

JAMMIN' ANIMATION

Long before *The Fairly OddParents* burst into song, Saturday morning TV was filled with wacky adventure, kooky comedy, and good, old-fashioned rock and roll. (Well, maybe not so good.) We tracked down and rated, on a scale of 1-10, some of TV's most outrageous cartoon bands.



HOLO-ER THAN THOU JEM, 1985-88

Jem was about a battle of the bands: Jem and the Holograms versus the Misfits. Can you guess which band was the good one and which band was evil? Here are some hints: Jem sang songs such as "We Can Make a Difference" and "Love Unites Us," while the Misfits sang "Outta My Way," "Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!" and "Winning Is Everything." Jem was constantly playing charity benefits and befriending her fans. The Misfits, on the other hand, only wanted to steal Jem's fame and fortune.

Jem was the secret identity of Jerrica Benton, a normal girl who used a pair of hologram-casting earrings to give herself

Jem's glitzy clothes and fluffy hair as well as to help her thwart the Misfits' dastardly plans. But there wasn't much of a point to her double identity—Jerrica was just as pretty, as successful, and as sickly sweet as Jem herself.

GROOVE LEVEL

10

Made in the era of early MTV, *Jem* presented at least two animated music videos in every episode, complete with the title of the song and the group's name in the lower-left corner of the screen.

ACTION FACTOR

6

Jem didn't do much crime fighting. Mostly, she worked on keeping the Misfits from stealing the show.

TAILS OF ADVENTURE JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS, 1970-74



If you're in a band and your drummer's ears wiggle, pay close attention...extended chase scenes may follow. On *Josie and the Pussycats*, the wiggling ears belonged to Melody Valentine; they were always the first sign that trouble was afoot. Sinister scientists and power-mad spies interrupted every gig on this band's tour. The girls never missed a beat, however, even when the series turned into *Josie and the Pussycats in Outer Space* and they took a permanent rocket trip out of the galaxy. When they decided to be stars, they really meant it.

GROOVE LEVEL

8

Viewers were able to hear at least one full song per episode, usually while the group was on the run.

ACTION FACTOR

9

Being chased by superspies and mad scientists, capturing the bad guys, and even rocketing into space made the Pussycats' show *furry* exciting.

HIPSTER HEROES

THE IMPOSSIBLES, 1966-68

They may have looked like a run-of-the-mill ultramod pop band, but the Impossible Three had an amazing secret: They were superheroes, too. When their boss, the Big D, contacted them through the gizmos in their guitars, this sharp-dressed trio put on tights and took on bad guys. Fluid Man could turn into liquid, Coil Man's limbs became super-elastic springs, and the shaggy-haired Multi-Man could create copies of himself. Despite their powers, there was one thing the Impossible Three were never able to do: find a drummer.



GROOVE LEVEL
1

This power trio's songs were always interrupted by their superhero duties.

ACTION FACTOR
10

It was impossible for these heroes to stand still.



FAR-OUT FAMILY *THE BRADY KIDS, 1972-74*

When Greg, Marcia, and the rest of the Brady kids sang "Time to Change" on *The Brady Bunch*, they weren't kidding. In 1972, the siblings changed into animated forms for their own Saturday morning cartoon, *The Brady Kids*. Along with some animated pets—a whistling dog, two space pandas, and a magical mynah bird—the kids got into one bizarre adventure after another. But whether they were traveling to ancient Greece with Wonder Woman or helping out spacemen from Venus, these wholesome hipsters always managed to break out their instruments and burst into song. Alice would have been proud.

GROOVE LEVEL
5

The songs were real hits, but the Bradys jamming on actual instruments? Come on.

ACTION FACTOR
5

There was plenty of strange stuff going on, but no chase scenes and no superpowers made for a pretty slow pace.



MUSIC WITH BITE



JABBERJAW, 1976-78

According to his theme song, Jabberjaw was "the most futuristic shark you ever saw." And as sharks go, he was pretty unusual. Living in the year 2021, Jabberjaw walked, played drums (for a human band called the Neptunes), and talked like Curly from the Three Stooges. Jabberjaw and the Neptunes toured the ocean cities of the future, running into countless monsters and criminals. In this fishy cartoon, the shark got top billing but always griped that he got "no respect." Maybe he should've taken his drum kit over to the Impossible Three.

GROOVE LEVEL
2

It's a little hard to believe a fish could really keep a firm grip on drumsticks.

ACTION FACTOR
8

Man, that shark could run!

by Frank Pittarese

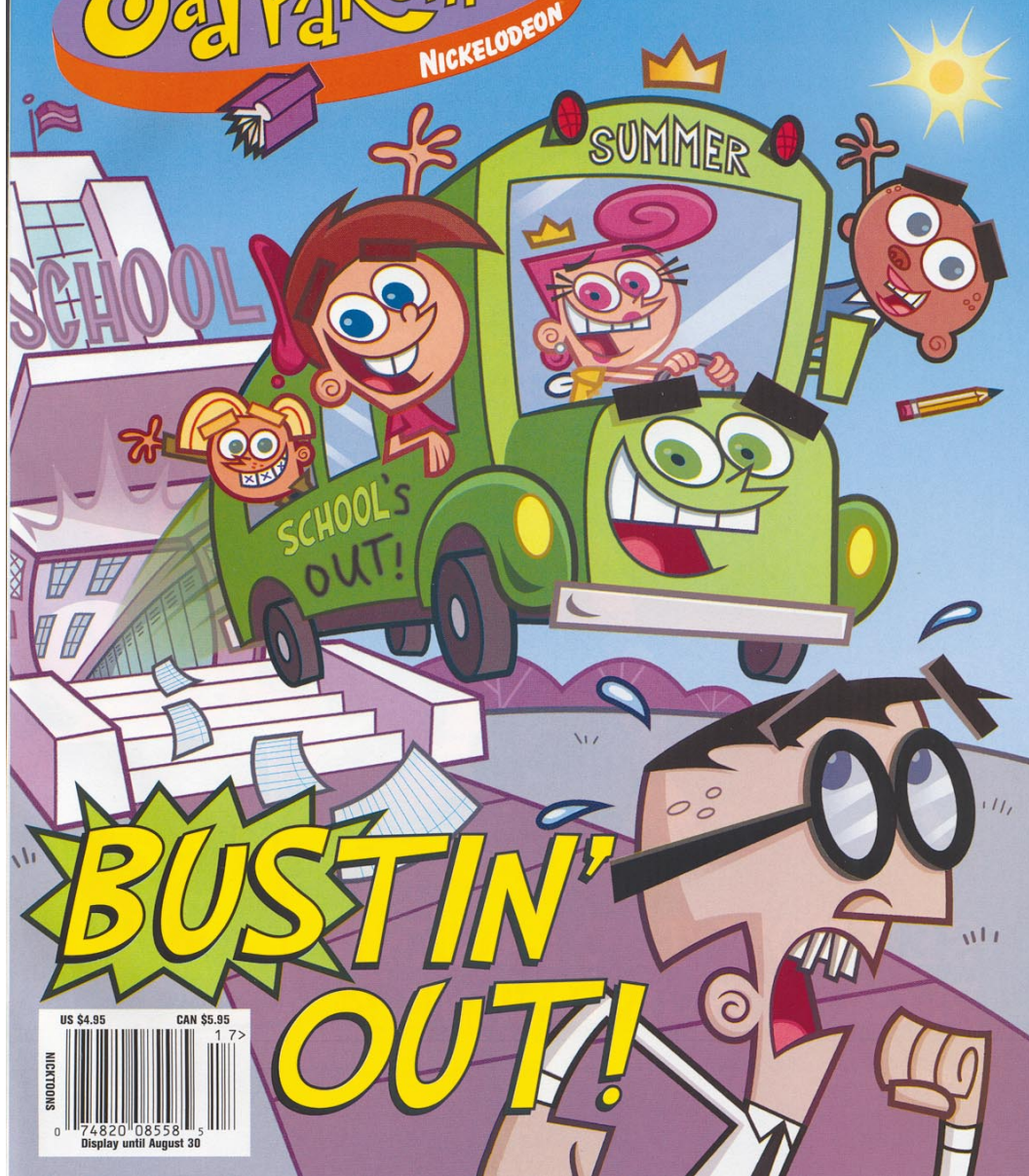
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