

Subject: Tunes Weekly - Part Two: 10 Artists Who Belong In The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame!

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Tunes Weekly - Part Two: 10 Artists Who Belong In The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame!



The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is great, but if your favorite artist hasn't been inducted, you might think differently. Most of their

choices more than deserve the award, but some of them will make you scratch your head. Green Day? Really? You're telling me that Alice Cooper is in, but The Doobie Brothers are not? In 1998, a guy named Lloyd Price was inducted while Earth,Wind & Fire sat at home waiting for the phone to ring. Ritchie Valens (inducted in 2001) had a mediocre hit, "La Bamba" and died at the age of 17 in a plane crash with Buddy Holly...would Valens have been inducted if, say, Chubby Checker had been on that plane instead of Holly?

I do love the induction ceremony every year, though. It's a damn good time, with lots of drinking, great funny speeches, and a live show that allows us to see these legends rock out one more time. But, there are many worthy artists who have yet to make it, and our little list will enlighten you and celebrate ten of them. We'll even engage both sides of the argument; deserving or undeserving? Some, or maybe even all of these, will eventually make it, but dammit, they're not in yet, and so we vow to stand outside the Rock Hall with pitchforks and flaming torches until they get the good word! Here is Part Two of 10 artists who deserve to be there. Rock on.



Kool & the Gang, eligible since 1994

Deserving?- A band's life span is pretty short, and most of them never even get out of the garage. They break up for all sorts of reasons; hell, even the Everly Brothers went years without speaking to each other and they were brothers! But, when all is said and done, in the end, you know that if you dig around enough, you are guaranteed to find those ultimate survivors: microbes, cockroaches.....and Kool & the Gang; they have survived 55 years. How did they do it? Like a virus, they adapted to their surroundings. Starting as a jazz band, and then morphing into funk and R&B, smooth pop-funk, and then into a modern, electro-pop sound, they sold over 70 million records along the way. So now, while Kool & the Gang are outside peeking through the Rock Hall's windows, the Sex Pistols (members since 2006 and with one studio album to their credit) are inside giving Kool the finger. That ain't right. Maybe Kool and the boys should have spit on their audience and snarled a little more.

You like to party don't you? Well, you need music to do it up right, and Kool & the Gang was the music of choice. "Jungle Boogie," "Hollywood Swinging," "Celebration," "Ladies Night," and the great "Get Down on It." Yep, so many hits, done with soul and groove. Writing this is putting me in a fighting mood. The Hall better call soon, because, although Kool & the Gang are still out there on the road, band members are dropping like flies and I want to see them to play at their induction ceremony.

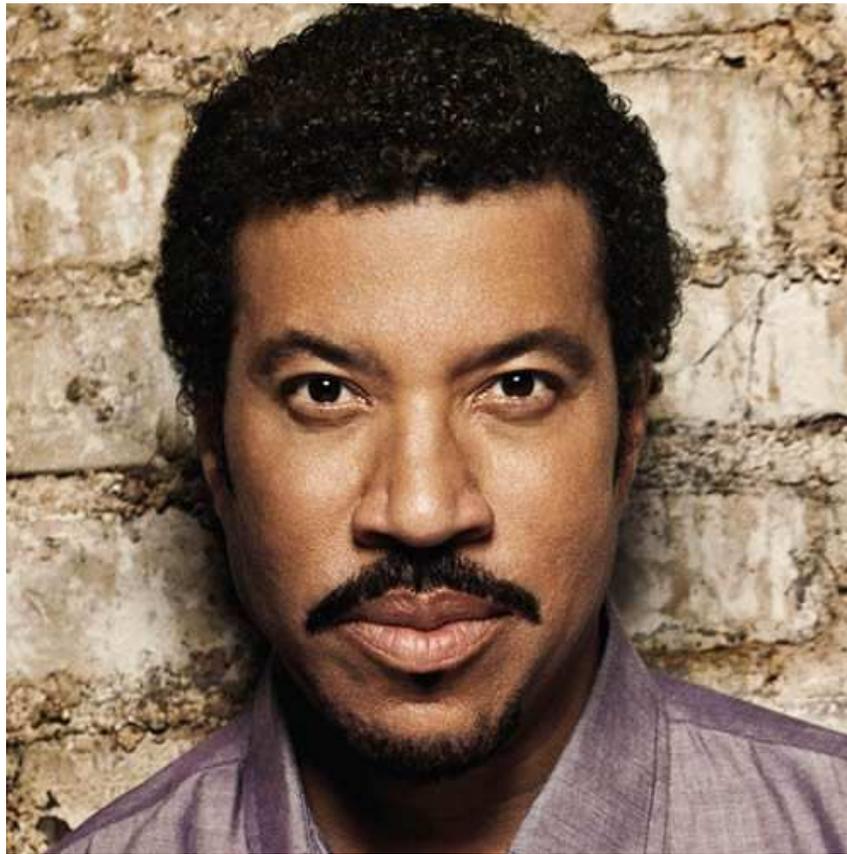
Undeserving?- Are the songs too good? Too funky? Does the Hall need some kind of scandal for Kool & the Gang to be considered for induction? Here's something for you: It's not really cool, but the members have known each other since grade school. Plus, there is no "Kool". It's just Robert Bell's nickname. No drug addictions. Sorry.

Essential Songs- "Hollywood Swinging," "Too Hot," "Cherish," "Joanna," "Celebration," "Get Down on It."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBIRuGFT7Ew>



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Lionel Richie, eligible since 2006

Deserving?- Oh man, this guy has had an amazing career, and it is truly a crime that he hasn't been inducted yet. He started out with the Commodores and has made some of the hippest soul music around. In 1980, he performed a miracle; he made Kenny Rogers actually seem hip and sexy by writing "Lady," a huge number one hit. After accomplishing a feat like that, Lionel felt that he could possibly cure cancer, but instead, he went solo in 1982, and his career just skyrocketed, selling over 100 million records, and sending the Commodores into a deep depression. The guy could do no wrong. Hit after hit followed. He played the Olympic closing ceremony, won an Oscar, co-wrote "We Are the World," and he even danced on the ceiling. Some said he was "a black Barry Manilow," which I rejected outright; Lionel would never have come within ten miles of a song like "Copacabana." No doubt about it, he will, one day be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. That he hasn't already, gives the Hall a Cleveland-sized black eye.

Undeserving?- I have a strong suspicion why he is not in the Hall yet...and I sort of agree. When he made the Caribbean-flavored hit record, "All Night Long," Lionel Richie made a fatal mistake: he sang it with a fake Jamaican accent. I cannot explain why he did it, but nothing could possibly be worse. I can only hope that he agonized over that decision, because it could delay his induction for years. I've seen reggae cover bands that did the same thing and it wasn't pretty. I might note that Lionel also had his fair share of bad hair days. Maybe after factoring that in with the fake Jamaican accent, the Rock Hall of Fame decided to just let him stew over it for awhile.

Essential Songs- "Penny Lover," "My Love," "Truly," "Love Will Conquer All," "Endless Love."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i45qDsId1E>



Joe Cocker, eligible since 1994

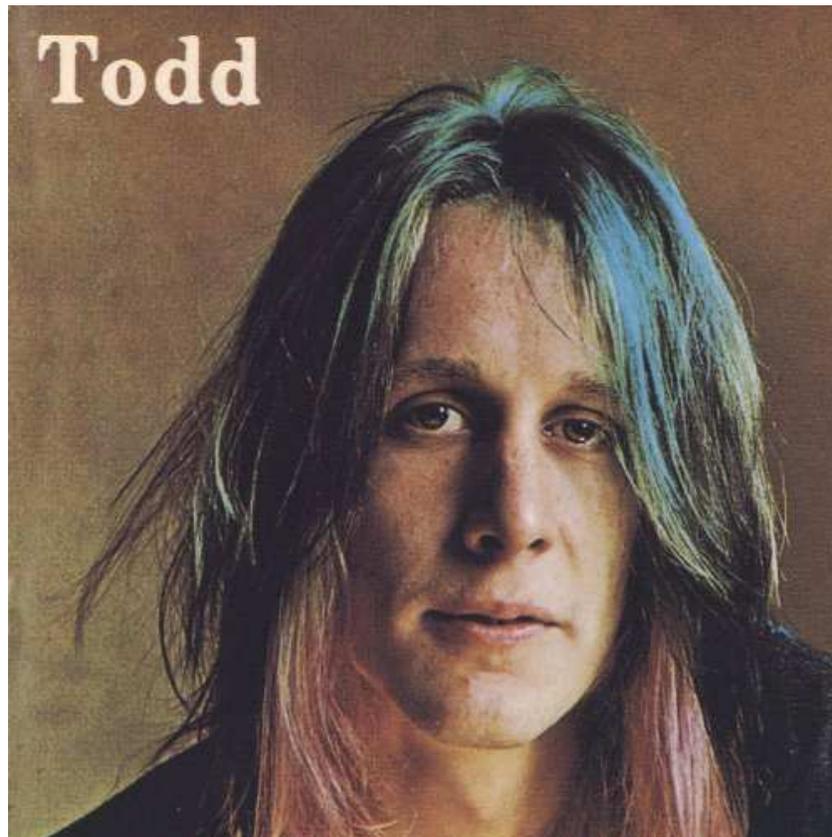
Deserving?- Try and imagine Woodstock without Joe Cocker's spastic, electrifying performance of the Beatles' "With a Little Help From my Friends." It's unimaginable. The guy is a flat-out vital part of rock history and yet he's not in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Is it any wonder that the Hall has some credibility gaps? Joe Cocker's

resume reads like pure classic rock and roll to me. His voice was bluesy and gritty, and he was a wild man on stage, as he crazily moved to some unseen force that only he understood. He was also part of the legendary Mad Dogs & Englishmen tour, he played Woodstock, and he was a severe alcoholic; he had it all! If you can get through his version of "You Are so Beautiful" without choking up, then you are a better person than I am. I am especially sad that Joe Cocker died without getting that Hall of Fame spotlight he so richly deserved. He was the Man. Here's to you, Joe.

Undeserving?- I know the rap on Joe Cocker: He made his name doing cover songs. Okay, so he wasn't a songwriter. But, he was simply one of the finest interpretive singers that rock and roll ever produced. His version of The Beatles' "With a Little Help From my Friends" just spanked their own version all over and that's no mean feat. Ditto with the Box Tops' "The Letter." By all accounts, he was a good and decent man, and when he died, it took a long time for the tears of his peers to cease flowing. If there is justice in this world at all, he will someday be enshrined and will take his rightful, spastic, place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Essential Songs- "You are so Beautiful," "Feelin' Alright," "With a Little Help From my Friends," "Up Where we Belong."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tfLyK2DVVUU>



Todd Rundgren, eligible since 1995

Deserving?- This Todd Rundgren thing really sticks in my craw. It's almost easy to forget how talented Todd Rundgren really is since he does so many things so well. He is a multi-instrumentalist, singer; producer, songwriter, and I'll wager that his place in rock history is as secure as anyone's. His 1972 double-album "Something/Anything?" was a revelation, with him playing all instruments and singing all vocals, and it remains among my all-time favorite records. He has also long been at the forefront of cutting-edge recording technologies. He has had a long solo career sandwiched between his time with Nazz and later with the prog-influenced, Utopia. He has one of the finest pop sensibilities I've ever heard. He also has a very restless, creative, nature and, seemingly, has no desire to ever repeat himself. I've probably spent a solid year of my life listening to "Can We Still Be Friends." He is one of the artists I return to again and again for his continuing brilliance and it is a CRYING shame that he is not in the hall. I mean, John Mellencamp is in there for God's sake.

Todd is a pop genius steeped in Philly soul; what's not to love?

Undeserving?- Award-givers generally frown upon those who wear many hats and Todd Rundgren epitomizes that. He could have just released pop classics for the rest of his life, but he seemed to always be starting anew. I think that has worked against him in the eyes of critics and, to a point, the general public. He has never courted fame or fortune, and has always tended to follow his own muse, despite some of the darkened corners to which it has led him. But, when you're a Todd fan, you follow him wherever he takes you and you don't question it. So yeah, I can understand why there has not been a rush for his induction, but after 24 years, give him his pedestal already. He's more than earned it.

Essential Songs- "The Waiting Game," "Can We Still Be Friends," "Hello It's Me," "I Saw The Light," "It Wouldn't Have Made Any Difference," "We Gotta Get You a Woman," "Love is the Answer."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILeCB7Kn-VE>



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TOTO, eligible since 2003

Deserving? - TOTO exemplifies the various ways in which the Rock Hall of Fame drives us crazy. First of all, TOTO's stats alone qualify them: over 40 million albums sold, Grammy awards, induction into the Musician's Hall of Fame, and the list goes on. They can play anything. It would be hard to imagine music from the 70s and 80s without contributions from the members of TOTO. In fact, they've played on records by most of the other artists on our list.

At least three of their original members are my personal favorite musicians ever: guitarist Steve Lukather, original drummer, the late Jeff Porcaro, and original bassist David Hungate. Throw in keyboardist David Paich, keyboardist Steve Porcaro, later bassist the late Mike Porcaro and singer Bobby Kimball, and it's sort of like Nolan Ryan, Barry Bonds, Ken Griffey Jr, George Brett, Wade Boggs

and Cal Ripken Jr getting together to play a little baseball.

Tragically, brothers Jeff and Mike Porcaro passed away respectively in 1992 and 2015.

Despite personnel changes over the years, their sound remains instantly recognizable and they are a fan favorite, as well as a favorite band and live act by most of their peers. TOTO will definitely play at their own induction ceremony.

Undeserving? - So, why isn't TOTO in the Rock Hall of Fame? This is too easy. Among some of those people who make these decisions, there is a certain disdain for competence; for knowledge; for craft. The quality of the melody, the depth of the pocket, and the pulse of the groove matter not, once they cop that attitude. This same attitude exists in politics, which is why certain voters seem so determined to put someone who's never spent one day in government into the toughest job in the world. Yeah, that'll show 'em! It's the revolt of the common man. That attitude exists in music too. The Sex Pistols couldn't play their instruments so they are perceived as more honest and "real." So, here come these fancy "studio pro" session players for whom everything comes just a little bit too easy. Yes, the voters have every intention of granting TOTO's fans' wishes, but first they have to perform a very small task...and wait until the Hall is damn good and ready (you like the *Wizard of Oz* reference?). So, Green Day and the Sex Pistols will spit their lung-cookies into the front row and take their "real" three-chord songs right into the Hall of Fame. When TOTO's award is handed down, I almost hope they refuse it.

Essential Songs - "Hold the Line," "Rosanna," "I'll be Over You," "Georgy Porgy," "Orphan," "99".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWIgEtkE3GA>



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D. Tillis writes Tunes Weekly exclusively for www.tunescompany.com

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