**The Musical Extravaganza of the 1980s**

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As a 90s kid (and a millennial), I grew up in a world, which experienced political instability, security quagmires, financial meltdowns of multiple nature and a once in a lifetime pandemic. Yet all of this did not deter a significant portion of my generation from experiencing the best of Western pop culture through the lenses of films, music and television shows.

While my previous piece on the topic focused on some of the latest films and shows having deep linkages to the 1980s, the primary driver for writing this one is my endearing love for that decade’s enthralling music. I never got to experience the era but it feels like it remained a huge part of my life which is akin to illusionary nostalgia.

The 80s introduced synth-pop, consolidated the foothold of soft rock & power ballads and influenced film soundtracks that became household names. Some of the modern music has reintroduced 80s music to younger generations through globally known singers such as The Weeknd and Dua Lipa. The former’s blockbuster song “Blinding Lights” is a tribute to the era and in some aspects, it gives Joaquin Phoenix’s Joker vibes. Moreover, it had such a huge cultural impact that it got featured as the introduction theme for the recently released Disney Plus show Ms Marvel that features the best of both American and Pakistani pop culture.

Let’s not forget how the introduction of MTV and Top of the Pops changed the dynamics of listening to music. The former was all about music videos (some of which had subtle plot lines) while the latter was about upcoming and known singers presenting their skills in a unique style. Their cultural impact still lasts to this day given how streaming platforms such as YouTube act as a nostalgic time machine.

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Even console and pc games such as the Grand Theft Auto series and Cyberpunk 2077 revived the retro feels of the era via both modern and classic songs. This itself leads us to the notion that the 80s never truly phased out as a decade of musical extravaganza. Meanwhile, films from the era such as Back to the Future, Top Gun and Dirty Dancing kept their music eternal for future generations to get enthralled by.

The sheer bliss of listening to those songs is inexplainable and amongst my personal favourites include bands and singers such as Wham, Pet Shop Boys, The Human League, A-ha, Kenny Loggins, The Police, Corey Hart, INXS, Belinda Carlisle, Richard Marx and Bryan Adams. Others that had a handful of great songs include Cutting Crew, Mr Mister and Kajagoogoo.

Amongst them, British singers and bands dominated the charts throughout the decade but this did not deter others from their North American, Australian and European counterparts from gaining a lead. If I specifically describe the influence each of my favourite singer or band had globally, it would be more like writing a dissertation. This is the kind of pop culture influence they had on our lives.

In some cases, some songs couldn’t top the charts but had the full potential to do so. Perhaps, it’s all about the audience’s taste and over the years these very songs gained their long-overdue popularity.

The introduction of Sony’s Walkman and subsequent launch of iPods and iPhones years later continued to make the 80s increasingly ethereal in terms of content. In a real sense, the globalisation of music initiated from this point and the world changed for the best. No other decade comes this close and may never do.

Modern shows such as Stranger Things have truly revived 80s music for all generations and the latest season has Kate Bush’s “Running up that Hill” ruling the playlists once again owing to a certain scene in Episode 4 featuring Sadie Sink’s character.

Let’s keep the feel of this magical decade alive through its music which is irreplaceable in every possible manner.

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