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Curating Moving Images

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**It Used to Be about the Music, Man: Rock 'n' Roll Fan Movies and the Post Facto
Creation of the Nostalgia Market**

Abstract:

Remember back when the music used to mean something? Or at least it seemed to mean something? Or at least there were structures in place that told you that the music meant something? Wouldn't you like to relive those days? Even if you didn't really live through them?

Now you can, with the Rock 'n' Roll Fan movie. Unlike a traditional Rock 'n' Roll Movie (the Beatles films, *Head*, *Spice World*) the focus of the Fan movie is not on the band and their exploits in putting on the show, but rather on the exploits of the fans in going to the show. The band's appearance is relegated almost to that of a cameo; the narrative is in the impediments of the characters reaching that moment of incongruity when the story pauses and the performance occurs, often accompanied by awkward scenes of introduction, exposition, or just plain bad acting. The band's performance usually works as the point of resolution in the narrative: conflicts are overcome, loves are found or renewed, and the older generation finally gets it (either catches on or catches it). The promise of youth and rock music inspire redemption to the characters but also to the audience of the band and its audience: the film-viewer. Nostalgia is the point at which that promise becomes the past, the point at which the redemption from the pain of adolescence becomes redemption from the pain of midlife.

The program will take the form of a weekly show presented over five weeks time. Each session will include the screening of a film featuring a rock/pop group followed by a concert performed by a tribute band modeled on the musical group featured in the film. The journey of the characters in the film to hear the band is recreated by the journey of the present-day audience to hear the re-creation of the band, completing the cycle of nostalgia through the re-insertion in/re-assertion of the past.

Location:

The Mission Theatre & Pub, Portland, Oregon
Projection facilities for film and video
Live music stage
Microbrews and pub fare

<http://www.mcmenamins.com/index.php?loc=72&id=168>

This location offers the multiple aspects of the performance space required for the dual nature of the program; it is popular with younger and older crowds as well as movie-lovers and movie-enjoyers; it is modestly mid-sized; and it offers refreshments for increasing the enjoyment of the show as well as of the sort that draw people in regardless of what's playing. Admission charged will be for the band, not the movie.

Format:

Movies will be screened via video projector from DVD. The venue is not proper for 16mm projection, and the only 35mm archival print discovered so far is a non-circulating copy. Original theatrical distributors have been either unresponsive or non-existent (i.e., no longer in business or no longer in possession of distribution rights). The Mission regularly projects live sporting events as well as television series from DVD with great popularity and success. Secondly, the monies saved on film rentals would be able to be applied to performance fees for the performers.

Sessions:

1. Do You Remember Rock 'n' Roll Radio

The Film: *Rock 'n' Roll High School*

The Band: The Ramones

The series begins with a genre defining film. Master of adaptation Roger Corman shifted from *Disco High School* to *Rock 'n' Roll High School*, combining elements of proven (rock star movies) and newly popular (teen comedies) genres to create his low budget magic once again. Parents just don't understand, teenagers are smarter than anyone else, and there is salvation in music: what is old is reconstituted into the new, just as The Ramones took a nostalgia for old rock 'n' roll and reconstituted it into what would be punk. The tribute band, then, reconstitutes the style of The Ramones into a femme aesthetic.

The Tribute: The RAMONAS L.A.

<http://www.gigs4all.com/bands/The-Ramonas.php>

Booking contact:

For booking info please contact us through MySpace or theramonasrock@yahoo.com.

Band description:

1-2-3-4!!! The Ramones invented punk rock - its sound, its style, its speed - RAMONAS L.A. keep it alive! The RAMONAS L.A. were formed in early 2005 and are the first and only Los Angeles All Girl Ramones Tribute band. The girls embrace everything the Ramones stood for, the energy, the drive, the look and their bombastic phonic assault of performing one song right after another keeping the crowd excited and thirsty for more!

No Wigs, No Act, just pure Ramones punk rock!

2. This is Radio Clash

The Film: *Rude Boy*

The Band: The Clash

At its release, this film was another sign of how The Clash had sold out – a messy, vain work of punk poseurs. Nostalgia works to temper such partisan sentiments. Joe Strummer did his penance outside of the spotlight and has been in the process of redemption, as is the case with *Rude Boy*. True to the more political roots of British punk, the impediments the fan character faces are not grotesqueries of authority figures but the social problems of race and class conflict. The fan does not dream of sticking it to the man so he/she can just have decedent fun; the fan dreams of the music as a way out of the oppressive social structures that perpetuate poverty and hatred amongst the masses.

The Tribute: London Calling

<http://myspace.com/98824973>

Band description:

London Calling formed with an idea of doing a one-off tribute to the music of the Clash in dedication of Joe Strummer as it was the 1st year anniversary of his death on 22 December. The gig was booked at the Junction, St Pauls, Bristol 12th December. Due to disorganisation, just a little advertising was done, in the main local listings magazine. On the night the place was, to our total and utter amazement, packed, and you have to remember that this venue is by no means everyone's favourite joint. The band played 12 songs that night and had to repeat 4 of them as the crowd went mad for it. At the end of the show about half a dozen members of the crowd joined the band on the small, but quite high, wobbly stage and performed White Man in Hammersmith Palais! After that first gig the band decided that they couldn't just leave it at that and they discussed the idea of a tribute band. As lead singer Reg explains. "Well, we didn't want to be a tribute band that were just kind of playing the songs and taking the piss out of the original Clash. What we were trying to do was recreate the excitement we felt during that period as punk rock exploded."

3. Thank You for the Music

The Film: *ABBA The Movie*

The Band: ABBA

ABBA is even more separate from the narrative impulse of the film as most of the footage of them is documentary, edited together with the story sections shot later on. The impediments to the DJ reaching ABBA do not stop the movie audience from seeing ABBA in concert. Perhaps this structure reflects the band's structure as well as finely constructed crowd pleasers and as more pop than rock. Much as the Village People were built to perform Jacques Morali's songs, ABBA was put together to sing Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus' songs and, specifically, to win the Eurovision Song Contest. Pleasure is the ultimate result of succeeding to hear the music, but the conflict between authority (the Bodyguard) and the downtrodden (the DJ) is only a Euro-pop

reference back to the American source of the teen versus authority. It is a game to be played for further (comedic) pleasure rather than for a supposed social statement. This film probably goes a long way to explaining parts of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* and *Muriel's Wedding*. Perhaps it would have better for continuity's sake, but luckily we did not have to fly in our band from Australia.

The Tribute: ABBA AGAIN - A Canadian Tribute to ABBA

<http://www.abbaagain.com/about.htm>

Booking contact:

For Management, Booking, or general inquires please e-mail bookings@abbaagain.com

Band description:

Beautifully blended harmonized vocals, exciting eye-catching choreography, glittering costumes with platform shoes...and a touch of humour! Established in 2006 this exciting new act has worked for audiences small and large. They feature the best in sound and always leave audiences wanting more. Perfect for any club, theatre, convention, wedding, birthday or corporate event.

ABBA AGAIN will help you relive your memories of the 70s era with songs like the ever-popular Mamma Mia, through to the lingering sounds of SOS and EAGLE, bouncing back to the disco dancing favorites DANCING QUEEN, VOULEZ-VOUS, and DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW to the show stopping sounds of THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC. This show is not to be missed.

4. Can't Stop the Music

The Film: *Can't Stop the Music*

The Band: The Village People

Considered one of the worst films released in 1980, it won the very first Golden Raspberry RAZZIE for Worst Picture (beating out *Xanadu*). It is difficult, however, to assign the true reason for this honor, whether it be on solid Worst Picture grounds or merely a visceral reaction to The Village People. Interestingly, nostalgia works almost as a positive revisionist tool for the current reception of the film. Taken straight in 1980, the film was derided, but now being able to admit to and embrace its deliberate campiness, the movie occupies new ground upon which it can be reassessed. Shockingly, this film had an estimated budget of \$20 million, half of which was spent on publicity. As this suggests, as is the case with many Rock 'n' Roll movies, *Can't Stop the Music* falls somewhere in between vanity and commercial, though here the formula is not necessarily pertaining to the band. The real story, and glory, belongs to the character Jack Morell, loosely based on the creator/producer of non-filmic Village People, Jacques Morali. The narrative follows his plight in trying to get his music heard, forming a musical group to perform it, and falling in love. The group is almost incidental to that narrative, as reflected in their iconographic makeup and their interchangeability: the film was made

soon after the original “Police Officer” was replaced by Ray Simpson, and the group is still performing but not with any of the original members. The Village People were/are essentially a cover band, thus the decision to bring in the official group itself as the night’s tribute band.

The Tribute: The Village People

<http://www.officialvillagepeople.com/Contact%20page.html>

Booking contact:

Ken DiCamillo, William Morris Agency
1325 6th Ave
New York, NY 10019
212-903-1304

5. Rock ‘n’ Roll All Nite

The Film: *Detroit Rock City*

The Band: KISS

The final screening comes full circle to the point of nostalgia for the nostalgia market. Coinciding with the reemerging popularity of the full-fledged makeup-blood-and-fire KISS concert performance and of the Teen Sex Comedy, this self-homage to KISS (it was produced in part by the band) and homage to the low budget rock ‘n’ roll movies of the 1970s and 80s was a critical and financial disappointment upon release (grossing just over \$4 million on an estimated \$15 million budget). Archival footage, costuming, music, etc. can create a simulacrum of the past, but can one truly recreate the emotional state of history? Is that not what nostalgia actually is – the melancholy realization of the inability to recapture the past except through empty signifiers? KISS does not seem to think so. They recreate one of their 1970s concerts in the film. Thus we recreate them recreating themselves with a facsimile of a simulacrum. Long live the Gods of Thunder.

The Tribute: Gods of Thunder

<http://www.gotkisstribute.com/home.html>

Booking contact:

Neal's Music
6919 Warner Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
Work: (714) 842-9965
Cell Phone: (714) 330-9428
email address: nealmuzic@aol.com
website: nealsmusic.com

Band description:

Gods of Thunder is available to entertain all of your wildest KISS dreams. Whether you are interested in hiring us to play a small club, outdoor festival or private party, we've even been asked to play weddings!!! It doesn't matter if you are planning on hundreds or thousands, we've GOT what it takes to 'Bring The Roof DOWN'!!!! Your ticket to one of the greatest shows you will ever see is just a phone call or email away....

Contact our booking agent...Neal Shelton at the phone number above or email him by mousing over the Neal's Music logo above. He can also be reached on his cell phone at (714) 330-9428.

For the extreme KISS experience, GODS OF THUNDER is the only band to hire...100% true...100% authentic. We have impressed the most die hard, devoted KISS Army members and life-long KISS fans. We're 4 of the most hardcore KISS fans you could ever meet!!!

We present you with a complete and accurate recreation of a 1970's KISS concert with extreme attention to detail. As close to the real thing as you can get...perfect recreations of the Dressed to Kill/Alive & Love Gun/Alive II costumes, platform boots & precise musicianship on all the heavy hitters from KISS' power rock line-up. Full show including Gene spitting blood, Ace melting the strings during his guitar solo, Paul's stage antics and Peter's blistering drum solo & awesome vocals!!! WE DO IT ALL! Fully lighted KISS sign, sirens and firehouse lights, smoke and the signature Paul Stanley Firehat!! We also use the identical instruments they used and made famous. This group is dedicated to bring you the most authentic production possible!!! Every member of this band is truly dedicated and we want to claim the title of the BEST KISS TRIBUTE BAND.....EVER!!!!!!

So...if you're ready, we're ready. Just one word of caution...you had better be prepared for an all out assault on the senses 'cuz we bring the realism of 1970's KISS ALIVE and ALIVE II!!!!

Budget:

ITEM:	COST:
DVD Purchase @ \$20*5	\$100
LA RAMONAS fee + travel	\$4000
London Calling fee + travel	\$6000
ABBA Again fee + travel	\$4000
The Village People fee + travel	\$15,000
Gods of Thunder fee + travel	\$6000
Total Budget:	\$35,100

Filmography:***Rock 'n' Roll High School* (1979, sound, 93 mins., color, DVD, USA)**

Production Companies: New World Pictures

Producers: Roger Corman
Michael FinnellDistributors: New World Pictures (theatrical)
Buena Vista Home Entertainment (DVD)
Warner Home Video (VHS)Director: Allan Arkush
Joe Dante (uncredited)Writer: Richard Whitley (screenplay)
Russ Dvorch (screenplay)
Joseph McBride (screenplay)
Allan Arkush (story)
Joe Dante (story)

Cinematography: Dean Cundey

Editor: Larry Bock
Gail WerbinCast: P.J. Soles
Vincent Van Patten
Clint Howard
Dey Young
Joey Ramone
Johnny Ramone
Dee Dee Ramone
Marky Ramone

Summary: Comedy set in a high school where the students have the lowest academic average in Southern California, the athletes haven't won a game in years, and three principals have gone insane. Features scenes of a concert by the Ramones. —OCLC WorldCat

***Rude Boy* (1980, sound, 133 mins., color, DVD, UK)**Production Companies: Buzzy Enterprises
Michael White ProductionsProducers: Jack Hazan
David MingayDistributors: Atlantic Releasing Corp.
Tigon Film Distributors Ltd. (theatrical)
Metrodome Distribution (video)
Prism Leisure Corporation (DVD)Director: Jack Hazan
David MingayWriter: Ray Gange
David Mingay

Cinematography: Jack Hazan

Editor: Peter Goddard
David Mingay

Cast: Ray Gange
Topper Headon
Mick Jones
Paul Simonon
Joe Strummer

Original Music: Mick Jones
Joe Strummer

Summary: "Set in the U.K. of 1978 and filmed as a fictional documentary, *Rude Boy* follows Ray as he quits his job in a London sex shop to become a roadie for the most exciting live band in the country, The Clash. Part character study, part "rockumentary," *Rude Boy* portrays the disillusionment of youth at a time of economic decline in late '70s Britain"--Container.

***ABBA: The Movie* (1977, sound, 96 mins., color, DVD, Australia/Sweden)**

Production Companies: Polar Music International
Reg Grundy Productions Pty. Ltd.

Producers: Stig Anderson
Reg Grundy

Distributors: Universal Music (DVD)
Warner Bros. Pictures

Director: Lasse Hallström

Writer: Robert Caswell
Lasse Hallström

Cinematography: Jack Churchill
Paul Onorato

Editor: Lasse Hallström
Malou Hallström
Ulf Neidemar

Cast: Anni-Frid Lyngstad
Benny Andersson
Björn Ulvaeus
Agnetha Fältskog
Robert Hughes
Stig Anderson

Original Music: Stig Anderson
Benny Andersson
Björn Ulvaeus

Summary: A behind the scenes look at the tour life of the members of the Swedish band ABBA interconnected with a fictional story of an Australian DJ whose attempts to interview the band are thwarted by their bodyguards. --OCLC WorldCat

***Can't Stop the Music* (1980, sound, 124 mins., color, DVD, USA)**

Production Companies: EMI Films

Producers: Henri Belolo
 Allan Carr
 Neil A. Machlis
 Jacques Morali

Distributors: Associated Film Distributors (theatrical)
 Anchor Bay Entertainment (DVD)
 Anchor Bay Entertainment (VHS)

Director: Nancy Walker

Writer: Allan Carr
 Bronte Woodard

Cinematography: Bill Butler

Editor: John F. Burnett

Cast: Alex Briley
 David Hodo
 Glenn Hughes
 Randy Jones
 Felipe Rose
 Ray Simpson
 Valerie Perrine
 Bruce Jenner
 Steve Guttenberg

Original Music: Jacques Morali

Summary: "New York City DJ/songwriter Jack Morell (Steve Guttenberg) needs just one big break to get his music heard and land a record deal. But with the help of his retired supermodel roommate (Valerie Perrine) and an uptight tax attorney (Olympic champion Bruce Jenner), they bring together six singing macho men from the Greenwich Village scene for an outrageously '80s adventure of fun, fantasy and disco fever. Welcome to the not quite straight story of the creation of the Village People in their one and only musical extravaganza. This is *Can't Stop the Music!*"

"Reviled by critics but beloved by fans, *Can't Stop the Music* is still a jaw-dropping experience for everyone. Tammy Grimes, Marilyn Sokol and June Havoc co-star in this notorious camp classic produced by Allan Carr (*Grease*) that features unforgettable dialogue, unimaginable performances, unbelievable production numbers of hits like "Y.M.C.A." and so much more!" --Container

***Detroit Rock City* (1999, sound, 95 mins., color, DVD, USA)**

Production Companies: Base 12 Productions
 Corrupter Production Service Ltd.
 KISS Nation
 New Line Cinema
 Takoma Entertainment Group

Producers: Michael De Luca
 Kathleen Haase
 Barry Levine
 Art Schaeffer

Gene Simmons
Tim Sullivan
Brian Witten
Distributors: GAGA Communications
New Line Cinema
Director: Adam Rifkin
Writer: Carl V. Dupré
Cinematography: John R. Leonetti
Editor: Mark Goldblatt
Peter Schink
Cast: Giuseppe Andrews
James DeBello
Edward Furlong
Sam Huntington
Lin Shaye
Melanie Lynskey
Natasha Lyonne
Shannon Tweed
Gene Simmons
Paul Stanley
Ace Frehley
Peter Criss

Summary: It's 1978: bell-bottoms, day-glo, lava lamps and rock-n-roll define the generation. Join Hawk and his three best friends as they head out to pay their respects to the kings of rock, KISS. --OCLC WorldCat