

The day the movies died: *An impending strike could turn Tinseltown into a ghost town*

by Natalie Kresen
staff writer

Imagine Tom Cruise washing your windows or Julia Roberts teaching your theater class. It seems like remedial labor for top-budget movie stars like these, but after May 2, 2001, they may just be fishing through the want ads as talk of a strike now looms over the Hollywood elite.

According to industry insiders, it is very likely that the Writers Guild of America (WGA), the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), and members of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), will prepare to walk out on projects beginning in May of next year. Once members' contracts expire, the combined unions plan to negotiate with film and television studios on issues of greed and lost backend payments from cable and video in the 1980s. These are the same issues currently fueling the unions' strike against advertisers, who have turned to nonunion labor to keep up.

"Foreign, home video, cable, Internet, these will all be huge issues again, things could get very, very ugly. And the sense around town is that these strikes will happen," says executive director of the Producers Guild of America (PGA) Vance Van Petten. Others agree, saying the strikes will take place because screenwriters are "incredibly mili-

tant" and SAG is extremely disorganized.

What will happen to the entertainment business if this strike really does happen? Get ready for major changes in television. Extra episodes of shows are being filmed right now, but once they run out, all that could be left are reruns and lots of "starless, scriptless shows," writes Daniel Fierman of *Entertainment Weekly*.

Reality programming may become even more lucrative for network giants. FOX of course will remain strong with shows like *COPS* and *Beyond Belief*, as well

nitely suffer. Even if they order more episodes of *Dawson's Creek*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* or *Felicity*, the shows' stars often use down time to do movies. And without reality TV or news shows, there isn't much left for the WB to air.

The WB might get to retain some of its stars for shooting episodes, however, if the film industry follows suit with a strike of its own. Hollywood is scrambling to finish as many movies as possible before June 30th of 2001 because many actors may not be working after this date. "As a result, tentpoles like *Men in Black 2*, *Jumanji 2*, and the

films and films without the actors that they have come to love and admire. Broadway will become a more popular place for Hollywood talent, and books will be more commonly used if the networks cannot satisfy consumers with their new shows.

"I don't get the sense that people remember how awful the last strike was," an anonymous executive said. "It was devastating. Businesses went under. People lost their homes. Who wins if this happens?" Hollywood struck before? The average moviegoer may not have noticed, but Hollywood has a rather long history of strikes. In December of 1952 to February of 1953, SAG led a strike over filmed television ads. From March to April of 1960 actors took control and led a strike against movie residual payments. The 1980s saw a number of strikes, the first of which was from July to October of 1980 when SAG and AFTRA demanded residual from home videos.

Years went by without any problems in Hollywood, and then in 1987 the walkouts began again. In June and July of 1987, the SAG struck over the salaries and amount of work given to cartoonists. At the same time the WGA demanded money "over pieces of home video and pay-TV pies." In 1987 the Directors Guild of America had its first industry wide strike over TV and movie residuals. The last one came in March of 1988 in August of the same year, when the WGA pushed for higher residual payment and more control over scripts.

Certainly, Hollywood jetsetters are preparing for the worst. Mara Brock Akil, creator of *Girlfriends* on the WB, says "I have my application in to be a bagger." Will that be paper of plastic?



Television and film stars will both feel the pinch if the strike does take place next May. Jennifer Aniston (left) could lose her *Friends*, *The West Wing* (right) will be impeached, and Jennifer Lopez (top) could be trapped in a cell of unemployment.

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as a host of other shows in the genre. ABC and NBC have commissioned other reality programming such as *Mole* and *Chains of Love*, respectively. But fledgling netlets like the WB will most defi-

Batman have been wiped off production slates until the labor disputes are resolved," writes Fierman.

Once the new movies run out, audiences will be introduced to loads of European, Australian and English

Surviving the music

by Susan Taylor
staff writer

Didn't you just love *Survivor*? Were you one of the millions of people who tuned in every Wednesday night at eight? Who would be voted off this week? B.B? Sonja? Jenna? Sean? Well good news! Now, thanks to the *Survivor* original soundtrack, you can go back to the island and relive your favorite memories and castaways!

The album starts out with an extended version of the show's main theme, "Ancient Voices." The original title version is also included. There are other songs from the show featured on the album like "Mud Bath" and "Buzzed." Of course "Tally the Vote" from the tribal

councils is also included. There are a few original songs like "Snake Island," "My Tribe," "Voices of Heaven," "Gold," and "The Strong Will Survive." In total, the album includes nineteen songs, fourteen original. It sounds almost like the *Riverdance* soundtrack--without the dancing. Inside the album booklet are thumbnail photographs of all the castaways with their titles underneath.

In addition to T-shirts, books, and other trinkets from the TV show, the *Survivor* soundtrack is one of the more popular items to commemorate this summer's hottest show. Maybe with the soundtrack, America will be safely occupied until *Survivor 2* premieres in January.

Smacked Down

by Katie Galley
editorial page editor

Finally, the Rock came back to Pittsburgh! This past Tuesday the WWF brought their women exploiting, beer drinking, arse kicking all around good fun back to the 'Burgh.

Starting the evening off watching the taping of the newly added MTV show, Sunday Night Heat, the mayhem began. Wrestlers that would never make it to the main event amused the crowd until it was time for the pyrotechnics and phone booth brawling to begin.

Smackdown started off the same way that it always does: loudly. After the smoke from the explosions cleared, it was time for some wrestling. The Commissioner, Mick Foley, came out to speak of the newly returned Stone Cold Steve Austin's bad boy behavior the past week, and to try to put the kibosh on his antics.

The crowd favorites came out to beat the crap out of each other one af-

ter another. Lita defended her Women's Championship, promptly tearing apart Jacqueline with the yummy Hardys cheering her on ringside.

The trash-talking Tazz tried to beat up Jerry "the King" Lawler with the help of new bad-guy Raven. However, Jericho came out to tell 'Raisin' and Tazz to "shut the hell up" and get out of the ring. A battle ensued, and Tazz and 'Raisin' walked away victorious.

The most exciting event of the night was, by far, the main event. Who thought that The Rock and Triple H would ever team up again? Well they did to try and 'lay the smack down' on their current enemies, Kurt Angle and Chris Benoit. Unfortunately, in the end, it was the underdog tag team that walked away with the win.

A special thank you goes out to the most electrifying man in sports entertainment, The Rock, for sticking around after the taping to pump up the crowd in Pittsburgh. Next time let's just hope that it doesn't take them 8 months to come back again!

Sic' Em FIDO

by Deanna Symoski



Whose Generation? Talkin' bout the lost decades of music

In light of what I've been hearing lately from music lovers, I thought maybe it would be a good idea to start brushing up on some of my late 1960s lingo, so here goes: "Peace, man." "Flower Power!" "Far out!" Okay, so that's all I really know, but I'll be sure to study up if The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 10 Greatest Songs list is truly accurate. It seems the list, which contains nine songs released between 1965 and 1971, is supposed to be a fair survey of music appreciation. But there is a glaring absence in this compilation--a few measly years called the seventies, eighties and nineties.

I'm a bit concerned about this black hole in the vortex of music, so I decided to take a closer look at this list.

First, I considered the source. The voters on that poll all have something in common--their age. As any of us would do, they pinpointed the soundtrack to the important part of their lives, when the world was changing, and they were old enough to change with it. These songs served as background music during a tumultuous political era when the Vietnam War was raging and JFK was becoming a memory.

But all music belongs on the soundtrack to some era, none more or less important than another--whether it's the flapper 20s when Capone shot up the streets or the crooners of the 40s when the end of World War II gave birth to a whole new generation. There was Disco in the 70s, which came as backlash to the heavy ballads of earlier years, and whatever it is exactly that the 80s spawned. Every decade combines to write crucial chapters in the country's history. To say that this six-year period held the "greatest" songs is to ignore the poignancy of every generation before and after.

Especially after. I've heard numerous comments that suggest Rock and Roll, especially the folk music of this six-year stretch, was the last inventive variation on music. It was the last wave of ingenuity, causing all others since to recreate the sounds they are too feeble-minded to make new. Yes, electric guitars were innovative, hence their staying power, but then came along the use of synthesizers and turntables. And now is the point where you run screaming heresy because I have just compared Dylan, The Doors and Lennon to rap.

Rap, however, is the most recent wave of musical change, and the messages are no less potent than those sung about in times of war or a changing political climate. With no Vietnam or clearly defined points of controversy, perhaps genius was forced to be born out of our internal conflicts.

Like the songs listed, modern music emphasizes self-reflection, but for reflection's sake. Few are political statements, but rather a confession of insecurity amidst a world too uninterested to notice. Some of the greatest songwriters ever emerged from this period. But to reverse them all as legends simply because they existed at that time does a disservice to musicians everywhere. Certainly the climate of the era was conducive to poignant music, but that doesn't mean that if we aren't at war, the music suffers. On the contrary, the music becomes more creative because its writers must search deeper for their souls. And the songs that emerge in the process of self-discovery are just as significant as those that finish the journey. They are just harder to find.

Sifting through the avalanche of crap in the music industry in order to find those "great" songs is a task few choose to undertake. We rely on time to make legends of our music. Or we wait until a group tells us these were the best songs. Maybe the Hall of Fame's list wasn't of the "greatest" songs, maybe they were just the most convenient. We know they're "great" because we hear so much about them, and someone once wrote that they were. But if time and a generation's consensus are what make legends out of songs, it's no wonder modern pioneers like Run DMC, the Beastie Boys or Nirvana fail to make these lists. Perhaps we are not yet far enough removed to realize the impact they have made by the messages they send or the musical talent they possess. Someday, when we stop ingesting the traditional definition of "great," we just might make legends of our own.

New Releases

Movies

Along Came a Spider

Remember the Titans

Ring of Fire

Girlfight
9/29

Video*

The Bachelor

Sleepy Hollow
Special Edition

Music*

Duncan Sheik
"Phantom Moon"

Greenday
"Warning"

Lenny Kravitz
Greatest Hits

Radiohead

DVD*

Snow Day

Rocky Horror Picture
Show

Nightmare Before
Christmas

* release date is 10/3

68% of you said that you wished life was more like the movies. Most of that percentage was women, however. Guess the men don't seem to mind if fairytale endings stick to the Silver Screen. Next Week: look for a new feature to highlight the upcoming TV season.

e-mail votes to behrcoll5@aol.com