



audiophile

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A closer look at VH1's greatest artists

Former music network VH1 (let's not kid ourselves that it's anything more than a lifestyle and reality channel at this point) polled 200 artists and "music experts"

earlier this year to assemble a list of the "100 Greatest Artists of All Time." This updates their first such list, which was similarly compiled in 1998. When all the votes were counted and the special four-night broadcast was complete, here's how the new rankings stood (with additional commentary by yours truly):

1. The Beatles (Repeat finish from '98 and no surprise)
2. Michael Jackson (MJ gets a massive death bump, up from #40)
3. Led Zeppelin
4. Rolling Stones (Surprisingly low showing for the Stones, previously #2)
5. Bob Dylan
6. Jimi Hendrix
7. Prince (Impressively, the highest-ranked artist — MJ notwithstanding — whose apex didn't occur in rock's golden age of the '60s and '70s)
8. Elvis Presley
9. James Brown
10. Stevie Wonder (Definitely Top 5 for me)
11. Bob Marley
12. David Bowie (The '70s bi icon slides a tad from #7)
13. The Who (The world's loudest band, features openly bisexual guitarist Pete Townshend)
14. Nirvana
15. The Beach Boys
16. Madonna (The Queen of Pop soars from #86)
17. Queen (Gay frontman Freddy Mercury is possibly more revered now, a decade and a half after his death from AIDS complications, than when he was singing to packed stadiums)
18. Pink Floyd
19. U2
20. Marvin Gaye
21. Bruce Springsteen
22. The Clash
23. AC/DC
24. The Velvet Underground (The leading lights of NYC's '70s omniseual music scene bound from #74)

25. Chuck Berry
26. Neil Young
27. Aretha Franklin (Too low for the Queen of Soul)
28. Elton John (Too low for the Queen of the '70s)
29. Radiohead
30. Aerosmith
31. John Lennon
32. Black Sabbath
33. Guns N' Roses
34. Tina Turner (The greatest all-around female rocker ever should be ranked in the top 20)
35. Johnny Cash
36. Paul McCartney
37. Fleetwood Mac (Stevie Nicks and Co. slip from #22)
38. Sly & The Family Stone
39. The Kinks
40. The Police (All literate gays had a crush on Sting... or am I projecting again? Either way, this is a poor outcome for the band that previously finished #10)
41. Van Halen
42. Metallica
43. Ray Charles
44. Joni Mitchell (Strong female singer-songwriters were abundant in the '70s and here's the clear best of the bunch)
45. Al Green
46. Ramones
47. Jay-Z
48. Rage Against the Machine
49. Parliament-Funkadelic
50. Sade (One of my favorite groups ever makes an auspicious debut)
51. Billy Joel
52. Beyonce (The current R&B superdiva makes a grand entrance)
53. Little Richard (Rock and roll's undisputed architect is a fey mess who remains queerer than a \$3 bill — even if he no longer acknowledges it)
54. Public Enemy
55. Peter Gabriel
56. KISS
57. Iggy & the Stooges
58. Cheap Trick
59. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers
60. Whitney Houston (Gays love drama and nobody's served it better than Whitney the last decade)
61. Cream

see VH1 on 22

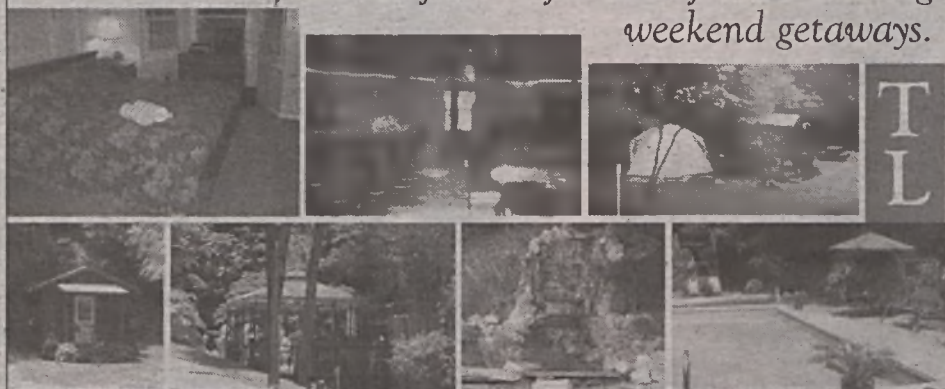


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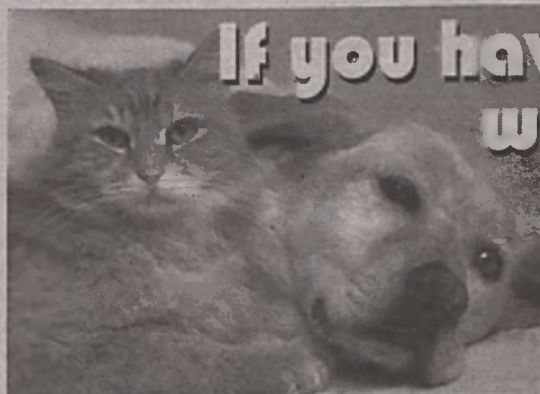
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