

WHOLE LOT OF FAINTIN' GOIN' ON

We celebrate the headliners who unleashed puppy love

Like video games and the atomic bomb, teen idols are one of the defining inventions of our time. Earlier generations had heroes. But were they heroes who made teen girls wriggle and squeal by the millions? Who beckoned them from every movie screen and record rack? Who winked at them from a million bedroom pinups? Hardly.

What do teenagers want in a teen idol? A glimpse of heaven without adult supervision. They may not be philosophers, but adolescents still have a philosopher's yearning for the ideal. To them it looks this way—face (cute); clothes (cutting edge); body (body!); hair (big); grin (sly); voice (might still be cracking—let's go back to face). They like them naughty (the Rolling Stones, Madonna, Rob Lowe), and they like them nice (the Beatles, David Cassidy, Paula Abdul). They get them whatever way they want them.

Remarkably, we've had nearly 50 years of these paragons of puberty. It was late 1942 when a young Frank Sinatra appeared in New York City

and caused an 8.0 jolt on the teen-dream Richter scale. So it seems like a perfect time to collect them, recollect them, dust off the old crop and check out the new. On the following pages you'll find a variety of tributes. Among them are our choices for the Top 10 teen idols of all time. (And don't for a minute think it was easy.) We also provide a visual history through the decades, in coonskin hats and white suits and sideburns and spit curls. And as proof that there's life after idol-dom, we've tracked down some of your favorite golden oldies and reminisced alongside them.

Some people will tell you that teen idols are kid stuff. But idols touch us all at one time or another. The geezers of tomorrow—that's every one of us—will still shiver to recall the blue-black glint of Presley's forelock, the big hair of Farrah Fawcett, the body (body!) of Marky Mark. These idols help us find our way too. They take our earliest notions of passion, love, devotion, and cast them on a wide screen. We say to them: You send us. And they send us from childhood to adulthood. So here they are. Enjoy the show!

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