

Big Daddy's 24

Well, it's over. After seven months of arguing and having to make heartbreaking decisions (I really took this seriously), here's the Final 24. Remember some basic ground rules. The song had to kick ass from start to finish, which ruled out some classic tunes like STAIRWAY or BOHEMIAN. Only one song per artist. (The Stones and the Who, in particular, could have had many). All songs had to be at least five years old to stand some sort of test of time. Hats off to Stephen King for the idea to begin with and THANKS FOR ALL YOUR VOTES!

I-Pod Alphabetical Order

1. **AC/DC... YOU SHOOK ME ALL NIGHT LONG.** I love that the opening guitar intro that has nothing to do with the rest of the song. Yet when a cover band starts into it the club will go nuts because they know the song that well. The first song ever sang by Brian Johnson after the death of Bon Scott. Pretty good start, eh? He wrote those down and dirty sexy lyrics also. Did you hear my recent interview with him?
2. **THE BEATLES... I SAW HER STANDING THERE.** I'm aware that when you stack this up against many of the other songs here, this tune can sound a little antiquated, but believe me it rocks! Just check out any of the live performances of this song on ANTHOLGY if you don't believe me. One of the first songs ever (some believe it IS the first) to start with a 1-2-3-4! Do you think McCartney would have written WELL, SHE WAS JUST SEVENTEEN, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN if he was writing this song today? Yet, it's that very line that gives this song the true spirit of rock and roll, which is not love, it's LUST.
3. **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN... BORN TO RUN...** The only song Bruce never messes with live. The house lights come up and he does it EXACTLY like the record (except for the E-Street Band holding that note forever before Bruce shouts "1-2-3-4!"). Majestic Phil Spector Wall of Sound, inspiring lyrics, Keith Richards once said a great single should capture you by the opening ten seconds and boy, this one sure does. Other than JUNGLELAND, no Bruce song completely captures every magical aspect of what he and the band stand for. 1-2-3-4!
4. **CHUCK BERRY... NO PARTICULAR PLACE TO GO.** I love it when people say someone's lyrics are just "pure poetry" because 90% of the time, the people saying that (including me) have no idea what ANY kind of poetry is. So then, let me say this about these incredible lyrics, uh, they're PURE POETRY! What would anyone reading this do to be able to be a teenager again driving around with some hot chick with NO PARTICULAR PLACE TO GO? Trying to get the SAFETY BELT TO LOOSE. Yeah, Chuck, what belt are you really talking about? It's "teen opera" at it's best and earliest. You can draw a straight line from this song to BORN TO RUN and a million others. And the guitar playing and melody aren't too shabby either. Seek out George Thorogood's live version, it's terrific.
5. **CREAM... CROSSROADS.** Four minutes of blistering Clapton (and a rare lead vocal at the time). Bruce & Baker also keep up to say the least, thank you very much. This might have been the very first song I air guitared and I know every note to this day!
6. **ELVIS COSTELLO... PUMP IT UP. PEACE LOVE & UNDERSTANDING** is more powerful, LIPSTICK VOGUE has some of the greatest drumming EVER, NO REPLY rocks so hard, it's the one Costello song that Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day chose to perform with Elvis when he was given the chance, and RADIO RADIO is so angry that SNL didn't want him to perform it. So why did I choose PUMP IT UP? For one simple reason. It's every bit as dynamic as the above songs, but because it's played at sporting events, I have heard it hundreds of times more than those songs, yet I still play it when I'm home and drunk and need a song to kick the party off. Don't you? So much fun to sing also and God knows what it's all about and who cares?
7. **THE DOORS... ROADHOUSE BLUES.** Has there ever been a more perfect rock lyric than "Well, I woke up this morning and I got myself a beer?" What an underrated blues singer Morrison was. Today, most people look at him as some pathetic drunk, but I have known a million loads in my life who couldn't sing like Jim Morrison. Believe me, he's a GREAT singer. ROADHOUSE was written by the entire band and that's John Sebastian on the harmonica, playing under a fake name (G. Puglese) because of the Doors recent controversy in Miami (Did Jim whip it out or didn't he?). Lonnie Mack adds that real bass that the Doors usually didn't use. I have also heard that the tack piano that Manzarek uses is the same piano that was used for GOOD VIBRATIONS.
8. **FOO FIGHTERS... ALL MY LIFE.** The newest song on the Final 24 and if I hadn't insisted that every song be at least five years old, I might have included the awesome THE PRETENDER instead. ALL MY LIFE will do just fine, however. Unique guitar sound, incredible drumming from Taylor Hawkins. Lyrically, it might be the only song on here that doesn't deal with partying or chicks. One of those songs that I have often played the entire ride home from WIP. For the record, Dave Grohl is an underrated singer.

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9. **FREE... ALL RIGHT NOW.** Whenever this song comes on when I'm doing my trivia thing at Chickie & Pete's, I ask the crowd, "who is performing this song?" And often nobody knows until ten guesses or so. Classic opening riff, bluesy, gutsy vocals from Paul Rodgers (who went on to front Bad Company), and a killer chorus, this song will never, NEVER go away. I was walking down the street on Woodland Avenue in SW Philly with a chick I was dating at the time. How's this for a name? Her name was Dozey! We were walking by Joe Niagara's record store which had just opened. Dozey offered to buy me a record, and me being broke as always, said "sure" and we strolled on in and I picked out FIRE AND WATER, which had this song on it. The "Rockin' Bird" was behind the counter himself! By the way, the album version kicks ass on the 45 version due to Paul Kossoff's (who died at 25) killer guitar solo.
10. **JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE... FIRE.** If I ever make a list of the greatest DRUMMING performances captured on record (and I will), Mitch Mitchell's work on this song will be right up there. It propels the whole damn song. Not that Jimi's guitar work slacks off, dag, was he something! By the way, Hendrix and the band were staying at an apartment one night after a gig and there was no heat. They all had to gang up around the fireplace. The owner of the joint had a Great Dane that Jimi had to move out of the way to get closer to the fire, hence that line, "move over, Rover, and let Jimi take over."
11. **THE KINKS... YOU REALLY GOT ME.** I was in my Mom's kitchen the first time I heard this and, oh well, you just had to be there. That raw guitar sound was created by cutting the speaker with a razor, and no, Jimmy Page does not play on this song. That's Dave Davies on that tremendous solo. His brother Ray's ethereal voice provides a unique contrast within the song. Ray, who wrote it, admits it's a blatant rip of LOUIE LOUIE, but who cares. And despite a zillion cover versions, including some pretty good ones, no one tops the original.
12. **LED ZEPPELIN... COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN...** Yeah, I could have gone with ROCK N ROLL or THE OCEAN or a dozen other songs, but I went with this one because, one, duh, it's awesome, and two, it's off their debut album(which is celebrating it's 40th anniversary, by the way) and it's the first track by them I ever heard. So to say it's stood the test of time would be a major understatement. Blistering guitar solo (with Plant yelling "suffer!" in the background), fast paced power rhythm section from Bonham & Jones, and what can I say about Plant's vocal other than the first time I experienced it I went "what the #%&! is that?!" Contains a rare backup vocal from Page. Do yourself a favor and check out the many live versions on the BBC package. Which, if you don't own already, shame on you.
13. **JERRY LEE LEWIS... NUMBER ONE LOVING MAN.** The one track of the Final 24 that I am gong to assume that most of you never heard. Recorded in '79 by the legendary Bones Howe and featuring Elvis alum James Burton on guitar and the legendary Hal Blaine on drums, I have never played this song for ONE PERSON who didn't flip out over it. I swear to God this might be the most played cut of the Final. It's off a WB CD called ROCKIN' MY LIFE AWAY. Get it! Buy it! Steal it! Whatever you gotta do, believe me, your life is incomplete without it. THE KILLER LIVES!
14. **LITTLE RICHARD... RIP IT UP.** Released in '56, it's the oldest song on the list. It's also the only tune that I wasn't around when it was originally released. Every other song I can remember when it first came out. Is there a better opening line "Well, it's Saturday night and I just got paid?" What a voice and considering how primitive recording techniques were at the time, it's an amazing sound. That's Lee Allen on the sax who later had a solo instrumental hit titled WALKING WITH MR. LEE which I sampled for a song I used to do called I GOT AN NRB!
15. **MOUNTAIN... MISSISSIPPI QUEEN.** Apparently Christopher Walken was in the studio that day yelling "more cowbell!" since it ranks right up there with the Stones HONKY TONK WOMEN as far as outstanding cowbell songs. That's Leslie West on that opening power riff. Here's a surprise. The song was written about a chick who came to a gig in Nantucket who was from Mississippi and was wearing a see through blouse. This is the stuff of great rock songs, folks. One of the first things I did as President of West Catholic (besides misappropriating funds) was install a jukebox in the cafeteria. And the song that I played every day? MISSISSIPPI QUEEN!
16. **THE MOVE... DO YA.** Most of you are more familiar with ELO's version, but make no mistake about it, this earlier version kicks it's ass. Written by one of rock's underappreciated icons, Jeff Lynne, it's kicks off with one of the most awesome power chord openings ever laid down. By the way, Lynne wrote this as a contractual obligation when the Move were disbanding. Not bad, eh? Check out as much Move as you can, particularly the recent reissue of MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY.

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17. **NIRVANA... SERVE THE SERVANTS.** Based on your e-mails, this was not a popular choice. Most of you wanted TEEN SPIRIT, which is certainly an important and fantastic song, but what can I say, I like this one better. Dark, sad, lyrics and I'm a sucker for opening power chords (see FREE, MOVE, etc.). Grohl's drumming is creative and powerful, Cobain's vocal is as raw as ever. I even like IN UTERO better than NEVERMIND and I LOVE NEVERMIND! This was the last song written for that CD.
18. **PEARL JAM... DO THE EVOLUTION...** I didn't even like NO CODE, the previous Pearl Jam CD, so it wasn't like I was even looking for this song when it came out. Well, this one really blew me away. So much so, I carried the CD with me everywhere I went for a week and played it for anyone who would listen. An absolute incredible Eddie Vedder vocal, how does that man still have a voice? Great, dark lyrics and an even more disturbing Todd McFarlane video. That's Stone Gossard playing bass, by the way, not Jeff Ament, and it really stands out.
19. **THE ROLLING STONES... SATISFACTION.** This is the selection that I got more complaints about than any other song. By far. Everyone wanted FLASH or SUGAR or SHELTER or SYMPATHY. What do you want me to say? ALL those songs are classics. I love them all. But none of them have the historical significance of SATISFACTION. Not to mention, I still love it every time I hear it. Greatest rock riff ever? Is there a Stones song with more timeless lyrics? As Paul McCartney once said about people who criticize THE WHITE ALBUM, saying it would have been a better single record, blah blah blah., "Fuck off, it's the White Album!" That's how I feel about SATISFACTION.
20. **SEX PISTOLS... GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.** Utter perfection from beginning to end. Rotten & Viicous might have recieved all the pub, but it's guitarist Steve Jones, drummer Paul Cook and producer Chris Thomas who are the unsung heroes here. Not to say that Rotten's snarly vocal (the lyrics were written by Rotten while eating breakfast at his mum's) doesn't perfectly capture the mood. I own it in it's original 45 vinyl format and it has never come off my jukebox.
21. **STEVIE RAY VAUGHN... THE HOUSE IS A ROCKIN'...** This exhilarating rocker was played frequently during time outs at the Center when the Sixers were making the championship run during the Croce/Iverson era. The joint would go nuts. If this tune doesn't get your adrenaline motorizing, then check your pulse. Check out this story. I'm laying around down the shore on August 27th, 1990, when I get a call from my main man Spins Nitely asking me if SRV has died. "They just played three straight songs of his on the radio, but they ain't saying anything." I call a cool jock named Steve Raymond at WZXL in Wildwood who's a friend of mine and I have the hotline number. "Is SRV dead?" I ask him. Steve replies, "Is that official?" I look at the phone and realize that if I say yes, he would have gone on the air with that and what if he wasn't dead? Unfortunately, he was and I miss him so much. So much spirit and passion.
22. **WHITE ZOMBIE... MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN.** Doesn't get more ferocious than this. I believe that's Jay Yuenger on that incredible slide guitar, but band members so came and went, I'm not so sure. If anyone knows, drop me a line. I'm also looking for an instrumental version. Awesome video!
23. **THE WHO... BABA O' RILEY.** Now here's a cut that has been as overplayed as SATISFACTION, yet I got no complaints about it's inclusion. Why would I? So dynamic, so full of tension. Is it the only song on the list that includes two great vocal performances? And last, but not least, it's the only Keith Moon song that I can get remotely close to drumming to down in my basement.
24. **ZZ TOP... TUSH.** This is the fourth basic blues rocker on the Final. What a lyric. "I ain't looking for much!" No, just what we're all looking for. Did you know that Hendrix once mentioned Billy Gibbons as his favorite guitarist? And it always kills me that the only member of the band without one of those insane beards is the drummer, who's name is Frank BEARD!

That's 13 American acts if you're keeping count (I know the Hendrix Experience is two-thirds British, but because of Jimi, I'm taking them as American!) and six solo acts as compared to bands. Unfortunately, there isn't one woman on this list. I so badly wanted a Pretenders cut, but just couldn't squeeze it on. I will continue to find similarities and peculiarities about this list and will write them when I find them. Thanks so much for all your feedback, this was a lot of fun.