

# Nostalgia in the age of iTunes

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Nostalgia. Such a word sometimes brings up harsh, painful memories, such as our parents' musical taste. Sometimes such a word brings up wonderful memories, such as the music we listened to when we were kids, or the television shows we watched, or the movies we saw.

Most of the time, the word "nostalgia" brings us face-to-face with a harsh, painful question: How do we, the consumer, interpret nostalgia in this modern day and age, when children's television isn't at all what it used to be and the movie and television industry is increasingly reluctant to treat "nostalgic content" the way that they should?

This article may be able to shine some light on those things that may be overlooked by the mainstream, or if it is a mainstream item, maybe this might increase the sales enough to really start a torrent (pun not intended) of older content to be distributed through digital channels.

First, let's talk music. There is a ton of music on iTunes, most of it is what is called "catalog music" by the people who run the music labels to shun people away from "that old stuff" and focus them on "the new stuff that's happening right now".

But that hasn't stopped labels like Walt Disney Records from releasing a ton of older material onto iTunes, like the 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea soundtrack, beautifully remastered by Randy Thornton (which WILL be reviewed in a future issue of The Clarion), as well as a ton of lesser-known material, like most of the Annette Funicello albums when she was the Britney Spears

(without the rampant drug use) of her time.

Second, let's talk TV. The TV we as kids watched back in the 80s and early 90s was our generation's biggest source of happy memories. With cartoons on Saturday mornings like The Smurfs, Disney's The Adventures of the Gummi Bears, Jim Henson's Muppet Babies, Garfield and Friends, and many, many others, along with such live-action fare every other day of the week like American Gladiators, Double Dare, GUTS, and Mama's Family, created a generation of TV watchers, wanting to watch every episode that came along.

What can we watch right now that can bring back those happy memories for us? Well, there's a Smurfs DVD either coming very soon or is already out, the Gummi Bears' adventures are finally out on DVD, The Muppet Babies' DVD adventures are in limbo thanks to Disney buying the right to this property and doing absolutely nothing with it, and Garfield and Friends has a glut (pun intended) of DVD releases.

American Gladiators is on iTunes right now, as "Classic" American Gladiators Six Packs, to "avoid confusion" with the new American Gladiators, which is also on iTunes, thanks to NBC-Universal not actually producing the show! As for those other shows, the only show that is represented on iTunes right now, sadly, is a single episode of Mama's Family about Mama getting a goose for Christmas dinner as a present.

This is, in my opinion, simply outrageous and something should be done about it. However, every single television studio blatantly cites "poor sales" as an excuse to

not do anything. Yeah, the sales are terrible, because YOU have nothing on there! It's a classic Catch-22 that should NEVER have been true in the first place.

However, there ARE a few shining examples. Case in point The Jim Henson Company, because even though they made a pretty heinous mistake in selling some of their most well-known entities to Disney, they were still smart enough to retain a few of their more well-known IPs, such as Fraggle Rock and Farscape, the first seasons of which are now on iTunes!

I'm eternally reminded of a quote from Walt Disney about this very subject, and if all the studios, especially Disney, follow Uncle Walt's advice, they would seriously be a lot better off: "You're dead if you just aim for kids. Adults are just kids, except all grown-up."

Also, there's a wonderful initiative started by Jocelyn Stevenson, a writer for Fraggle Rock, called Save Kids' TV. This initiative is mainly in Britain, but it certainly should apply around the world, as more and more developed countries try to make plays for kids' health that involve controlling every aspect of what children eat, and I'm living proof of the fact that it doesn't work; I feel that the children HAVE to learn about healthy eating on their own and NOT because of parents controlling it.

Now, let's talk about movies. Older movies sometimes get a DVD release that is wonky at best, like *The Man Who Would Be King* and *The Goodbye Girl*. Sometimes, older movies, especially if those older movies are "mainstream" by nature (or basically a much-loved feature), examples being *Snow*

*White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Disney), *The Wizard of Oz* (MGM), or the six *Star Wars* movies (LucasFilm Limited), get a ton of DVD releases, and the studios have multiple chances to truly get it right.

I'm really glad that Warner Home Video announced a moratorium on releasing *The Wizard of Oz* recently, because multiple releases of that film seriously get old, and sales continue to be cannibalized in multiples of each release.

But some cult favorites, like *Saludos Amigos* and *The Three Caballeros* (Disney), *The Man Who Would Be King* (MGM), or the three *Indiana Jones* flicks (LucasFilm Limited) only get maybe one or two releases, and one or two chances to really get it right.

My hope is that these films get more of a chance. I know that my calling the *Indiana Jones* flicks "cult favorites" might get me some flack, but seriously, compared to the absolute juggernaut that is *Star Wars*, it is a cult favorite.

Wanting something to do this summer? BC is accepting applications for a Summer in London program until March 1. See Jubal Tiner for the application.