

# My First Concert

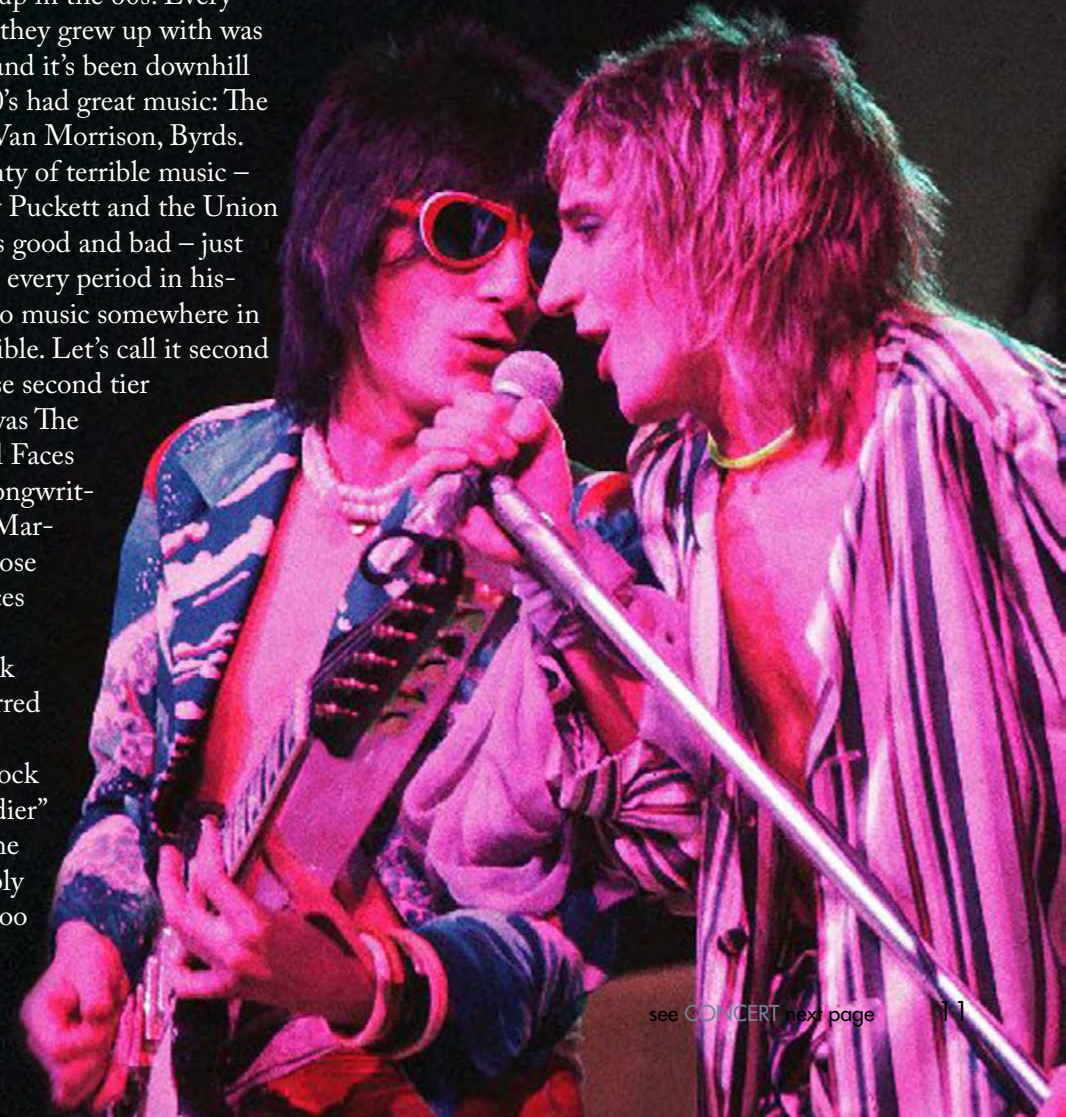
The rumor is that an emergency meeting of TM People kingpins was hastily convened. I hear that terms such as “liability insurance,” “willful ignorance of negligence,” “putative damages,” and “piercing the corporate veil” were all thrown around. Apparently, someone finally got around to reading one of my columns. I was then paid a visit by a high ranking TM People kingpin, who was flanked by two very large men wearing oversized suits. “We want you to write something different this month” I was told. “Forget about the silly “how-to” tripe. Instead write about...oh, I don’t know, how about your first concert? That should be harmless enough; even you couldn’t screw that up.” One of the large men was cracking his knuckles. “Sure thing” I croaked.

There are two problems in writing about one’s first concert. First, it dates you. I mean, what is your mental image of a person whose first concert was Jimi Hendrix, or Bobby Fuller, versus your mental image of someone whose first concert was Katy Perry or DJ Khaled? See what I mean? So for purposes of this column, we’ll assume my first concert was attended prenatal. Second, people might assume that you were a big fan of the band or performer you saw at your first concert. Well, not necessarily. Fifteen and sixteen years olds don’t necessarily go places because they want to; they go places because they can. Being away from parents and

other authority figures is really the point; the music is secondary.

I “came of age” musically in the 1960’s. Some people say that music from the ‘60s was just the best music evah! This is said primarily by boomers who grew up in the 60s. Everybody thinks the music they grew up with was the pinnacle of music and it’s been downhill ever since. Sure, the ‘60’s had great music: The Temptations, Beatles, Van Morrison, Byrds. But there was also plenty of terrible music – I’m lookin’ at you Gary Puckett and the Union Gap. So 60’s music was good and bad – just like today, and just like every period in history. And there was also music somewhere in between great and terrible. Let’s call it second tier music. One of those second tier bands of the late 60’s was The Small Faces. The Small Faces was primarily singer, songwriter, guitar player Steve Marriott. He had one of those great rock and roll voices that could hit the high notes full voice, his rock and roll bona fides marred only by his elfin-like stature. He wrote big rock anthems like “Tin Soldier” and “Afterglow.” But the Small Faces are probably best known for “Itchycoo

Park,” not a bad song, but not really representative of most of their stuff. Then they broke up. Steve Marriott joined the band “Humble Pie” with Peter Frampton, and then died in a fire. And that was that.



Ronnie Wood (left) and Rod Stewart (right)  
of the band Small Faces in concert, 1975  
Photo by Jim Summaria via Wikimedia Commons

So, one day I'm reading my Creem Magazine and see that the Small Faces are back together, Steve Marriott replaced by the guitar player from the Jeff Beck Group, Ron Wood (today an official Rolling Stone), and the singer from the Jeff Beck Group, some guy named Rod Stewart (today, sort of embarrassing). The article said that in England, they called themselves The Faces, but that in America, record company executives made them keep their old name so as to reap the trademark goodwill, whatever that is - sounds stupid. Anyway, get this, the Faces/Small Faces were coming to America and would be playing at some tiny place in Birmingham, Michigan, less than two miles from my house. So my friends and I turned up the nagging to eleven until the parents finally cracked and let us go - on a school night, no less!

Now it must be understood that Michigan had recently passed a law lowering the drinking age to 18, because, you know, what could possibly go wrong with that? Consequently, any place that did not have a liquor license simply had no customers who were 18 years old or older, bequeathing that place to the teenyboppers. That would be me. This place had no liquor license, so it was full of kids most of whom had no idea who this band was, but as indicated above, that didn't matter a lick.

I recall this place as looking like an old car dealership that had been gutted and turned into a "venue." So it was a bit like the old Bardo in Arlington, only cleaner, of course. There was no stage or seats. The band set up on

the floor at one end, half the audience sat on the floor, and the other half clowned around. I was sitting just a few feet from Rod Stewart's snakeskin boots, watching Ron Wood the whole time, wishing I could play guitar like that. Actually, wishing I could play guitar at all. I still wish that. The band was very good, and very professional, not rolling their eyes and mocking the young audience very much at all. The word "nappies" only came up a couple times, and they did an encore even though it might push the concert past 10:30 making us all late for the nursery.

It was clear that this band was nothing at all like the old Small Faces. They were tighter, and much bluesier. The concert was okay, even though I knew none of the songs. But I did learn something from Ron Wood that I was sure was very important: You can jam a lit cigarette on the head of a Fender Stratocaster between the high "E" and the "B" stings, and it will stay there even while "rocking out" until the song is over, and then you can then enjoy what's left of the cigarette. This must have made a big impression on me even though I neither smoked nor played guitar, because I still remember it. And I finally found a use for it: padding this column! We all had a good time and we got home a little after 11:00. Parents placated. All was well.

Now, to the one or two people who are still reading, you're probably saying to yourselves "There's five minutes of my life I'll never get back. I could write something better than that." Yes, you could write something better

than that - much better. And you should. You could write about your first concert, or why '80s music is so much better than '60s music, or point us to the one or two good movies in the Netflix streaming catalog of awful movies. Anything you want. E-mail it to a TM People kingpin at TM PEOPLE. That way, we can all read something good, and I don't have to do anything. Everybody wins! [TM](#)

