

Why We Can't Get Enough of the '80s

Within the span of a few weeks in Summer of 2010, Hollywood gave us movies by the name of *The A-Team* and *The Karate Kid* wrapped around a 7-game NBA Finals between the Boston Celtics and the Los Angeles Lakers. I posted to Facebook "I'm going to miss the 80s when the Summer is over!"

Oh, 1980s. We love you so much. We love you so much that we've never truly let you go.

The meteoric rise of the TV Show *Stranger Things* has proven this true. Don't worry; this isn't another article about the show. It's just to say that for all the hoopla, one recurring theme you hear fans talk about is the nonstop '80s references. For people like me, who love the '80s, it is absolutely part of the appeal. Even Will's bowl haircut.

But *Stranger Things* isn't even close to alone on this. As people my age have begun to become producers in Hollywood, the love for the decade has become common. There are so many 80s references in *Psych* I cannot even count them or catch all of them. But there's no mistaking why Ralph Macchio has a guest spot on the show or why Shawn once said "ding ding" to Carl Weathers.

I have often and loudly proclaimed the '80s as the best decade for just about everything. It was, in a phrase of the times, rad. Here is why:

The Music

I'll brawl to the death over this one. The only time I have ever felt cool in the history of my life was in second grade

riding in the back of my brother Tracy's T-top Mustang on the way to school, listening to "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straights. And "The Power of Love" by Huey Lewis and the News. And "Eye of the Tiger" by Survivor.

Does life get any better? I submit that it does not!

I grew up dreaming about the day I would dance with my wife to "Can't Fight This Feeling" by REO Speedwagon and "Lost In Your Eyes" by Debbi Gibson. And you better believe I fulfilled this dream with Kayla in 2014. I can take you to the exact spot in Walker-Gamble Elementary when I first heard "Every Rose Has Its Thorns" by Poison. And who among us doesn't automatically feel like dancing without inhibition when we hear "I Wanna Dance With Somebody" or singing in unison with a huge group of people during "Come On Eileen"?

Some of my favorite memories ever are being at karaoke hearing Josh Crowe sing "Total Eclipse of the Heart". Or singing "You Spin Me Right Round" at the top of my lungs at 9 years old without an ounce of self-consciousness. And to go all Hebrews 11 on you, what more can I say? Time doesn't permit to tell you about Bon Jovi, Tom Petty, Aerosmith, U2, Prince and Guns N' Roses.

I'm positive in a Top 100 song decade vs. decade battle, the '80s would annihilate the competition. And if you still doubt that I offer up the following as a mic drop:





and



Television

I'll be honest: in any list of my favorite shows of all-time, the #1 show (*Seinfeld*) is from the '90s and most of the rest of the Top 10 will be from this century. Yet despite this, back then we still had no shortage of shows that were perfect for that time. *Family Ties*, *Who's the Boss?*, *Growing Pains*, *The Cosby Show* and even lesser known shows like *ALF* (I had the lunchbox in 4th grade) and *227* (with Hal Williams as Lester Jenkins) were weekly viewing for my family. I have often said

that I know my parents made us work when we were children, and we played outside a lot but it seems like if you name a show from the 80s, we watched it. And we loved it. Who didn't love Tuti from *Facts of Life*?



TV Theme Songs and Intros

Half of our [TV Theme Song Top 10 list](#) features shows from the '80s. Because that decade was the golden age of introducing shows by putting the perfect music with the actors' names in real life. Some told epic background stories (*The A-Team*), others gave welcoming, feelgood invitations (*Cheers*), some were impossible not to sing along with (*The Jeffersons*) and others just played cool music over cool video (*Magnum PI*, *Miami Vice*). They just don't make TV Intros like they used to.



Saturday Morning Cartoons

Here is another category where the '80s dominates the field. It's hard to fathom the fact that for a short time in my life I got to watch *ThunderCats*, *He-Man*, *Muppet Babies*, *Transformers* and *G.I. Joe* all in the same week. We all grew up not just watching these shows, but playing them outside, pretended to be the characters, owning the action figures and using our imaginations in a way that seems foreign these days.



And it wasn't just make believe that we learned. We all learned wisdom and life knowledge and that "Knowing is half the battle." (G.I. JOE!!!)



A few years later brought the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Duck Tales*, cementing this decade as the most prolific cartoon decade of all-time.

Movies

Again, other decades can compete in this category but any decade that gave us *Back to the Future*, *Die Hard*, *The Goonies*, *Ghostbusters*, *The Karate Kid*, *Rambo*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Indiana Jones*, *The Princess Bride*, *Top Gun* and *The Terminator* has to be on the short list for best ever. Not to mention that many consider *Rocky III* and *IV* to be the best of those movies and the '80s introduced us to Yoda and a more authoritative, finalized version of Darth Vader. And that there is widespread belief that *Empire* is the greatest Star Wars film.

Beyond that the 80s brought us timeless coming of age pieces

like *The Breakfast Club* and *16 Candles*, child acting legends like Corey Haim and Corey Feldman, and some of the best fantasy ever in *Labyrinth* and *The NeverEnding Story*. David Bowie was a legend that probably didn't put his pants on one leg at a time. And man I had a crush on Jennifer Connelly. And it's a shame that kids today will never know the thrill of going to the local video rental store and getting *Spaceballs* for the 17th time. Ridiculous speed! My hometown had 300 people growing up, one traffic light and zero fast food places. But we had two video rental stores!

And again, lest there be any doubt, go find *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* and watch it. I rest my case.



Professional Wrestling

Ric Flair and Four Horsemen...Hulk Hogan slamming Andre the Giant...Dusty Rhodes, The Road Warriors, The Ultimate Warrior, Hacksaw Jim Duggan (H00000!!!!), The Rock N Roll Express vs. The Midnight Express, Randy Macho Man "000H YEAH" Savage (wrestlers made a lot of random, boisterous sounds but they were super cool), chairs thrown in the ring, steel cages, referees getting knocked out, bad guys cheating, heroes dashing in from the dressing room...what a time to be alive! If my dad wanted to me punish me, a very effective way was to

take away Saturday wrestling.



NBA Basketball

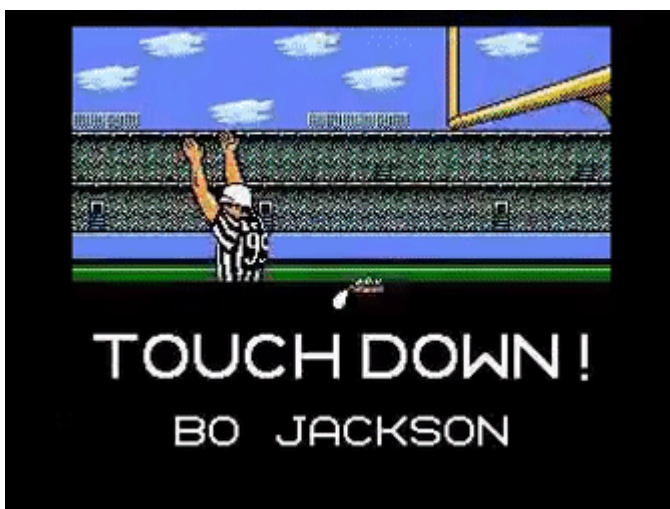
There were great moments all across sports this decade by people like Jordan, Montana and Kirk Gibson, but all decades have great moments. Only one decade has ever given us Lakers vs. Celtics, Celtics vs. 76ers, Lakers vs. Pistons, Celtics vs. Pistons, and Larry vs. Magic. The modern NBA era is close, closer than any other. But the NBA in the '80s is about as white-hot as any league could be. Somewhere between Bird telling all of the Lakers he was going to make a three in all their faces in a Finals game and Kevin McHale giving Kurt Rambis a Russian Sickle (classic 80's wrestling move), the league entered rarefied realms of entertainment. Hearing the Garden Crowd chant "BEAT L-A!! BEAT L-A!!!" is something I'm thrilled to have witnessed live.



Video Games

Two Words: TECMO BOWL

And before that there was John Elway's QB. And before that "Ten Yard Fight". And before that the Atari football game where you had to make the block men face forward before each play. What an evolution!



And there is so much more! In some ways, I miss the 80s the same way Toto misses the rains down in Africa. Yet in others, I don't really have to. Thanks to *Stranger Things* and *Psych* and the magic of the internet, I can transport myself back in time on a whim.

Do you remember the '80s? What did you love most about it?