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Dear Dick
(p. 5)



By Ben Hamper

Is rock & roll radio dead? Or better yet, is rock & dull radio alive?

Sure it is. But before I enrage every boppin' Flintoid in every hoppin' corner of this town, let me explain my beef. It is a sentimental gripe full of total fury. Ask my friends and they will tell you that Hamper's likely to wrestle any party-blabber topic around to the state of the airwaves and you ought to head for the hills 'cuz he'll squak till dawn about bands you never heard of and are probably glad you haven't.

A rebel without a pause, who is either living in the past or merely pissing into the wind with a bladder full of misinformation.

I'll be the first to admit I have no grand credentials to fork over in regards as to what deems me to be such an authoritative poo-bah on the subject of rock radio. Just another kid gone old in the tooth, wearing his rock n' roll heart on his sleeve, who remembers the magic of the music, unrestrained and boundless, springing from his radio to help squelch the bored bleating of youth.

Long before it became the corporate switchboard we know and loathe today, radio was a veritable potpourri of styles, directions and attitudes. Playlists were not shackled to some computerized ear-in-the-sky that attempted to assuage the audience into mass submission by turning their backs on the majority of rock n' roll music.

It was not unusual to hear a set of music that consisted of everything from bubble-gum to acid rock to hokey folk music, all within ten minutes of each other. If you couldn't handle the dippy charms of 1910 Fruit Gum Company, just hang onto your dangling medallions because riding in on the segue was Blue Cheer and, by golly, those furry critters had enough guitar scrunch to crumble the walls of common decency.

The matter of editing, as it were, was left to the individual. Creativity was not so much the key, as was simple provision. Give it a spin and let the audience decide for itself on the music's

Rock is Dead (They Say)



"In any given hour, you can bet a stack of Foghat belt buckles that you're gonna hear AC/DC and Van Halen grinding those axes till you're left with nothing but pulp in your rockin' brainpan."

own merits.

Today you have very little opportunity to discern for yourself what is out there, what might be waiting for you around the omnipotent fences of the modern day rock format. You either take their formula of majority-ruled rock n' roll or turn the damn thing off.

I'm not just laying a number on WWCK either. They may be even a little bit more enlightening than the rest of the bland-o pack. But I still cannot understand rock radio's drone-headed programming. The music that has all the imagination, style and wit of sledgehammers mating in the sonic boom. I mean, how many

times can they re-write "Smoke On The Water" before it simply sounds like sludge on
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