

Bringing In The New Year of 2018



Happy New Year 2018

Happy New year of 2018 everyone! We all survived the horrors of 2017, with a promise that 2018 will be a better year for everyone. So, to ring in the new year properly we need a bit of holiday music.

For the new year of 2018, I think this lovely piece of music speaks for hopes of better times ahead.

Believe it or not, this song was released way back in 1976. From the ever-wonderful Wikipedia:

Year of the Cat is the seventh studio album by Al Stewart, released in 1976 and was produced and engineered by Alan Parsons; it is considered his masterpiece [...] While Stewart is known for his guitar virtuosity, the song is recognized for producing amazing interplay of multiple guitars, piano, saxophone, violin, and drums

So here it is, for your start of the new year enjoyment.

Merry Christmas, Now With Music



Trans Siberian Orchestra

I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas to end what has generally been an awful year. So I think a bit of uplifting music is in order for this magical day.

I first heard of the band "[Trans Siberian Orchestra](#) (TSO) from some people in my carpool, about eight years ago. Hearing them rave about this group got me curious, and I purchased my first TSO album "Christmas Eve and Other Stories." I was immediately hooked. I've since picked up two other albums by this group, (one Christmas album, and one rock opera) and I remain in awe of the power of their music.

The two TSO Christmas albums mix renditions of classical Christmas music mixed with their original work. Their music speaks to me in a way very few singers do.

I joined the Navy at the ripe age of 17 and celebrated my 18th birthday in Navy Boot Camp. I ended up stationed on my first submarine in San Diego, California, on the opposite side of America from the rest of my family. After several years other members of my family migrated out to California but for the first few Navy years, I spent my holidays alone. Christmas was usually the loneliest holiday as all my married shipmates spent the day with their families, which left single folks

like me to fend for ourselves. This meant Christmas in the barracks or (once I turned 21) at the designated local bar. Some years I volunteered to take a duty day for one of my married shipmates so they could be at home, and I could spend my day onboard my sub around the only people I then knew.

The TS0 song “The Old City Bar” brings me back to my early Navy days of not having any family around. I can’t listen to it without bringing back strong memories of my first few Christmases in the Navy. For this Christmas, after a horrendous year that was witness to the wholesale government-directed looting of our country and citizens taking increasingly sharp sides over who we are as a nation; I think this song is worth listening to.

So here is a live rendition of TS0’s incredibly powerful Christmas song “The Old City bar.”

Merry Christmas everyone. May the coming year bring us peace.

Snow Falls In Virginia



Music Inside

Today I’m watching the first snowfall of this season, and coincidentally the first snow of 2017. At least here in

Northern Virginia. As luck would have it, today is a Saturday, so I've avoided the Mad Max-like horrors of traveling out on our snowy highways. On the flip side, I'm stuck in the house all day and cabin fever strikes quickly.

We're presently up to about one-half inch, and with any luck, we'll have Washington, D.C. shut down for a week.

On this cold, snowy day, we need a little something to warm the place up. Something like, [Vanessa Mae](#) playing something really hot. With ice. Okay, just about everything Vanessa Mae does is pretty hot, but some things are hotter than others. So, how about a music video clip of Vanessa Mae in "The Devil's Trill."

On a snow-related question; Every time we get a snow storm everyone runs out and buys up melting salt and snow shovels. Now, I get the melting salt, but, snow shovels? What the hell did everyone do with the shovels from the last year?

A question to ponder...

Happy New Year 2017



New Years!

For the first post of the New Year, I just want to wish everyone a Happy New year 2017! Gratuitous New Year's video on the flip in celebration of having survived this past year while retaining some semblance of sanity.

Given everything that has happened (or didn't happen, dependent upon your point of view) in 2016, I thought this music video by Sir Elton John was very fitting.

Happy New Year everyone. Here's to hoping 2017 doesn't suck nearly as bad as 2016.

About Those Heroes



Music Inside

I have to confess that one of my favorite female singers is the native Welsh wonder [Bonnie Tyler](#). I also enjoy great animation movies (called cartoons for a younger generation, but I remain a kid at heart) and among my top computer-generated animations are the “[Shrek](#)” movies. So when these are put together, I'm hooked.

All the “Shrek” movies are good, some better than others. My favorite in the series is [Shrek 2](#), largely because the movie

features the song "[Holding Out for A Hero](#)" (recorded by [Jennifer Saunders](#)) which happens to be one of my favorite Bonnie Tyler pieces. The clip of this song and the companion animation should be considered a music video all by itself.

So tonight, because it's a cold April Saturday evening and Winnie is out working, I present the wonderful Shrek 2 movie clip of Bonnie Tyler's song "Holding Out for A Hero" as only CGI animation can produce.

Enjoy!

Level Of Total World Stupid Rapidly Increasing



entering our beautiful countryApril Fools

Zurich, Switzerland, April 1, 2016. Today, leading world scientists announced that the total quantity of Stupid in the world was rapidly increasing. "It's worrisome," said Dr. Fabienne Urnechi, head of the sociology department at Karolinska Institutet of Sweden. "Our worst case predictions consistently underestimate measured increases."

Dr. Urnechi explained the process of measuring Total World

Stupid (T_{ws}). “We use a dedicated Pleiades supercomputer to collect and collate daily news stories from 183 designated Nodes of Stupid (NoS) locations across the globe. The computer then sifts through these stories and applies an algorithm to measure key indications of stupid and generates a Stupid Index Number (SIN).” Over time, we’ve watched this SIN increase to completely unbelievable levels.

Dr. Jason Essal-tin, head of the computer sciences department at Oxford University of England, explained “We used to generate a SIN on a daily basis but started to have concerns about the safety of the computer. Quite frankly, we worried that the level of Stupid the computer was dealing with might infect the circuitry and decrease the computer’s intelligence. Now we run the program once each week, and then perform extensive diagnostic counseling to ensure the system continues to work as designed.”

Dr. Guiseppe Belilia, director of geospatial analysis at the Roma Tre University in Italy explained that the geographical Clusters of Stupid (CoS) were concentrated in a few tightly defined clusters. “We see several major clusters centered in the United States, for example. The strongest concentration appears to be focused in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. “Dr. Belilia explained. “Interestingly enough, that SIN level appears to fluctuate on a calendar basis. It’s hard to be sure of the reason, but one data point indicates the SIN level increases when ever the US Congress is in session.”

Although total world Stupid is increasing, scientists take solace in the knowledge that only a few CoS clusters are driving these levels, so it is still possible to develop policies to control and possibly reduce total world Stupid.

Dr. Belilia explained that until recently, all CoS remained stationary. “But starting about a year ago, we plotted some CoS’s moving in erratic patterns” Dr. Belilia said. “After considerable cross-mapping and exhaustive research by an

interdisciplinary team of scientific specialists from dozens of fields, we were able to show that these moving clusters correlated with the campaign trails of American Republican presidential candidates! It was fascinating to map how the SIN level increased where ever these people traveled.”

Dr. Urnechi explained that one candidate in particular was driving these levels of Stupid. “Notable for these moving CoS is that of Mr. Donald Trump, whose SIN level is increasing to extraordinary levels. Honestly, in the 20 years we’ve been performing this research, we’ve never seen anything like the SIN level Mr. Trump is generating. His SIN is actually skewing measurements of Stupid across the entire globe.”

Some potential solutions for controlling world Stupid levels include quarantining America from the global community through massive Internet firewalls and news media blackouts. “we’ve also discussed travel restrictions, but a sizable number of Americans remain decent, non-stupid people and preventing them from leaving high CoS areas would be inhumane” Dr. Essaltin explained. “We are considering some type of medical exam we can administer to Americans wanting to go abroad that determines which Presidential candidate they support. Preventing anyone who supports Mr. Trump from leaving America shows a ninety percent confidence factor in preventing infections of concentrated Stupid spreading to the rest of the world.”

The consensus of scientists monitoring levels of Stupid is that world totals should decrease after the American elections unless Donald Trump becomes President. “Then all bets are off” says Dr. Urnechi, “and we’ll have no choice to build a huge wall completely around America as the only possible means of containing the Stupid. “ Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto stated his country would be willing to pay for this wall “to contain the possibility of concentrated Stupid entering our beautiful country.”

The Presidents Song



President's Day

Today is a federal holiday celebrating Presidents Day. Here in Washington we're celebrating with another snow shower, which seems to be such a waste of a day off, given that even the hint of snow is enough to shut down the entire Washington metropolitan region. All this following Valentine's Day, so at least we should still be on good terms with our significant other.

For today's special holiday I thought to share a small American history lesson with my many readers. The last time I had any reason to read up on American history was helping Winnie study for her citizenship interview several years back. So, through the ever-wonderful YouTube I present a video clip of "The President's Song," singing all our president's names up to the current occupant of the White House President Barack Obama. I even like the music.

This does make me wonder how the song's authors will add in our next president, whomever that might be...

So happy President's day everyone! Hoping you'all had a nice Valentine's celebration yesterday, and a good day today.

A Song For This Winter



Music Inside

So far this winter has been unusually strange. We went from temperatures so abnormally warm my grass began to grow in late December, to a freezing spell and snowstorm with record-setting accumulations. Then back to warm weather a couple of days after the snowstorm. It's only January and I'm officially over this winter's weather.

Given the level of suckitude (yes, it's a word) of this winter, I've decided there is only one song that appropriately classifies it. I present to my many loyal readers [Frank Zappa](#) and the "Mothers of Invention" band's classic song "Don't Eat the Yellow Snow."

This is the full music suite, because you really need to hear the entire piece to appreciate the pure insane level of genius that went into it. So grab a coffee from Alfonso's Diner, mark the spots of yellow snow in your backyard, and enjoy! Soon enough, this winter will pass.

Happy New Year 2016!



New Years!

For my first post of the new year of 2016, I want to wish all my many readers, family and friends a new year of prosperity, good health, and good fortune.

And for those old-timers who need a bit of cheering up this morning, there's a music video on the flip.

I found this on Facebook a few days ago and traced it back to the YouTube source. If you were born well before the 1970's you might recognize the TV shows used in this wonderful music mashup.

Witches Of Halloween Past



Halloween Witch

So today is Halloween, a day for tricks and treaters and candy and costumes. Little kids get to dress in cute little outfits going door-to-door asking for free sugar. Adults lucky enough to get invited to a Halloween party dress up in naughty outfits befitting their age and get free food and booze. All in all, a great day to have a little fun.

Halloween is one of my still-favorite holidays even though I haven't been to a costume party in too many years to think about. But I enjoy seeing little kids coming around for trick and treating and I always have candy to give out. Good stuff like chocolate candy bars, with the ulterior motive being that if we have left-over candy at the end of the night, we can enjoy it ourselves.

There's a lot of great Halloween movies around, as well as even more not-so-great Halloween movies. One of the more enjoyable movies of the past was the Bette Midler movie "Hocus Pocus," released in 1988. It was pure fun and I suspect Bette Midler enjoyed making it as much as people had watching.

Thanks to the ever wonderful YouTube, I offer a little trick and treating eye-candy of Bette Midler performing the classic "I Cast A Spell On You," in the midst of a pretty wild adult costume party, from "Hocus Pocus."

Happy Halloween everyone!