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The Wright State GUARDIAN

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Retro Rewind: “Slippery When Wet” by Bon Jovi

Maxwell Patton

July 28, 2020

Bon Jovi is one of those rock bands that everyone has heard at least one song from, no matter where they grew up.

Whether that tune is the working-class anthem “Livin’ on a Prayer,” the hard-hitting debut single “Runaway,” a ballad like “I’ll Be There for You” or “Never Say Goodbye,” or any other selection of their discography, each of us can relate to a Bon Jovi tune.

They take us back to the time of glam rock, big hair, leather and Ray-Ban sunglasses, when teens could take in cult movies and enjoy a simpler life with friends.

Without further ado, this week’s Retro Rewind will be an album that brings the nostalgic feelings of the 1980s to the forefront: their third studio album, “Slippery When Wet.” Released on Aug. 18, 1986, the record spawned four singles that have become rock radio favorites: “You Give Love a Bad Name,” “Livin’ on a Prayer,” “Wanted Dead or Alive” and “Never Say Goodbye.”

What famous rock song inspired “Wanted Dead or Alive?” What drenched household item has the album’s title written on it on the cover artwork? How does a band come up with a name like “Slippery When Wet” for an album? Read on in this week’s Retro Rewind to discover these answers and more.

The artist

American rock group Bon Jovi was formed in Sayreville, N.J. in 1983. Currently, the band’s line-up consists of vocalist and rhythm guitarist Jon Bon Jovi, lead guitarist Phil X, bassist Hugh McDonald, drummer Tico Torres and keyboardist David Bryan.

However, Bon Jovi included McDonald as a studio musician at the time of “Slippery When Wet”’s release, with Richie Sambora and Alec John Such playing lead and bass guitar, respectively.

Bon Jovi has released a total of 14 studio albums, three live albums and five compilation albums. The group has sold over 130 million records across the globe, solidifying their status as one of the top-selling American rock groups. They were inducted into the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2006 and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2018.

The tracklist

Opening the album is a beautiful introduction featuring keyboard and electric guitar as “Let It Rock” slides its way into the listener’s ear. The song’s chorus has the lyrics “let it rock, let it go. You can’t stop a fire burning out of control” in an anthemic manner.

After this comes “You Give Love a Bad Name,” one of Bon Jovi’s most popular tracks. Originally, the song was written for Bonnie Tyler as “If You Were A Woman;” however, Desmond Childs later reworked the tune with Sambora and John Bon Jovi.

Next up is “Livin’ on a Prayer,” another popular Bon Jovi track and the band’s signature song. McDonald had written and recorded the bass guitar part for this track.

“It deals with the way that two kids – Tommy and Gina – face life’s struggles,” Bon Jovi remarked about the song’s central characters, “and how their love and ambitions get them through the hard times. It’s working-class and it’s real... I wanted to incorporate the movie element and tell a story about people I knew. So instead of doing what I did on ‘Runaway’, where the girl didn’t have a name, I gave them names, which gave them an identity... Tommy and Gina aren’t two specific people; they represent a lifestyle.”

Aerosmith were fans of the next track, “Social Disease.” The track features heavy horns and a quite good Sambora riff. Following this is another popular tune, “Wanted Dead or Alive.” Inspired by Bob Seger’s “Turn The Page,” the song draws parallels between the lives of a rock band and a wild west outlaw, as both are, according to Bon Jovi, “a young band of thieves, riding into town, stealing the money, the girls, and the booze before the sun came up.”

The anthemic “Raise Your Hands” opens the album’s second side, and the tune sounds like the ultimate way to rouse a stadium crowd. “Without Love” is a rocking ballad brought to life by Torres’ drumming and a killer solo from Sambora.

“I’d Die for You” is fairly similar in structure and sound to the band’s debut hit “Runaway,” but that doesn’t diminish the song. “Never Say Goodbye” tells the story of a high school romance in a much slower tempo than the rest of the album. Closing “Slippery When Wet” is “Wild in the Streets,” where Bon Jovi spins a tale of New Jersey life.

The production

After the release of their second album, “7800° Fahrenheit,” Bon Jovi hired Desmond Child as a songwriting partner and began work on “Slippery When Wet.”

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The band wrote 30 songs and auditioned them to teenagers from the New York and New Jersey areas, ordering the tracklist by the teenagers' opinions.

Four tracks on the record, "Livin' on a Prayer," "You Give Love a Bad Name," "Without Love" and "I'd Die for You," were written by Sambora and Bon Jovi in collaboration with Child in the basement of Sambora's mother's home.

The remainder of the songs on "Slippery When Wet" were written by the duo except for "Wild in the Streets," which Bon Jovi wrote solo. Originally, the singer did not want to put "Livin' on a Prayer" on the album because he wasn't satisfied by it, though Sambora convinced him that the song would become a hit.

"Slippery When Wet" was recorded in 1986 at Little Mountain Sound Studios in Vancouver, Canada. This title was decided upon after the band visited the No. 5 Orange strip club in Vancouver.

The record's cover art, a wet, black trash bag with the name traced into it, was not the first choice; the original art for the album features a busty woman whose wet t-shirt showed the title. "Our label freaked out a bit when they saw what we'd done," Sambora mentioned. "They thought it would be banned by American stores, so we had to come up with something else – fast." The original cover artwork is still included in most Japanese releases of the album.

What critics thought of "Slippery When Wet"

This record continues to reign as the top-selling album in Bon Jovi's discography, as it is certified 12x Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America.

It spent eight weeks atop the Billboard 200 chart and 38 weeks inside the top five, and Billboard proclaimed "Slippery When Wet" 1987's top-selling album. The album was also included in the book "1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die."

However, critics had a mixed response to the record. Music journalist Robert Christgau remarked that "Slippery When Wet" "proves that youth rebellion is toothless enough to simulate and market."

Meanwhile, Rolling Stone's Jimmy Guterman was extremely critical of the record, writing that "Jon Bon Jovi and his band serve up condescending sentiment, reducing every emotional statement to a barefaced cliché – either because they think that's all their audience can comprehend or because that's all they can comprehend. On "Slippery When Wet," Bon Jovi sounds like bad fourth-generation metal, a smudgy Xerox of Quiet Riot."

What I think of the album

I would have to agree that “Slippery When Wet” is somewhat cliched; however, I don’t think it takes away from the value of the project. While some songs may be hard to listen to (“I’d Die for You” gave me a headache, which is a first, while “Livin’ on a Prayer” could be considered annoying by some, as it’s been played to death at sporting events), there are still plenty of gems across the tracklist.

“You Give Love a Bad Name” is an absolute classic while “Wanted Dead or Alive” conjures up Western imagery and a traveling tour bus playing to fans from around the world.

In addition, Bruce Fairbairn’s production does wonders for the album, enhancing the vocals and instrumentation to another level. With a combination of anthems, ballads, and iconic stadium rock, “Slippery When Wet” is a nostalgic and entertaining experience that invites the listener to rock out with the band as if Bon Jovi was playing in their very living room.

Five steps to success: Online class edition

Laci Wells

July 29, 2020

It's no secret that students either love or hate online classes. While there are many pros and cons of taking an online class, studying and keeping up with assignments can be difficult.

Here are a few tips to help improve the online class experience:

Create a study plan

It's important that once you receive your material, to take some time and make a layout for your assignments. Within this layout, stay organized. Designate a certain amount of time to each assignment and reading so that you can comfortably learn the information you're given. Adjust your study plan according to your knowledge of the material. Always allow wiggle room.

Manage your time effectively

This is where having a plan is useful. Once you create a study plan, you must make good use of the time you're allowing yourself. In order to meet deadlines and be consistent, it's important to get into a routine. Set aside a specific time to do your online assignments and be repetitive. It will result in less stress and better grades.

Use your resources

You are given readings and videos for a reason! The information you need to succeed is at your fingertips. Knowing how to use Pilot and all of its basics allows you to have a sense of familiarity when it comes to your class. Making sure you know how to check for notifications and messages from your professors is also a must. Knowing who to contact and how is important when it comes to reaching out when you have questions. Being familiar with your resources is essential when it comes to excelling in an online class.

Note-taking

Although an online class isn't a lecture setting, it's important to still take notes to retain information. If you write down material, you're more likely to remember it. Organizing your notes in a manner than you are familiar with will make it more enjoyable to learn the provided information. This is especially helpful when watching videos; write down key points so that you



don't have to keep re-watching the material. Finding ways to take notes efficiently will make testing easier.

Remind yourself what your goal is

It's easy to get distracted and forget why you're taking an online class in the first place. At times, you feel as if you are teaching yourself the material, and that there's no end. It's crucial to remind yourself why you're doing all the work in the first place. Set goals for yourself. Whether that's daily or weekly, strive for greater things than simply passing an assignment. Remind yourself what the big picture looks like.

How to: Personalizing face masks

Alexis Wisler

July 30, 2020

With the state opening back up this summer after the coronavirus shutdown, it is important to wear a face mask while out in public.

Wearing a face mask doesn't mean you can't be stylish and show off your personality. Here are six ways to customize your cloth face mask to keep yourself safe and stylish.

Fun fabric

When making your cloth mask, pick a fabric that you enjoy and could wear every day.

Maybe you want a bold print to show off your bold personality. Or you might want a neutral print to go with any and every outfit. The pattern of your cloth mask is an easy way to express yourself while keeping yourself safe.

Make it reversible

Make one side of the mask neutral for everyday use and the other side loud and vibrant for the days when you want to stand out.

It is recommended to make your cloth mask doubled layered anyways. This is a perfect way to be environmentally conscious about your cloth mask because you won't need to use extra materials to make a second mask. Plus, having one mask means you won't lose your second one.

Embroidery

Another way to customize your face mask, after picking out your preferred pattern, is by embroidering a small detail onto the side.

The options for embroidered details are limitless and make your mask one of a kind. Show off your personality with a design or embroider a message you think is important.

Get creative with it and wear your mask out in public to keep you safe and show off your embroidery work.

Bedazzle

Want something with a little more bling? Bedazzling your face mask is a quick way to add extra flair and show off your outgoing personality while protecting yourself and others around you.

Watch tutorials online for how to safely bedazzle cloth and make it unique to your style. You can bedazzle the entire thing or bedazzle words onto your mask.

Tie-dye

A customization classic, tie-dying your cloth mask can be a fun and creative way to personalize it.

Start off with a blank, white cloth mask and tie-dye using safe dyes. Be sure to wash or rinse the mask completely of extra dye before wearing it to avoid irritating or staining your face. This is a perfect option to stay safe while enjoying the summer vibes.

Iron-on patches

Do you have an iron-on patch that you've been holding onto for years because you didn't know what to put it on? Your cloth face mask could be the perfect option.

Make sure the patch is small and allows the cloth to bend around your face once it is applied.

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Basketball Teams Prepare for Uncertain Season

William Baptist

July 31, 2020

The Wright State University (WSU) men's and women's basketball teams are preparing for the upcoming season, as they would for any other season. The basketball teams were allowed to begin summer activities starting July 20.

The NCAA basketball season doesn't begin until November. However, due to coronavirus this is the first time the coaches and players have been able to participate in university activities since the end of last season.

The basketball activities and preparation for this season will be unlike any other season in college basketball history, because of coronavirus.

There will be a multitude of guidelines put in place by WSU campus, the NCAA, along with federal, state and local authorities.

"Wright State University policy requires the use of face coverings inside campus facilities... All media footage must be shot in the viewing room through the glass windows, located directly across from the main entrance," according to a press release from the university on July 17.

As the season approaches, there could be numerous policies that are changed or enforced strictly. This situation is fluid and changing almost weekly.

Men's basketball team

Last season the WSU men's basketball team was anticipating an invitation to the National Invitation Tournament (NIT) before it was canceled.

Scott Nagy, the head coach for the men's basketball team, knows this season will be different, but he is operating as if it were business as usual.

"We have to go ahead like it will be a normal season, and we're operating on a day to day basis," said Nagy.

Nagy is following all of the protocols that have been put in place, and he seems eager to get back to work with the team.

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“For our emotional well-being it’s good for everyone to be back... They’ve been waiting for this moment to be back together, and when the players are with us they are safer,” said Nagy.

Nagy will be entering his fourth season as head coach, and will look to continue the great success he’s had at WSU thus far.

Women’s basketball team

The WSU women’s basketball team had their first season below 20 wins, under Head Coach Katrina Merriweather.

Merriweather is ecstatic to have the opportunity to bounce back this season and get things back on track.

“I can’t see last season having an impact on this year, everyone is extremely excited to get back,” said Merriweather.

She is ready for the challenge this season, even though there is still lots of uncertainty surrounding the specifics of how the season will work.

“We’re really excited to be together right now, and just have the opportunity to get in the gym and get better...for our sanity it is important to live in the moment, we want to embrace all of our opportunities,” said Merriweather.

She has been stressing to her team to not take anything for granted after what everyone has been experiencing from coronavirus.

“Now everyone has to reflect on their effort and appreciate what we have, I choose to focus on what we can control here and be grateful for it,” said Merriweather.

The WSU basketball teams are extremely enthusiastic about the upcoming season, regardless of the unknown surrounding it.