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Term Paper: Journey

Journey is a band that has been through many changes and trials. Started in the seventies, this will be the band's fourth decade in existence, making it one of the longest surviving bands in music history. Journey has made several albums and had many hits. This paper will cover Journey's history and connect their work to the work of entertainment periods covered in this class thus far.

Journey was formed on New Year's Eve in 1973 in San Francisco. Herbie Herbert brought his pick of musicians together to form the group. They were originally called "The Golden Gate Rhythm Section." A radio station had a contest to rename the group but they found none of the names fitting. Herbie's assistant John Villanueva suggested the name Journey and it stuck (History of Journey 1). The original group consisted of: Neal Schon (guitar), Ross Valory (bass), Prairie Prince (drums), and George Tickner (guitar) (Tribute to Journey 6). Biographies on the original group for most of the members are as follows:

Neal Schon was born in Midland City, Oklahoma on February 27, 1954, to Barbara and Matthew Schon. Neal's parents were both involved in music. His mother sang and his father was in a band. At the age of five, Neal began playing different instruments but most of his attention was given to the guitar as he grew older. Around

age 15 Neal began playing in clubs and was noticed by Santana member Gregg Rolie. Neil was presented with the option of joining Santana. He was also recruited to play in Eric Clapton's band, but in the end picked Santana. In 1973, however, Schon left Santana to join Journey. Neil plays guitar for the band but also plays the piano (Tribute to Journey 2).

Ross Valory was born in San Francisco, California, on February 2, 1949 to Catherine and Mark Valory. Ross is one of six kids, all of whom are boys. Ross started in music through a friend who presented the idea of getting a guitar and hooking up with a local band. When Ross was 16 he was part of his first known band that was eventually named Frumious Bandersnatch. After Bandersnatch, Valory played with the Steve Miller Band before he joined Journey. Valory knew about the idea for Journey through Herbie Herbert, whom he had met when he joined Bandersnatch. Ross plays bass for Journey but also plays piano, clarinet, guitar, and drums (Tribute to Journey 4).

Prairie Prince was born on May 7, 1950, in Charlotte, North Carolina. His two older sisters as well as his parents influenced his music career. His mother was an artist and his father had played the drums when he was young. In his high school years he formed a band with his friends that would become known as The Tubes. In the 1970s Prince recorded with many different artists while staying with The Tubes. In 1973 he joined Journey but only stayed through the first album. He left Journey to focus on his work with The Tubes (Prince 1).

Lead singer Steve Perry was hired into the group in 1977. Perry, whom most people know for his lead vocals in Journey for so many years, replaced Robert Fleischman and was heard for the first time with Journey on their fourth album, *Infinity*

released in 1978. Perry was born on January 22, 1949, in Hanford, California, to Mary and Raymond Perry. He moved to Los Angeles when he was eighteen to pursue a career in music as a vocalist. He was in several bands before Journey. Manager Herbie Herbert was searching for a lead singer when he ran across Perry's demo tape with his band, Alien Project. By the time Herbie was looking for a lead man Alien Project had broken up and when Perry got the call he readily agreed. Perry fronted the band starting with *Infinity* and ending with *Trial by Fire*. Perry left the band a couple years after they recorded their 1996 album *Trial by Fire* because he suffered from arthritis in his back and hip and was in no condition to continue touring (Tribute to Journey 6, History of Journey 2).

Journey peaked during the "Steve Perry Years," starting with *Infinity*. Recording many albums and scoring many top hits, Journey soared through the eighties. With Perry's incredible voice and the songwriting skills of Rolie and other group members, the albums of the eighties prospered and many reached the top .

During the late eighties and early nineties the members of Journey went their separate ways to do their own solo work. Perry recorded a couple of solo albums, and other members joined or established smaller bands and played with them for a while (History of Journey 3).

The current Journey is made up of Steve Augeri (replacing Perry), Ross Valory on bass, Jonathan Cain playing piano and guitar, and Deen Castronovo on drums (West 1,2). This line up was first heard on the Armageddon soundtrack with "Remember Me" (West 1-2).

After recording *Trial by Fire*, Perry announced that he would no longer be with the band because his condition would not take kindly to touring. Journey had to look for a new lead singer. Touring, it was felt by everyone in the group, was essential to the band and was the whole reason for the band's existence. As a result, in 1998 Journey hired Steve Augeri to take Perry's place at the mic (History of Journey 2).

Steve Augeri was born in Brooklyn, New York. He played many instruments and in many little bands. Starting in the later eighties he was fronting a band called Tall Stories as the lead singer. Tall Stories lasted until the early nineties and after the band dissolved Augeri got a job working for Gap. A friend suggested that Augeri send in a demo tape when they heard that Journey was looking for a lead singer to replace Perry. Augeri never sent a tape so his friend made one and sent it in without Augeri knowing. Next thing he knew he was auditioning for Schon and Cain and was recruited to be the new frontman for Journey (Journey Biography 2).

Journey went through many changes as a group. Many people came and went from the group, Neal was the only member to make it all the way through the years. Ross Valory is an original member in the band today but left after the album *Frontiers* was recorded in 1983 and came back in 1996. Most members that were in or are in Journey were in other bands before they joined Journey (History of Journey 2). A list of former members is as follows:

- Aynsley Dunbar
- Robert Fleischman
- Prairie Prince
- Gregg Rolie

- George Tickner
- Steve Smith
- Steve Perry

The scarab seen on many Journey albums is their symbol. Egyptians saw the scarab beetle “as a symbol of self-creative power, rebirth, renewal, transformation, and regeneration” (Richard 1). This description fits very well with the journey the group has made. They went through many transformations with constant loss and gain of members throughout the years. After the almost ten-year gap where no albums were recorded, their *Trial by Fire* album might be considered a renewal. The scarab is a fitting symbol for Journey, which has endured much through the years and is beginning another phase in their career (Richard 1,2).

There are many tribute bands focused on the work of Journey. These bands are well named because they are named after Journey albums or song titles. In addition to tribute bands there are also several smaller bands that contain some of the members of Journey. Most of these bands came and went throughout the phases of the core group of Journey, but a few still exist with the Journey members playing their smaller bands on the side (History of Journey 3,4, Tribute to Journey 1-6).

Journey has made eighteen albums and had over twenty-six hits in their lifetime thus far. The first album was recorded by the original group. Journey did not have a hit song or a top selling album until their fourth album, *Infinity* (History of Journey 1). After the disappointment of poor sales of their first three albums Journey’s record label told the group to make an album that will sell or find another label. *Infinity*, Journey’s fourth album released in 1978, was the first album recorded with Steve Perry and was the break

the group had been waiting for. Unlike the previous three albums, *Infinity* had songs with powerful vocals and did not have as many long instrumental breaks. *Infinity* yielded three singles: “Wheel In The Sky”, “Anytime”, and “Lights.” Another reason that is believed to contribute to their success is the consistency in style of their music. Journey has the same style throughout their albums giving them a style that is recognizable and uniquely theirs. This style did not change with the fads or current mainstream music which gave fans a recognizable feature and the same type/style of music that first enchanted them (Stacy 1).

Other Journey albums sold just as well if not better after *Infinity*. *Escape*, *Frontiers*, and *Greatest Hits* all sold extremely well with *Greatest Hits* going platinum a total of nine times thus far (Tribute to Journey 4).

Journey has had six top ten hits with their highest ranking hit of all time being “Open Arms” which hit number two on the charts. “Open Arms” is by far Journey’s most famous song. Other top ten hits include: “Be Good To Yourself,” “Only The Young,” “Separate Ways,” “Don’t Stop Believin’,” and “Who’s Crying Now.” From 1978-1996 Journey had twenty-six top hits from their albums (Tribute to Journey 5).

Gregg Rolie was with the original group and stayed with them through the eighties. He co-wrote many songs on the albums and even did some vocals on the early albums.

The first album Journey recorded with Augeri, *Arrival*, was compared to *Infinity* by Neal. When the group recorded *Infinity* they had a new singer and needed the album to be a success. With *Arrival*, Journey once again has a new lead singer. *Infinity* was a complete turn around from previous work. That album was needed to launch Journey’s

career as a band. The previous three albums had flopped and *Infinity* was the last chance to make it. When *Infinity* was released it went big and turned things around for the new and improved Journey allowing them to have many successful albums after *Infinity*. The same was thought for *Arrival*. With a new lead singer Journey needed to prove itself once again. *Arrival* was the beginning of a new phase of Journey so this album was just as important as *Infinity*.

Just like some later Greek and early Roman theatre that had to meet the standards of the audience in order to be successful and continue, our entertainment has to meet the standards of the audience in order to be considered a success (Goldfarb 52,67). Journey's first three albums were not as successful as they needed to be in order to keep the attention of the public. As a result they were told to make something that appealed to the public or get moving and find another record label to take a chance with them.

Just as Thespis stepped out of the chorus to do his own thing when his acting went over well, Journey members took a break in the late eighties and early nineties to do their own work. After the band had an awesome level of success they went their separate ways to record solo work and make it on their own for a while (Goldfarb 28, A Tribute to Journey 2).

The book mentioned that in early Greek theatre a choragus, or a producer, was responsible for the acts signed and or supported. This producer was a wealthy person and expected the sponsored acts to do well and bring in money (Goldfarb 30). Producers or managers today are the same way. They will sign a group on to a record label and with that privilege of a record deal they expect success. They expect the album to sell a

good number of copies which probably would mean at least a gold record status. When an album is popular it reflects on a producer or record label as being capable to find talent and new sources of income and success. The same went for the Greek producers. They were responsible for the plays so if the play was a success then they were praised for making it so and built a reputation on success and the revenue brought in from that success. Record labels and producers now are responsible for all acts they sign. If a group or solo artist does not do well then they are dropped so as not to ruin the successful reputation held by the company. Journey was told that they had one more chance to make an album that would sell or they would be dropped from the label (Carpenter 1). It has always been about money and what is popular with the audiences.

Just like theatre was a reflection of the times by the content that was included, songs and music are a reflection of the times by the words and style of music (Goldfarb 119). Journey's first three albums were a reflection of the instrumental types of music going on at the time. Song lyrics are emotions or events experienced by one person or a group of persons. Many songs suggest things that are going on at that time in history through social lives, politics, or another way.

Journey was idolized after their success just like the Greek and Roman actors were idolized. Both came after a period of criticism though. Greek and Roman actors were scorned and thought lowly of until people changed their opinions. Journey was always critiqued and criticized before, during, and after fame, success, and idolization (Goldfarb 76,81, History of Journey 2).

As we discussed in class Beethoven was the first musician to put so much passion into his music. Lots of emotions were stirred when listening to his music. Beethoven

was part of the Romantic movement, which was big on weaving feeling and things that happen in real life into music and theatre. Musical artists today put emotions and experiences into their lyrics. Songs are often reflections or stories of events that have taken place in the writer's life. Journey follows this style of songwriting. Jonathan Cain commented at one point that "Journey writes the soundtrack of our lives." The song "Lovin, Touchin, Squeezin" is a very good example of a personal event/hardship endured by the writer. This song describes the end of a relationship and a kind of mocking response to the other person about what they did. Steve, Jonathan, and Neal have all recorded solo albums that are also comprised of personal struggles and triumphs (Stacy 1-3)

I found Journey to be an interesting band with a semi complicated history. The connections to the past entertainment history were hard for me to make at first but when we got closer to modern entertainment things fell into place more easily. Once I got one and understood where I came up with it I as able to think of others and relate them to the band as well. Journey went through many changes, constantly changing and replacing members and going through in and out phases, but their music style always stayed the same. Through all of that they were able to keep going and keep making albums that sold. Journey is a band that will forever have a legacy and be remembered. I think the best Journey years were with Steve Perry. His voice is so awesome and he handles himself well in the music, putting his everything in it to make the music the best it can be. If there is anyone who can replace him, Steve Augeri is the man to do it. His voice resembles Perry so closely that sometimes I forget I'm listening to the new Journey with Augeri singing.

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