

# 66 of My Favourite 80s Albums of All Time

Shôn Ellerton, February 1, 2026

Trying to whittle down my favourite 80s albums to 50 was just too difficult, so it ended up being 66.



It's time for another listicle!

This time, I'll run through sixty-six albums from the 80s that have been memorable to me. A few of those in the list below are not technically *albums*, but rather, specially-made compilations put together by the artist.

Special thanks to my mum, my sister, and my late friend, Darren, from Wales who died tragically fifteen years ago that inspired me to discover some of these masterpieces.

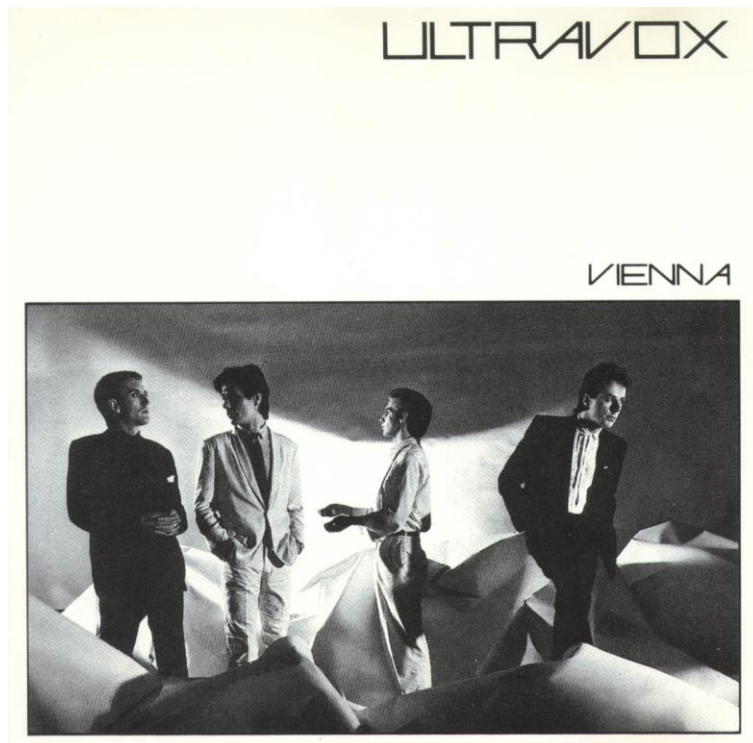
Let's start from the earliest to the latest during that 80s timeframe.

## #1. *Telekon* by Gary Numan (1980)



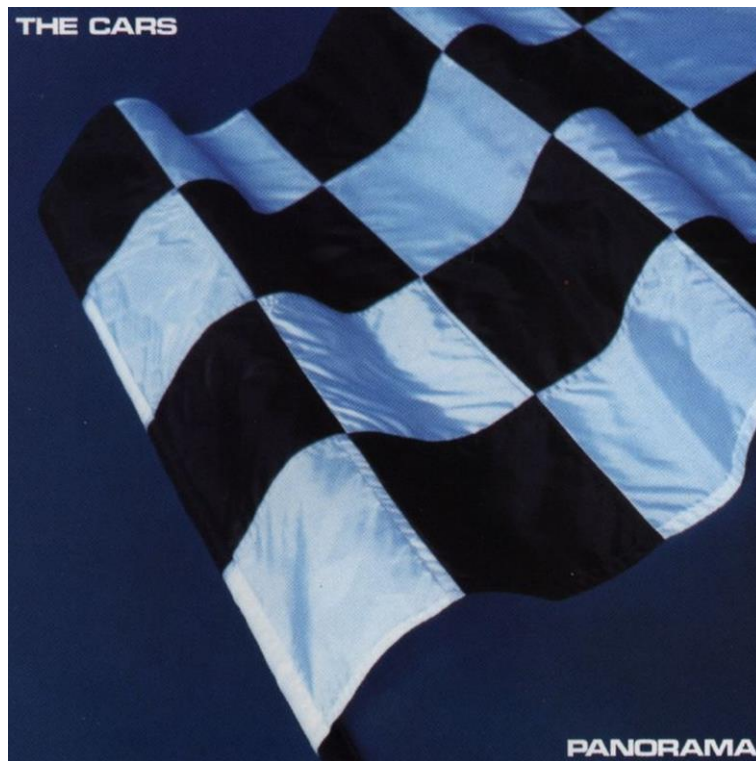
Never heard of Gary Numan until I met a new friend in Wales during the late 80s. Prior to that, I was living in the US, and I *never* heard of Numan before during that time. Apparently, he was quite the artist live on stage according to my friend. He excelled at fusing rock with futuristic-sounding synthesizers making his music somewhat other-worldly. His lyrics are very interesting conjuring up images of robotics and dystopian societies. His most famous track is, of course, *Cars* from *The Pleasure Principle* album, but in my opinion, *Telekon* is, by far, his best album. Best tracks on this album are *This Wreckage*, *Telekon*, and *Remember I Was Vapour*.

## #2. *Vienna* by Ultravox (1980)



*Ultravox* is another band that I never heard of until my Welsh friend introduced them to me. *Vienna* is *Ultravox*'s most well-known album, and also, in my opinion, their best, although the next three to four albums are very good as well. Not unlike Gary Numan, they had that nouveau-synth sound but what made them unique is the addition of a violin played by Billy Currie. The sound they had was a curious mixture of punk, new wave, classical, and pop. It was a very British sound. Lyrics aren't bad as well. Take *New Europeans*, which, if now compared to today's youth, isn't that far removed. *Vienna* is the most popular track, but there are others that are far more sublime including the sinister *Mr. X* and the aforementioned *New Europeans*.

### #3. *Panorama* by The Cars (1980)



I was introduced to *The Cars* by one of my mum's friend by the name of Judy back in Colorado during the early 80s. *The Cars* is probably most well-known for its lovely but rather syrupy track, *Drive*, from its *Heartbeat City* album. However, *Panorama*, in my opinion, conveys what *The Cars* is about. A sound of roller skating rinks, girls, diners, drive-ins, arcade machines, and the days of lost youth. But, unlike *Drive*, it also has pathos, melodrama, and uses a lot of haunting minor chord sequences to keep it mysterious. It took a few listenings to really appreciate this album after being first exposed to *The Cars* from its *Shake It Up* album.

#### #4. *Drama* by Yes (1980)



The group, *Yes*, is perhaps, one of my top five bands of all time.

*Yes* had their most influential time during the 70s creating magnificent albums like *Close to the Edge* and *Relayer*. Although not in the same league, their album, *Drama*, just crept into the 80s with a great mixture of 70s progressive rock creativity and 80s rock energy. The album didn't get great reception as their earlier albums, but that's the problem. *Yes* set a bar so high with their prog rock albums of the 70s that producing later albums would expect very high expectations.

And, oh, the artwork by Roger Dean made collecting all of *Yes*'s album's an absolute must. But sadly, most of today's listening audience remember *Yes* with its very mainstream and rather uninteresting song, *Owner of a Lonely Heart*.

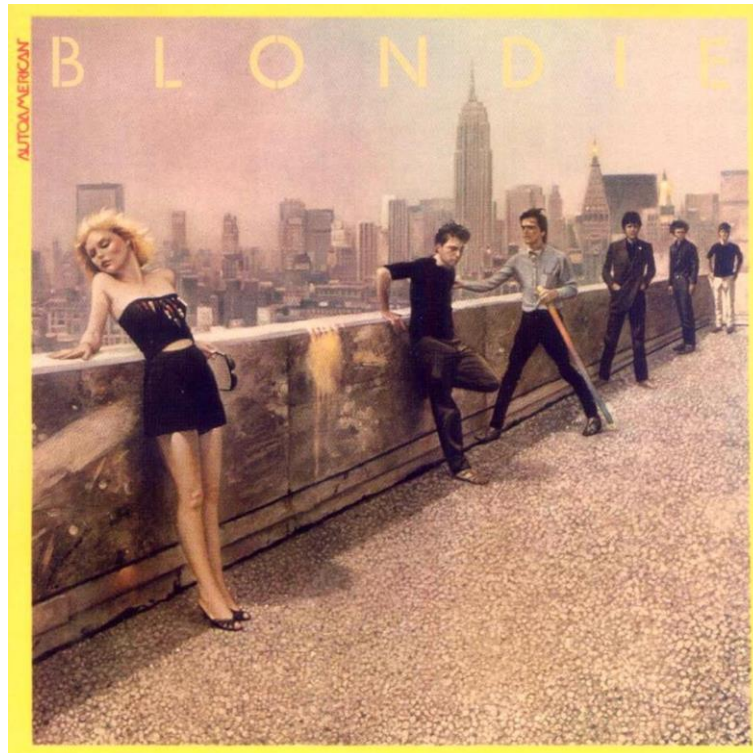
*Drama* is *Yes*'s last album that had that real complex prog-rock style along with amazing and deeply poetic lyrics that I've never come across.

## #5. *Never For Ever* by Kate Bush (1980)



Kate Bush had the most unique voice I ever heard when I was introduced to her much later during the early 90s. Her songs are gorgeous, and indeed, very sensual, almost sexual. She was like this young little rebellious nymph who seemed to command men to her feet. The sound she created was simple and clean. She also loved to inject a little bit of Oriental-sounding sequences into her songs, for example, in her rebellious track, *Army Dreamers*. She's produced quite a few albums, but if I was choose one, it has to be this one.

## #6. *Autoamerican* by Blondie (1980)



*Blondie*, otherwise known as Debbie Harry, was a little bit of a sexpot of the 80s music scene. And yes, she starred in that disturbing sci-fi film, *Videodrome*, with James Woods. *Autoamerican* was a very mainstream album. Nothing particularly special about it bar the fact that it conveyed to me the very essence of youth in the 80s, the time I remember so well. *The Tide is High* and *Rapture* are probably the two most well-known but I think *Do the Dark* is her best on this album. *Blondie's Autoamerican* was the symbolic symbol of adolescent lust and young hedonism.

## #7. *Gaucha* by Steely Dan (1980)



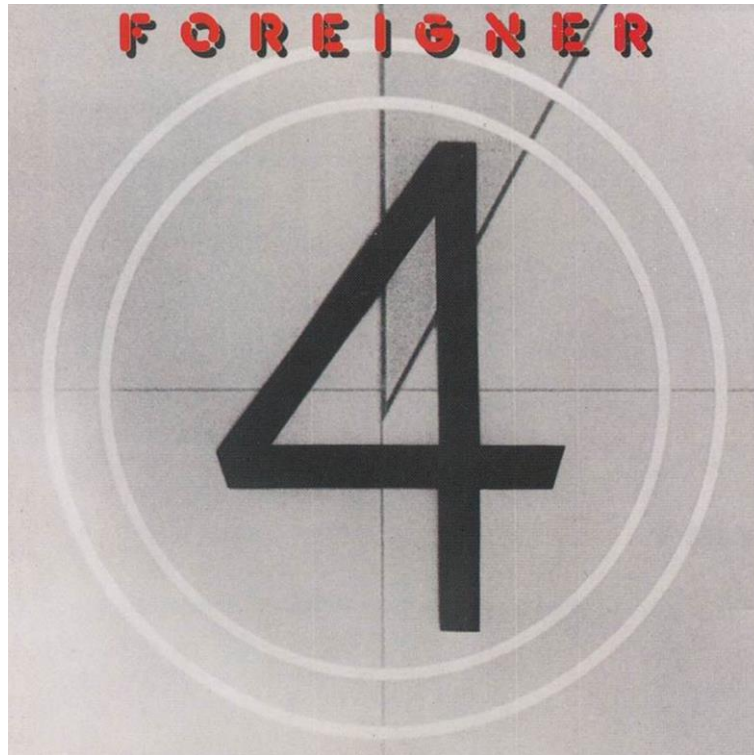
*Steely Dan* had become another of my top five bands ever. My mother had a few of their records and I think, between us, we must have played them hundreds of times.

*Every* album by *Steely Dan* up to *Gaucho* is legendary. Everything after became a little ordinary.

But *Gaucho*, to me, represents the ultimate pinnacle of absolute loveliness with their previous albums, *Aja* and *The Royal Scam* following very close behind. There are no weak tracks on this entire album. It's perfect.

And, for audiophiles, oh my, the recording quality, especially with those Japanese pressings!

## #8. 4 by Foreigner (1981)



*Foreigner's 4* album was my very first record which I owned. Can't remember if I bought it or got it as a birthday present. Anyway, I wanted it so much because I was absolutely riveted listening to the track, *Urgent*, at full volume in the back of my friend's older brother's pick-up truck back in school days. Except for a couple of tracks, this album is just raw energy, powerful, and exciting to listen to. It's not heavy metal or anything like that, but it's pure American classic rock. Themes of aspiration, heartache, and good times. This is Foreigner's best album by a long way with great tracks like *Jukebox Hero*, *I'm Gonna Win* and, of course, *Urgent*.

**#9. *Penthouse and Penthouse* by Heaven 17 (1981)**



*Heaven 17*? I'm sure I heard that name before. Wait! There were a couple of girls browsing through a record store in Stanley Kubrick's phenomenal but dark film, *A Clockwork Orange*, and they were talking about a fictitious group called *Heaven 17*. Guess that's how they got the name from, who knows?

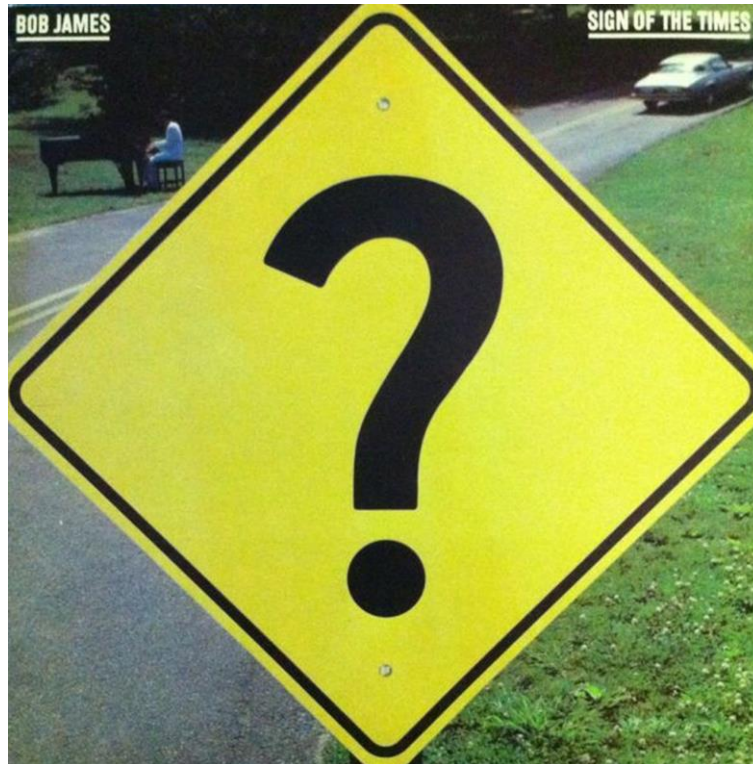
*Heaven 17*. So, very British. And they were. All synth pre new wave stuff. It was the early 80s and the yuppies were shaping Britain to become that Thatcherite corporate machine as it came to be. *Heaven 17* centred much of their material around all that greed, capitalism and corporatism.

This album, *Penthouse and Pavement*, is a record with Side A being the Penthouse and Side B being the Pavement. Side B, the Pavement, is the more interesting side with tracks like *Geisha Boys and Temple Girls*, *Let's All Make a Bomb*, and *The Height of the Fighting*.

The sound is simple and perhaps, thin, but it's melodic, very catchy, with good lyrics.

Good nightclub stuff of the early 80s.

## #10. *Sign of the Times* by Bob James (1981)



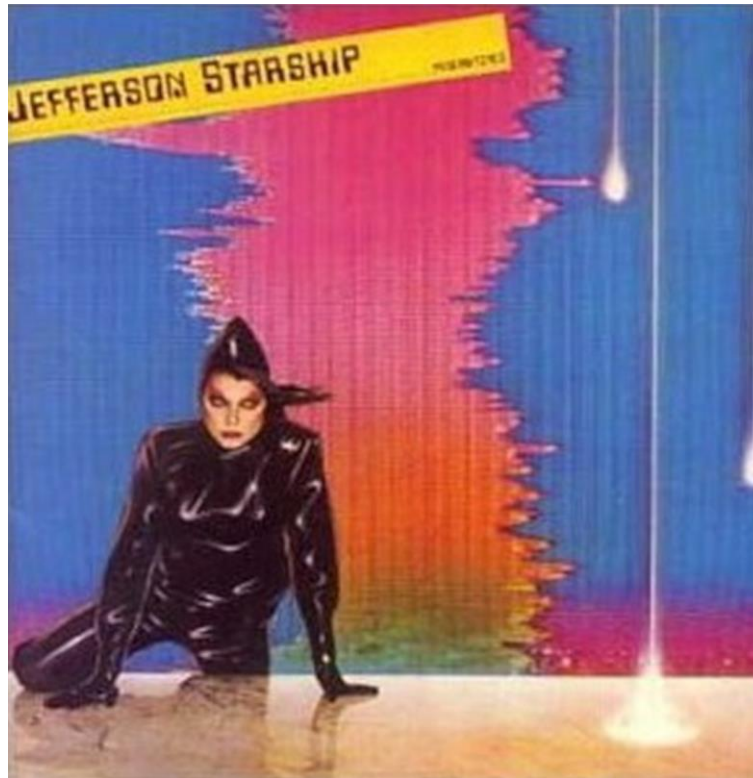
I'm not the biggest fan of jazz, however, there was a lot of, what they called fusion jazz from the 70s which I sometimes liked. But there was also the slightly syrupy stuff which Bob James put out, known as soft synth jazz, I suppose. It was easy to listen to with that typical 80s soft twang guitar sound, synth keyboards, vocals, saxophone, soft drumming, and piano.

A lot of traditional die-hard jazz-lovers can't stand this sort of sound, but somehow or another, I grew attached to it. I liked the complex augmented and diminished chords of Bob James's piano playing.

This album, along with *Grand Piano Canyon*, which came out in the 90s, are Bob James's best works of art. Many might recognise the melody of this album's second track, *Steamin' Feelin'*, which has been re-used by many other artists in later years.

I've played this album many times.

## #11. *Modern Times* by Jefferson Starship (1981)



*Modern Times* is another record introduced by Judy, my mother's friend, back in the early 80s. She had some great records I can tell you!

I'm not the biggest fan of Jefferson Starship nor its predecessor, *Jefferson Airplane*, but I loved the track, *Miracles*, in their 70s album, *Red Octopus*. And that got me to try out this *Modern Times* album.

Today, it's successor, *Starship*, is known for its overplayed, and, in my opinion, overrated track, *We Built This City*.

*Modern Times* is not really well known, which is interesting, because this album has some of the rawest and most exciting classic rocks themes I've ever heard with female vocalist, Grace Slick, exuding endless amounts of power and energy.

Love this album except for the last track.

If you like this, try out Pat Benatar's *Precious Time* album, which I list below.

## #12. *Computer World* by Kraftwerk (1981)



Off over the Atlantic to Germany!

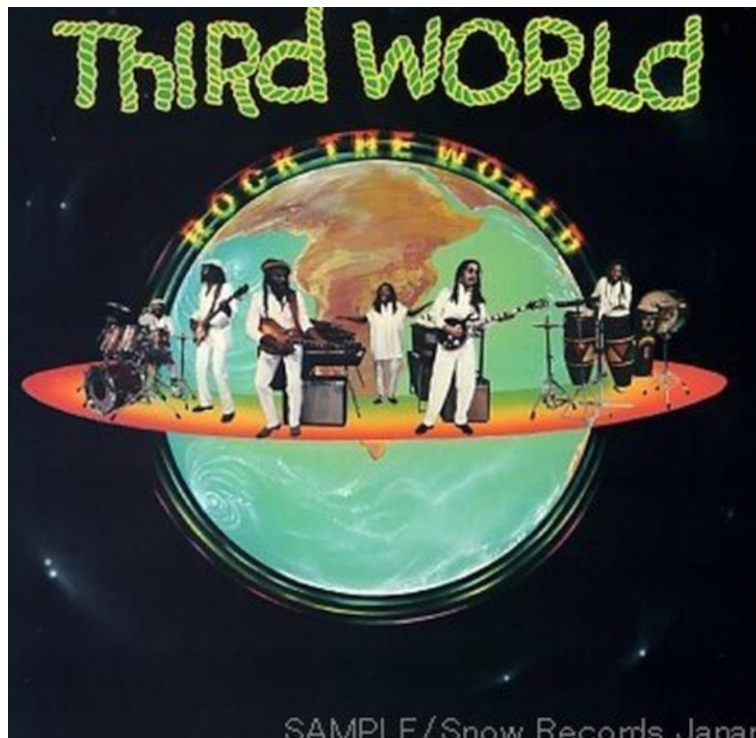
Kraftwerk's *Computer World* may have been the second album I ever owned. Had a couple of friends, who still, to this day, love to collect and dabble with classic audio equipment, got me hooked onto Kraftwerk. This was after hearing a bizarre little number called *Numbers*, an electronic track which had been used so many times in future years as a backing sequence for modern dance and electro tracks.

I love this album through and through. Sure, it's geeky and all that. But it's melody and originality is off the charts within the realm of experimental electronic music.

*Computer Love* is a lovely track with a melody that had been re-used by later artists in their pieces of music. I could never understand why musicians who base their melodies on those that created the originals, never attribute to them on the album cover or sleeve. Do they think that they could use something obscure and get away with the public not knowing about it?

Of course, there are obvious pieces of sampled work by later artists which could, positively be tributes to their originals. Examples include Coolio's *Gangsta's Paradise*, based on Stevie Wonder's *Pastime Paradise* and Basement Jaxx's *Where's Your Head At* based on Gary Numan's *M.E.*

### #13. *Rock the World* by Third World (1981)



This is the first reggae album I owned. It might, perhaps, be my third favourite reggae albums of all time, the other two being Bob Marley's 1978 album, *Kaya*, and Third World's compilation record, *Reggae Greats*, which is included in this list.

So many good tracks on this record, all very melodic and catchy, some incorporating a bit of that late 70s and early 80s disco sound, quite unlike much of the other reggae I was listening to.

Third World, not being as lyrically important as artists like Bob Marley or Linton Kwesi Johnson, tends to be just good, light-hearted and foot-tapping happy.

### #14. *Rage in Eden* by Ultravox (1981)



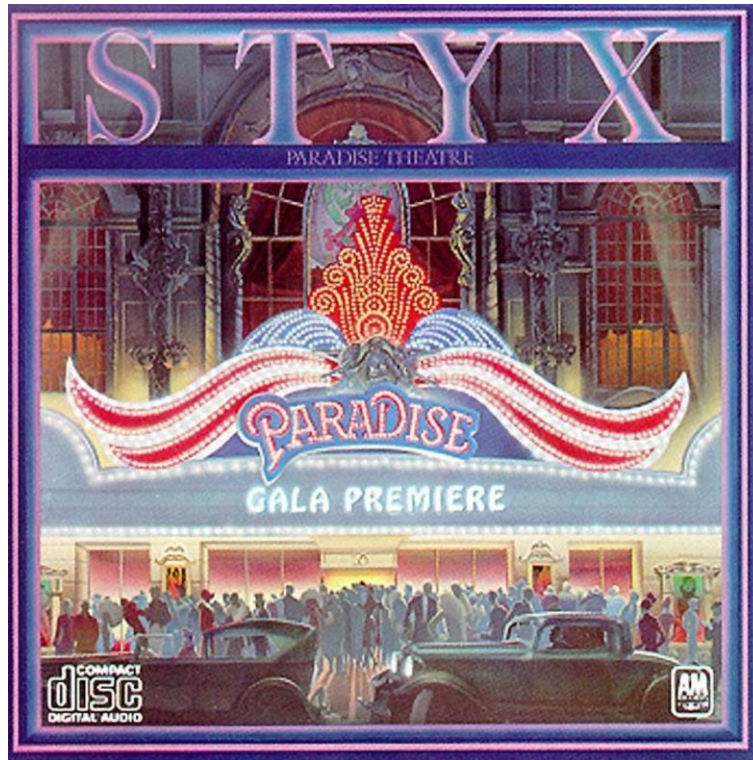
Ultravox released its next album, *Rage in Eden*, after its masterpiece, *Vienna*.

I instantly took a like to this album. It's a catchy boppy mix of pop, synth, and classical music. It's the sort of music I remember listening to with headphones watching out the window passing grey, wet suburbia and boggy football pitches in middle England from the comfort of an Intercity 125 train.

As with much of Ultravox, its sound is quite raw, unpolished, and, sometimes, I dare say, a bit thin. But the melody, the rawness of it, coupled with interesting lyrics makes it an interesting diversion from much of the traditional 80s stuff that came out during that time.

Favourite tracks for me include *Rage in Eden*, *I Remember (Death in the Afternoon)* and the combined tracks of *Accent On Youth* and *The Ascent*.

## #15. *Paradise Theatre* by Styx (1981)

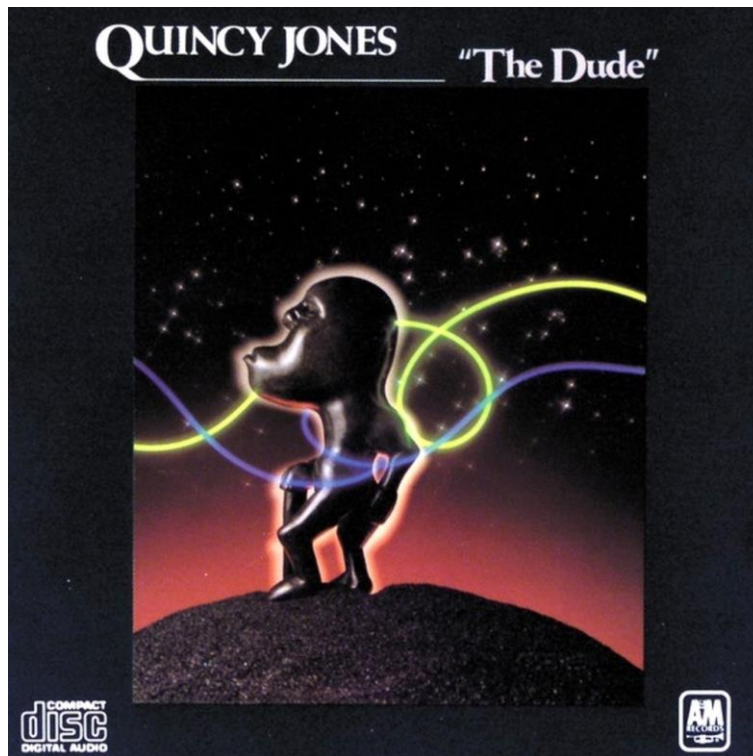


Another album I discovered in my mother's collection is that of Styx's *Paradise Theatre*, an album that I listened to over and over again. Should be listened in its entirety because the album tells the story of once prosperous times to a time of mediocrity and struggle.

It's difficult to describe this album. It feels like one big fairytale in a way. A rock-fest of colours and texture.

It's lovely and exhilarating to listen to being the epitome of that classic soft-rock 80s sound that everyone can remember with a mere one or two listenings.

## #16. *The Dude* by Quincy Jones (1981)



This is one of the coolest albums with respect to being smooth and polished and I think, Quincy's best. Another one in my mother's repertoire of vinyl I discovered. Remember, in those days, the only choice of music you had was to run through your parent's music collection and what your friends brought over!

Want to woo the lady of your life? This isn't a bad start!

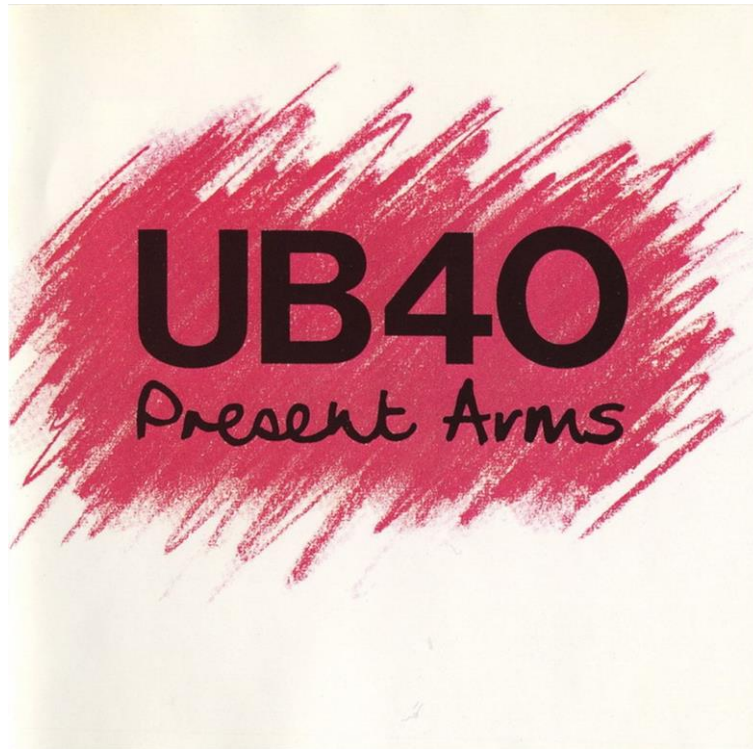
Beautiful. Silky. Sexy. Can I say more?

Love *The Dude* track and I remember by heart the lyrics to this track to this day including The Dude's monologue, a part of it being

*'so if you go to my school, you've got to learn this rule, don't let you mouth write a cheque which your body can't cash!'*

Legendary stuff, but skip the soft and mushy track, *Just Once*, which is just a bit tiresome.

## **#17. Present Arms by UB40 (1981)**



I really got into reggae music when my father exposed it to me during the early 80s. He had been working in the Caribbean chartering boats to tourists, and it was during this time I had succumbed to the reggae beat.

I never considered UB40 to be truly home-grown reggae. It was just a little too polished and contrived for much of its repertoire.

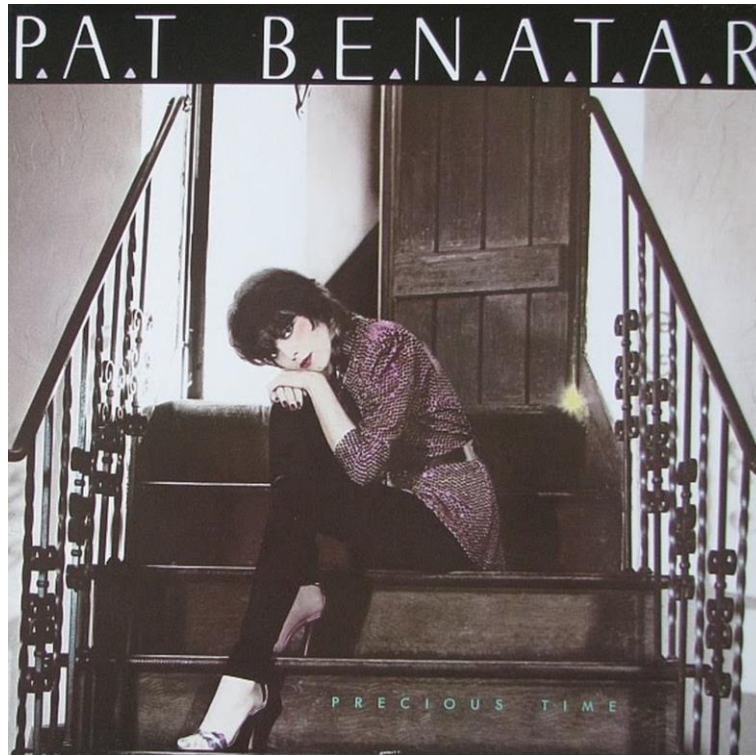
However, UB40's second album, *Present Arms*, was a little different and unique combining ska, Brit pop, and reggae together.

It's a happy-go-lucky sound to say the least. Good days at the beaches. Hanging around mates at the amusements. That sort of thing.

Best two tracks are *Present Arms* and *One in Ten*.

An interesting dub version of this album was put out by UB40 called *Present Arms in Dub* which is worth a listen or two.

## #18. *Precious Time* by Pat Benatar (1981)



Much like Jefferson Starship's *Modern Times*, this album represents great classic 80s rock with great melodies and screaming guitar sequences but its Benatar's powerful and alluring voice which really steals the show. The lyrics remind me that living in the 80s also had its tough times and wasn't all that it was cracked to be.

As for the album's content, all, except perhaps the last two tracks, are excellent.

Not a big Benatar fan, but this is a great album.

## #19. *Faith* by The Cure (1981)



My sister got me into The Cure many years ago, along with a variety of other alternative goth-like bands which were popular during the 80s. During school days, The Cure was the antithesis of the Van Halen and Foreigner jock crowd.

*Faith* is an album I have played over and over and over again. It's deliciously dark, deep, and rich with layer after layer of dreamlike soundscapes. It's depressing and dreary in content, that's for sure. But it's never boring. Luscious dark bass guitar and a rhythm which makes you hanker for more of it. This album is the second of The Cure's so-called Dark Trilogy, the first of it being *A Forest*, and the third, *Pornography*.

This album exposes the *lack* of faith in an uncompromising world. A place where people are lonely despite being in a city surrounded by seven million people!

All the tracks are amazing on this album, but to appreciate them, they need deep bass capability from your hi-fi.

*The Funeral Party* is especially depressing! It seems that David Lynch took some elements of this track for its *Twin Peaks* TV episodes, but I'm not certain about whether he did or not.

## #20. *Shake It Up* by The Cars (1981)



I was given a tape to listen to before going overseas to play on my portable cassette player. One side of it was Police's *Reggatta de Blanc* and the other, a Cars album called *Shake It Up*. Having not much else to do, I listened to the tape and I got hooked on both The Police and The Cars.

Listening to this, it sparked off so many emotions during my young teenage years. It reminisced of good times, lost loves, and all that is which is adolescent.

This was my first foray into the world of The Cars, and still to this day, it represents the old-school fun of yesteryear. The drive-ins, the arcades, the diners, and, of course, enticing women by getting them into fast cars.

Most beautiful tracks on the album are *I'm Not the One* and *This Could Be Love*.

## #21. *Happy Families* by Blancmange (1982)

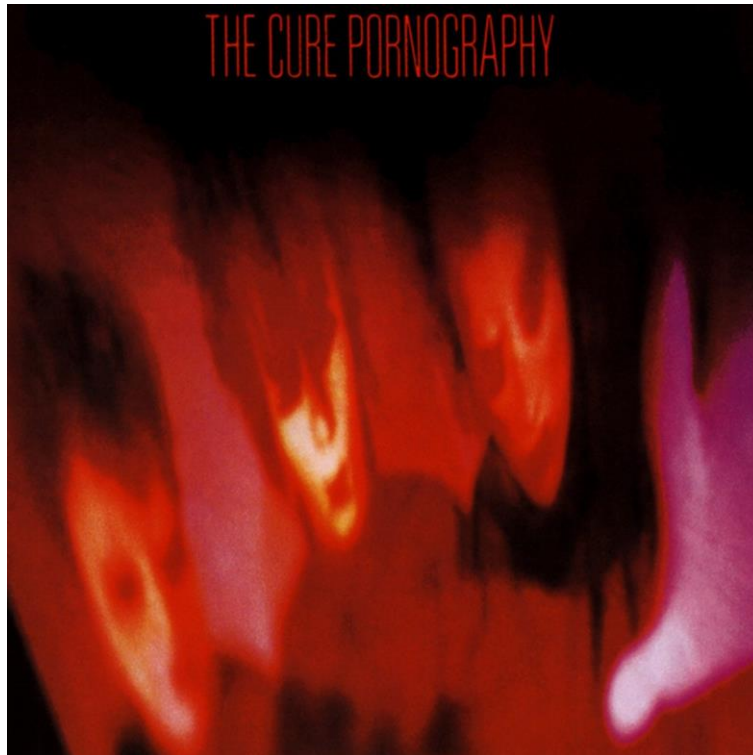


Blancmange isn't particularly well-known and I only came across them because of Darren, my Welsh friend who recommended trying them out whilst browsing a second-hand vinyl stall in a Cardiff market. *Happy Families*, their first and, frankly, only listenable album, struck me because of its cool cartoon artwork which I liked.

Turned out to be fun and easy to listen to. Really catchy melodies albeit using all synth instruments which didn't have the greatest depth of sound by all means. Some melodies had a little ELO in them, one had a bit of Middle Eastern sound to it, another sounding a little Vangelis-like, and some, a little melodramatic like *Cruel*.

Played this many a time on my little Rega Planar 3 turntable in a YMCA bedsit in the late 80s.

## #22. *Pornography* by The Cure (1982)



The very first thing you hear when you play the first track on this album, *One Hundred Years*, is a fast-paced piece of unrest, trauma, and tragedy filled with sorrowful tones perfectly renditioned by Cure's vocals and lyrics.

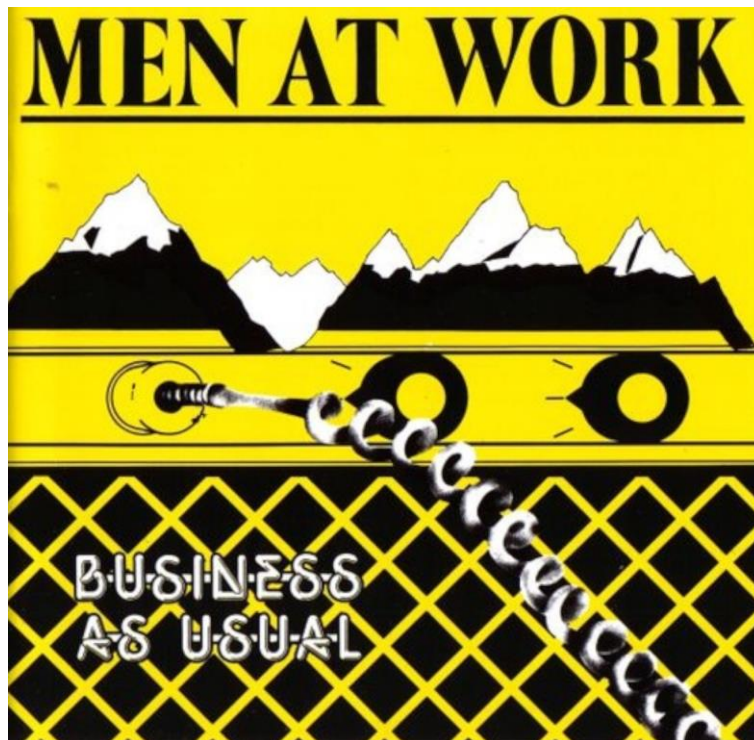
This is the third and final album of their so-called Dark Trilogy, the prior two being *Seventeen Seconds* and *Faith*, which I mentioned above.

But unlike *Faith*, the sound is completely different. It's dark, but rather than brooding, it's frenetic with a fast drum beat with lots of layers of strong guitar themes, and very interesting key changes.

The last two tracks, *Cold* and *Pornography* are especially chilling.

Play this album loud for best results!

**#23. *Business As Usual* by Men at Work (1982)**



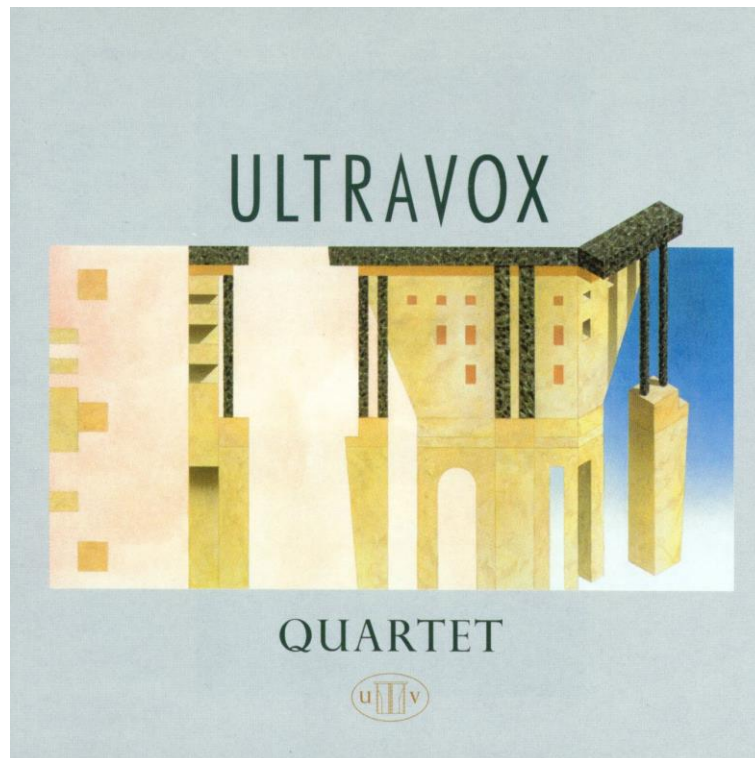
I don't know how popular this was in Australia during the 80s, but it certainly made its mark in 80s culture in America.

It's not often that something famous makes its way out of Australia in the music scene. Ask the average non-Aussie guy on the street to list out famous 80s Australian bands and they usually struggle to list anything apart from Men At Work, AC/DC, Crowded House and INXS. And interestingly, Men At Work did only three albums which, to be honest, only the first one, *Business as Usual*, was the only good one. Although the track, *Overkill*, on *Cargo* wasn't too bad.

Love this album. Just good old fashioned tunes that so many people enjoy listening to. Nothing complicated. Nothing unusual.

Comfort listening.

**#24. *Quartet* by Ultravox (1982)**



Another Ultravox album!

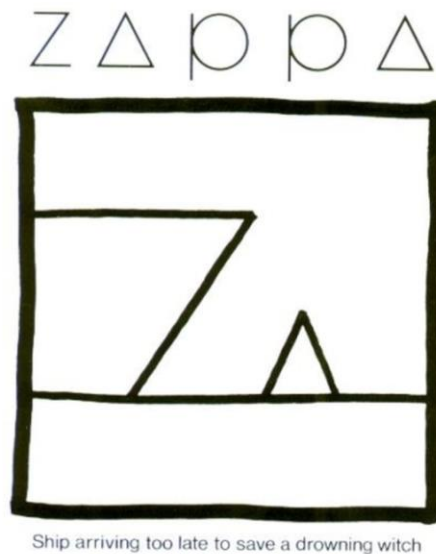
Although not as innovative as the other two other albums mentioned earlier, *Vienna* and *Rage in Eden*, *Quartet* is highly listenable with very catchy melodies along with a deeper richer synth bass which the previous two lacked. Probably due to the quality of the master recording or the studio or both.

Lots of classical themes in this album with synth piano arpeggios, strings, and lullaby-like melodies as in the tracks, *Hymn* and *Serenade*.

The album is uplifting with a solid beat to keep it alive and moving in its paces.

A notable change in the album starts when the two tracks, *When The Scream Subsides* and *We Came To Dance*, play. The former is energetic, assertive, very catchy with an addictively insane bassline and with a great synth bridge in the middle. Then we have, *We Came To Dance*, a weird downtempo but Depeche Mode-like piece with a strong bassline.

**#25. *Ship Arriving Too Late To Save A Drowning Witch* by Frank Zappa (1982)**



Frank Zappa is the Salvador Dali of the music world in my opinion. This dude seems to have an endless number of albums and I've touched only a fraction of them.

I'm sure most Frank Zappa fans would list this album as one of his less great pieces. I understand that. I've listened to some others, and ok, they're good, but I really enjoyed this album.

This album is just crazy and frenetic starting with the Bee Gees-on-acid style track, *No Not Now*, followed immediately with what I consider to be one of the funniest tracks I've ever heard, *Valley Girl*.

Anyone who wants to know everything about spoiled bitchy girls living in affluent Californian suburbs must listen to *Valley Girl!* Has it changed much in 2026? Probably not.

Run up to the fourth and fifth combined tracks, *Drowning Witch* and *Envelopes*. This is real prog-rock classical stuff like Spanish guitar gone all electric and mental.

And to finish, the pantomime-like Punch-and-Judy style mayhem of a track which reminds me disconcertingly of Mr Bungle, *Teen-Age Prostitute*.

Great album! And a cool modern minimalistic cover as well!

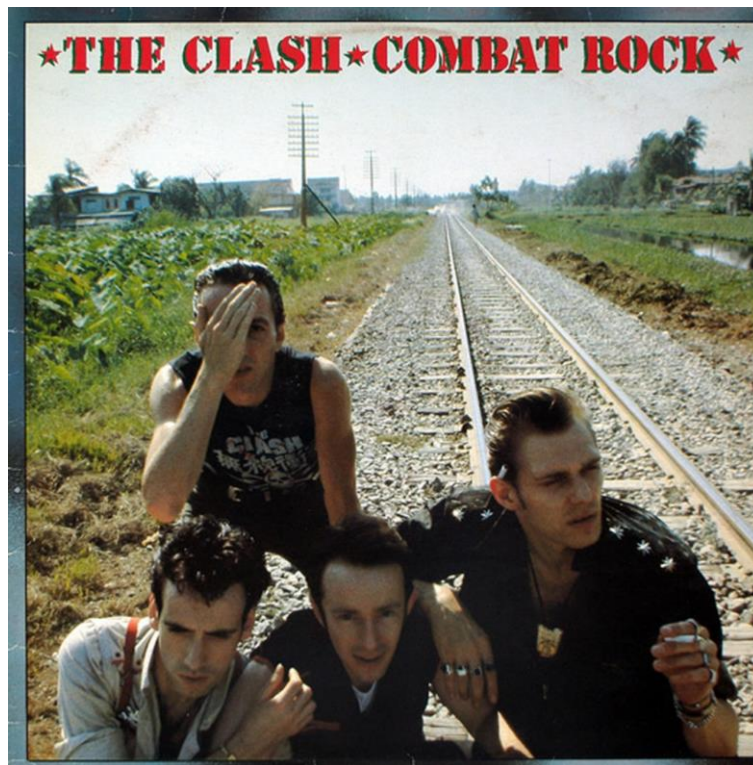
## #26. *Rio* by Duran Duran (1982)



I'm probably the very few of my generation who first remembered Duran Duran as that evil guy in that weird but sexy 1968 Jane Fonda movie, [Barbarella](#), rather than the band itself. Much like when the group Heaven 17 took its name from Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, so did Duran Duran with *Barbarella*.

I love this album through and through as do so many others. Many of the tracks, not all though, had set the pinnacle of the New Wave Brit scene during the early 80s. Particularly *My Own Way*, *Last Chance on the Stairway*, and *Save a Prayer*, and of course, *Rio*. Probably not so popular, but personally one of my favourites, is the last track, *The Chauffeur*, which takes a little deviation from the rest of the album making it a very suitable ending track.

## #27. *Combat Rock* by The Clash (1982)



Came by The Clash when the track, *Rock the Casbah*, was repeatedly aired on many of the radio stations I listened to in Colorado back in the 80s. I'm convinced that this was more popular in the US than it was in the UK! It was one of my all-time favourite tracks of my schooldays and still, to this day, kids in the year 2025 are listening to this same track with the same fervour. I think the track, *Should I Stay or Should I Go*, was the more popular one, but to me, it's one of my least favourites.

One word of advice. If you've befriended someone who's really into punk music and you mention that The Clash are utterly brilliant. Chances are, you'd be given a stare of derision and then put into your place that you really don't know much about punk after all. It's the same with UB40 and the die-hard reggae crowd.

But that aside, I think *Combat Rock* isn't a bad album at all. Sure, there're a few weak tracks, but the strong ones make it up.

And remember, 'It's not Coca-Cola. It's Sprite!'

**#28. *New Gold Dream* by Simple Minds (1982)**



Before moving to the UK in the late 80s, I didn't really get into Simple Minds. Sure, there was that one extremely popular track, *Don't You (Forget About Me)*, which, I admit, is very good. However, when a friend of mine in London back during college days suggested I get a vinyl copy of *New Gold Dream*, that's what I did. I played this record over and over. Copied it to metal tape and played it on my Sony Walkman Pro as well!

With that slap base, catchy rhythm, and emotive vocals reminiscent of those in the US band, The Cars, it captured the summer heat and energy of Britain during those golden years in the late 80s and early 90s. In a strange sort of way, I sort of consider Simple Minds to be the UK equivalent of The Cars.

I'd say the album is a little unusual in some respects. The slightly medieval overture sounding theme of *New Gold Dream (81-82-83-84)* and the oddly pensive but highly melodic *King is White and in the Crowd* are such examples. Both of which I like very much. And of course, the classics, *Someone*, *Somewhere in Summertime* and *Promised You A Miracle*.

## #29. *A Broken Frame* by Depeche Mode (1982)



Often, when something terribly tragic had occurred, we remember exactly what we did at the time of the incidence.

Well, here's my claim to this.

When the twin towers came to the ground, I was listening to this very album with a set of headphones off a Rega Planar 3 turntable listening to it in my father's house in Ludlow in the heart of England. There, I saw my father watching, what I thought to be an action film on TV, only to be alerted that this was for real.

Haunting, huh?

I got to love Depeche Mode when I first heard *Everything Counts* on the radio when driving around San Diego. Again, I had that certain feeling that American independent FM stations were more into it than the popular UK stations were. Not sure why that was. Perhaps, its content exposed so much of the bleakness of British life for the ordinary blue-collar worker struggling to make ends meet. But that doesn't make sense, either. The UK had, by far, the bleakest soap operas including *Eastenders*, *Brookside*, and *Coronation Street*, exposing quite a few bleak and dark elements of British society.

Anyhow, Depeche Mode's second album, *A Broken Frame*, is as bleak as it gets interspersed with a couple of oddly overly-happy songs here and there. Even the album cover is bleak recalling dark Soviet times with peasants working the fields. At least, that's the way I see it.

As with the first album, *Speak & Spell*, a much simpler and happier sounding affair, there isn't much in the way of complexity and sophistication to the sound. It's raw and very simple. However, unlike many bands, Depeche Mode seemed to get better and better with every single year.

The two must-listen tracks, both of which are depressing in nature, are *Leave in Silence* and *Satellite*.

### #30. *The Nightfly* by Donald Fagen (1982)



When Steely Dan disbanded after its stupendously beautiful *Gaacho*, Donald Fagen split and created his first album, *The Nightfly*.

It didn't disappoint, although there were critics who were quick to point out the deficiencies. And, by the way, Walter Becker split as well and, like Fagen, made his own album, which didn't appeal to my taste the same way as Fagen's.

Yes, Steely Dan did come with an interesting reappearance on their later album, *Two Against Nature*, in 2000, but the good ole' days were gone maintaining my stance that *Gauche* was their final masterpiece.

*The Nightfly* is an album which immediately recalls the feeling of being sat in a glass-clad living room overlooking a city of lights at night sipping a cocktail whilst listening to jazz in the style of the 50s.

The whole album is beautiful and soft to listen to. It's one of those records you can either play in the background at soft levels or listen to at higher volumes in which to be enveloped with the fine nuances of all the sounds. This record, much like all of Steely Dan's former records, was produced with the very highest quality of sound.

For me, the track, *The Nightfly*, must be one of the worst offenders of *earworm* or *stuck song syndrome* in which you endlessly have the tune playing in your head after listening to it.

### #31. *Thriller* by Michael Jackson (1982)

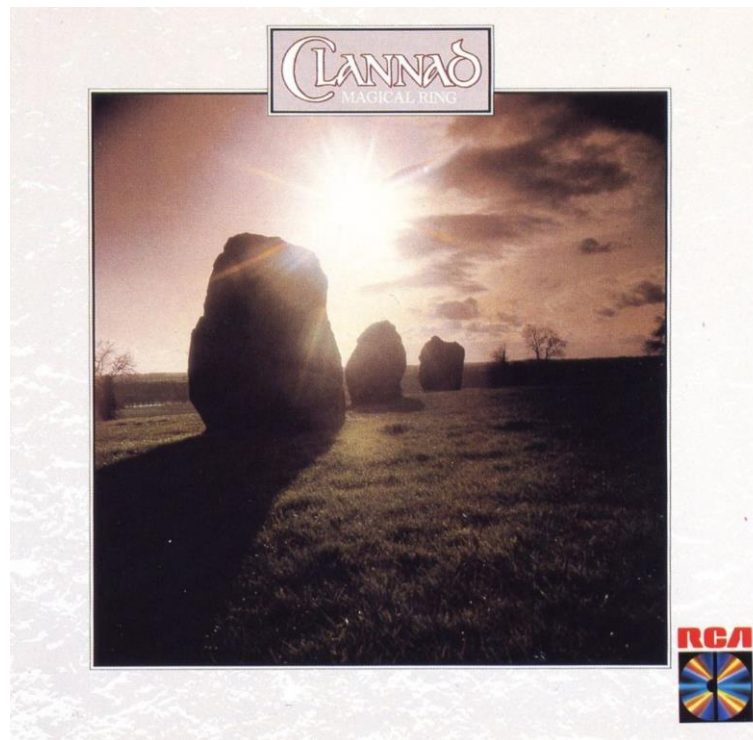


I wouldn't call myself an ardent Michael Jackson fan, but his album, *Thriller*, has so many memorable tracks including *Thriller*, *Beat It*, *Billie Jean*, *Pretty Young Thing*, and *Human Nature*.

I remember all the hype on MTV when the mini-movie of *Thriller* featuring Vincent Price was all the rage. Even today, it is watched by many of today's younger generation including my own 10-year-old son.

It's a great album worthy of being timeless for many others to enjoy.

### #32. *Magical Ring* by Clannad (1983)



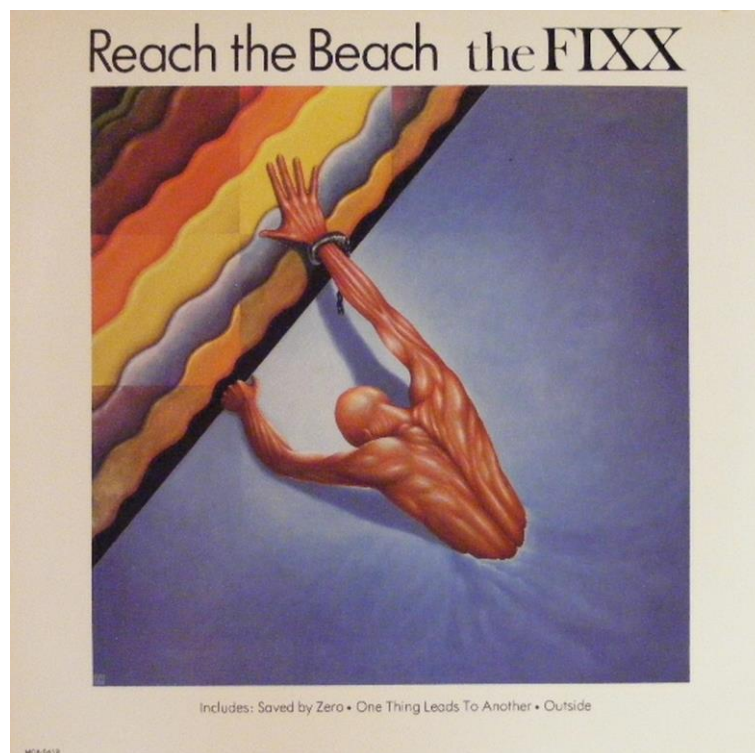
Although Clannad is Irish, the mystical and mysterious lands of Wales always remind me of the sounds of Clannad. Wales, a country I love very much has a special place in my heart, and listening to Clannad evokes so many memories of once living there.

Generally, I'm not the biggest fan of folk music, but Clannad is one of those rare exceptions for me. And no, I'm not into The Chieftains! A question often asked of me is, 'Surely, you've heard The Chieftains?'

The record cover of its standing stones is a fitting scene for the music that's encased in the album. Peaceful, ancient, simple, but powerful.

The masterpiece of this album, if not all within Clannad's repertoire, in my opinion is *Newgrange*.

### #33. *Reach the Beach* by The Fixx (1983)



My sister introduced me to The Fixx album, *Reach the Beach*, a long time ago.

Its music has a similar quality to it as INXS but with a little more of a melodramatic sound rather than the more upbeat happy-go-lucky sound of its Australian cousin. It's almost a cross of INXS and Depeche Mode with its choice of synthesizer sounds.

The entire album is a pleasure to listen to but sadly, there were no other Fixx albums that held me in the same way as this one.

Awesome tracks include *One Thing Leads to Another*, *The Sign of Fire*, *Saved By Zero*, *Reach the Beach* and *Liner*.

### #34. *The Luxury Gap* by Heaven 17 (1983)



Another awesome album by Heaven 17. But rather than the aforementioned *Penthouse and Pavement*, the sound has matured with greater complexity with some very interesting changes of tempo and content throughout.

There's something jazzy about this album but also being heavily rooted in British synth-pop.

Take *Lady Ice and Mr Hex*, a track with an unexpected complex piece of piano jazz as its bridge, is a great example of this strange fusion.

We, of course, have the most famous track on the album, *Temptation*, which oddly reminds me of Diana Ross and the Supremes. I don't know why, but even today, I hear this track from time to time whilst browsing in shopping malls. Which is a little depressing in a way.

The leading track, *Crushed by the Wheels of Industry* is a great track to start off this very dynamic and interesting album.

### #35. *Madness* by Madness (1983)



Madness.

What a great group!

I remember how loud they were when they played in Finsbury Park and I wasn't even there. I was at my friend's house near Manor House tube station which adjoins the park itself.

This group came up with some of the catchiest melodies I've come across. I loved its honky-tonk and saxophone sound and its continual scale changes throughout their melodies.

As pointed out in the beginning of this piece, some of those in this collection of records I've covered in this piece are not albums and this is one of them. This record, *Madness*, is an extraordinarily good compilation of their greatest tracks.

**#36. *With Sympathy* by Ministry (1983)**



OK. For hardened Ministry fans who like industrial metal, this album is often considered to be a bit of a let-down.

This album, *With Sympathy*, is most definitely new wave material, which works for me, because I didn't get along with Ministry's more industrial metal material.

Each to their own.

Again, another album my sister introduced to me, and I'm glad she did.

When you start listening to it, you may feel it that it's a bit shallow and simple, almost to the point of being a bit silly, but after a listen, you just have to listen to it again.

Notable tracks are *Revenge*, *Work for Love*, and *What He Say*.

### **#37. *Burning From the Inside* by Bauhaus (1983)**



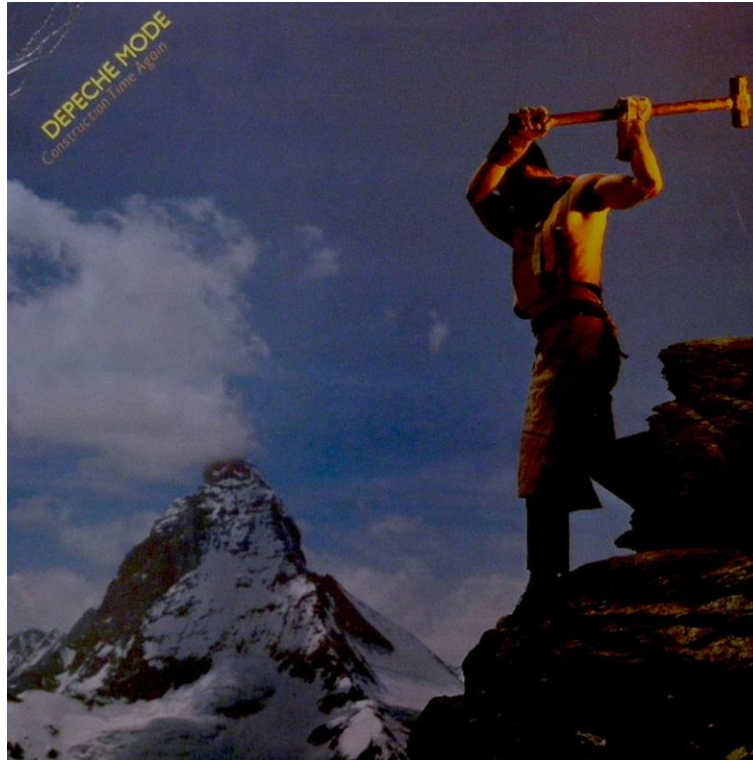
Bauhaus isn't for everyone, that's for sure.

My sister introduced me to a wealth of goth-type industrial music way back in the early 80s. She was into this stuff during her pre-teen years which, when I hear what kids listen to today, is pretty impressive.

Bauhaus, usually being on the dark and gloomy side, like the creepy track, *Swing the Heartache*, on its *The Sky's Gone Out* album, this album is much more uplifting with lots of raw energy in the guitars and vocals. Although it's got a bit of gritty sound, it's quite melodic, even being a little Pink Floyd in places as in the track, *Slice of Life*.

I found the most interesting tracks to be *She's in Parties* with its impressive guitar work ending with a great bass guitar solo at the end, and *Honeymoon Croon*, a frenetic little punky number with a thumping rhythm, screeching guitars, and Peter Murphy's vocals.

### **#38. *Construction Time Again* by Depeche Mode (1983)**



Depeche Mode's third album is strong throughout, every track of which, is great.

The central theme of this album matches its title. Building in a new world but also exploiting it. Greed and money come into the equation with *Everything Counts* and the rather strange and sombre, *Pipeline*. Environmental issues feature in the lyrics of the catchy song, *The Landscape is Changing* and poverty in *Shame*.

As with most of Depeche Mode's album, the sound is well-recorded and clean which adds to the foot-tapping element of its music.

Depeche Mode is not considered 'happy' music, some of my friends, calling it *Depressed Mode*!

### #39. *Legend* by Clannad (1983)



What I like about this album is its unusual composition of tracks which border on being ethereal, mystical, with an almost timeless feel to it. Almost like the ghosts of ancient knights wandering around misty lands.

This album is not accredited to being one of Clannad's better ones by some reviewers, perhaps, because of its odd disjointed choice of pieces or just being too simplistic. Not sure. I would agree that the track, *Scarlet Inside*, is tedious.

Loving the sound of the harp, *Lady Marian* is a lovely but sad-sounding simple piece with a harp, a flute, and soft backing synth strings as if being lost somewhere in the mist in a meadow filled with sheep somewhere in Wales, but being in Irish band, I guess it should be Ireland!

#### #40. *How Men Are by Heaven 17* (1984)



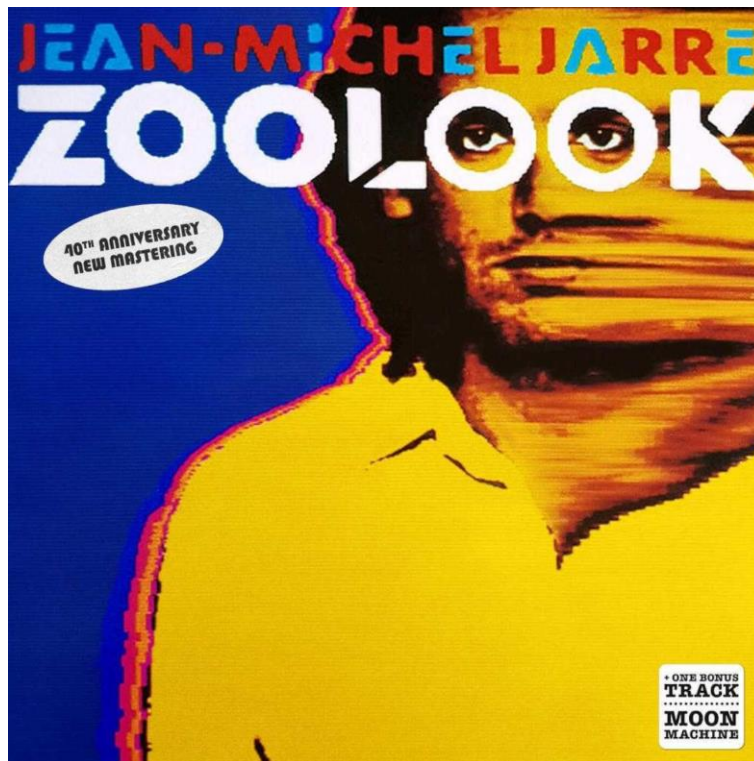
Another Heaven 17 album?

Yep.

This album, I believe, is their most catchy and polished of them all. The whole album is worth listening to. With a decisive, well-recorded and clean sound, it has so much going in it. One of the greatest examples of how fusing synth-pop, jazz, and even a little soul can make such a dynamic and interesting album.

Superb album which I can listen to over and over.

**#41. *Zoolook* by Jean-Michel Jarre (1984)**



One of the greatest electronic composers and performers of his genre, I had listened to a lot of Jean-Michel Jarre. Especially his albums, *Oxygene*, *Rendezvous*, and *Zoolook*.

When I first picked up *Zoolook*, it seemed that I picked up an oddity. It seemed that everyone knew about the *Oxygene*, *Equinoxe*, and *Rendezvous* albums, but not this one.

*Zoolook* is very weird, almost a bit creepy. Strange voices here and there, one track, *Diva*, with the odd kid's chuckle and a gibberish woman's voice inside, what sounds to be a cave with dripping water. In fact, all the voices in this album are speaking weirdly and inexplicably, much like the album's title, a zoo of aliens or something like it.

And the album gets weirder with the machine pulse-like *Wooloomooloo* and the odd circus-like *Blah Blah Café* ending with the atmospheric *Ethnicolor II*, which is a little disturbing in a dream-like way.

The track, *Zoolookologie*, is the only typical Jarre mainstream-style track, and, yes, it's my least favourite of them! I don't like the happy-go-lucky Jarre tracks and he *always* puts at least one in on all of this albums.

Turned out in later years that this highly complex album had gained a better appreciation in more recent years. Certainly one of my favourite albums and one of my most played.

For me, this is Jarre's best.

#### #42. *Fans* by Malcolm McLaren (1984)



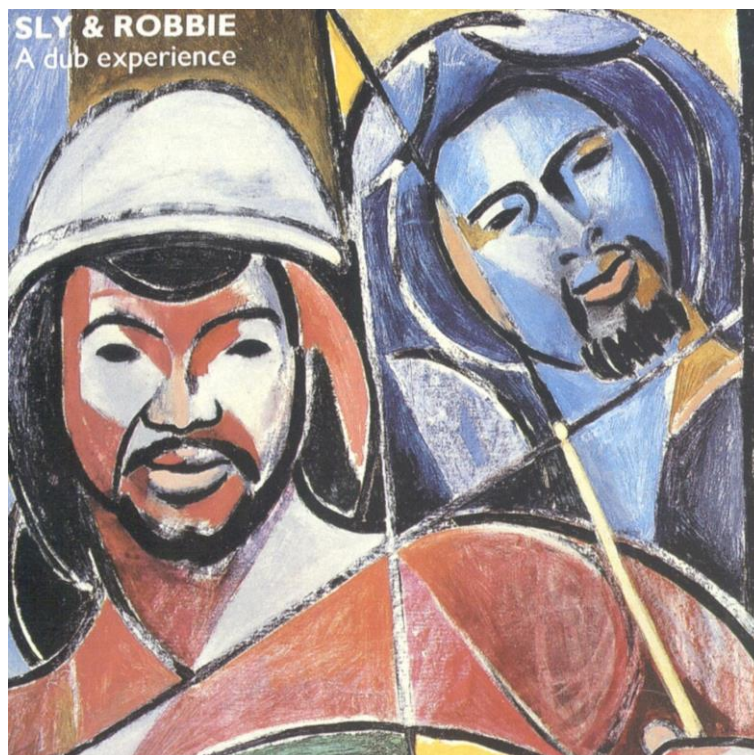
Malcolm McLaren is an unusual and brilliant musician, but he is certainly not mainstream with his very strange way of mixing different styles of music in ways that one would not imagine possible.

He manages to mix modern 80s synth-pop with classic opera pieces like *Carmen* and *Madam Butterfly*. It was not received well with the critics and has, subsequently, almost died into obscurity, but I personally believed this worked wonderfully well.

Opera lovers, which I am not, could find this album an aberration. The album should be listened to in its entirety to follow the rather sad tale of an American who marries a Japanese wife, has a baby, abandons her, goes back to America, re-marries another woman, goes back with American wife to Japan, but now afraid to confront his now three-year-old and realises the tragic outcome of his

Japanese wife. Quite heart-wrenching. Malcolm McLaren is an acquired taste and his album, *Fans*, will probably ever remain beyond the fringe of popularity with most.

### #43. *Reggae Greats: A Dub Experience* by Sly & Robbie (1984)



This is an instrumental record featuring an almost stark-like soundscape of dub beats interlaced with lots of modern electronic synthy stuff.

Two tracks are very good in my opinion.

*Assault on Station 5* and *Demolition City*.

There's something weird and spacelike with the track, *Assault on Station 5*, as if playing dub music in an abandoned spaceship orbiting around Saturn. The track almost sounds like it could be played in a late-lounge area of a chilled nightclub festooned with space aliens.

*Demolition City* is quite an engaging combination of distorted dub sounds, reggae rhythms, and weird little sounds as if in an echoic chamber, over an underlying piano bass melody.

It's an odd record to say the least, but I have enjoyed it.

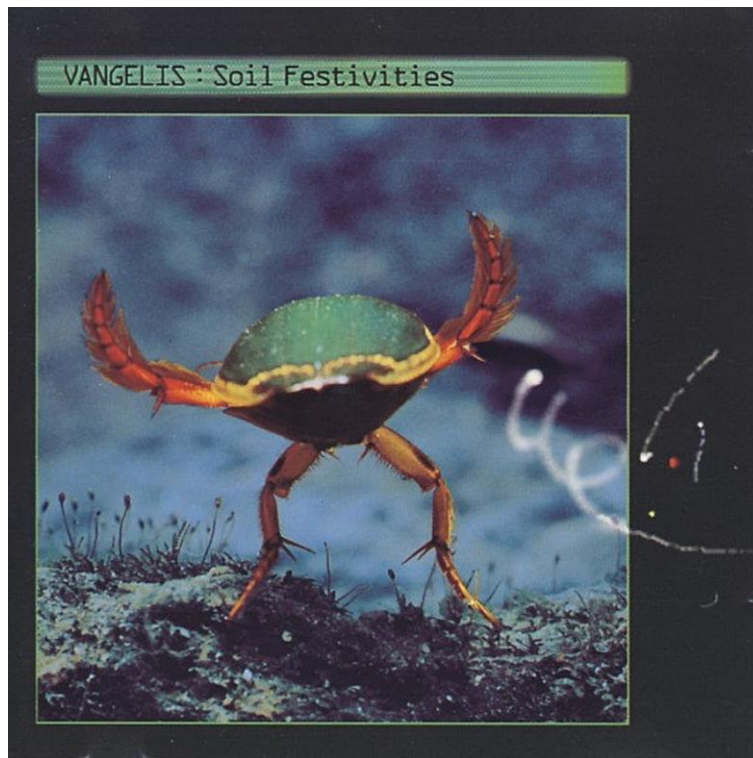
#### #44. *Into the Gap* by Thompson Twins (1984)



This is about as 80s Brit Pop as you can get. A friend of mine by the name of Barry from college days introduced this album to me. Back in the schooldays in the US, I remember the tracks, *Doctor! Doctor!* and *Hold Me Now*, the latter being too syrupy for my liking.

Often, you hear great tracks by an artist, then get the record, only to find that most of the other tracks are ordinary. Not this one. Except for the last track, which is a bit dull in my opinion, the entire album is a great listen.

#### #45. *Soil Festivities* by Vangelis (1984)



A guy called Rob who stayed at the YMCA whilst I was studying Cardiff, got me into Vangelis. Although I remember the theme tracks from *Chariots of Fire* and *Blade Runner*, I didn't know who the artist was. But there is that distinct Vangelis sound with its synth keyboard, violin string overlay, and those chime bells which gave me the hint.

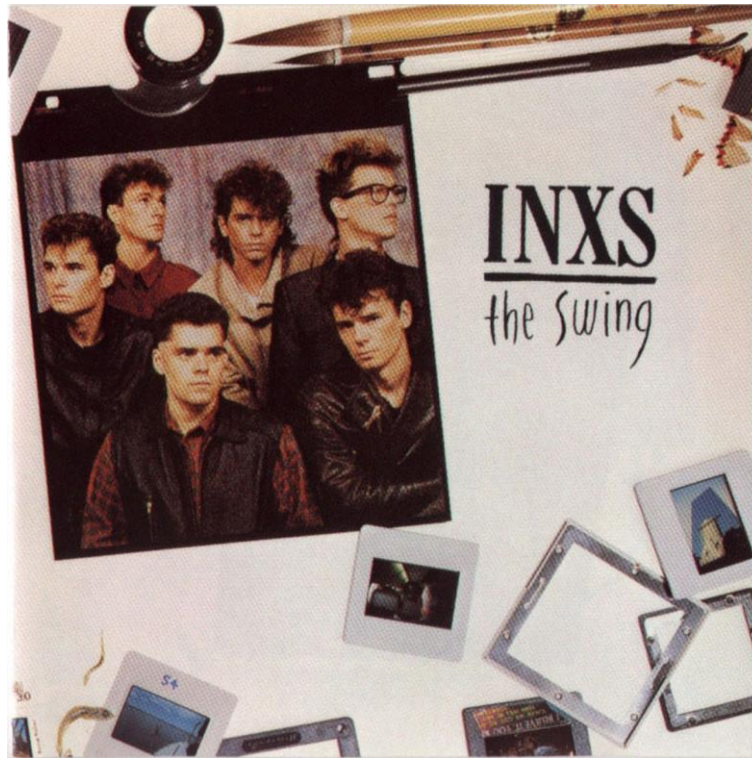
*Soil Festivities* is my favourite Vangelis record, the second one being close being *Heaven and Hell*. This album is divided into five movements, three of which are peaceful but brooding and mysterious, and two being dissonant, upbeat, chaotic, and relatively explosive.

The album is more akin to being classical-like in nature giving a feeling of peace and serenity after a light rainstorm with the occasional clash of thunder and lightning, portrayed in the two chaotic movements, to wake you up.

One can almost smell the petrichor, you know, that smell when the rain hits the soil, when listening to this album. Little organisms in the soil, the green of the grass, and that crepuscular light during dawn and dusk.

Fantastic album.

**#46. *The Swing* by INXS (1984)**



For me, INXS, Simple Minds, Thompson Twins, and The Fixx have so many crossovers that they sometimes blur into each other. It's that same kind of sound but done in Aussie fashion.

I can't imagine anyone who was raised up with 80s pop music not knowing INXS's hit single, *Need You Tonight*. But that was on their *Kick* album, which I don't like very much. Probably only played it twice to give them the benefit of the doubt.

*Swing* is a pretty good album, but what got me to buy it, is for the first track, *Original Sin*. But surprise, surprise. There's some other great tracks like *Melting in the Sun*, *I Send a Message*, *Dancing on the Jetty*, and *Johnson's Aeroplane*.

I recorded this album onto a high-quality tape and listened to it many times through a Sony Walkman Pro and it just sounds terrific. Lots of slam, drive, and great punchy tracks.

As for INXS's other albums. Lots of average tracks with the occasional great one. And that's about it.

## #47. *Ocean Rain* by Echo & The Bunnymen (1984)



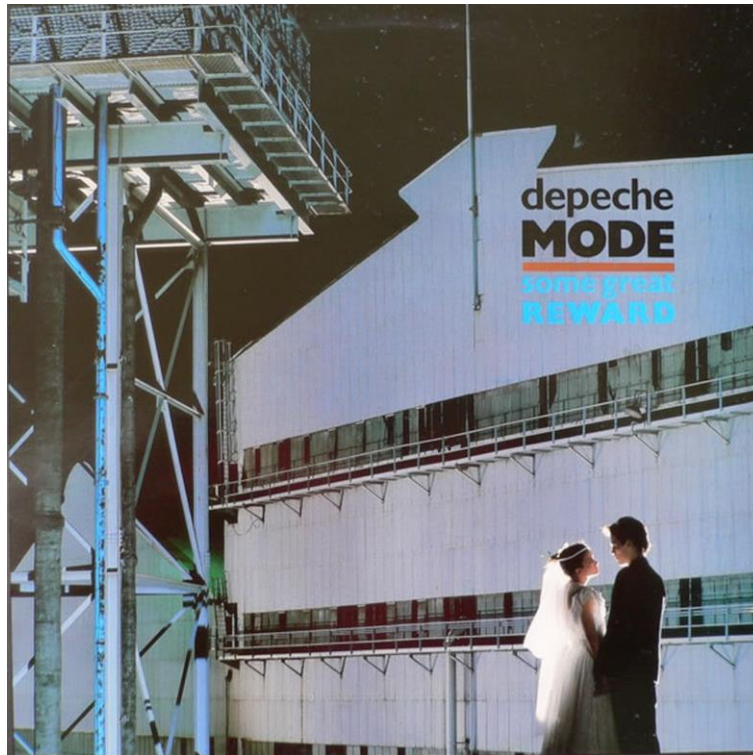
*Ocean Rain* is another album introduced to me by Rob when I stayed at the YMCA. I might have heard of Echo & The Bunnymen but didn't really know them.

I think this is a great album with some quite unusual but highly listenable and catchy melodies placing it firmly into the alternative market.

Lots of strange scale sequences which seem just a little out of tune with the rest of the music. But that's the appeal and seems to be Echo's signature sound.

Best tracks are *Nocturnal Me*, *The Yo-Yo Man*, and the more well-known, *The Killing Moon*.

## #48. *Some Great Reward* by Depeche Mode (1984)



Depeche Mode's *Some Great Reward* is quite a maudlin and depressing piece of work, but it's also a great album apart from a couple of sluggish non-descript tracks, *It Doesn't Matter* and *Somebody*.

In typical Depeche Mode, the songs are based on humanity, or rather, inhumanity. Songs of debauchery, broken relationships, unrequited faith, being bored, and finally, suicide, as portrayed, damningly, in the last track, *Blasphemous Rumours*. The most well-known, and upbeat, track is *People Are People*.

Although very different sounding, both Depeche Mode and The Cure are inextricably paired to me as they both seem to focus on the dark side of things, particularly death.

Listening to Depeche Mode's *A Broken Frame* while watching in real-time the collapse of the twin towers probably didn't help either!

**#49. *Welcome to the Pleasuredome* by Frankie Goes to Hollywood (1984)**



WELCOME TO  
THE  
**PLEASURE DOME**

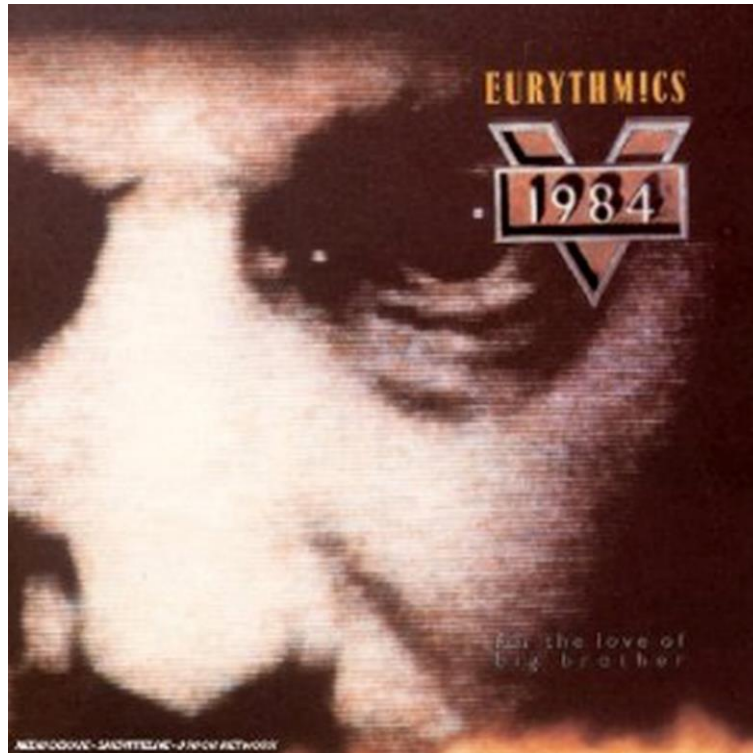


While most people associate Frankie Goes to Hollywood with their hit single, *Relax*, and to a lesser extent, *The Power of Love*, I associate it with the epic prog pop track, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*, which takes an entire side of a record clocking in at over fifteen minutes. It is a bizarre and theatrical piece of music, that's for sure, and really only appreciated when listening with full attention on a high fidelity to pick up those little details that makes this track so special.

I picked up this gatefold double record second-hand in excellent condition for five pounds back in '87 *just to own that title track*. But the other tracks aren't duds, some of them being very good, including their hits, *Relax* and *The Power of Love*, as mentioned above.

It's one of my most treasured LPs and it's nice to see that high street shops are selling this in high-quality vinyl to a new generation of record collectors.

**#50. 1984 by Eurythmics (1984)**



This Eurythmic's album, *1984*, is not very well known by most, especially in an era when streaming services pick out only the number one's like Eurythmic's *Sweet Dreams*, for example. In fact, as of writing, this album isn't even on Spotify, which is a great pity because it's one of my favourite albums in my collection which I've played a *lot* of times. And also, the movie *Nineteen-Eighty Four* starring John Hurt and Richard Burton, the best version by far, used the tracks on this album for its music which, in my opinion, made the film so poignant and memorable.

Granted, the album's sound is very synth-80s which some criticise it for. But that's when it was. The 80s *and released fittingly in 1984!* Indeed, I recognise some of the very same synths which my father used to have whilst he was in the music business. On a sidenote, he entertained, from time to time, a few well-known musicians back in the day, two notably being Annie Lennox, the other Suzi Quattro.

This album holds up well on its own and one doesn't have to watch the movie, but I suppose it helps. The content is both haunting, beautiful, and also rather menacing such as the last two tracks, *Ministry of Love* and of course, *Room 101*, which, in my opinion, holds up as a great piece of electronica.

But the star track is *Julia*, an exceptionally beautiful but sad track.

## #51. *Macalla* by Clannad (1985)



Well. We've got to 1985!

*Macalla* is very different to *Legend* and *Magical Ring* feeling a bit more mainstream adding a bit more rhythm and rock to it, for example, in the track, *Closer To Your Heart*. But the album still keeps its Gaelic roots integrating classic Irish folk into its melodies.

The sound on this album is beautifully rich and varied. From simple Irish jig music in *Journey's End* to the lovely and more complex and slightly ethereal track, *Northern Skyline*.

This is Clannad's first album which really feels like it has a more complete sound.

Die-hard Irish folk music lovers might blaspheme this because of the 80s-sounding synths used throughout.

## #52. *Swamp Thing* by Malcolm McLaren (1985)



I'm surprised this album's even on Spotify because it's quite an unusual one.

When you hear this record for the first time, your reaction might be of cringe and disbelief.

Think of women in tight spandex doing aerobics, comic book creatures coming out of the mire, kids doing active things, babies being born, and.... I just don't know.

It's bizarre, but extremely catchy if you listen to it all.

The only remotely mainstream-like track is *Buffalo Love*, which is quite nice.

The title track, *Swamp Thing*, is just... out there. But love that thumping rhythm!

The best track is *Boom Boom Baby*, which is, yes, a little cringy, but addictive with one of the weirdest catchiest rhythms I've heard in pop music.

My sister got me into Malcolm McLaren with the *Fans* album, but not sure how I came across this oddity.

### #53. *Reggae Greats* by Third World (1985)



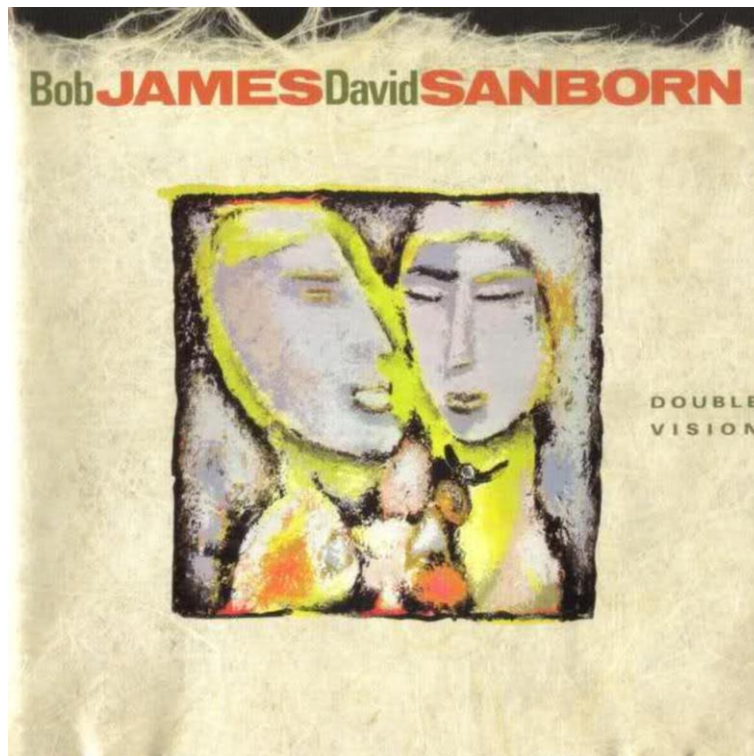
This is not an album, but rather a compilation of some of Third World's best reggae pieces.

Back in the late-80s or so, my dad, whilst driving at breakneck speed with me in the front passenger seat, shoved a cassette copy of this record in to the car tape player and I instantly took a like to it.

If I had to choose a record with reggae on it, this one would be it. One track, *Always Around*, is a bit insipid and syrupy, but all the others are a great listen and defines that reggae sound wonderfully.

The defining star track on this record which I can play over and over is *Jah Glory*, but there are so many other great ones here.

**#54. *Double Vision* by Bob James & David Sanborn (1986)**



One of the most defining soft jazz with saxophone albums I've come across.

Yes. Very 80s. Smooth, perhaps a bit too smooth for some, but very tuneful and sounds magnificent on a good system.

My mother had quite a few of these sort of albums which got me familiar with them much to my sister's horror who absolute loathes them. I can sort of see why she does. It does have a cheesy sound in parts with that 80s keyboard synth stuff, but... to me, it works.

Best track on the album I think is *Never Enough*.

**#55. *Rendez-vous* by Jean-Michel Jarre (1986)**



After Jarre's exemplary album, *Zoolook*, this album, *Rendez-vous* comes second of my favourite Jarre albums followed with *Oxygene* as the third.

Unlike *Zoolook*, this is a far more typical Jarre album, and, to me, represents the height of his career. *Magnetic Fields* had its good moments but his albums subsequent to this from *Waiting for Cousteau* and to the present just lost me apart from the odd little bit here and there.

*Rendez-vous* is a grand piece of work encompassing power, mysticism, and beauty all rolled up in one.

Unfortunately for me, but great for most other Jarre fans, is Jarre's mandatory inclusion of the one happy-go-lucky part of the album, which is *Part 4*. Basically, the first track of Side 2 of Jarre's records have this and it annoys me by removing the mystical feel of the album to make it all 'let's be happy and dance' thing! Grrr.

**#56. *Electric Cafe* by Kraftwerk (1986)**



So precise! So punctual! So Kraftwerk!

I like all the Kraftwerk records from *Autobahn* to this one, *Electric Café*. The really early ones being a little premature and raw, and those after *Electric Café* just being endless mixes and repeats *except* for *Tour de France Soundtracks* which came out in 2003 and the single track, *Expo 2000*.

Now be careful with *Electric Café* because there are multiple versions out there with odd rearrangement of tracks. You don't want the remastered one with *House Phone* on it. Not sure what they did to it but it's not the same.

I've listened to this a lot.

I like that really precise slam sound with those industrial noises along with that authoritative rhythm which, if played on a good system, is quite mesmerising.

It's a bit of a silly album in a way, with electro-synth voices repeating things like *Boing Boom Tschak*, *Musique Non Stop*, and *Electric Café*, but it's kind of a cool album.

Play it loud on a good system and I promise you, the slam is astonishing.

This is a great example of 70s electronica morphing into the 80s.

Great album, although it got, frequently, lack-lustre reviews.

## #57. *The New Mix In One Go* by Yello (1986)



I had *so* much fun with this double LP. It's a compilation, I know, but if you want some Yello, you gotta get this!

Now. I don't know what the hell they did with the CD version which sounds thin, but the vinyl version is a veritable 'wall of sound', which Yello is famous for.

This is another record which sounds amazing when played loud. It's a crazy mix of electronica and pop with all styles of music from being jazz-like, latino-like, reggae-like, and dance and techno-like. It's quite a unique sound.

Most of us have snippets of Yello's music in popular movies, for example, *Oh Yeah* in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and the first bit of *Lost Again* in *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* when the two main characters played by Steve Martin and John Candy realise they have to share a double bed in a motel.

If you have a good turntable with a good system, get the double vinyl if you can and play it loud.

All of its good but *Swing*, *Vicious Games*, and *Lost Again* are my favourites.

## #58. *Black Celebration* by Depeche Mode (1986)



Just when you thought Depeche Mode couldn't be even more morbid, check this album out.

Depeche Mode is one of those groups which gets more and more sophisticated. I mean, look at their first album, *Speak & Spell*. It *actually* sounded so basic, like it came from one of those, coincidentally with the same name as the album, Speak & Spell machines for teaching kids how to spell words from the 80s! Remember those things?

But Depeche Mode never got boring. It moved its sound with the times and held out its originality up to the present. A bit like The Cure which, likewise, just got better.

*Black Celebration* is a bit of a turning point in which Depeche Mode got quite a bit more complex in terms of sound composition. And this is one great album worthy of praise.

Again, Depeche Mode focusses on the dark with lots of death, but this time with added themes of helplessness and vulnerability, like the tracks *A Question of Time*, *Stripped* and *World Full of Nothing*.

Lovely, isn't it?

But the album is exceptionally tuneful and melodic with lots of complex chord transformations which piques one's soul.

Something creepy with the last two tracks, *Dressed in Black* and *New Dress*.

Seems to be a lot of dressing and undressing in this album!

## #59. *Within the Realm of a Dying Sun* by Dead Can Dance (1987)



Again, thanks to Rob at the YMCA, I found out about this amazing group, Dead Can Dance, which was formed in Melbourne, Australia, of all places.

Dead Can Dance has a very exotic but mysterious quality to it. There are lovely vocals by Lisa Gerrard against a backdrop of ethereal mystical sounds with beautiful layering which engulfs the listener. And, some of it really sounds like

it belongs to an ancient landscape, not unlike Australia. Especially the track, *Windfall*.

I like most of Dead Can Dance's albums, but this one is my favourite and I have played this many a time. It's just so surreal, haunting, and utterly beautiful.

The whole album is genius and should be listened to in entirety.

The last track gives the album the perfect endpiece, a very powerful and long track called *Persephone (The Gathering of Flowers)*.

### #60. *Enya (aka The Celts)* by Enya (1987)



Now, the funny thing with Enya, is that she had created music which I find so utterly tacky and cringeworthy, that I have to switch it off. Too much vocoder synth stuff in her music unfortunately.

However, this album, *Enya* or otherwise now known as *The Celts*, is quite a beautiful piece of work in general, albeit there a couple of tracks which I have to skip over.

The original vinyl pressing, I believe by the BBC if memory serves me well, has a rich, dark, and luscious sound.

Beautiful tracks include *Aldebaran*, *The Sun in the Stream* with a lovely bagpipe serenade, and *Epona* with a nice ensemble of a mixture of harps.

### #61. *Sign 'O' The Times* by Prince (1987)



Look, I'm no great Prince fan, but this album is great funky stuff and it really is a bit on the literally funky side as well. For example, *The Ballad of Dorothy Parker* and *If I Was Your Girlfriend*, which are both a bit strange.

Great tracks include *Strange Relationship*, *It*, and the short and odd *Starfish and Coffee*.

Beautifully recorded, this album really opens up on a great system.

### #62. *Tango in the Night* by Fleetwood Mac (1987)



There's something just a little sexy about Fleetwood Mac, don't you think? Remember the album cover for *Rumours*?

This is Fleetwood Mac's most 80s sound and it's so fresh and alive. With very hummable tunes which you can have in your head all day, it's a fun musical escapade which you can listen anywhere.

Serious Fleetwood Mac fans seem to love to dismiss this album as an attempt to make this as commercial as possible.

I disagree.

It's a good listen throughout with maybe, perhaps two or three weak tracks, but it's a great album overall.

The title track, *Tango in the Night*, although far less known than *Big Love* and *Everywhere*, is the most intriguing and powerful on the album in my opinion.

### #63. *Hysteria* by Def Leppard (1987)



I wasn't too sure whether to add this, but then I remember I had played this album quite a bit on long road journeys going from Cardiff to North Wales on a frequent basis. Is it better than the earlier album, *Pyromania*? I personally think so, although I love the two tracks, *Foolin'* and *Rock of Ages* on *Pyromania*.

Never could describe Def Leppard. They try to be on the harder side of rock, but really, it's just a sort of ersatz heavy metal, but it's not even that. By the way, I'm not the biggest metal fan, although if you get me on progressive metal, I'll listen to that!

However, *Hysteria* is not a bad album, despite the abuse I got from my sister because I liked it. Especially the track she hates the most, *Pour Some Sugar On Me*.

The first two tracks, *Women* and *Rocket* are excellent and powerful tracks which shadow everything else on the album. The bridge sequence on *Rocket* is pretty cool with its relentless hammering of the drums.

**#64. *Substance 1987* by New Order (1987)**

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SUBSTANCE  
1987

Not an album, but a collection of New Order's singles. It's a great compilation, that's for sure.

Although *way* overplayed these days, *Blue Monday* was one of my favourite tracks, but there are many others which are just fab too listen to.

Reminding me of the girl I tried to date, I loved listening to the punchy tracks, *The Perfect Kiss* and *Bizarre Love Triangle*, the latter a bit of a cheesy track but great fun to listen to. *Bizarre Love Triangle* really made good use of the ubiquitous 80s vocoder. Probably an Akai!

Not sure what most Joy Division, the precursor to New Order, fans make of this selection though.

New Order, along with lesser known artists like Krush and Nitro Deluxe, came up with music in the late 80s which created what I consider the beginnings of more modern house and dance music.

**#65. *Music for the Masses* by Depeche Mode (1987)**



*Music for the Masses* is my favourite Depeche Mode album. Perhaps one of my favourite all-time records full stop.

The entire album is ace with no weak track.

That first track, *Never Let Me Down Again*, is my favourite Depeche Mode track of all time and it's so beautiful, powerful, and quite exotic with that little Japanese-sounding arpeggio at the end of each verse.

And then the second track, *The Things You Said*, just follows after flawlessly. A beautiful track with rather scathing lyrics.

*Strangelove* follows next and is such a compelling track, after which is *Sacred*, a good solid track.

The next couple of tracks are somewhat debauched but beautiful, *Little 15* and *Behind the Wheel*.

*I Want You Now* is, well, how can I put it... someone needs to seed their oats. But it's not syrupy and insipid, it's performed with power and emotion.

The next two tracks are good as well but the last track, *Pimpf*, is a strange Omen-sounding little number which is a little sinister.

A phenomenal album which must be had by any Depeche Mode fan.

## #66. *Paradise* by Inner City (1989)



A strange gap of two years elapsed without anything which really inspired me until 1989. Not sure why most of my favourite 80s albums are in the *first* half of the decade considering that one of my most favourite genres of music is electronica of the 90s.

Inner City pipped in just before the 90s with their album *Paradise*.

Deeply emotive, sexy, and rhythmic, this album, in my opinion, was the first of its kind that I heard of. Something which can be played in *today's* nightclub without sounding all cheesy 80s or Abba-like, if you know what I mean.

Today, Inner City still sounds fresh and good. *Big Fun* was their main hit at the time but it transpired that *Good Life*, turned out to be the more popular one in more recent times.

I personally loved *Paradise* and *Power of Passion*, the latter piece, a brooding and sexy piece which personifies that late-night nightclub scene.

Love this album but it feels more like the 90s scene, but as it's officially 80s, here it is!

## That's the End I'm Afraid

Well, I had fun with this piece, and I hope you'll have fun to explore some of these albums on your favourite streaming service.

Now if I had to choose only 10 of these records, all of being actual albums?

Hard call, but perhaps, in order of release date:

- 1) Steely Dan *Gauche*
- 2) Foreigner *4*
- 3) Jefferson Starship *Modern Times*
- 4) Styx *Paradise Theatre*
- 5) Quincy Jones *The Dude*
- 6) The Cure *Faith*
- 7) Heaven 17 *How Men Are*
- 8) Jean-Michel Jarre *Zoolook*
- 9) Dead Can Dance *Within the Realm of a Dying Sun*
- 10) Depeche Mode *Music for the Masses*