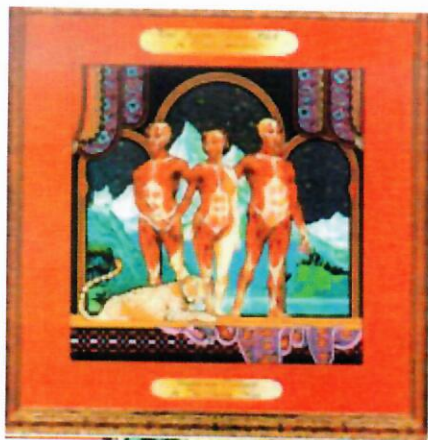
*ELTON JOHN - *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*

Arguably the finest paring of Bernie Taupin and Reginald Dwight, this enduing classic speaks for itself. If you haven't heard this work, you must have lived under a rock.



*KANTNER, SLICK AND FREIBERG - *Baron Von Tollbooth and The Chrome Nun*

The band formerly known as Jefferson Airplane released this album before assuming the name Jefferson Starship the following year. The undisputed kings of the Haight-Ashbury counterculture in the 1960's, this album shows much of the same inspiration and some of the direction about to come. It is a remarkable 'transition' work, more than worthy of your time and sits squarely on the 'must hear list.



LED ZEPPELIN - *Houses of the Holy*

Zip's fifth album, the first to openly bear a name rather than a number, is one of their strongest works. It is relaxed and carries a folksy charm that outflanks its rock edge. The reggae inspired "D'Yer Mak'er" is a stand out. "The Rain Song," with its uplifting string arrangement and effortless tender melody, is terrific. This album represents one of Zeppelin's highest achievements.

JOHN LENNON - *Mind Games*

Not my favorite Lennon work, it is still an effective return to his introspective form, well received by both audiences and critics.

LYNYRD SKYNYRD - *Lynyrd Skynyrd*

This Southern Rock band, whose name slurs the pronunciation of a high school shop teacher, took their brand of rock from the blues. With hits like "Gimme Three Steps," "Simple Man" and "Tuesday's Gone," they ruled AOR play lists. The now overplayed-to-death "Freebird" has become the second most played rock anthem on the airwaves, surpassed only by "Stairway to Heaven."

*PAUL McCARTNEY - *Band On The Run*

While the schmaltzy Red Rose Speedway also came out in '73, this was the one everyone had been waiting for. Vaguely reminiscent of *Abbey Road*, the work has no 'losers' on it. It pleased fans and shut the critics up. Paul had not lost his magic. This is a no-brainer. Add it to your 'must hear' list.



*MILLER, STEVE - *The Joker*

Family friends like Charles Mingus and Les Paul were visitors to Steve Miller's childhood home. That may account in part for the two very different periods of his musical career. In the late '60s and early '70s, Miller was one of the top blues influenced rock acts in the San Francisco bay area. Then, from the mid- to late '70s and in the early '80s, he became one of the biggest pop rock acts in the business. *The Joker* is right in that cusp, one of his more interesting works, showing the force of his childhood influences as well as a hint of his star power to come.



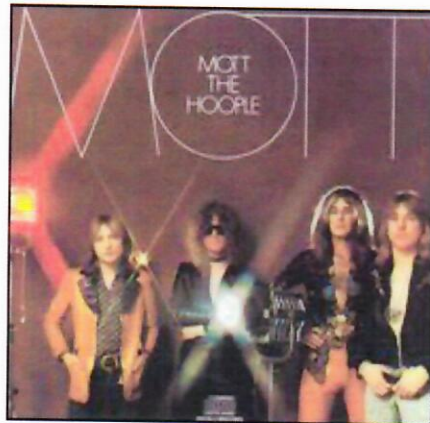
*RONNIE MONTROSE - *Montrose*

With a young, still unknown Sammy Hagar on lead vocals, this eponymous hard-rock album was one of the first from an all American group to compete with British bands that ruled the era. Ronnie Montrose's take-no-prisoner guitar work established whose band it was. Though his career never really went anywhere special, this album is still one of the best of the era.



*MOTT THE HOOPLE - *Mott*

Though writer/vocalist Ian Hunter would move on to an occasionally brilliant solo career, this album - spurred by the success of *All the Young Dudes*, whose title cut was penned by none other than David Bowie - revealed a candid glimpse of Hunter's wry wit and cynical humor. While 1974's follow up, *The Hoople*, and Hunter's solo work in 1975 were much better recordings that epitomize his tough inventiveness, this was the beginning of it all for MOTT THE HOOPLE. There are three albums you should purchase soon if you don't own them: *Mott*, *The Hoople*, and *Ian Hunter*.



MIKE OLDFIELD - *Tubular Bells*

The title cut found its way into the score for the runaway hit film, *The Exorcist*. Used with remarkable effectiveness in the film, this odd amalgam of instrumentals perfectly blended into one thematic work, the album is unique for its time and, though it sounds somewhat dated, it is still remarkable to hear.

*PINK FLOYD - *Dark Side of the Moon* and *A Nice Pair*

What is left to say about this masterpiece? The album spent an unprecedented 741 Weeks on Billboard's Top 200 Pop Album list, from March 3, 1973 to July 23, 1988 - more than 15 years. When it fell off that list, it had sold over 24 million copies in the US alone. The story made the Wall Street Journal. Roger Waters' psychedelic

inspired lyrics, David Gilmour's guitar licks, and the slick production abilities of one up-and-comer producer named Alan Parsons came together in equal measures and took the world by storm. This is an essential album.



QUEEN - *Queen*

Notable more for what it foreshadowed than its own contribution, it is nonetheless a very solid and underrated work. Most of you will only know the hit 'Keep Yourself Alive,' but the fact remains that the eponymous work from Freddy Mercury, Brian May, Roger Taylor and John Deacon was worthwhile and set the stage for their later masterpieces like 'Sheer Heart Attack' and 'A Night at the Opera.'

*RARE EARTH - *Ma*

With all five tracks written and produced by Norman Whitfield, *Ma* is a foot stompin', toe tappin' masterpiece. Talk about blue-eyed soul! What a missed gem this is. One side carries a rambling bluesy soulful song about a hard-luck mother, and the other side gives us a four-song tour-de-force. I was the only kid in my group who 'got' this record, now considered the best work the group ever did. With good reason. The Temptations had done the song "Ma," but nobody ever tore up on a song about mom like Rare Earth. If you can sit still to "Big John is my Name," go get fitted for a coffin 'cause yer dead. The haunting arrangement and cock-sure drive of "Smilin' Faces" will leave you in a sweat. "Hum Along and Dance" will have you doing just that, and the simulated female orgasmic vocalizations in the background through the instrumental "Come With Me" will have you reaching for a smoke (or something). This album is superb and gets my vote for Valedictorian of the Class of '73.



THE ROLLING STONES - *Goatshead Soup*

I have trouble with the Stones, including this work. Though I truly like it, I've always found this band to be less sincere than other British Invaders, like THE WHO, for instance. Yet with cuts such as "Dancin' with Mr. D," "Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo (Heartbreaker)" and the ballad "Angie" (reprising Jagger's relationship with Angela Bowie), what's not to like?

PAUL SIMON - *There Goes Rhymin' Simon*

Retaining the buoyant, light-hearted sensibilities of his earlier works, but moving into higher production values so predominant with his later works, songs like "Kodachrome" ruled the radio airwaves and gave Simon confidence that imbued later works like *Graceland*.

RINGO STARR - *Ringo*

You've gotta love Richard Starkey, long the butt of all the Beatles' jokes. On this laid back, nonsensical album, each of the ex-Beatles stepped up to help their long overshadowed brother with songs, backing vocals and session work. It is not a serious work, but it is fun and the song "Photograph" spent a week at number one in November, '73.

SLADE - *Sladest*

Deemed 'too British' by American record buyers, this compilation nicely summed up their first five albums. They were an early 'glam' group whose influence cannot be ignored in the rock of the late '60s and early '70s.

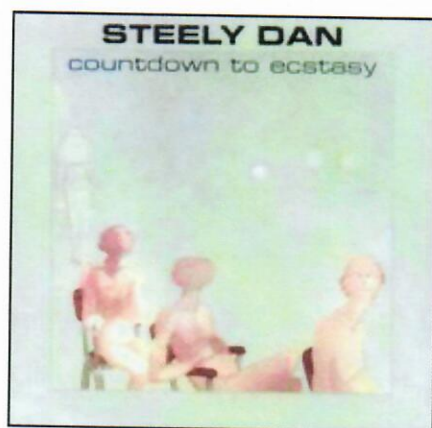
*SPRINGSTEEN, BRUCE - *Greetings from Asbury Park NJ and The Wild, The Innocent and the E Street Shuffle*

I still find E-Street to be one of his most enthusiastic and enjoyable works in his repertory. This jazzy expansion of Springsteen's folk-rock roots was a decided advance from *Asbury Park* and offered a sentimental adieu to that era. The 'Boss' was moving up soon.



STEELY DAN - *Countdown to Ecstasy

The Dan! WOW! I cannot recall a band that put out more 'tasty' treats on a regular basis in the seventies. This is the second of the albums Donald Fagen and Walter Becker made using the name they borrowed from a 'dildo' in the William S. Burroughs novel *Naked Lunch*. The two had played together all over New York for years. One of those bands had future famed Saturday Night Live comedian Chevy Chase as its drummer! STEELY DAN was an ongoing experiment, liberating its musicians, more than a band. Studio musicians entered and exited subsequent records as if a revolving door defined their work in the studio. Consistent over the years, however, were Fagen's songwriting, Becker's stellar production quality and their unique blend of jazz, traditional pop, blues and R&B. Buy all their albums, not just this one.



CAT STEVENS - *Foreigner Suite* and *Buddha and the Chocolate Box*

Born as Steven Demetre Georgiou to a Greek father and Swedish mother, December 23, 1977, Stevens formally became a Muslim and adopted the name Yusuf Islam. To my mind, *Foreigner Suite* really represents the last sound of an era, a sound filled with such wonderful works as *Tea for the Tillerman* and *Catch Bull At Four*. With *Suite*, Stevens broke a four-album streak that employed the same sidemen and producer. He turned from his long emphasis on acoustic guitar in favor of more elaborate keyboard, string and brass arrangements. The old flare is still there, and breaks through often, but this album was the last of the material that

made him a genuine pop sensation.

STYX - //

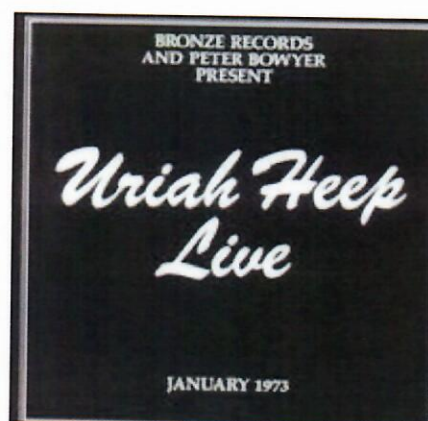
Their early work was, to me and most other Styx fans, by far their most textured and creative, though many people will point to *Paradise Theater* alone. Thought Styx launched the careers of Dennis DeYoung and Tommy Shaw, other prog-rock bands, like THE MOODY BLUES and ELP, inspired Styx's early work. The recording quality here is a real disappointment. I remember the 45-rpm release of "Lady." What bass power! The 12 inch 33 1/3-rpm didn't have any of the subterranean kick of that 7-inch 45! It's still a great work.

TRIUMVIRAT - *Illusions On A Double Dimple*

Though *Illusions* was the second studio publication from this prog-rock group from Finland, it was merely a harbinger of things to come. It was spirited and competent, but its highest accomplishment was to provide enough sales to create financial and creative freedom for the band so they could go back to the studio for their 1975 masterpiece, *Spartacus*, just reissued on CD last spring.

*URIAH HEEP - *Live and Sweet Freedom*

Among the most influential heavy metal bands that paved the way for speed metal bands like METALLICA, MEGADEATH and METAL CHURCH, URIAH HEEP was yet one more band who had found their name in classic literature, this time in Charles Dickens' work. Heep is a clerk in *David Copperfield*. The band's *Live* album showcased all the driving speed of blisteringly fast guitar work presented on stage. Take a close listen to "Easy Livin'" and "Look at Yourself." This album really grabbed me. Their studio albums were nothing compared to these live performances. I had first hand knowledge of that fact. A 'Heep' show, in a small War Memorial near my home in Pennsylvania, was the first real rock concert I ever attended.



JOE WALSH - *The Smoker You Get, The Player You Drink*

One of the most 'colorful' characters of the classic rock era, Joe Walsh never fails to entertain. With a title like this, I hope you didn't expect anything serious from this, his second solo album! It is a boatload of fun.

WAKEMAN, RICK - *The Six Wives Of Henry VIII*

Commencing a profitable and productive solo career while continuing to contribute to a successful working band is not easy. Here is one cat who pulled it off. Not only did this album help pave the way for progressive rock, it also introduced the unbridled energy and effectiveness of the synthesizer as a bona fide instrument of the trade. Using an elaborate mix among the Mellotron, Moog, and Hammond C3 organ, Wakeman created a musical 'persona' for each of the ill-fated wives of the 16th century monarch and, in the process, launched a very successful solo career.

*THE WHO - *Quadrophenia*

THE WHO has long been my favorite of the original British Invaders, mostly for the honesty of their material and the energy and inventiveness of their music and arrangements. While *Quadrophenia* ostensible looks at the lives of four young 'mods' struggling to come of age, it also an examination of their own roots and of their place within the era's pop culture. Pete Townshend's second 'Rock Opera', a more ambitious and detailed achievement overall, it is easily one of the band's most sophisticated, effective creations. What, you haven't heard it? Time to fix that.



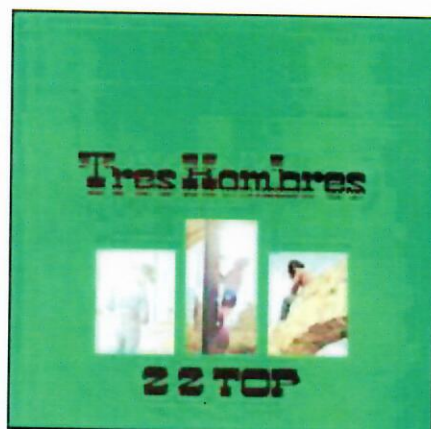
FRANK ZAPPA - *Overnight Sensation*

You can choose to not like his work, but you cannot deny his affect on popular music or culture. With his propensity for sexually explicit songs like "Camarillo Brillo," "Dirty Love, and my favorite, "Dinah-Moe Hum," it is no surprise that he didn't get airplay. But he was the *man* to the 'stoner' crowd, and his work stands alone.

*ZZ TOP - *Tres Hombres*

The third entry from this stompin' Texas blues-rock trio, whose only member to never wear a beard was drummer Frank Beard, chock-full of now classics like "Jesus Just Left Chicago," "Beer Drinkers & Hell Raisers" and "La Grange," this is one kickin' party favorite. If you are only going to own one ZZ TOP album, this is the one. Although, I heartily encourage you to pick up the 1987 three CD compilation, Six Pack which will give you *ZZ Top*, *Rio Grand Mud*, *Tres Hombres*, *Fandango*,

Tejas and El Loco, all in one box! Call your friends, order some food, pop open the drinks and cut loose!



There were many I chose to omit. They missed the mark. A short list of near misses follows:

BROWNSVILLE STATION - *Yeah!*

RICK DERRINGER - *Rock 'N' Roll Hootchie-Coo*

FUNKADELIC - *Cosmic Slop*

IGGY POP AND THE STOOGES - *Raw Power*

NAZARETH - *Loud & Proud*

TED NUGENT AND THE AMBOY DUKES - *Call Of The Wild*

STEVIE WONDER - *Innervisions*

I'd be remiss if I omitted the often cited early, if not actually the first, "one hit wonder." That magnificent atrocity from DAVID ESSEX, *Rock On!*

Hindsight

Memories well-rehearsed, a cleansing experience! I hope there's some fun here and this has reminded you of a few old favorites . . . or maybe spurs you to check out some albums you missed. Don't hesitate to write me if I overlooked any of your favorites! This reminiscence is one man's recollection, but the whole year - 1973 - was a group exercise. As one philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, reminds us: "Without music...life would be a mistake." But then he never heard Tiny Tim.



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